

Likho

At the end of the 1980s when India's first HIV/AIDS cases started being reported in the mainstream media, it became clear that gay men and "men-having-sex-with-men (MSM) were one of the high "risk" groups for HIV/AIDS. *Bombay Dost* was founded in the midst of this maelstrom in 1990 as India's first registered LGBTQ magazine. Twenty-five years on, the challenge was to navigate the age of new media that can highlight issues of sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

Likho ('Write' in Hindi language), a project supported by Global Fund MSA grant, was conceptualised in 2015 by The Humsafar Trust and *Bombay Dost*. The project aims to raise a new generation of citizen community journalists to write on issues related to HIV and Sexuality. Developing a grassroots-based media team is important to combat stigma associated with Sexuality and HIV as well as wrong representations in mainstream media. The scope of the project has over the last few years widened to reach out to mainstream media, sensitise them and acknowledge media persons who write on issues related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and HIV.

Annually, Likho conducts the following programs

Likho Citizen Journalism Workshop

The Citizen Journalist Project under Likho, was initiated in 2015 with an open call for application from candidates across India. Around 20 aspiring writers were chosen in the first year and their capacities built in four areas: Journalistic Writing, Communication, Advocacy and Research, with equal emphasis on writing with sensitivity. Likho Citizen Journalism Workshops are held once a year and trains a batch of 20 aspiring citizen journalists who want to write on issues concerning the LGBTQ community. The writers have produced articles on Sexuality and HIV for *Bombay Dost*. Some have even started writing for mainstream publications and online media on issues relating to sexuality and HIV. The writers who have undergone these workshops have also held sensitisation sessions for mainstream media.

Likho Awards For Excellence In Media

The Likho Awards For Excellence in Media was instituted by *Bombay Dost* and The Humsafar Trust in 2016, to recognise exemplary works by the media in India that have a fair and inclusive representation of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community . The awards honour the best in Print, Online and Television media, Advertising, Arts, Literature and Films. The 'Likho Media Awards' signify the importance of the various arms of media, the role it plays in changing attitudes and its responsibility in ensuring an equal society. The award carries a plaque and a cash prize of Rs 5,000. The aim is to honour and acknowledge the contribution of journalists and the media who work towards a proper representation of the LGBTQ community and eschew stereotypes.

Likho Indian LGBTQ Media Summit

The first Likho Indian LGBTQ Media Summit was held in November 2016. The summit aims to bring together media professionals – LGBTQ and Allies – in a national network aimed at promoting a fair and inclusive portrayal of LGBTQ communities in the media.

Likho Sensitisation Workshops for Media persons

The Likho workshops are conducted for reporters, sub editors and other media persons interested in writing on LGBTQ issues. The workshop acquaints the writers with the basics of 'Sex, Sexuality and Gender' and the legal framework of LGBTQ rights in India.

For more queries, write to likho.hst@gmail.com