

RUHAMA

Supporting Women Affected by Prostitution



Annual Report 2015

Chairperson's Statement	03
CEO's Foreword	05
About Ruhama	06
Services: Ruhama at the frontline	07
- Headline statistics for our service delivery in 2015	08
- Street Outreach Programmes - Reaching the most vulnerable	09
- Casework and Care Planning - A holistic approach	11
- Housing and Social Welfare Service - Rebuilding home	15
- Education and Development - Rebuilding lives	17
- Counselling and Holistic Therapies - Rebuilding self	18
Advocacy, Communications and Training - Changing hearts and minds	19
- Influencing legislation at home and abroad	19
- Ruhama on the world stage	20
- Raising awareness to REACH the most vulnerable	20
- Sharing best practice	22
Volunteering at Ruhama - Making a real difference	23
Statistics	25
Financial Summary for 2015	32
Independent Auditor's Report	33
Acknowledging our Financial Supporters	33

Chairperson's Statement

Valerie Judge

Chairperson of Ruhama



In 2015, Ruhama worked with hundreds of women affected by prostitution & sex trafficking. This is not a measure of success. It is a measure of need. The women who come to Ruhama do so because they have decided they need some help. They need practical help, help to change their lives, and often to deal with the harmful personal effects of being sold, again and again, for the sexual gratification of others.

Ruhama began its work 26 years ago as a small outreach service to women on the streets of Dublin. We still provide that service. It might be a cup of tea, a chat, a step inside from the rain and cold. Or it might be that the woman who comes to "The Van" wants help to change or improve her life, to engage in counselling or avail of the other holistic supports that Ruhama offers. The "Van" provides a non-judgemental safe space, offering further support, if that is what she herself decides she wants.

Over the years the services provided by Ruhama have evolved, in response to the changing needs of women and girls affected by prostitution. This report gives a picture of the services that have developed in response to the needs of the women we meet.

Some of our services are in support of meeting those basic needs of everyone in society – supports to get a job, a home, a family life, self-esteem. For women who have been prostituted, being able to meet these basic needs can sometimes be particularly complex.

Prostitution in Ireland has evolved over the years. We live in an increasingly globalised and technology enabled world. We can buy anything on the internet. Women can now be bought and sold on-line, virtually anywhere, and any time.

Women affected by prostitution are now less likely to be on the streets, and more likely to be in indoor prostitution, ie brothels. A brothel in contemporary Ireland may be an apartment in any residential development, a house in any estate, in any city, town or village in the country. Women are commonly accessed by buyers through third parties via websites or mobile phone numbers. This is a highly organised business, often operated by transnational organised crime.

The contemporary world of prostitution can involve trafficking, internationally and nationally, and the ability of the woman involved to take full control of her own life is not always easy. A woman in a brothel may have been brought to Ireland under false pretences, may have had her papers taken, may be moved on a regular basis

around the country and be advertised online with different nationalities and identities. Or she may, for complex reasons, simply feel that there is no alternative, or no choice and no chance of a life outside of prostitution.

Ruhama has worked in partnership, with other NGOs, the Department of Justice & Equality, the European Commission and An Garda Síochana, and our own service users to create an awareness among affected women, that there are free dedicated support services available to them, which provide health, advocacy and many other forms of assistance.

The "REACH project" was not only a joint project to reach out to women and girls who are trafficked, or vulnerable to being trafficked, but also to reach out to men and boys to inform them about the issue. Research shows that the vast majority of men in Ireland do not buy women for sex and never will. Nonetheless, the minority of men who do buy sex are fuelling a multi-million euro business to the benefit of organised criminals, rather than the benefit of the women who are trafficked and prostituted.

Ruhama's focus is the hundreds of women who engage with us each year. Ruhama also recognises that there is a need for systemic change to ensure that exploitation of women through the commercialisation of sex is minimised. Ruhama believes that a society, which recognises prostitution as a product of inequality and exploitation, and which responds accordingly, will create the most effective approach to minimise the harm of the sex trade, by providing a legislative framework which recognises the right not to be exploited.

The organisation engages in work to advocate for legislation and policies from a human rights based perspective.

Today, we have the opportunity to address the problem of exploitation and trafficking systemically, by addressing the matter of the purchase of a woman's consent to sex.

We welcome the initiation of the Sexual Offences Bill 2015 by the Minister for Justice & Equality, and hope that, like other countries which have enacted similar legislation such as Sweden, Norway, Northern Ireland and France the Government will enact this Bill, sending out the clear message that it is not acceptable in our society for one person to buy out or to sell sexual access to the body of another.

On behalf of the Board of Ruhama, I am very pleased to present this report of the work of the organisation during 2015. We are grateful to all funders and donors for their support, without whom the organisation cannot operate. We thank all organisations, statutory and Non-Governmental, with whom we work on a daily basis for their ongoing support.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors, for their support and significant contribution to the development of Ruhama, and their commitment to the services for women.

I wish, finally, to convey my personal sincere appreciation of the work of each member of the Ruhama team, led by CEO Sarah Benson, including, in particular, the growing number of volunteers who are carrying out exceptional work every day.

Valerie Judge
Chairperson
Board of Directors

Foreword

Sarah Benson Chief Executive Officer



I am delighted to present Ruhama's Annual Report for the year 2015. In the course of 2015 we supported 301 women affected by prostitution and trafficking through our wide range of specialist services, which are delivered on a national basis. 228 women benefitted from our intensive casework support this year, including 94 victims of sex trafficking. A further 73 were supported exclusively through our Street Outreach service, or with non-casework support.

Of particular note in 2015 was a 16% increase in the number of different nationalities of women engaged with. We supported a staggering 43 nationalities. This situation is reflective of the increasing globalisation and migration trend which we are seeing across the world. When we look at prostitution and sex trafficking it is critical that we become more alert to the gendered dimension of migration and the risks to women and girls. So many women and girls already face exploitation and abuse while in transit, therefore; it is truly devastating to know that many reach what they believe to be a safe harbour only to find themselves thrust into brothels to be sold for sex.

Even those women who migrated for 'economic' rather than 'asylum' purposes can find themselves equally at risk to exploitation by the organised crime gangs managing the commercial sex trade.

Through 1281 direct face-to-face casework meetings, 12,140 phone and 8146 text contacts Ruhama assisted women with diverse and complex needs with dedicated emotional support, advocacy and information. We also provided a broad range of additional services such as our housing and welfare support, counselling and our education & development programme, which saw an increased uptake in 2015 of 21%.

Ruhama's objective is, first and foremost, to support the personal goals of any woman affected by prostitution or trafficking who is looking for assistance. All our services are free and confidential. We operate a person centred care plan system whereby all the complex aspects of life can be examined with a dedicated caseworker and where women themselves identify the priorities they want help with.

This can be as practical as English classes, legal advice, or social welfare information or as complex as recovery from trafficking or the process of exiting prostitution. Exiting is not a linear process, and is often something that women only discuss with us after building up a relationship of trust over time. Neither, importantly, is the desire to exit prostitution a pre-requisite for Ruhama to offer our services which are non-directive and non-judgmental.

We simply work with women wherever they are at in their lives. We also continue, as always, to reach out to women in street prostitution with our Outreach van. These women are a particularly vulnerable cohort that typically represents about 25% of Ruhama's service users.

Some things remained significant challenges to our frontline workers in 2015 which warrant highlighting. Of particular concern is the dearth of safe, appropriate, affordable accommodation accessible to women exiting prostitution or fleeing a trafficking situation who are desperate to move on with their lives. An additional barrier for migrant women from the European Economic Area is the Habitual Residency Condition. This can make it extremely challenging for these women to find a secure home in Ireland as they cannot access any social welfare supports, even if they have been trafficked and sexually exploited here.

Ruhama's wider advocacy work has always been shaped by the experiences and needs of the women we support. In 2015 we continued this work on a national and international level, collaborating with other organisations and groups at home and as far afield as the United States & South Korea, to raise awareness of the harms of the commercial sex trade and enhance legislative, policy and practice responses to those affected by it.

But none of our work would be possible were it not for the support of a host of individuals and agencies who truly believe in what we do. Thanks must go firstly to our funders and generous donors who keep our doors open to women whenever they may need us. We also appreciate the great collaborative work on women's behalves with other NGOs and statutory services. Thanks too to those who help to realise the invaluable work of Ruhama through 'people power' – our dedicated team of staff and volunteers, ably supported and guided by our Board of Directors.

Finally I want to pay tribute to the women who use our services, both past and present, for inspiring us, through their own stories of courage and survival, to continue the fight against the sexual exploitation of all women and girls.

Sarah Benson
Chief Executive Officer

Vision and Mission

Ruhama's vision is of a more just society, in which prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation do not exist.

Ruhama's mission is to:

- Reach out to and provide support services to women affected by prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation
- Based on individual need, to offer assistance and opportunities to explore alternatives to prostitution
- Work to change public attitudes, practices and policies which allow the exploitation of women through trafficking and prostitution.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles which inform Ruhama's work are:

- Providing a non-judgmental service
- Placing a high value on equality, inclusivity, cultural diversity, dignity and respect
- Affirming every woman's right to society's protection and respect
- Commitment to learning and to continual service improvement
- Accountability to the women we work with and our funders.

Ruhama Functions

Ruhama is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and a registered charity founded in 1989, which works on a nationwide basis with women affected by prostitution. Ruhama offers support and assistance to women:

- who are currently active in prostitution
- who have a history of prostitution
- who are victims of sex trafficking.

Ruhama regards prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation as forms of violence against women and violations of women's human rights. We see prostitution and the social and cultural attitudes which sustain it as being deeply rooted in gender inequality and social marginalisation.

Grounded in a perspective which emphasises the value and dignity of every human being, Ruhama works from a position of respect and uncritical acceptance of women, and seeks to actualise belief in their inner capacity to effect positive change in their own lives.

Board of Directors 2015

Chairperson: Valerie Judge

Company Secretary: Colm O' Dwyer

Catherine Clancy

Colm Dempsey (Resigned Dec 2015)

Breda Flood

Margaret Lynch

Ethna McDermott

Myriam McLaughlin

Frances Robinson (Resigned Oct 2015)

Mary Scully

Zuilmah Wallis

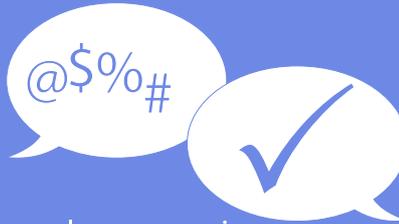
Ruhama's services to women include:



Needs assessment

Individual casework support and advocacy

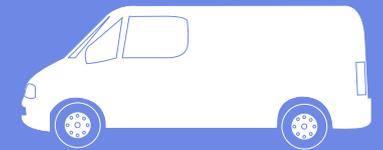
Care planning and case management



Interpretive support



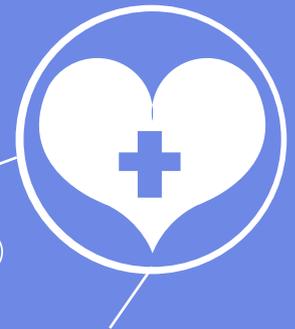
Support with job-seeking



Mobile street outreach to Dublin's 'red light' areas



Referral to other key agencies that can offer additional support



Practical support (material needs) in certain circumstances

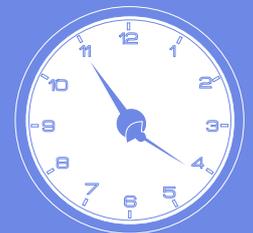
Emotional and psychological supports including access to counselling



Crisis accommodation in emergency situations

Housing and social welfare support

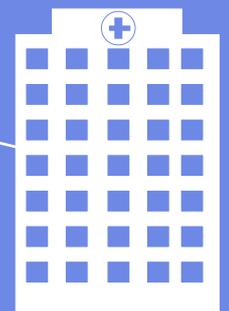
Out-of-hours emergency response



1 - to - 1 to and group training and development opportunities

Support into mainstream training and education

Outreach service to HSE Women's Health Service sexual health clinic (and other locations)



Headline Statistics for our service delivery in 2015

301 Women received support in total

66 Women received street outreach support	860 Staff and volunteer hours of street outreach delivered over	122 nights
228 Women received casework support, of whom:	134 Women received general casework support	94 Women received casework support as victims of trafficking
1,281 Face - to - face contacts were made	12,140 Telephone contacts were made*	8,146 SMS contacts were made*
80 Women received Education and Development support	50 Women received specialised Housing and Social Welfare support	25 Women received support -did not go into casework
103 Women accessed Ruhama's services for the first time in 2015 , of whom:	76 Women received general casework support	27 Women received casework support as victims of trafficking

The core of Ruhama's work is the direct support we provide to women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking. This support is wide-ranging and holistic, reflecting the often complex needs of women who have experienced sexual exploitation.

All of the specialist services we offer have been tailored to meet these specific needs, and are constantly evolving in light of the feedback we receive from the women we support.

Ruhama supports women, including transgender women, who are actively involved in prostitution, those who are seeking support to exit, victims of sex trafficking, and women with a past experience of prostitution/sex trafficking.

A continuum of support is offered, ranging from outreach and crisis intervention to person-centred casework, education and development programmes and housing and welfare assistance. All of the support on offer is delivered in accordance with each woman's wishes and needs, and at her own pace.

Seeking to exit prostitution is not a requirement of Ruhama offering services to any woman involved in prostitution. All services are free and confidential.

In 2015, Ruhama supported a total of 301 women in a variety of different ways.

**phone contacts to and on behalf of women*

Street Outreach - Reaching the most vulnerable

While the majority of women who access Ruhama's services are involved in the indoor sex trade, there still is a significant number of women in street-based prostitution and Ruhama offers them support through its Street Outreach service which operates up to 4 nights a week.

Women who engage with our Street Outreach service present with a range of issues which they need support in addressing. These issues include: addiction, debt, homelessness, poor health, suicide ideation, domestic violence and mental health. For others, the outreach van is simply a safe place to get away from the streets temporarily and meet a friendly face.

Via our Street Outreach programme, we engaged with and assisted **66 women** selling sex on-street in Dublin's 'red light' districts during 2015.

Ruhama was out on the streets on **122 nights** in our outreach van: specially designed as a safe space where women can access very practical supports such as hot drinks, snacks, hats and gloves and health supplies, alongside much-needed emotional support and onward referrals to our own and other specialist services.

As ever, the women in street prostitution we encountered across the year experience significant vulnerabilities, including poor physical and mental health, substance use issues, poverty and debt, and homelessness or the risk of it.

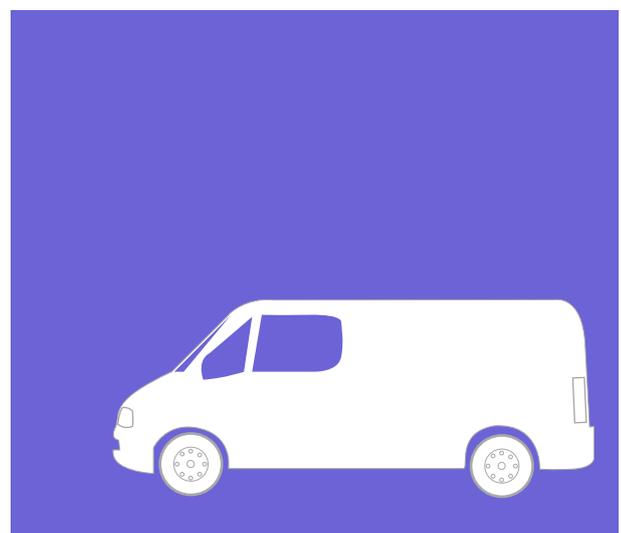
Unsurprisingly, they also face serious dangers – many women reported being threatened, robbed, and physically or sexually assaulted whilst selling sex on the street.

One positive development in this area of work in 2015 was the increased number of women accessing Ruhama's street outreach support who also went on to avail of our more in-depth casework service.

Our outreach
van went out
122 nights
supporting
66 women



Tara and Karen take the van on outreach



Snapshots from the streets

"We met a woman who was feeling **suicidal**.

A few weeks previously she had been **badly beaten up by a buyer.**"

- Outreach volunteer

"We saw a man **throwing a woman** out of his car while it was moving.
We asked the woman if she wanted **support** reporting to the Gardaí.

She was very **shaken.**" - Outreach Volunteer

"A woman we met had been **assaulted** earlier that night.

She was **shocked and upset.**

We gave her money from the emergency fund to **get home.**"

- Outreach Volunteer

Casework and Care Planning - A holistic approach

Ruhama offers its casework service on a nationwide basis – supporting women affected by prostitution and sex-trafficking right across Ireland.

Each woman who accesses this service is involved in the development of her own personalised care plan, which addresses all of the aspects of her life where she would like to make change.

This care plan forms the basis of the holistic support that each woman will then receive from Ruhama – typically provided on a one-to-one basis by her dedicated caseworker and advocate.

The purpose of the care plan is to empower women to overcome trauma, gain independence, and in many cases to support them to rebuild their lives after the experience of being sexually exploited.

Women are assisted to set realistic goals for themselves and make informed decisions about their future.

In 2015 Ruhama supported 228 women in our casework service, up 9% from 209 in 2014. Of these 228 women, 103 were accessing our services for the first time.

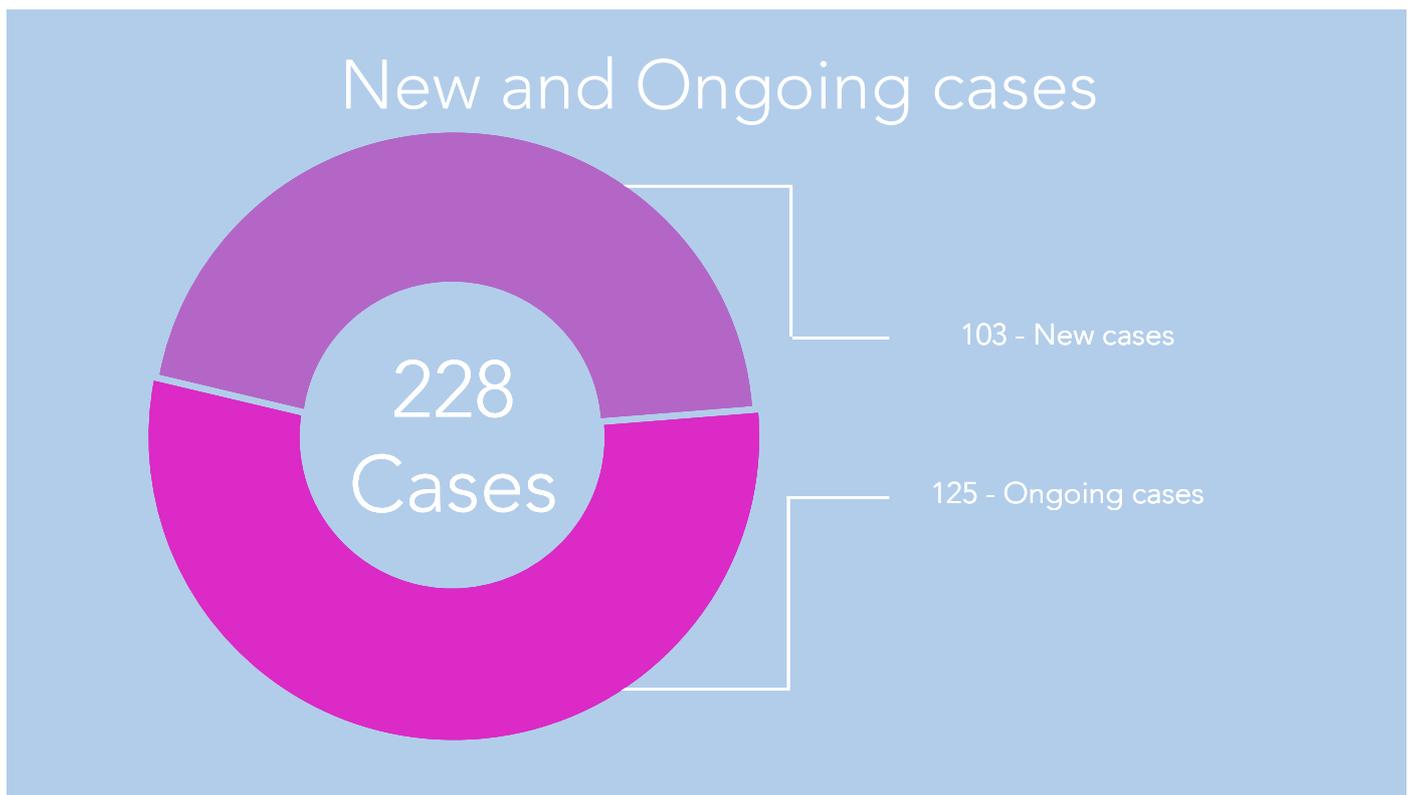
These women came to Ruhama via a number of different routes, which, as ever, highlight the true importance of multi-agency partnership working in this area.

In addition to a significant number of self-referrals and referrals via our own outreach service, our main external referral sources for 2015 included the HSE Women’s

Health Service, An Garda Síochána, solicitors and social workers – all vital groups of professionals in terms of the identification and assistance of women who are being exploited in prostitution.

Reflecting the global nature of the sex trade, the women we supported in 2015 represent South and Central America, Asia, Africa, Western and Eastern Europe, and highlight the way in which political and economic instability in women’s home countries leave many very vulnerable to exploitation, and the potential to be trafficked.

In 2015, Ruhama supported 228 women from 43 different countries in casework (an increase from 37 nationalities in 2014) including 94 women who are victims of sex-trafficking.



In 2015, Ruhama supported 228 women from 43 different countries

How women benefitted from our casework service...

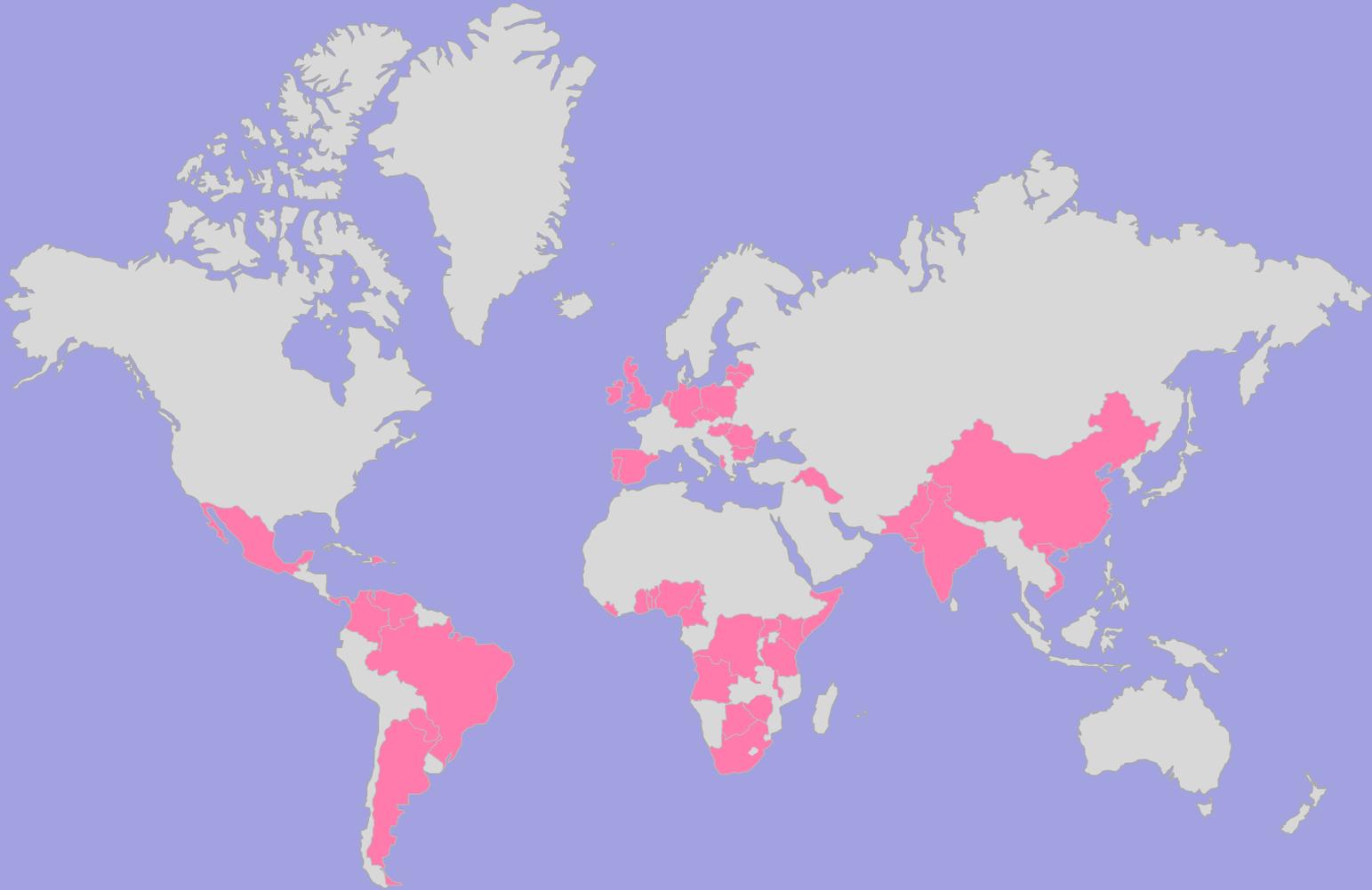
"A caseworker is someone who helps your situation... to achieve your goals and healing process, as well as getting the knowledge about the steps to take in a new country." - 'K'

"It's a good place to learn new skills and everyone is very nice." - 'C'

"I don't think I could have done it on my own... I know I am finishing with Ruhama soon but in the back of my mind I know that you are still there... I have to stand on my own two feet now but at least now I believe that things are going to be OK." - 'L'

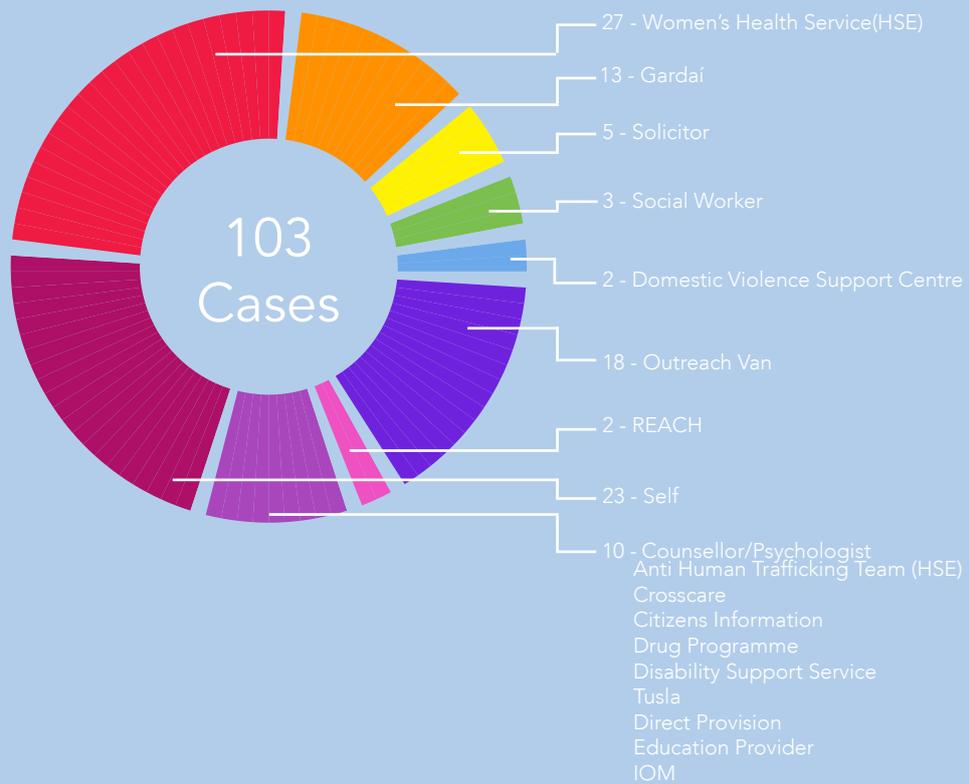
"I am so happy to have met you people, when I was about to give up - remember when I was giving up and you stopped me, you asked me to hang on for awhile longer, remember? And now look at me, everything is better, I am so happy." - 'JD'

Nationalities of ALL women accessing Ruhama's casework service 228 women from 43 countries

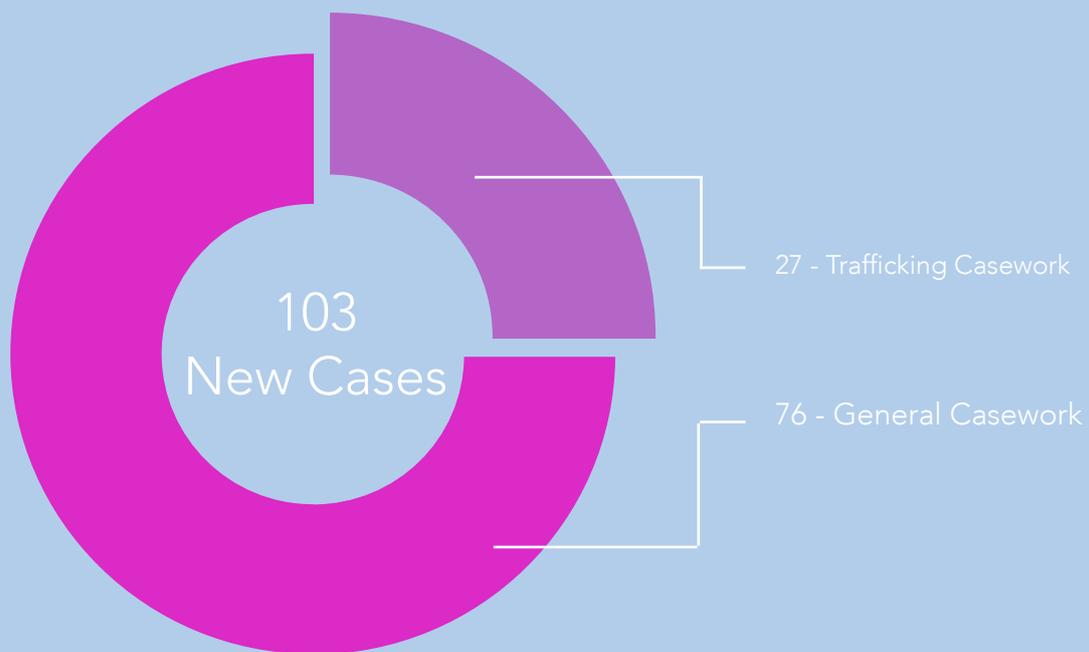


Ireland - 55 Nigeria - 54 Brazil - 28 Romania - 19 Zimbabwe - 6 Hungary - 5 South Africa - 4
 Cameroon - 3 Bulgaria - 3 Uganda - 3 Czech Rep. - 3 Albania - 3 Congo D.R.C. - 3 Spain - 3
 Poland - 2 China - 2 Malawi - 2 Kenya - 2 U.K. - 2 Colombia - 2 Dominican Rep. - 2 Angola - 1
 Argentina - 1 Benin - 1 Botswana - 1 Germany - 1 Ghana - 1 Netherlands - 1 India - 1
 Kurdistan - 1 Latvia - 1 Lithuania - 1 Liberia - 1 Mexico - 1 Pakistan - 1 Panama - 1
 Paraguay - 1 Portugal - 1 Somalia - 1 Tanzania - 1 Togo - 1 Venezuela - 1 Vietnam - 1

Referral Sources for all new cases in 2015



New cases in 2015



Housing and Social Welfare Service - Rebuilding home

In addition to our casework support, Ruhama also provides a dedicated one-to-one service focused on housing and social welfare issues for those women who need more intensive assistance in this regard.

In 2015, 50 women availed of our housing and welfare support service, which included very practical help with things like opening bank accounts, filling forms, undertaking property searches and viewings, and providing small grants to assist with rental deposits and basic homewares.

The service also provides tailored advocacy for women in landlord/housing association negotiations, in ensuring they can secure their social welfare entitlements, and in developing budgeting skills to manage their households independently.

The current housing crisis in Ireland is well-documented, with more and more vulnerable people becoming homeless on a weekly basis. In this context, Ruhama has seen many women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking rendered invisible when it comes to the right to secure a safe and affordable home. Some of the particular challenges faced by those we support include:

- Women active in prostitution facing exorbitant rents, who have to stay in prostitution to keep up with payments
- Homeless women in prostitution who are finding it impossible to stay drug-free or on low dosages because of the serious dearth of drug-free hostels
- Victims of trafficking leaving Direct Provision after gaining their status in Ireland, for whom it is all but impossible to get together a month's deposit and a month's rent in advance, when they have previously been surviving on €19.10 per week
- Homeless migrant women being excluded from local authority housing lists because they have not been living in Ireland with permission for the required five years
- Local authority assessments that do not highly rate a history of sexual exploitation and rape as factors to be considered in a woman's need for housing.

The importance of being able to access a space that one can really call 'home' cannot be underestimated for women who have been affected by prostitution. Women rebuilding their lives after the trauma of sexual exploitation need to be able to put down roots and take charge of their personal space.

In 2015, Ruhama worked hard to support women to find safe, affordable and suitable accommodation. However, we recognise that collaborative working is vital in this area, and we know that these homes could not have been secured without the assistance and commitment of a number of other organisations we work in partnership with, including: Crosscare, Daisy Housing, De Paul Trust, the Department of Social Protection, Dublin City Council, the Homeless Agency, Mercy Law Centre, New Communities, Place Finders, Rendu Housing, the Separated Children's Team, St. Vincent De Paul, Stepping Stone Housing, Threshold and others.

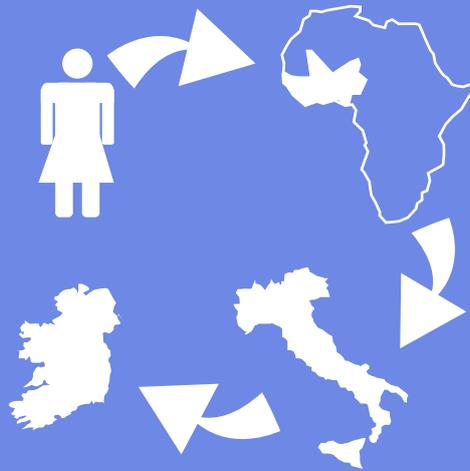
In the face of Ireland's continuing housing crisis, delivering our Housing service remains extremely challenging, but nevertheless we have been successful over the last year in starting women on their journey back to independent living, as Zena's story demonstrates.



In 2015,
50 women
availed of our housing
and welfare service

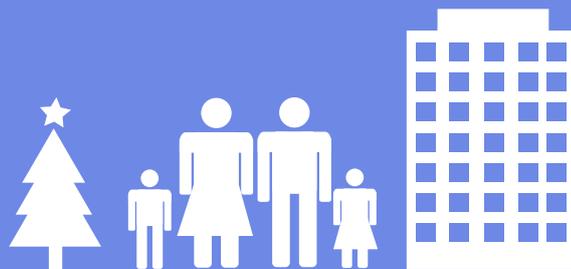
Zena's Story

Zena* was trafficked from West Africa and forced into prostitution first in Italy and later in Ireland.



In March 2015, Zena was granted permission to stay in Ireland. Because of the lack of housing here, it took **9 months** before she found an apartment to rent.

Just before Christmas, Zena moved into a two bedroom apartment with her husband and two young children, with the help of Ruhama's Housing and Social Welfare Officer.



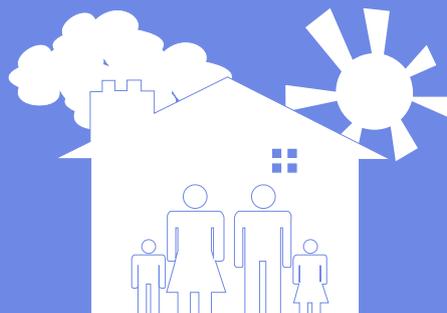
Zena says her situation is 'lovely' now – after years spent in Direct Provision she finally gets to control her own money, she can learn how to save and how to economise and budget for things.

Zena loves cooking in her new home. For the first time she and her husband can have real intimacy
- "a proper loving relationship".



There is a separate space where the children can do their homework, and they love having their own space, just like the other children in their school.

Zena feels that she and her family are in a safe place at last, and they want to give something back



Zena believes it is important to "support the community, to contribute to the economy of the country." Zena says that it is wonderful to finally have a clear plan for the future.

*Name changed to protect woman's identity.

Education and Development Programme - Rebuilding lives

Ruhama's unique Education and Development Programme is designed specifically with the personal and professional development of women affected by prostitution in mind.

The Programme has evolved over the years in response to the needs and ideas of the women we support. Its focus is allowing women to explore their potential, while at the same time opening up alternatives to prostitution.

In 2015, 80 women availed of Ruhama's Education and Development Programme, an increase of 21% on the previous year. Women had access to a wide variety of opportunities, delivered in-house on a group or one-to-one basis as required, including:

- English language and English literacy skills
- Maths/numeracy skills
- Computer skills
- Study skills and study support
- Third-level preparation
- Career guidance
- CV design and development
- Sewing skills.

A number of Ruhama's group courses, typically run twice annually, have been designed specially to build women's self-confidence and self-efficacy and give them the tools for making effective changes in their lives. These include:

- STEPS (Steps to Excellence for Personal Success) – which develops and enhances participants' confidence to work towards building the lives they want to lead
- Shaping Your Future – which provides participants with the tools and skills necessary to support job-seeking
- The Sarah Bird Programme – a trauma healing course, which helps participants who are experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to reduce the levels of stress and anxiety they are experiencing and improve their coping skills and overall mental health.

Ruhama's New Home

In 2015 our Education and Development team explored some specific themes relevant to the work of Ruhama. These themes became integrated into our support work with women, whilst also involving staff and volunteers.

We began with the theme of 'Our new home' – reflecting Ruhama's move from All Hallows College in Dublin 9, to our exciting new home in Cork Street, Dublin 8.

Being closer to the city centre allows women to more easily access our wide range of services in the same safe and confidential environment.

Some of the particular benefits of our new space include dedicated holistic therapy rooms, a large meeting and training space, and smaller, private rooms for one-to-one support and learning sessions.

The last months of 2015 saw us settle well into our new home, and begin integrating into the community, whilst also starting to build strong links with local services that can be of benefit to the women we support.



Counselling and Holistic Therapies - Rebuilding self

Women using Ruhama's services report having endured horrific levels of sexual, physical and emotional abuse from prostitution/having been trafficked.

The reporting of rape and sexual assault is extremely common. Many women have also experienced sexual abuse, neglect and/or violence as children. As adults the issue of intimate partner violence is also a common factor.

The impacts of such experiences are hugely damaging to women, many of whom speak of living in constant states of tension and fear or hopelessness. Displaying the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is not uncommon & women's suicidal ideation is an issue that our team respond to frequently. Not being able to process and deal with trauma is identified as a significant barrier to women's abilities to move on with their lives and achieve the goals that they wish.

Therefore, in addition to our dedicated and holistic casework service, Ruhama also provides a free counselling service to women accessing our services for those who need this extra therapeutic support. All women who access Ruhama for support have the opportunity to avail of our one-to-one counselling service, which, like all of our services, is free of charge.

In 2015 our counselling team consisted of four fully accredited and experienced counsellors including an Art Therapist.

During 2015, 214 hours of counselling were provided to 23 women in total.

Our qualified counsellors are adept at supporting women who have been involved in prostitution with a host of issues they often face, including trauma, isolation, anxiety, depression and relationship problems.

For many of the women we support, counselling is instrumental in rebuilding their sense of self and identity and setting them on the road to recovery from trauma.

For some, recovery also involves availing of Ruhama's dedicated holistic therapies that allow women to tackle stress and enhance their sense of wellbeing.

During 2015 11 women availed of regular therapies such as Reflexology, Shiatsu, neck, shoulder and head massage provided by two trained holistic therapists.



During 2015,
214 hours of
 counselling
 were provided to
23 women

Advocacy, Communications and Training - Changing hearts and minds

In addition to the provision of our frontline services, in 2015 Ruhama also made significant strides in tackling the issues of prostitution and sex trafficking from a broader advocacy perspective, addressing the conditions and institutions that allow the sexual exploitation of vulnerable women and girls to thrive.

This work was carried out at both a national and an international level and involved a host of influencing activities, including:

- Raising awareness of the harms of prostitution and trafficking amongst specific audiences, and the general public at large
 - Advocating for legislative and policy change that tackles the demand that drives the sex trade, whilst addressing the vulnerabilities of those exploited within it
 - Supporting survivors of prostitution and sex trafficking to raise their voices against exploitation
 - Providing training and other resources to key professionals who are in a position to support and respond empathetically to vulnerable persons involved in prostitution.
- Some highlights of our advocacy work in 2015 are outlined below.

Influencing legislation at home and abroad

2015 was a pivotal year for the progress of Ireland's Sexual Offences Bill, which includes a range of legal instruments to tackle sexual exploitation, including outlawing the purchase of sex with penalties for those who profit from prostitution.

These are measures that Ruhama has campaigned long and hard for, most recently as a core member of the Turn Off the Red Light (TORL) Campaign.

TORL is a broad-based coalition with a membership of over 70 organisations spanning the NGO sector, trade union movement, and civil society.

During 2015 we worked closely with our TORL partners to ensure that as well as tackling demand, the Sexual Offences Bill also includes the repeal of the offence of soliciting for prostitution – a key measure that recognises the vulnerabilities of the vast majority of those who sell sex, and the injustice of criminalising them.

Having promoted the Bill through our media work, amongst our supporters and allies, and behind the scenes with key political figures it is now very close to fruition – by the end of 2015 it had almost completed its passage through the Seanad and ever closer to becoming a reality in law in 2016.

Given the global nature of the issues we work on and the fact that prostitution is an international trade, Ruhama also strives to ensure that we can extend our influence and expertise to other jurisdictions that are also focusing on these issues.

During 2015 we made a number of submissions and undertook a number of actions in this respect, including:

- Our formal response to Northern Ireland's Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on their consultation Leaving Prostitution: A strategy for help and support
- Our formal response to the consultation on Scotland's Prostitution Law Reform Bill, 2015
- A joint submission (with our partners Doras Luimní and the Immigrant Council of Ireland) to the European Commission on the need for an independent National Rapporteur in the State's fight against human trafficking
- Our joint submission with partners to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit in response to the draft publication of the 2nd National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking of Human Beings
- Furthering our advocacy goals via our active participation in the European Union Civil Society Platform Against Trafficking in Human Beings and the European Women's Lobby Observatory on Violence Against Women
- Hosting a briefing session for MEPs as members of the European Parliament FEMM Committee (Women's Rights and Gender Equality) on the frontline, policy and advocacy work of Ruhama.

All of our submissions are available on Ruhama's website www.ruhama.ie

Ruhama on the world stage

During 2015, Ruhama's CEO Sarah Benson continued to play a key role in CAP (Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution) International (<http://www.cap-international.org/>) as the Coalition's Chairperson.

CAP International is a unique coalition of fourteen frontline NGOs providing direct assistance to victims of prostitution and sexual exploitation in Europe, North America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

The fundamental objective of CAP International is to contribute to the adoption and implementation of abolitionist policies and legislation at the domestic, continental and international level.

In the Spring of 2015, Sarah represented both Ruhama and CAP at the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59) in New York. She travelled as an approved member of the official Irish State Delegation to CSW59, which provided an excellent opportunity to meet with the State representatives of the Irish mission: both those travelling from the Department of Justice and also those from Foreign Affairs who form the Permanent Mission to the UN for the Irish State. Sarah also gave an address at two packed CSW events:

- Advocacy and Networking Strategies for Legislative Reform: Ending Prostitution and Human Trafficking (organised by Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, and also addressed by Minister of State for Justice and Equality, Aodhán Ó Ríordáin, the Director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International, Taina Bien-Aimé and Diane Matte, Director of the Canadian frontline organisation La CLES)

- Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation: A Violation of the Human Rights of Women and Girls (organised by CAP International and also addressed by CAP colleagues from India, Spain, France and Canada, by the French Minister for Equality, the senior advisor to the Swedish Minister for Equality and three Members of Parliament from Sweden, France and the UK).



With Minister Aodhan O'Riordan & Diane Matte, Director La Cles Montreal before addressing the an event on legislative approaches to tackle the exploitation of prostitution and trafficking.

In addition to the above, CSW59 provided valuable opportunities to attend other events of relevance to the work of Ruhama, to network, meet and strategise with allies old and new and to reinforce the key message of prostitution and trafficking as an inherently harmful form of violence against women and girls across the globe.

In November 2015, we were privileged to present the work of Ruhama and the European Women's Lobby at a conference on Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in Seoul, South Korea. This conference was organised by the Women's Human Rights Commission and Department of Justice of South Korea. In addition to the conference, we had the opportunity to meet with statutory and NGO stakeholders and visit to exchange information and learn from projects working with women and children who are victims of trafficking



Raising awareness to REACH the most vulnerable

A key area of Ruhama's awareness raising work during 2015 was the successful delivery of the REACH Project.

The REACH Project is a European Commission co-funded project that aimed to raise awareness of trafficking as a form of violence against women and girls and improve responses to this issue across the whole island of Ireland. The Project was realised via the work of a highly collaborative 'all island of Ireland' multi-agency partnership, including:

- Republic of Ireland: the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit at the Department of Justice and Equality, Ruhama, the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and Cosc

- Northern Ireland: the Department of Justice, Northern Ireland Women's Aid and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

REACH focused specifically on the trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation and the initiative had three key audiences: vulnerable women and girls in the sex trade who had been or were at risk of being trafficked, men and boys as sex purchasers but

Raising awareness...continued

also as allies in combating prostitution and sex-trafficking, and professionals whose remit may bring them into contact with vulnerable persons in prostitution.

Key project activities and successes are outlined below.

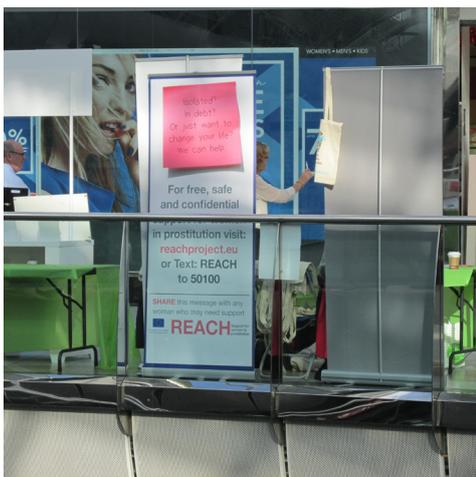
The women & girls' awareness raising initiative

Ruhama led on this aspect of REACH, with a nationwide awareness raising initiative which aimed to ensure that all women and girls on the island of Ireland who are being exploited in the sex trade can access the support that they need.

Our message was very simple – to let all women and girls on the island of Ireland who find themselves in a difficult situation in the sex trade know that free, safe and confidential support is available specifically for them, and to encourage them to access this support.

This initiative was very much informed by research undertaken with women who have a variety of experiences within the sex trade both north and south of the border, who themselves recommended the messages and modes of delivery that would reach those women and girls most in need of help.

Informed by women's responses, REACH developed a series of awareness raising materials (pop-up stands, posters and post-its) advising women in prostitution that support is available and how to access it. Materials were made available in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Romanian, Russian and Mandarin.



These have been distributed across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to key locations suggested by the women in the research. With support from the HSE, we distributed REACH posters in multiple languages to virtually every A&E Department, Maternity Department, Sexual Health Clinic and Sexual Assault

Treatment Unit in Ireland. At the same time, we also targeted other locations that women told us were important, including transport hubs, State immigration offices, Direct Provision accommodation, English language schools, drug support projects and a range of other services and locations that vulnerable women in the sex trade may access.

The men and boys' campaign

The "Prostitution: We Don't Buy It" Campaign, delivered as part of the REACH Project, aimed to deter men and boys from purchasing sex. But rather than simply telling this audience what not to do, the campaign sought to harness the power of the vast majority of men and boys who do not buy sex, calling on them to make a stand against prostitution and sex trafficking, and empowering them to speak out about these issues. This in turn served to encourage those who have bought sex or are considering doing so in the future to join or return to the fold of the majority.

At the same time, We Don't Buy It cleverly tackled some of the myths and rationalisations about prostitution that men who buy sex use to justify their actions. It is these myths and lies about prostitution that the majority of men simply 'don't buy'.

The campaign was launched at a hugely successful and exciting event in central Dublin in April by Minister for Justice & Equality Frances Fitzgerald TD and her Northern Ireland counterpart Minister for Justice David Ford MLA.

The campaign generated a huge amount of interest, support and conversation almost immediately – with #wedontbuyit trending on Twitter, alongside almost blanket coverage in more traditional media, in print and on national radio and television.



The campaign was featured on the Luas, the Dart, buses in Northern Ireland, on telephone boxes on both sides of the border, and also on huge 'Ad Mobiles' that drove around Dublin and Belfast city centres on launch day – all getting commuters and bystanders talking. Thousands have since visited the campaign website www.wedontbuyit.eu, complemented by significant support on social media platforms.

The men and boys' campaign ...continued

We Don't Buy It achieved a level of awareness amongst the general public that quickly beat industry standards for a campaign of its size and budget. In addition, the reception and interest that We Don't Buy It received has been overwhelmingly positive both nationally and indeed internationally – attracting attention from places as close as Scotland and as far away as Australia and Pakistan. What has been especially welcomed is the positive but also firm tone of the campaign – rather than simply berating those who pay for sex, it gives a voice to the majority of men and boys who do not, while nonetheless challenging sex buyers' behaviour.

Training and tools for professionals

As part of its brief to combat sex trafficking, the REACH Project also endeavoured to enhance frontline professionals' responses to sexual exploitation across the island of Ireland. This strand of the project involved the development of an innovative, user-friendly mobile app that supports professionals in responding effectively when their work brings them into contact with a potential/actual victim of trafficking.

To guide the development of the Know Sex Trafficking app, free training sessions were delivered to multi-disciplinary audiences in Dublin, Belfast and Tralee entitled 'Introduction to good practice in identifying and responding to victims of sex trafficking'.

As part of these short introductory sessions professionals from a wide variety of fields – including law enforcement, criminal justice, health, social care, education, housing services, women's support services, drug support services, migrant support services and mental health services – were given the opportunity to feed directly into the development of the app.

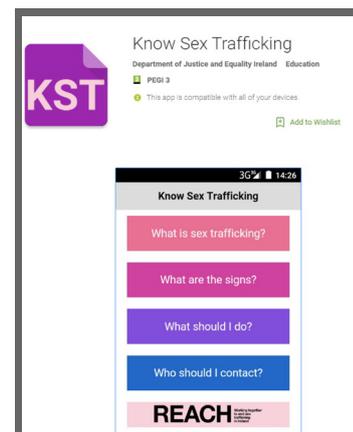
The app (complemented by a hard copy booklet) addresses four simple but key questions that professionals often asked themselves when faced with a potential/suspected case of sex trafficking:

- 1) What is sex trafficking?
- 2) What are the signs?
- 3) What should I do?
- 4) Who should I contact?

The app is aimed at professionals who do not have the capacity, nor the requirement, to be 'experts' in sex trafficking, but who do need to be equipped to identify the signs of trafficking, and understand how to respond in a safe, proactive, victim-centred way.

The REACH Project as a whole was a significant success as an awareness raising initiative in its own right, but also in terms of the excellent partnership working and enhanced relationships that were strengthened both cross-border and between State actors and NGOs during the course of the project.

A further crucial outcome is the extent to which REACH produced some very engaging and user-friendly tools and materials that are adaptable to anti-trafficking efforts in other jurisdictions which we were delighted to share and have been extremely well-received by our European counterparts during REACH's closing conference in Brussels.



Know Sex Trafficking app on Play store

Sharing best practice

Throughout 2015, Ruhama has engaged with a host of individuals, organisations and agencies, from students and community groups to politicians and other influencers both at home and abroad, to highlight the work that we do and the most effective ways to tackle the exploitation inherent in prostitution and trafficking.

Of particular note in this regard is the dedicated training we provided to a wide range of professionals throughout the year, and especially our bespoke training delivered to An Garda Síochána, which focuses on the need to recognise the vulnerabilities and risks faced by those in prostitution, and to respond respectfully and empathetically to them as actual or potential victims of crime rather than offenders.

Volunteering at Ruhama - Making a real difference

"Just letting the women know you are there for them whenever they are ready, no judgement, show kindness and respect them and where they are in life."

– Outreach volunteer

The delivery of many of Ruhama's key services relies heavily on the work of our dedicated, trained volunteer team.

In 2015, 45 volunteers were involved in the provision of a variety of essential services including:

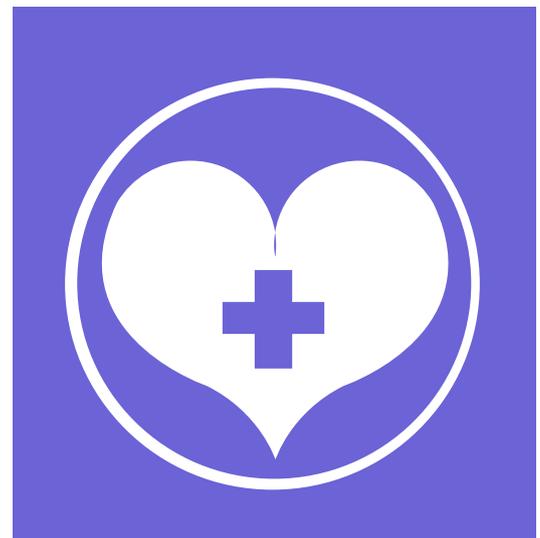
- Outreach to women in street prostitution
- One-to-one English/Study support
- Befriending
- Counselling
- Preparation for third level courses
- Personal development courses
- Sewing
- Holistic therapies
- IT classes
- Career guidance counselling
- Awareness raising.

Volunteers' contribution to the work of Ruhama amounted to over **2,880** hours in 2015.

A great many of Ruhama's vital services to women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking could not be delivered to the same extent, or indeed, could not be delivered at all, were it not for the commitment and skill of our volunteers.

Ruhama's rigorous volunteer recruitment and training programme, coupled with the ongoing support provided to our volunteer team, ensure that our volunteers are always of a high calibre, and many bring a great deal of previous experience and expertise to their roles.

As ever, we wish to thank all of our volunteers for so generously supporting the work of Ruhama once again in 2015, with such obvious enthusiasm and passion.



Here some of our volunteers explain more about their work at Ruhama and the impact they can see it has

"I admire the work Ruhama is doing: a small but effective organisation, committed to the well-being of women, working both at grassroots and systemic levels to respond to an important issue." - Education volunteer

"Working with the women, who are inspiring, powerful survivors. The atmosphere and support with the other volunteers, and the chance to feel like you can make a difference for someone who needs support - no matter how big or small that difference is." - Outreach volunteer

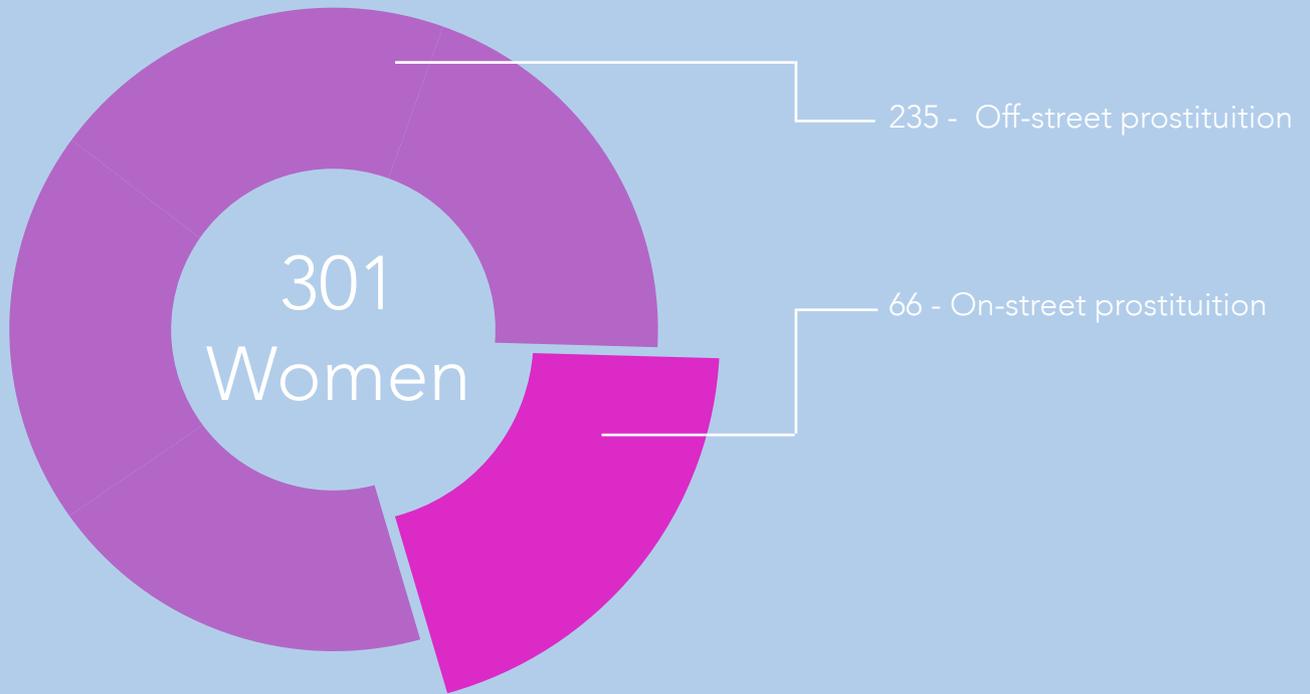
"Meeting the women in prostitution: I was struck by their resilience and drive to survive. After a busy night on the van, driving home, feeling good that I might have done some good that night." - Outreach volunteer

"I have seen the women grow in confidence... Most of them are highly motivated and get great satisfaction when they notice their own progress. Most are ambitious and set educational goals such as obtaining third level qualifications. It is well worthwhile supporting them in their efforts to build better lives." - Education Volunteer

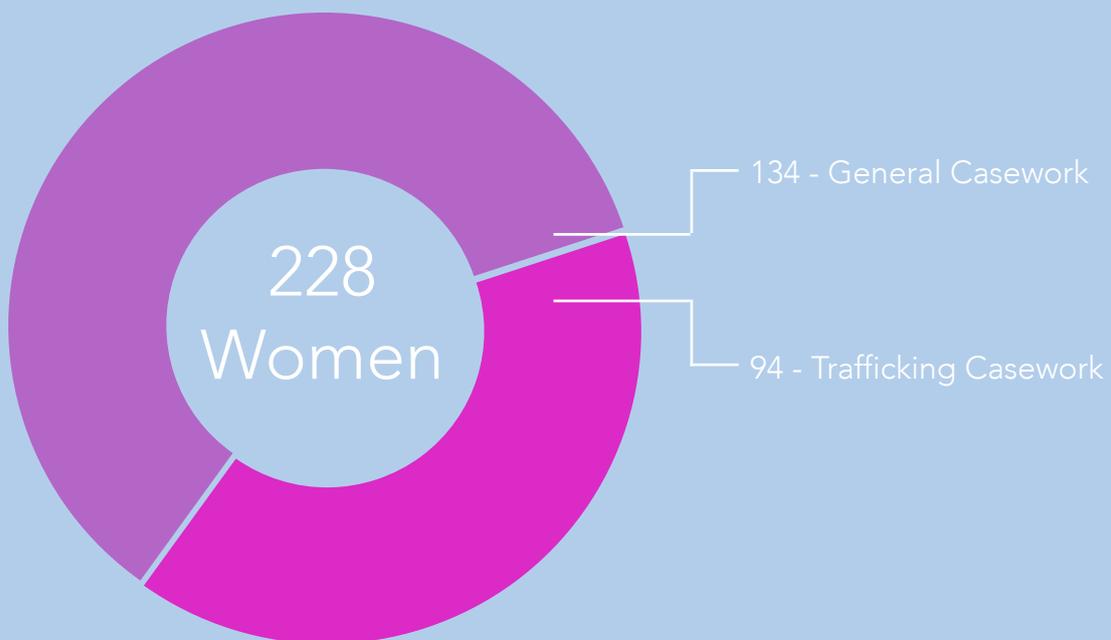
"I think my education support work is helping women gain confidence and skills. I have seen them improve their college marks, tackle assignments with greater ease, manage the academic environment more effectively, take pride in their achievements, share their joys and struggles - increase their hope in a brighter future."
- Education volunteer



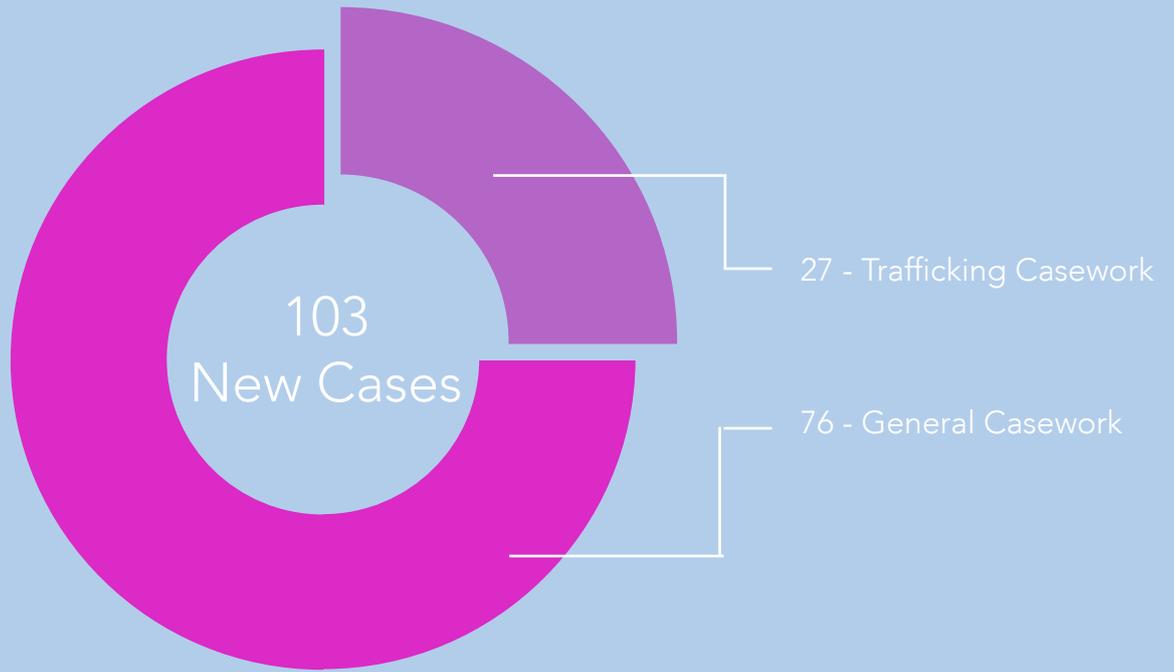
Type of prostitution in which women supported in Casework or Outreach were involved



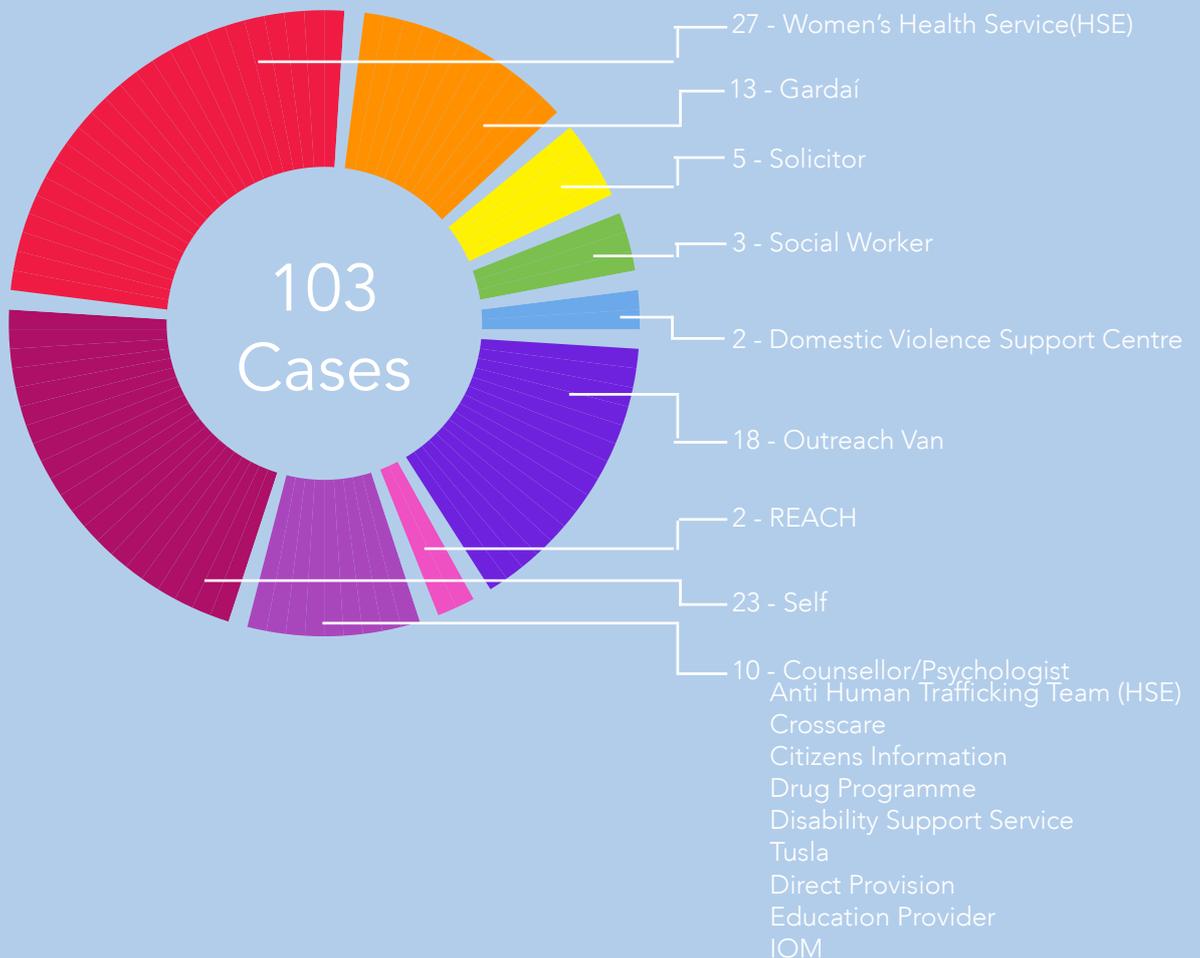
Number of Women in Casework



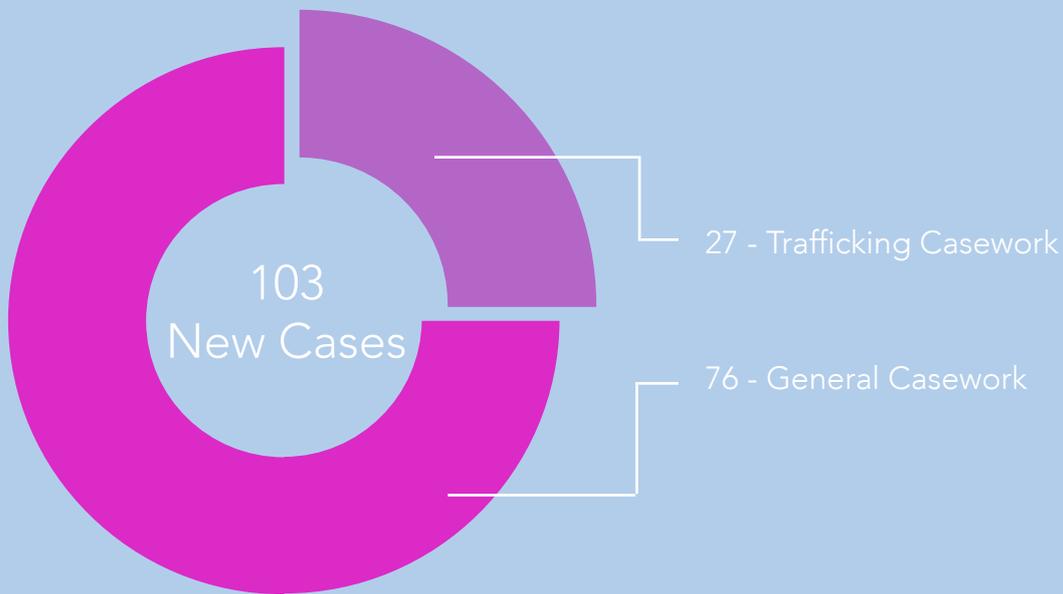
New cases in 2015



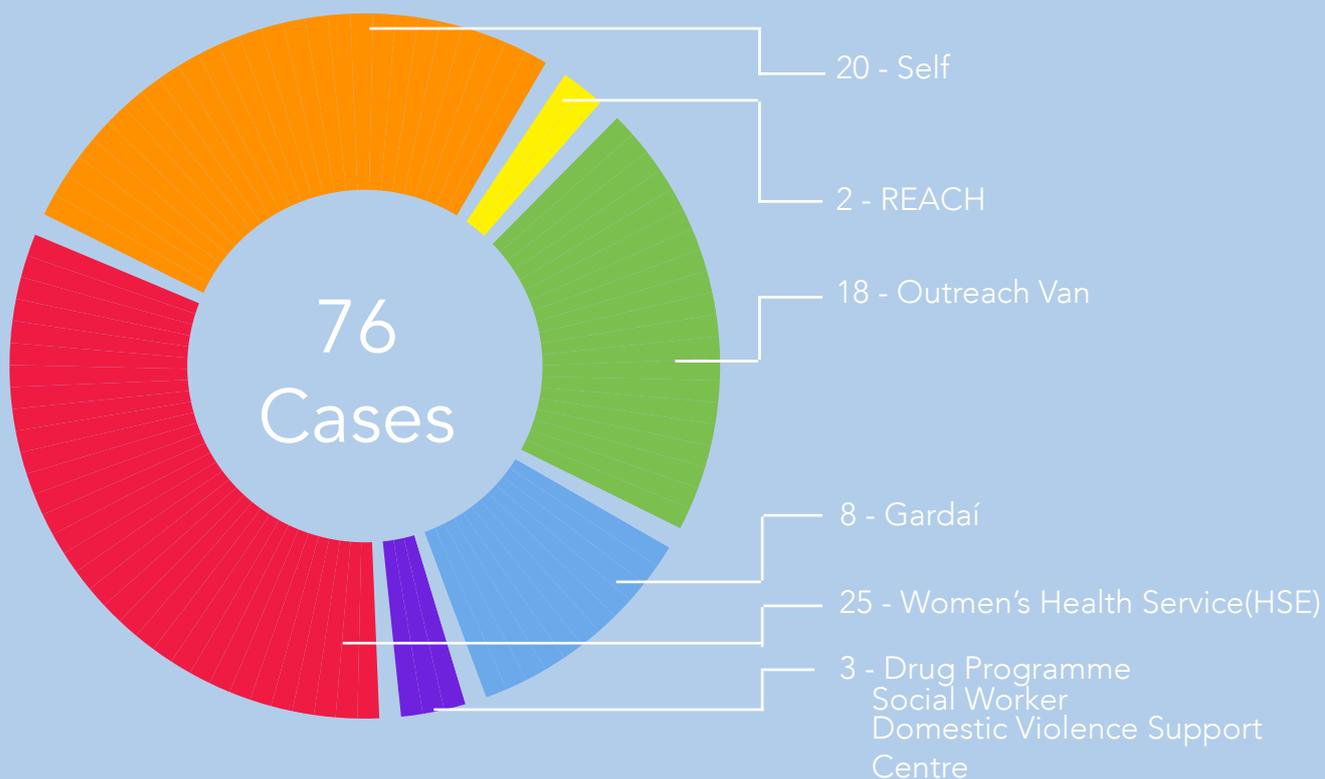
Referral Sources for all new cases in 2015



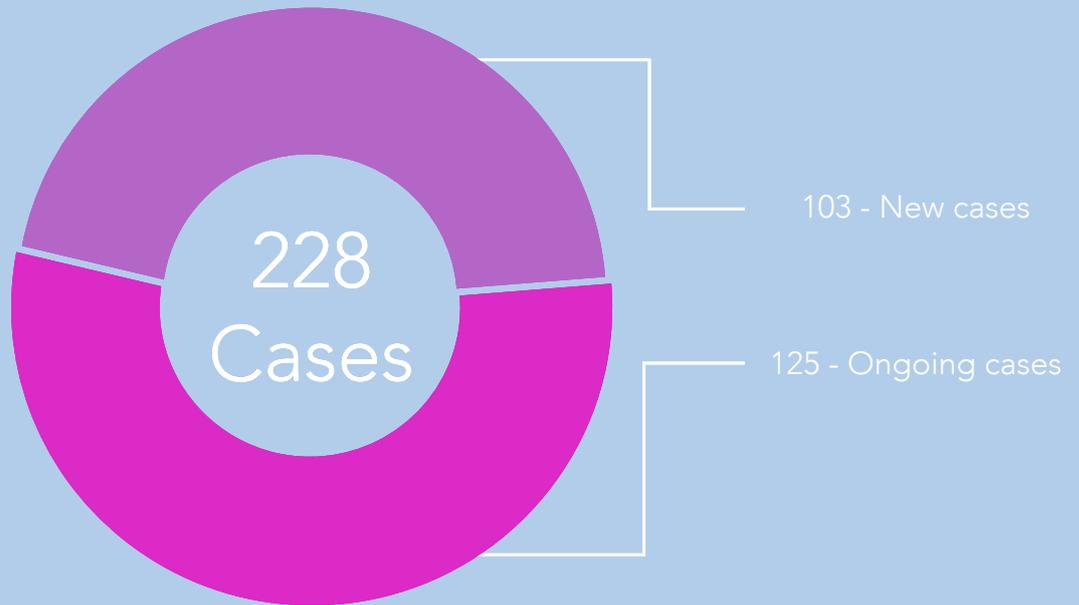
New Referrals to Casework



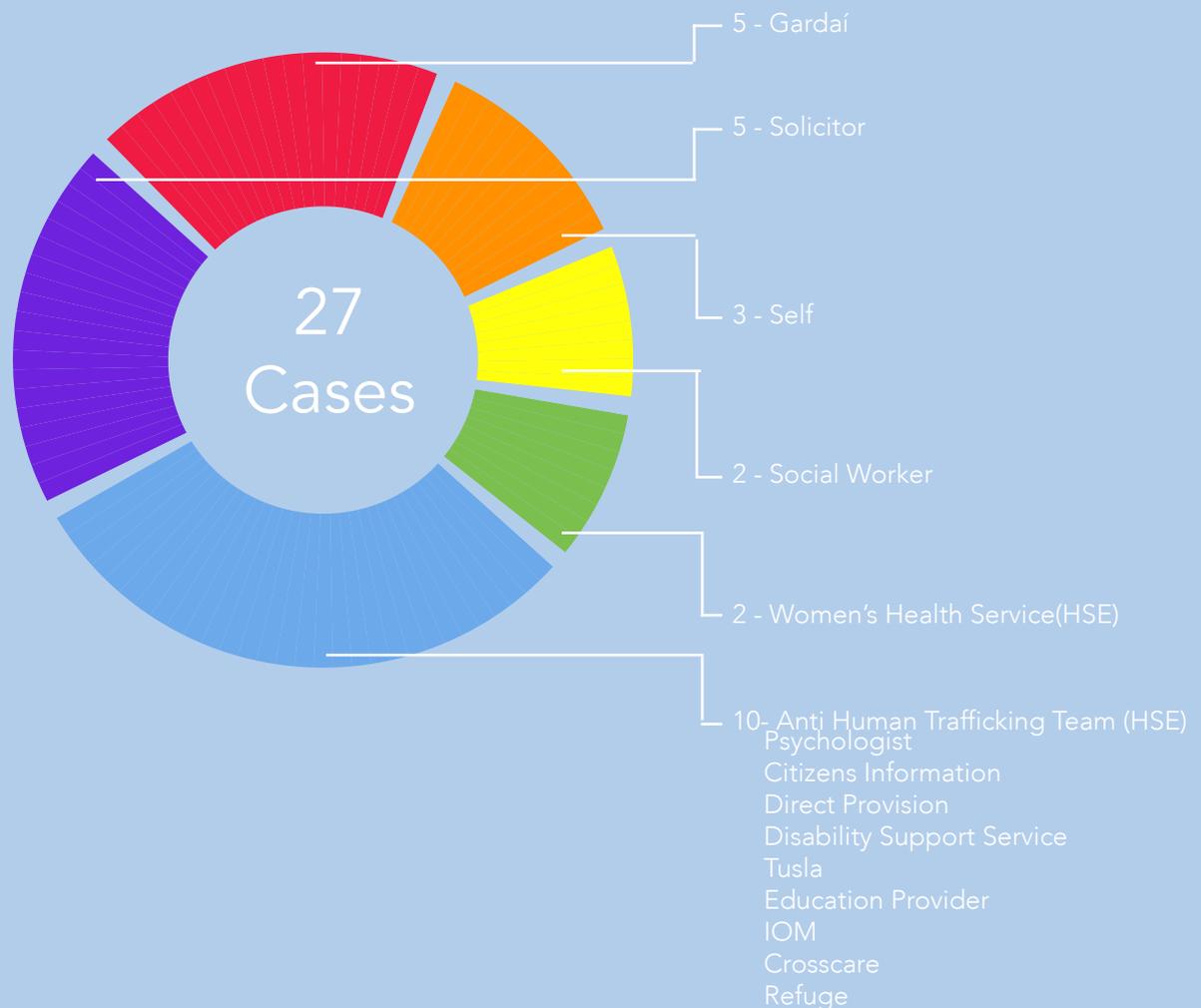
Referral Sources for all new cases of women in prostitution in 2015



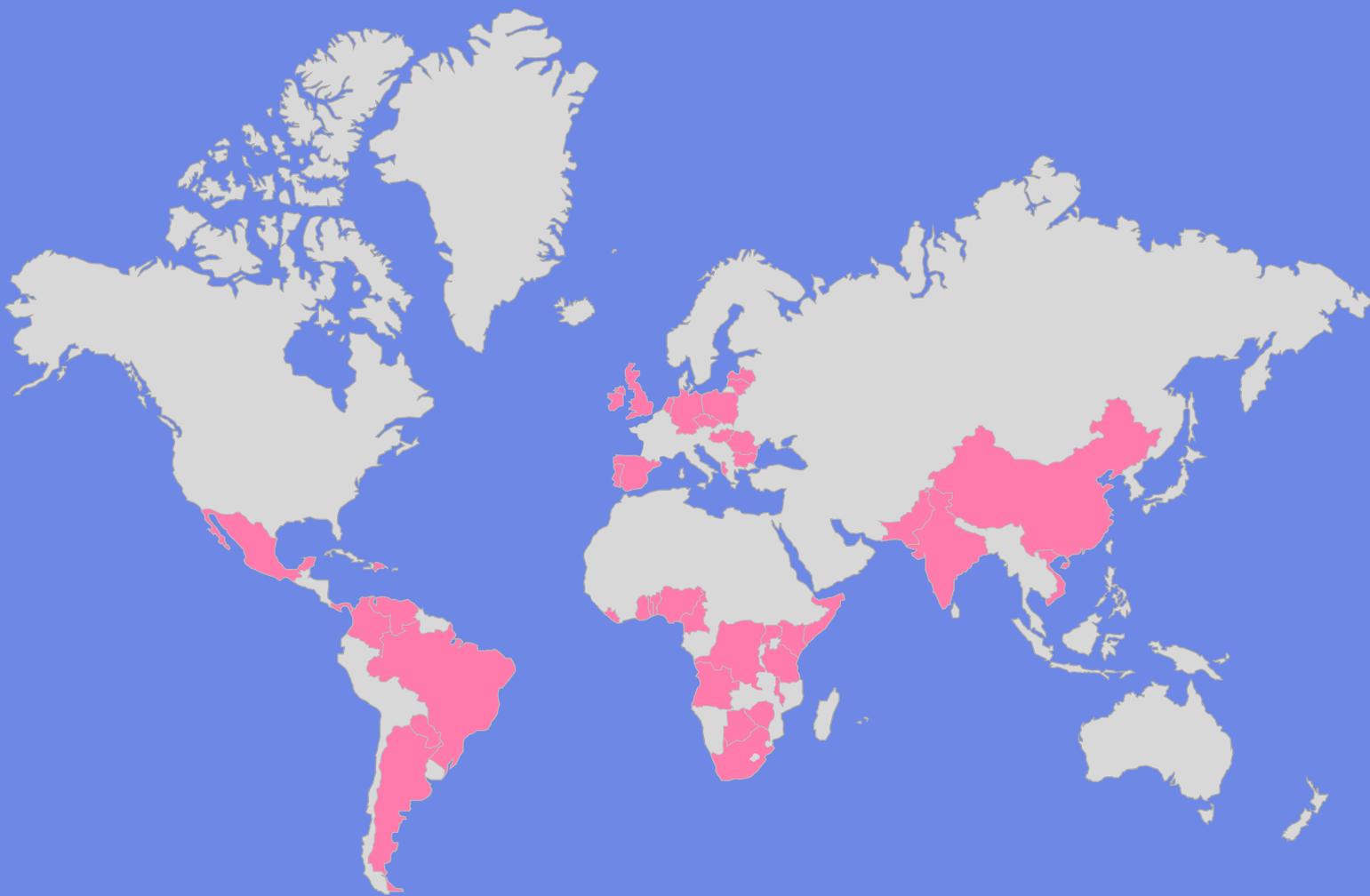
New and Ongoing cases



Referral Sources for all new cases of victims of trafficking in 2015

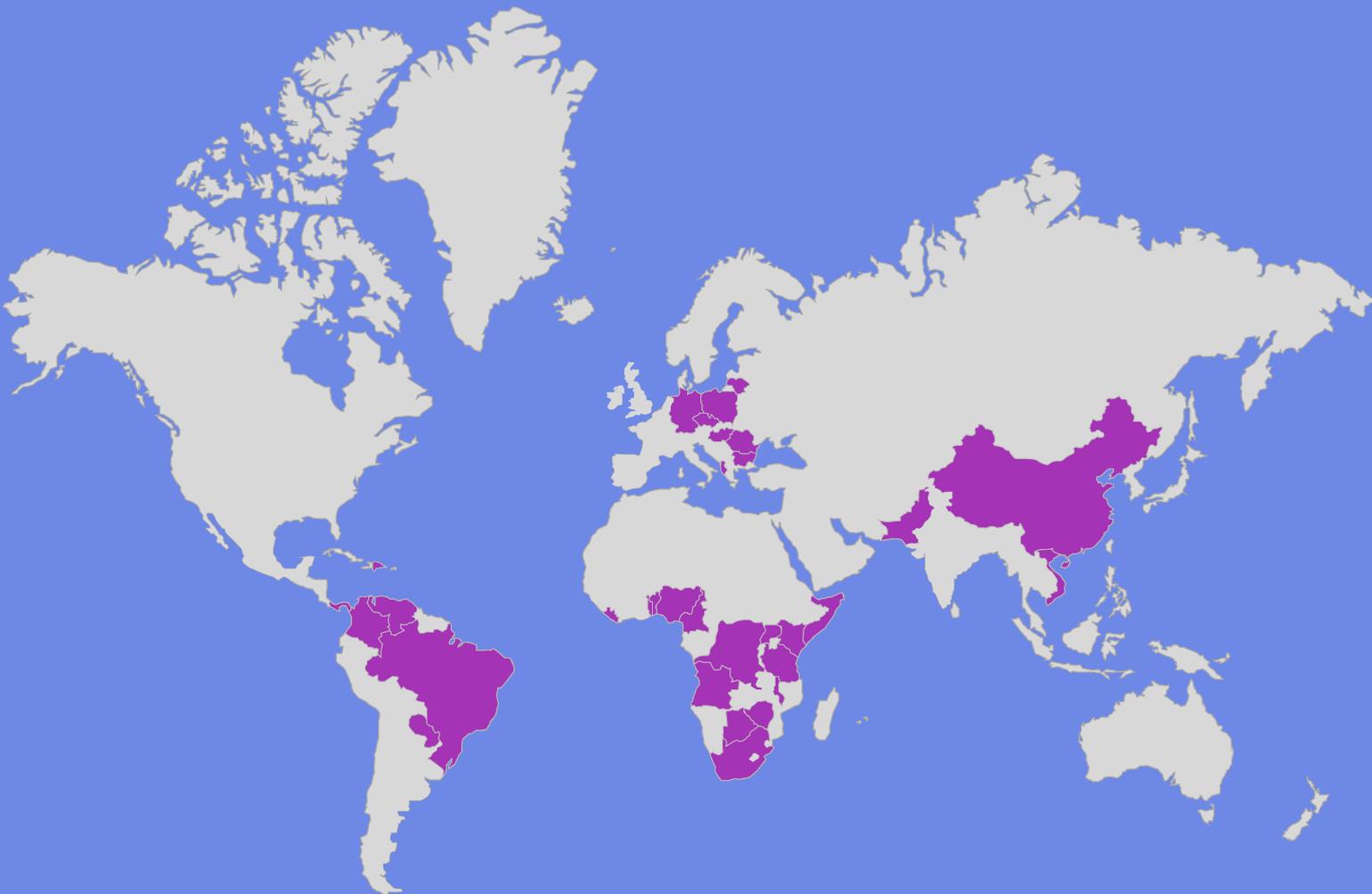


Nationalities of ALL women accessing Ruhama's casework service 228 women from 43 countries



Ireland - 55 Nigeria - 54 Brazil - 28 Romania - 19 Zimbabwe - 6 Hungary - 5 South Africa - 4
 Cameroon - 3 Bulgaria - 3 Uganda - 3 Czech Rep. - 3 Albania - 3 Congo D.R.C. - 3 Spain - 3
 Poland - 2 China - 2 Malawi - 2 Kenya - 2 U.K. - 2 Colombia - 2 Dominican Rep. - 2 Angola - 1
 Argentina - 1 Benin - 1 Botswana - 1 Germany - 1 Ghana - 1 Netherlands - 1 India - 1
 Kurdistan - 1 Latvia - 1 Lithuania - 1 Liberia - 1 Mexico - 1 Pakistan - 1 Panama - 1
 Paraguay - 1 Portugal - 1 Somalia - 1 Tanzania - 1 Togo - 1 Venezuela - 1 Vietnam - 1

Nationalities of ALL VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING accessing Ruhama's casework service 94 women from 25 countries



Nigeria - 48 Brazil - 8 Zimbabwe - 5 Romania - 4 Albania - 3

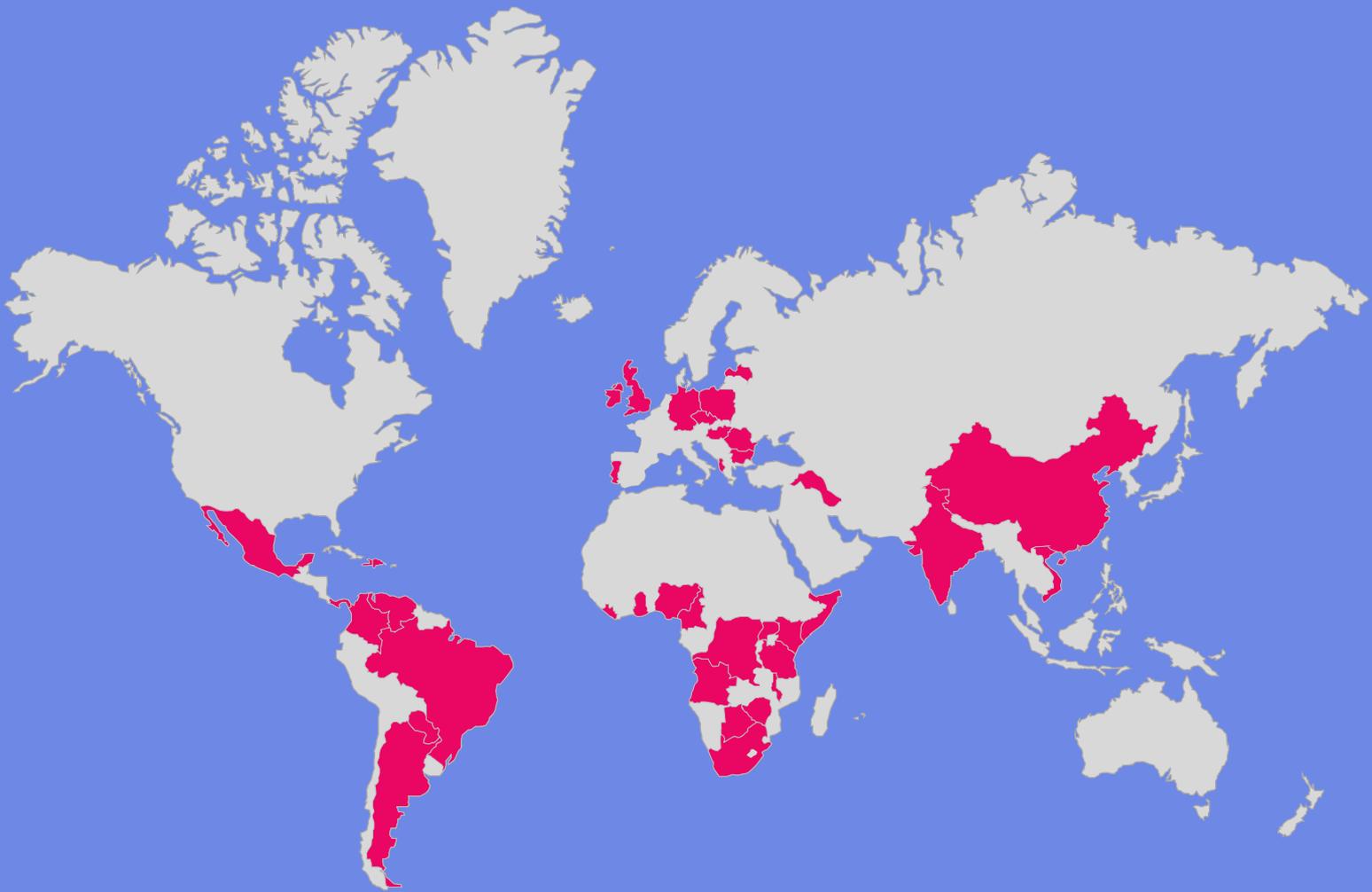
South Africa - 2 Bulgaria - 2 Cameroon - 2 Congo D.R.C. - 2 Hungary - 2

Kenya - 2 Czech Rep. - 1 Uganda - 1 Poland - 1 China - 1

Angola - 1 Benin - 1 Malawi - 1 Lithuania - 1 Liberia - 1

Pakistan - 1 Somalia - 1 Tanzania - 1 Togo - 1 Vietnam - 1

Nationalities of ALL WOMEN IN PROSTITUTION accessing Ruhama's casework service 134 from 32 countries



Ireland - 55 Brazil - 20 Romania - 15 Nigeria - 6 Hungary - 3 Spain - 3

South Africa - 2 Uganda - 2 Czech Rep. - 2 Colombia - 2 Dominican Rep. - 2

U.K. - 2 Congo D.R.C. - 1 Cameroon - 1 Bulgaria - 1 Poland - 1 China - 1 Malawi - 1

Argentina - 1 Botswana - 1 Germany - 1 Ghana - 1 Netherlands - 1

India - 1 Zimbabwe - 1 Latvia - 1 Mexico - 1 Panama - 1

Kurdistan - 1 Paraguay - 1 Portugal - 1 Venezuela - 1

Financial Summary 2015

Ruhama is a company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital

Income and Expenditure 2015		
Annual Statutory Funding	2015	2014
Anti Human Trafficking Unit Department of Justice and Equality	€ 252,000.00	€ 172,256.00
HSE	€ 118,824.00	€ 118,824.00
South Inner City Local Drugs Taskforce (HSE)	€ 100,824.00	€ 100,824.00
Other Grant Income (including EU REACH Project)	€ 212,556.00	€ 136,301.00
Donations/Fundraising	€ 91,272.00	€ 105,540.00
Total Income:	€ 775,476.00	€ 633,745.00
Total Expenditure	€ 773,264.00	€ 649,118.00
Operating surplus/(Deficit)	€ 2,212.00	-€ 15,373.00
Other income and expenses		
Interest receivable	€ 54.00	€ 75.00
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	€ 2,266.00	-€ 15,298.00

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2015		
Fixed Assets	2015	2014
Tangible assets	€ 26,305.00	€ 30,314.00
Debtors	€ 8,031.00	€ 16,096.00
Cash at bank and in hand	€ 268,318.00	€ 257,528.00
	€ 276,349.00	€ 273,624.00
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	-€ 122,325.00	-€ 120,399.00
Net Current Assets	€ 154,024.00	€ 153,225.00
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	€ 180,329.00	€ 183,539.00
Capital and Reserves	€ 21,962.00	€ 27,438.00
Income and Expenditure Accounts	€ 158,367.00	€ 156,101.00
Funds	€ 18,329.00	€ 183,539.00

Independent Auditors' Report

We have audited the financial statements of Ruhama for the year ended 31 December 2015, which comprise the Income & Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Statement of Changes in Funds and the related notes and accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014 and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Ireland'.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2015 and of its surplus for the year then ended: and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting framework and, in particular, the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Matters on which we are required to report by the Companies Act 2014

- We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.
- In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited.
- The financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.
- In our opinion the information given in the directors report is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception.

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Act 2014 which require us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions specified by section 305 to 312 of the Act are not made.

Signed by:

Liam McQuaid

For and on Behalf of: Duignan Carthy O'Neill

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
84 Northumberland Road
Dublin 4

Acknowledging our Financial Supporters

As ever, Ruhama wishes to pay tribute to all of our financial supporters, who made all of the work documented here possible in 2015.

From our major statutory funders, to those who donate small but essential amounts on a monthly or one-off basis, your support is absolutely vital to us.

With this in mind, we have striven once again this year to ensure that we make every cent count, and operate in as efficient and as streamlined a way as possible so that the maximum benefit goes to those who rely on our services.

It is always a positive experience to collaborate with those who are so committed to raising funds for us, as this feedback shows:

"The American Women's Club of Dublin (AWCD) is honoured to have Ruhama as our adopted charity.

AWCD chose Ruhama for its woman-focused mission.

We have held several fundraisers throughout the year, and Ruhama has always been a pleasure to work with, both because of their utmost professionalism and their sense of humour!

We love how the staff we have worked with always have such a positive outlook on life! AWCD hopes that our contribution will assist Ruhama in reaching more women affected by prostitution and make a difference in the lives of Ruhama's many clients."

Please note that Ruhama is fully committed at all times to achieving the standards contained within the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. To explore the many ways in which you can support the work of Ruhama, including making a donation, please visit our website: www.ruhama.ie

