



**PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR THE  
EARTHRIGHTS SCHOOL (ERS) ADVOCACY TRAINING PROGRAM**

**MAY-DECEMBER 2019**

**Please read the following information carefully before completing this application.**

EarthRights International (ERI) believes in the power of law and the power of people in defense of human rights and the environment, which we define as *earth rights*. We recognize that a healthy environment cannot be maintained without respect for human rights, and that human rights are unattainable without healthy ecosystems.

The EarthRights School (ERS) is a unique training program for civil society advocates from the Mekong region who are working on environmental and human rights issues. The theme of the seven month program is "*Community Leadership for Earth Rights*." The curriculum integrates storytelling and legal advocacy strategies used to address earth rights abuses caused by large-scale development projects, with a strong focus on land rights, environmental and social impact assessments, regional Asian investors, hydropower dams, coal-fired power plants and special economic zones (SEZ).

The goal of ERS is to train grassroots and community leaders about the **impacts of large-scale economic development projects** on communities and the environment and how they can advocate for more equitable development in their communities. We train emerging leaders on effective strategies to reduce negative impacts and improve outcomes of investment projects through strengthening the capacity of local communities to advocate on their own behalf. Through the tailored focus of the program, ERS enables participants to return to their communities with the knowledge and skills to help empower communities play a greater part in local decision-making and protection of their environment.

The **training program** provides core knowledge on development processes, human rights, environmental standards, and corporate behavior and accountability, along with practical advice on how to engage national, regional and international systems and mechanisms such as the UN system, financial institutions, human rights commissions, and private corporate engagement. In particular, the program centers on the development of practical skills in advocacy, including strategic campaign planning, stakeholder engagement, media messaging, and community empowerment and mobilization.

ERS emphasizes the value of local knowledge, wisdom, and life experience of the participants, and therefore adopts a **participatory-learning approach** to the training where individuals share and learn from each other's particular strengths and experiences. The program focuses on serving individuals that have close ties with their local environments and communities. All classes incorporate hands-on learning through group discussions, role-plays, debates, case studies, oral presentations, videos, and other learner-centered activities to ensure participants engage with the material in a critical and practical way.

Through a **series of field trips**, participants will also examine the threats posed by various projects around Thailand such as coal-fired power plants and large-scale industrial zones, and



learn first-hand about communities' campaigning strategies to protect traditional livelihoods, community health, and local environments.

In 2019 we are recruiting candidates from organizations actively involved in advocacy on earth rights issues related to the following themes:

1. Extractive industries including oil & gas, mining, and agribusiness plantations
2. Mega-Projects including; dams, highways and other large scale development projects
3. Land Rights and Clean Environments
4. Power, Rights, and Immunities for Corporations, IFIs, and Emerging Financial Powers
5. Earth Rights Defenders
6. Climate Change and Climate Justice

The training program is seven months long; 5 ½ months of classroom-based training and 1 ½ months of field work practicum in which students return home to conduct research. The program begins in mid May 2019 and runs through mid-December 2019, and takes place predominately in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The 1 ½ month practicum field session is a unique opportunity for students to use the knowledge they have gained from the program to investigate and document first-hand the earth rights abuses in their communities as practicing researchers. The students then return to the school to present their research findings and prepare individual action plans for how they will work with the community. Upon graduation students will become part of a strong network with the confidence to implement their action plans.

*\*Please note that ERS is an independent program not affiliated with any university, and therefore does not offer university or academic credit \**

### **ERS APPLICATION CRITERIA**

*NOTE: ERS WILL NOT SELECT ANYONE WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE APPROPRIATE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS TO ALLOW THEM TO TRAVEL TO AND WITHIN THAILAND.*

#### **Applicants must meet the following requirements:**

1. Participants must commit to active participation in advocacy on earth rights issues in the greater Mekong region for at least one year following the program.
2. Participants should have two or more years experience working with communities and/or civil society groups focused on human rights or the environment, with a specific focus on investment projects. Applicants must be interested in learning more about different aspects of advocacy strategies and how to develop an advocacy plan to be used in their communities.
3. Participants must complete the practicum field session, which includes creating a field research plan and conducting an original research project, and present their findings related to an earth rights issue in the Mekong region.



4. Participants must have at least basic level English language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) to be determined through a personal interview. This is important because the classes will be taught in English.
5. Participants must be willing to live at the training center during the classroom sessions and follow the rules regarding security, safety and communal living. Participants must share community duties such as cooking, cleaning, and maintenance work.
6. Participants must participate in communal life, participatory decision-making, and experiential learning, including sharing and reflecting on their own experiences.
7. Participants must be interested in meeting and living with people from different backgrounds and respect people as individuals regardless of their backgrounds.
8. Participants must be willing to follow and respect the non-discrimination policy of the school. ERS has a zero tolerance policy for discriminatory attitudes and behaviors based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, political belief, age, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, or other status.
9. ERS will not consider any applicant who is enrolled in a university or other school program.
10. Applicants must have a valid passport at the time of acceptance into the program.

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

1. Complete the application form and answer the essay questions in English language only. You can handwrite or type your answers. If you need more space to answer, you can add a page / sheet of paper.
2. The application deadline is **February 01, 2019. All applications must be received by this time. Applications received after this deadline will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Applications** may be sent by post or e-mail (\*see contact information below).
3. Recommendation Letters: Have two people who know you well each complete the recommendation form. One recommendation should be from a member of an organization you are involved with and the other should be from a civil society leader in your community (such as a teacher, religious leader, NGO worker or ERS alumni). These should be returned together with the application.



4. Due to the high number of applicants, ERS will only contact short-listed applicants to set up a test and an interview. The test will assess the applicant's English language and critical thinking skills.
5. Candidates will be chosen to participate in the ERS program based on their application, recommendation letters, test, and interview results.

All individuals who meet the above criteria are encouraged to apply. ERS also strongly encourages applications from women, members of ethnic minorities, and those living in rural communities. ERS does not discriminate based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, political belief, age, gender, physical ability, or sexual orientation.

### **2019 ERS PROGRAM TIMELINE**

#### **Application Dates**

Feb 01, 2019	Application Deadline – applications MUST be received by this day
Feb 05-08, 2019	Short listed applicants will be informed
February-March 2019	Test and interviews will take place (date and location to be announced)
April 01, 2019	Selected Participants will be contacted
May 12, 2019	Participants arrive
May 13, 2019	ERS Program begins

#### **Training Program Dates**

May 13- August 08, 2019	Classroom Session (I)
Aug 09-Sept 22, 2019	Students Field Work Session
Sept 22, 2019	Students come back to school
Sept 23-December 13, 2019	Classroom Session (II)
	Classroom Session (II)

Upon completion of this application – including letters of recommendation – please return it by email or post to one of the following addresses, to arrive **no later than February 01, 2019**. ***Please note that this deadline is strict.***

#### **Contact address:**

Program Manager, ERS  
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