

Sexual violence in sport – the case of Slovenia

Mojca Doupona, Ph.D., University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sports
Sunčica Bartoluci, Ph.D., University of Zagreb, Faculty of Kinesiology

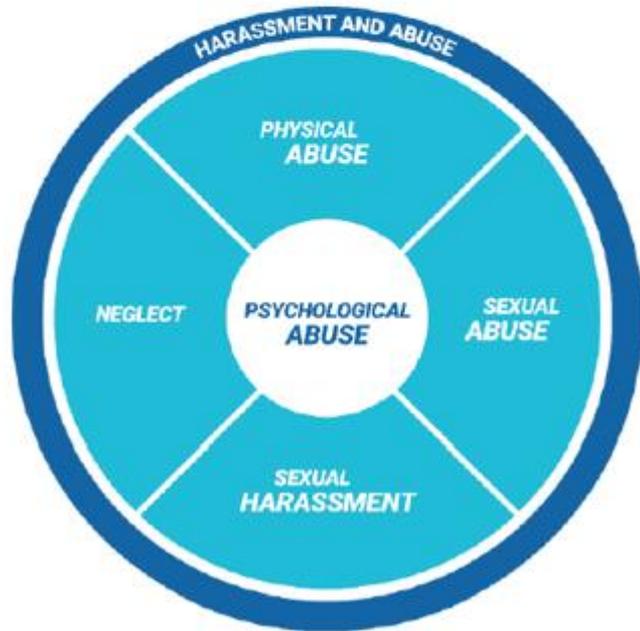


Today's Presentation

- Circumstances and socio-cultural structures
- The importance of breaking the silence
- Research questions, Data, Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion/Discussion



The cultural context of harassment and abuse is rooted in discrimination based in power differentials across a range of social and personal factors...



Circumstances and socio-cultural structures

- the culture of male hegemony
- the culture of trust, family and loyalty
- selection processes in sport
- disciplining regimes
- silencing and concealing

Introduction

- Safeguarding recognized as a specific issue for EU policy since EC **White Paper on Sport** (2007)
- XG Good Governance - **recommendations** on the protection of young athletes and safeguarding children's rights in sport (2016).
- **EU Work Plan for Sport** (2017-2020) identified need for additional study to gather data on violence against minors in sport and identify good national practices.
- Recent/ongoing projects:
 - Erasmus +: e.g. iProtect, Voices...
 - Council of Europe: Pro Safe Sport projects, StartToTalk
 - Initiatives @international federations

UL was part of
VOICE project
(2016-2018
Erasmus +
Sport project).

Starting point

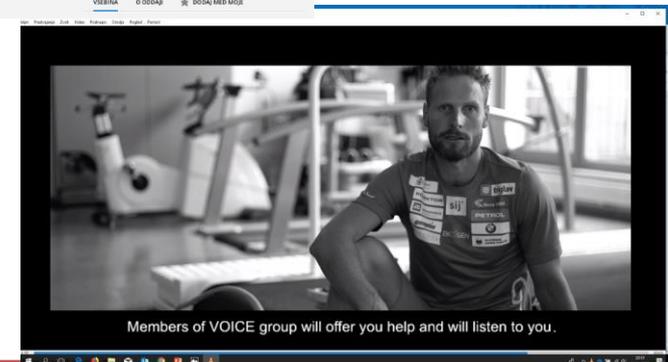
The aim was to generate crucial research data on sexual violence in European sport and produce a powerful knowledge-exchange and educational resources.

OBSTACLES AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- Taboo: even mentioning sexual violence make people feel uncomfortable
- People do not want to be in any relation to sexual harassment and violence
- Small country – fear of being recognized

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- 4 interviews (2 allowed to use)
- Video spot made for awareness raising about sexual violence (4 top athletes performing)
- National forum: 27 + 7 participants (april 2018)
- Media coverage: 3 radio and 1 TV broadcast; 7 newspaper articles
- Public debate about sexual violence in sports has finally started!

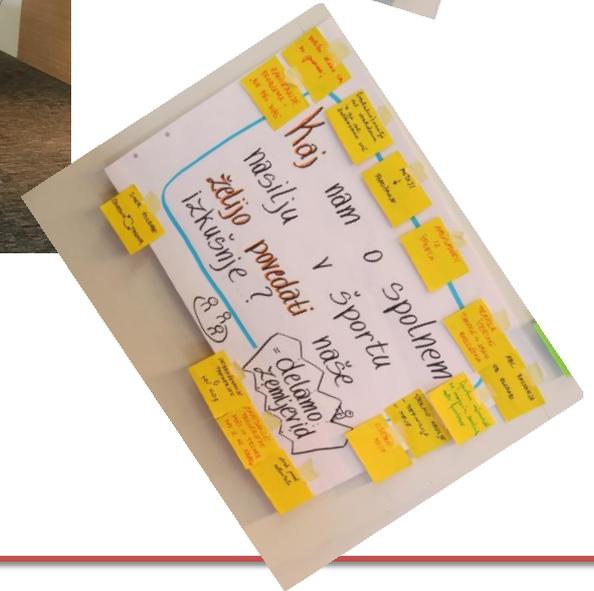
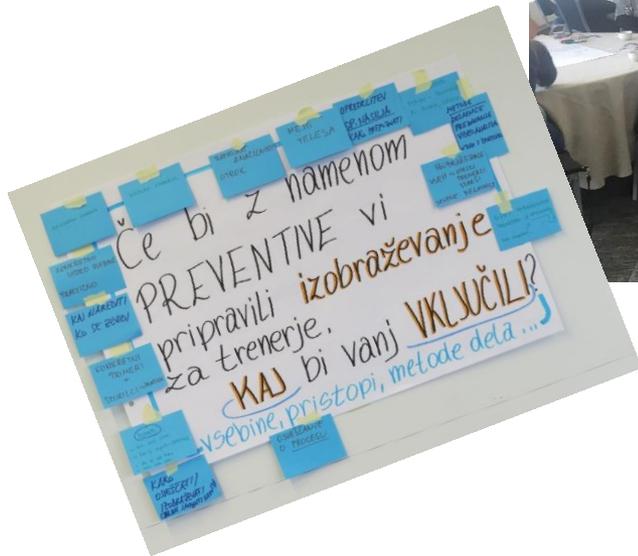
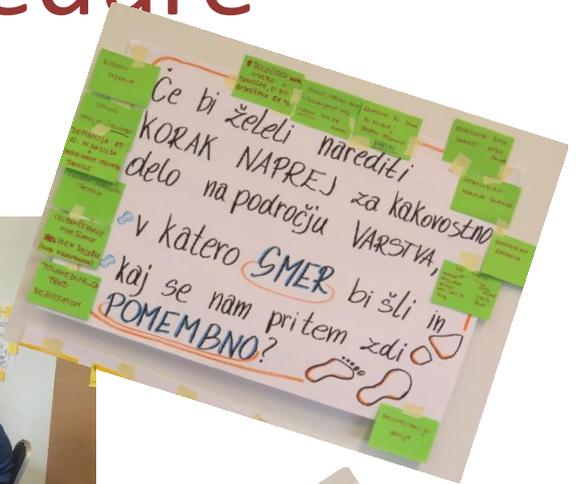


Research Question

What is the society' perception of the need for action and protection of young athletes against sexual harassment in sport.

Data... and procedure

35 participants
in focus groups



Results

- They all knew, though, that sexual violence is punishable by law,
- they were not aware what sexual violence in sport is

Sports Act (2017) in it's Article 47 regarding work prohibition states:

Article 47

(Work prohibition)

In relation to professional work in sports programs specified in points 1., 2., 4. and 7. of the first paragraph of Article 6 of this Act, a work contract cannot be entered into and the work cannot be done on any other legal basis by a person who

- 1. has been finally convicted of an intentionally committed criminal offence prosecuted ex officio to unsuspended imprisonment of more than six months;*
- 2. has been finally convicted of a criminal act against **sexual integrity**.*

Results

- they did not know what kind of behavior except the most extreme and publicly recognizable acts were classified as sexual violence in sport. The other question that arose was that there is:
- **no clear distinction** between sexual harassment and sexual abuse.
- They asked for specific **list of examples** for each sport
- They also asked for **guidance** in the future about how to talk with children and other young people (and their parents) about sexual violence.
- **Coaches are not trained** for conduct a conflict talk or a talk where sensitive matters are included.

When participants were asked which way they would go after the workshops and why it is important, they said:

- *Individual person is more important than the result that we are seeking/expecting from them;*
- *A lot of effort should be put into **making a society sensible**; Rationalizing of the violence should be stopped; Each sport club should have a trustworthy person to whom children could speak about sensitive matters; More elite athletes would be asked to speak in favor of possible victims, they could also play an important role as ambassadors;*
- ***About sexual violence education participants stressed out the following:***
coaches and trainers should be taught regularly about the sexual violence and abuse, they should also be encouraged to learn about appropriate behavior (zero tolerance!) when they find out about inappropriate sexual behavior in their club or among their colleagues;

...however

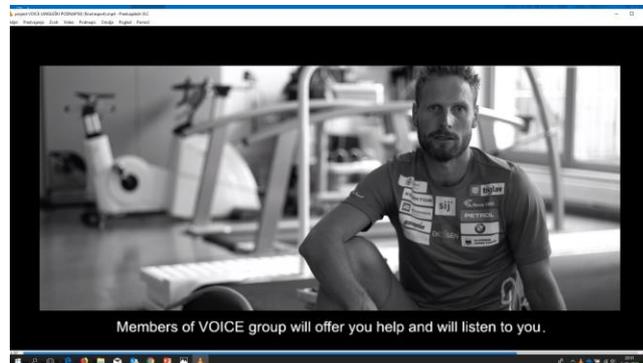
- We count the break of a taboo as one of the major outcome of the project.
- there are many more victims than those who had enough courage to expose themselves to the interviewers, we think, that breaking the silence is very important as well.

Conclusion

- We need more definitions and descriptions about sexual violence in specific sport
- The need of education for awareness raising (in schools and sport clubs)
- Sport organizations should prepare ethical rules of behaviour
- Confidant for athletes is needed (SOS telefon)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1D73XIXe3k>



Thank you!

