

UK UMBRELLA BRAND FOR SOUTH ASIAN LGBT+ COMMUNITY LAUNCHES CROWD-FUNDING CAMPAIGN

Submitted by: Gaysians

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LONDON (October 19, 2020) Birthed in 2017 as a platform to showcase and spotlight Queer, South Asian groups, organisations and events online, GAYSIANS is the creation of Reeta Loi; award-winning activist, writer, music artist, one of Forbes 100 Women Founders and Contributing Editor for GAYTIMES. Reeta is also a Reporter for VICE and recently uncovered a gay marriage scam in India.

After disownment from her own family due to her sexuality and without access to community, culture or stories like her own, Reeta has spearheaded GAYSIANS globally as a movement to provide positive visibility and a united voice for LGBT+ South Asians, an over-looked and under-funded group of vulnerable people. Her platform is the first of its kind to provide South Asian LGBT+ people much needed access to support and community across the UK. Reeta was also instrumental in lobbying for repeal of Section 377, legislation that criminalised homosexuality in India. She has been listed in the Guardian's Pride Power List for three years running.

Almost four years since its inception, GAYSIANS now has a new website (gaysians.org) with a network of 24 organisations spanning the UK that work to support people who identify as part of the LGBT+ community from a South Asian background. These organisations cover a variety of different faith groups and charities that represent the spectrum of unique experiences that come with being queer and South Asian. The solidarity across different faith groups that is being driven by GAYSIANS is revolutionary.

Alongside other queer POC & Black communities, the South Asian LGBT+ community are globally and locally some of the most vulnerable and overlooked minority groups in the world. A BBC report in 2018 highlighted that British South Asians are twice as likely as the rest of the UK population to believe that same-sex relationships are not acceptable and most worryingly, this percentage barely shifts amongst younger age groups. This trend is unlike any other ethnic group in the country and is highly alarming.

Due to cultural and language barriers which prevent South Asians from seeking support outside of their families and community, there is a lack of data to show the type of support needs for this group.

According to the 2011 UK Census, LGBT+ South Asians amount to 491,564 people, the overwhelming majority of whom are not accessing support. According to ONS data, in 2020 this figure rises to some 600,000 LGBT+ South Asians.

GAYSIANS aim to raise £54,600 in 3 months, which will be used to deliver the following initiatives over the course of one year:

Launching a survey to investigate and understand the support needs of the South Asian LGBT+ community

Working with partners and alliances in their network to increase outreach for services in mental health, homelessness, sexual health, trans and non-binary identity and faith support. Our helpline partner (Karma Nirvana) has seen a 90% increase in calls under COVID. The needs of our community have never been greater.

Expanding the network with partnerships and alliances to reach a global audience
Delivering written, audio and video content focused on issues experienced by this community to help improve their wellbeing and prevent feelings of isolation

Alongside this, GAYSIANS will utilise funding to support individuals:

£40 paying for a young person to attend a workshop on homelessness prevention, mental health wellbeing or sexual trauma which will allow them to gain access to tools and services specifically catered to their needs.

£200 will pay for GAYSIANS to speak with people that have experienced homelessness and trans and non-binary individuals to develop content that will reach and provide support to thousands of people.

£1,000 will allow GAYSIANS to be registered as a CIC, opening up access to grants and funding that is currently inaccessible.

This work can happen in one year instead of ten upon achievement of the target. The crowdfunder is open until 31st December 2020.

The goal for GAYSIANS is to become globally recognised as the umbrella brand for the South Asian LGBT+ community. Bringing together all resources, networks and organisations related to being queer and South Asian and spotlighting these voices and stories the world over.

GAYSIANS crowd-funding campaign on GoFundMe.

Link: <https://gf.me/u/y3akiu>

Some words from our partners:

“I am so proud that akt will be partnering with Reeta Loi and Gaysians on a programme of work which will greatly benefit some of the most vulnerable and under-supported young people who are facing challenges in their lives and who often have their specific needs and identities overlooked or ignored by mainstream providers. Gaysians plays an incredibly important and unique role in the lgbtq+ sector, providing a ground breaking and vital lifeline of support and information to lgbtq+ South Asian people nationally.”

Tim Sigsworth, Chief Executive
akt (albert kennedy trust)

“Gaysians.org is an important beacon within the South Asian LGBTQI+ community that provides a vital connection between critical services, groups and charities serving the community. The creative and positive work of Gaysians creates a bond that brings many of us together as a family... which is vitally important as many of our own blood families have rejected us for being LGBTQI+.”

Matt Mahmood-Ogston, Founder

Naz & Matt Foundation

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