



# TRANS YOUTH MANIFESTO

A manifesto and recommendation handbook for organizations working for LGBTQIA+ youth.



# Key Note



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Youth across the globe, especially in our country, has been very active in sharing and being vocal about their thoughts through different mediums. The majority of them prefer social media to present their thoughts which often include creativity and innovations, but left unheard by our decision-makers. Decision-makers are often seasoned persons and they come with matured thoughts, but we forget that these can include youth too. Trans youths are still way behind in being included to make decisions in all walks of life - from their families, to workplaces to community initiatives and sometimes even for their own selves, trans youth are not given the autonomy of making decisions.

It is very clear that the trans-youth has been underestimated for their contributions to different aspects of the work happening today. This is due to a lack of understanding, stigma and phobia that is prevalent in the country today. Even in organizations working for LGBTQIA+ youth, trans voices often get left behind due to systemic exclusion. So, we have designed this Manifesto as a recommendation tool that has been designed by the youth themselves. This manifesto consists of recommendations which can be considered by organization leaders to better include youth within their organizations through systems and mechanisms.

TWEET Foundation is a trans-led organization working for the upliftment and empowerment of the trans community. We strongly believe that the youth is not just future leaders but have capabilities that need to be nurtured for present leadership. Through this manifesto we hope to bring out their voices and sincerely hope that organizations can adopt some of these recommendations to better include trans youth in their organizations.

# Why Youth Inclusion

**The transgender youth population lacks knowledge and experience. The transgender youth comes from a vivid intersectional background. There are barriers to language, education and guidance and mentoring for the trans community. The people who are often in positions of power in the Indian context are the people who come from the upper caste, upper class, educated, mainland and are cis-het majoritarian. It will always be important that every LGBTQ-serving organisation needs to look at their working framework.**

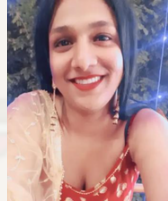
**The barriers of racial inequalities, nepotism and involvement of youth can be tackled by organisations being accountable, taking the onus and strict measures to keep the youth from diverse backgrounds involved. Every organisation needs to do an intersectionality analysis to understand whose voices are at the table where decisions are being taken. Moreover affirmative action needs to be taken to ensure that trans youth is being provided with skills and education to participate in organisation building.**

**WE THE TRANS YOUTH OF INDIA believe in removing our subconscious biases, we bring in fresh, new ideas, and perspectives in decision-making. We are open and honest about our experiences and demand accountability from those who make decisions for us. We have willingness to learn and grow and become more aware.**

# Contributors



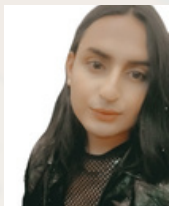
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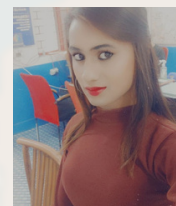
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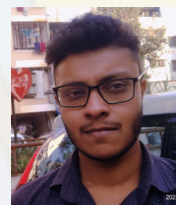
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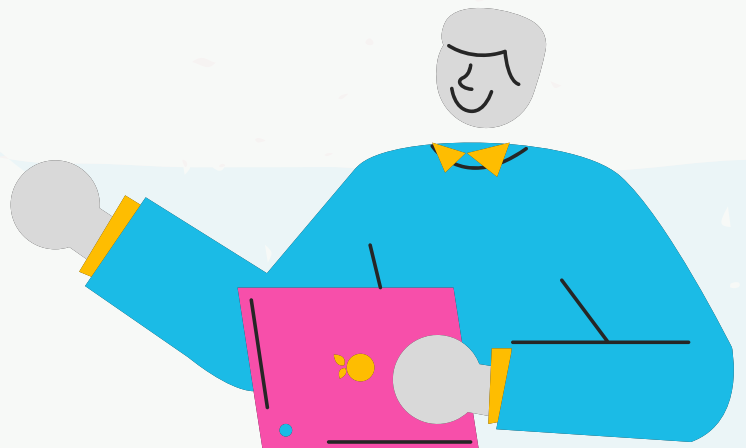
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# Critical Analysis of the Ongoing Work

We reflected together and analysed the ongoing work happening in India for the transgender persons especially the youth. We realised how far we have come from a time where we were still struggling to get legal recognition. It's only through the constant activism by the trans leaders across India. Over the past years we have also seen many non-profits, social enterprises, and corporates come forward to support the trans youth in many ways - providing helpline, fellowships, shelter spaces, health and legal support, skill-building and leadership-building workshops that further make us believe in the bright future. However, for us, it is important to reflect on how we can better include, listen and deliver meeting the needs of diverse young trans individuals today.

Here's what is working for us:

Overall, there is some systemic support that has gotten build. Social media awareness and connectivity helps us access services and enables us. Corporations are accepting trans people and identifying talent to hire, non-profits are providing shelter spaces and skilling opportunities. Healthcare systems are adapting, especially in metro cities, and educational institutes are becoming more inclusive.



## Critical Analysis of the Ongoing Work

While there's a lot that is going well, as youth, we always want more, we demand more and we are loud about it.

Here are top 3 things that we feel need to be emphasized to the trans-led organizations today that is something that bothers us and needs to change.

### 01 Tokenistic inclusion in many spaces

“Although companies want to work towards building inclusive workspaces, no proactive steps are usually taken to assure safety and inclusion of trans persons. Most often, we are used as poster-stories by corporates to show to the world how hiring us makes them inclusive. No one is demanding accountability from them, not even organizations working in D&I spaces. Everyone has their own agenda and we are being treated as products for showcase.”

### 02 Lack of sensitivity while conducting programs/projects for LGBTQIA+/ trans community

“Events are done in the name of trans people by not including trans people. Every 2nd organization wants to do something for the community but nobody asks what we need, how we need and how we want to be treated. Dignity to communities can only be given when they are included in decision making.”

### 03 Affirmative actions are often lacking from those even within the LGBTQIA+ community

“Even with organizations working with the LGBTQIA+ community, very few organizations invest in education and skilling of trans persons within their teams, their personal growth and their well-being. Most often trans people are left behind and do not get a chance to grow within the organization.”

In this manifesto cum handbook, we, the young trans people, look at what POWER means to us, and breakdown each letter to see how each of these affect the decision-making and inclusion of youth in any organization and we provide some key recommendations to the organizations.

**P**OSITION  
**O**PPORTUNITY  
**W**ISHES   
**E**MPOWERMENT  
**R**ESOURCES

# Key Barriers to 'POWER' for trans youth

## POSITION

Most often privileges and positions of power go hand-in-hand. That is just how systems that value certain skills, intellect & experiences are designed to be. When we talk about inclusion and diversity, we try to showcase that our value systems can be diverse in themselves that way no systematic exclusion will take place. The same goes for including youth in positions of decision-making. Its often assumed that a young person will be less experienced and will have fewer skills to be in positions of decision-making. It is imperative that decisions of today impact the youth tomorrow and it's of utmost importance that a balanced approach is taken especially when your work is impacting those of the youth.

### Reflection

Within your management/leadership team what % of team members are trans people and within your overall team what percentage comprises of trans youth?

If your answer to any of the above is <30% whereas your key beneficiaries are the LGBTQIA+ youth, we highly recommend you to choose to actively include more trans voices within your organisation.

### Recommendations :

1. Trans representation is a must in LGBTQIA+-serving organizations, including trans people of diverse intersectional backgrounds in leadership positions.
2. Encourage young trans employees to take decisions at their own positions and levels for example choosing the venue of the workshop, choosing the channels for advocacy etc.
3. Create a trans youth advisory/steering committee for your key projects that specifically work to impact the trans youth where key decisions should not be taken without approval from the young advisors.



## **O**PPORTUNITY

It is often told to the youth there are ample opportunities for them to grasp and learn from, however when systems are designed by people to whom opportunities seem easy they forget how most people can be left out by simple choices we make in offering any opportunities. On what media/platform do we post about upcoming hiring, in which language do we publicise an upcoming event or in which locations do we hold a capacity-building workshop that creates barriers for those marginalised by the use of technology to be present on LinkedIn, to be not able to read English fluently or not have location privileges of being in the metro cities.

### Reflection

Think about the last job opportunity posted by your organization and in what manner youth from LGB community youth person is more likely to get the opportunity compared to a trans youth?

### Recommendations:

- 1. Remove Barriers to Qualifications and Years of experience for positions of hiring to enable young trans people a chance to have a fair chance at the opportunity as trans youth is more likely to drop out of education due to unacceptance of their gender identity.**
- 2. The communication channels used by the trans community for the information exchange should be identified and utilized.**
- 3. Remove barriers of locations - offer remote work opportunities, internships and free-lance work to support those who may not be able to work from office due to factors such as dysphoria, lack of policy & trans friendly infra at workplace.**

## WISHES

The wishes and needs of the trans community need to be heard while working for the LGBTQIA+ community actively. When we work with the trans community on a day-to-day basis, cis-people often start assuming their needs, and overlook their own privileges. This can happen a lot of times when diverse voices are missing in the decision making panels.

### Reflection

Whose “voices” are missing in organisations’ leadership and how can organisations create space for those voices to be heard and valued?

### Recommendations:

1. Create policy-level changes and mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of trans youth in the larger objective/goal/mission/vision of the organization so as to design the projects and organizational level matching the overall objectives of the organizations.
2. Create feedback mechanisms for the services provided or events conducted and ensure that feedback is incorporated in the support you offer to trans persons.
3. Actively ask for the need of the beneficiaries - ask if they want travel support, internet recharge support to join online meetings etc.

## **E**MPowerMENT

Empowerment is the key for sustainable movement and development. While we can create spaces for the youth today, its important to invest effort, time and resources in them to enable them for future leadership. Most often for organisations and leaders it seems easier and faster to get the work done by people who are already skilled and experienced. With minimal resources generally in trans organisations, it further becomes difficult to invest in capacity building of the teams. But empowerment needs to be seen as investment and resources need to be built accordingly.

**Reflection :** How many paid internships/fellowships have you offered to trans youth for their development in the past 1 year? If your answer is less than 2 then you must develop mechanisms to offer internships and fellowships to trans youth.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1. Create Shadowing Leadership Programs - Allow young trans people to shadow the organization's leaders for a time period. Shadowing allows youth to see, hear, and experience what a future leadership role could look like.**
- 2. Offer paid internships/fellowships - This allows young people to get a kickstart at their career, experience real-life work situations and in turn build their skills in short periods.**
- 3. Offer education support to trans youth working in your organization to complete their education.**

## RESOURCES

Resources for trans people are scarce and when it comes to youth it becomes further challenging for them to have access to fundings, to networks, to spaces and to technical expertise. Allocating sufficient resources becomes an important part of empowering the youth to take their own decisions and build their own capacity.

### Reflection

When was the last time you connected a young trans leader with your networks of funders?

#### Recommendations:

1. Allow for at least 10-15% of any project budget to be decided by the trans youth for its allocation and how that should be used.
2. Think of resources beyond funds such as - sharing your networks, sharing funding opportunities, offering office space, offering software licences etc.
3. Actively sub-grant activities to smaller collectives and organisations or hire trans freelancers.

**Conclusion :**

**We believe many steps are already being taken by organizations and individuals to empower the trans youth today. However, it should not be treated as a favor but as a duty and as an accountability towards the key beneficiary of the work. We wish to see a world where passing on the baton becomes a norm and a healthy balance is developed between youth and older leaders.**

**We hope this manifesto can become a tool for organizations to develop action plans for their organizations to develop key mechanisms and policies to further the cause of youth inclusion and empowerment.**

## Acknowledgements

**We would like to sincerely thank all our young team members from whose inputs these recommendations have been put together. We thank the funders i.e. Youth Lead along with APTN to bring forth such important seed funding to further the cause of inclusion of youth that allowed us to come together and discuss these issues. We thank the implementing organizations: TWEET Foundation and Basera Samajik Sansthan for the implementation & technical support. We thank leaders of both organizations the founders, CEOs and Board to fully supporting this initiative. We thank all those key stakeholders who always encourage us and joined us for the launch of this manifesto.**

**We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to Trans Inclusion.**

**Disclaimer : This document has been created to point out specific needs of the community where organizations can do better and is not intended to criticize the work happening today. If there is anything we can improve in this document or any issues that you can see, please feel free to write to us and we would be happy to have a dialogue or change the content accordingly.**

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