Overview of Organisation

Women’s Fund Asia (WFA) is a regional women’s fund, committed to supporting women, girls, trans, and intersex people led interventions, to enhance and strengthen their access to human rights. WFA provides sustainable and flexible funding and resources to support the leadership of women, girls, trans, and intersex activists and group, who work at local, national, and regional levels for human rights.

The Fund started in 2004 as the South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF), operating in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In 2016 the organisation undertook an intense process of review and consultations, and it was relaunched as Women's Fund Asia on 8 March 2018. As WFA the organization expanded its mandate across Asia, increasing its outreach from five to 18 countries.1

WFA’s programming is steeped in a rights-based approach, ie, progressive realisation of the rights of women, girls, trans, and intersex people in the region. The core of our programming is directed more towards the underpinning causes of the violations—therefore we look to realisation of rights, staking of claims, and holding states and communities accountable. We work towards building an environment wherein women, girls, trans, and intersex people can exercise and enjoy their rights. In addition, we also invest in processes through which local voices and experiences can guide global frameworks that will enable the realisation of normative standards at the local, national, regional, and global levels. We believe in substantive equality, non-discrimination, and participation. At the same time, we believe that states, as duty bearers, have an obligation to respect, promote, protect, and fulfil those rights. We support capacity development by our partners to work towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals, by using existing frameworks, such as CEDAW, to create transparency and hold their States accountable for this.

1 South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan
Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam
East Asia: Mongolia
The issues and initiatives we support through our grantees partners are critical to the realisation of human rights of women, girls, trans, and intersex persons and their activism for equality. Further, given the socio-political climate of heightened surveillance and attack on freedom of expression, speech and human rights, the information and data we harbour must stay soundly protected. Owing to this need, this application is to strengthen our own organisational processes on data and information management and security.

About Leading from the South

Leading from the South (LFS) is a programme that falls under the policy on women’s rights and gender equality, as well as the policy framework Dialogue and Dissent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The overarching goal of this policy framework is to strengthen the capacity for lobby and advocacy of civil society organisations in low- and lower-middle-income countries. For women’s organisations in particular, influencing policy in order to ensure that women’s rights and gender equality are placed and kept on the agenda at local, national, regional, and international levels is essential.

LFS is a feminist consortium of philanthropic women’s funds, conceptualised and managed by four leading women’s funds: African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (FMS), International Indigenous Women’s Forum (FIMI)/AYNI Fund (AYNI), and Women’s Fund Asia (WFA). These four women’s funds have been selected on the basis of their unique characteristics through a waiver.

Current Context

The pandemic is exacerbating existing structural and power inequalities within Asian societies, state measures to respond to the crisis hardly mitigate this and instead entrench them further. Social distancing, the key strategy promoted to ‘flatten the curve,’ is not feasible for women, girls, trans, and intersex people in refugee settlements and urban slums, factory and migrant workers in cramped housing, the homeless, sex workers, rural women who rely on begging, and LBTIQ+ people who live in communal groups after being forced out of homes by hostile families, amongst others. When these groups are unable to comply with these measures, they also bear the brunt of state
sanctions. Sex workers and the other marginalized communities, for example, report increased harassment by the military and police in the enforcement of mobility restrictions.

Furthermore, already narrow civic spaces are further closing down across the region, as exemplified by curtailing of freedom of expression through censorship and enforcement of fake news laws, heightened surveillance, as well as the silent but intensifying crackdown on women’s human rights defenders, human rights defenders, and democratic voices—all in the guise of addressing the public health crisis. Combined with the uncertainty of resources due to the shifting of donor funding priorities, these pressures are having an impact on the survival and sustainability of women, girls, trans, and intersex led groups, and ultimately the resilience of feminist movements in the region.

**Scope and Objectives**

These changes in the economic, social, and political climate triggered by the COVID-19 crisis have a direct impact on the wellbeing and security of women and trans* human rights defenders in the region. In order to better inform our strategy and program under the current scenario, we would like to undertake a mapping exercise to capture the immediate, short-term, and long-term risks and vulnerabilities faced by the communities and groups we work with under the Leading from the South programme.

The main objectives of this mapping exercise are to:

- Assess the risks and vulnerabilities faced by these communities funded in the current scenario.
- Assess the significant factors which hinder or support the communities during the crisis.
- Understand the implications and mitigations factors available to reduce these vulnerabilities.
- Review and provide recommendations specific to WFA’s strategy and program.
Timeline

August 2020 – September 2020

To Apply

Please submit an expression of interest to mjagdeeshan@wf-asia.org with the subject line ‘Vulnerability Mapping’. The expression of interest should include a curriculum vitae which describes your experience in relation to similar assessment work.