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May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026


## PROPOSAL FOR THE GLOBAL PROGRAMS CONNECT CONSULTANCY


**Funding without security is exposure. Visibility without protection is violence. C4AC was built on the belief that safe communications is the foundation of any movement that wants to survive. We bring that belief, and the practice behind it, to this consultancy.**


Prepared by  
**Comms for a Cause**

Prepared for  
**Equality Fund**

 +91 7387281218

 @commsforacause

 team@commsforacause.org

 www.commsforacause.org



# APPROACH TO THE ASSIGNMENT

We are living through a coordinated, globally funded assault on trans rights. From legislative chambers in the United States to judicial decisions in the United Kingdom, from the halls of the United Nations to street-level violence in South and Southeast Asia, trans people are facing a moment of acute and escalating threat. This is not a scattered backlash. It is an organized political project.

Right-wing movements across the world have made the erasure of trans identities a central pillar of their ideological agenda. Anti-gender campaigns, funded by transnational conservative networks, have successfully pushed gender-critical framings into mainstream feminist and human rights spaces, creating rifts within movements that were once unified. Trans rights, which were never fully secured, are now being actively dismantled. Legal protections are being repealed. Healthcare access is being criminalized. Public life is being made hostile, dangerous, and in many contexts, deadly.

In Asia, this global shift intersects with pre-existing structures of state repression, religious conservatism, caste-based discrimination, and colonial legal legacies that have long criminalized trans and gender-nonconforming people. The narrowing of political space for trans rights in the region is not new. But the current moment represents a qualitative escalation: a convergence of global anti-gender politics with local authoritarian consolidation that is shrinking the room for trans movements to organize, connect, and survive.

Against this backdrop, the question of how feminist funders resource trans-led movements is not a programmatic consideration. It is an urgent political one. Movements that are inadequately resourced in this moment will not simply grow more slowly. They will collapse. And with them will collapse years of organizing, coalition-building, institutional memory, and hard-won political ground that cannot be easily rebuilt.

This is why C4AC is bringing our full organizational capacity to this consultancy. We are not politically neutral observers of this crisis. We are a trans-led organization, rooted in the same communities and facing the same threats. We believe the Equality Fund's Connect stream has a historic opportunity to resource trans-led collective action in Asia in a way that takes seriously both the urgency of the political moment and the structural conditions that have kept these movements invisible to funders. We are here to help design that.



## ABOUT US

**Our team brings together this frontline knowledge with deep philanthropic expertise: Together, we offer the Equality Fund a team that is simultaneously movement-rooted, philanthropy-literate, and security-informed. Hafsa Bhat will serve as consultancy coordinator, ensuring coherence across workstreams and serving as the primary point of contact with the Equality Fund throughout the engagement.**

- Suman Saurav brings over a decade of strategic communications and feminist advocacy, with a track record of leading global campaigns and building cross-movement alliances from within trans-led and queer movement ecosystems.
- Kabir Patil brings eight-plus years of digital security and web infrastructure expertise, designing privacy-first, trauma-aware systems specifically for at-risk communities including trans and queer organizations across Asia.
- Hafsa Bhat brings over a decade of human rights research, advocacy, and programme implementation across gender, SRHR, disability rights, and Islam and human rights, with particular expertise in designing safe, empathetic, and creative spaces for vulnerable communities.
- Anuja Gopalan brings seven years of feminist grantmaking at Open Society Foundations, with deep expertise in South Asia programming, anti-discrimination portfolios, and resourcing movements under politically restrictive conditions.



**Suman Saurav**  
Co-Founder, C4AC



**Kabir Patil**  
Co-Founder, C4AC



**Hafsa Bhat**  
Head of Programmes and  
Advocacy, C4AC



**Anuja Gopalan**  
Consultant, C4AC

## REFERENCES

**Joy Chia, Executive Director, Astraea Foundation** [jchia@astraeafoundation.org](mailto:jchia@astraeafoundation.org)

**Anuja Gopalan**  
Consultant, C4AC



# APPROACH TO THE ASSIGNMENT

## The Problem We Are Starting From

Across Asia, trans-led feminist movements are not absent from the landscape of collective action. They are structurally pushed out of it. Not because they lack power, strategy, or political clarity, but because the infrastructure that would make them safely visible does not yet exist at scale.

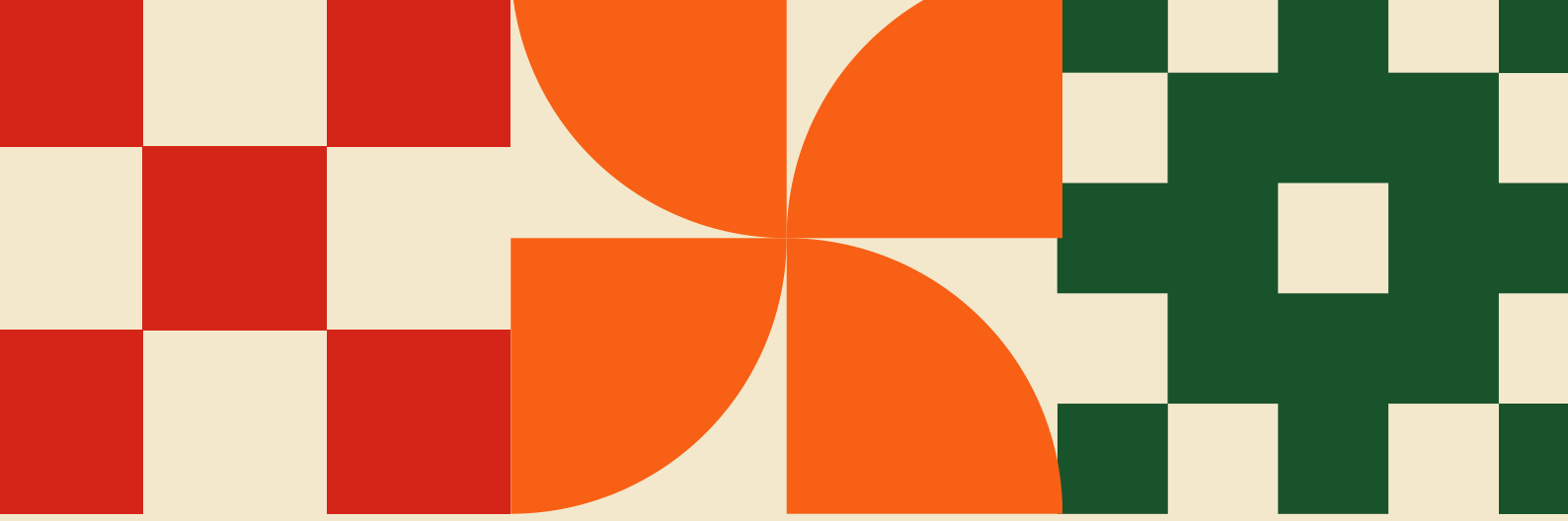
The Connect stream's ambition, to weave connections across adjacent movements and bridge to non-traditional allies, runs directly into a wall that funders rarely name: visibility, for many movements in Asia, is not an asset. It is a threat.

In countries across the region, from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Myanmar, trans activists, queer organizers, and intersectional feminist movements face state surveillance, coordinated disinformation, digital repression, doxing, and legal criminalization. For these movements, being seen by a funder can simultaneously mean being seen by the state. The result is a structural trap:

- Movements stay invisible to survive.
- Invisibility cuts them off from funding.
- Underfunding means no resources for secure communications infrastructure.
- Without secure infrastructure, coalition-building across movements becomes an active security risk.
- Movements fragment. Coalitions collapse. And the connective tissue the Connect stream seeks to build never forms.

This is not a gap in movement will or capacity. It is a gap in funder imagination, and in the infrastructure that funders have been willing to resource.

C4AC exists precisely at this intersection. We were built on one foundational belief: that communications without security is not safe communications, and that unsafe communications kills movements.

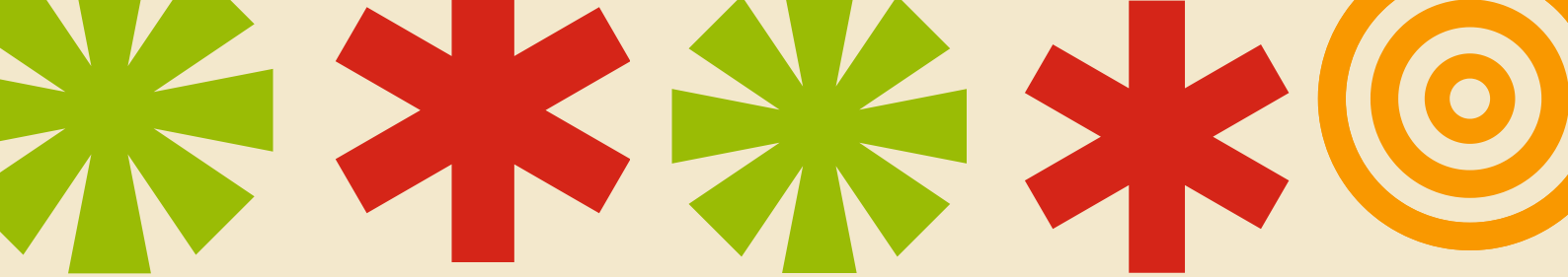


# OUR HYPOTHESIS FOR THE CONNECT STREAM

We propose that the evolution of the Connect stream must be grounded in the following working hypothesis:

"Cross-movement collective action in Asia will not be achieved through convenings and coalition grants alone. It requires a prior investment in the safety infrastructure that makes it possible for movements to find each other, trust each other, and organize together without putting each other at risk."

This reframes the Connect stream's core question from 'how do we fund coalitions?' to 'what conditions need to exist before coalitions can safely form?' and opens the door to a new generation of grantmaking that treats digital security and narrative infrastructure as foundational movement investments, not add-ons.



# OUR PROPOSED APPROACH

**We propose a three-phase consultancy over 10 to 12 weeks, structured around the Equality Fund's research questions and deliverables.**

## **Phase 1: Research Design and Landscape Mapping (Weeks 1 to 3)**

We will develop a feminist, security-informed research plan that maps the cross-movement landscape in Asia with particular attention to trans-led and queer organizations, and their existing and potential relationships with feminist, labor, disability, climate, and caste justice movements.

Our research methodology will include:

- Desk research on historical and contemporary cross-movement efforts in Asia, with case studies drawn from labor-feminist, caste-queer, and climate-gender intersections.
- A typology of collective structures, including coalitions, networks, consortia, and informal alliances, assessed through a security and sustainability lens.
- Key informant interviews with movement actors, regional feminist funds, and funders supporting collective action, drawing on C4AC's existing networks and Anuja's OSF connections.
- A specific focus on the role of digital security infrastructure, or its absence, as a factor in the success or failure of cross-movement efforts.

## **Phase 2: Deep Consultation and Case Study Development (Weeks 4 to 8)**

Drawing on our grassroots networks and Anuja's philanthropic relationships, we will conduct in-depth consultations with movement actors and funders across Asia and globally. This phase will produce:

- Case studies of cross-movement collective action in Asia, with particular focus on what made them work or fail, and the role of communications and digital security infrastructure.
- A funder landscape analysis identifying who is currently supporting collective action across movements, how they approach their role, and what C4AC and the Equality Fund can learn from and build on.
- Identification of the actors, including trans-led and queer organizations currently too exposed to be visible, who could play a leading role in cross-movement mobilizing with adequate and secure resourcing.



### Phase 3: Recommendations and Connect Stream Design (Weeks 9 to 12)

The final phase will synthesize our research and consultation into a living recommendations document that provides the Equality Fund with a concrete roadmap for the evolution of the Connect stream. This will include:

- Recommendations for how Connect can integrate digital security and communications infrastructure as eligibility and assessment criteria, ensuring that grantmaking design does not inadvertently expose at-risk applicants.
- A framework for an open call that is genuinely accessible to trans-led, queer, and other structurally invisible movements in Asia, including recommendations on safe application processes, anonymized nominations, and security-aware due diligence.
- Suggested partnership typologies and funding durations aligned to the different stages of cross-movement coalition formation.
- A measurement framework for the Connect stream that captures not just outputs and reach, but the depth, safety, and sustainability of collective action over time.
- Reflection and learning touchpoints built into the roadmap to enable the Equality Fund to adapt the Connect stream over its 5-year horizon.

We treat recommendations as collaborative products: the process of stress-testing them with the team is as important as the final text. The recommendations will be specific, operationalizable, and honest about trade-offs. We are not interested in producing a document that is easy to shelve, we will name the tensions: between scale and intimacy, between formalized coalitions and fluid alliances, between the Equality Fund's position as a funder and its aspiration to be a movement partner because we believe that naming them is what allows for honest strategic navigation.

## WHY THIS APPROACH IS DIFFERENT

Most consultancies approach this kind of work from the outside: reviewing literature, interviewing stakeholders, synthesizing findings. We do that too. But we also bring something most consultancies cannot offer: we are already inside the networks the Connect stream is trying to reach.

C4AC's participatory nomination model, through which we identify grassroots organizations for our accompaniment cohorts, means we have trusted, long-term relationships with trans-led and queer movements across Asia that have never appeared in a funder database, precisely because visibility is a threat to them. These are the movements the Connect stream's evolution needs to center. And we are the consultancy that can bring their perspectives into this process safely, ethically, and without exposing them.

Our approach is not extractive. It is accompaniment-informed. Every interview, focus group, and consultation we conduct will be designed according to feminist information-gathering principles, trauma-aware facilitation, and digital security best practices, including secure communications channels, informed consent processes, and where necessary, anonymization protocols.

# SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

C4AC meets every dimension of the Equality Fund's desired experience for this consultancy:

- Extensive knowledge of collective action and cross-movement collaboration: C4AC's entire model is built on facilitating connections across feminist, queer, trans, Dalit, disabled, and Indigenous movements. Our FHR3 accompaniment includes a dedicated Linking, Learning and Lobbying pillar that brings cohort organizations into global and regional convenings.
- Broad philanthropic network: Anuja Gopalan's seven years at OSF and CRD, spanning South Asia programming, anti-discrimination grantmaking, and learning and impact design, gives the team direct access to a broad network of funders supporting collective action globally.
- Understanding of philanthropic program design and open calls: Anuja has designed multi-year program strategies, theories of change, and grantmaking tools for one of the world's most recognized foundations. Hafsa brings programme implementation expertise across human rights, SRHR, and disability rights portfolios.
- Knowledge of feminist organizations in Asia: C4AC is based in India and works extensively across South and Southeast Asia, with direct relationships with trans-led and queer grassroots organizations across the region.
- Research, interview, and facilitation skills: The team brings strong research, writing, and facilitation backgrounds. Hafsa has designed and delivered workshops and training programmes for vulnerable communities. Anuja has led learning-focused consultations across OSF's grantee base.
- Feminist modalities for information gathering: C4AC's entire practice is rooted in feminist, trauma-informed, and participatory methodologies. We do not extract, we co-create.
- Availability: The full team is available to begin this consultancy in May 2026 and complete it within the 2 to 3 month window.

## MISSION ALIGNMENT

C4AC is a trans-led organization. Our leadership, including our Co-Founders, identify as trans, non-binary, Dalit, queer, and neurodivergent. Our entire organizational existence is a response to the structural exclusion of marginalized communities from funding, visibility, and safety.

We practice what the Equality Fund's voluntary disclosure section asks about:

- Leadership: Our Co-Founders and senior team are trans, non-binary, Dalit, queer, disabled, and neurodivergent.
- Equal pay and flexible work: We operate on feminist organizational principles including transparent pay and flexible, care-centered working arrangements.
- External impact: Through our pro bono accompaniment work, we directly resource trans-led and queer grassroots organizations who are excluded from traditional funding pipelines.
- Advocacy: We actively advocate for communications and digital security to be recognized as core movement infrastructure in philanthropic spaces.

We do not advance gender equality as a strategic objective. We live it as an organizational reality.



# COMMS FOR A CAUSE - C4AC

Financial Proposal Equality Fund Global Programs Connect Consultancy

Duration: May July 2026 (3 months)

contact: hafsa@commsforacause.org

| Deliverable / Activity  | Team          | Days | Day Rate (CAD) | Total (CAD)       | Notes                 |
|---|---------------|------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>PHASE 1 Research Design and Landscape Mapping (Weeks 1-3)</b>        |               |      |                |                   |                       |
| Security-informed feminist research plan and methodology                | Hafsa + Anuja | 8    | CAD 350 / 500  | <b>CAD 3,400</b>  | Deliverable 1         |
| Cross-movement landscape mapping: Asia trans and queer orgs             | Hafsa + Suman | 10   | CAD 350        | <b>CAD 3,500</b>  | Desk research         |
| Typology of collective structures through a security lens               | Anuja + Hafsa | 6    | CAD 500 / 350  | <b>CAD 2,550</b>  | Deliverable 2         |
| Key informant interview design and interviewee list                     | Hafsa + Anuja | 6    | CAD 350 / 500  | <b>CAD 2,550</b>  | Deliverable 1         |
| Digital threat landscape: Asia trans movement security risks            | Kabir + Xai   | 6    | CAD 275        | <b>CAD 1,650</b>  | Security brief        |
| <b>PHASE 2 Deep Consultation and Case Study Development (Weeks 4-8)</b> |               |      |                |                   |                       |
| Key informant interviews: movement actors and funders                   | Hafsa + Anuja | 14   | CAD 350 / 500  | <b>CAD 5,950</b>  | Asia and global       |
| Case studies: cross-movement collective action in Asia                  | Hafsa + Suman | 12   | CAD 350        | <b>CAD 4,200</b>  | Deliverable 3         |
| Funder landscape analysis and consultations                             | Anuja         | 10   | CAD 500        | <b>CAD 5,000</b>  | Deliverable 4         |
| Secure consultation infrastructure and anonymisation protocols          | Kabir + Xai   | 8    | CAD 275        | <b>CAD 2,200</b>  | Security design       |
| <b>PHASE 3 Recommendations and Connect Stream Design (Weeks 9-12)</b>   |               |      |                |                   |                       |
| Recommendations: Connect stream evolution and open call design          | Hafsa + Anuja | 12   | CAD 350 / 500  | <b>CAD 5,100</b>  | Deliverable 5         |
| Security-informed grantmaking framework and eligibility criteria        | Kabir + Hafsa | 8    | CAD 275 / 350  | <b>CAD 2,500</b>  | Core output           |
| Measurement and learning framework for Connect stream                   | Anuja + Hafsa | 8    | CAD 500 / 350  | <b>CAD 3,400</b>  | Deliverable 5         |
| Final synthesis, editing and quality assurance                          | Hafsa + Anuja | 6    | CAD 350 / 500  | <b>CAD 2,550</b>  | Before handover       |
| <b>PHASE 4 Coordination and Project Management</b>                      |               |      |                |                   |                       |
| Consultancy coordination and Equality Fund liaison                      | Hafsa         | 10   | CAD 350        | <b>CAD 3,500</b>  | Ongoing 3 months      |
| Stakeholder engagement and feedback incorporation                       | Hafsa + Anuja | 8    | CAD 350 / 500  | <b>CAD 3,400</b>  | Up to 2 rounds        |
| Internal team coordination and workstream management                    | Suman         | 8    | CAD 350        | <b>CAD 2,800</b>  | Ongoing               |
| <b>SUBTOTAL Consultant Fees</b>   |               |      |                | <b>CAD 54,250</b> |                       |
| <b>ADDITIONAL COSTS</b>   |               |      |                |                   |                       |
| Secure tools, encrypted platforms, and transcription services           |               |      |                | <b>CAD 800</b>    | One-time project cost |
| Contingency (5%)  |               |      |                | <b>CAD 2,712</b>  | Buffer for overruns   |
| <b>TOTAL PROJECT FEE</b>  |               |      |                | <b>CAD 57,762</b> |                       |

| <b>PAYMENT SCHEDULE</b>                                      |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Milestone 1 Contract signing                                 | <b>30%</b> | May 2026  |
| Milestone 2 Research plan and landscape mapping approved     | <b>30%</b> | June 2026 |
| Milestone 3 Draft recommendations delivered                  | <b>25%</b> | July 2026 |
| Milestone 4 Final report and Connect stream design submitted | <b>15%</b> | July 2026 |