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A Global Design

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Movement Led by Children

A contest that teaches design-thinking skills to millions of kids across the globe

CLIENT   RIVERSIDE SCHOOL

THE CHALLENGE

Help young students in India become empowered to effect change in the world.

THE OUTCOME

The Design for Change Contest, a competition for 10- to 13-year-olds to create real-world solutions and learn the tenets of design thinking.

IMPACT

countries, including millions of kids who can make a big difference in the world.

Designer turned educator Kiran Bir Sethi wanted to blur the boundaries between school and life to help young students become aware, enabled, and empowered to effect change in the world. In aiming to spread her message to millions of children across India , Sethi tapped IDEO and the d.school at Stanford to help create a design contest for youth that would show them that they could make a difference in their community.

Together with the d.school, IDEO designed a competition for middle school students

centered design approach into a simple process that 10- to 13-year-old kids could follow on their own, the contest included rules, tools, and platforms that would be accessible to children and teachers throughout India regardless of their previous exposure to design.

The team shaped the rules so that students could learn core design-thinking skills such as empathy, brainstorming, collaboration, and reflection through the process of participating in the contest. And together, the group developed a toolkit to walk students through the simple four-step process.

The biggest challenges to the contest were overcoming the lack of infrastructure, language barriers, and a discrepancy in school resources. There was no national database of schools for easy outreach, so Riverside built

toolkit to more than 30,000 schools.

The contest receives about 2,000 entries from groups of youth in India each year. They have been addressing challenges such as illiteracy, pollution, traffic safety, care for the elderly, alcoholism, and the environment.

As of 2015, the Design for Change Contest has scaled far beyond India, and is being run in 30-plus countries, with millions of children participating. Each contest entry shows that kids really can make a big difference in the world.

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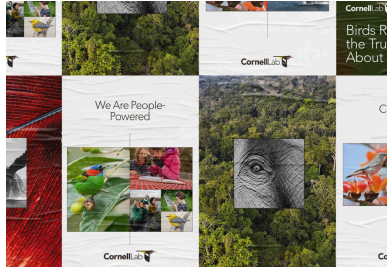
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The Cornell Lab of Ornithology builds collective action to stem biodiversity loss, bringing conservation scientists together under "One Lab."

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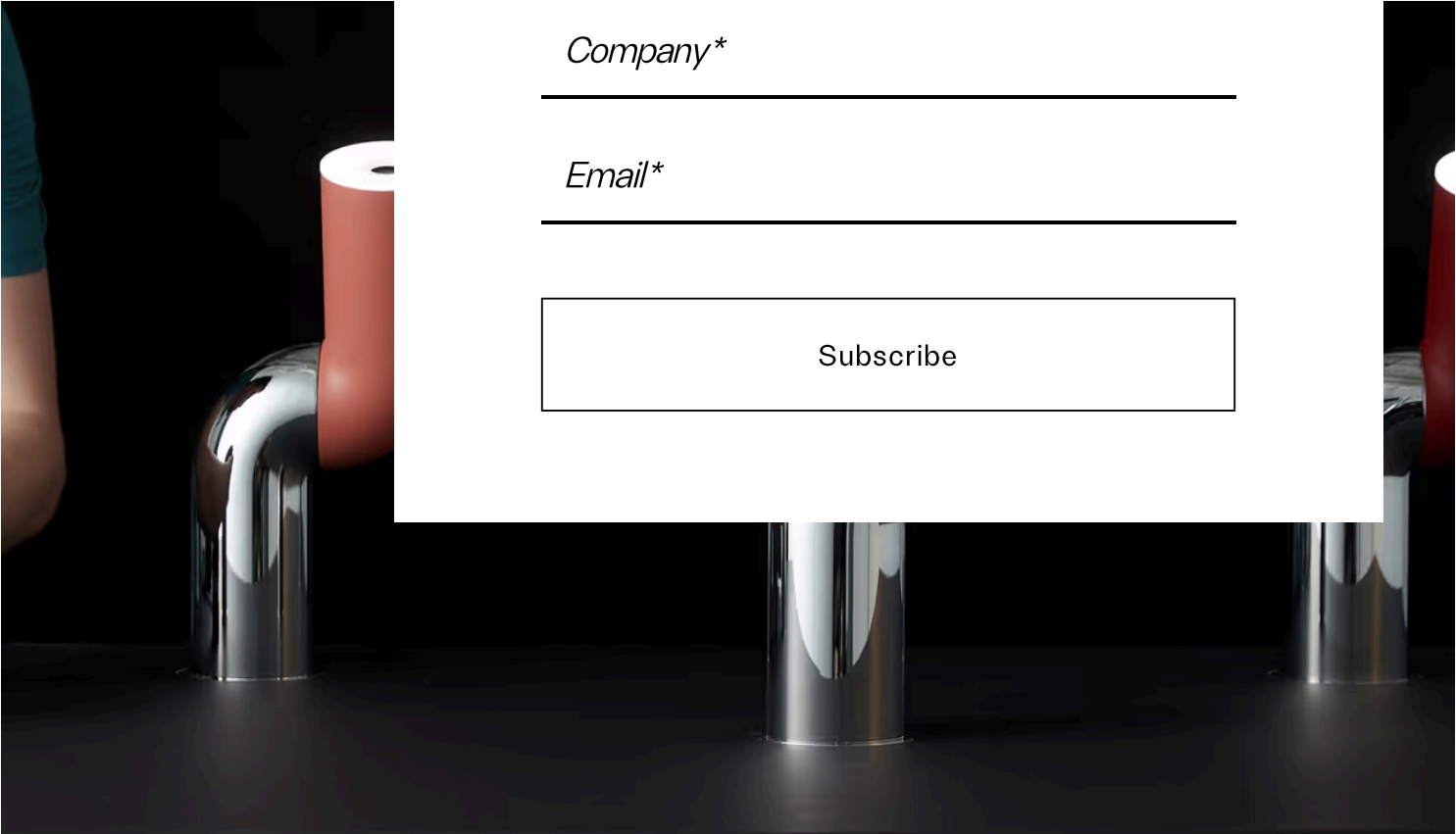

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