

Women's Room – Center for Sexual Rights

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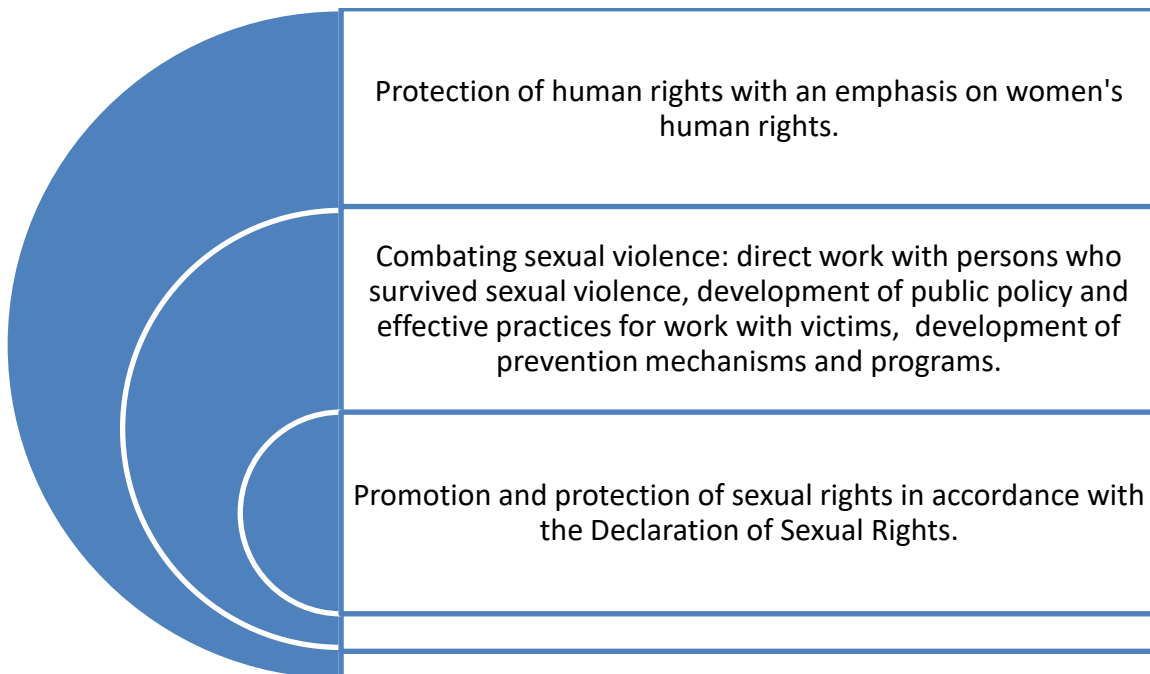
WOMEN'S ROOM – CENTER FOR SEXUAL RIGHTS

The Women's Room - Center for Sexual Rights is a feminist, non-profit, civil society organization established in 2002 with the aim of prevention and combating sexual violence, providing direct support and assistance to persons who survived sexual violence as well as promotion and protection of sexual rights.

Our vision is a society free from patriarchy, discrimination, misogyny and violence against women, where individual choice is the fundamental value.

Within the scope of the Women's Room, the Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence provides direct assistance and support to persons who survived sexual violence. We actively work on developing public policies, prevention programs, improvement of legislation, implementing specialized education as well as raising awareness about the problem of sexual violence.

AREAS OF WORK



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GOALS

Active advocacy for the promotion of gender equality based on feminist principles and values.

Empowerment of women to actively demand and protect basic women's human rights.

Active work on the prevention and combating of all forms of violence against women, with emphasis on sexual violence and violence in family, through assistance and support to victims; the design and implementation of prevention programs and specialized education; the development of mechanisms and policies for combating these forms of violence; and systematic monitoring of these mechanisms and policies in practice.

Direct work with persons who survived sexual violence through counseling (psychological counseling, legal counseling, crisis counseling, information on available services in the health system) and therapeutic work, including preparation for court proceedings and work with persons close to victims of sexual violence.

Empowerment of children and youth in combating sexual, gender and sexual discrimination.

Active work on the protection and promotion of the rights of children and youth and the prevention of sexual violence against and among children and youth.

Promotion and protection of sexual rights in accordance with the Declaration on Sexual Rights.

Active advocacy against discrimination based on sex, gender, gender expression and/or gender identity, sexual orientation and intersex characteristics.

Empowerment and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) populations in demanding and protecting their basic human rights.

Advocating non-violence and active participation in peace processes.

TARGET GROUPS

women in general

persons who survived sexual violence

women who experienced any form of violence against women

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children and youth

representatives of competent state bodies and institutions

representatives of civil society organizations and civic initiatives

students

LGBTIQ persons

citizens – general population

MAIN ACTIVITY GROUPS

1) DIRECT WORK WITH VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In the Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence (Centre), a multidisciplinary team of experts provides free assistance and support to survivors of sexual violence:

- support in the process of reporting sexual violence (accompanying to the police, hospital, State Attorney's Office, court, social welfare center);
- preparation for court proceedings;
- counseling and therapy: crisis counseling (legal and psychological, information on available services in the health system), therapeutic work for dealing with traumatic experiences;
- information and counseling for persons close to victims;
- developing and publishing of various materials intended for survivors of sexual violence.

The Centre's Team provides comprehensive assistance and support to survivors of sexual violence, in accordance with survivor's individual needs.

Centre's Team's member is also Darko, a therapeutic dog, chocolate Labrador whose presence and peaceful energy reduce the stress and discomfort of persons who turn to us for support, both during the first encounter and the following sessions.

2) EDUCATION

This is one of the key areas of our work, which we believe makes significant contribution to the achievement of the Women's Room's program objectives.

Special attention is given to prevention programs against sexual violence against and among children and youth, as well as to specialized multi-sectoral education for representatives of bodies, institutions and civil society organizations on work with persons who survived sexual violence or work with women who have experienced violence in family.

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Areas of education: violence against women, sexual violence, violence in family, gender equality, sexual rights.

Methods of education: specialized trainings and/or workshops (one-day and multi-day), lectures, round tables, panels, consultations, seminars, public events (e.g. performances).

3) RESEARCH

Scientific research conducted by the Women's Room aims at better insight and understanding of the issues connected to the areas of work of the Women's Room. The following research has been conducted (published) so far:

- Attitudes of political parties about LGBT rights before the 2003 elections in Croatia (2003)
- Attitudes and knowledge of seniors of the relevant university faculties about sexual violence (2004)
- Reality of Women's Sexual Rights in Croatia (2005)
- Experiences of LGBTIQ population with psychosocial providers in Croatia (2005)
- Attitudes and experiences of psychologists towards LGBTIQ population (2005)
- The gender prism of the sexual rights of youth (2006-2007)
- Civil society organizations providing specialized services to women victims of violence as key actors in the process of democratization of society (2010)
- Protection of rights and providing assistance to victims/witnesses of violence in family (2010)
- Gender, gender roles, sexuality, violence (2011)
- Sexual Violence in Croatia 2000 – 2010 (2011)
- Analysis of the role, capacities and sustainability of civil society organizations working on combating violence against women (2016)
- Sexual harassment at the Faculties of the University of Zagreb (2017)

Ongoing research

- Analysis of the content of media coverage on women murdered by their partners and close relatives in Croatia (2017/2018)

4) DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICIES AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE THROUGH PUBLIC WORK, ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

- participation in the development of public policies for combating and prevention of sexual violence and support for persons who survived sexual violence (development of effective support programs for survivors of any form of sexual violence, advocacy for changes in legislation in the field of sexual violence);
- organization/participation in national and international seminars and conferences;
- active work on changing societal attitudes towards sexual violence;
- participation in numerous committees, working groups and other relevant local and national bodies for improving public policies related to combating violence against women (2007 - present);

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- organizing an international Transgressing Gender Conference: Two is Not Enough for Gender (E)quality (2005);
- developing various documents and public policy proposals against sexual violence (e.g. "Proposals for changes related to sexual violence: legislative changes, protection of victims and development of prevention programs", 2006);
- initiating the development of the **Protocol of Conduct in Cases of Sexual Violence** and active participation in its development with the Working Group of the Governmental Office for Gender Equality (2007 – 2010);
- organizing the first Regional Conference on Sexual Violence (2008);
- organizing an international and regional symposium titled "Transposium" and "Transposium II" in co-operation with Trans Aid (2014);
- organizing the first International Conference on Sexual Violence in Croatia "System of Public Policies and Support for Victims of Sexual Violence" (2015);

- web site "Safe Zone", intended for women who experienced any form of violence and professionals working in the field of combating violence against women (2012 – present);
- initiated the coordinated development of the Action Plan of Civil Society Organizations for Combating Violence against Women in Croatia (2016);

- long term coordination of the *Network for the Cooperation between Government Institutions and Non-Government Organizations against Sexual Violence* (2002 – present);
- co-founders of the Regional Network Against Sexual Violence (2017);
- coordinators of the Support and Cooperation Network for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses (2018);
- members of numerous networks and initiatives: WAVE Network - Women Against Violence Europe, Victim Support Europe (VSE), Women's Network of Croatia (until 2017), PETRA Network, Platform 112, Initiative of civil society organizations for the introduction of education on human rights and democratic citizenship – GOOD.

- implementation of public campaigns:
 - ✓ first national campaign on sexual rights "Take Your Rights into Your Own Hands" (2005)
 - ✓ first national campaign on sexual violence „STOP Sexual Violence“ (2009, 2010)
 - ✓ national campaign against violence against women "Exercise the Right to Live without Violence!" (2012, 2013)
 - ✓ national campaign against violence against women "In Three Clicks Choose Life without Violence!" (2012)
 - ✓ public campaign „Let's Speak the Language of Equality“
 - ✓ public campaign "Seize a Life Free of Violence!" in cooperation with Croatian Rugby Association and the Advertising Agency IMAGO (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)
 - ✓ online campaign (Facebook, Instagram YouTube) „Let's Share Responsibly“ (2017, 2018)

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5) PUBLISHING

Publishing various materials (e.g. leaflets, manuals, books) related to areas of our work. So far we have published the following books, manuals and brochures:

Year of publishing	Title
2004	Manual „Sexual Violence in Schools“ Book „Sexual Violence – Theory and Practice“
2005	Brochure „Sexual Rights – the Future for Equality“ Manual „It's Cool to Know – manual for youth on the issue of human trafficking“ Book „Sexual Violence – Theory and Practice“ (English edition) Conference collection „Transgressing Gender: Two is not enough for Gender (e)quality.“ (Croatian and English editions)
2006	Publication „The Reality of Women’s Sexual Rights in Croatia – Research Results“ Toolkit „Creation of Sex? Gender“ Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorders, the International Gender Dysphoria Association Harry Benjamin“ (translation) Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Clients, the American Psychological Society (translation)
2007	Manual „Sexual Violence in Schools“ (second revised edition) Publication „Sexual Violence – how to recognize and prevent it!“ Publication „Sexuality among Seniors – Identifying and Removing Existing Prejudices“
2008	Toolkit „Creation of Sex? Gender“ (second extended edition) Toolkit „Creation of Sex? Gender“ (English edition) Manual „abcYES! Gender Equality“ Book „Surviving Sexual Violence“ (translation, author Liz Kelly)
2009	Publication „Don't Be Afraid of a Shadow – brochure for victims of sexual violence“ Journal on trafficking in persons „We are Still Struggling“

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2010	Publication „Civil Society Organizations Providing Special Services to Women Victims of Violence as Key Actors in the Process of Democratization of Society“ (research results)
2011	Publication „Sexual Violence in Croatia 2000 – 2010“ (research results)
2014	Manual „Minimum Standards – a Feminist Model of Social Services for Work with Women Victims of Violence“ Standards of Care (SOC) for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (translation)
2016	Manual „Civil Society Organizations as Key Actors in Combating Violence against Women in Croatia“
2017	Manual „#REACT – Online Sexual Violence against and among Children and Youth“

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE WOMEN'S ROOM SINCE ITS FOUNDATION

- over 1520 educational sessions held
- over 54 000 participants of educational sessions
- the first *Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence* opened in Croatia
- over 4310 counseling sessions held with 1250 individuals
- 14 pioneer research projects implemented
- over 120 different materials published related to our areas of work
- the first media campaign on sexual violence „STOP Sexual Violence“ (2009, 2010)
- the blog „Women's Room – Women's Voice“ on the webpage of Večernji list (2009-2016)
- Coordinator of the organization, Maja Mamula, PhD, elected the Zagreb Woman of the Year for protection of women's rights (2010)
- Women's Room's member Antonija Hojt received the Volunteer Oscar for her volunteer work with the Women's Room (2010)
- initiating the development of the *Protocol of Conduct in Cases of Sexual Violence* and active participation in its development with the Working Group of the Governmental

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Office for Gender Equality, which was adopted by the Government of Croatia in November 2012

- **web site “Safe Zone”, intended for women who experienced any form of violence and representatives of institutions and civil society organizations who work on this problem**
- **national campaign against violence against women “In Three Clicks Choose Life without Violence!” (2012)**
- **the first International conference about sexual violence in Croatia „System of Public Policies and Support for Victims of Sexual Violence ” (2015)**

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