

#Tool 16



How to create and sustain an Anti-rumours network

Objective

This tool facilitates the creation and consolidation of an Anti-rumours network that contributes to the development of an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy (ARS). Its aim is to help build a diverse, participatory and sustainable ecosystem of cooperation, capable of preventing and countering prejudice, misinformation and discriminatory narratives, whilst strengthening equality, participation, well-being, safety and a sense of belonging for LGBTIQ people.

How to use the tool

This tool is aimed at those responsible for driving an Anti-rumours Strategy (ARS) and should be used from the outset of the process.

It is not intended to provide a single model for a network, but rather a set of criteria to help adapt the governance and operation of the anti-rumours network to the specific circumstances of each local context.

Recommendations

- ✦ Prioritise the quality of participation over the number of members.
- ✦ Ensure that the activation group and core team are established with care, clear criteria and a strong commitment, as they constitute the key foundations and driving force of the Anti-rumours Strategy.
- ✦ Incorporate diversity from the outset.
- ✦ Ensure safe environments for all participants.
- ✦ Review the network's composition regularly.
- ✦ Adapt the organisational model to the actual capacity of the local area.

1. Define the network's purpose

Before inviting the organisations, individuals and institutions identified in the assessment, it is advisable to answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of establishing the network?
- What changes is the network expected to contribute to?
- What role will the network play within the ARS?
- What can the network contribute that any isolated actor cannot achieve on its own?

The network should have a clear and shared mission.

2. Identifying key stakeholders

A good network brings together a wide variety of profiles.

Administration	Civil society	Other organisations / actors
* Equality.	* LGBTIQ organisations.	* Faith-based organisations.
* Diversity.	* Neighbourhood associations.	* Religious leaders.
* Youth.	* NGOs.	* Retail.
* Education.	* Youth organisations.	* Businesses.
* Culture.	* Family associations.	* Media.
* Social Services.	* Cultural organisations.	* Content creators.
* Health.	* Sports clubs.	* Influencers.
* Police.	* Trade unions.	
* Citizen Participation.	* Schools, colleges and universities.	
* Communication.	* Professional bodies.	
* Employment services		

3. Ensuring diverse participation

Diversity goes beyond the inclusion of LGBTIQ people and organisations. It also involves promoting the meaningful inclusion of people with diverse experiences.

Check whether the network includes at least:

- LGBTIQ people.
- Young people.
- Older people.
- Migrants or people with a migrant background.
- Ethnic minorities.
- People with disabilities.
- Religious diversity.
- Different professional backgrounds.

Representation should never replace meaningful participation.

4. Create a simple governance structure

Avoid overly complex structures.

The following may be sufficient:

- An activation group.
- A core team.
- An open, inclusive and welcoming network.
- Temporary working groups organised by topic or project.

Each group should have defined roles.

5. Building trust

Networks thrive on relationships.

It is advisable to:

- Agree on the terms of reference.
- Establish safe environments.
- Encourage active listening.
- Manage conflicts constructively.
- Recognise the contributions of everyone.

Ensure that LGBTIQ people do not constantly assume an educational or symbolic representative role, and that they can participate on an equal footing and with equal influence.

6. Define different levels of involvement in the Anti-rumours network

Not all members can devote the same amount of time.

A healthy network offers a range of levels of participation and decision making.

Level	Commitment
Informed	Receives information
Contributor	Participates from time to time
Active member	Drives initiatives
Core team member	Takes part in decision-making and governance

7. Who is who in the Anti-rumours Strategy

Structure / role	Main role	Key responsibilities
Activation Group	Initial driving and mobilisation group	Initiate and give impetus to the Anti-rumours Strategy process; bring together key stakeholders; build initial commitment and legitimacy; help define the first priorities and mobilise the actors and resources needed to start the process. Depending on the local context, it may later be integrated into the Core Team or remain as an oversight and support body.
Core Team	Coordination, governance and strategic oversight	Coordinate the development and implementation of the Strategy; ensure continuity and coherence; translate strategic priorities into concrete actions; coordinate stakeholders and resources; monitor progress; provide checks and balances; and ensure that decisions and actions remain aligned with the principles, values and objectives of the Strategy.
Anti-rumours network	Broad ecosystem for participation, collaboration and dissemination	Bring together a wide range of organisations, institutions and community actors committed to the Anti-rumours Strategy; exchange knowledge and resources; strengthen collaboration; support and participate in initiatives and actions; disseminate alternative narratives; and extend the Strategy's reach and sustainability across different sectors and communities. Can be a member of the Core Team.
Anti-rumours agent	Local multiplier and practitioner	Act as a trained person who applies and promotes the Anti-rumours Approach in their own professional, organisational or community context; identify and address rumours and discriminatory narratives; facilitate dialogue and critical reflection; support or implement anti-rumours actions; and contribute to spreading the approach and connecting the Strategy with local communities. Can be a member of the Core Team.

8. Have a good model for integrating, engaging and supporting new members

Phase	How do they join?	Objective	Recommended actions	Expected outcome
1. Initial contact	Participation in the needs assessment, invitation from a member, attendance at a training session, campaign or activity, institutional contact or spontaneous interest.	Raise awareness of the Anti-rumours Strategy and spark interest in joining the network.	To present the ARS and the anti-rumours network, explain their purpose, and identify interests and motivations. Pay attention to any clear signs of misalignment with the principles, values or narrative of the Strategy.	The individual or organisation is aware of the network and shows an interest in remaining involved.
2. Onboarding	Inclusion as a potential participant.	Facilitate a positive integration and build trust from the outset.	Welcome them, share basic information, explain the different ways of getting involved, introduce them to other members of the network and assign a contact person where necessary. Make the expectations, principles and values of the network explicit and use the initial interactions to identify any significant concerns or red flags.	The person understands how the network works and how they can contribute.

Phase	How do they join?	Objective	Recommended actions	Expected outcome
3. Initial participation	Participation in meetings, training sessions or activities.	Encourage a gradual level of involvement tailored to the availability of each individual or organisation.	Participate in working groups, campaigns, community initiatives, discussion forums or training activities. Where concerns about alignment arise, maintain a gradual level of participation; the core group must review the situation before assigning roles involving decision-making, representation or access to sensitive spaces.	Bonds are formed, trust is built, and an initial sense of belonging is fostered.
4. Sustainable integration	Ongoing participation.	Become an active member of the network.	Proposing initiatives, collaborating on the design and implementation of actions, sharing resources and knowledge, and taking part in decision-making forums.	The individual or organisation plays an active role in the anti-rumours wider community and contributes to the development of the strategy.
5. Joint responsibility and shared leadership	Consolidated involvement.	Strengthen the network's sustainability and distributed leadership.	Coordinate working groups, facilitate activities, support new members, represent the network and promote new initiatives.	The network increases its capacity for action and fosters new community leaders.

9. Design an annual participation plan

The network needs constant activity without becoming overwhelmed (one meeting every fifteen days and one action every two months would be advisable).

For example:

- General meetings.
- Thematic meetings.
- In-house training.
- Campaigns.
- Working groups.
- Exchange of good practice.
- Evaluation.

10. Looking after the network

A network also needs looking after.

It is a good idea to review the following periodically:

- Who is taking part.
- Who has stopped taking part.
- Actors with opposing or misaligned positions.
- What needs there are.
- Whether all voices are heard.
- Whether LGBTIQ people perceive the network as a safe space.
- Whether there are power imbalances.
- Whether contributions are being recognised.
- Whether results are being shared.
- Are achievements being celebrated.
- Is participation facilitated.
- Do learning opportunities need to be created.

11. Assess the quality of the network

The assessment should go beyond the number of members and examine the quality of the network's functioning. The following indicators may be considered:

Diversity

- * There is diverse representation.
- * There is intersectional participation.
- * There are institutional and community stakeholders.

Participation

- * People are involved in decision-making.
- * Collective proposals are developed.
- * Responsibilities are shared.

Governance

- * There are clear roles.
- * Coordination works well.
- * Communication is smooth.

Impact

SHORT/MEDIUM TERM:

- * Joint actions are promoted.
- * New partnerships are formed.

LONG TERM:

- * The network influences public policy.
- * LGBTIQ people experience greater recognition, safety and a sense of belonging.

12. Before launching the Network, check whether...

- There is a shared purpose.
- There is sufficient institutional support.
- LGBTIQ organisations are involved.
- There is diversity across sectors.
- An intersectional perspective is incorporated.
- LGBTIQ people are involved in decision-making.
- Clear roles have been defined.
- There are basic terms of reference.
- There is a clear plan for inclusion, care and support.
- There is a realistic action plan.
- Monitoring indicators have been defined.
- Mechanisms are in place to add in new members and renew leadership if necessary.

Key ideas

- ✦ An Anti-rumours network is more than a list of organisations.
- ✦ It is an ecosystem of cooperation based on trust, shared responsibility and a common purpose.
- ✦ The network's legitimacy depends largely on LGBTIQ people not merely being the recipients of actions, but active participants in decision-making and in developing collective responses to disinformation, prejudice and discriminatory narratives.

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