



Kingdom of the Netherlands



FROM THE SOURCE

Environmental Media Training

in Damascus, Syria - September 22-26 2010

FROM THE SOURCE, a multimedia initiative for water and environmental issues in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the Netherlands Institute for Academic Studies in Damascus and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Damascus are pleased to announce a five-day Environmental Media Training from September 22 to 26, 2010 for 10-15 Syrian print journalists, photographers and film makers.

Course objectives and outline

Climate change, drought, pollution and growing water scarcity are increasingly affecting daily life in the Middle East, yet media coverage of environmental issues in the region remains limited and often ineffective. In this context, FROM THE SOURCE is organising a five-day environmental media training for Syrian journalists with the aim of improving participants' reporting skills and understanding of environmental issues.

Course contents and working methods

The training will take place from Wednesday 22 September until Sunday 26 September from 9:00 to 17:00 with a one-hour lunch break. The training will feature a number of interactive classroom-based components including lectures, practical exercises and debates on the topic of the environment and water in Syria.

Activities will include an introductory open discussion on water, the environment and how participants perceive these topics in their everyday life; practical "how to" sessions on producing effective texts and images on environmental topics; a lecture and question & answer session on the state of the environment and water resources in the Middle East; and brainstorming sessions about relevant topics and how to approach their coverage. This first part will take up the first day-and-a-half of the training.

During the second part of the training, participants will receive a reporting assignment, and spend the rest of the workshop identifying, researching and reporting on a local environmental

story. Participants will be divided into groups of two to three journalists, so that print, photo and film reporters will work together in a multimedia group to cover one topic.

The trainers will be on hand to help the groups through the process of developing and executing their reports and provide them with contact details of local experts whom they can interview.

After completion of the course, participants will

- have a good understanding of the importance environmental and water issues and the local effects of climate change
- be able to identify environmental stories and develop strong story angles.
- have improved their ability to produce accessible and fact-based articles on environmental and water issues.
- have produced a 400-500-word story (print), a photo essay with captions (photography), a five-minute TV news item (film).

Admission requirements

All candidates must:

- be fluent in English
- be aged between 21 and 35 years
- have two to five years professional experience in the media sector
- have an interest in environmental issues
- preferably have experience in the coverage of social, human-interest stories; environmental, development issues
- be available for the duration of the training and obtain, if needed, written approval from their employer to participate in the course and be freed from work-related obligations

Broadcast/film applicants must in addition:

- have a solid technical background, preferably in DV (Digital Video) production
- have a critical eye

Print applicants must in addition:

- have a high standard of written English

How to apply

All applications should be submitted by email to both of these addresses below:

dechatel@gmail.com

joshka@sapiensproductions.com

with the mention 'FROM THE SOURCE Environmental Media Training' in the subject line. All applicants must submit the following:

- the completed application form (Parts A and B which are attached)
- an updated CV
- examples of recent work
 - for print journalists: two published articles (by email)
 - for broadcast journalists/filmmakers: recent showreel on DVD (to be delivered to the NIASD at the address below)
 - for photographers: up-to-date portfolio on a CD/DVD (to be delivered to the NIASD at the address below)
- a letter of motivation explaining what they hope to gain from this training
- one environmental story idea, with an explanation of the angle the candidate would take on the story, a list of potential interviewees/ locations to visit
- at least one reference from employers/supervisors/editors

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

The deadline for applications is August 10, 2010

Candidates will be asked to do a short interview over Skype or phone with the trainers between August 10 and 15. A final list of candidates will be drawn up by August 19 and participants will be informed by email of their acceptance.

Venue

The training will be held at the Netherlands Institute for Academic Studies in Damascus.
Address: East Mezzeh, Al Farabi Street 85.

About From the Source

FROM THE SOURCE is an interactive multimedia initiative for water and environmental issues in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) that seeks to create awareness of the value of water and the environment among users in the region and beyond.

FROM THE SOURCE was launched in 2009 by filmmaker Joshka Wessels and journalist Francesca de Châtel, Dutch media producers who have worked extensively on the topic of water and the environment in the MENA region.

By establishing a network of reporters and a media platform where water stories can be told from a human angle, FROM THE SOURCE aims to trigger a public debate on the subject and place the topic of the environment at the forefront of mainstream media.

About the trainers

Joshka Wessels (PhD) is an award-winning eco-documentary filmmaker and geographer based in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Over the past six years, she has directed and produced several documentaries on water issues in both the Netherlands and MENA region for the EU and international broadcast channels such as *BBC World* and *Al Jazeera* English. Joshka wrote her PhD thesis on rural communities and traditional water management in Syria.

Print journalist and editor Francesca de Châtel has worked as the managing editor and editor-in-chief of *Syria Today*, the country's first English-language magazine. She has published several articles on environmental issues in Syria, and extensively researched the topic of water in the Middle East. Her book on various aspects of water management in the region, *Water Sheikhs and Dam Builders, Stories of People and Water in the Middle East* was published in 2007.

For any questions or enquiries regarding the training, please contact the course trainers:

Francesca de Chatel (print): dechatel@gmail.com
Joshka Wessels (photo, film) joshka@sapiensproductions.com

Please note:

Filmmakers and photographers should submit DVDs/CDs of their work to the NIASD By August 10, 2010 at the following address:

Postal address: NIASD, P.O.Box 36103, Mezzeh
Visiting address: NIASD, East Mezzeh, Al Farabi Street 85, Damascus

Tel: 00963-11-6120515, 61249790, 61249791, 6117922
00963-11-6120515