

# **Jhanelle Gopie from New York City is spending the summer in Victimology Society of Serbia as part of an International Field Program (IFP)**



My name is Jhanelle Gopie and I am a 23 years old Belgrade transplant from New York City. I am currently finishing up my Master's Degree at The New School, located in New York City, studying International Affairs and Global Development. I am spending the summer in Belgrade as part of an International Field Program (IFP) offered through my university. This 10-week summer program allows students to work and conduct research with community-based organizations, NGOs, international organizations, government, and local agencies in their host country through seminars and independent research. The IFP provides students with a critical context for understanding global issues as well as an opportunity to develop foundational tools for working in diverse communities, conducting research, analyzing policies, and implementing projects in developing countries.

I have always had a passion for gender equality, which I developed during my undergraduate career. Inspired by the women in my own life, I have taken almost every opportunity I can to research and learn about the different women's movements around the world and how we as a global community can continue to fight for the many obstacles to women's rights. Working with the Victimology Society of Serbia gives me the opportunity to learn more about the current rights and policies of vulnerable populations in an often overlooked region.

My research project will be focused on achieving gender equality through women's economic empowerment. While in Serbia, I will conduct research on women's current role in the Serbian economy while also looking at the historical context that led them to their current position. I will then examine how women's civil society in the country can act as agents for their own economic empowerment and the strategies implemented in order to advocate for policy change. While in Belgrade, I hope to visit with different women-led civil society organizations and assess the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities associated with advocating for gender equality through economic empowerment. Through my work with VDA, I hope to also give context to the different issues affecting women in the labor force and why advocacy and policy change is crucial to a more equal society.

I am really enjoying my time in Belgrade, exploring the many different facets of the city. I am excited to learn more about the history and culture throughout Belgrade. I look forward to working with and learning from the Victimology Society of Serbia, and hope to contribute to VDS as best I can.