



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

MAY-DECEMBER 2018

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 training program for civil society advocates from Myanmar and 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 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 lessen 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 to play a greater part in local decision-making and protection of their environment to meet the needs of their communities.

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 2018 we are recruiting candidates from organizations actively involved in advocacy on earth rights issues related to the following themes:

1. **Extractive Industries**
2. **Mega-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**; divided into a classroom-based training and a field work practicum in which students return home to conduct research. The program begins in mid May 2018 to mid-December 2018 and will take place in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The **field work practicum** is a unique opportunity for students to use the knowledge they have gained from the program to document first-hand the earth rights abuses in their communities. The students then return to the school to transform their research findings into individual advocacy plans, and upon graduation they leave confident to implement their plans.

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

ERSMY 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 Myanmar or 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 a research project related to an earth rights issue in their home country.



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 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 **January 26, 2018. 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.

2018 ERS PROGRAM TIMELINE

Application Dates

Jan 26, 2018	Application Deadline – applications MUST be received by this day
Jan 29 – Feb. 02, 2018	Short listed applicants will be informed
February and March 2018	Test and interviews will take place (date and location to be announced)
March 26-30, 2018	Selected Participants will be contacted
May 12 & 13, 2018	Participants arrive
May 14, 2018	ERS Program begins

Training Program Dates

May 14 - Aug. 5, 2018	Classroom Session (I)
Aug. 6 - Sept 22, 2018	Practicum Field Session
Sept 24 - December 14, 2018	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 January 26, 2018**. *Please note that this deadline is strict.*

Contact Program Coordinator, ERS
Email: ersmm@earthrights.org