

Why online resource sharing is the way forward for the LGBTI movement

[Blog, Human Rights Defenders](#)

2020 proved to be a game-changer for LGBTI activists, sending almost every aspect of the work into the digital sphere. Luckily ILGA-Europe had been developing an [online resource-sharing centre](#) for a few years before COVID-19 hit, and we probably couldn't have picked a better moment to launch it.

Imagine the year is 2019. Like so many other activists in the international human rights movement, so much of your work seems to depend on travelling and attending in-person events. At the same time, it's impossible to keep up to speed with the things you need to know to do your work successfully. It's hard to think of other ways to get informed, and the work just seems to grow and grow, leaving very space and time to focus on the work you need to do. Prior to 2020, we at ILGA-Europe had been asking ourselves how we could better meet the needs of activists in these changing times.

Then COVID-19 came along and everything changed. Suddenly all travel was off the table, our workspaces went online, along with the meetings we needed to attend. The internet became our primary tool to keep in touch with each other. For ILGA-Europe, it was no longer the question *whether* online tools could support the cross-border solidarity that has characterised our LGBTI movement for many decades. The question became about *how* online tools might do this in the best possible way.

At ILGA-Europe we have been quietly working on the creation of an online resource-sharing tool for a few years now. **This week we proudly launched the result of that work, our online resource sharing centre, [The Hub](#).** We probably couldn't have chosen a better moment to launch it. After a year of seeing all international LGBTI convenings cancelled or reconfigured online, there is an urgent question of how we can best go about sharing information.

A go-to place for activists

Webinars and other online gatherings have done great service to the movement, but they aren't resources that stay put. We wanted to create one go-to place where activists can search for diverse resources. A place where we can easily add new resources as they become available. We call these resources 'cards', and new cards will be added to The Hub every month.

In offering learning opportunities to the movement, we increasingly see that activists have very specific questions. For instance, activists don't ask how they should carry out communications generally, but they may have questions about how to produce a podcast, or create a campaign. They don't ask how to fundraise but want to know how to make online fundraising events work, or raise donations via Facebook. Cards on The Hub address such specific questions and do so in a super easily-accessible way.

The Hub currently offers content in eight thematic sections — areas of work that are clear priorities for the LGBTI movement in Europe and Central Asia: Campaigning, Communications, Community, Fundraising, Management, Security, Wellbeing — and Russian translated cards. We will be adding other thematic sections later on.

Another important reason for us to build The Hub was to make sure that resources become available for all activists, and not just the lucky ones who attend our conferences or other events. That's why The Hub is accessible to any LGBTI activist.

Use your own experience to benefit the movement

We wanted to build an online resource centre where over time activists can contribute with their own experiences, adding them to the resources we've created at ILGA-Europe. So we added an easy-to-use feature called 'Case Studies', which allows activists to add their own experience to cards. So, for instance, if you have created a podcast, you can add the things you have learned to the card. Or if you hosted an online fundraising event, you can tell other activists about the learning you've achieved. Case studies capture the work and experiences of activists and thus allow activists to directly learn from each other.

Will this mean the end of ILGA-Europe's in-person events?

The short answer is no. We understand that The Hub cannot replace in-person meetings and conferences, and we will continue to organise them post-COVID. Networking, critical conversations, trust-building ?? these are some of the things that cannot be easily done online. We believe that there will continue to be a space for such events as vaccinations change the face of COVID-19, and we move beyond 2021.

But like our conferences and in-person trainings, The Hub opens the doors for our ILGA-Europe family to grow. It invites in people who normally don't get to attend events. It allows the ILGA-Europe team to share resources that otherwise wouldn't be widely disseminated, and allows activists to share their own experiences. It is a timely new addition to ILGA-Europe's toolbox, with which we hope to continue supporting the strengthening of LGBTI activism across Europe and Central Asia.

Safety first

We are well aware that the internet isn't always a safe place. Therefore, The Hub has built-in an additional layer of security for sensitive content. Such content is only accessible for users that have been verified by us. When you join The Hub and come across content marked 'sensitive', you will be asked to go through a verification process with a member of our team. This allows us to share resources that are specific to the LGBTI community, and for our use only.

If you haven't joined The Hub yet, now is your chance. [Click here](#) and within minutes, you'll have your profile set up and you'll be ready to go. Tell other LGBTI activists about it too on your social media, that way our Hub community can continue to grow and strengthen!

[Here's a tweet you can share now!](#)