



The Use of Events to Achieve Social Change: The Case of ILGA Portugal

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Learning Objectives

1. To understand the impact of social marketing on behavioural change.
2. To understand the importance of the communication in social marketing.
3. To analyse the importance of events as a communication action in social marketing.

1 Introduction

The ILGA Portugal Association was founded in 1995, in Lisbon. It is the largest and oldest association fighting for its ideals, that is, for equality and against discrimination of the LGBTI+ community in Portugal. Its main objective is the integration in society of the LGBTI+ community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex) through a broad programme of support, in the social sphere, which ensures the improvement of their quality of life, through the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (ILGA, 2022a). It should be mentioned that its Board of Directors is mainly made up of volunteers and a body of 10 leaders is

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Fig. 1 Start screen of the official ILGA Portugal website. *Translation: Having Support/Helping ILGA/Help and be part of it/Denounce discrimination.* Source: ILGA Portugal (2022)

elected, which makes up the General Assembly and the Fiscal Councils, elected by the members themselves. However, there is also a technical team, consisting of four people, which ensures the normal functioning and services of the association (Silva, 2021). The work they develop is above all a work of education, interaction, and empowerment, thus allowing their beneficiaries to participate and intervene in the protection of LGBTI+ rights and in the fight for equality, not only in sexual matters, but also in issues such as racism, xenophobia, or disability (ILGA, 2022a).

In order to facilitate the dissemination of its activities, ILGA Portugal has its own institutional website and uses other dissemination tools such as billboards. However, it also participates in several national and international projects, with themes ranging from the promotion of safe spaces for all people to raising awareness of the LGBTI+ issue in the various areas of action of public entities (ILGA, 2022a).

ILGA also organises annual events such as Arraial Pride and the Rainbow Awards, as well as monthly events such as conferences, lectures, training, and others, all with the same objective: to ensure that LGBTI+ people live in a world with much more equality. The association also has a solidarity shop, where its products can be bought at affordable prices and its delivery is fast and efficient (ILGA, 2022a). Information about the organisation can be found at its website (Fig. 1).

With its work the organisation helps to achieve SDG 10 (“Reduced inequalities”), in particular in order to reach the target “by 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”.¹

¹<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal10.html>

2 Case Development

2.1 Events as a Communication Action in Social Marketing

An event is an occurrence with a certain agenda and schedule, which brings together a certain group of people and aims to achieve certain objectives. “*From a communication point of view, each and every event has as its main objective to carry a message in favourable conditions, at the right time, and in an environment conducive to the reception of said message. The event assumes itself, therefore, as a language and a communication tool*” (Gomes, 2015).

The event, as a public relations tool, emerges to achieve social, cultural, or political changes (Giacomo, 2007; Duarte, 2009; Theaker, 2012).² According to Martins (2013), events can be divided into two major groups: public and private.

- Public events: (i) Cultural Celebrations: Festivals, Carnival, Parades, Religious Events, and Tributes; (ii) Art/Entertainment: Concerts, Exhibitions, Award Ceremonies, and Other Shows; (iii) Trade/Business: Fairs, Markets, Exhibitions, Meetings and Conferences, Advertising/Promotional Events, and Fundraising Events; (iv) Sports Competitions: Professional or Amateur; (v) Educational and Scientific: Seminars, Workshops, Congresses, and Interpretative Events; (vi) Recreational: Games and Sports from a fun perspective and Entertainment Events; (vi) Political: Inaugurations, Investments, VIP Visits, and Rallies.
- Private events can be differentiated into: (i) Personal Celebrations: Birthdays, Family Holidays, and Rituals; (ii) Social Events: Parties and Meetings.

2.2 ILGA Portugal

The main aim of the ILGA Portugal Association is the integration into society of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex population through a broad programme of support in the social sphere to ensure improvement in their quality of life: by fighting against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, promoting citizenship, human rights, and gender equality (ILGA, 2020). It also has a strong diversity policy and interest groups dedicated, namely, to lesbian women, transgender people, and Rainbow Families. To mention that it is a member of the Advisory Board of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality; of the *Fundamental Rights Platform of the Fundamental Rights Agency* ILGA—*International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association*; NELFA—*Network of European LGBT Families Associations*; ILGA-Europe’s *Advocacy Network*.

As an association dedicated to LGBTI+ activism, ILGA Portugal developed one of its campaigns to celebrate its work since 1996, focusing on three concepts: movement, action, and collective. It should be noted that this action and many others

²Giacomo (2007), Duarte (2009) and Theaker (2012).



Fig. 2 ILGA's Mupi advertisement. Source: ILGA - Marketeer (2021)

are in favour of the rights of LGBTI+ people and their families present in the genesis of the formation of ILGA Portugal. In the organisation and participation of events, ILGA Portugal relies on the support of its communication team (Fig. 2 shows one Mupi about one manifestation ILGA has organised).

2.3 ILGA's Events

Events are languages and communication tools that aim to achieve specific and previously outlined objectives (Marketeer, 2021). However, ILGA Portugal intends through its events, namely, the Rainbow Awards and Arraial Lisboa *Pride*, to disseminate its fight for equality and against discrimination of LGBTI+ people and their families. Therefore, the events and communication campaigns in general are essential for ILGA Portugal to spread its message, attract supporters, and gradually change mentalities. All the events produced by ILGA Portugal represent a privileged moment of visibility for brands that have in their core of social responsibility the concern for the rights of LGBTI+ people and their families. They are political moments of celebration and visibility, where they celebrate conquered rights (ILGA, 2022b).

ILGA Portugal organises annual events such as Arraial *Pride* Lisboa and Arco-Íris Awards. However, besides these events, it also organises other more specific events such as conferences and debates and cultural events such as film cycles or the book fair. This case focuses on the two first events.



Fig. 3 ILGA's advertisement about Pride Festival. Source: ILGA Portugal (2022b)

2.3.1 Pride Festival

Arraial Lisboa Pride is the largest LGBTI+ event in Portugal. Since 1997, it has been organised by ILGA Portugal, in partnership with the Lisbon City Council and EGEAC (Empresa de Gestão de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural, A.M.—an event's company), and gives visibility to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population, in a celebration of pride in equality. It is an event intrinsically linked to an associative, political, and social positioning, where all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex (LGBTI+) people, families, and allies are welcome. There are no barriers in their entry, leaving out only discrimination, stigma, prejudices associated with health, affections in public, or any other dimension of the lives of each one (Pride, 2021). It is held in the city of Lisbon—the Terreiro do Paço, is integrated in the Lisbon Festivities, as it aims to mark Lisbon's identity as a city that values and cherishes diversity and equality, saying no to discrimination and giving visibility to the LGBTI+ population and their families.³ The inclusion of Lisbon in the event's name reinforces this commitment and, also, places Lisbon in the itinerary of the main

³Lisbon (2019) and ILGA (2022a).

LGBTI+ tourist destinations (Pride, 2021)—see Fig. 3 (it shows the call for Pride Festival).

We are talking about an annual event, with 12 hours of operation, but an event that not only has a very large social and recreational component, but also has a component of awareness to many issues. We have an area in the festival that we call the *Welcome Center*, which is basically a replication of the centre, we transport the centre there, the Terreiro do Paço, and so we have awareness raising, demystification and socializing activities for 12 hours in the most touristic square in the country. This is the event that has much more impact, not only because of the number of people, but because there are people who every year show up there and never show up again in another context, because of a logic of ‘there are so many people that the person is not visible’. Therefore, it is much easier for the person to leave and go there than to come to the door, one thing is to pass by and stay, to enter here you have to want to and you know what you are coming for, it is a whole logic of visibility (Ramos, 2020).

2.4 *Arco-Íris Awards*

The Rainbow Awards are, since 2003, given annually, usually in January, by the ILGA Portugal Association, as a form of recognition and incentive to personalities and institutions that, through their work, have distinguished themselves in the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sexual characteristics, such as homo, trans and biphobia, and intersexism, thus contributing to the affirmation of the rights of LGBTI+ people in Portugal.⁴

In 2021, for the first time the ILGA Portugal Association’s Rainbow Awards were broadcast simultaneously on television, on the Q channel, and multiplatform online *streaming*, thus allowing decentralising the event and taking it to more and more people, all over the world (Fig. 4).⁵

2.5 Purpose for Holding the Events

In organising its events, ILGA aims to draw attention to the behaviour of the community at large. However, it has specific objectives for each target group (ILGA, 2022a):

- For Associations: to motivate the participation of other associations present in the parish and to motivate them to be propagators of ILGA services in the community.
- For Traders: to make them aware of the importance of developing an environment of diversity and respect for the customers and employees of their establishments.

⁴Wikipedia (n.d.).

⁵e-cultura (2020); Dezanove (2022) and ILGA (2022a).



Fig. 4 Television broadcast of ILGA’s Rainbow Awards. Source: dezanove—online newspaper (2018)

Make them aware of the well-being of LGBTI+ people and how this can associate value to their service.

- For Locals: draw attention to the LGBTI+ struggle and the importance of public debate and advocacy, introducing them to and bringing them closer to the association.
- For Workers: draw attention to the services, need, and importance of having an association like ILGA in the community.
- For Visitors: create a climate of general well-being and safety for visitors and frequenters of the community.

3 Conclusion

We can conclude that the events organised by ILGA Portugal are an essential PR (Public Relations) tool for its communication and for the pursuit of its objectives as an association that defends the rights of LGBTI+ people.

These aim to change social behaviours, both of its primary audience—LGBTI+ people—and of society in general. The aim is for LGBTI+ people to change their perception of themselves and create a sense of community. Society is expected to change its attitudes and behaviours towards LGBTI+ people.

It is (also) with party and celebration, with pride, as opposed to the shame instilled in LGBTI+ people, that ILGA Portugal intends to pursue its social marketing to change mentalities and transform Portugal into a more just and equal country. These activities and goals have a very important contribution for the achievement of SDG 10.

4 Discussion Questions

Question 1—What is the relation between events and social marketing?

Question 2—How important are events for behavioural change?

Question 3—How important are these events for LGBTI+ people?

Question 4—How important are events for ILGA Portugal?

Teaching/Classroom Notes

Synopsis

This case study refers to ILGA Portugal. ILGA Portugal Association is the largest and oldest association fighting for equality and against discrimination of LGBTI+ community, in Portugal.

Its main objective is to integrate the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex population into society through a broad programme of support in the social sphere that guarantees the improvement of their quality of life: through the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, the promotion of citizenship, human rights, and gender equality. ILGA has a Communication Department, which is responsible for the management and development of existing communication supports, events and for social marketing.

Potential Audience and Instructor's Material

This case has been developed for use in the framework of Marketing for Non-profits courses in general, and Social Marketing seminars, in particular.

The potential audience for this chapter is twofold:

- Undergraduate students pursuing degrees in marketing and management.
- Graduate students pursuing MBA and master's in marketing, NPOs management; or Executive Programmes and Seminars (about NPOs marketing in general, and Social Marketing in particular).

Learning

1. To understand the impact of social marketing on behavioural change.
2. To understand the importance of communication in social marketing.
3. To analyse the importance of events as a communication action in social marketing.

Time Frame for Class Discussion

This case can be taught in one session of 60–100 minutes, depending on the number of students participating in the discussion activities, as well as the previous work that students have done before class.

Suggested Discussion Questions

Question 1—What is the connection between events and social marketing?

Question 2—How important are events for behavioural change?

Question 3—How important are these events for LGBTI+ people?

Question 4—How important are events for ILGA Portugal?

Analysis

Answer to Question 1—What is the connection between events and social marketing?

Access the importance of events for social marketing, using the case study as an example.

- Do these events promote social marketing concepts?
- Which other events could be organised to reach social marketing goals?

Other suggestion could be included.

Answer to Question 2—How important are events for behavioural change?

In this question, students should reflect on the role of events in behaviour change and its link with social marketing.

Some concepts that could be developed:

- Effectiveness of these events to these goals
- What behavioural changes are expected after these events?

Answer to Question 3—How important are these events for LGBTI+ people?

This is also a question with a free response. The idea is that students think about whether these events contribute to improve LGBTI+ people's lives. And what other options ILGA could have to achieve their goals.

Discussion topics:

- Social acceptance and minority groups.
- Social marketing and improving society.
- Promotion and events to build a community and increase acceptance.

Answer to Question 4—How important are these events for ILGA Portugal? What is the return for the association of creating these two events?

This is a question with a free response (there are no correct or incorrect answers). Each student can give their opinion. The most important aspects of this question are that students strongly argue their opinions, whether they are favourable or unfavourable towards this campaign, and that they reflect on what the strengths and weaknesses might be (or pros and cons).

Discussion topics:

- Brand awareness
- Brand associations

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