PRO GENDER SUPPORT FOUNDATION

PAKISTAN
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OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Pathways to Inclusion

Pro-Gender Support Foundation Pakistan

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Pathways to Inclusion: PGSF Theory of Change

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DISCLAIMER

This theory of change sets out PGSF's understanding of how change happens and the contribution it seeks to make. It describes intended change, not guaranteed results, and is reviewed every year as PGSF learns. Higher-level outcomes depend on many actors, and PGSF does not claim sole responsibility for them. Figures are stated as at November 2026. Reference to any institution or group does not imply its endorsement of this publication.

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are from PGSF activities and may not be reproduced separately from this publication.

OUR VISION

A society where everyone can participate, prosper and thrive.

OUR MISSION

Advancing inclusive development by strengthening communities, building capacity, expanding opportunities and enabling meaningful participation for all.

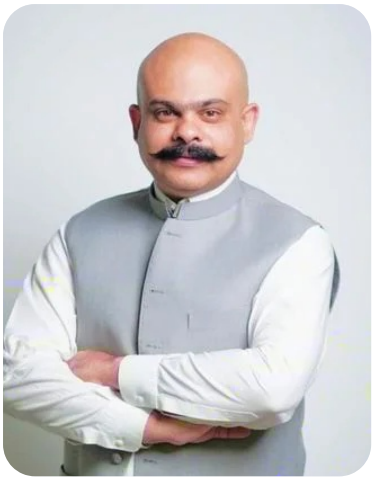
READ ONLINE

Explore the interactive version of this theory of change

Scan the code or visit **progendersupport.org/theory-of-change**

FOREWORD

A note from the author



When PGSF began working with the transgender community in 2013, the need was urgent and the work was practical: helping people reach the services, rights and opportunities that others take for granted. Over the years, that work has taught us that exclusion is rarely caused by one missing thing. It is a cycle, held in place by deprivation, stigma and institutional neglect, and it can only be broken when change happens at all three levels together.

This theory of change is our attempt to set out that learning clearly and honestly. It explains what PGSF is accountable for, what we believe our work contributes to, and the conditions that must hold for change to last. It is not a final word. It is a living framework, and we will review it every year as we learn.

I hope it serves as an invitation. To partners, institutions and colleagues who share our vision of a society where everyone can participate, prosper and thrive: we would be glad to walk these pathways with you.

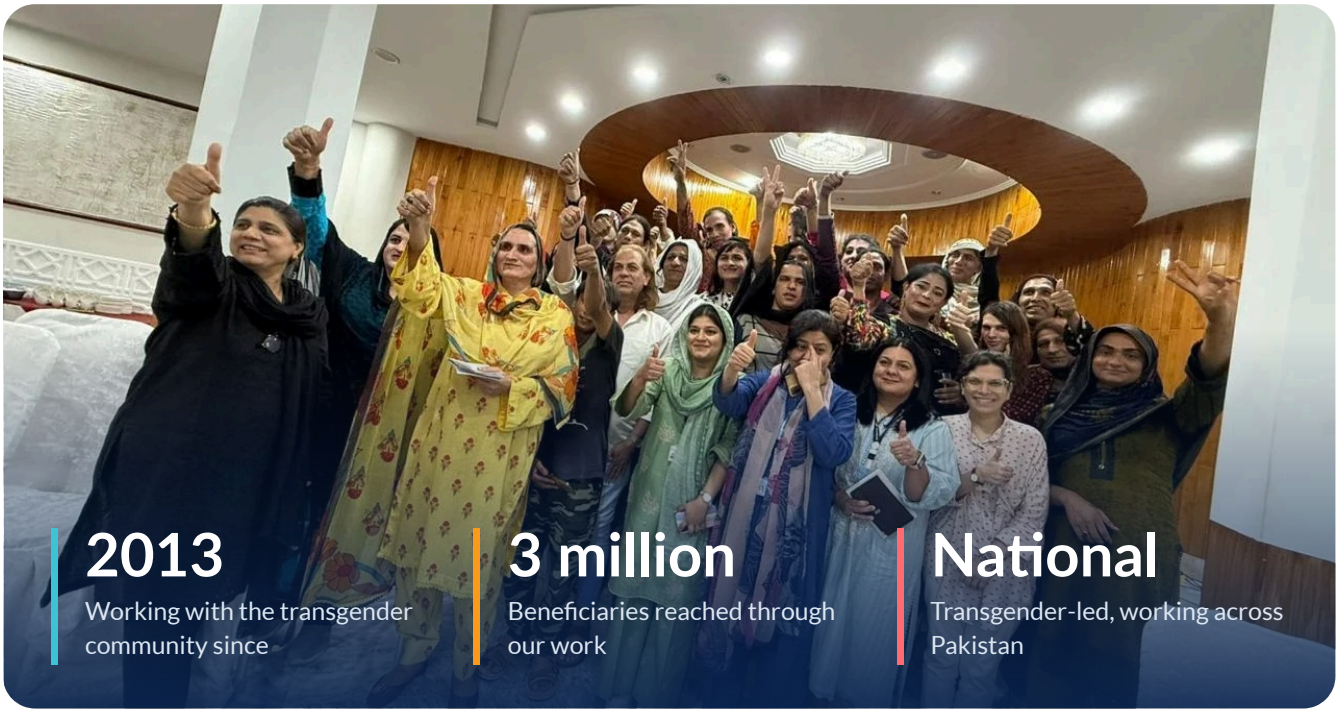
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Who we are

Pro-Gender Support Foundation Pakistan (PGSF) is a national, transgender-led organisation working across Pakistan for the inclusion of people of all genders, with a particular focus on transgender (*khawaja sira*) persons.



What sets PGSF apart

Transgender-led

PGSF is led by the community it serves, which gives it a legitimacy that few organisations can claim.

Trusted by communities

More than a decade of work has built trust with communities and their traditional structures.

Inclusive by design

Our mission covers people of all genders, so no one who faces exclusion is left out.

THE IMPACT WE WORK TOWARDS

People of all genders in Pakistan, and transgender (*khawaja sira*) persons in particular, exercise their rights and participate fully and equally in social, economic and civic life, free from discrimination and violence.

Exclusion is a cycle, not a single gap

Exclusion on the basis of gender is produced by three interlocking sets of drivers. Each one feeds the next: deprivation deepens stigma, stigma discourages institutions from engaging, and institutional neglect sustains deprivation.

At the individual level

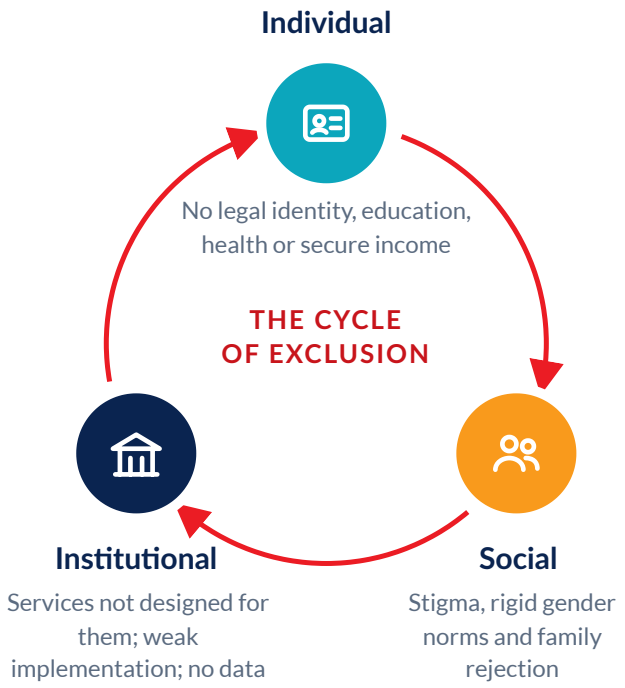
Many lack legal identity, education, health and a secure livelihood, which keeps them dependent on informal and often exploitative arrangements.

At the social level

Stigma, rigid gender norms and family rejection, often beginning in childhood, push people to the margins and away from support networks.

At the institutional level

Public services rarely consider excluded groups, commitments are unevenly implemented, and missing data keeps the problem invisible.



Who faces these barriers

Transgender (*khawaja sira*) persons
MOST ACUTE

Women

Older people without family support

Persons with disabilities

Transgender persons experience this cycle in its most acute form, but women, older people without family support and persons with disabilities face many of the same barriers. **Lasting change requires action on all three levels at once.**

03 · OUR CHANGE HYPOTHESIS

If, and if, and if… then change follows

Our hypothesis brings the three levels of exclusion together into one line of reasoning. Each condition maps onto one of our three pathways of change.

IF excluded persons acquire the capabilities, legal identity and economic means to act on their own behalf

PATHWAY A · AGENCY

AND IF families, communities and opinion leaders come to accept and support them

PATHWAY B · ACCEPTANCE

AND IF public institutions become responsive and accountable to their needs

PATHWAY C · INSTITUTIONS

THEN **exclusion progressively gives way to equal participation**

BECAUSE the barriers are mutually reinforcing and fall only when individual, social and institutional change advance together

Three pathways, one impact

Each pathway shows the outputs PGSF is directly accountable for, the intermediate outcomes they are expected to bring about, and the long-term outcome they contribute to.

A Agency and economic empowerment

OUTPUTS

- Excluded persons have increased knowledge of their rights, entitlements and the means to claim them
- Excluded persons acquire foundational education, life skills and market-relevant skills
- Accessible entry points to identity registration, health and legal support are available

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Excluded persons hold legal identity and use public services and social protection
- Excluded persons generate sustainable income and have greater control over decisions affecting their lives

LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Excluded persons, especially transgender persons, are economically secure, self-reliant and able to claim their rights

B Social acceptance and community inclusion

OUTPUTS

- Families, elders and religious and opinion leaders are engaged in dialogue on dignity and inclusion
- Community leaders and peer facilitators are equipped to support and speak for excluded members
- Public understanding of the rights and contributions of excluded groups is increased

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Stigmatising attitudes and discriminatory practices in families and communities decline
- Excluded persons receive family and community support and take part in community life

LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Social norms in the communities concerned affirm the dignity and equal worth of people of all genders

C Institutional responsiveness and enabling policy

OUTPUTS

- Service providers in health, education, justice and civil registration are equipped to serve without discrimination
- Credible evidence on excluded groups is generated and shared with decision-makers
- Partnerships and coordination mechanisms link civil society with public institutions

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Public institutions adopt inclusive practices and are accountable to excluded groups
- Legal and policy commitments on inclusion are implemented and adequately resourced

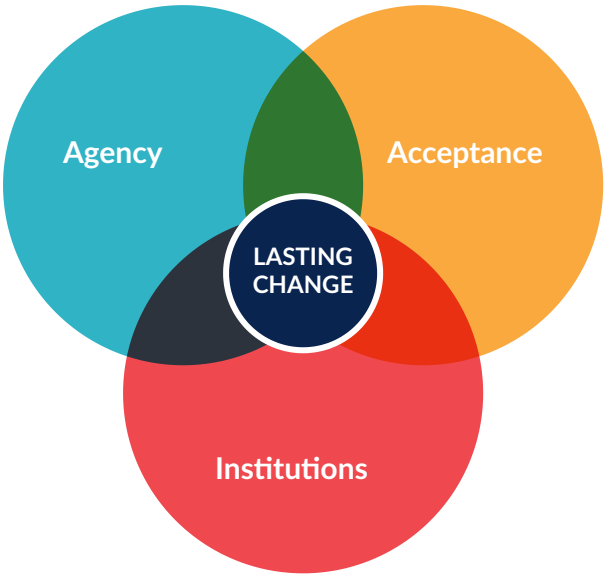
LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Public institutions and policies protect the rights of, and deliver equitable services to, people of all genders

IMPACT

Equal rights and full participation for people of all genders in Pakistan

The pathways reinforce one another



Visibility and voice

As people gain identity, skills and income, they become more visible and better able to voice their needs, which shifts attitudes and creates pressure for change.

Lower risk

Greater social acceptance lowers the risks people face when they seek services or enter the labour market.

Gains that last

Responsive institutions consolidate individual and social gains and protect them from reversal.

No single pathway is expected to achieve the long-term outcomes on its own.



Agency, acceptance and opportunity, celebrated together.

PGSF as a bridge

PGSF's contribution rests on its legitimacy as a transgender-led organisation and on the trust it has built with communities and their traditional structures over more than a decade.



Contribution, not attribution

PGSF IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR

Delivering its outputs well, and demonstrating through evidence its contribution to change at the outcome level.

PGSF CONTRIBUTES TO

Higher-level outcomes that depend on many actors. PGSF does not claim sole responsibility for them.

THE STORY CONTINUES ONLINE

See every pathway come to life on our website

Explore the full theory of change, follow the links to our programmes, and share it with colleagues.

progendersupport.org/theory-of-change

SCAN TO EXPLORE

07 · KEY ASSUMPTIONS

What must hold true, and our plan if it does not

The pathways depend on conditions partly outside PGSF's control. We monitor them throughout and adjust the theory of change where they do not hold.

WHAT MUST HOLD TRUE	OUR RESPONSE
1 **Community trust and traditional structures continue to provide access to excluded persons.**	→ IF IT WEAKENS Broaden entry points through peer networks, family members and other trusted intermediaries.
2 **Public institutions remain willing to engage, supported by national legal and policy commitments on inclusion.**	→ IF IT WEAKENS Shift emphasis to evidence, coalition-building and engagement at levels where openness remains.
3 **Greater visibility does not expose excluded persons to unacceptable risk.**	→ IF IT WEAKENS Apply do-no-harm and safeguarding measures, and adjust the pace and visibility of work to the context.
4 **Markets and local economies offer viable opportunities for income generation.**	→ IF IT WEAKENS Diversify livelihood options and strengthen links with private-sector actors.
5 **Partners are willing to invest in change that unfolds over the long term.**	→ IF IT WEAKENS Combine long-term goals with measurable milestones that demonstrate progress early.

08 · GUIDING PRINCIPLES

How we work along every pathway

Gender and Development lens

We examine the distinct needs, risks and opportunities of women, men and transgender persons, rather than treating gender as a separate topic.

Meaningful participation

The people most affected shape the decisions that concern them.

Do no harm and safeguarding

The safety and dignity of community members always come first.

Sensitivity to context

We work within Pakistan's constitutional guarantees of dignity and equality, with respect for the culture and faith of the communities we serve.

09 · MEASURING AND LEARNING

A theory that learns

Progress is tracked through indicators at output and outcome level for each pathway, drawing on both quantitative data and the experiences of community members themselves. Findings feed into regular reflection within PGSF and with its Technical Advisory Group, and the theory of change itself is reviewed every year so that it keeps reflecting what we learn about how change happens.



Work with us on this change

Partner with PGSF to turn this theory of change into results for people of all genders across Pakistan. Whether you are a donor, a public institution, a civil society organisation or a professional who wants to contribute your skills, there is a place for you on these pathways.

Partner with us

Co-design and fund work along one or more pathways.

Support our programmes

Help turn outputs into lasting outcomes.

Volunteer your skills

Share your expertise with communities.

SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

progendersupport.org

Everything you need to know about our work and how to get involved.

Our programmes | Theory of Change | Adopt a Stall | Volunteer

ADOPT A STALL · PLEDGE NOW

Every stall is a livelihood.

Help us set up 50 stalls run by transgender entrepreneurs. Adopt one, or partner with us on our programmes.

Pledge now
progendersupport.org/adopt-a-stall