

Toolkit

Raising Awareness of Fundamental Rights among LGBTIQ+ Communities

A Methodological Guide for Civil Society Organisations

Developed within the StandUp4LGBTIQ+ Project

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1. Why This Toolkit Exists

Across Central and Eastern Europe, many LGBTIQ+ people are aware that discrimination exists — but significantly fewer understand what their concrete rights are, when those rights apply, and what they can realistically do if those rights are violated. The same may be applied to knowledge of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter).

Mapping and awareness-raising activities conducted within the StandUp4LGBTIQ+ project revealed several recurring patterns:

- Uneven awareness of fundamental rights protections.
- Uncertainty about when EU law and the Charter apply in practice.
- Low levels of trust in public institutions in certain contexts.
- Persistent underreporting of discrimination and harassment.
- Limited impact of awareness activities that remained abstract or overly legalistic.

This Toolkit responds directly to those findings.

Its purpose is to support civil society organisations (CSOs) working with LGBTIQ+ rights holders in designing awareness-raising activities that are:

- clear and accessible,
- grounded in everyday experiences,
- linked to available remedies,
- safe and ethically responsible,
- adaptable across diverse LGBTIQ+ communities and national contexts.

This is not a legal textbook. It is a methodological guide for translating legal protections into practical, usable knowledge.

2. What Effective Awareness Really Means

Awareness raising is more than providing information. It is about enabling recognition, confidence, and action.

An awareness activity can be considered effective when participants:

1. Recognise discriminatory behaviour.
2. Understand that legal protection exists.
3. Know where to seek support.
4. Feel safe enough to consider reporting.
5. Trust that seeking help can lead to meaningful outcomes.



Information alone rarely leads to action. Trust, clarity, and accessible pathways are equally important.

Experience from the StandUp4LGBTIQ+ project shows that awareness activities should always be linked to concrete support mechanisms. Raising expectations without offering guidance may increase frustration rather than empowerment.

3. Starting from Evidence: Using Mapping and Surveys

The Toolkit builds on mapping and survey findings gathered during the project.

These findings highlighted:

- Differences in awareness levels across age groups and countries.
- Specific vulnerabilities of trans and non-binary persons.
- Lower trust in institutions in certain environments.
- Confusion about complaint mechanisms.
- High levels of underreporting.

These insights demonstrate that awareness strategies must be context-sensitive and evidence-based.

Methodological Recommendation

Before launching awareness activities, CSOs are encouraged to assess:

- What do LGBTIQ+ individuals in our context already know?
- What misconceptions are common?
- Which institutions are trusted?
- Are we prepared to respond if reporting increases?

Evidence-based planning increases relevance and sustainability.

4. Recognising Diversity within LGBTIQ+ Communities

The LGBTIQ+ community is not homogeneous. Experiences differ across gender identity, sexual orientation, age, geographic location, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic background.

For example:

- Trans and non-binary persons may face frequent barriers in healthcare and administrative processes.



- Young people may encounter bullying in schools.
- Individuals in rural areas may lack safe community spaces.
- Migrants or ethnic minorities may face multiple forms of discrimination.
- Persons with disabilities may encounter accessibility barriers.

Methodological Principle: Intersectionality

Awareness activities should acknowledge overlapping vulnerabilities. This does not require separate campaigns for each subgroup, but rather inclusive language, diverse examples, and sensitivity to different lived realities.

5. Translating Rights into Everyday Language

One of the key findings of the project was that legal language often creates distance.

Effective awareness avoids excessive legal terminology and focuses on practical understanding.

Instead of presenting legal provisions abstractly, rights can be explained through relatable scenarios.

Suggested Structure for Explaining Rights

1. What does this right protect?
2. In which situations does it apply?
3. What might a violation look like?
4. What can someone do if it happens?
5. Who can provide support?

This structure connects rights to lived experience and encourages practical understanding.

6. Choosing Appropriate Awareness Formats

Different formats serve different purposes and audiences.

Community-Based Activities

Workshops, Pride outreach stands, and small group discussions enable dialogue and trust-building. These formats are particularly valuable when addressing sensitive topics such as discrimination reporting.

Online Campaigns



Short videos, infographics, and story-based posts can reach wider audiences. Simplicity and clarity are essential in digital communication.

Peer-to-Peer Approaches

Engaging community members as facilitators or ambassadors can increase credibility and accessibility, especially among youth.

Printed Materials

Leaflets and concise rights summaries remain useful in environments where digital access is limited or anonymity is important.

Selecting the right format requires considering safety, target audience, available resources, and follow-up capacity.

7. Linking Awareness to Remedies

Awareness must be connected to realistic pathways.

Every awareness activity should clearly communicate:

- Where individuals can seek help.
- Whether services are confidential.
- Whether assistance is free.
- What the process may involve.

Providing contact details of legal counselling services, equality bodies, or relevant institutions strengthens credibility and practical value.

Transparency builds trust.

8. Safety and Ethical Considerations

Participant safety is central to responsible awareness work.

CSOs should ensure:

- Voluntary participation.
- Protection of personal data.
- Safe and accessible venues.
- Informed consent for photographs or public sharing.



- Risk assessment for online and offline activities.

Particular attention should be given to:

- Minors.
- Trans and non-binary participants.
- Individuals not publicly out.
- Persons living in hostile environments.

Visibility should always be a choice, not an expectation.

9. Monitoring and Learning

Monitoring does not need to be complex.

Simple tools may include:

- Anonymous feedback forms.
- Short knowledge reflections.
- Tracking inquiries following campaigns.
- Reviewing online engagement statistics.

The objective is continuous improvement, not extensive reporting.

Learning from both successes and challenges contributes to long-term effectiveness.

10. Regional Cooperation and Multiplication Effect

This Toolkit is designed to be adaptable and shareable across the region.

Sharing experiences between organisations can:

- Strengthen consistency of messaging.
- Support mutual learning.
- Increase efficiency.
- Encourage innovation.

These exchanges aim to incorporate direct inputs from awareness activities conducted during the project and to promote a multiplication effect across participating organisations.

Each organisation is encouraged to adapt the methodology to its own legal, cultural, and social context.



11. Key Methodological Takeaways

Based on project experience, several core lessons emerge:

1. Awareness must be practical.
2. Clear language increases accessibility.
3. Trust is as important as information.
4. Safety is non-negotiable.
5. Information must be linked to action.
6. Diversity within LGBTIQ+ communities must be recognised.
7. Sustainability is more important than scale.

Effective awareness is a continuous process, not a single event.

12. Final Recommendations for CSOs

CSOs using this Toolkit are encouraged to:

1. Base awareness strategies on evidence.
2. Translate rights into everyday language.
3. Establish referral pathways before expanding outreach.
4. Maintain realistic expectations about reporting levels.
5. Prioritise safety and ethical responsibility.
6. Use simple monitoring tools to improve practice.
7. Share experiences regionally.
8. Treat this Toolkit as a flexible methodological framework.

The ultimate aim is not only that LGBTIQ+ individuals are aware of their rights — but that they feel supported, informed, and confident enough to act when those rights are violated.

Awareness raising contributes to empowerment when it connects knowledge, trust, and accessible pathways.

