

ÉCLIPSE FILM PRESENTS
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH SOUND PICTURES AND KRO-NCRV

THE NEXT GUARDIAN

a film by ARUN BHATTARAI and DOROTTYA ZURBÓ

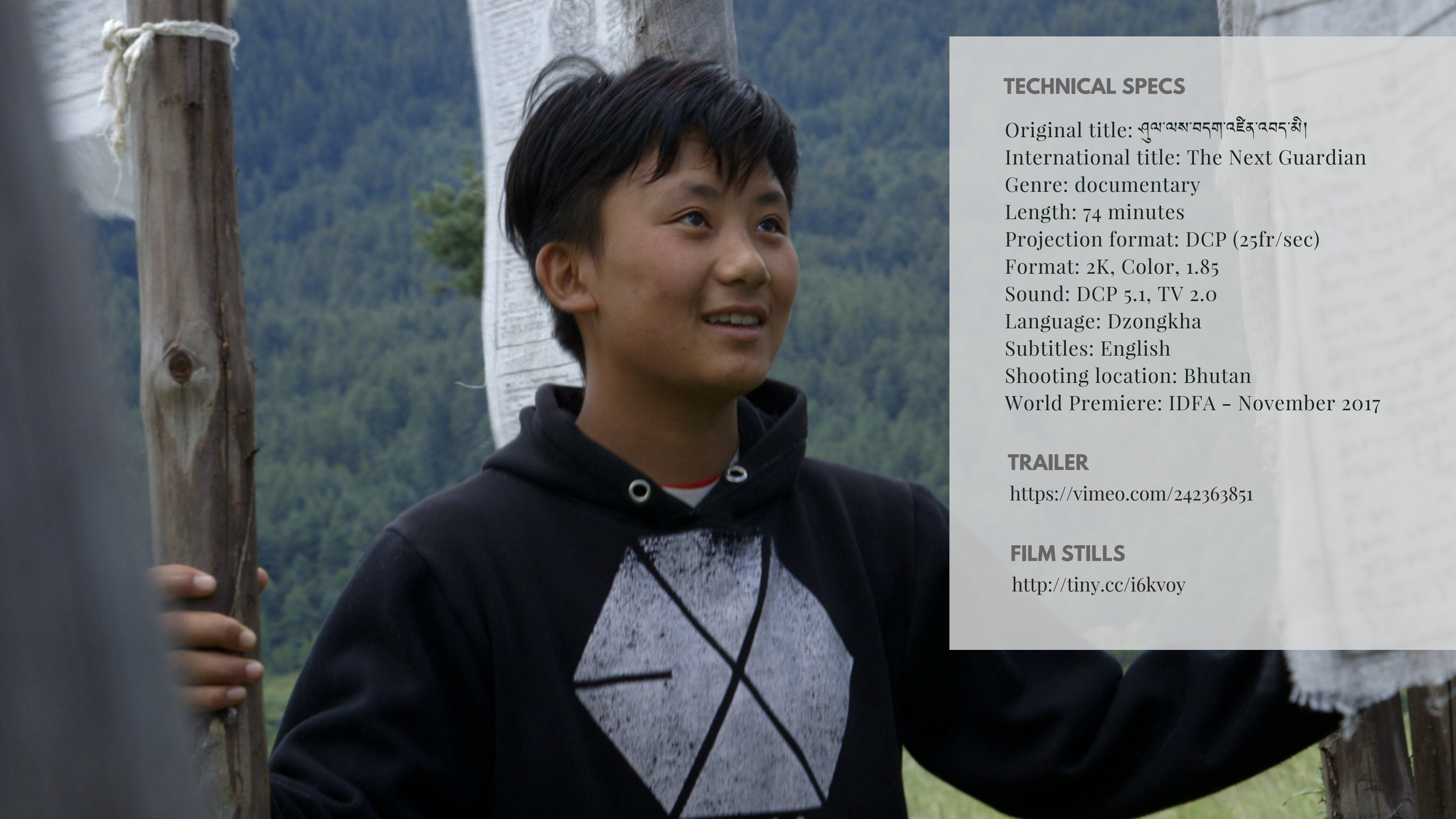




INTERNATIONAL SALES

Syndicado
FILM SALES

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TECHNICAL SPECS

Original title: ལྷལ་ལས་བདག་འཛིན་འབད་མི།

International title: The Next Guardian

Genre: documentary

Length: 74 minutes

Projection format: DCP (25fr/sec)

Format: 2K, Color, 1.85

Sound: DCP 5.1, TV 2.0

Language: Dzongkha

Subtitles: English

Shooting location: Bhutan

World Premiere: IDFA - November 2017

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/242363851>

FILM STILLS

<http://tiny.cc/i6kvoy>



LOGLINE

The contrasting dreams of two generations clash within the microcosm of an ancient Buddhist monastery in Bhutan, when Gyembo an ordinary teenager is chosen as the next guardian of their family monastery by his father.



SHORT SYNOPSIS

In a remote village in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, Gyembo (16) and Tashi (15) aimlessly roam while their father meticulously polishes the ancient relics inside the altar of their family monastery. This family has been taking care of the monastery from one generation to the next for thousands of years. Following tradition, the father wants his son Gyembo to carry on the family heritage but he has other desires just like his transgender sister. The film through bittersweet micro-situations takes us inside a Bhutanese family where the contrasting dreams of two generations are caught in a time clash.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In a remote village in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, Gyembo (16) and his sister Tashi (15) aimlessly roam while their father meticulously polishes the ancient relics inside the altar of their private monastery. This family has been taking care of the temple from one generation to the next for thousands of years. Unlike their father whose life revolves around the monastery, Gyembo and Tashi have grown up with desires that go beyond the confines of this sacred place. While Gyembo wants to become a football player he is also the only confidante for Tashi who identifies herself as a transgender. Following tradition, the father wants Gyembo to carry on the family heritage. He genuinely believes that the only way for Gyembo to accumulate good Karma is to leave school and dedicate his life towards religion. This film explores the irony of two generations with contrasting dreams living alongside each other. The outcome of the generation gap is a bittersweet story of a family caught in a time clash.





CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Bhutan is the last Buddhist Kingdom in the world. Placed in the Himalayas in between India and China it has been living in self-imposed isolation which is why most of its traditional values and culture are still intact. Even television was only introduced to Bhutan in 1999 making it the last country in the globe to receive it. However modern values like democracy, mass media and urbanization are slowly growing within the last decade. Bhutan is mostly known to the outside world for its official concept of measuring progress in happiness (Gross National Happiness). The government runs a policy of excluding foreign influences from the country. That is why Bhutan is still so isolated in our globalized world and rarely represented in the international media. It is really difficult for foreigners to enter Bhutan because of the expensive daily visa cost and also challenging to get permission to film in the country. As Arun is one of the few qualified documentary filmmakers in Bhutan we as a creative team had an exclusive access to bring a local Bhutanese story to the international audience. Our special collaboration: Arun having an inside local view and Dorottya having an outsider European perspective created a complex multi-layered narrative out of this story.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We, Arun Bhattarai (director, Bhutan) and Dorottya Zurbó (co-director, Hungary) are graduates from DocNomads Joint Masters in Lisbon, Budapest and Brussels where we worked on many documentary projects together dealing with the topics of adolescence, migration and multiculturalism. Our different cultural backgrounds helped us approach these subjects with more sensitivity and formal experiments. This multicultural dialogue between us not only strengthened our interest in documentary but helped us understand where we come from and how we can benefit from each other's different perspectives in artistic works. That is why we decided to work on our first feature-length documentary *The Next Guardian* together, creating the basis for a unique international co-production between Hungary and Bhutan.

Right after our graduation we started searching for inspiration for a possible documentary project together in Bhutan. We wanted to find a story that reflects the cross-roads between traditional and Western values and the beginning of modernisation in the country. We thought this contrast that shapes the ethical and moral values and physical landscape of the country is an essential life experience of many Bhutanese youth growing up from the late 80's. Arun is part of one of the first generations who experienced the fast changing world around him.

He grew up in a remote village in the Southern part of Bhutan never seeing a television or automobile until his teenage years. When he first came to Europe to study filmmaking he experienced cultural shock in terms of welfare, rhythm of life and quality of relationships. Returning to Bhutan with this experience made him more sensitive towards the changing values and the generation gap between parents and youth that he experienced under his own skin. He could see this transition from a different perspective which we wanted to express in this story.

During our research, first we got to know Tashi, the youngest daughter of the family who was participating in the selection camp of the newly established National Women's Football Team. We immediately felt connected to Tashi because we noticed her strong desire to express her boyish identity. Then when we visited her family, we instantly got close to them because of their warm and open dynamics. When we heard Tashi's father refer to Tashi as a 'he' we felt that we found something really special. We found a family in a traditional part of the world who is trying to find ways to understand the changing sexuality of their teenager child, with love and acceptance through their Buddhist interpretation of life. However in contrast to this acceptance we found that there is a bigger conflict within the family. It was related to the inheritance of the monastery and the family heritage; this story resonated the country's transitional state and could have a wider focus through the personal journey of two siblings. That is why we decided to put the inheritance of the monastery in the centre of our story that represents the microcosm of a culture on the verge of change. It gave us a possibility to talk about more universal issues like family, generational conflict, father-children relationship and identity in the archaic society of the last Buddhist kingdom.

In our documentaries we like to capture micro-moments with love, humour and irony. The intimate observational camera lets us focus on the small details and contrasts between the generations and the drama can unfold in a more subtle way which is more close to the nature of the Bhutanese people and their microcosm.

We feel our film tells a very local story therefore provides an exclusive access for the foreign audience, a glimpse of contemporary Bhutanese society. Through the personal journey of the siblings it becomes a modern tale of a forgotten part of the globe that you can rarely find in our uniformalised and globalized world any more.



CAST AND CREW

In collaboraton with: Gyembo
Tashi
Tenzin
Phub Lhamo

A film by: Arun Bhattarai & Dorottya Zurbó

Producer: Julianna Ugrin

Co-Producer: Arun Bhattarai

Executive Producer: Laetitia Schoofs

Edited by: Károly Szalai H.S.E.

Director of Photography: Arun Bhattarai

Music by: Ádám Balázs

Sound Design by: Rudolf Várhegyi H.A.S.E.

Production Manager: Zsófia Zurbó



BIOGRAPHIES



Dorottya Zurbó – director

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date of birth: 04.05.1988

Dorottya Zurbó (Budapest, 1988) graduated from the first edition of DocNomads Joint Masters for which she was awarded full Erasmus Mundus scholarship in Lisbon, Budapest and Brussels. She is also an honours graduate in film theory and history from ELTE, Budapest. Currently she is a D.L.A. student at the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest where she is also a lecturer in the field of transmedia and experimental documentary. Her short films have won several awards including the Best

Documentary in the Student Competition at Astra IDFF in Romania, 2014 and have been screened in many festivals (Verzió, One World, Doclisboa and Zagrebdox). Her latest short documentary (Distance) was premiered at the Jihlava IDFF in the Fascinations Experimental Film Competition this year. Her first feature length documentary (*The Next Guardian*; co-director) shot in Bhutan will be screened at IDFA in the First Appearance Competition. She is also working on her second feature lengths documentary (*Lessons in Hungarian*) supported by the Incubator Program of the Hungarian National Film Fund. She was invited to the IDFAcademy Summer School 2015. She was part of Sarajevo Talent Campus 2015. She was awarded with a scholarship for young emerging artists from the Hungarian Academy of Arts for one year in 2015.



Arun Bhattarai – director

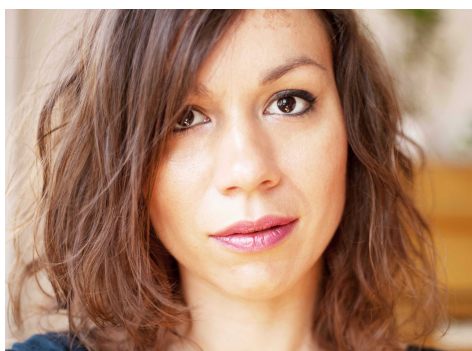
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date of birth: 12.03.185

Arun Bhattarai (Samtse, Bhutan, 1985) graduated from the first edition of Docnomads Joint Masters for which he was awarded a full Erasmus Mundus scholarship in Lisbon, Budapest and Brussels. Prior to this he was working at the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) as a TV director for youth documentaries and TV programs for more than 5 years. His short documentaries have been screened in festivals like Prix Jeunesse Festival, Germany and Alparvima Film Festival, India. He developed his first feature-length documentary (*The Next Guardian*) on several international workshops and

pitching forums (IDFAcademy Summer School, Dare to Dream, TokyoDocs, AIDC). The film was supported by the IDFA Bertha Fund and will be screened at IDFA- First Appearance Competition this year. Currently he is working on his second feature-length documentary (*Kelden*) supported by The Asia Pitch 2016. He has just established his own production company (Sound Pictures) dedicated to creative documentaries. He is one of the few independent documentary filmmakers in Bhutan.



Julianna Ugrin – producer

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Graduated from ELTE University in 2005, she started to work in the film field at Flora Film International. In 2009 she was selected to EURODOC producers workshop. From March 2009, she worked at Havas Films as producer and production manager. In 2011 and in 2016 she co-organized sessions of EURODOC in Budapest. She established Éclipse Film, an independent film production company in 2011. She developed projects at various international workshops and pitching forums like in Trieste – When East Meets West, IDFA Summer School, Ex-Oriente Film or ZagrebDOX. Films produced by her were screened, nominated and awarded at festivals like IDFA, DOK Leipzig, or Sarajevo IFF. Since 2013 she teaches at the Hungarian Film Academy in Documentary MA studies and is a DLA student there. She is part of Emerging Producers 2014 and is an EAVE graduate. She is organizer of DunaDOCK Master Class & Pitching series, and member of EDN.

FILMOGRAPH AND AWARDS

2017 – A Woman Captured – producer – dir.: Bernadett Tuza-Ritter

IDFA – main competition 2017

2017 – The Next Guardian – producer – dir.: Dorottya Zurbó and Arun Bhattarai

IDFA – first appearance competition 2017

2017 – The Letters – short – producer – dir.: Teréz Koncz

2017 – Kincsem – feature – executive producer – dir.: Gábor Herendi

2016 – Loop – feature – executive producer – dir.: Madarász Isti

2015 – Train to Adulthood – documentary 76’ – dir.: Klára Trencsényi
DOK Leipzig 2015 – Golden Dove Award – Next Masters Competition

Zagreb DOX 2016 – Special Jury prize

2015 – Song Brothers – documentary 77’ – dir: Balázs Lévai

Kamera Korrektúra – best documentary award 2015

2015 – tititá – documentary 87’ – dir: Tamás Almási

Sarajevo IFF – Special Jury Prize for competition programme documentary
2015

2015 – Hot Men Cold Dictatorships – documentary 90’ – dir: Mária Takács

2015 – War of Wits – feature – executive producer – dir: Béla Paczolay

2013 – Stream of Love – documentary 70’ – dir.: Ágnes Sós

IDFA – main competition 2013

Trieste IFF – Best documentary award 2014

– – Espansioni award 2014

COMPANY PROFILE

Éclipse Film is a Budapest-based independent film production company, founded by Julianna Ugrin in 2011. The company concentrates on high-quality productions with relevant, particular or artistic content. It develops and produces mainly documentaries, but also author fiction films, commercials and corporate films on an international level. However, our primary focus is on creative documentaries. Since its foundation, Éclipse Film has managed to connect young, talented Hungarian filmmakers with experienced members of the industry. Our films have participated in festivals like IDFA, DOK Leipzig, Sarajevo IFF, to name but a few. The company is also a co-organizer of DunaDOCK, EURODOC and KineDok.

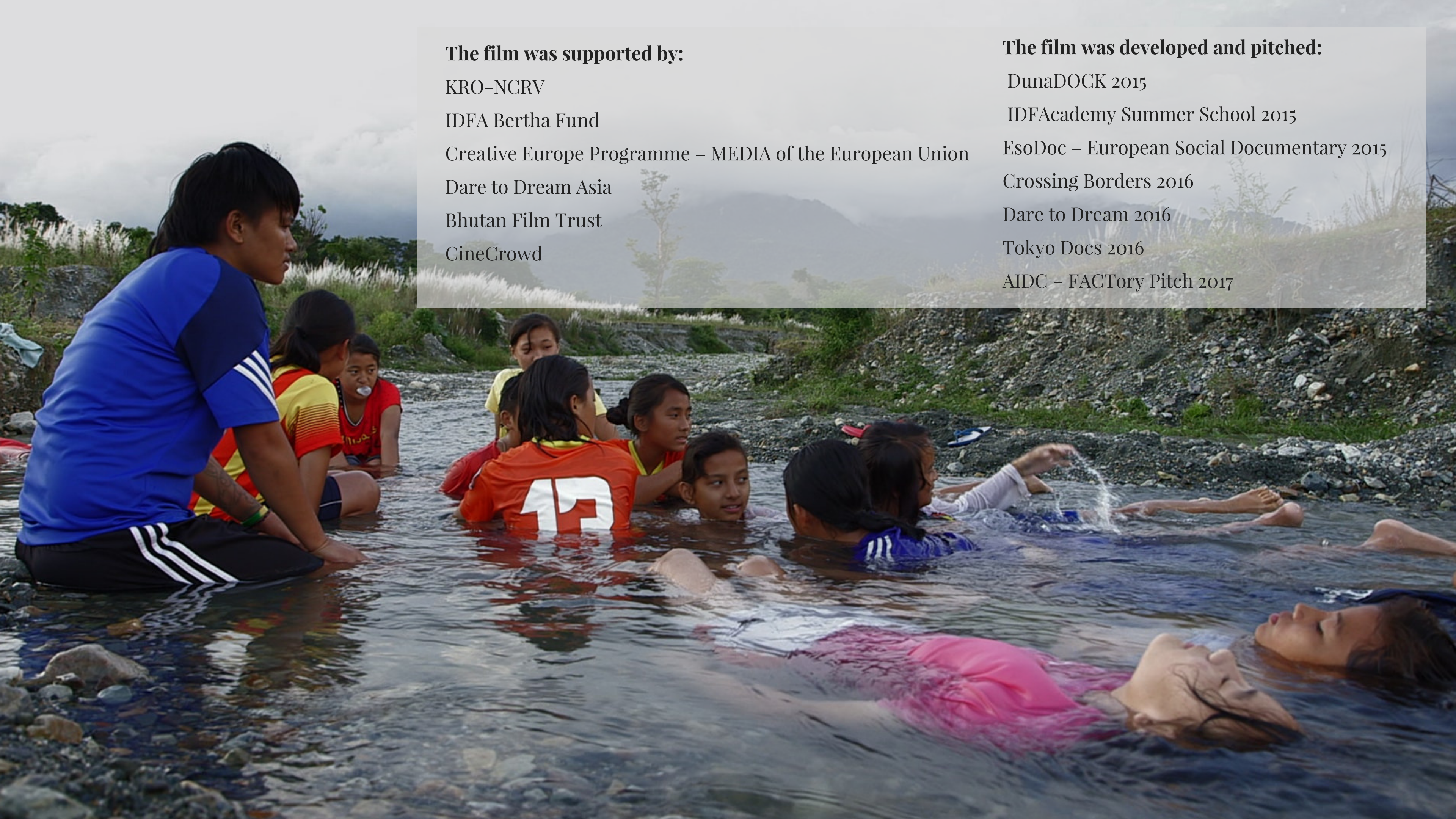
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The film was supported by:

KRO-NCRV

IDFA Bertha Fund

Creative Europe Programme – MEDIA of the European Union

Dare to Dream Asia

Bhutan Film Trust

CineCrowd

The film was developed and pitched:

DunaDOCK 2015

IDFAcademy Summer School 2015

EsoDoc – European Social Documentary 2015

Crossing Borders 2016

Dare to Dream 2016

Tokyo Docs 2016

AIDC – FACTory Pitch 2017

