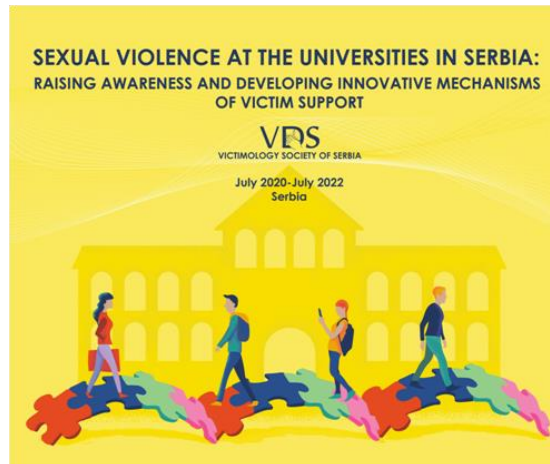


Sexual violence against students at the universities in Serbia:  
Raising awareness about sexual violence and developing innovative mechanisms of  
victim support



Victimology Society of Serbia is one out of nine research institutions from around the world who won the SVRI (Sexual Violence Research Initiative) and World Bank Group Development Marketplace Award for Innovation in the Prevention and Response of Gender Based Violence 2020 for implementing the project “Sexual violence at the universities in Serbia: Raising awareness and developing innovative mechanisms of victim support“. The project lasted from July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022.

The project "Sexual violence at universities in Serbia: Raising awareness and developing innovative mechanisms to support victims" aimed to *portray and raise awareness about sexual violence at universities and faculties in Serbia, as well as improving the institutional response by proposing innovative mechanisms for prevention and response on cases of sexual violence at universities/faculties in Serbia*. The project was financed by the World Bank.

The project was implemented through the following groups of activities:

- ❖ Research about sexual violence against students on faculties in Serbia aimed to find out the scope and characteristics of sexual violence against students as well as existing mechanisms for support and prevention of sexual violence at the faculties.
- ❖ Development and implementation of training for students, teaching and non-teaching staff aimed to strengthen the capacity to respond to sexual violence at faculties
- ❖ Development of mechanisms for the prevention of sexual violence and support for victims at faculties
- ❖ Presentation of project and research results at different events, scientific gatherings in the country and abroad, also through appearances in the media.

***Most important project results:***

- ❖ ***Research results presented in the book "Sexual violence against students at faculties in Serbia; Nikolić-Ristanović, V., Čopić, S. (2022). Belgrade: Victimology Society of Serbia", which is available at the following***



***[link:https://vds.rs/File/KnjigaSeksualnoNasiljeNadStud.pdf](https://vds.rs/File/KnjigaSeksualnoNasiljeNadStud.pdf)***

1597 students from 22 faculties participated in research about sexual violence. Key results of study are:

- 17% students experienced sexual violence, 27.6% know about sexual violence against their colleagues.
- The highest number of students experienced sexual violence more than once, suffering numerous psychological, social and economic consequences

- For all forms of sexual violence, except for quid pro quo (sexual blackmail), students represent most of the perpetrators
- Victimization factors which increase the probability that a student will become a victim of sexual violence are female gender and sexual orientation different from heterosexual; year of study, using drugs, socio-economic status etc.
- Students who have experience of sexual violence rarely turn for help
- Informing and training students and university staff in order to recognize, prevent and suppress sexual violence is rare
- Mechanisms for prevention and response to sexual violence and victim support at the faculties is needed

Key proposals and recommendations for effective response to sexual violence at the faculties:

- Developing normative and institutional framework for prevention and suppression of sexual violence (e.g. appropriate legislation, gender equality body)
- Raising awareness and education about sexual violence at the universities
- Information about available mechanisms for support and reporting sexual violence
- Providing for a safe environment at the faculty
- Providing support and protection to students and employees from sexual violence at the university
- Establish an accessible and transparent sexual violence reporting mechanism that ensures anonymity, confidentiality and security
- Enabling different ways of reporting sexual violence and enabling reporting of sexual violence via third persons
- Providing two levels of procedure: counseling (disclosure, getting support) and formal complaint (with adequate sanctions)
- Monitoring of implementation and efficiency of measures for prevention and suppression of sexual violence and victim support

- ❖ **Victimology Society of Serbia has designed and implemented the four-day training that aims at building capacities of students and university staff for proper first response/support to sexual violence at the faculties**

The training was implemented for six faculties and 137 participants were trained, of which 70 are college students, 50 are teachers and 17 are non-teaching staff.

- ❖ **The participants of the training continued their activities of developing and improving mechanisms for the prevention and suppression of sexual violence within their faculties, with the support of VDS:**

- University of Arts in Belgrade has adopted Rulebook on protection against abuse in the educational and work process at the University of Arts in Belgrade, which also regulates protection against sexual violence
- Faculty of Philosophy in Niš has developed and adopted Rulebook on prevention and protection from violence, sexual violence, harassment and blackmail, also violence prevention team of faculty developed website named “My faculty, my safe place” which contains information about how to report and whom to report violence, sexual violence and harassment on faculty (<https://tpn.filfak.ni.ac.rs/>).