

# Our River ~ Our Life

Bagmati River Conservation Awareness Program for School Students



Friends of the Bagmati  
&  
Clean Energy Nepal

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## Introduction

*Our River ~ Our Life* is a Bagmati river conservation awareness program for school students organized by the Friends of the Bagmati (FoB) in association with the Clean Energy Nepal (CEN). This is one of the components of the Neighborhood Watch Scheme project run by Friends of the Bagmati among the communities living along the Bagmati Riverbank from Thapathali to Teku stretch. The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), United Kingdom funds this project.

The water qualities of rivers found in Kathmandu have been significantly deteriorated. The water quality of holy Bagmati River truly represents severe degree of pollution in river system of Kathmandu Valley. Awareness and mass education programs are very important tools to motivate and encourage local people to adopt environment friendly behavior and attitude to contribute to Bagmati river conservation.

Students' participation and mobilization in mass education and awareness campaign holds great significance as desired behavior and attitude change can be easily achieved in the case of children.

## Objectives

The broad objective of this program was to raise awareness on Bagmati river conservation issues in order to make people follow the best possible environmental management practices in Kathmandu Valley. The specific objectives were:

- To aware students regarding the causes, effects and solutions to Bagmati river pollution
- To motivate and encourage students to adopt environment friendly attitudes and behaviors to contribute to Bagmati river conservation
- To mobilize students in mass education and awareness for Bagmati river conservation
- To provide forum for interaction and sharing ideas on environmental management
- To enhance personal capability of students through competition

## The target group

The targeted people of this campaign were the school students (grade 6-9). We believe that the students are a group of people who can be the real agent to bring change.

Moreover, the focus of this campaign was to involve the students of the schools of the core/downtown area whose sewers finally reach the Bagmati River (Teku - Thapathali stretch).

## Implementation

The students were invited to compete through poem, painting, photography and field reporting in order to portray the impacts that core city dwellers and the people along the riverbank notice.

### The themes:

Poem competition:	the solution to Bagmati river pollution
Painting competition:	vision for a clean Bagmati river
Photography competition:	the story of Bagmati river pollution
News Reporting:	the issues of Bagmati river pollution

### Participation:

- The participating schools selected the students for different competitions through initial screening competitions at their own school.
- Single entry, each for poem, painting, & photography competition was accepted from each school. Students participating in the poem and painting competition competed on reporting competition as well.
- The target participants of the program were set as school students from grade 7-9. But the students from grade 10 were also allowed to participate. Students from 50 schools having Nature Club under Children and Environment Program of KMC and CEN, were invited as participants.
- Altogether 80 students from 22 schools participated in different competitions. Besides students guide teachers of the nature clubs, teachers of schools, guardians, volunteers and officials from governmental and non-governmental organizations also participated.

*(Please check Annex 1 for a list of participating schools)*

### Date and Place

Orientation session of the amateur photography competition and field visit to all the participants of the reporting competition was organized on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2005, Saturday. The total stretch covered was from Thapathali to Teku Kalo Pul.

FoB and CEN exhibited all entries (paintings and photographs) at Teen Dewal, Teku on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Saturday. On the same day prizes were distributed to all the winners of different competitions.

The brochure containing information about the main reasons of Bagmati River pollution and the messages on how students can contribute to reverse the degradation of the Bagmati River was distributed to all the participants (students, and their guardians and teachers).



### Highlights of the inauguration day: 21 May 2005

The inauguration ceremony was organized on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2005 at Kalmochan Mandir, Tripureshwor. Participants and invitees gathered at 7:00 AM and after registration inauguration ceremony began. During the registration session the competing paintings and poem were also collected. The painting and poem competitions were not organized on the spot. The schools selected the competing poems and paintings through screening competitions at their own school.

Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi, program officer at CEN, welcomed all the participants and briefed about the program schedule. Mr. Sharad Shrestha, senior tour guide, explained about the



importance of cultural heritage found along the Bagmati riverbank. He also provided some tips and points to be remembered while undergoing field visit.

Then all the participants were divided into two core groups: photography and news reporting groups. Participants of poem and painting competitions were specified as participants of news reporting competition. Mr. Jati Raman Bhattarai guided the photography group whereas Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi took care of reporting group. Mr. Raman Bhattarai gave orientation on photography competition and Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi on news reporting competition.

Then photography and news reporting group were again divided into sub-groups. Then volunteers and resource persons were assigned to those groups to help them during the visit. After conducting the refresher games for the participants all the participants set out for the field visit. The route of the field visit was fixed along the Bagmati riverbank from Kalmochan Mandir at Thapathali to Teku.



During the field visit the participants interviewed local peoples regarding the current causes and effects of the Bagmati river pollution. The participants of the photography competition took photographs of different issues of the Bagmati river system. The field visit ended at Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) office. The participants of the news reporting were provided half an hour time to prepare news report on the basis of the field visit. The program ended with the review of the day and refreshment.

### Highlights of the closing day: 28 May 2005

The closing ceremony was organized at Teen Dewal Mandir, Teku on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2005. The closing ceremony comprised of exhibition of paintings and photographs of the participants, poem recitation, news presentation and prize distribution.

Mr. Mukesh Maharjan hosted the closing ceremony. Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi gave welcome speech mentioning that ideas expressed by participants during the competition should be incorporated in their daily life actions and activities as well. Mr. Umesh Bhattarai, judge -

poem competition, analyzed the entire poems submitted by the participant's. He then announced the winner of the poem competition. Participants also presented prizewinning poems and news reports.



The winners of the photography competition were selected by considering the viewers' choice too.

School kids distributed token of appreciation to all the judges who helped voluntarily.

Finally, Mr. Bhusan Tuladhar, Executive Director of CEN distributed the prizes to the winners. He urged all the participants of the program to be part of the solution to Bagmati river conservation not pollution. He requested all to act immediately in this regard.

*Please check Annex 2 for program schedule.*



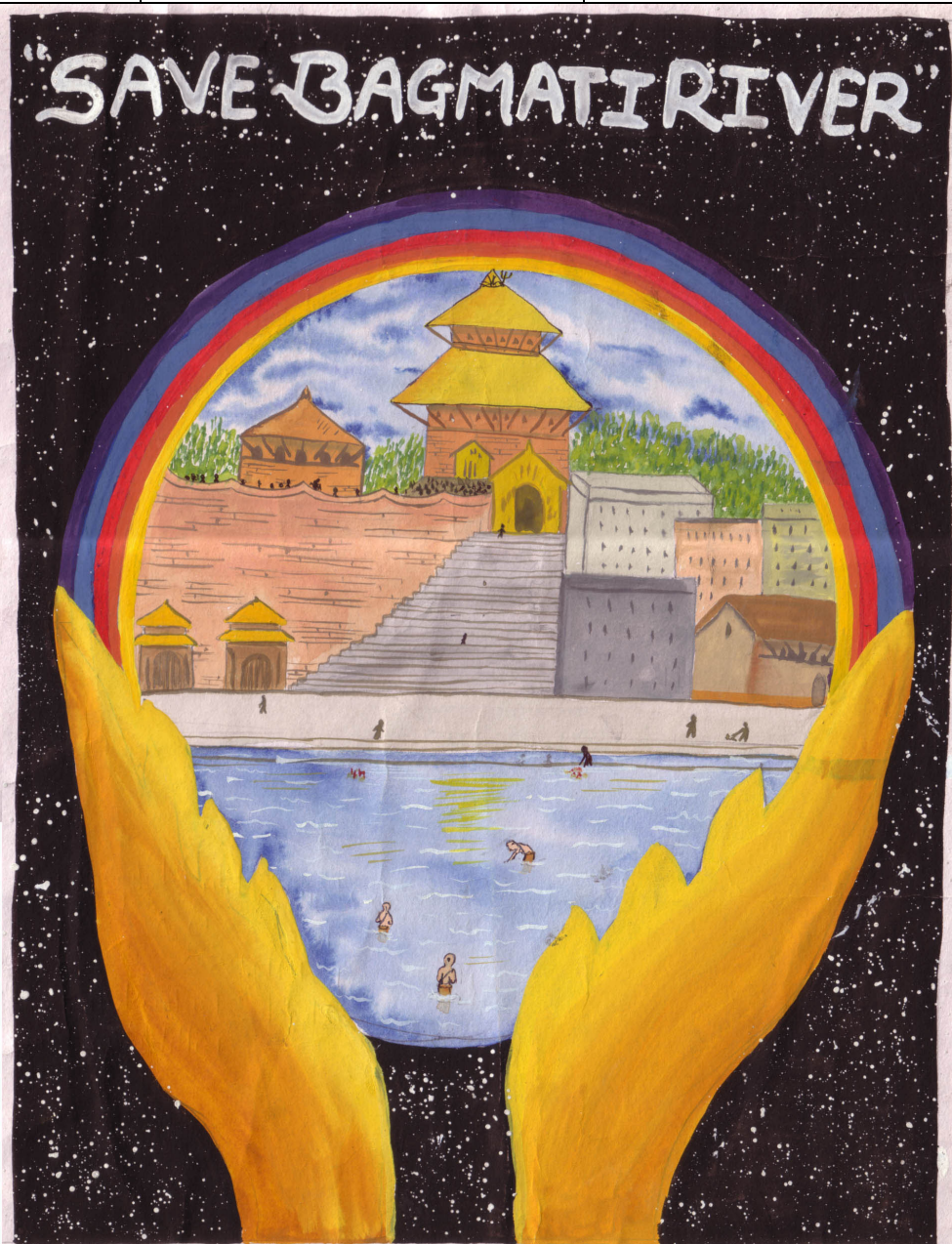
## Results of the Competitions

A panel of judges selected the first, second and third position winners on different competitions.

### 1. Painting competition: vision for a clean Bagmati river

Chief Judge: Mr. Govinda Prasad Shah “Ajad”

Position	Name and Class	School
1 <sup>st</sup>	Ms. Nitu Maharjan, Class 10	Padma Kanya Secondary School



## 2. Photography competition: the story of Bagmati river pollution

Chief Judge: Mr. Jati Raman Bhattarai

Position	Name and Class	School
1 <sup>st</sup>	Mr. Bikash Thapa, Class 10	Mangalodaya Secondary School






### 3. News Reporting: the issues of Bagmati river pollution

Chief Judge: Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi

Position	Name and Class	School
1 <sup>st</sup>	Mr. Bal Krishna Shrestha, Class 9	Asphodel Public School
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tears of Bagmati</b></p> <p>“Bagmati is a holy river which is originated from the Shivapuridada. It is a river which look beautiful in past. Its water was used by all. It is the life of people’s too. It was clan, green, big, unpolluted river. Peoples used to bath, swim, wash utensil here. People to drink it. It was in heart of all. For irrigation people used this river.</p> <p>The above passage is told by an 72 years old woman named Charumati Parajuli. She also lived near the bank of Bagmati as a Sukumbashi. She have past 72 years near the Bagmati. She lived in Banshighat which her family.</p> <p>She said “Nowday the white and transparent river look like black. It is being unusual and same to holy river. Many dirts are mixing in it. Plastic, bottles, house hold goods, drainage, clothes dead animals bodies, harmful chemicals are mixed. She said, “She want to die by seeing clean Bagmati river, but it is impossible. I will die in two three days. But if we all people and Government are united we can make our dream true.</p> <p>The real state of Bagmati is so bad nowadays. It is look bad. In the clean river many things are mixed. About 52 big drainage and many small drainage are joined ere. The trees around it are cutted by the peoples. I think they have knowledge about Bagmati. But they are not seeing the tears of Bagmati. Tears are pouring from our holy river, our only one holy river.</p> <p>We must clean our Bagmati. Our holiest river. We should sweep away the tears of Bagmati. We must bring it in it’s real state. We have drinking problem in Kathmandu valley. That is because the curse of Bagmati. One day we have to die by not drinking water. Nepal is second reachest country in water resources in Nepal.</p> <p>Our river, our soul, our heart, our life, we must protect, preserve it.</p> <p>Sweep the tears of Bagmati.</p> <p>Thanku</p> <p>Bal Krishna Shrestha Class 9 Asphodel Public School</p> <p><i>Note: The text written by the student has been copied without any editing and distortion.</i></p>		

#### 4. Poem competition: the solution to Bagmati river pollution

Chief Judge: Mr. Umesh Bhattarai

Position	Name and Class	School
1 <sup>st</sup>	Ms. Preeti Shakya, Class 8	Bal Namuna Secondary School
<p>“वाग्मती नदी प्रदूषण समस्या समाधानका उपायहरू”</p> <p>प्रीती शाक्य कक्षा : ८ बाल नमुना विद्यालय, काठमाडौं</p>  <p>विगत वर्तमान र आगतका तस्विर आँखाअगाडि उभैँदा भक्कानो छोडी रोऊँ-रोऊँ जस्तो लाग्छ अव्यक्त पीडाले सताउँछ । तिम्रो शरीरमा फोहोरको डङ्गुर लादिएको देख्दा तिम्रो शरीरमा बग्ने रगतमा फोहोरका किटाणु रमाउँदा तिम्रो शरीर शिथिल हुँदै जाँदा कसको मन नरोला र ? हे वाग्मती, तिम्रो यो कस्तो दुर्गति ।</p> <p>हे वाग्मती, तिम्रो यस दुर्दशा देख्दा आज आस्थाहरू खण्डित भएका छन् विश्वासमा तुसारो लागेको छ मानिसले धर्म छाडेको छ चापले घेरा हालेको छ संस्कृति र सभ्यता हराएको छ हे वाग्मती, लाग्छ, विगतसँग वर्तमानले नाता तोडेको छ ।</p> <p>त्यसैले म भन्दै छु साथी हो आऔँ, जुटौँ लागिपरौँ सहकार्य गर्न वाग्मतीलाई सफा-सुगन्धर अनि सुन्दर पार्न । मार्गोँ सहयोग सबैबाट गरौँ विचार साटासाट एकजुट भई लागौँ अब संघ-संस्थाहरूसमेत सब । नफालौँ फोहोर यसका यताउति नमिसाऔँ ढल बिनसिस्ति नत्यागौँ धर्म र संस्कृति यो हो हाम्रो अमूल्य संस्कृति ।</p> <p>अति भयो दुर्दशा अब पवित्रता रोजौँ नदीलाई ढल नबनाऔँ विकल्प खोजौँ पशुपतिको कृपा मार्गोँ अन्तरात्मैले जागौँ नदी हाम्रा नसा-नसा हुन् सुस्वस्थ ब्रह्मन्तिर लागौँ ।</p> <p>समाप्त</p>		

## Conclusion

We believe such programs helped to disseminate conservation messages to the local people in general and the school students in particular. We invite all concerned groups and individuals to support such activities in order to contribute to our effort in conserving the Bagmati River.

The students are always trying to engage them into some innovative initiatives during their extra curricular activities at school. We should try to render them some new concepts and ideas to attract their attention to the Bagmati River Conservation.

We expect to work with school students in more elaborate form to address the Bagmati River issues. We are very thankful to all who helped us to make this program a great success. Success in our terms is - to inform maximum number of people about the ways to perk up the lost glory of the Bagmati River.

## Annex 1

### Participating Schools

1. Ananda Bhumi School
2. Anmol Jyoti School
3. Asphodel Public School
4. Bal Sewa School
5. Children Model School
6. Gyanodaya Secondary School
7. Intensive International School
8. Kanya Mandir Higher Secondary School
9. Kathmandu International School
10. Mangalodaya Secondary School
11. Milan Vidya Mandir School
12. N.N.L. Secondary School
13. New Zenith School
14. Occidental Public School
15. Padma Kanya School
16. Peoples Peace English
17. Shree Panch Ratna Rajya Laxmi Secondary School
18. Rose Bud School
19. Shanti Nikunja School
20. Shree G. M. Higher Secondary School
21. South Point Boarding School
22. The Spangle Boarding High School



## Annex 2

### Program Schedule

#### 21 May 2005

07:00 - 07:30	Gathering at Kaal Mochan, Tripureshwor Opposite to Blue Bird
07:30 - 08:00	Orientation - Photography Grouping for Photography - Mr. Raman Bhattarai
08:00 - 08:30	Briefing - Field Visit - Mr. Sharad Shrestha & Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi
08:30 - 09:30	Field Visit accompanied by Tour Expert, Mr. Sharad Shrestha
09:30 - 10:30	Refreshment at KMC, Teku

#### 28 May 2005

11:00 - 11:30	Gathering at Teen Dewal, Teku Adjacent to Pachali Bhairav, Teku
11:30 - 11:35	Welcome
11:35 - 11:50	Selection of Finalists - Photography Competition
11:50 - 12:05	Poem Presentation - Top Five
12:05 - 12:10	Experience/Feedback from 2 students (1 boy and 1 girl)
12:10 - 12:25	News Report Presentation - Top Five
12:25 - 12:40	Speech - Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar, CEO, Clean Energy Nepal - Mr. Sharad Shrestha, Tour Expert - Judges
12:40 - 12:55	Prize Distribution by Guest Token of Appreciation to all Judges by school kids
12:55 - 13:00	Closing by the Master of Ceremony

Annex 3

**List of Supporters and Sponsors**

**Supporters**

Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), United Kingdom  
Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC)

**Sponsors**

The Nepali Times Magazine  
Kodak, Photo Concern Group  
Dwarika's Hotel



Friends of the Bagmati (FOB) is a registered non-governmental organization established by a group of people from different walks of life who have come together through their common concern and their wish to restore the environment of the Bagmati and other rivers of Nepal.

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Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) is a non-profit group conducting research based public education and advocacy campaigns to promote sustainable energy use and environmental conservation, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley.

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