



Work package n°2

Participatory action research

"Youth perspectives on violence incidence, attitudes towards marginalized groups, and solutions for positive change"

Serbia July 2025



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Page 1



Table of Contents

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Methodology.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Question 1) The correspondent's gender.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Question 2) The correspondent's age.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Question 3) The Correspondent's Educational Background.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Question 4) The residence of the correspondent.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Question 5) Have you ever witnessed violence against marginalized groups? (e.g., LGBT+ individuals, persons with disabilities, Roma people, migrants...).....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Question 6) If yes, what kind of violence was it? (you can select multiple answers).....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Question 7) Which groups do you think most often suffer violence and discrimination? (you can select multiple answers)</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Question 8) Where do you think such violence most often occurs?</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Question 9) How do you usually react when witnessing violence against a marginalized person?.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Question 10) Do you think young people in Serbia have enough information about the rights of marginalized groups?.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Question 11) Where do you most often get information on this topic? (you can select multiple answers).....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Question 12) Do you think the system (state, schools, institutions) adequately protects marginalized groups?.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Question 13) What do you think is the best way to combat violence against marginalized groups? (you can select multiple answers).....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Question 14) Would you personally participate in activities promoting equality and tolerance?</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Question 15) Do you believe young people can initiate positive changes in society?</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>11</i>



INTRODUCTION

What is PAR analysis?

PAR (Participatory Action Research) is a process where young people explore issues that directly affect them – such as violence, discrimination, and exclusion – and work together with their peers to find solutions through surveys, interviews, and group discussions.

Five young people from Šabac participated in this Participatory Action Research (PAR). They ranged from 18 to 30 years old, including 3 females and 2 males. Three of them were in their final year of high school. Among the participants, one belongs to a minority group, one is unemployed, and one comes from a background with limited economic opportunities. Supporting the process were also two youth workers, one female and one male. A dedicated WhatsApp group was created for communication, mainly used for scheduling meetings and sharing information. Meetings and group work took place in person at the organization's premises, as this was deemed more effective.

Youth workers introduced the participants to the concept of Participatory Action Research (PAR), the process itself, expected outcomes, and timelines.

Throughout the process, youth workers took on a supportive and developmental role – allowing young participants to take ownership of the idea, plan, and lead the entire process. Their involvement was focused on mentoring and constructively challenging the participants' ideas by asking guiding questions and encouraging critical thinking, reflection, and the expansion of their capacities.

Methodology

During one meeting, it was collectively decided to conduct the research online via a Google Form for consistency. The group proposed and revised the survey questions to ensure clarity. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions divided into three thematic sections: demographic data, questions related to violence, and information and impact.

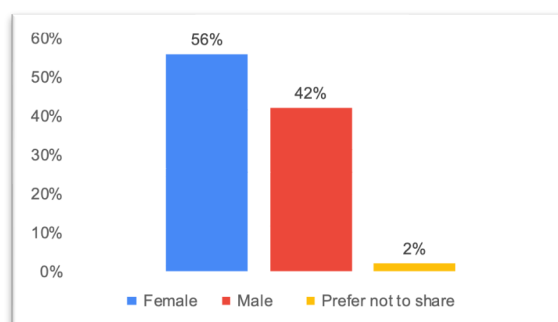
It included a combination of single-choice and multiple-choice questions, designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative insights.

Before launching, the form was tested on a small sample of independent individuals to evaluate its functionality and clarity. Based on their feedback, adjustments were made. To target the right audience, the form was initially shared within the organization's volunteer network and later distributed to other suitable participants who had previously engaged in our exchanges and training events.

The final report was developed using a combination of charts and tables to present the data in a clear and visually comprehensive way. The data collection phase lasted for 7 days.

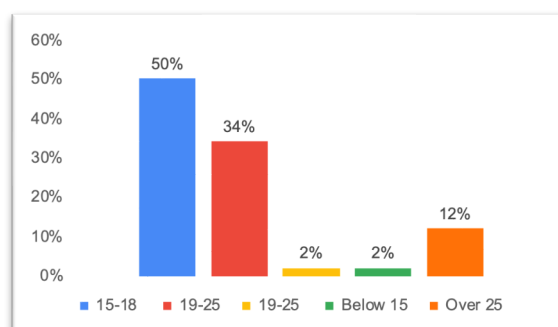


Question 1) The correspondent's gender



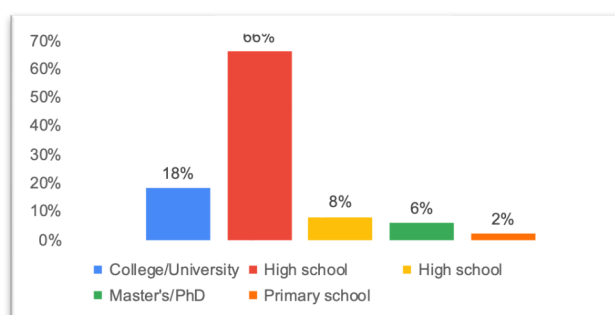
The number of participants was almost evenly distributed by gender: 28 identified as female, 21 as male, and 1 participant preferred not to disclose their gender.

Question 2) The correspondent's age



The majority of respondents — 42 out of 50 — were between 15 and 25 years old.

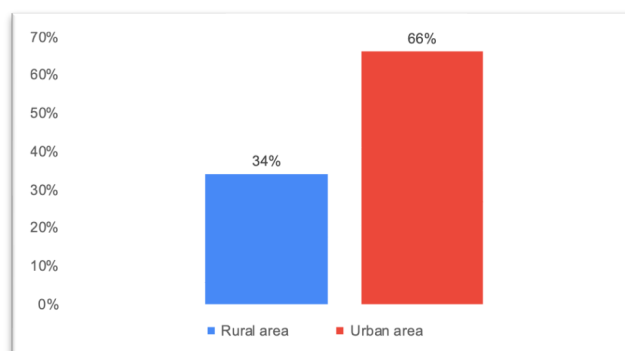
Question 3) The Correspondent's Educational Background



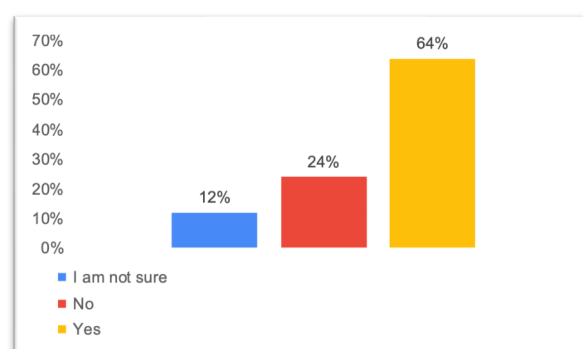
Taking into account the ages of the respondents, where the largest group is as much as 50% in the age range of 15 to 18 years, it follows that most of them are currently attending high school.



Question 4) The residence of the correspondent



Question 5) Have you ever witnessed violence against marginalized groups? (e.g., LGBT+ individuals, persons with disabilities, Roma people, migrants...)



Based on the collected data, it can be concluded that as many as 32 individuals (64%) have witnessed some form of violence directed at marginalized groups.

Furthermore, an additional 6 individuals stated that they were uncertain whether the incident they observed constituted violence, which makes these findings particularly concerning.

Question 6) If yes, what kind of violence was it? (you can select multiple answers)

Online violence	2%
Online violence, Discrimination or isolation	2%
Physical violence	4%
Physical violence, Psychological/verbal violence, Discrimination or isolation	4%
Physical violence, Psychological/verbal violence, Online violence, Discrimination or isolation	8%
Physical violence, Psychological/verbal violence, Online violence, Discrimination or isolation, Other form (e.g., institutional)	2%
Psychological/verbal violence	6%
Psychological/verbal violence, Discrimination or isolation	6%
Psychological/verbal violence, Online violence	10%
Psychological/verbal violence, Online violence, Discrimination or isolation	26%





Psychological/verbal violence, Online violence, Discrimination or isolation, Other form (e.g., institutional)	2%
I have not witnessed anything	28%
Grand Total	100%

Further analysis of the data reveals that, according to the respondents, violence does not manifest in only one form. The most frequent answers indicated the presence of multiple types of violence simultaneously.

This leads to the conclusion that violence is becoming increasingly prevalent and frequent, occurring in both online and offline environments.

Question 7) Which groups do you think most often suffer violence and discrimination? (you can select multiple answers)

LGBT+ individuals	4%
LGBT+ individuals, Migrants and refugees	4%
LGBT+ individuals, Poor people	4%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma	10%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Migrants and refugees	6%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Migrants and refugees, Persons with disabilities, Poor people	2%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Migrants and refugees, Persons with disabilities, Women	4%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Migrants and refugees, Persons with disabilities, Women, Poor people, Other minority communities	4%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Migrants and refugees, Poor people	2%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Migrants and refugees, Women	2%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Persons with disabilities	2%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Persons with disabilities, Poor people	2%
LGBT+ individuals, Roma, Women	4%
LGBT+ individuals, Women	8%
Migrants and refugees	2%
Migrants and refugees, Poor people	2%
Migrants and refugees, Women	2%
Persons with disabilities	2%
Persons with disabilities, Women	2%
Persons with disabilities, Women, Poor people	2%
Poor people	2%
Roma	2%
Roma, Migrants and refugees	4%
Roma, Migrants and refugees, Persons with disabilities, Poor people	2%



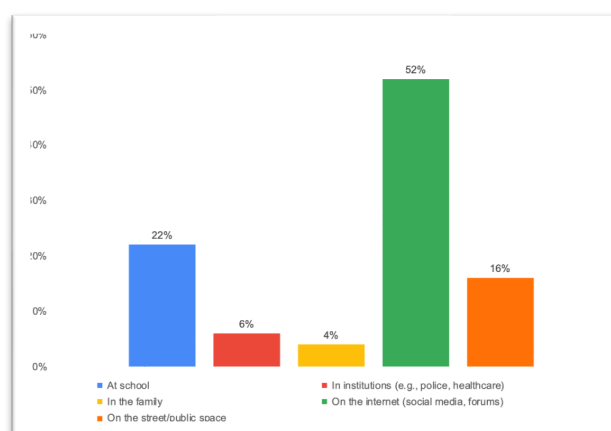
Roma, Migrants and refugees, Women	4%
Roma, Persons with disabilities, Poor people	2%
Roma, Persons with disabilities, Poor people, Other minority communities	2%
Roma, Poor people	4%
Roma, Women	4%
Roma, Women, Poor people	2%
Roma, Women, Poor people, Other minority communities	2%
Grand Total	100%

The data also indicate that violence is not directed solely at a single category, but rather spans across all listed groups.

However, what particularly stands out is that the most prevalent forms of violence are directed toward the LGBT+ community and Roma individuals.

As many as 46% of responses included these two categories alongside others, while the LGBT+ community, combined with other groups, was mentioned in 56% of all responses.

Question 8) Where do you think such violence most often occurs?



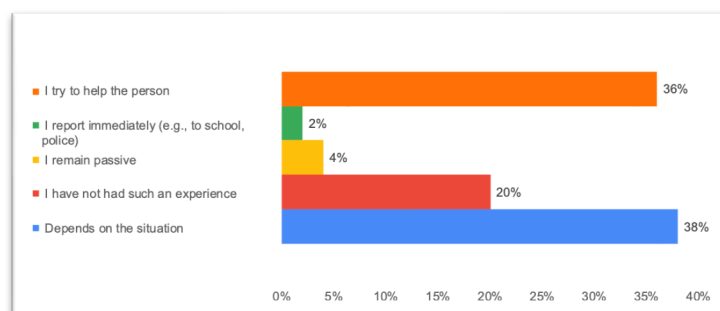
The fact that as many as 22% of respondents identified school as the place where violence most frequently occurs is particularly concerning.

Equally alarming is the finding that 52% of respondents reported the Internet as a common setting for violent behavior.

These insights point to a troubling reality—that the two environments where young people currently spend most of their time (school and online platforms during their free time) are also the two main spaces where they are most exposed to violence.



Question 9) How do you usually react when witnessing violence against a marginalized person?

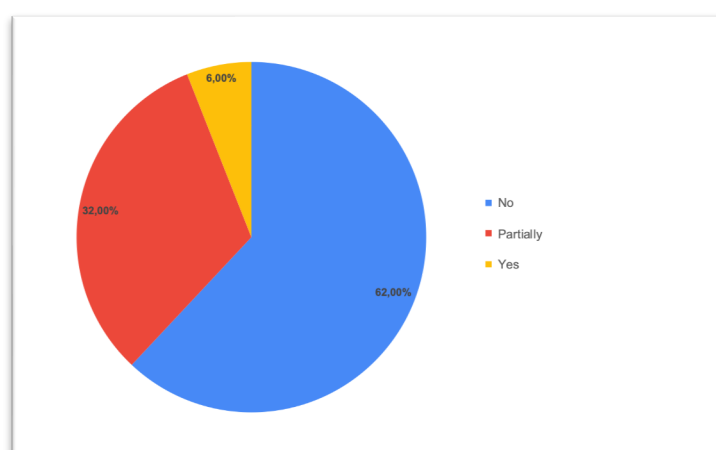


In most cases, participants respond to instances of violence based on the specific situation in which they find themselves.

It is encouraging that as many as 36% choose to offer help to the person experiencing violence.

However, it is concerning that only 2% report such incidents to the police.

Question 10) Do you think young people in Serbia have enough information about the rights of marginalized groups?



When asked whether young people in Serbia have sufficient information about the rights of marginalized groups, only 6% of respondents answered Yes, while as many as 62% answered No, and 32% believe that young people are partially informed.

Question 11) Where do you most often get information on this topic? (you can select multiple answers)

Family/friends, Media (TV, newspapers)	2%
Internet/social media	34%
Internet/social media, Family/friends	4%
Internet/social media, Family/friends, Organizations/workshops/campaigns	2%
Internet/social media, Media (TV, newspapers)	18%
Internet/social media, Organizations/workshops/campaigns	8%



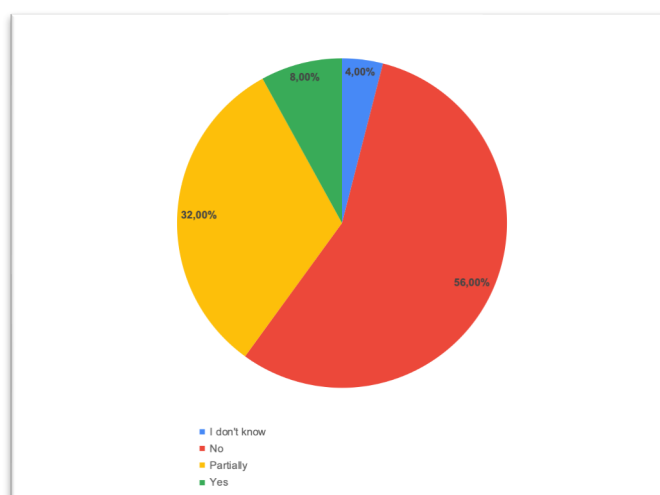
Media (TV, newspapers)	2%
Organizations/workshops/campaigns	10%
School	4%
School, Internet/social media	6%
School, Internet/social media, Family/friends	2%
School, Internet/social media, Family/friends, Media (TV, newspapers), Organizations/workshops/campaigns	2%
School, Internet/social media, Media (TV, newspapers)	2%
School, Media (TV, newspapers)	2%
School, Organizations/workshops/campaigns	2%
Grand Total	100%

When asked where they obtain information on this topic, participants most frequently cited the Internet, with 34% identifying it as their primary source.

When combined with other sources such as television and newspapers, this percentage increases by an additional 18%.

The least amount of information is obtained from family and friends.

Question 12) Do you think the system (state, schools, institutions) adequately protects marginalized groups?



Respondents believe that the state, institutions, and schools are not doing enough to ensure the safety and adequate protection of marginalized groups.

When asked about this, 56% answered No, while an additional 32% responded Partially.

Question 13) What do you think is the best way to combat violence against marginalized groups? (you can select multiple answers)

Education in schools	10%
Education in schools, Media and social media campaigns	4%
Education in schools, Media and social media campaigns, Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Support for victims (psychological, legal)	2%

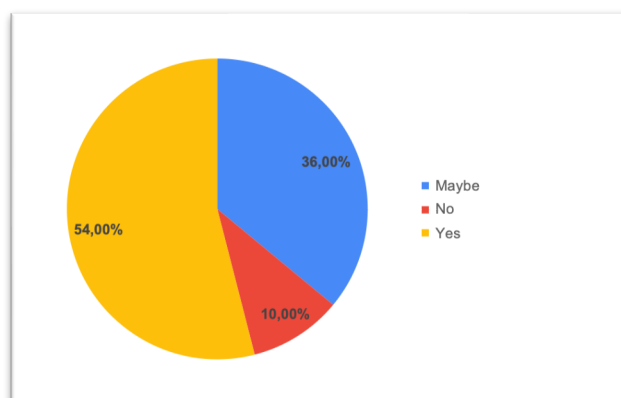


Education in schools, Media and social media campaigns, Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Support for victims (psychological, legal), Strengthening laws and institutions	8%
Education in schools, Strengthening laws and institutions	6%
Education in schools, Stricter penalties for perpetrators	6%
Education in schools, Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Strengthening laws and institutions	4%
Education in schools, Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Support for victims (psychological, legal)	8%
Education in schools, Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Support for victims (psychological, legal), Strengthening laws and institutions	8%
Education in schools, Support for victims (psychological, legal)	2%
Education in schools, Support for victims (psychological, legal), Strengthening laws and institutions	2%
Media and social media campaigns	2%
Media and social media campaigns, Stricter penalties for perpetrators	4%
Media and social media campaigns, Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Strengthening laws and institutions	2%
Media and social media campaigns, Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Support for victims (psychological, legal), Strengthening laws and institutions	2%
Strengthening laws and institutions	2%
Stricter penalties for perpetrators	12%
Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Strengthening laws and institutions	10%
Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Support for victims (psychological, legal)	4%
Stricter penalties for perpetrators, Support for victims (psychological, legal), Strengthening laws and institutions	2%
Grand Total	100%

Participants in the study identify education in schools, stricter penalties for perpetrators, and strengthening the rule of law and institutions as the main ways to address this problem. They also see campaigns on social media as a solution.

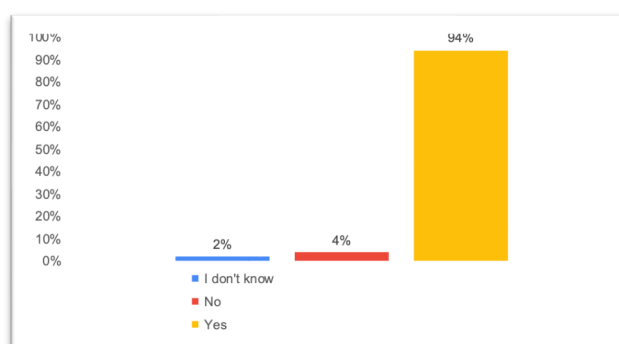


Question 14) Would you personally participate in activities promoting equality and tolerance?



Participants expressed, with 54% of responses, an active willingness to take part in promoting equality and tolerance, while only 10% stated that they do not wish to participate in such activities.

Question 15) Do you believe young people can initiate positive changes in society?



What is encouraging is the fact that as many as 94% of respondents believe that young people can bring about positive change in society.

Summary

This research offers valuable insight into the perspectives of young people in Serbia regarding violence against marginalized groups and their potential role in building a more inclusive and just society.

The majority of respondents (50%) are between the ages of 15 and 18, indicating that most are currently high school students. Alarming, 64% reported having witnessed some form of violence against marginalized individuals, while an additional 12% were uncertain whether what they observed qualified as violence. These findings point to the increasing prevalence and normalization of violence—often involving multiple forms, both online and offline.



The LGBT+ community and Roma people emerged as the most frequently targeted groups. In 46% of responses, one or both of these groups were mentioned alongside others, and in 56% of cases, the LGBT+ community was referenced in combination with other categories.

Respondents identified schools (22%) and the internet (52%) as the most common environments where violence occurs, places where young people spend most of their time. While it is positive that 36% of respondents would offer help to someone experiencing violence, only 2% said they would report the incident to the police.

When asked about awareness of the rights of marginalized groups, only 6% of respondents felt that young people were sufficiently informed, while 62% said they were not, and 32% believed their knowledge was partial. The internet was the primary source of information (34%), followed by a combination of other media like TV and newspapers (18%). Family and friends were the least mentioned.

A significant 56% of participants believe that the state, institutions, and schools are not doing enough to protect marginalized communities, with 32% saying they do so only partially. As key solutions, respondents emphasized the importance of education in schools, harsher penalties for perpetrators, strengthening institutional responses and the rule of law, as well as running awareness campaigns on social media.

Encouragingly, 54% of respondents expressed a willingness to actively participate in promoting equality and tolerance, while only 15% were not interested. Perhaps the most hopeful finding is that an overwhelming 94% of young people believe they can be a driving force for positive change in society.

Meeting Summary – Association Members and Youth Workers

We held a meeting of our Association, attended by both young people and youth workers who were involved in the design and implementation of this research, as well as other members of our organization. A total of 15 participants were present.

During the meeting, we presented the key findings of the research and openly discussed the challenges we encountered throughout the process. One of the overarching conclusions is that the significance of this research is now being overshadowed by the escalating violence taking place on the streets of Serbia. Peaceful protesters—primarily young people, students, and citizens—are increasingly being subjected to police repression and the excessive use of force. This situation is significantly affecting public trust in institutions, yet it is also fueling a stronger desire among young people for positive social change.

The participants of the research emphasized how meaningful this process was for them, as it helped raise awareness of the issues currently affecting our society.

They expressed appreciation for the opportunity to independently take part in shaping the research process, to learn new things that will benefit them not only in their education but also in other areas of life, and to receive constructive feedback and suggestions for



improvement from their mentors. Participants also reflected on some of the main challenges faced during the project, including coordination among participants and time management. Importantly, many stated that they plan to remain active beyond this research, continuing to engage in initiatives that aim to improve societal conditions and enhance the safety and well-being of every individual.

Mentors noted that today's younger generations possess remarkable knowledge, motivation, and energy to bring projects to completion. They also highlighted the positive experience of working in intergenerational teams, where participants differed not only in age but also in technical knowledge and skillsets. This diversity proved to be a strength, enriching the collaboration and overall outcomes.

Moreover, the current civil actions and nationwide protests have limited our ability to organize in-person events. Protest organizers have called for unity and discouraged the use of any flags other than the national flag of Serbia, as well as any messaging unrelated to the broader demand that institutions fulfill their responsibilities.

Additionally, with the end of the school year, we no longer have access to schools or similar institutions for presenting the research findings. In light of all this, we have decided to shift our focus toward an online awareness campaign, promoting tolerance and equality. We also plan to continue sharing the research results and insights through personal conversations and informal channels, ensuring that the findings still reach a broad audience despite the current limitations.

Below is Screenshot from our Instagram page.

