

Including the Voices of Hate Crime Victims in Policymaking and Policy Implementation: a Practical Guide



Hate crime victims are often excluded from the policymaking process and neglected during policy implementation. This can lead to inadequate, insufficient or ineffective policies and practices.

In contrast, by including hate crime victims in the development of policy responses, states can ensure that systems, policies and programmes are tailored to the needs of victims, helping them to recover and regain agency while upholding their rights to redress and support.

More specifically:

- Victims can provide valuable information to policymakers and criminal justice professionals, who would otherwise be unable to capture fully the impact of hate crimes on victims, their family and friends, and the wider community.
- Victims can help address problems within existing criminal justice and victim support structures, such as inequalities, the marginalization of communities and a lack of public awareness about the issue.
- Victims from different communities sharing their experience can help the authorities amplify the message that hate crime can affect anyone and will not be tolerated.
- Through their involvement in policymaking and policy implementation, victims can help raise awareness about how victims' rights to an effective investigation and effective remedy should be at the centre of criminal justice responses.

- Victims who engage in policymaking and policy implementation can use this opportunity to act and transform their experience for the benefit of other people targeted in hate crimes and other forms of intolerance.
- Engaging with hate crime victims should follow a victim-centred, gender-sensitive and intersectional approach. This approach acknowledges that the identities of hate crime victims are multifaceted and overlapping. In addition, the principle of “do no harm” must be observed at all times.

The Guide presents ten practical steps:

- 1. Putting victims at the centre of any initiative** – All potential engagement must be voluntary and based on informed consent. Event organizers must not put victims under pressure to speak in public or engage in other ways.
- 2. Choosing a suitable format for engagement** – Victims can engage directly as event speakers, indirectly (with the support of a civil society organization), through self-organized advocacy groups or by contributing to empirical research. When selecting a format for engagement, organizers must consider the policy area addressed by the initiative, as well as other relevant factors.
- 3. Preparing the engagement** – Any engagement with hate crime victims should be preceded by detailed preparation, including

logistics, special accommodation for specific needs that individuals might have, and work with both the victims and the audience. This should be conducted by professionals who have knowledge of hate crime victimization.

4. **Creating safer spaces** – Sufficient safeguards must be put in place to protect victims from the risk of secondary victimization.
5. **Managing expectations** – Victims should receive clear information about the aims and objectives of a given initiative, the added value of bringing hate crime victims into the discussion, the nature of the process, the possible outcomes, and the audience and their role.
6. **Offering support before, during and after the event** – A specialist support provider, who is able to provide psychological and emotional support, should be available before, during and at the follow-up stage of the initiative.
7. **Building trust and long-term partnerships** – The organizers should build trust by investing in long-term partnerships that go beyond one-off events and isolated engagements.
8. **Putting systems in place to institutionalize hate crime victims' voices** – Hate crime victims can have a direct impact on policymaking and policy implementation as

part of official advisory groups, which meet at regular intervals and have permanent access to officials within state structures.

9. **Avoiding the instrumentalization of victims and their voices** – Any engagement with hate crime victims must not be treated as a way to pursue the aims of an institution, government, political party, civil society or international organization.
10. **Ensuring that a range of voices are heard** – While planning a policy-related engagement, it is important to engage communities that have less opportunities to have their voices heard.



For further information, please see **Including the voices of hate crime victims in policymaking and policy implementation – a practical guide.**

To learn more about the STARS initiative, please contact ODIHR at hcvictimsupport@odihr.pl



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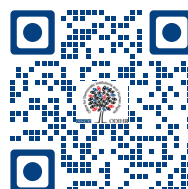
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