

Transgender Day of Visibility 2026

A fortnight ago, our team at TransgenderSG received an email from a transwoman in Pakistan. She was facing violence. She was homeless. She was reaching out to us in Singapore for a lifeline. This is not an anomaly—it is a reminder that the daily violence done to the transgender community globally remains largely unreported.

The world feels tired. Two wars. Millions displaced from their jobs by automation. Mental health challenges. Workers burning out, compounded by the aftermath of COVID. In Singapore, through my work in the civic space, I come across innumerable stories of single mums, parents caring for their disabled children, foreigners drowning in hospital bills, frail and sick elderly still clearing tables at hawker centres into their eighties. The Asian in me hesitates. Who am I to ask you to pay attention to transgender issues when so many are carrying so much?

And yet. In 2024, the Cass Review in the UK was weaponised to deny gender-affirming care to trans youths. In 2025, the US administration began systematically erasing transgender identities from public life—and that erasure did not stay within its borders. This year, transgender persons in India may face steeper legal hurdles just to be recognised as who they are. Suffering is not a competition. But it does compound when it is invisible. What does it look like here, at home?

Transgender identities do not exist in our school syllabus. Mainstream media is not permitted to portray us positively. Families fracture under the weight of stigma—youths are pushed out of their homes, not because they did anything wrong, but because their identities are perceived as unacceptable. The attempted suicide rate among transgender youths in Singapore sits at an alarming 21%.

To change the sex marker on an IC, the Singapore Government requires invasive surgeries—including those that sterilise. The full cost runs between \$30,000 and \$200,000, yet the average transgender person only spends around \$10,000. As a result, only 6% of those who want to change their sex marker have been able to. Without matching documents, many face barriers to employment, housing, travel, marriage and family. Our community's unemployment rate is six times the national average.

Why should anyone care? I once told a friend that Singaporeans are colour-blind and was promptly corrected. As a majority Chinese, I had to learn that the verification of that claim belongs to our minorities — if they don't feel it, I cannot assert it. The same logic applies

here. For Singapore to be truly gender-equal, the most marginalised genders must be included. We cannot claim inclusion if the people we are supposed to be including don't feel it.

In Singapore, racial cohesion did not happen by accident. It was built — deliberately — through education, housing and national service policies. Disability inclusion has its own ecosystem, imperfect but present. But the burden of trans awareness has fallen almost entirely on the trans community and its allies, and the data tells us plainly: it has not been enough.

When suffering is caused by social stigma and inequitable policy, it is — by definition — unnecessary. Policy change is blocked not by evidence but by unexamined myths held by the voting public. While we may not all be able to influence public or corporate policies, the most immediate thing any of us can do is address the stigma. A simple measure: how many transgender persons in your circle are out at their workplace? That number tells you everything about how safe it still feels to be visible.

Building an inclusive society takes work. So did building a multi-racial one. But the fruit of that labour is rare and worth it — a society where diverse people look past appearance and social standing and respect each other; where empathy lets us meet people where they are and not where we want them to be. where every person can find support and strength. Such an environment allows us to truly hear each other's needs, for every person to find support and strength. It's not just less tiring to live in. It's life-giving.

Call to Action: You can partner TransgenderSG for a more inclusive Singapore. We offer awareness talks. Reach us at contacttransgendersg@gmail.com