

Wednesday, February 13th  
2013 4 - 5 PM

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## Building with Earthbags for Education and Community Development in Nepal

By Travis Hughbanks (Edge of Seven)

### ABSTRACT

Denver-based architect Travis Hughbanks spent nine months living in rural villages in Nepal's Everest Region, where he oversaw the construction of the first two schools to be built in the region with the earthquake-resistant earthbag construction method. The schools were sponsored and funded by Edge of Seven, a Denver-based non-profit that creates access to education, health services, and economic opportunities for girls and women in the developing world.

Both villages targeted through this initiative shared the problem of lacking adequate educational resources for the children in the region and being located in a highly seismic region. The goal of these projects was to create structurally-sound school buildings using a simple and cost-effective building method so that children could receive an education in a safe and healthy environment. The project also aimed to educate local community members and laborers on how to implement the earthbag construction method.

### ABOUT TRAVIS

Travis Hughbanks, LEED, has over 10 years of professional experience working with commercial, institutional, and residential architecture firms in Boston, Austin, and Denver. He was a key member of the project teams on the AIA COTE award-winning Garthwaite Center for Arts and Science in Massachusetts, the Texas Society of Architects Design award-winning I-35 Makeover in Austin, Texas, and the 2011 AIA New England Design award-winning Nasami Farms Native Plant Center in Massachusetts. In 2010, Travis traveled to Nepal to design and oversee construction of Edge of Seven's first school building project. In 2011, he returned to help Edge of Seven implement the earthbag construction method on two school buildings in the Everest Region. Travis is currently an Edge of Seven board member and holds a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Idaho's School of Architecture.

