

THE JUSTICE INSTITUTE ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Bucharest, Romania

In November of 2017, Vital Voices conducted its sixteenth **Justice Institute on Gender-Based Violence** in Bucharest, Romania. Through convening diverse practitioners across the criminal justice system, the Institute strengthened their ability to investigate, prosecute and provide services for victims of gender-based violence (GBV) crimes, and in doing so fortified participants' capacity to better collaborate in promoting victim safety and offender accountability.

24%

of Romanian women have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetime



November 13 | Faculty Training Day

Faculty Facilitators included representatives of diverse sectors of Romanian society working to address violence against women through the criminal justice process. During the Faculty Training Day held at the Avon offices in Bucharest, Vital Voices introduced the structure and content of the Justice Institute model, highlighted particular tools for effective facilitation, and sought feedback on key issues of legal and cultural sensitivity.

November 14 | Institute Day 1

Media Launch The Institute launched with a panel discussion focused on:

- Explaining how the Justice Institute model seeks to actualize a multi-sector approach to address GBV
- Discussing how allied professionals within and outside the justice system can collaborate to promote more effective responses to victims of GBV
- Listening to the personal experience of a victim of an abusive relationship and her journey to becoming a survivor and advocate

Module 1 | Practical Exercises

This module introduced participants to the regionally-tailored hypothetical case scenarios on which the Institute is centered.

- *Practical Exercise A: Children Exposed to Violence*
- *Practical Exercise B: Charging Decisions*
- *Practical Exercise C: Collateral Consequences*

This module identified systemic and widespread challenges in Romania, while also allowing Faculty to observe which participants might be leaders on the issues, or, to the contrary, hold attitudes that endanger or blame victims.

Module 2 | Evaluating and Investigating the Case

In this module, participants discussed common goals and challenges faced by professionals handling GBV cases, including disagreements and misunderstandings of the law, barriers to implementation, and unique dynamics of GBV cases that make them difficult to investigate and prosecute. Participants also explored how multidisciplinary teams can coordinate and collaborate to more effectively respond to GBV.

November 15 | Institute Day 2

Participants continued working on Module 2, which included a variety of interactive sessions on assessing dangerousness, responding to intimidation, investigating and analyzing a case, and assessing a domestic violence incident while children are present. Highlights of the day included discussions of overt and subtle forms of intimidation, particularly relating to technology, and an evidence-gathering activity where participants assumed the role of members of a multidisciplinary team in order to investigate a case and assist the victim through the criminal justice process.

What was your favorite part of the Institute?

"The role playing that allowed us to understand the work of different institutions and how we can collaborate to combat gender violence."

"The practical exercises were very useful and very dynamic."

November 16 | Institute Day 3

Module 3 Prosecuting the Case

Facilitators kicked off the final day of training with **Module 3**, which generated productive discussions about conducting thorough investigations that lead to more informed charging decisions to help ensure stronger prosecutions and increase both victim safety and offender accountability.

Module 4 Holding Offenders Accountable

The final module included dialogue on sentencing in which participants considered new methods for implementing coordinated community responses post-conviction and discussed how to empower victims as survivors. Participants also developed individualized Action Plans in which they identified steps they will take to improve the quality of justice as it relates to GBV cases. The day ended with participants' reflection on the past three days and a small celebration.

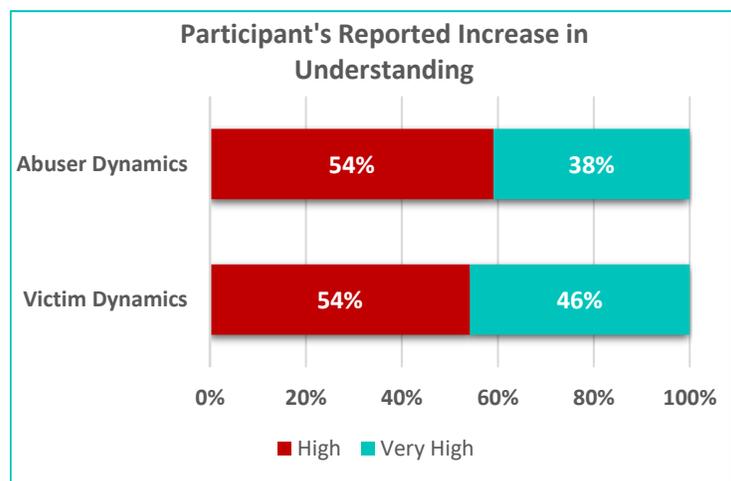
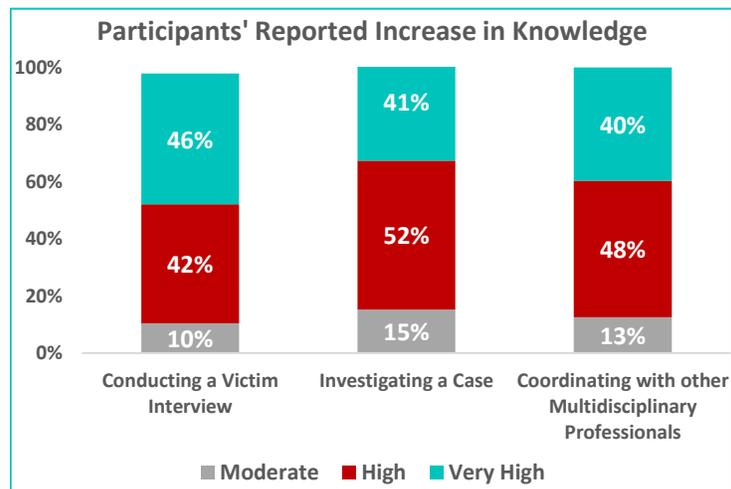
Closing thoughts

Ultimately, in convening these diverse practitioners across the criminal justice system, the Institute addressed some of the most pressing institutional and attitudinal challenges to combatting GBV in Romania by encouraging participants across sectors to identify challenges and outline strategies to collaboratively address them.

Activities Participants Found Most Useful

1. Practical Exercises
2. Collaborating with Agencies and Advocates
3. Working with and for the Recanting or Reluctant Victim

Knowledge & Skills



Institute Results



Over 50 Participants & Local Faculty Facilitators

Based on post-training surveys...

96% Agreed or strongly agreed the Institute established a *network* where participants can share information with others

90% Rated their level of increase in their ability to partner with others to identify victims of domestic violence as high or very high



A Local Faculty Facilitator leads a session on the importance of collaboration.

