OUR VOICES OUR FUTURES CONSORTIUM

**FEMINIST TECH DEEP-DIVE 2.0 on
FEMINIST INFRASTRUCTURES FOR THE FUTURE**
A Blueprint for Repair

Application deadline: 31 January 2023

THE DEEP-DIVE: A three-day deep-dive, conducted virtually; an affirmative and positive exercise to help participants interrogate their relationship with platforms and digital tech infrastructure, and co-create a feminist tech blueprint for the future.

RATIONALE: The internet is increasingly owned and controlled by a few private actors, and deployed in unethical ways by anti-gender and anti-democratic governments and political actors. "Big-tech" corporations are not transparent about how their technologies are designed, how their algorithms are trained, or how they use our data.

The underlying problem? Much of the digital tech infrastructure that we interact with is built on the principle of "profit over people", and is open to exploitation by ultra-conservative forces, despite corporations paying lip service to "free speech" and liberal values. This has a profound impact on our democracies and our rights.

Governments and their allies, and other actors, at times colluding with corporations, use these technologies to create and deploy propaganda, using a range of tools from "political hate" bots, to human "trolls" tasked with harassing opponents, to smear campaigns driven by disinformation. Messages of hate and divisiveness are then amplified across the platforms we use because algorithms are trained precisely to drive up the visibility of divisive content as it generates more engagement and thus profit for its owners.

The widespread lack of accountability, coupled with total monopoly over the digital tech infrastructure and tech governance landscapes by a few very powerful actors, makes our relationship with technology unequal and untenable. These actors create systems which largely uphold and maintain unjust power structures and reinforce harmful norms, such as gender and sexual norms, excluding and harming many people and groups.

When feminists, communities and structurally silenced women and people participate in the creation of digital tech infrastructure, and make collective decisions regarding their governance, our online lives - and the spaces which shape them - will be more inclusive and vibrant, creating strong and resilient communities and movements.

PEDAGOGY and CONTENT: The deep-dive emphasizes linking theory to practice, and **is not a workshop or a training.** The deep-dive aims to foreground global South examples, case studies and perspectives as much as possible. Key resource persons will present the deep-dive within a framework of unpacking the following three areas:
1) <u>Hardware:</u> exploring the politics of larger tech infrastructures, i.e platforms; helping participants to understand the politics and principles embedded in our platforms and what shapes our interactions with them;
2) <u>Software</u>: unpacking the politics of code, algorithms, protocols and the aesthetics of the online; looking at invisible infrastructures;
3) <u>Wetware:</u> learning about the histories and current situation of feminist intervention, i.e. "wetware", which proposes the body as part of tech infrastructure, exploring ideas such as physical resources, performance and performativity, and data.

OBJECTIVES:
1. Participants will **gain a good understanding** of the state of digital technological infrastructures, in three parts: hardware, software and "wetware", and how these power structures are enabling the erosion of rights and democracy globally, and in their own contexts;

2. Participants will be **taught how to identify** the gendered impact of such control and exclusion, as well as how it intersects with sexuality, disability etc., through the lens of intersectionality and feminist theory;

3. Participants will **reflect and imagine**, with guidance, on how feminist tech interventions could change this reality, towards more affirmative and rights-based approaches; they will interrogate and imagine collectively their relationship with platforms and how to recast these relationships;

4. Participants will **collaborate and concretely conceptualize practical, precise and political** interventions in groups, in the context of queer and/or feminist theories on technology;

FOR WHO: The Deep-dive is for **activists**, **researchers**, **human rights practitioners**, **journalists and other media practitioners**, and **artists**, working on issues of **gender and sexuality**, on the rights of **lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people, sexual rights**, **sexual and reproductive health and rights**, **rights of persons with disabilities**, **HIV and AIDS**, **violence against women or gender-based violence**; and/or working on issues of **democracy**, **civic space**, **freedom of expression**, **assembly and association**, **dissent and protest**, **digital rights**, and who want to expand their theoretical knowledge of these issues through a feminist lens.

Participants should be embedded in human rights and/or feminist movements, civil society, or working closely with civil society and/or movements to advance their goals. **The Deep-dive is not for full-time students.**

We encourage **members of structurally excluded*[1] groups across the global South and the global North to apply.**

BY WHO: This Feminist Tech Deep-dive is presented by [Dr Nishant Shah](), and is conducted by the Our Voices Our Futures consortium. It is co-created and primarily led by consortium members [CREA]() and the [Association for Progressive Communications]().

Our Voices Our Futures is a global South-feminist led consortium dedicated to amplifying the voices of structurally silenced women in all domains of civic space, including online space across India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon and Sudan. **CREA** is a global feminist human rights organization led by feminists in the global South; CREA works to build feminist leadership, expand sexual and reproductive freedoms, and advance human rights of all people. The **Association for Progressive Communications**' focus is to create a just and sustainable world by harnessing the collective power of activists, organizations, excluded groups, communities and social movements, to challenge existing power structures and ensure that the internet is developed and governed as a global public good.

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[1]CREA uses the term 'structurally excluded' to draw attention to the ways in which societal architecture prevents certain people from enjoying the full spectrum of rights and from meaningfully and effectively participating in their communities and decision-making spaces. Our work focuses on preventing individual harms, dismantling the structures that construct and sustain those harms, and creating pathways to justice for persons excluded because of their real or perceived genders, sexualities, identities, or chosen forms of labor. At present, CREA works with structurally excluded women and girls, persons of diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics, persons with disabilities, and sex workers. CREA will continue to practice and advocate for broader inclusion and solidarity.

INCLUSION: We hope to create something which is meaningful and inclusive, for all participants, especially structurally excluded people -- such as those who are women's human rights defenders, trans, intersex, nonbinary, lesbian, bisexual or gay people, disabled people, people living with HIV, sex workers etc.

ACCESSIBILITY and LANGUAGE: We will provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. We will provide interpretation into some languages (as needed), sign language interpretation (as needed), and closed captioning in English for all. Please let us know what your specific requirements may be, at the time of applying.

WHEN AND WHERE: The Deep-dive is scheduled for 14, 15 and 16 February 2023. It will be conducted virtually, with attention paid to confidentiality, privacy and security.

HOW TO APPLY: Application deadline is **31 January 2023.**
Please apply by filling out this form: Doc & PDF!

Around 35 applicants will be selected to attend the Tech Deep-dive. Please note that only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

Please write to subha@creaworld.org if you have any questions.