

COVID-19: Keeping LGBTI communities together

[Blog](#), [Community Organising](#), [Covid-19](#)

Many countries have surpassed the peak of the COVID-19 crisis and are beginning to plan phased-out endings of their lockdowns. But we're not out of the woods yet, and if numbers of coronavirus cases start rising again, lockdown measures are most likely to be extended or reinstated, as was seen in Singapore. In a webinar presented by ILGA-Europe earlier this month, participants shared the activities and strategies their organisations have used to stay connected while confined to their houses.

Coffee on Zoom or brunch on Facetime? Following an online course together or watching a movie? For the past two or three months, LGBTI organisations have been exploring a plethora of different ways of staying connected, while providing support to their communities.

As part of ILGA-Europe's '[Protect, Adapt, and Rally](#)' three-part plan to support the LGBTI movement through the COVID-19 crisis, our webinar on Community Organising provided a space to share ideas and opinions on how to continue staying in touch, and how activists have been helping their communities and vulnerable individuals during these challenging times. Here are some of the activities our participants became involved in:

1. Individual and Community Support

- Providing antiretroviral therapy (ART) to LGBTI living with HIV.
- Creating an online peer group to provide psychological support.
- Offering online psychological support with a psychotherapist available at no cost.
- Phone and WhatsApp campaigns with volunteers offering psychological and legal support.
- Running a food provision service for trans sex workers who are unable to work.
- Creating a Facebook support group to provide information on national activities, on and offline.
- Providing online materials about COVID-19 and social distancing for LGBTI youth.

2. Coming Together

- Setting up a penpal network.
- Setting up online support groups for trans people and parents of LGBT people.
- Collaboration with other organisations
- Hosting social media live events (Facebook, Instagram) to offer a platform to members of the community.
- Virtual Coffee Lottery via Zoom, a virtual social occasion where participants are randomly paired for an online coffee meet-up
- A 'Queerentine' online hangout for the community to discuss various issues.

3. Fun and Entertainment

- Online meetings with LGBTI groups to play games and chat.
- Volunteering to walk with a member of the community, while socially distancing.
- Sending out newsletters with recommended activities that are accessible online, such as LGBTI events, books and movies.

- Formal and informal group meetings on social media platforms to discuss ideas on the use of time; how to be 'sexually self-sustainable' during quarantine; entertainment opportunities etc.
- Online yoga classes
- A charity concert for supporters, providing online space for young queer and ally artists.

Want more? Watch now our webinar on how to continue reaching out to LGBTI during COVID-19 crisis.

In this episode of our series of community organising webinars, we shared stories of how activists maintained their outreach work during lockdown and social distancing requirements across Europe and Central Asia.

What have we learned in supporting our communities as the crisis continues to persist?

On 5 June 2020, ILGA-Europe organised a webinar on how to continue reaching out to LGBTI during COVID-19 crisis.