



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

FROM THE EIGHT NORTH EASTERN STATES

For Scriptwriting Workshops on Sexual Violence and Impunity

As part of the projects

STEPPING STONES: ENGAGING WITH YOUTH IN SOUTH ASIA AND BODY OF EVIDENCE

By Zubaan and Panos South Asia with International Development Research Centre and Goethe Institut

In 2016, Zubaan completed a three-and-a-half year IDRC-supported research project entitled the Sexual Violence and Impunity (SVI) project, which looked at recent histories of sexual violence in five countries in South Asia (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka). It examined the silences that exist around the issue, as well as the structures that enable a lack of accountability on the part of perpetrators. The extensive research conducted by participants in the project illuminated existing blind spots in law, police, medical and court practices, and the taboos that exist in families, communities and educational institutions around sexuality, violence and harassment and which ensure that sexual violence remains unspoken and unaddressed. It also explored the different articulations of justice for individual victims/survivors and their communities. Fifty-five research papers were commissioned that covered law, medical and forensic issues, historical perspectives, militarization, states of exception and more. The project helped to put together a community of (mostly young) researchers and brought out the results of the research in six country-based volumes – four of which have been published so far – as well as two stand-alone books.

Around the same time, Panos South Asia, a media support organization for the region, selected and trained twelve young and mid-career journalists to work under the guidance of research institutes and mentors to bring out the voices of women in these areas through both mainstream media and in the form of a book. The aim of the project was to combine journalism and research to understand the lives of women in three conflict zones in South Asia – in post conflict Nepal; in long drawn out conflicts in the Northeast of India and Kashmir; and in the frontlines of battle in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan.

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati, India, The Uks Resource and Publication Centre for Women and Media, Pakistan, The Hri Institute for Southasian Research and Exchange, the Alliance for Social Dialogue (ASD), Ain o Salish Kendra, Dhaka and Simorgh, Lahore were the participating research institutes.

Many of the questions raised by the Panos research resonated with the results of the Zubaan research studies and towards the end of the projects, the two organizations began to talk of the possibility of doing something together to take the results of their studies further, and perhaps addressing newer, different constituencies. Two related projects grew out of these conversations: The Stepping Stones project and the Body of Evidence project, the former supported by the International Development Research Centre and the latter by the Goethe Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan.

THE PROJECTS

The basic idea behind these two initiatives is to take the findings of the SVI project into different forums and to engage young people in discussions about the ways in which impunity for perpetrators is built up and strengthened by existing lacunae in legal, medical and social practices. Some of the questions that guide these two related projects are:

- What are medical students taught and how do they take this knowledge into medical practice when dealing with victims/survivors of sexual violence?
- What are law students taught about dealing with victims/survivors of sexual violence?
- Why are societies so tolerant of sexual violence and why do they still continue to blame victims for a crime that is perpetrated against them?
- Why is the issue of bodily autonomy one that seems so difficult to grasp for our societies?



Our sense is that it is important to engage young people in discussions about these issues. Across South Asia the last few years have shown how increasing numbers of young people have led and joined the protests against sexual violence in each country. In doing so, they have brought their own questions to these protests.

The Zubaan-Panos collaboration brings together these concerns. Both organizations, one in India and the other in Nepal, will come together to hold a number of small theatre workshops in which theatre groups run by young people, or theatre activists will be brought together with resource people in a series of workshops where scripts will be developed based on the material generated by Zubaan's SVI project. This is envisaged as the first step of the project.

As a second step, selected groups will be asked to create theatre productions from the scripts and to perform these in educational institutions such as universities, medical training colleges, legal institutes, perhaps even high schools. Each such performance will be accompanied by a discussion conducted by the theatre group and accompanying resource persons from Zubaan as well as from a group of advisors and researchers associated with the SVI project.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES of the workshop are creative scripts developed during the workshops that can become a resource for future use. One primary script and smaller, individualized scripts can be developed to suit the regional aspects of the theme.

DURATION: 5-day workshop in July 2018 (date to be announced)

Interested theatre groups and artists from **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura** can get in touch with us at projects@zubaanbooks.com with their **CVs and/or a background note** on the groups along with a **sample script** they have developed or helped to develop regarding gender concerns. No fees are applicable for participating in the workshop.

LAST DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 07 JUNE 2018

ZUBAAN is an independent feminist publishing house based in New Delhi. We publish academic books, fiction, memoirs and popular nonfiction, as well as books for children and young adults under our Young Zubaan imprint, aiming always to be pioneering, cutting-edge, progressive and inclusive. For more information, log onto www.zubaanbooks.com

PANOS SOUTH ASIA, with its headquarters in Kathmandu, is part of the family of Panos Institutes worldwide that encourage and facilitate public discourse and debate on a wide range of issues. Panos South Asia continues to work with Zubaan on the SVI project. For more information, log onto www.panos.org

THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (IDRC) funds research in developing countries to promote growth, reduce poverty, and drive large-scale positive change.

THE GOETHE-INSTITUT is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute, active worldwide.