



GLOBAL NETWORK OF
YOUNG PEOPLE
LIVING WITH HIV

AIDS 2022

Virtual Hub Guide

Why do we need **virtual hubs**?

The 24th International AIDS Conference, AIDS2022, is taking place in Montreal from 29 July to 2 August. Many young people who would love to attend are not able to travel to Canada but, for the first time, the conference will take place both in-person and virtually, to make it accessible to as many people as possible. This is a fantastic opportunity to really broaden participation in the conference without the challenges and costs involved with travel.

We want to seize this chance to bridge the gap between communities and decision-makers and to encourage activists to get the most out of the conference. We are supporting networks of young people living with HIV to set up virtual hubs in their own countries where activists can gather in person, join in the conference virtually, share their experiences and perspectives and learn from others.



What is a **virtual hub**?

- A physical space where people can be together during AIDS2022 in their home country. This could be a meeting room in a hotel, a community center, or some other dedicated, safe space.
- Open to participants on each day of the AIDS2022 conference (Friday 29 July to Tuesday 2 August 2022).
- Allowing young people to view AIDS2022 sessions and make their own contributions.
- Providing opportunities for relationship building, discussions, and shared learning among other participants and partners.



How to set up a hub?

AIDS2022 is approaching fast, so plans need to be put in place for the virtual hubs right now. Here are some steps to follow. They are not necessarily in order; you might not want to wait until you have completed the first step before you move on to the next. All of them need to be done as soon as possible, so be sure to read the whole guide now.

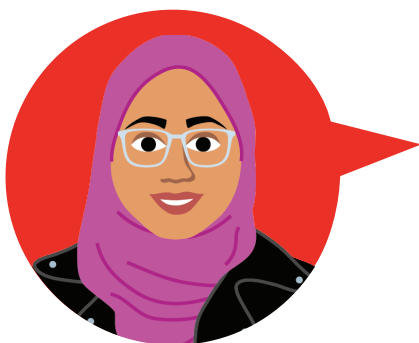
1

Make a Budget



Funds are available from Y+ Global to set up a hub in your country. You need to understand what total budget you have to spend and plan how you will ensure that you have enough money to cover everything that you hope to do. Some of the items you will need to pay for may include:

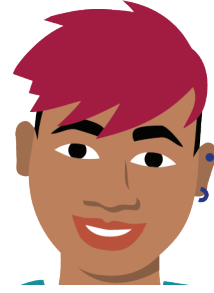
- ✓ Venue hire
- ✓ Refreshments and lunch – you should provide each person in the hub with lunch every day and some other refreshments for a coffee break in the morning and afternoon.
- ✓ Travel costs – to cover the cost for participants to get to the hub
- ✓ Equipment hires, internet connection, etc. – you may need to hire a large TV screen or projector so that you can watch the sessions together.
- ✓ Documentation – will you want to print out any copies of the agenda or other paperwork?
- ✓ Translation – it can be quite expensive to pay for an interpreter so decide if you need one and make sure you find out how much they will charge.



Include as much detail as you can in your budget and be sure that you are realistic about costs.

2

Find a Venue



This is important. You need to find a space that is flexible and can be adapted to accommodate all the participants. It should include an area where you can watch live-streamed sessions, as well as a space where you can sit together and reflect on what you have heard and share and develop your own ideas.

Think about where refreshments and lunch can be served and who will be providing these.

How will people get to the venue? Make sure you choose a location that is easy to access. You will want to encourage as many people as possible to come and take part so try and choose a central location that can be reached by public transport.

You should also encourage a diverse range of participants. Think about any issues that may need to be addressed to make the space accessible to everyone. For example, will any of the participants need disability access? What about a private space for prayer? Will anyone need to bring their children with them?

If possible, use a venue that is used by people living with HIV already, like a community space where people are comfortable. It is critical that people feel they can attend the hub without any concerns about their privacy or safety.

Don't forget you need to stick to a budget so make sure the venue is not too expensive.

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Develop a timetable of events and activities



AIDS2022 is a massive conference. It will take place over five days with a whole range of events not only the main conference sessions but also satellite sessions and pre-conference meetings streamed live on a virtual platform, session recordings and on-demand content, and a virtual exhibition.

There will be an entire virtual Global Village running alongside the conference with a strong community focus. Live performances, films, and arts will be uploaded from this to the virtual platform and there will also be sessions including panel discussions, debates, and presentations, with opportunities for Q&As. They will focus on current and emerging HIV-related topics, often with specific emphasis on key and affected populations. These sessions will be streamed live on the AIDS 2022 virtual platform and will also be available to view on-demand.

There is an official youth programme for the conference that you should check out here. And finally, lots of organizations will be holding their own virtual side events too that you may want to join.

Y+ Global has organized registration for you so that you have access to all the events. You will need to take a detailed look at the conference programme and choose what to include in your hub. All the details can be found on the AIDS2022 website here. Don't forget Montreal is the host city, so the conference programme follows Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

To decide on the best agenda for your hub, start by bringing together a small group of young people to get their thoughts on which sessions they are most interested in. Together you can develop a draft agenda for each day so that participants have an idea of what to expect in the hub. You may want to adapt your agenda as you go along. At the beginning of each day, it would be great if everyone in the hub came together to decide what sessions they are most interested in and to agree on an agenda for the day. This way they are likely to find the whole experience more interesting and to get more out of the conference.

Don't try and cram too much into each day. You'll need frequent breaks and time for people in your hub to share their reactions to what they have heard.

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Find people who would like to join the hub



This is the most important step of all. Who is going to come to your hub? Think about how you can let people know the hub is taking place and sign them up to take part. The conference is only a few weeks away, so you need to spread the word now.

You should aim to have at least 15-25 participants every day. If you have the space and money, then it would be great if you could have more.

Agree on a system for registering people for the hub. When they register make sure you know which days they will be attending and take their contact details. Be clear with people and explain what will be happening in the hub as well as all the practicalities around lunch and travel.

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Encourage diversity



The hubs should be inclusive, safe spaces that are welcoming to all young people living with and affected by HIV as well as young people from key populations. To make sure that your hub is a success you will need to think about this at every stage of the process:

- When you choose the venue, make sure it is a place where people will feel safe.
- When you register people for the hub, reach out to and include a diverse range of young people.
- When you organize the logistics, plan for anyone with additional needs.

Don't forget. The sessions will all be delivered in English. If you have people coming to your hub who cannot speak English, you will need to organise translation.

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Spread the word



The whole point of these big AIDS conferences is to shine a spotlight on the issues faced by people living with HIV and to encourage discussions about how to shape the HIV response. By setting up a hub in your country, you can be sure that young people have a louder voice in this process. You don't want to just talk to the other people in your hub, you also want to share your thoughts, reflections and ideas with the wider world.

Instead of just watching the sessions - look for opportunities to participate. In some sessions you may have an opportunity to raise your hand (virtually) and make your own contribution to the discussion, in others you will be able to add comments in the chat. Some sessions, particularly some of the satellite sessions and those organised on the fringes of the conference, may be particularly designed to be as interactive as possible. Look out for events like those so that you can include them in your agenda.

You should also use this opportunity to spread the discussion wider. Use your social media channels to share your reflections as you go along. And remember this is an advocacy opportunity. The eyes and ears of the world will be focused on AIDS2022. Think about what messages you would like them to hear. You could encourage everyone in your hub to join together and decide on one advocacy message that they think is a priority. Together they can all promote this through the social media platforms that they use. Try and make anything that you post as engaging as possible. Including photos or graphics helps so make sure you take some photos of your hub and share those. But get permission from everyone involved first - explain clearly how you will be using any photos that you take and make sure people give their consent beforehand.

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Be prepared



The virtual hub will only be a success if you are well organised. Here is a short checklist of some of the things to help you work out what you need to prepare:

- ✔ A big screen for people to watch sessions.
- ✔ A stable internet connection so you can join in the live streams.
- ✔ Registration details (including any log in information) – so that you know how to access any of the conference sessions on the virtual platform.
- ✔ A clear timetable so that food and refreshment breaks can fit around your activities.

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Don't panic



Yes, there is a lot to do but you can do this! Allen and Irene at Y+ Global are happy to help answer your questions and point you in the right direction if you are not sure what to do. You can WhatsApp them any questions you have.

Good luck and enjoy the conference!