

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy to Facilitate a Workshop Session on linkages between gendered online hate speech, disinformation, and its impact on social cohesion

1. Organization background

Centre for Equality and Justice (CEJ) is a women's organization based in Colombo, working primarily with war-affected women from the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities and the rights of those affected by political violence and other forms of civil unrest. CEJ also works on issues of democracy, rule of law, and social inclusion and brings a gender perspective into all its work. CEJ engages with policymakers, and government officers and strengthens grassroots-level women's capacities to claim their rights. CEJ also works closely with youth across Sri Lanka on key areas such as preventing violent extremism and reconciliation

2. Project background

During the past decade, with the advancement of technology and the increased popularity of social media networks, the number of users in the digital space has increased. With such increased accessibility, trends in increased hate speech narratives, disinformation and misinformation campaigns have been identified in South Asia and Sri Lanka particularly. In Sri Lanka, transitioning from the 3-decade-long conflict, the digital space has formed narratives that favour the majority and feed on the existing ethno-religious divide. Past violence has displayed instances where online violence instigated and amplified offline violence on marginalised individuals, including women human rights defenders and activists. These misinformation campaigns have benefitted past governments to come to power by spreading hatred online to create narratives that persecute marginalised groups and ethnic minorities and stultify efforts on building social cohesion.

Social media influencers play an important role in this and have grown in prominence over the past decade to become an important part of the information and disinformation network. They serve as an effective alternative to mainstream media channels and information sources, and can often influence the behaviour of their large and loyal follower bases. This influencing power on audience behaviour makes

influencers prime sources of information as well as disinformation in the modern digital space. Strongly loyal followers are easily persuaded to act and think in ways advertised or conveyed by the influencers,

giving influencers considerable power to effect change in wider society, specifically their key follower demographics. Due to their social status and influencing power, influencers are also prime targets, as well as proponents of digital hate speech. This hate speech could also turn into quantifiable actions within society making it crucial that influencers actively promote a safe and ethical digital space. There is a critical need to provide influencers with the requisite knowledge and tools to engage in the digital space safely and also to spread awareness on socially relevant issues in a manner that is conducive and promotes reconciliation and social cohesion.

To address these issues, CEJ is implementing a project **“Empowering Women Leaders Combating hate speech and disinformation - Strengthening digital literacy and effective digital response”** to capacitate 25 young women influencers on the linkages between gendered online hate speech, disinformation, and its impact on social cohesion, and effective digital responses to combat the same.

3. Scope of Work

CEJ seeks the services of a Consultant to facilitate a 2 hour workshop session for 25 selected women influencers on the linkages between gendered online hate speech, disinformation, and its impact on social cohesion, and/or effective digital responses to combat the same.

The objectives of the session will be;

- To make influencers aware of the dangers of irresponsible posting and sharing of inaccurate data.
- To educate influencers on how any irresponsible posting and association on their part, combined with their large follower base and network, could have the effect of encouraging intolerance and division within the wider society.
- To make influencers aware of the dangers of collaborating/associating with socially contentious or problematic celebrities/public figures/brands and companies.

4. Expected Deliverables

- Deliverable 01: Attend online meeting(s) with CEJ when needed.
- Deliverable 02: Develop a session plan and session content and submit to CEJ for feedback and approval by **TBD**.
- Deliverable 03: Incorporate CEJ feedback and conduct the session with women influencers by **TBD**.
- Deliverable 04: Submit a brief session observations reports by **TBD**.

5. Duration

The proposed time period of the consultancy will be from **late November 2022 to early December 2022**.

6. Consultancy Fee

The Consultant is required to quote an all-inclusive fee for the assignment. The amount will be agreed upon between CEJ and the Consultant, as per the Financial Guidelines of CEJ.

- The payment will be made upon the submission and approval of deliverables 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- The payment will be made within ten working days from the date of approval of deliverables.

The Consultant will work in collaboration with CEJ staff and report to the Executive Director.

*Only short-listed candidates will be notified. Interested candidates may send a resume to suhanya.cej@gmail.com with names and contact details of two referees with the email subject line **UP5 Workshop Session Facilitator CV by 15th November 2022**.*