

NFDC introduces its first ever Children's Screenwriter's Lab

*The six final scripts are **A Lottery Ticket** by Sagarika Banik, **Kabuliwala** by Soumitra Ranade, **The Adventures of Kaka and Kiki** by Shreyas Govindarajan Thathachari, **The Girl with the Gents Bicycle** - Ravi S. Alok, **The Mahout** - Sharmila Sankar and **The Pink Walls of My School** - Girish Jotwani.*

Mumbai, August 12, 2015: National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) India is pleased to announce the six projects selected for its first ever Children's Screenwriters' Lab.

With an aim to cultivate original Indian stories specifically for children and adolescents, the Children's Screenwriters' Lab will provide participants the opportunity to explore their stories through one-on-one and group sessions with international mentors. The participants will also get a chance to pitch their scripts to producers and investors in a specially designed session during Film Bazaar 2015.

Mieke de Jong, Rasmus Horskjær and Anna Tamara Bos, known internationally for their extensive work in children's films, will mentor the projects.

The selection consists of narratives and perspectives that would engage young audiences.

A Lottery Ticket - Sagarika Banik

Kabuliwala - Soumitra Ranade

The Adventures of Kaka and Kiki - Shreyas Govindarajan Thathachari

The Girl with the Gents Bicycle - Ravi S. Alok

The Mahout - Sharmila Sankar

The Pink Walls of My School - Girish Jotwani

Sagarika Banik has directed several short films and documentaries on various social and environmental concerns. She has also written for Bengali television apart from assisting on feature films like *Red Alert* and *Ring Road Shubha*.

Soumitra Ranade is the writer and director behind children's films like *Jajantaram Mamantaram*, *Goopi Gawaiyaa Bagha Bajaiyaa* and *Alibaba Aur 41 Chor*. He has also

written books for children and directed documentaries like *Khoob Asti Afghanistan* (Are You Alright Afghanistan?). Ranade has represented Indian animation at international film festivals and has been on the pre-selection committee for the International Children's Film Festival, India.

Shreyas Govindarajan Thathachari is a young writer who has worked in feature films, television serials, short films, and commercials. Apart from developing his own scripts, he has worked as an assistant director and script supervisor in projects like the Walt Disney production, *Million Dollar Arm*. *The Adventures of Kaka and Kiki* would be his debut feature as a screenwriter.

Ravi S Alok is a writer and director whose short films, *The Ticket* and *Khuli Khidki* have shown at film festivals in India and abroad. As a writer, Alok has collaborated with Sudhir Mishra and is writing his next feature film.

Sharmila Shankar is a writer and producer who was trained at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune and Femis, Paris. She has executed *Divya* a Malay feature film and *Kiss Kis Ko*, a Hindi film shot in Bali, Indonesia. Apart from heading an independent media company, Sankar has also developed and published eight books on Indian wildlife.

Girish Jotwani holds a degree in Editing from Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. He has written, directed and edited several short films.

Nina Lath Gupta, the MD of NFDC India who introduced Children Screenwriters' Lab this year says, "For a country where a very substantial percentage of our population are children, we have a huge paucity of sufficient content for kids in the feature film space. Given NFDC's focus on initiating development work in areas where there is a perceived vacuum, it was only natural for the institution to take up the issue of developing production worthy content for children's films."