History and context



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CommsLabs has been convening since 2014 all across the globe!

Colombia



The first CommsLab was hosted in Colombia in **July, 2014** with local host **Colombia Diversa** and participants from Latin America. Gathering together **more than 35 activists from Latin America with 12 technologists and communications practitioners** from around the world, the group worked together to create new media strategies and digital advocacy tools specifically designed to meet the needs of LGBTQI human rights defenders.

Kenya and South Africa



In April, 2015, activists and allies from Kenya and South Africa, the United States and beyond gathered in Cape Town, South Africa to begin the work of setting the strategic direction and vision for CommsLab Kenya and CommsLab South Africa. Participants felt strongly that the two sessions should be linked, and should build in broader participation. They also began to forge the foundation of the most important content to include in the two CommsLabs, work that will be built upon with engagement with activists in both places in the months to come.

Dominican Republic



Co-designed and co-facilitated by grantee partners from Latin America and the Caribbean, the **4th CommsLabs* in Punta Cana in 2015/2016** was an opportunity for LGBTQI+ activists from all over the region to build capacity, experiment with new tools and technologies, and intentionally connect with each other both within and across movements to break down the structures of racism, patriarchy, and colonialism, work together to build creative messaging and develop organizing tactics, as well as discuss the particular challenges they face. Connecting the physical and digital organizing spheres, ultimately building collective power, CommsLabs is much more than a training and exchange space: CommsLab is a space for organizers to rest, rejuvenate, reflect, and recharge.

Caribbean



The Caribbean CommsLabs marks the start of APC’s collaboration with Astraea. COVID impacted CommsLabs in many spheres and re-shaped the whole process: from (deciding and building) infrastructure and switching to online meetings, to handling uncertainty in logistic planning and travel restrictions. We opted for a hybrid format: holding CommsLabs simultaneously in Jamaica and Barbados, connected through the internet to give the feeling of being altogether in one event. This reduced risks related to travel restrictions and created a more manageable and careful space.

Central Asia and South Caucasus



The CASC CommsLab takes place in a moment of heightened tensions in the region with the wars raging in Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh, and multiple laws being discussed in different countries that impacts civil society funding and organizing, specially LGBTQI+ organizations.

With COVID not being a big of threat anymore, the Activist Advisory Board Co-Design consultation happened in person in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The event was held in Tbilisi, Georgia in February 2024.

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