

EARTH AUTHORS

Mentoring children to create and publish children's books about the natural world



**Youth Conservation
Action Network**



Nature can take care of us if we take care of nature

Earth Authors is a first-of-its-kind mentoring program for children to create children's books.

Walking mindfully, middle school students explore the natural world and create storybooks using their real-life discoveries. Along the way, they understand crucial threats to the planet such as the climate crisis, and solutions like ecosystem restoration, food security and planetary health.



Children are explorers and storytellers **at heart**

Participants learn through a blended, research-backed curriculum, designed and implemented by experts. The students' journey and expressions such as writings, art work and discussions, create a documentation of their exploration for posterity. Using their learnings, each participant will write, illustrate and publish a storybook, and speak up for social causes. In this way, the experiences they gain will help them become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and wise-reasoning individuals.

Who can participate?

Ages 9 to 14

Who can apply?

Anyone with enthusiasm and determination to making a difference to the environment

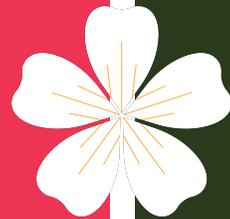
What's the duration?

6 months to 1 year



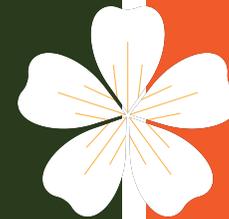
“I think I found myself capable of writing so much.”

- **Grade 6 Earth Author**



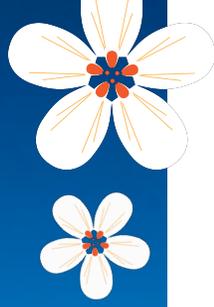
“What kept me going was the thought of my book being read by people around the world, and my own written text sitting on my palm in its very book form...”

- **Grade 5 Earth Author**



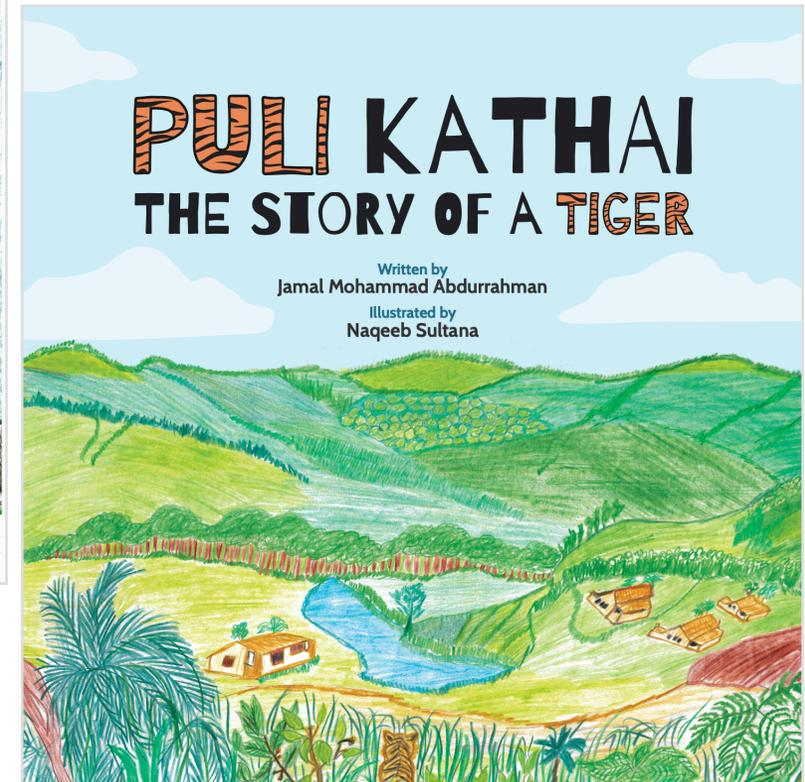
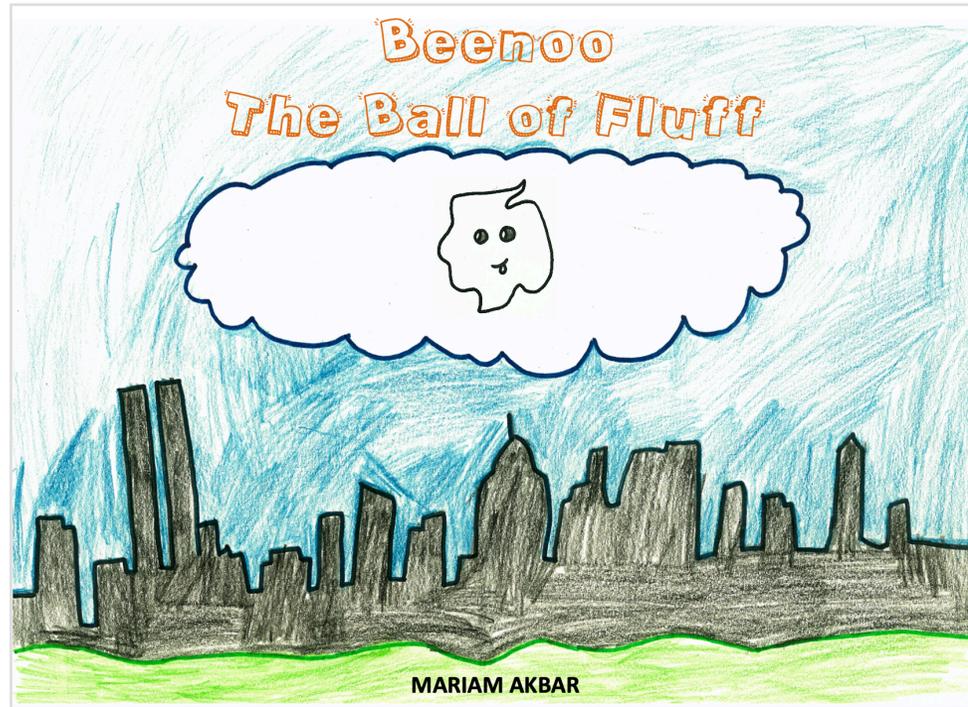
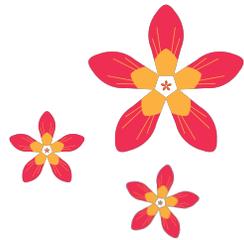
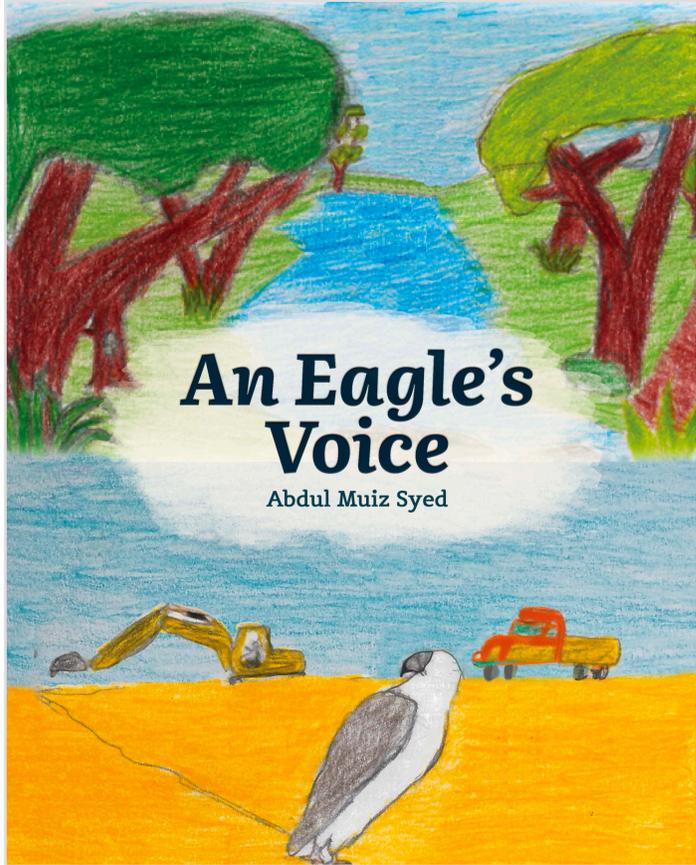
“Being given the choice to decide the content of the book and its meaning really made me realize how much of an impact a book can have and how I should use my power as an author to spread a powerful message.”

- **Grade 8 Earth Author**



Activities by an **Earth Author**

- > Exploring the natural world in their neighbourhood
- > Listening
- > Sharing stories
- > Reading articles
- > Envisioning
- > Journaling
- > Reflective writing
- > Creative writing
- > Power of Characters
- > Appreciative inquiry
- > Peer support
- > Developing a story idea
- > Writing for storytelling
- > Spotting fake news
- > Illustrating your story
- > Book design
- > Book publishing
- > Storytelling for communities
- > Supporting communities affected by COVID-19

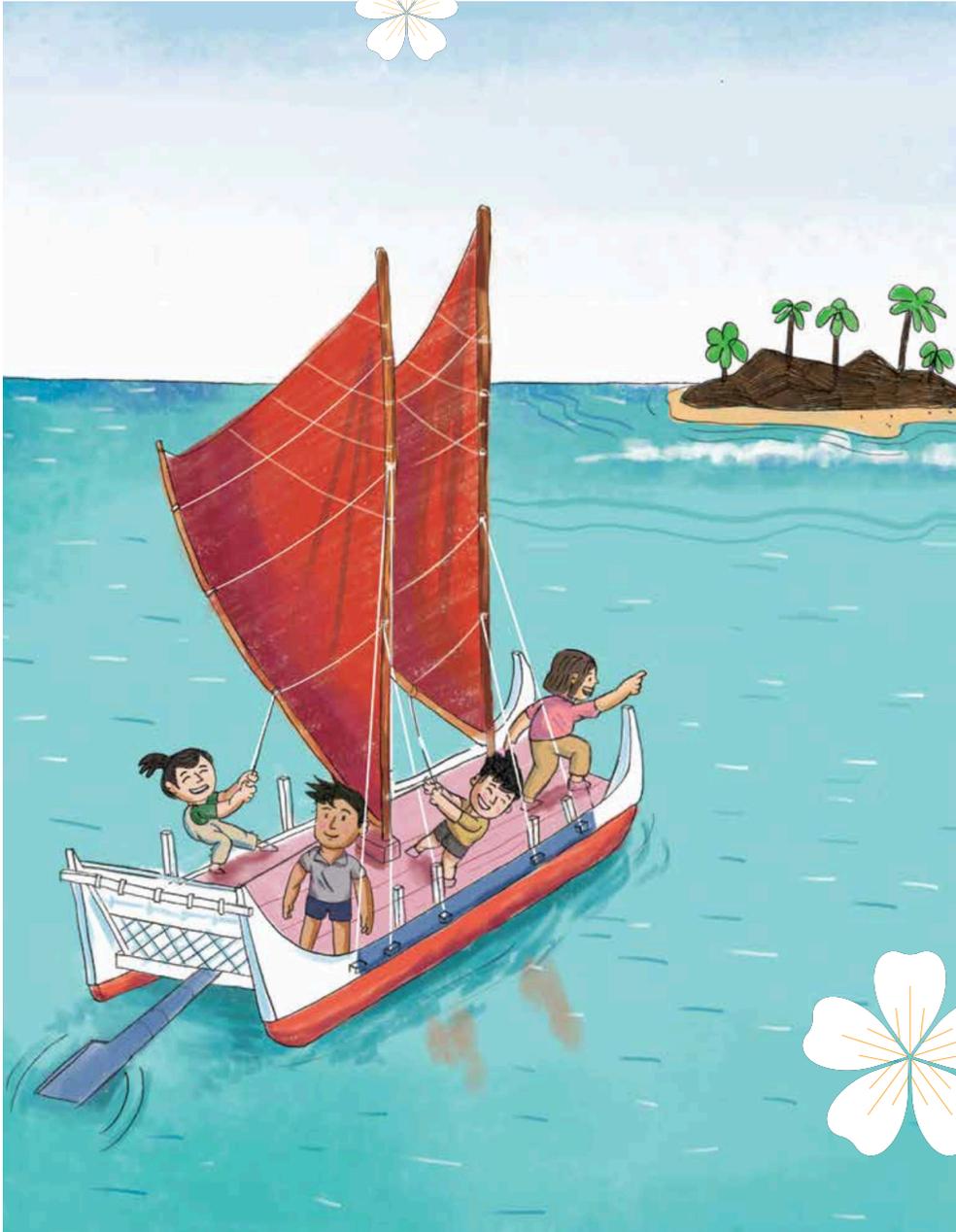


A few cover pages of children's books published by the participants of the Earth Authors' program



Our Model

- Earth Authors Program was developed after an inspiring in-person conversation with legendary Polynesian navigator and National Geographic Society's Hubbard Medalist, Nainoa Thompson, and through an Innovation for Sustainable Development Grant by the East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- This program is deeply rooted in values of traditional wayfinding such as listening to nature, existing as a community, and being driven by a vision. Participants prepare the canoe, sail the canoe and reach the land — each step being a metaphor to explore the natural world, create a children's book, and speak up for a social cause.



When children create storybooks, **they** **build character, acquire skills and gain knowledge**

Calmness

Curiosity

Confidence

Empathy

Determination

Resilience

Diligence

Openness

Responsibility

Creativity

Personal expression

Adaptability

Self-direction

Planning

Exploration

Global awareness

Collaboration

Oral and written communication

Planetary health

Our changing planet

Sustainable practices

Human Journey

Urbanisation

Food security

Ecosystem services

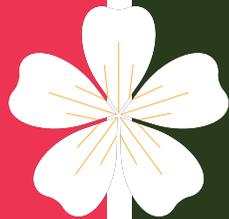
Indigenous cultures

Innovation for conservation



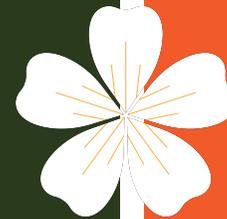
“I would like to write this book because I want to stop people from polluting. I feel it slowly wipes away nature and there is pollution everywhere, in everything. So, I badly feel like putting a stop to this.”

- Grade 5 Earth Author



“By doing this project, my knowledge about birds and their habits expanded. During the process my ability to find and take in relevant information, grew. It also taught me to work with deadlines and to never give up!”

- Grade 7 Earth Author



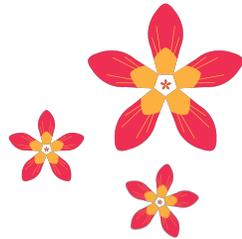
It’s the excitement in the process of making a book that pushes me. Converting words to pictures, trying to sew them together, they appeals to my interest very much. I felt more inclined to thoroughly develop my basic idea after you described different categories of nature writing, including climate change, ecology, physics, science and politics.

- Grade 8 Earth Author

Learners become Explorers Authors Changemakers

Program details

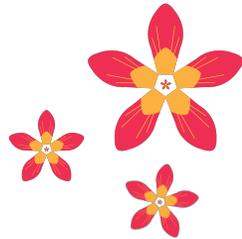
- Creating books is largely driven by the participants' working with the mentors, listening to feedback and engaging consistently. We have found that children who put in the required effort every week produce an exemplary output.
- Journalling during the program is mandatory. We have found that the originality of written expression, art work and the transformation in participants is deeply visible when they journal regularly.
- Participants must attend the sessions regularly to benefit the most from the project.
- A computer/laptop is required to attend the group sessions and individual mentoring conversations, which will happen for three to four times a week via Zoom.



Program details

Learners
Become
Explorers
Authors
Changemakers

- All the sessions will be recorded. Cameras must be on. But, the videos will not be shared in public without the consent of the parents.
- Earth Authors Program will involve the participants going on short walks in their neighbourhood. Parental company for safety is advised.
- The program does not include the cost of design of the book. You are welcome to design on your own, work with a designer, publish on Amazon Kindle, or inform us at the right stage if you need a designer, which will involve an additional fee on actuals.



The Expert

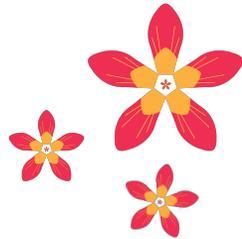


K. RAMNATH CHANDRASEKHAR is a practitioner with 13 years of experience in conceptualising and implementing experiential education programs for schools in the Asia-Pacific region. As a trained photographer and filmmaker, Ram has traveled across India to produce stories that have inspired people to speak for India's natural and cultural heritage. He was shortlisted for the Rolex Young Laureates Programme, awarded the Torchbearer of the Environment by the Tamil Nadu State Government, and an alumni and 2020 Innovation for Sustainable Development Fellow at the East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii. After interacting with 50,000 students in 250 schools through conservation education campaigns, Ram and his partner Rachita co-founded the Youth Conservation Action Network (YouCAN) to empower children and youth to become changemakers for the natural world, and themselves, through programs such as the Earth Authors. His work can be viewed at www.ramnathshekar.com



The Expert

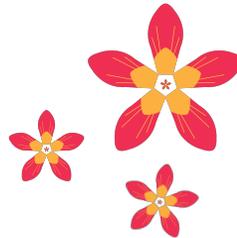
Aneesa Jamal is an alumna of Smith College, USA and an MBA from the University of Washington. She founded Al Qamar Academy, an innovation driven micro-school in Chennai India. Prior to Al Qamar, she worked with multinationals like Microsoft, AT&T, Modi Xerox & Price Waterhouse. Aneesa has been teaching for the past 13 years. Her mentorship has launched 25 children to write and publish children's storybooks on ecology and conservation. Aneesa has designed and implemented a robust reading program, among many others, at Al Qamar whereby most children naturally become readers within a few years. Several alumnae exceed American reading level benchmarks when transferring to US schools. Through Aneesa's mentorship, Al Qamar students have participated in the Nanowrimo Young Writers' Program for the past 7 years. In 2019, they students collectively penned over 200,000 words in a single month - creating stories and narratives. Aneesa's approach to teaching and learning has benefitted numerous children and teachers for a just and equitable society through the Cogitation Club. www.cogitation.in



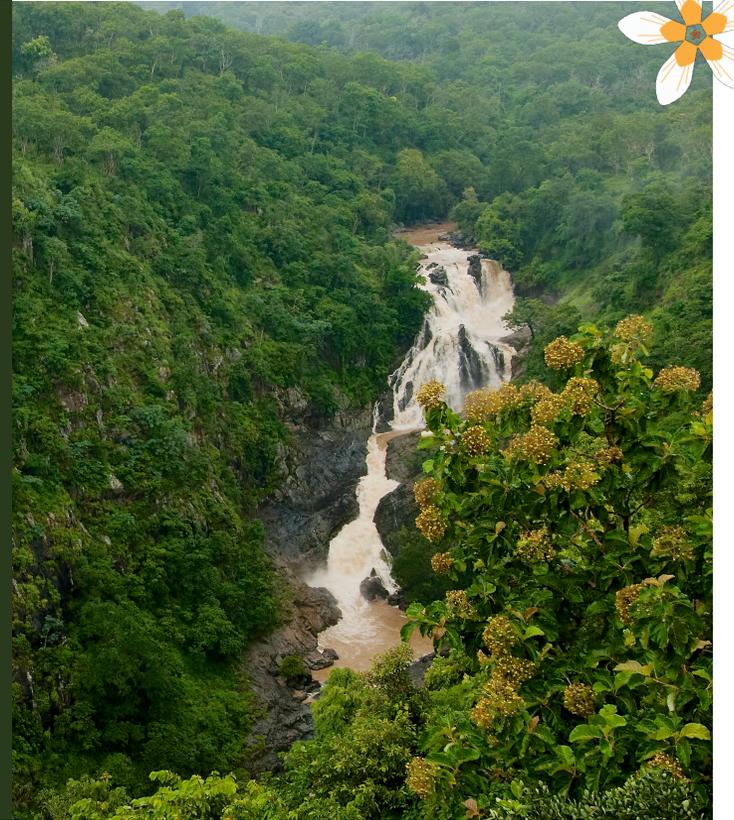
The Expert

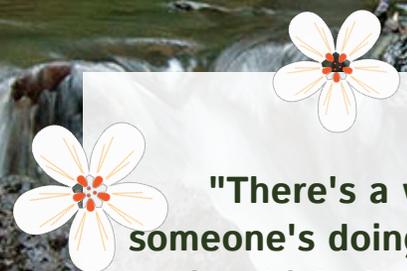
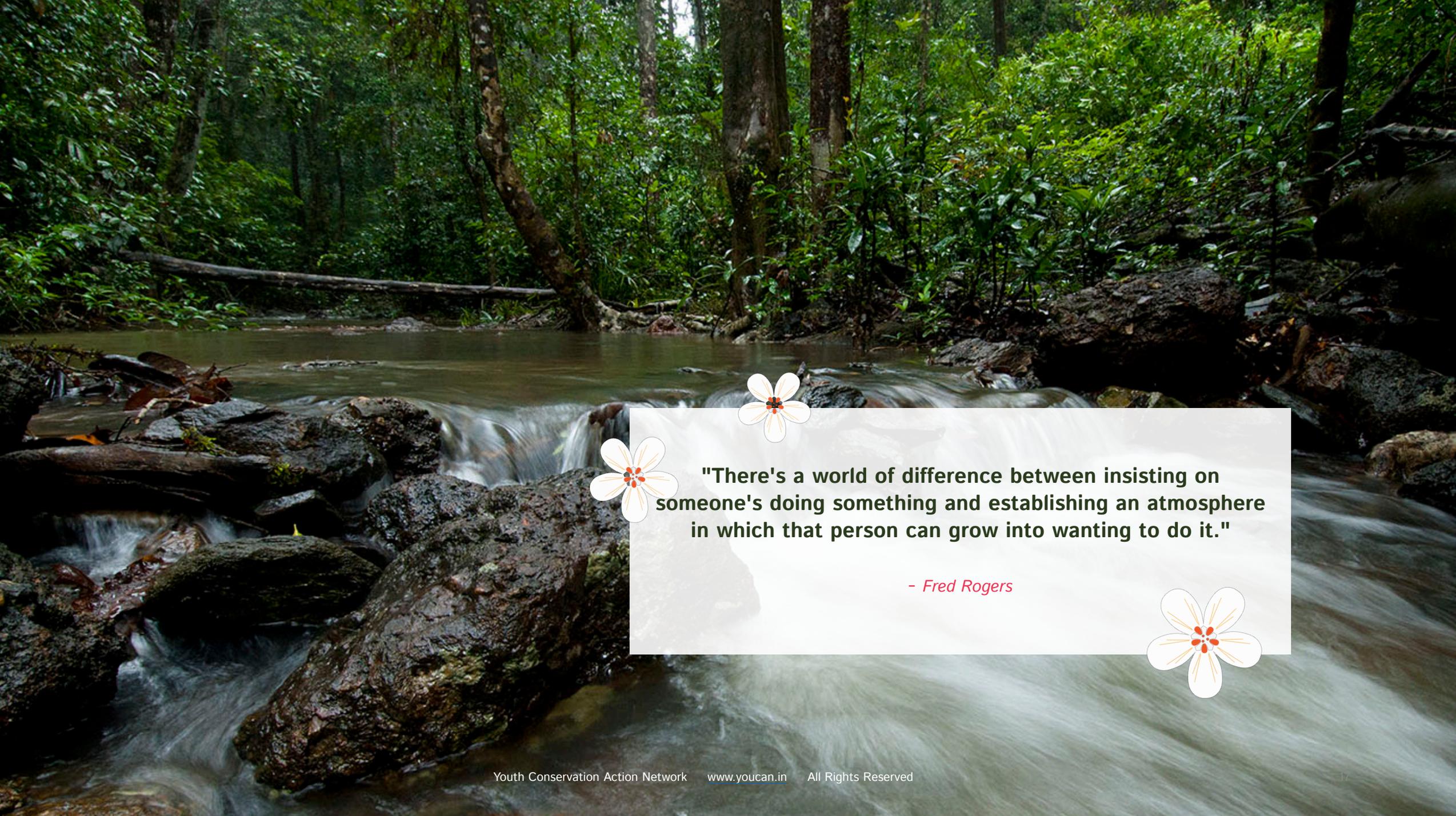


Ashvini Menon is a Graphic Designer, Cartoonist and an Illustrator. She completed her post-graduation in Graphic Design from The National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad and her post-graduate diploma in Environment and Sustainable Development from Indira Gandhi National Open University. She has won various awards and recognitions for her work through the years. Ashvini worked as a User Experience Designer at Microsoft India, before coming back to her home city to establish her practice for wildlife and the environment. Ashvini is as passionate about the environment as she is about visual design. Solving complex communication problems and consulting on sustainable production methods is her area of specialization. She founded the Ashvini Menon Visual Design Studio in 2016 as a social enterprise that primarily uses visual design for wildlife and sustainable development. Her clients range from Visa to Google, and from Greenpeace to the World Wide Fund for Nature. Her work can be viewed at www.ashvinimenon.com



How to register?
Send an email to info@youcan.in





"There's a world of difference between insisting on someone's doing something and establishing an atmosphere in which that person can grow into wanting to do it."

- Fred Rogers





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