



OUTSUMMIT

A Human Rights Day Conference for LGBTIQ Activism



OUTRIGHT
ACTION INTERNATIONAL

30 Years

What is OutSummit?

OutSummit is an annual global convening for the human rights of LGBTIQ people organized by OutRight Action International. It is a space to come together across civil society, State and private sector boundaries to share insights and best practices, and to strategize for the human rights of LGBTIQ people around the world.

OutSummit had been held for the past six years in early December, around Human Rights Day which is marked annually on December 10. The choice of date is not coincidental. To this day, in too many places, the human rights of LGBTIQ people are not recognized as such. OutSummit serves as a space where we can reaffirm that LGBTIQ rights are human rights, and join forces across sector boundaries to continue pushing for progress in global recognition of this basic fact.

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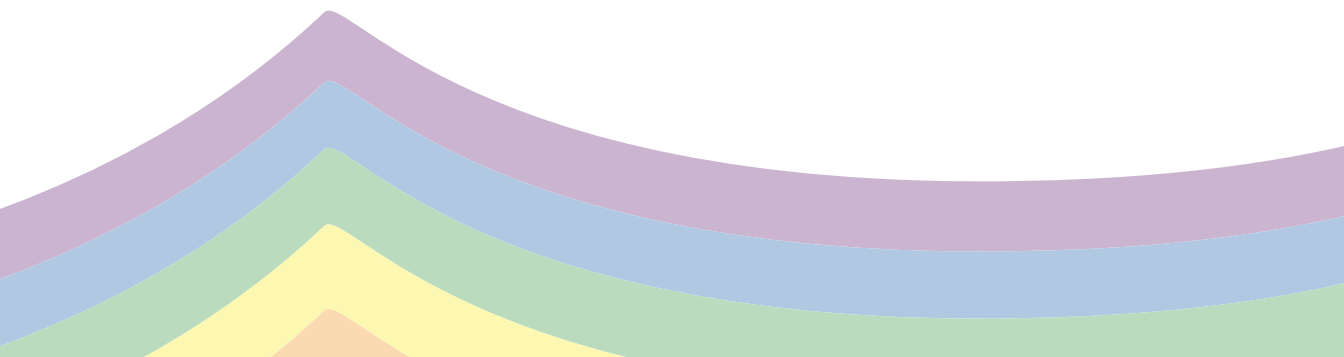
OutSummit 2020

In 2020 OutRight organized the first virtual OutSummit. We were saddened not to be able to come together in person, but cancelling was not an option. The urgency of OutSummit had only grown in the months leading up to it.

While the COVID-19 pandemic left no country or person unaffected, as all crisis situations do, the pandemic affected those most vulnerable – such as LGBTIQ people – more severely than the general population. Across the world LGBTIQ communities faced a devastation of livelihood, increased risk of domestic and family violence, rising mental health challenges caused by isolation, scapegoating for the pandemic, challenges accessing healthcare, and an inability to connect with chosen families and communities. Moreover, humanitarian responses even in countries which recognize the rights of LGBTIQ people are too often organized in a binary gendered way, overlooking LGBTIQ at best, and actively excluding us at worst from being able to access relief. LGBTIQ organizations who would normally step in to support their communities also struggled to adapt to the new reality, further compounding the challenges.

It was a difficult year. Without a doubt. But it also opened opportunities for connecting in a way that was not possible before.

“Community is a promise that we are not alone,” said Hamed Sinno in their heartbreakingly beautiful and emotional keynote speech. And nowhere was this clearer than at OutSummit 2020. Our virtual OutSummit was, by far, the most well-attended and successful OutSummit to date.



OutSummit 2020 Program

For the first time, we hosted OutSummit over three days, juggling multiple time-zones, including satellite sessions tailored for an audience in Asia and the Pacific.

In recognition of the growing movement against racial injustice, and the fact that there can be no LGBTIQ equality without racial equality, our headlining panel discussion was “Movements for Liberation: LGBTQ Activism and Racial Justice”. In celebration of OutRight’s 30th anniversary, the second plenary session focused on “Resistance and Resilience: OutRight and the LGBTIQ Movement over 30 Years”. Other sessions focused on tackling sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts and gender ideology, ensuring equitable solutions to crisis situations, advocating for LGBTIQ inclusion at the UN, improving visibility of LGBTIQ people in the media, and many others.



Our keynote speakers were **Hamed Sinno** – poet, activist and lead singer of the Lebanese indie-rock band Mashrou’ Leila, and Filipino American supermodel and trans rights activist **Geena Rocero**.

Geena spoke about her experience of being a successful model but not being seen for who she really is, about what drove her to come out, and the

strong shoulders of activists who came before her giving her strength and power.

Hamed spoke about the importance of community, about anti-blackness, the power of hate speech, and the mental health struggles we try to overcome just to survive.

Among speakers and participants were a number of journalists. Media are an important avenue for elevating the voices of LGBTIQ people, for advocacy and awareness, influencing the narrative on LGBTIQ issues, and reaching



audiences which we don't have direct access to. Through media we also elevate our advocacy and fundraising aims. This year we had numerous journalists registered to take part in OutSummit, and a media panel featured prominent journalists from from the BBC, VICE, Gay Times and Latvian National Broadcasting television LTV.

OutSummit 2020 in Numbers

1650
people
registered

From
100
countries

Over
30
sessions in
3
days

115
speakers

Journalists
registered
19

Social
media reach
300K

4065
comments
made in the
conference
platform
chat
function



Presenters Said

"Politicians have a responsibility to do what is best for all of us. They work for us, and if they are not making decisions that are in our best interest, they must be held accountable. This nation is ours. If you care about this community, then you will join us. Otherwise you are part of the problem and we will call you out on that."

– *Ifásinà Efunyemi*

Human rights defender, educator, journalist, writer and poet from Belize

"Allies listen, show up, speak up. Allyship isn't just on a T-shirt and a pen."

– *Molly Q. Ford*

Vice President of Global Equality Programs, Salesforce

"When we allow people to bear witness to our struggle we create family. The opposite of despair is not happiness, it is community. Our fight for justice and equity is a fight for community and a fight through community. Community has always saved me. It was a promise that I wasn't alone. Through every obstacle we (Mashrou' Leila) have been carried to safety by countless trans and queer voices. That is the power of community."

– *Hamed Sinno*

Keynote speaker, Lebanese American musician, poet, and social justice advocate

"Damn. Sometimes I walk away thinking we can actually change the world you know."

– *Bev Ditsie*

Activist, South Africa

"We get courage from each other. And what has been done in the generations before has provided the space for where we are now – to ask for more."

– *Dominique Hinman*

Screenwriter and activist, Feminist Filmmakers International, USA

"Thank you for offering the no-cost registration option for activists. In-person conferences often exclude the valuable contributions of people who cannot afford to attend/travel and/or cannot travel safely across borders."

– *Abigail Garner, author of Families Like Mine, based in Germany*

"I am standing on the shoulders of giants and trans women who are leading the way, the activist groups that have been doing the work."

– *Geena Rocero*

Keynote speaker, Filipino American supermodel, and transgender advocate

Participants Said

“Congratulations on making this dynamic, fluid and accessible! I love this platform and the creativity you all brought to it! More please! I can’t wait until next year!”

– Ryan Ubuntu Olson, Human Rights and Gender Expert
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

“The past 8-9 months were challenging to say the least, but because as activists our lives and daily work require us to face and brace all negativities, we remained resilient. As a movement we became creative and more determined to ensure that our mandates are not lost amidst a pandemic. It is therefore moments like this OutSummit 2020, that serve as a motivation and an inspiration to work harder, love stronger, and remain in solidarity with this awesome family of world-wide champions for change.”

– Col Mc Ewan, Executive Director, GuyBow, Guyana

“This is one of the best panels I’ve ever attended. And absolutely the best chat I’ve ever observed during a panel!”

– Healy Thompson,
Stephen Lewis
Foundation

“I learned a lot during these sessions. I feel that through these sessions we strengthen each other as we move forward to achieve a better world together.”

– Yuphita Nofihantiwi,
ERAT INDONESIA

“Thank you for offering the no-cost registration option for activists. In-person conferences often exclude the valuable contributions of people who cannot afford to attend/travel and/or cannot travel safely across borders.”

– Abigail Garner,
author of *Families Like Mine*, based in Germany

“Really amazing! Please consider this online OutSummit format again.”

– Rzouga Selmi,
Unicorn Refugees, Tunisian activist

“I’m so grateful to the voices here for underscoring the importance and power of coalition-building. We can’t outspend but we can out-organize!”

– Jace Ritchey

Where Do We Go from Here?

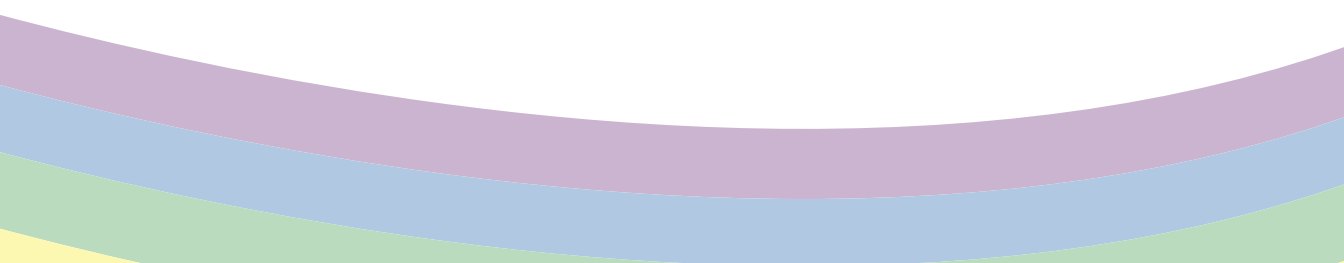
We sometimes say “the global LGBTIQ movement” like it is a given, but that is not true. It is a precious thing. It takes nurturing to create. It catalyzes progress. And it saves lives. We have a global LGBTIQ movement because we build relationships in spaces like OutSummit and because we learn to fight, not just for ourselves, but for each other.

But to truly generate change, we can't only meet once a year at OutSummit. This work happens 365 days a year.

Even a year into the pandemic, after over \$1 million has been distributed to LGBTIQ organizations around the world through OutRight's Global LGBTIQ COVID-19 Emergency Fund, we continue to receive daily pleas for help. The pandemic continues to amplify existing vulnerabilities of LGBTIQ people and cause devastation to our livelihoods. LGBTIQ organizations are struggling to stay alive, to pay bills, to support their communities, while also standing up to restrictive legislation targeting LGBTIQ people, scapegoating of our communities for the pandemic, and day to day challenges or harassment, discrimination, and violence which LGBTIQ people continue to face every day, everywhere. In 67 countries around the world same-sex relations continue to be criminalized. Only five countries ban sexual orientation and gender identity. We have so much left to fight for.

Our movement urgently needs ongoing support to be able to get through this crisis, and to continue important, life-saving work advocating for recognition of the human rights of LGBTIQ people, fighting discrimination, challenging harassment and violence, and empowering LGBTIQ people everywhere.

Whether you're an activist, academic, journalist, donor, youth, businessperson or government official, we need you. We can and will keep changing the status quo for LGBTIQ rights, but we can't do it alone.



Partners, Sponsors and Supporters

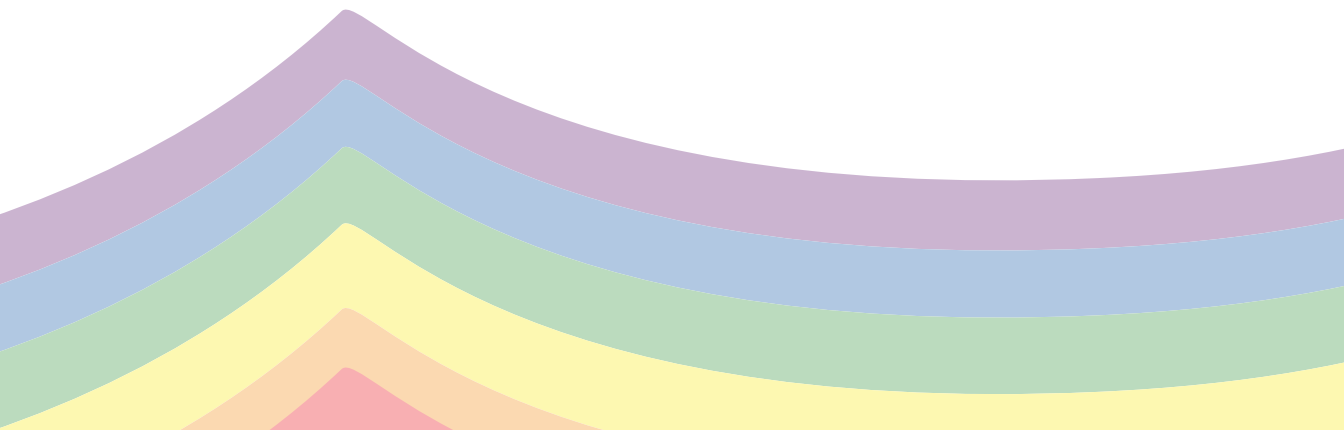
OutSummit is organized in collaboration with partners the Sorensen Center for International Peace and Justice and the Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic of the CUNY School of Law.

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Law in the Service of Human Needs

This year we are grateful to founding sponsors The Small Change Foundation, as well as sponsors P&G, Dell Technologies, Levi Strauss & Co, Microsoft, The Walt Disney Company, Herman Miller, Verizon and Nomura Holdings America. We are also thankful for supporters Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality, a World Economic Forum Lighthouse Project; InterPride; Better Together Foundation; World Bank GLOBE and Open Finance.





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