

**(TRANS)FORMING SPACES:**

# Expanding Queer People's Access to Education

SAFE AND  
ACCESSIBLE  
HOUSING



AFFIRMATIVE  
MENTAL HEALTH  
PRACTICES



FEEDBACK  
FORM



SRHR  
RESOURCES



ANTI-RAGGING  
COMMITTEE  
WORK

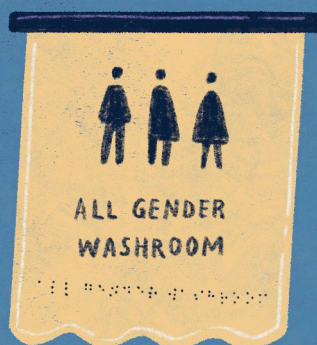
THIS IS A  
DISCRIMINATION  
FREE ZONE!



INCLUSIVE  
DEBATE  
COMPETITION  
CHAMPION



ALL GENDER  
WASHROOM





## About The YP Foundation

The YP Foundation (TYPF) is a youth-led and youth-focused organisation that facilitates young people's feminist and rights-based leadership on issues of health equity, gender justice, sexuality rights and social justice.



 [theypfoundation.org](http://theypfoundation.org)

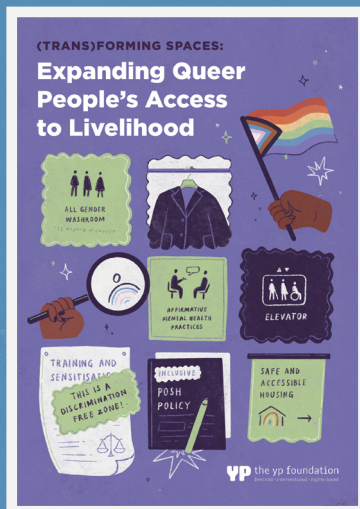
 [info@theypfoundation.org](mailto:info@theypfoundation.org)

 [theypfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/theypfoundation)

## About The Loud and Queer (LAQ) Programme

Loud & Queer is TYPF's intervention on queer and transgender rights and diversity. Through this programme, we create resources, platforms and leadership abilities to address critical issues of health, sexuality, prevention of violence and discrimination, and increase awareness about the lives and issues of LGBTQIA+ persons.

Check out the other resources in this series:



**(TRANS)FORMING SPACES:**  
**Expanding Queer People's  
Access to Education**

## Credits

The YP Foundation acknowledges the contribution of all young people and leaders who have been associated with us over the years, for their invaluable perspectives and insights.

**Ideation, Research and Writing:** Zayan (he/him), Nayanshree Hemlani (she/they), and Ivaan Jain (he/him)

**Ground Assessment by Youth Leaders:** Aditi Rawat (she/her), Anamika Patel (she/they), Anurag (he/him), Diya Choudhary (she/her), Hetavi (she/her), Jyoti Muhal (she/they), Nishi (she/they), Shreya (she/her), and Soumya (they/them)

**Editing, Design and Illustration:** Mrinalini Godara (she/they)

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## Acknowledgement

This resource is a testament to the collective support and belief of everyone involved which includes our youth leaders, experts, researchers, and respondents who helped us complete the needs assessment (which laid the foundation of this work) and actively shaped the consultation processes. Their enthusiastic participation ensured that our work truly reflects the voices of those who are the most marginalised within the queer and transgender community in India. It is their love and commitment that gives this resource its meaning and life.

We can't thank enough for the unwavering support and faith that our advisors – Ankana Dey, Dr. Harikeerthan Raghuram, Gautam Ramchandra, Mihir Samson, Rajeev Anand Kushwah, and Vihaan Vee, provided us in this journey. Their encouragement, ideas and critical thinking helped us to shape the indicators holistically. Without their invaluable inputs and time, it would have been difficult for us to get the confidence needed for these indicators to be presented to you all.

We would like to acknowledge all the youth leaders of **Expanding Queer People's Access to Leadership (EQUAL) 2.0 cohort, 2025** – Aditi Rawat, Anamika Patel, Anurag, Diya Choudhary, Hetavi, Jyoti Muhal, Nishi, Shreya, and Soumya, who visited more than 47 spaces and facilities in Jaipur, Lucknow and Varanasi to assess them on a number of laid affirmative indicators and share their observations with us. Their dedication and persistent efforts are the reason why we were able to bring on ground observations and experiences to build this resource. We also want to acknowledge the youth leaders and team between 2022–2025 for laying the foundation for this work. We also would like to extend our gratitude to Dr. Kolika Mitra who supported us with monitoring and evaluation of the work and guided us in this process for any course correction. We also want to thank Neeti who supported our work in Varanasi with a lot of enthusiasm and solidarity. A special thanks to the entire team of Sappho for Equality who very generously helped us in organising a community consultation on these indicators in Kolkata. We are grateful to everyone who was present during the community consultation and trusted us enough to share their experience with us. This work would have never been possible without them.

A special thanks to our designer Mrinalini Godara for working with us in all forms from voice notes, to emails to feedback loops and making sure these resources look gorgeous – we thank you for your work.

We also thank the entire staff of The YP Foundation, particularly the team that has led the queer and transgender rights work, for working on this and championing it in an era when global spaces are shrinking already. We would also like to thank Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice for supporting this initiative.

Implementing these indicators goes beyond mere compliance; it is about championing true equity, enhancing well-being for all, and channelising the collective potential that arises when every voice is valued. We urge all stakeholders to embrace these recommendations, to transform our spaces into truly affirmative ones where people from diverse identities do not only exist but thrive. Our collective commitment to this vision will undoubtedly strengthen our communities and enrich society as a whole.

**Prabhleen and Zayan**



## ALLYSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### 01. Ensure inclusivity by designating a few all-gender and accessible washrooms for use by everyone, including persons with disabilities.

**Explanation:** Transgender and gender non-conforming persons often face stress, anxiety and mistreatment when accessing gendered washrooms. Providing access to all-inclusive and gender neutral washrooms can greatly reduce or even eliminate this burden. These washrooms should be open to *all*, and everyone should be free to use a washroom that best aligns with their identity and personal comfort, without fear of judgement or restriction. Inclusive signage, including Braille and clear visual cues, should be used to ensure that these facilities are easy to navigate for all.

**Reference:** [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 6](#) emphasises on the availability and sustainable management of sanitation and water for all.



### 02. Ensure availability and accessibility of menstrual products to people of all gender identities.

**Explanation:** Usually, sanitary napkin or tampon vending machines are only present in women's washrooms, but many people who menstruate don't identify as women. Transgender men, non-binary individuals, and people with diverse gender identities may also need access to these products. For example, think of a transgender man who menstruates. Using a men's washroom that lacks menstrual products can make it harder for him to manage his period with dignity and ease.

Hence, to make access equitable, menstrual products as well as appropriate sanitary waste disposal systems should be available in all washrooms and medical rooms, regardless of gender demarcation.





### 03. Strengthen accessibility across physical infrastructure to create an inclusive environment for everyone, including persons with disabilities.

**Explanation:** Ensuring physical accessibility along with reasonable accommodation is essential in creating an environment where all students, faculty and staff, including those living with disabilities, can participate fully and with dignity.

Accessibility also benefits everyone since anyone can encounter disability at any point in their lives. Disabilities may be permanent, temporary, or situational; an injury, surgery recovery, or even a broken limb can limit mobility. Hence, the infrastructure should be designed in a way that it is accessible for everyone.

Additionally, not all disabilities are visible. Chronic illness, neurodivergence, and other non-apparent disabilities can significantly affect learning, working, or navigating shared spaces. Establishing systems that support the diverse needs of the community across the spectrum of disabilities is imperative to creating an environment where everyone can thrive.

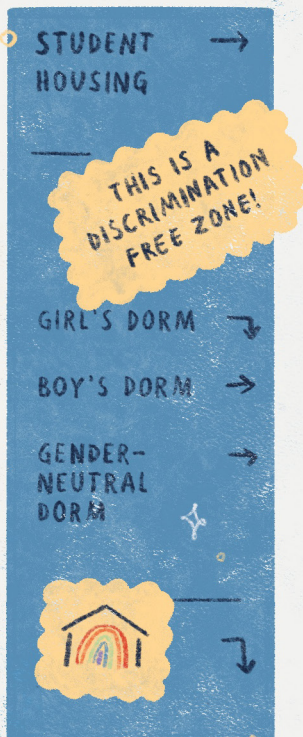


### 04. Accessible and discrimination-free accommodation facilities for all students.

**Explanation:** If your institution offers accommodation, it is important that all students, regardless of gender identity, have the freedom to choose a hostel space where they feel most safe and comfortable. This could mean opting for either women's, men's or gender-neutral housing.

Providing the option of gender-neutral or co-ed housing can help foster a more inclusive and respectful environment where all students feel affirmed and supported. Such a step will also help transgender and queer students with diverse identities and gender expression fit in better.

Similarly, travel arrangements during field trips or off-campus activities should prioritise the comfort and safety of LGBTQIA+ students and staff. For example, while taking a long bus journey, queer or transgender persons might not feel safe using a washroom in transit. Where possible, alternative arrangements should be explored.





## 05. Encourage transparency and accountability through anonymous student feedback channels.

*Explanation:* In educational spaces, often there is a lack of direct communication channels between students, educators and management. Introducing anonymous online feedback mechanisms allows everyone to share their experiences, suggestions, and concerns more openly and honestly, especially around sensitive issues. If meaningfully reviewed and acted upon, feedback and suggestions shared by students, faculty or other staff can play a vital role in building trust and strengthening institutional processes and systems.



## 06. Foster a safer and more inclusive campus environment through regular gender sensitisation workshops.

*Explanation:* Regular gender and sexuality sensitisation workshops are key in creating an inclusive, affirming and safe environment for everyone, particularly queer and transgender students. These must include all members of the community, including students as well as faculty, management and other staff to build a culture of allyship.

Sensitisation helps prevent instances of misgendering, deadnaming, and other everyday practices that can cause distress or dysphoria among transgender and non-binary students. This in turn gives them the necessary space to prioritize academic performance and meaningful engagement on campus without fear of judgement.

### Sources:

- [Report](#) by the University Grants Commission titled *Saksham: Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programmes for Gender Sensitisation on Campuses*.
- [The Transgender Persons \(Protection of Rights\) Rules, 2020](#) mandates sensitisation for faculty and introduction of inclusive curriculum changes to foster respect for equality and gender diversity.





## 07. Ensure that grievance and complaints committees on campus reflect inclusive and intersectional representation.

**Explanation:** Students from LGBTQIA+ communities, as well as those from marginalised caste, religion, disability, and class backgrounds, may face harassment, inappropriate comments, and exclusion within educational spaces. To ensure these concerns are heard and addressed fairly, it is important that the Internal Committee (IC) and Grievance Redressal Cells reflect the diversity of the campus community by having representation of LGBTQIA+ individuals and those from other underrepresented groups. Such representation can help foster trust in these committees and lead to more empathetic and effective resolutions. Members of these committees should also receive sensitisation training on gender and sexuality to deepen their understanding of the lived realities of complainants and enable them to respond with care and fairness.



### Sources:

- [Prevention of Sexual Harassment \(POSH\) Act, 2013](#) mandates the establishment of Internal Complaints Committees in institutions with more than ten staff members. UGC guidelines and national advisories also emphasise the importance of training and structural protections to address gender-based harassment, especially for students from vulnerable or marginalised groups.
- [University Grants Commission \(Prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students in higher educational institutions\) Regulations, 2015](#)
- [Advisory for ensuring the welfare of Transgender Persons](#) by the National Human Rights Commission



## 08. Make anti-ragging and anti-bullying policies more inclusive.

**Explanation:** LGBTQIA+ students, as well as other students from marginalised backgrounds, may be more susceptible to bullying, ragging, and exclusion on campus. Hence, existing anti-ragging and anti-bullying cells must proactively centre meaningful inclusion in their work to prevent such harm. This can be done by:

- Installing inclusive signage in common areas which explicitly convey zero tolerance for bullying.
- Conducting regular training and sensitisation workshops among students and staff alike [see point 6]
- Ensuring diverse representation in the cell [see point 7].

**Source:** [The 2016 UGC \(University Grants Commission\) amendment to the Anti-Ragging Rules](#) in India broadens the definition of ragging to include any act of physical or mental abuse, including bullying and exclusion, targeted at a student based on various social identities. This includes attributes like: colour, race, religion, caste, ethnicity, gender (including transgender persons), sexual orientation, appearance, nationality, regional origins, linguistic identity, place of birth, place of residence, or economic background.



COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE OPEN TO ALL



## 09. Provide access to queer and transgender affirmative mental health counsellors on campus.

**Explanation:** Access to inclusive and affirmative mental health care is essential for LGBTQIA+ individuals, who may face unique stressors such as social stigma, discrimination, and limited support from family or institutions. Providing such services, at no cost and with full confidentiality, can make it easier for queer and transgender individuals to seek support when they need it most. This will not only supports their personal well-being but can also have a positive impact on their social and academic performance.

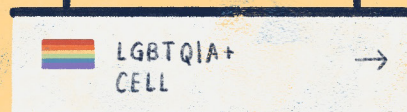
**Source:** [Survey on the cost of mental healthcare in Pune](#) by the India Mental Health Observatory



## 10. Support the establishment and sustainability of an LGBTQIA+ cell on campus.

**Explanation:** A formally recognised and supported LGBTQIA+ cell can be key to creating a more inclusive and affirming environment for all members of the campus community, including students, faculty and other management staff.

To build trust and representation, it is essential that the cell includes self-identified LGBTQIA+ students and staff, and their representation must be active, not tokenistic. This includes having a voice in campus-wide decisions, participating in policy reviews (e.g. on anti-bullying, housing, and access to facilities), and co-creating awareness initiatives. It is simultaneously essential that the cell works in conjunction with other campus bodies such as the Women's Cell or Student Council to drive sensitisation and inclusivity. Provided with adequate support and resources, this cell can organise workshops, film screening and cultural events for everyone, which will strengthen campus-wide allyship, sensitivity and awareness.



## 11. Make admission forms and processes more inclusive of gender diversity.

**Explanation:** Education institutions can signal inclusion right from the start by offering an open-ended field to write their gender, and space for prospective students to share their chosen name and pronouns in the application form.

Additionally, institutions are encouraged to allow students to apply using their self-identified gender, even if official documents have not yet been updated. Many transgender and non-binary individuals face delays or barriers in legally changing their name or gender markers. Prioritising self-identification over documentation reflects a commitment to access, equity, and care.



## 12. Consider creating a shared, inclusive medical room with trained staff and SRHR resources.

*Explanation:* Accessing healthcare on campus, whether for a fever, a panic attack, or emergency contraception, should feel safe, respectful, and judgment-free for all. Gender-segregated facilities often unintentionally exclude or single out students and faculty with diverse gender expressions and identities. A common medical room that welcomes everyone, regardless of gender identity, can help build a sense of safety and inclusion on campus. It's essential that these spaces are designed to respect all identities and are staffed with trained, empathetic healthcare professionals who can offer support without bias or assumptions.

At the same time, these spaces should be equipped with resources on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including contraceptives, menstrual hygiene products, and information on safe sex, sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention, and consent. Such a step ensures that everyone, including people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, can access such essential information more easily and without any fear of judgement.



## 13. Ensure access and inclusion in the shared spaces of a campus.

*Explanation:* Shared spaces on campus, such as canteens, libraries, playgrounds and common rooms are vital to community building and campus life.

To make these spaces truly inclusive, institutions must move beyond gender-segregated spaces or generic policy signage and instead create accessible spaces that offer something for everyone. This could include diverse food options in canteens that cater to different cultural and dietary needs; inclusive signage, posters, or artwork that reflect a range of gender identities, languages, and backgrounds; and quiet zones for neurodiverse students or those having sound and/or sensory sensitivities. Shared spaces, when designed with care, consciousness, and inclusive intention, can foster a sense of joy, comfort, and belonging for all students.





## 14. Adopt a flexible and gender-inclusive uniform policy.

**Explanation:** If there is a uniform or dress code at your institute, offering students a choice between all available options, regardless of gender, can go a long way in creating a more respectful and affirming work environment. Enforcing a specific uniform based on assumed gender can cause significant anxiety and discomfort, especially for transgender and gender non-conforming students. Where possible, consider eliminating mandatory uniforms altogether.



## 15. Ensure all students can participate in sports and extracurricular activities without gender-based restrictions.

**Explanation:** Every student, regardless of their gender identity, should have the freedom to participate in the sport or activity of their choice. Restricting access based on gender norms (for example, assuming certain sports are more “suitable” for boys or girls) not only reinforces harmful stereotypes, but also excludes queer, transgender, intersex and non-binary students with diverse gender expressions from participating in sports and extracurricular activities.

Institutions should also avoid requiring or endorsing any kind of medical or hormone-based criteria for student participation in sports and extracurricular activities. This will help create a more inclusive and affirming campus environment.

**Source:** Chapter VI, Section 13 of [The Transgender Persons \(Protection of Rights\) Act, 2019](#) specifically mandates that institutions funded or recognized by the government must provide transgender persons with equal access to education, sports, recreation, and leisure activities without discrimination. Adopting inclusive practices not only affirms students’ rights, it helps foster confidence, teamwork, and a stronger campus community.





# Glossary

*P.S. if a glossary definition includes a [highlighted word](#), it means that term is also defined elsewhere in the glossary. Each term builds on the others, and reading them together can offer a more comprehensive understanding of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.*

*To explore similar terms in Hindi, check out the [Inclusive Newsrooms](#) resource by The News Minute and Queer Chennai Chronicles.*

## Asexual

A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum – some asexual people may feel romantic or emotional attraction, or may experience sexual attraction only rarely or under specific circumstances (this can include identities such as *graysexual* or *demisexual*).

It is important to remember that many terms in the [LGBTQIA+](#) spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as asexual at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

## Bisexual

A person who is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to more than one gender. This can include attraction to people of the same gender identity as them, as well as to people of different gender identities.

It is important to remember that many terms in the [LGBTQIA+](#) spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as bisexual at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

## Cisgender

A person whose gender identity matches the gender and [sex that they were assigned at birth](#) (typically male or female).

## Deadnaming

The act of referring to a [transgender](#) or [genderqueer](#) person by their deadname. A *deadname* is the name given to a transgender person by their natal family at the time of their birth which they no longer use or identify with.

Whether intentional or accidental, deadnaming is a deeply hurtful and harmful practice, as it disregards a person's [gender identity](#) and chosen name.



**Gay** Someone who identifies as a man and is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as men.

It is important to remember that many terms in the LGBTQIA+ spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as gay at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

**Gender** A social and cultural system used to classify people into 'men' or 'women' based on their physical and biological characteristics. One's gender also shapes their experiences and expectations around behaviour, roles, appearance, feelings, and expression.

Gender exists on a spectrum, and one can identify as a man, a woman, both, or neither. Gender is distinct from [sex assigned at birth](#) and is deeply influenced by personal identity, culture, and lived experience.

**Gender  
Affirmative  
Surgeries  
(GAS)**

Surgeries that [queer](#) or [transgender](#) people undergo to affirm their gender identity, or look how they feel with regards to their gender identity. It is not necessary that all queer or transgender people undergo GAS, and a person's [gender identity](#) is valid regardless.

GAS includes procedures such as top surgery, breast augmentation, facial feminization surgery, orchiectomy, hysterectomy, etc.

**Gender  
Identity**

Refers to how an individual understands, experiences, and self-defines their gender. Gender identity needn't correlate with the body a person is born into, and it may not correspond with the gender they were assigned at the time of their birth. Everyone has a gender identity (typically [cisgender](#) or [transgender](#)), and it can exist across a wide and diverse spectrum.

**Genderqueer**

A term used by people whose [gender identity](#) exists outside or beyond the traditional binary of 'man' and 'woman'. Genderqueer individuals may identify with multiple genders, no gender, or a fluid or shifting gender. Some people who are genderqueer also identify as [transgender](#), while others may not – it depends on how the individual understands and names their own identity.

Like many terms in the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, genderqueer is flexible and self-defined.



**Intersex** An umbrella category for people who live with variations in their biological and physiological traits that cannot be strictly labelled as male or female. Being intersex is a natural part of human biological diversity.

If a baby's genitals don't clearly fit typical definitions of male or female, doctors may identify the child as intersex at birth. However, intersex traits are not always visible or identified at birth. In fact, many intersex people are assigned male or female at birth, even if their bodies do not fit into those categories.

**Lesbian** Someone who identifies as a woman and is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as women.

It is important to remember that many terms in the **LGBTQIA+** spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as a lesbian at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

**LGBTQIA+** An umbrella term that stands for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual**, and more. The "+" acknowledges that there are many other sexual orientations, gender identities, and experiences that may not be captured by these letters alone (such as pansexual, non-binary, genderfluid, and others). It reflects the diversity and fluidity of identities, and reminds us that language continues to evolve as people find new ways to name and express who they are.

**Misgendering** The act of referring to someone using **pronouns**, names, or gendered terms that do not align with their **gender identity**. Whether intentional or accidental, misgendering is a deeply hurtful and harmful practice, as it disregards a person's identity.

**Non-binary** Someone who doesn't identify as either a man or a woman i.e. they do not identify with either end of the traditional gender binary. Some people who are non-binary also identify as **genderqueer**, while others may not – it depends on how the individual understands and names their own identity.

Like many terms in the **LGBTQIA+** spectrum, non-binary is flexible and self-defined.

**Pronouns** Words we use to refer to someone in place of their name, such as she/her, he/him, or they/them. Everyone has pronouns, using the correct pronouns is a way to respect and affirm a person's **gender identity**.



**Queer** An umbrella term used by people to describe diverse [sexual orientations](#), [gender identities](#), and sex characteristics that fall outside of cisgender and heteronormative norms.

**Sexual Orientation** Refers to how one experiences sexual, emotional and/or romantic attraction to others.

Everyone has a sexual orientation – one can be attracted to people of the same gender, a different gender, more than one gender, or none at all. Sexual orientation exists on a spectrum and can include identities such as [gay](#), [lesbian](#), [bisexual](#), [pansexual](#), [asexual](#), [queer](#), and more. It is distinct from [gender identity](#), which relates to a person's own sense of self and gender.

**Sex assigned at birth** The sex (typically male, female or intersex) that is recorded or *assigned* to a person when they are born, usually based on the appearance of their external genitalia. Everyone is assigned a sex at birth, and this is often conflated with and used to *assign a gender at birth* even though this label may not align with a person's [gender identity](#) later in life.

**Transgender Person** Someone whose [gender identity](#) is different from the gender that was assigned to them at birth.

The term trans\* (with an asterisk) is sometimes used to signal the broad and inclusive nature of this umbrella, encompassing a wide spectrum of non-cisgender identities.

**Transgender Man** Someone who was assigned female at birth and whose [gender identity](#) is that of a man.

**Transgender Woman** Someone who was assigned male at birth and whose [gender identity](#) is that of a woman.

**Transmasculine Person** Someone who was not assigned male at birth and who identifies and expresses themselves on the spectrum of masculinity. Transmasculine persons can identify with any [gender identity](#).

Transmasculine is a self-defined term, and individuals may relate to it differently based on their experiences.

**Transfeminine Person** Someone who was not assigned female at birth and who identifies and expresses themselves on the spectrum of femininity. Transfeminine persons can identify with any [gender identity](#).

Transfeminine is a self-defined term, and individuals may relate to it differently based on their experiences.




\* INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL \*







 [theypfoundation.org](https://theypfoundation.org)

 [info@theypfoundation.org](mailto:info@theypfoundation.org)

 [theypfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/theypfoundation)