**Headline:** How PeoplesHub Is Fostering Local Revolutions

**Teaser:** PeoplesHub offers organizers essential knowledge and online solutions for progressive change.

By Aric Sleeper

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**[Article Body:]**

Every revolution starts small—with an idea that the status quo isn’t quite right and a change needs to happen—but building a social movement from the ground up means putting in serious work. Connecting and organizing people who are like-minded, even at a local level, without access to the right knowledge can be daunting, especially without any help. Since 2017, [PeoplesHub](https://peopleshub.org/) has assisted and reinforced progressive social movements through online training in team building and leadership, so that nascent revolutionaries can see their vision to fruition.

“Local revolution means people taking collective action to utilize their unique strengths to transform their community. It’s centered in knowledge, collective care and the act of bringing those at the margins into the center,” says PeoplesHub project director [Hope Ghazala](https://peopleshub.org/people/). “At PeoplesHub, we believe that the popular education that we and others around the globe practice provides the first steppingstone toward developing a local revolution.”

After a 12,000-mile road trip across the United States, visiting towns, cities and Native American reservations, founding editor of [YES! Magazine](https://www.yesmagazine.org/) and author [Sarah van Gelder](https://twitter.com/sarahvangelder) was inspired to create PeoplesHub to unite and strengthen local revolutions across the country through workshops and clinics.

“As Sarah visited communities and met with organizers, she realized that local concerns people had weren’t getting national attention, which created isolation,” says Ghazala. “PeoplesHub was created as a place to connect, inspire and scale up community efforts, and link local revolutions across the globe.”

Ghazala is a licensed social worker, facilitator and organizer, and joined PeoplesHub in 2020 as a community offerings coordinator, facilitating workshops centered on public safety. A proud native of New York City, Ghazala’s current role as the program director at PeoplesHub involves balancing a number of responsibilities within the organization.

“I was taught at a very young age that our oppressors can take everything material from us, but they can’t take our knowledge, so I am honored to work at an organization centered in popular education,” says Ghazala. “It’s inspiring to work at PeoplesHub.”

Popular education is a teaching methodology created by *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* author [Paulo Freire](https://www.freire.org/paulo-freire), who argued that teaching and learning are political acts in themselves. Essentially, [popular education](https://www.intergroupresources.com/popular-education/) is “[centered] on participants’ life experiences,” which means that the concept of teacher and student is scrapped and everyone involved in the process teaches and learns. A high level of participation is also expected in PeoplesHub’s offerings to ensure that every voice is heard in the education process, whether or not someone can speak English or Spanish, the two languages in which the training is conducted.

“As an online movement school, we try to make learning accessible for everyone in numerous ways,” says Ghazala. “It’s substantially less expensive to meet with people online, across geographies, and thanks to technology, we have translation services built right into the platform.”

PeoplesHub trainers work with labor unions like the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), nonprofits and media organizations that align with their values of resistance, resilience, restoration and reimagination. For the past two years, the Detroit-based media organization [Allied Media Projects](https://alliedmedia.org/) (AMP) has participated in PeoplesHub’s offerings to reimagine its annual conference in the context of COVID-19.

“Allied Media is an organization that cultivates media for liberation,” says [MARS Marshall](https://alliedmedia.org/news/orbiting-new-suns), co-executive director of AMP and director of the [Allied Media Conference](https://amc.alliedmedia.org/) (AMC). “We support an ecosystem of people and projects that are working through the lens of media as a form of visionary organizing work.”

In addition to hosting Allied Media Conference, which draws thousands of technologists and cultural organizers each year, [AMP’s Seeds Presenter Program](https://alliedmedia.org/amp-seeds/amp-seeds-presenter-program) facilitates online speaking events centered around social justice issues in the media. AMP also provides fiscal sponsorship and administrative support for social justice organizations and projects like [Complex Movements](https://emergencemedia.org/pages/complex-movements) and [the Hinterlands](https://www.thehinterlands.org/) through its [Sponsored Projects Program](https://alliedmedia.org/projects).

“This support is crucial,” says Marshall. “Instead of all of these individual projects having to become [501(c)(3)](https://ballotpedia.org/501%28c%29%283%29)s on their own, we are taking on the weight of administrative support for all of them.”

Members of PeoplesHub had attended AMP’s past conferences, so Marshall was familiar with the organization and knew who to connect with in 2020 when they sought to create a hybrid conference that was both hyperlocal and available online.

“PeoplesHub has always been this radical group of people orbiting in our network,” says Marshall. “In 2020, many conferences were making the massive pivot to go completely online. We had been following PeoplesHub in the past, but we started seriously collaborating [with them] at that moment.”

The 22nd Allied Media Conference will [convene](https://amc.alliedmedia.org/frequently-asked-questions) in Detroit, Michigan, at Wayne State University and the Detroit Institute of Arts, and online for participants across the world, thanks to the support of PeoplesHub. The event will feature film screenings, workshops, panels and plenary discussions centered around important topics like the framework of reparations, and power dynamics in the 21st century.

“We also have two dynamic ceremonies and three nights of parties this year,” says Marshall. “We like to say that relationships are formed in the sessions, but they get solidified on the dance floor.”

While trying to create a conference that’s accessible for all participants, environmentally conscious, COVID-19 safe and engaging, Marshall has been grateful to have the support and guidance of PeoplesHub.

“PeoplesHub plays a critical role in ensuring that our conference remains as dynamic and transformative as possible by engaging presenters and training them on the skills they need to make things happen,” says Marshall. “We couldn’t co-curate a container for so many people to come together and experiment with all of these strategies for liberation without the work by PeoplesHub.”

In 2022, PeoplesHub formed the [Arts and Social Justice Fellowship](https://www.facebook.com/1695905997109684/photos/a.4463806410319615/5260286504004931/?type) to support the work of four artists, Elena House-Hay, Saleem Hue Penny, Taria Person and Miguel Lopez. One of the goals of Ghazala and others at PeoplesHub is to connect disparate artists already focused on social justice to spark collaboration and incorporate cultural work into the organization’s model of popular education.

“We want to bring more visual art, poetry, music, dance and all forms of art into the offerings and online presence that we have,” says Ghazala. “We are so honored to have Elena House-Hay as a fellow, who is an incarcerated [artist]. As an organization that believes deeply in the dismantling of the prison-industrial complex, we are using the fellowship to stop the intentional isolation of incarcerated people and will include [more] incarcerated artists in the years to come.”

Looking ahead, Ghazala and the team at PeoplesHub are focused on dismantling the influence of the global far-right ideology and decentering the United States in their perspective of the movement by offering a series of talks on the rise of white supremacy, resisting surveillance and the far-right movement internationally.

“PeoplesHub is a relatively new organization with a small team,” says Ghazala. “We’re still learning about which models to adopt and how to scale our vision with our capacity. We want to be ambitious about the goals we pursue, like our work [on] the far right, and grounded in what we can influence, to have as much strategic impact as we can as a movement school.”