

STATEMENT OF WORK – PR11701242

Project Title: League of Disinformation Warriors

Project outline: The U.S. Consulate Mumbai is soliciting proposals for an organization to lead and develop an 8-month project on combatting disinformation. The purpose of the project is to provide the Western India digital information environment with strong counter-voices to disinformation by creating a league of disinformation warriors. Engage Indian and American experts to provide in-depth training on countering disinformation and cultivate a diverse group of journalism and social science students from Western India (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, and Goa) into a robust network of online and offline influencers with a nuanced understanding of the issue. The program must use Dosti House (refer: <https://in.usembassy.gov/education-culture/american-spaces/dostihouse-mumbai/>), a large library and programming space within the Consulate as the monthly incubation hub where this cohort will meet in person and online every alternate month to learn how to identify the causes, extent, and formation of disinformation. The cohort must then develop concerted strategies, pathways, and projects to combat disinformation in their respective cities and communities across Western India with tangible results that can be linked back to the learnings from the training program.

Key deliverables for vendor awarded the project:

- Identify a diverse and inclusive group of 15-20 graduate and undergraduate students through a highly competitive selection process, ensuring representation from diverse socio-economic, religious, and gender backgrounds across Western India.
- Ensure participants are from tier 2 and 3 cities across Western India with an interest in developing skills to counter disinformation, impacting social change, and serving as gatekeepers of truth in their cities and communities. The participants should be students of journalism, political science, or public policy, and would belong to diverse socio-religious and gender backgrounds to ensure the impact of the training percolates to vulnerable communities most prone to the impacts of disinformation.
- Since this is a hybrid program, the vendor will arrange for the participants from across Western India to travel to Mumbai 4 times for in-person training at Dosti House in Mumbai and attend 4 sessions virtually over the course of 8 months.
- Train participants in factchecking by engaging leading Indian and American experts and organizations as guest speakers. Course content should draw from real-life examples from U.S. and Indian sources. Develop a savvy league of disinformation dissidents that pool their resources, networks, and learnings to develop a series of sustained digital and offline campaigns, projects, and discussions around countering disinformation in their cities and communities at the end of the project.
- Ensure frequent monitoring and evaluation of the project and provide monthly status reports and updates during the course of the project and upon completion. Provide support and mentoring for all participants so they continue to advance the goals of this network well beyond the training's completion timeline.
- Provide for all costs associated with trainers, travel and accommodation for participants, and all other miscellaneous expenses incurred during the project timeline.

Project impact assessment: The successful completion of the project will be measured based on the number of online and offline projects executed by the participants. The number of fake news, religious and political propaganda, or contentious and false social media posts, videos, and WhatsApp forwards reported, addressed, or dispelled by the group after the cohort's incubation period. So there should be a method in place to remain in contact with participants at the end of the program.

Proposal and budget: To apply for the project, please provide a detailed narrative proposal (maximum of 5 pages) clearly outlining the implementation and evaluation plan along with a detailed breakdown of budget. This is in addition to other requirements outlined in the official solicitation request.

Here is a detailed narrative summary of the League of Disinformation Warriors project:

With an aim provide the Western India digital information environment with strong counter-voices to disinformation, the League of Disinformation Warriors project aims to cultivate a diverse group of journalism and social science students from Western India (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, and Goa) into a robust network of online and offline influencers with a nuanced understanding of the issue. It identifies a group of 15 to 20 participants through a highly competitive process, ensuring representation from diverse socio-economic, religious, and gender backgrounds across Western India. Over an eight-month period, this group will be trained in factchecking by Indian and American experts at Dosti House to become a league of disinformation dissidents that pool their resources, networks, and learnings to develop a series of sustained digital and offline campaigns, projects, and discussions around countering disinformation in their cities and communities at the end of the project. Since this is a hybrid program, the vendor will arrange for the participants from across Western India to travel to Mumbai 4 times for in-person training at Dosti House in Mumbai and attend 4 sessions virtually over the course of 8 months. To participate in the program, participants must pledge to continue to advance the goals of this network over the next decade. These projects are shepherded by the vendor awarded this project and must provide for all costs for the trainers, the travel and accommodation of all participants, and other miscellaneous expenses incurred during the project timeline.

Participants would have access to U.S. and Indian experts and a convening space in Dosti House, which is equipped with key technology needs and training resources. Participants would engage American experts, disinformation resources offered by social media platforms like Google, Twitter, and Meta, exchange alumni, any planned ECA speakers on disinformation. These engagements would happen in person or hybrid depending on the travel budget and availability of participants. They convene in person for one day every month (or alternate between virtual and in-person sessions, with two-day in person sessions at Dosti House every alternate month) over the duration of eight months and are trained to identify disinformation with the latest digital tools, as evidenced by pre-and post-tests. They are taught to effectively rebut and counter disinformation in compelling ways. They build an active support network of like-minded disinformation warriors devoted to stopping disinformation, as evidenced by subsequent group communication and collaboration. They are taught modern digital techniques like reverse image search and efficient ways for content delivery through social media posts, Instagram reels, YouTube and other tools that can help participants to leverage digital media platforms to dispel

disinformation. They are trained to develop well-researched and compelling narratives and conduct efficient online research and in-person outreach.

The participants will put into practice the disinformation combatting skills that they learn through this project and develop multiple in-person/offline and online social media campaigns and activities to promote disinformation resilience within their communities. Within six months after the conclusion of the program, the participants of the program will use the learnings and connections to develop a series of 10 sustained digital and offline campaigns, projects, and discussions around countering disinformation and proactive fact-checking and report on its impact in their cities and communities. They pledge to continue to advance the goals of this network over the next decade and report sustained outcomes year after year.