

CONNECT PROJECT AND RESOURCE CENTER

The CONNECT project aims to build capacities network of community based organizations on conducting advocacy, program management and strengthening communication with stakeholders and initiated by INFOSEM in terms of training of its members. CONNECT project supports 25 CBO partners, working closely to achieve the goal related to Advocacy, Capacity building and Research studies related to LGBT issues within the country and bring the change in society. To achieve the goal of the organisation we always need to find the resources around us to utilize it in a better way and sometimes we also face the lack of resources. Keeping this in mind CONNECT project is implementing the Skill building and Program Management workshop for the partners.

The CONNECT Resource Center is one stop platform to showcase the work of the LGBTQ communities in India. This website (under development) will look at various thematic areas of the project and disseminate them through the website. The CONNECT Resource Center will reach out to all INFOSEM members and collate information about their work and efforts through health programs, advocacy for mainstreaming LGBTQ rights, research that generates evidence of stigma and discrimination of the communities. It will also high light the capacity building initiatives in India that strengthen community systems. It will detail a list of NACO approved ICTCs in the country for HIV testing and ART centers for access to treatment by people living with HIV, link to LGBTQ films available on You Tube or other social media platform, a calendar to announce Key LGBTQ events in the country, list of community based organizations and community initiatives, LGBTQ literature and various different efforts being made in the country to repeal Section 377 that criminalizes same sex behaviours and progress on implementation of the TG bill will be integral to the CONNECT Resource Center. It will be a window for global audiences to access LGBTQ related information in India and a platform for Indian LGBTQ communities to share information and network.

The CONNECT project works on following pillars;

Capacity Building

The project aim to build capacities of community based organizations on conducting advocacy, program management and strengthening communication with stakeholders and initiated by INFOSEM in terms of training of its members. These avenues discussed at national, state and local levels to create a contiguous channel of advocacy. Training of the partners in areas of sensitization and advocacy with police, judiciary and health officials is essential. It would also be essential to upscale the efforts with parliamentarians and other elected representatives and start the dialogue on issues of sex, gender sexuality and health. The project involve the exposure of the partners to National and International conferences and workshops to not only build their networks but to also present their work, experience a range of innovative practices, and finally incorporate their learning in their work. The dissemination of the data and reports generated from desk review of national LGBT data by

the research team will help in building awareness among the network members as well as fine tune their advocacy strategy to produce quality outcomes.

Evidence Gathering

The INFOSEM secretariat based in New Delhi coordinates advocacy activities to inform policy makers, various stakeholders and influence change. A large part initiating any advocacy activities will only be determined by having factual information of the situation pertaining to police, judiciary and politicians at local, state and national levels. This information would need to be aggregated, assimilated and analysed at these various levels to come up with local, state level and national strategies. This would be done by organizing annual meetings, consultations, conferences and workshops of sexual minority community through the various partner organisations. The information would be further bolstered by undertaking desk-reviews, conducting a literature review/assessment of all research on sexual minority issues that exists in the country. Documentation of the oral history of sexual minorities MSM and TG living with HIV in the country will also be undertaken to complement the consultations.

Communications

The CONNECT project strengthening the INFOSEM website, set up an E- Resource Centre. The INFOSEM secretariat will be in charge of regular updating of website, blogs and other e-pages of www.infosem.org by coordination with all the members and thereby the member organisations. The INFOSEM secretariat will create visibility of the Network at regional and national level through strengthening community participation and creating online database of policy documents, reports, papers, and advocacy tools to increase accessibility of information to a wider audience. The advocacy initiatives include setting up of LOK PANCHAYATS (Peoples forum) and invite various stakeholders to share community concerns and disseminate findings. These findings could further help the capacity building initiative. They will also be disseminated through online communication as well as in conferences and consultations. The Secretariat will aim at identifying community leaders in 18 INFOSEM states and arrange monthly meetings with Parliamentary forums to address their concerns and give updates to the secretariat. This will help in setting a dialogue with politicians to advocate for change.

Networking

CONNECT Project's presence in the capital and proximity to policy makers is crucial to INFOSEM. The Secretariat coordinates with all the member organizations in organizing annual meetings, consultations, conferences and workshops involving key stakeholders and policy makers. The networks focus is on registration and increasing the membership of the network with LGBT organisations.