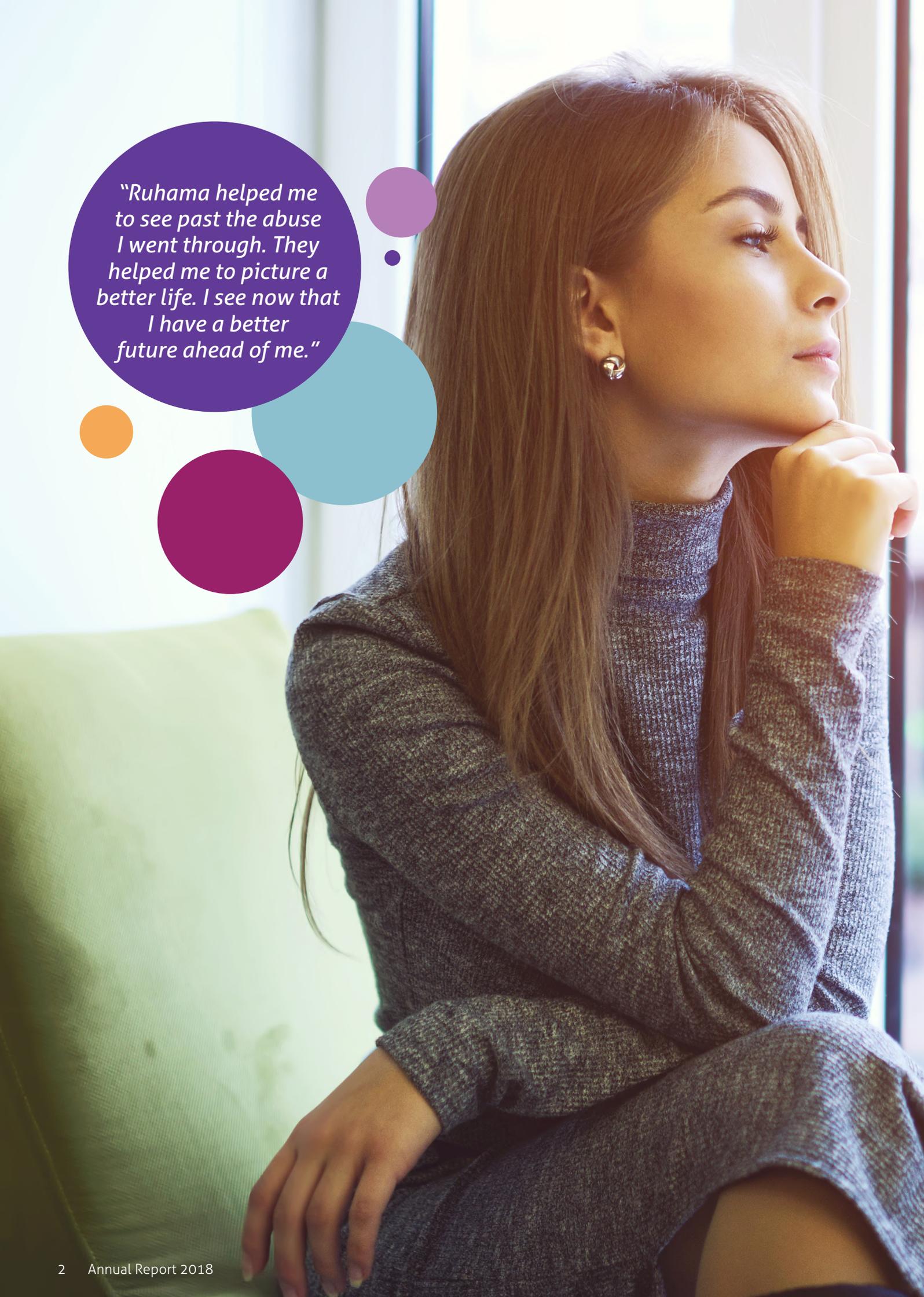




Supporting women
affected by prostitution

Annual Report
2018



"Ruhama helped me to see past the abuse I went through. They helped me to picture a better life. I see now that I have a better future ahead of me."

30 years
supporting
women
affected by
prostitution
and sex-
trafficking
in Ireland

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Chairperson's statement

On behalf of the Board of Ruhama, I am pleased to present this report on the work of the organisation in 2018.

During the year, Ruhama reached out to and supported **313 women** of **40 nationalities**, providing individually tailored casework to **251**. Services provided included emergency response, advocacy and accompaniment, education and job-seeking programmes, housing and social welfare supports, assistance with immigration issues, and counselling. There were **2793** face-to-face support contacts, **9970** telephone and **13,666** text contacts during the year.

All of Ruhama's services are offered on a free and confidential basis. Our approach is always non-directive and non-discriminatory. Seeking to exit prostitution is not a requirement to access our support.

We remain the only specialist, frontline NGO working in this field on a nationwide basis.

2018 was also a year in which the organisation undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process - including independent consultations with our key stakeholders: current and former service users, funders and partners as well as staff and volunteers. Through this feedback and analysis we were able to affirm the purpose, values, and priorities of Ruhama and develop a clear strategic plan for the coming five years.



We are extremely grateful to all funders and donors, statutory and personal, without whom the organisation could not have done any of this. Additionally, our dedicated team worked collaboratively with many other key service providers to meet women's needs. We thank all of our NGO and statutory partners who strive, as we do, to ensure that no-one in need of help falls through the cracks of society.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors for their dedication, support and significant contribution to the development of Ruhama during 2018, a period in which the organisation experienced growth, and to convey my genuine appreciation for the work of each member of the Ruhama team, led so well by CEO Sarah Benson, including, of course, our fantastic volunteers who give so generously of their time.

Colm O'Dwyer SC
Chair of Ruhama

Ruhama's Board 2018:

Colm O'Dwyer (Chairperson)
Mary Scully
Ethna McDermott
Myriam McLaughlin
Donal Dunlop
Jennie O'Reilly
Karen McMenamin
Valerie Judge (Resigned 12 June 2018)
Catherine Clancy (Resigned 01 September 2018)
Noreen O'Shea (appointed 9 October 2018)
Colm Bowden (appointed 9 October 2018)

CEO Foreword



I am delighted to welcome readers to Ruhama's 2018 Annual Report, which we launch in what is **Ruhama's 30th year of existence**. It has been a remarkable journey with many ups and downs. The good news is that we have supported literally thousands of women in very difficult situations over three decades. So many of them have had successful outcomes and been able to move past the trauma of sexual exploitation. The bad news is that some have not survived, and that the sex trade remains alive and well in Ireland. The most vulnerable continue to be exploited and exposed to the inherent harm and violence of prostitution. Our work remains vital.

Ruhama was **founded in 1989** to fill a gap for women in the sex trade, at a time when there were practically no supports for women in prostitution in Ireland. The charity has evolved over the years to adapt its services to the needs of the women we meet.

In its early days Ruhama's outreach van would venture out to Dublin's red-light districts up to 4 nights per week to connect with women, and our specially trained outreach team still do this. The women we met in on-street prostitution both then and now tend to be in very precarious situations with many experiencing homelessness.

Substantial shifts have occurred in the Irish sex trade over 30 years, with increased globalization and changes in migration flows which have resulted in a highly organised, transnational and criminalized sex trade that is thriving all across the country. The majority of individuals in prostitution that Ruhama supports now are based indoors in brothels, apartments, hotels and massage parlours. The indoor sex trade is the locus for the majority of the sex trafficking which occurs in Ireland and **in 2018 we assisted 122 victims of trafficking from 29 countries**.

One thing that has not changed at all is the inherent harm and violence of prostitution. The sex trade is still predominantly controlled by pimps and traffickers, and fuelled by the demand for 'sex for sale'. Ruhama's frontline experience has shown over thirty years that prostitution is a violation of women's bodily autonomy, and welcomes legislative and policy changes introduced in recent years to combat this.

We are confident that - with effective implementation - the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 will contribute to making Ireland a hostile market for pimps and sex traffickers.

This legislation decriminalizes the individual in prostitution, and criminalizes the so-called 'sex-buyer' in recognition of the role they play in perpetuating sexual exploitation. The women that we support report countless incidences of violence at the hands of pimps, traffickers and sex-buyers alike. However, things are changing, and there will come a day in Ireland when nobody thinks it is acceptable to pay for sexual access to women's bodies, or to sell another person for profit. This is the future Ruhama is committed to achieving.

I want, finally, 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 commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls.

Sarah Benson
Chief Executive Officer, Ruhama



*From the outset,
Ruhama's work was
underpinned by a
feminist, human
rights and women's
empowerment
approach.*

About Ruhama

30 years supporting women affected by prostitution and sex-trafficking in Ireland

In September 1989 Ruhama's outreach 'vanette' ventured out onto the streets of Dublin for the first time to make contact with, and provide support to, women involved in on-street prostitution. Ruhama was born 30 years ago in response to a lack of any support services available to women in prostitution, and was small, inconspicuous and quiet in its initial stages. In 2019, as Ireland's only dedicated frontline NGO supporting women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking, we reflect on three decades working with some of the most vulnerable, marginalised and invisible women in Irish society.

Between 1989 and 2019 the nature of the sex trade has undergone a dramatic shift and today operates as a highly organised, profitable and criminalised trade.

Every woman we met was supported based on her circumstances, needs and wishes. The outreach van was out on the streets of Dublin's 'red-light districts' up to 4 nights per week to connect with women in a safe, confidential setting. Follow up support was provided through counselling, home visits, advocacy, family support, skills development and crisis support. Within eighteen months, contact had been made with 114 women. Ruhama began working simultaneously to raise wider awareness on issues facing women in prostitution, including the social inequalities and injustices that contributed to women ending up in the sex trade.

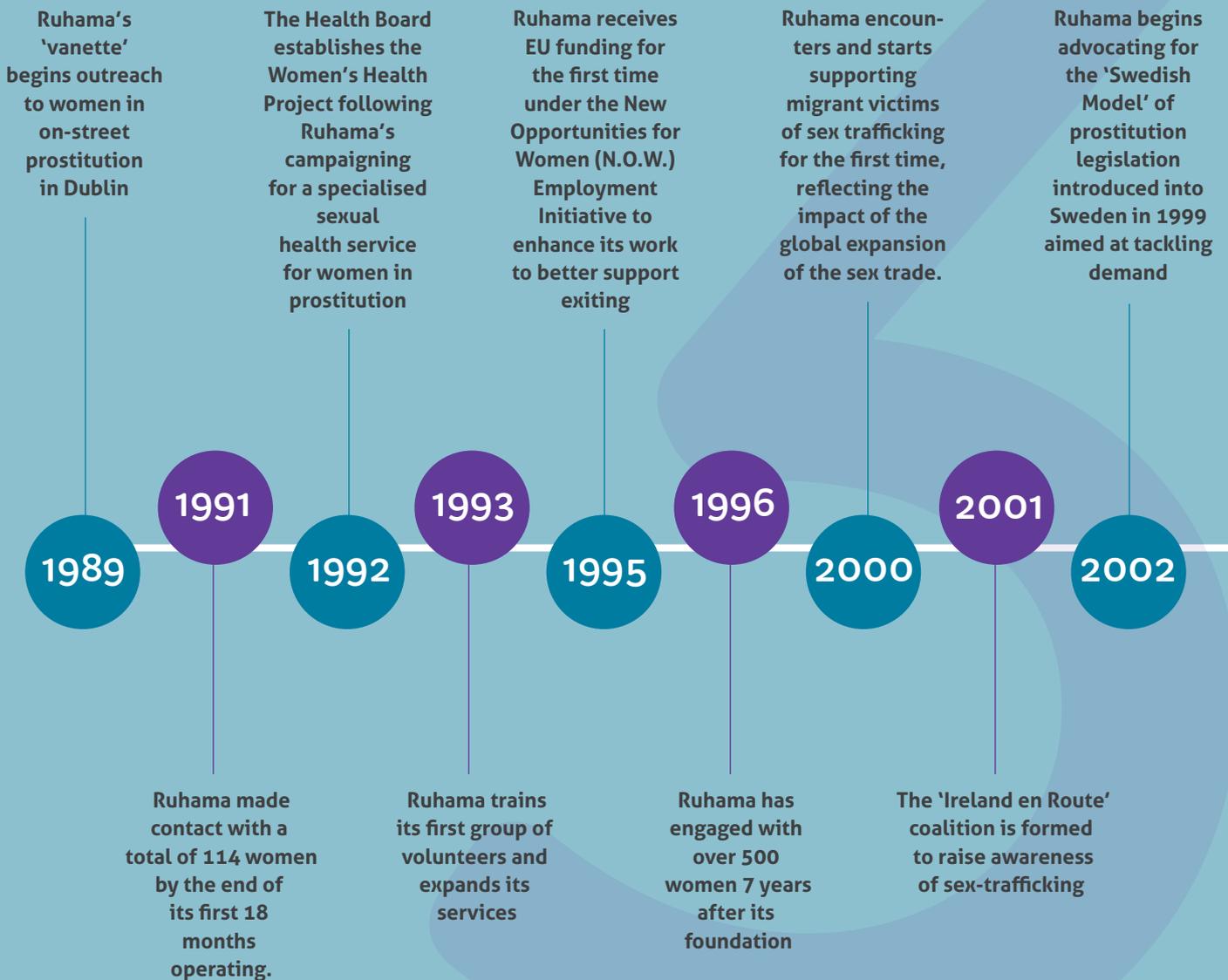
Between 1989 and 2019 the nature of the sex trade in Ireland has undergone a dramatic shift and today operates as a highly organised, profitable and criminalised trade. Globalisation and migration have resulted in a massive increase in the proportion of migrant women in prostitution here.

The global epidemic of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is now one of the most profitable criminal activities and has infiltrated every corner of Ireland. The evolution of the internet has resulted in women predominantly being advertised online and based indoors in hotels, and brothels in apartments and 'massage parlours.'

Harm, violence and exploitation is inherent to the sex trade in Ireland. Ruhama has learned this from the experiences reported to us by thousands of women over three decades. Therefore, years of advocacy and lobbying efforts by Ruhama and our allies has resulted in landmark legislative and policy change in Ireland to help tackle sexual exploitation. We were instrumental in achieving legislation to criminalise Human Trafficking in 2008, after years of lobbying. Further, following the success of the 'Turn Off the Red Light' campaign, individuals who are prostituted in the Irish sex trade are no longer criminalised while it is now a criminal offence to purchase sexual access to another person under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017.

As a frontline service, we have grown and evolved since 1989 by ensuring we continuously adapt our approach to best respond to the situations and needs of those who access our services.

We have supported thousands of women over the past thirty years, and, as long as the sex trade continues to exist in Ireland, we will continue to do so.



Ruhama publishes landmark research 'The Next Step': highlighting the experiences of women and barriers faced in exiting prostitution¹

Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) publishes ground-breaking research, conducted in collaboration with Ruhama & the HSE Women's Health Service "Globalisation, Sex Trafficking and Prostitution: The Experiences of Migrant Women in Ireland"²

Ruhama develops and launches its specialised training course with An Garda Síochána, focusing on good practice policing of prostitution, including victim support

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act is commenced in March. Individuals prostituted in the sex trade are decriminalised and it is now a criminal offence to purchase sex. This law aligns Ireland with the Nordic Model

Ruhama marks 30 years of supporting women affected by prostitution in Ireland

2005

2008

2009

2010

2011

2015

2017

2018

2019

The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 is enacted, for which Ruhama lobbied extensively

The 'Turn Off the Red Light' coalition is formed by ICI to campaign to introduce the Nordic Model in Ireland. Ruhama joins coordinating committee

Ruhama, with partners in the EU funded REACH Project, launches an awareness-raising initiative based on women's experiences of sex-trafficking, a public campaign to target demand (We Don't Buy It) and a training programme for frontline service providers

Ruhama moves its premises from Cork Street to Camden Street in Dublin City Centre. 314 women were supported this year

1 'The Next Step' research findings are available here: https://www.ruhama.ie/archive_news_press/page.php-intPageID=206.html

2 Globalisation, Sex Trafficking and Prostitution: The Experiences of Migrant Women in Ireland (2009). ICI, Ruhama and Women's Health Project (HSE). Available here: <http://www.dublinpact.ie/dignity/traffickingreport.pdf>

Our vision and mission

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

In achieving this vision, our mission is to:

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

Who we support

Women* who:

- Are currently involved in prostitution;
- Are involved and seeking to exit (leave) prostitution/ the sex trade;
- Are victims of sex-trafficking;
- Have previous experience in prostitution.

** A note on terminology: Due to the gendered nature of the sex trade, the overwhelming majority of people we support are women, including transgender women, and this is reflected in the language we use in this report whereby we refer to 'women'. However, we also assist a very small number of men each year on a case by case basis.*

How we work

Both our frontline and advocacy work is informed by 30 years of working directly with women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland. Our work is underpinned by our understanding of prostitution and sex trafficking as forms of violence against women and girls and pernicious violations of their human rights.

Prostitution, and the social and cultural attitudes which sustain it, are deeply rooted in gender inequality and social marginalization.

Women's needs and lived experiences inform all of our work and we:

- Provide a confidential, non-judgemental service;
- Place a high value on equality, inclusivity, cultural diversity, dignity and respect;
- Affirm every woman's right to society's protection and respect;
- Commit ourselves to continual learning and service improvement;
- Are accountable to the women we work with and our funders.

Importantly, the following are NOT requirements to access Ruhama's support: an intention/desire to exit prostitution; fluency in English; valid immigration permission.



Our Services



Outreach
(Street/ HSE/
Women's prison)



**Out of hours
emergency
response**



**Immigration
support**
(asylum, visas,
repatriation)



**Individual, tailored
casework and
care-planning**



**Housing and
social welfare
support**



**Refferals
to other
agencies**



**Interpretive
support**



**Support in
accessing justice**



**Crisis
accommodation
in emergency
situations**



**Education and
Development
programme**



**Practical
support**



**Awareness
raising and
policy advocacy**

Demand for our services in 2018

313

total number supported

1,804

volunteer hours

1,009

street outreach hours



9,970

telephone contacts



2,793

face to face contacts



13,666

text contacts



Total in casework

251

women



Housing & Welfare

57

women



Street outreach

62

women



Education & development

87

women



Counselling

19

women



Victims of trafficking

122

women

Street Outreach

The information in this section is based on unsolicited disclosures (i.e. Ruhama do not 'interview' women but rather give them space to discuss whatever they wish in the van). Therefore, we believe the %'s noted is an underestimation of the lived experiences of the women our outreach team meets through our street outreach.

The number of women involved in street-based prostitution has declined sharply since Ruhama was founded in 1989. Nowadays, the vast majority of women in prostitution are based indoors. However, there is still a number of, predominantly Irish, women who are involved in street-based prostitution. As we have done from the beginning, we continue to reach out and provide support to this group of extremely vulnerable women.

Our dedicated street outreach team is comprised of staff and volunteers who travel in our van to Dublin's 'red-light districts' up to four nights per week to reach this cohort of women in on-street prostitution, many of whom are in extremely precarious situations.

In 2018, our outreach van was on the streets a total number of **130 nights, for 1009 hours and with 255 recorded face-to-face interactions**. Ruhama's specially-trained outreach team provided both **practical and emotional support to the 62 women** they met throughout the year.

The van is a safe, warm and welcoming space where women have a brief respite from the street and their practical and immediate needs can be met, including through the provision of hot drinks, snacks, hats, gloves, and health and safety supplies. The team also provides a listening ear and emotional support, as well as onwards referrals to both our own and other relevant services. Women engaged with the van an average of 4 times throughout the year, with some meeting the team more often and others less.

Women we engaged with spoke to our outreach team about **complex and often chaotic lives**. The challenges reported included:

- Physical and mental health difficulties;
- Family breakdown;
- Domestic and intimate partner violence, control and coercion;
- Debt and poverty
- Sexual and physical violence
- Addiction
- Homelessness

60% of women reported dealing with drug and/or alcohol issues with many women consuming multiple substances.

In conversations with the women on this subject:

- 40% related to the use of crack
- 21% related to the use of heroin
- 16% related to the use of methadone
- 14% related to the use of benzodiazepines
- 8% painkillers, pills, weed and other substances

The worsening of the ongoing housing and homelessness crises in 2018 presented grave difficulties for women in street-based prostitution. 40% of the women we engaged with reported being homeless with a majority staying in hostels. Women reported that living in unstable accommodation made it difficult to recover from addiction to exit prostitution. The risks of violence faced by women in street prostitution compounded their vulnerabilities, and we heard reports of sexual and physical assaults, threats of the same, and robberies. 42% of these reports involved physical violence, and 42% reported sexual violence. The majority of this violence was experienced at the hands of sex-buyers.

A number of women who were familiar with the **Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 reported feeling safer to contact the Gardaí now they are explicitly decriminalised**. For those who were unfamiliar with the law, we made sure to inform them that they were now fully decriminalised for soliciting. A continuing part of the Ruhama outreach team's work is raising awareness of this positive change in the law among the women affected by it.

“

Emer's Story



I have been in street prostitution on and off for around 15 years now. I don't come out all the time, just the times when I need some extra money.

Around 2 months ago I was raped by a punter. He seemed nice enough when he picked me up, and as we were driving away he asked me how much it cost for what he wanted. I told him and he said that was too much and I wasn't worth that. Then he stopped the car and he forced himself on me. It must have been over quickly but I felt like it went on forever. Afterwards, he dropped me back but he didn't give me any money. That night I was too scared and upset to do anything about it so I went home. I was covered in bruises and my whole body ached.

I was back out a couple of days later and the team from the Ruhama outreach van were around. They gave me a cup of tea and asked how everything was going for me. I couldn't help it and I just blurted out the whole story. They were so kind and offered to go with me to get a medical check-up and to tell the Gardaí. It was such a relief to tell someone and know it was okay to report what had happened to me.

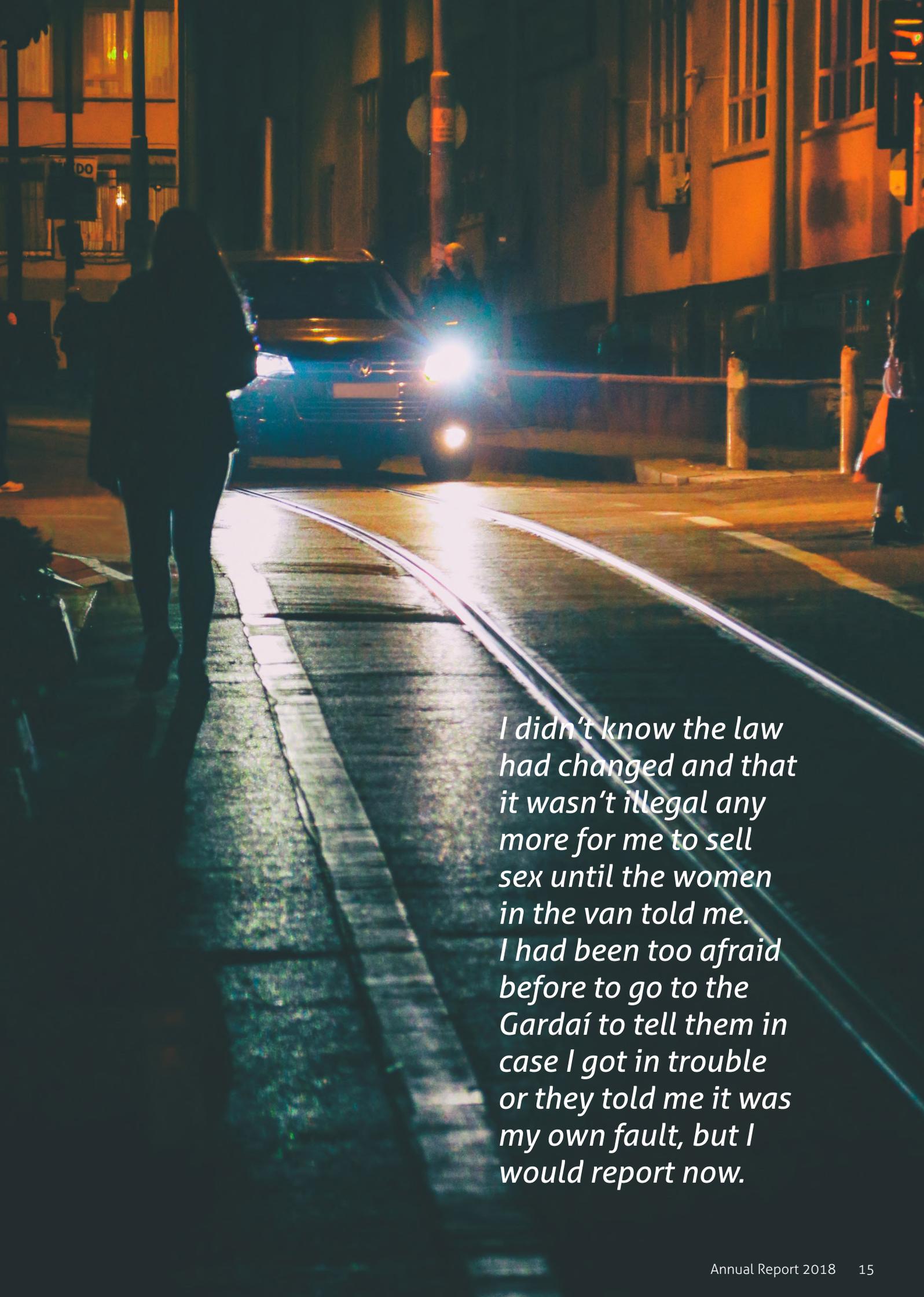
I didn't know the law had changed and that it wasn't illegal any more for me to sell sex until the women in the van told me. I had been too afraid before to go to the Gardaí to tell them in case I got in trouble or they told me it was my own fault. It was stressful to report it but the Gardaí were okay, and I felt at ease telling them about my experience.

I have been in touch with Ruhama regularly since then, and it's great to know that they are there to support me. The women who work there are really nice, and I feel comfortable talking to them about what's going on. They have told me about some of their courses and I'm thinking of taking the computer course so I can improve my skills. I was never that confident in school, but they've told me how friendly and patient the tutor is.

Being out on the streets can be hard and scary. We never know who will turn on us. I hope the man who did this to me pays for what he did, because I'm still paying.

”

* This woman's name and details about her story have been changed to protect her identity.

A nighttime street scene. A car with its headlights on is driving towards the camera on a wet road. A person is walking away from the camera on the sidewalk to the left. The scene is dimly lit, with the car's headlights providing the main source of illumination. The background shows buildings and streetlights.

I didn't know the law had changed and that it wasn't illegal any more for me to sell sex until the women in the van told me. I had been too afraid before to go to the Gardaí to tell them in case I got in trouble or they told me it was my own fault, but I would report now.

Person-centred casework

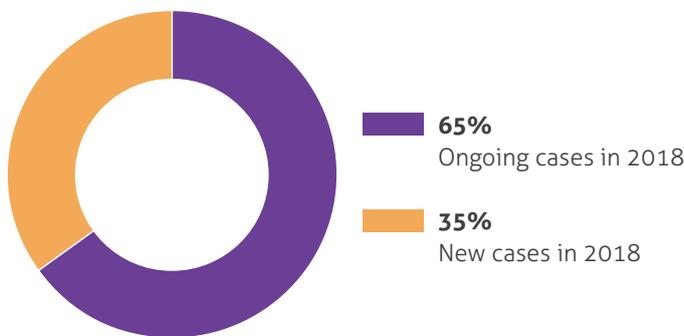
In 2018, a total of 251 women accessed Ruhama's casework.

Our response to women who seek our support is to **listen to what they say they need and to be as helpful as possible in meeting these needs.**

For women seeking our support - whether or not they are seeking to exit prostitution - the full casework support service is still offered and is tailor made for each person. This can include harm reduction support, including a safety plan and sexual health packs, as well as other practical and emotional supports.

We are conscious of the multiple and intersecting factors that render women vulnerable to sexual exploitation including sex, gender, poverty, homelessness, a lack of education, ethnic minority status, migration, child abuse, and intimate partner violence. This understanding informs our approach to work with women to overcome these vulnerabilities and feel empowered to move beyond them. Every woman's definition of empowerment is different, and we work with each realize her own vision of her future, at a pace that suits her.

When contact is initiated by a woman Ruhama assigns a caseworker to meet with her. They then work together to co-create a support plan. We can fund women's travel to meet us or may travel to meet women at a location that suits her across Ireland if she cannot travel to Dublin.

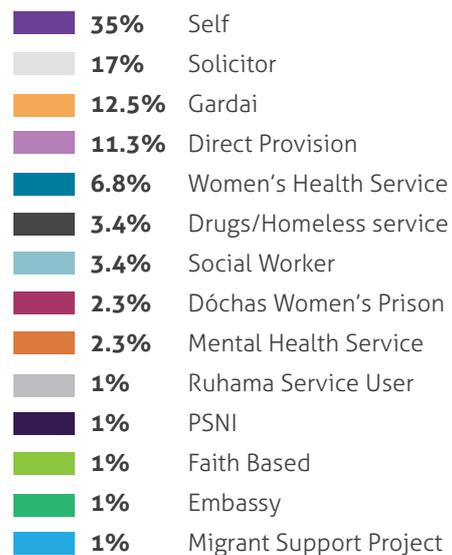
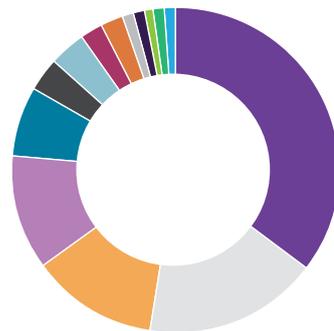


All of Ruhama's support services are offered on a free and confidential basis.

Referrals

While we connect directly with women on-street through our outreach van, the majority of the women we support are involved in the indoor sex trade. While Ruhama works closely with other organisations to maximise referrals, **a significant number of our service users self-refer to us with 31 directly calling Ruhama for support in 2018.**

Women are referred to access our services through a wide range of both statutory and non-statutory agencies, services and individuals.



Nationalities

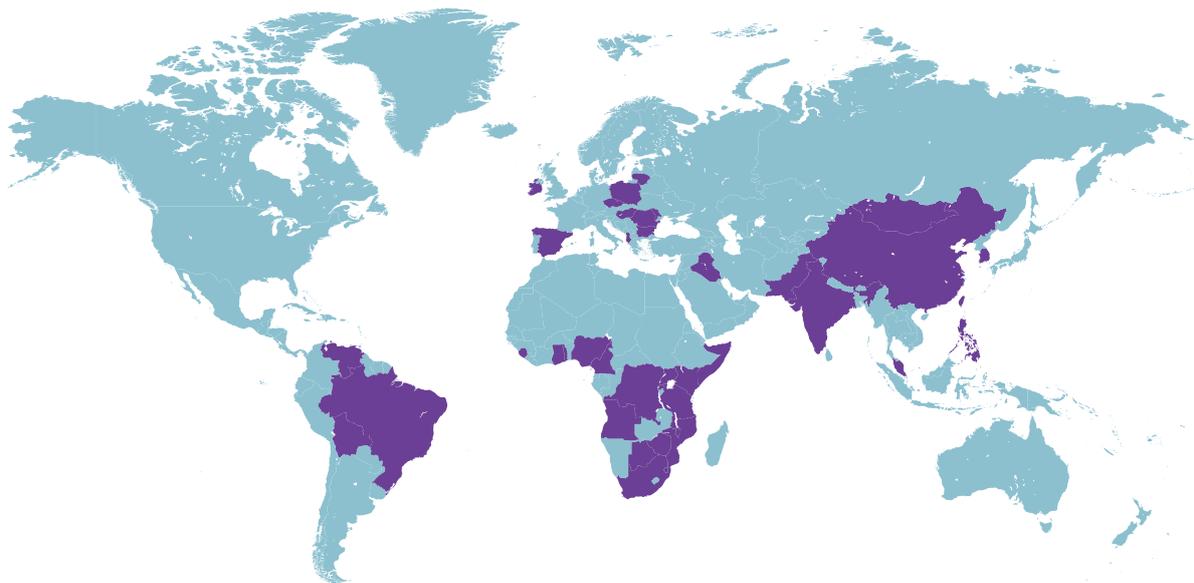
We support women of many nationalities every year, reflecting the transnational nature of the global sex trade and the numbers of women who are moved across international borders. **In 2018 the 251 women we supported through casework came from 40 countries across Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.** The most common countries from which women originated were:

- **Nigeria - 65**
- **Ireland - 50**
- **Brazil - 25**
- **Romania - 13**

Considering the diversity of the women who access our services, our casework team are multi-lingual and we can also provide professional interpreters if necessary.

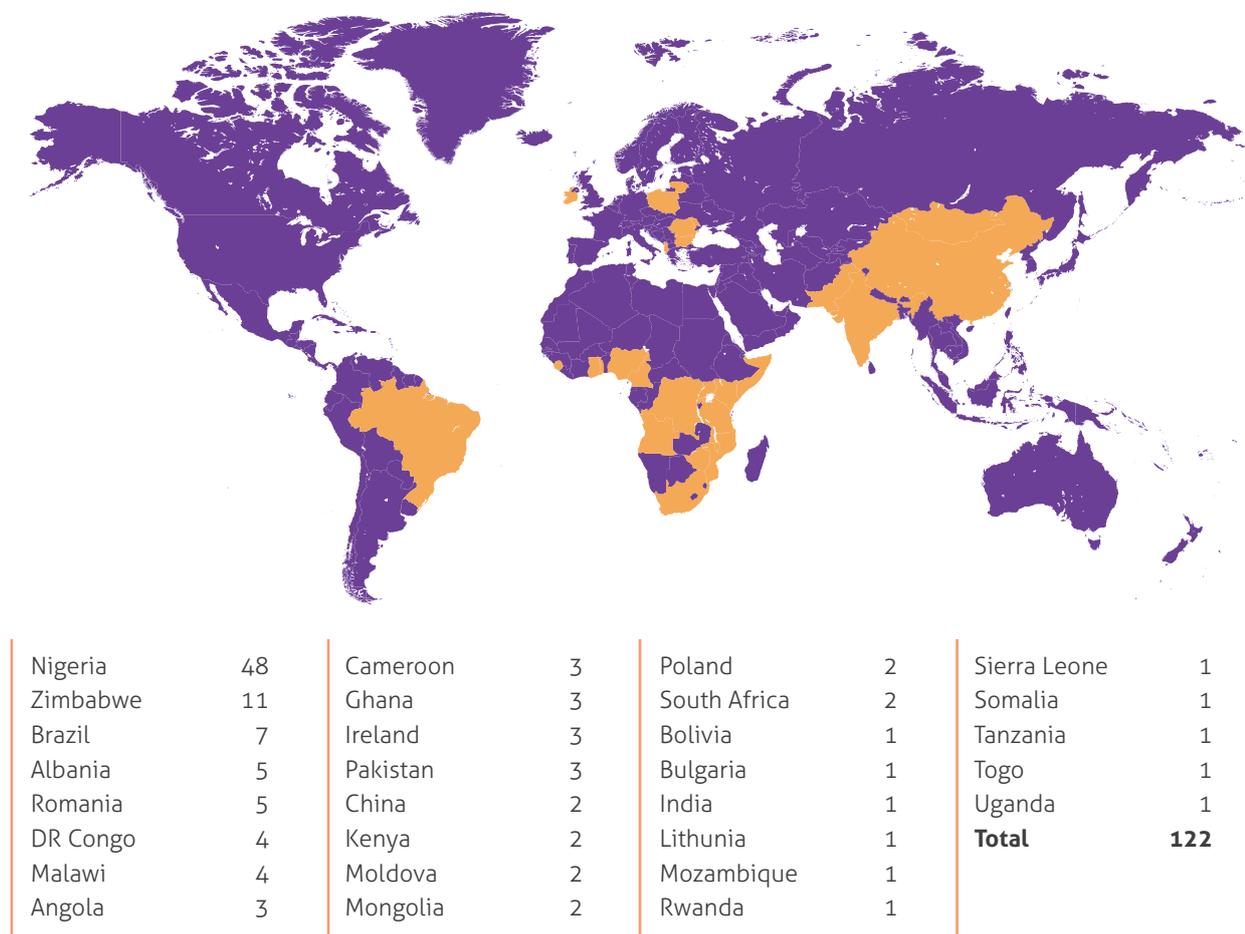
The women we supported in 2018 came to be involved in prostitution through a number of routes. Some entered through a lack of viable alternatives and difficult life circumstances. However, almost half of the women in casework were trafficked. **In 2018, 122 of the women we supported were suspected victims of trafficking and they originated from 29 countries.**

Figure 1: Nationalities of all 251 women accessing Ruhama’s casework supports



| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|--------------|---|----------------|---|--------------|---|--------------|------------|
| Nigeria | 65 | South Africa | 5 | Czech Republic | 2 | India | 1 | Somalia | 1 |
| Ireland | 50 | Malawi | 4 | Hungary | 2 | Korea | 1 | Swaziland | 1 |
| Brazil | 25 | Angola | 3 | Mongolia | 2 | Kurdistan | 1 | Taiwan | 1 |
| Zimbabwe | 18 | China | 3 | Moldova | 2 | Lithuania | 1 | Tanzania | 1 |
| Romania | 13 | Ghana | 3 | Spain | 2 | Malaysia | 1 | Togo | 1 |
| Cameroon | 7 | Kenya | 3 | Uganda | 2 | Mozambique | 1 | Total | 251 |
| DR Congo | 6 | Poland | 3 | Venezuela | 2 | Philippines | 1 | | |
| Albania | 5 | Unknown | 3 | Bolivia | 1 | Rwanda | 1 | | |
| Pakistan | 5 | Botswana | 2 | Bulgaria | 1 | Sierra Leone | 1 | | |

Figure 2: Nationalities of all 122 victims of trafficking accessing Ruhama’s casework supports



The relationship between each woman and her caseworker is unique, and is one based on mutual trust and respect. Some of the work undertaken by our caseworkers in advocating for women in 2018 includes:

- **9970** telephone and **13,666** text contacts
- **2793** face-to-face support contacts
- Many women were supported to take control of their **physical and sexual health**, including through accompaniment to medical appointments
- **111 women** were supported in managing their mental health
- **Large numbers of reports** were written and submitted advocating for women’s rights and entitlements, including to **immigration and legal services**
- Women supported with issues such as **parenting, and family reunification**
- Women were supported to manage **drug and alcohol misuse** and addiction.

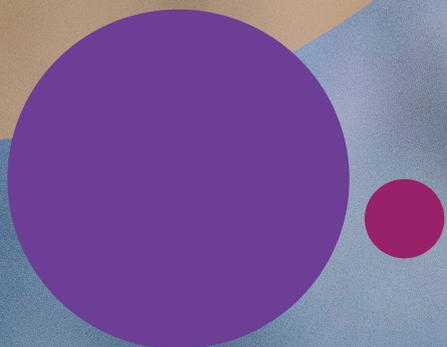
During the year caseworkers continued to support women who have been victims of crime to **access the criminal justice system**. Since Ruhama began work 30 years ago, we have supported many women in the sex industry who have been subject to **violence, including robbery and physical and sexual assault**. This is one aspect of the sex industry that has sadly **not changed during our 30 years of operation**. Prostitution remains as dangerous today as it did in 1989.

In 2018 our caseworkers supported **37 women to formally report crimes** committed against them to the Gardaí, through accompaniment through this challenging process. Many others were supported through practical information about accessing the justice system and availing of their rights as victims of crime.



The relationship between each woman and her caseworker is unique, and is one based on mutual trust and respect.

Only when a victim of sex trafficking has secure immigration status and a place to call home can she truly recover.



Housing & Social Welfare Service

57 women accessed our housing and welfare supports in 2018.

Having a place to call home is essential for women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking. As part of a woman's careplan, Ruhama also offers dedicated, one-to-one support and advocacy for women facing housing and social-welfare issues. Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right but poses a particular challenge for women who wish to exit prostitution. They may be actually living in a brothel, so in leaving prostitution they also risk becoming homeless. Many of the women in on-street prostitution with whom we interact are living chaotic lives, with **40% reporting experiencing homelessness in 2018**. Being unable to afford safe and secure housing keeps women trapped in a cycle of debt, homelessness and prostitution.

For victims of sex trafficking, stability and security are basic requirements for trauma recovery. The intersection of a number of contemporary phenomena in Ireland today, such as **the housing crisis, some landlord racism and the lethargy of the asylum process** continues to have a negative impact on their recovery. In Ruhama's experience, only when a victim of sex trafficking has secure immigration status and a place to call home can she truly recover.

In 2018, the following housing-related challenges created serious barriers for many women:

- Due to a distinct shortage in gender-specific emergency accommodation, women are reluctant to seek shelter in emergency hostels due to safety concerns. Instead, some sleep outdoors or feel their only option is to continue in prostitution in order to pay for private accommodation, including short-term alternatives such as B&Bs.
- As a result of the scarcity in affordable and secure housing, numerous women in the asylum-seeking process cannot find housing even when granted legal status to remain in Ireland. This leaves many with no option but to remain effectively stuck living in Direct Provision.

- The requirements for women who come from the EEA to access social welfare can be onerous and complex. Unfortunately, the lived experiences of women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking sometimes excludes them from entitlement to social welfare support in 2018, particularly due to the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC).³

Despite these difficulties, women were successfully supported to access housing and social welfare through our dedicated one-to-one support service in the following ways:

- Providing women with reports and referee letters, and accompanying women to view accommodation.
- Successfully assisting women to access rental allowance and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme and receive further social welfare benefits they were entitled to; for instance, the one-parent family allowance and child benefit.
- Empowering women to negotiate with landlords and housing associations.
- Training and advice to develop household-budgeting skills.

We are grateful to those with whom we collaborated to support women to access housing and social welfare in 2018. Collaboration between relevant agencies is critical in the housing sector in order to achieve positive outcomes for often vulnerable individuals. In 2018, we partnered with a number of entities, including the Anti-Human Trafficking Team of the HSE, many housing and homelessness support agencies, county councils, migrant support organisations and others in pursuit of homes and access to social welfare for the women who avail of this support.

³ Habitual residence in Ireland is a condition that you must satisfy for certain social welfare payments and Child Benefit. Some of the women we support do not meet these requirements, and are thus excluded from numerous welfare benefits: <http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/sw108.pdf>

Education & Development, Bridge to Work and Therapy

87 women availed of our Education and Development Programme in 2018.

Ruhama's Education and Development Programme supports women to discover their potential, and offers them space to explore alternatives to prostitution if that is their goal. The innovative programme gives women the opportunity to tap into and rediscover the skills and knowledge they already possess, as well as building new skills for their future.

The needs of women who access our Education and Development Programme are diverse. For that reason, as part of her care plan, we work with each woman individually to develop an education and development plan that allows her to build her confidence and imagine her future in a safe, supportive environment, at her own pace.

In 2018, 36 women engaged in one-to-one tuition and 49 with our group classes. Furthermore, 34 women attended 110 hours of one-to-one sessions with a professional guidance counsellor.

We offer the following regular in-house programmes and supports at Ruhama:

- English language and literacy skills
- Maths and numeracy skills
- IT skills
- Study skills and study supports
- Accessing education grants
- Preparation for third-level
- Career guidance counselling
- Designing and developing CVs and cover letters
- Applying for courses and job vacancies
- Securing volunteer and work placements

Additionally, we ran a range of specialised group courses for women in 2018. These courses are designed to build women's self-confidence and self-belief, and equip them with the tools needed to make positive changes in their lives.

Trauma Healing Programme (Capacitar) – this trauma healing course aids participants who are dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to reduce their levels of stress and anxiety and improve their coping skills and overall mental health.

"I sleep better. [The course] gave me time to rejuvenate and relieve my stress levels. Throughout the course, I felt welcome and counselled in body and mind."

Capacitar participant

STEPS (Steps To Excellence for Personal Success) – develops and increases participants' confidence to support them to move towards building the lives they envision for themselves.

"It has helped me to be positive about myself and gave me the confidence to plan my future again"

STEPS participant

Computers/ IT skills

"I am getting more confident. I learn so much every time I do this class. I go over what I already know but I also learn lots of new things."

Computer course participant

Shaping Your Future – equips participants with the tools and skills to support with both job-seeking and other aspects of professional development.

"When I look at my CV, I cannot believe it is me... and yet it is"

Shaping Your Future Participant

There are many positive outcomes to report for the women who accessed our education and development supports in 2018. Throughout the year, **participants advanced in their English, literacy, numerical and IT skills, built self-confidence, self-esteem, developed stress-management and coping skills, and enhanced their job-seeking capabilities.**

We recorded the following outcomes in 2018*:

- 34 women were professionally supported to develop and embark upon individual goal-orientated career plans
- 41 women were supported to apply for third level or further education/training grants
- 25 women began QQI/ professionally accredited courses
- 20 women completed QQI/ professionally accredited courses
- 11 women supported to acquire work placements as part of their ongoing studies.
- 9 women began general work placements or formal employment.

We commend and congratulate all the women involved in our Education and Development Programme for their commitment and completion of the courses throughout 2018.

We are grateful as always to all the tutors, trainers, coaches and facilitators who contributed to the delivery of education and development at Ruhama. We also worked with a number of national and local partners who were central to delivering the programme, including Capacitar, the Pacific Institute Ireland, Careers Portal, Dress for Success, and other education providers across the country.

**These figures only represent those women still connected with Ruhama development team at the time of an interview/course commencement/ job placement. A number of women in this period will have formally exited the service following casework/ development/resettlement support, moving on to independence and so their further positive outcomes for job-seeking and education are not known.*



The Bridge to Work Programme

Providing access to fair and decent work

Our Bridge to Work pilot programme began in 2017 with the aim of providing the women we support with access to the employment market. The programme is being developed in recognition of the significant challenges which face women affected by prostitution and trafficking in accessing decent work and income. These barriers may include low self-esteem, anxiety, and limited or no education or work experience. The overall objective of Bridge to Work is to empower women to overcome these barriers by creating a pathway into a secure, paid work placement.

2018 was an exciting year for the Bridge to Work programme as we looked to build on the work and progress made during 2017.

During 2018 we saw the programme grow and develop in the following ways:

- In partnership with a barista training company we provided four barista training workshops for women in the programme
- Paid and unpaid work placements were secured for a number of women, with the unpaid placement leading into a paid position in the sector
- Developed of a draft Employment Guide with the input of programme participants
- Completed of a tender process for an independent evaluator to evaluate the programme in 2019.

Benefits of the Bridge to Work Programme for participating women include:

- Increased personal growth, confidence and professional development that will allow each woman to identify the areas of work that she is good at and enjoys
- The chance to earn a salary to facilitate financial independence
- The opportunity for her to identify the skills needed to improve on in order to secure long term employment
- Growing a network of contacts and friends as part of a team environment
- Being treated with respect and dignity as a member of a professional team with real responsibilities
- Gaining a true sense of a work environment, employers' expectations and appropriate workplace behaviours
- Accumulating genuine work experience and employer references for her CV.

Benefits of the Programme for employers include:

- The opportunity to transform and positively influence the lives of women who have experienced exploitation
- Access to highly motivated women looking to demonstrate their abilities and develop new skills
- Ongoing support from Ruhama's Programme Co-ordinator
- The potential to achieve social responsibility objectives
- Support in the recruitment of underrepresented groups
- More motivated and engaged employees.

Can you support Ruhama's Work Placement Programme?

If you are, or if you know of, an employer that might be interested in hearing more about this innovative programme and being a part of truly changing women's lives for the better, please contact the programme coordinator Elaine McGauran. All enquiries are treated in confidence and without obligation. Email: elaine@bridgetowork.ie or phone her directly on 086 045 3683.

Barista training with women taking part in Bridge to Work Programme



This project is part supported by the Irish Government and European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice and Equality

Counselling and Holistic Therapies

Promoting healing

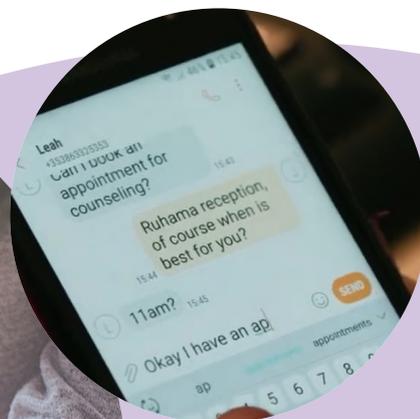
It is well documented that sexual exploitation has an incredibly detrimental impact on women's physical and mental health. The women who access Ruhama's services frequently report experiences of extreme **sexual, physical and psychological abuse while in prostitution**. Several women have also experienced other forms of **violence, neglect, control and abuse throughout childhood and into adulthood**. The impact of these experiences on women should not be underestimated. We have regularly come into contact with women who display some, or all, of the following:

- Low self-esteem and self-worth
- Anxiety and depression
- Addiction and substance misuse
- Trauma
- Extreme isolation and exclusion
- Dissociation
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts

Difficulties in coping with daily life and an inability to process and address trauma have been identified as significant barriers in women's abilities to go on with their lives following exploitation, and work towards their goals.

Alongside our casework, Ruhama provides a free counselling service for women who require additional therapeutic support. **19 women were supported with 132 hours of therapy and counselling in 2018 with our fully qualified and experienced counsellors**. A number of other women were also supported to access external counselling including in their own language or outside of Dublin as required.

This holistic approach to healing is further complemented by our provision of other therapies, including reflexology, shiatsu, and neck, and head and shoulder massage provided by our fully-trained holistic therapists. **20 women in 2018 benefitted from regular holistic therapies**.



“

Astrid's Story



I grew up in a small town in Eastern Europe. I got pregnant shortly after I left school, but the father left me as soon as he found out so I stayed with my family. Everything was tough, though – I knew my parents were under a lot of pressure having to feed us. I worked some hours in my father's grocery shop because there were not many other options for me to earn money there.

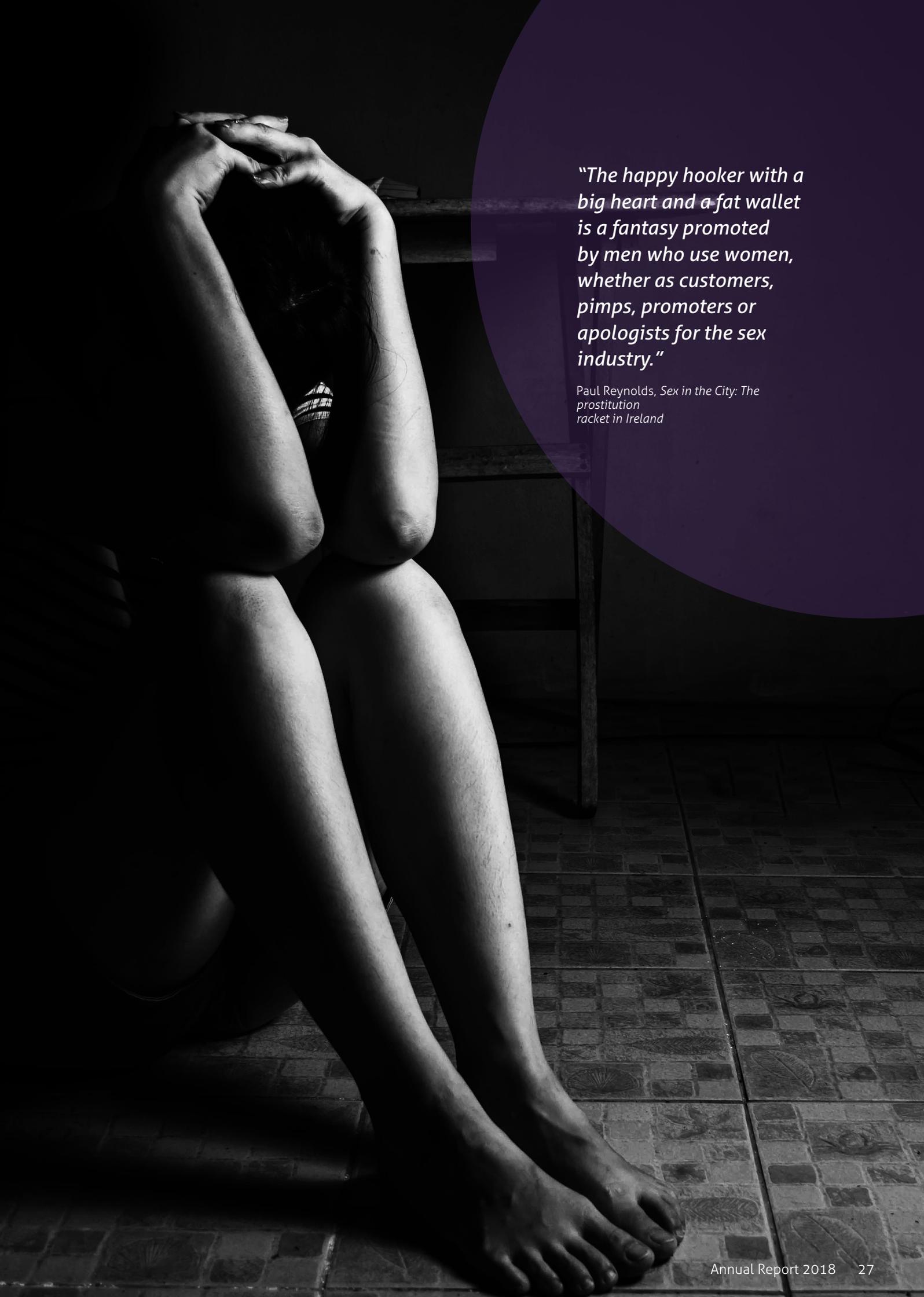
One day I met a man a few years older than me in the shop. He asked me out and we started dating. He was kind to me, and I fell completely in love with him. I felt so safe and taken care of. He told me one day that he had friends in Ireland who could get us both jobs in Dublin. It sounded like the perfect opportunity, and I was excited at the chance to be able to send money back to my family to support them for the first time.

Soon after we got to Ireland, though, things began to change. He started to get angry and violent over the smallest things like if I went out and took longer than I said. It turned out the jobs didn't materialise either, so we had no money. One night he invited his friend over and told me I had to have sex with him, or he would hurt my child. His friend followed me into my bedroom, took off his clothes and had sex with me. I cried all the way through.

This started happening every day and I could never say no because he threatened to hurt my daughter if I didn't let these men do what they wanted to do to me. They weren't giving me any money but they were giving it to my boyfriend when they finished with me. I was scared and numb for so long. I had no friends in Ireland I didn't tell anyone back home what was happening; I was too ashamed. Every time I left the house, he told me I had to be back in an hour and if I wasn't back he would threaten to kill me. One day after a year I just couldn't take it anymore. I told him I was going to the shop and instead I walked to the local Garda Station. I was shaking and crying as I told them what had happened to me, but I was glad I did. They then put me in touch with Ruhama and I met my caseworker. We sat down and I told her what had happened and all the things I wanted to do.

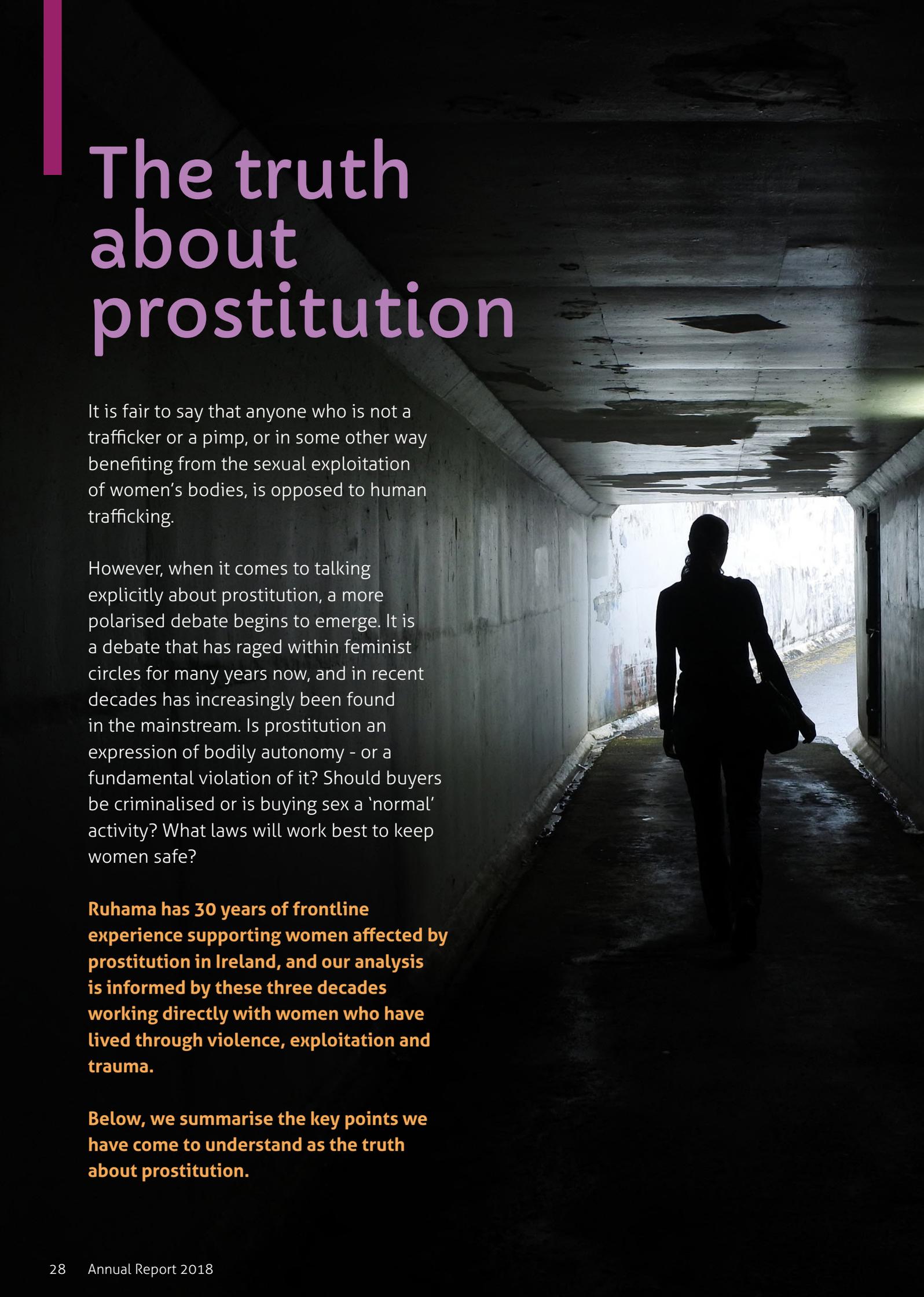
I've completed some of the courses now, and Ruhama has helped me to get the government's social welfare support so my daughter and I can stay living here. Now I can give her a better future. My ex-boyfriend is still under investigation and I hope they put him in prison. I felt so guilty and ashamed for putting my daughter in danger, but I've been going to counselling and I know now that it was not my fault. It was his. What he did to me was wrong, and what all of those men did to me was wrong. I'm finally hopeful about my future again.

”



"The happy hooker with a big heart and a fat wallet is a fantasy promoted by men who use women, whether as customers, pimps, promoters or apologists for the sex industry."

Paul Reynolds, *Sex in the City: The prostitution racket in Ireland*



The truth about prostitution

It is fair to say that anyone who is not a trafficker or a pimp, or in some other way benefiting from the sexual exploitation of women's bodies, is opposed to human trafficking.

However, when it comes to talking explicitly about prostitution, a more polarised debate begins to emerge. It is a debate that has raged within feminist circles for many years now, and in recent decades has increasingly been found in the mainstream. Is prostitution an expression of bodily autonomy - or a fundamental violation of it? Should buyers be criminalised or is buying sex a 'normal' activity? What laws will work best to keep women safe?

Ruhama has 30 years of frontline experience supporting women affected by prostitution in Ireland, and our analysis is informed by these three decades working directly with women who have lived through violence, exploitation and trauma.

Below, we summarise the key points we have come to understand as the truth about prostitution.

1

Prostitution is incompatible with human rights, feminism and gender equality.

The sex trade is gendered. It is overwhelmingly **women and girls' bodies that are commodified; bought and sold for male sexual pleasure**. Prostitution is sexist, patriarchal, and male-dominated and thrives off the exploitation of the most vulnerable women and girls. Gender equality will not be realised while the sex trade exists.

Prostitution is incompatible with human rights, and women's human rights in particular. This is recognised in many international laws and conventions which enshrine human rights, including the:

- 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others;
- 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (supplementary to the Palermo Protocol);
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁵;
- 2014 Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Resolution on Prostitution, Trafficking and Modern Slavery in Europe.

Ireland's laws and policies are designed to fulfil our obligations to uphold human rights and achieve gender equality, including those to counter human trafficking, protect individuals in the sex trade, and deter the demand for paid sex.

2

The sex trade is inherently harmful.

Individuals in prostitution are faced with **exceptionally high levels of violence**. Thousands of women that we have supported over the past 30 years have reported multiple forms of **sexual, physical and psychological violence from pimps, traffickers and buyers**. International research reveals rates of violence and mortality are much higher for this population compared to those not in prostitution. For instance, a study of 854 people in prostitution in 8 countries revealed 71% experienced physical assault, 63% were raped and 68% experienced post-traumatic stress disorder.⁶ The intrinsic requirement of prostitution - **repeated unwanted sexual contact, based on buyer's desires and not those of the prostituted person** - has significant emotional consequences. Many women report disassociation as a basic requirement to cope with this. Unfortunately, legalizing the sex trade does not reduce the physical, sexual and psychological trauma that it inflicts upon those within it⁷ - it simply legalizes it.

Prostitution is violent by its nature. The only way to make prostitution safe is to abolish it.



5 The UN Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identify 17 targets for Member States to strive towards with the aim of eradicating inequality and poverty by 2030. SDG 5 is Gender Equality; target 5.2 is: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

6 Farley, M., Cotton, A., Lynne, J., Zumbek, S., Spiwak, F., Reyes, M., Alvarez, D. and Sezgin, U. (2003). Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries. *Journal of Trauma Practice*, 2(3-4), pp.33-74.

7 Farley, M. (2004). "Bad for the Body, Bad for the Heart": Prostitution Harms Women Even if Legalized or Decriminalized. *Violence Against Women*, 10(10), pp.1087-1125.

3

Sex-trafficking and prostitution are inextricably connected.

Some try to differentiate between prostitution and sex trafficking, suggesting that sex trafficking could be eliminated if the sex trade were legalised. However, this is not the case.

The mere existence of a commercial sex trade means that there will be a need for a constant supply of women and girls to fulfil the demand of 'buyers.' There will never be enough people willing to enter the sex trade from a position of unconstrained choice to meet this demand. Therefore the most vulnerable women and girls then end up at risk.

Human trafficking is inevitable in the sex trade; it is the context in which sex trafficking occurs. Distinctions between 'forced' prostitution and free are dangerous – they can be used to legitimise and normalise the overall exploitation inherent to the sex trade. Human trafficking represents the extreme end of the spectrum of violence and harm that already exists in prostitution.

“Prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purpose of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person”

UN 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others

4

It is not always obvious that a person has been trafficked or pimped.

A risk in **making the false distinction between sex trafficking and prostitution is that the experiences of women who are in the sex trade as a result of subtler forms of coercion may be discounted.** Those who do not fit the 'stereotypical' idea of what it means to be trafficked may fly under the radar for protection and support when they are under the control of another person. There are a number of recognised indicators used to help identify victims of trafficking. In reality, many victims of trafficking do not very explicitly display these indicators, but they may well be in a situation where they are being exploited by third parties.

Pimps often use manipulation, intimidation and violence in intimate relationships to recruit women. However, women under this form of control may not recognise the exploitation in the relationship. For instance, many of the 'independent' women in Amsterdam's legal Red Light District are actually highly groomed by pimps masquerading as 'boyfriends.'¹⁰

“The bodies of women in prostitution are battlegrounds upon which misogynistic wars against all women take place.”

Amelia Tiganus, founder of Femicidio.net and prostitution survivor

8 'Prostitution as so-called free choice.' Information/ Discussion Papers: Ruhama's Perspective. (2007). https://ruhama.ie/archive_news_press/publications.html.

9 UNODC. (n.d.). Human Trafficking Indicators. [online] Available at: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/HT_indicators_E_LOWRES.pdf [Accessed 8 Apr. 2019].

10 Huisman, W. and Kleemans, E. (2014). The challenges of fighting sex trafficking in the legalized prostitution market of the Netherlands. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 61(2), pp.215-228

11 'Stop Traffick! Tackling demand for sexual services of trafficked women and girls: Summary and Recommendations.' The Immigrant Council of Ireland (2014). Available at: <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2017-10/AT%202014%20STOP%20TRAFFICK%20Tackling%20sexual%20demand%20for%20trafficked%20women%20and%20girls%20SUMMARY.pdf>

12 Farley, M., Golding, J., Matthews, E., Malamuth, N. and Jarrett, L. (2015). Comparing Sex Buyers With Men Who Do Not Buy Sex: New Data on Prostitution and Trafficking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 32(23), pp.3601-3625.



"[It is a] myth that it is possible to commodify consent. If while having sex with someone you feel repulsed by them touching you, afraid of what they might do, degraded and humiliated by the sexual acts, hurt by the hateful words they're whispering in your ear, sore because he's the fifth man you've had sex with today, exhausted from it all, traumatised, abused [...] a bit of cash at the end does not change...the lived experience of sexual abuse."

Kat Banyard¹⁸

5

Sex-buyers are not 'harmless punters.'

We call them punters here in Ireland; in other parts of the world they're 'johns.' Whatever we call them, **sex-buyers are not just a harmless group of lonely men looking for some company.**

The majority of sex buyers in Ireland are middle-class men over 25 in a relationship. They seek out women via online platforms, where it is not evident if a woman is under the control of a pimp or trafficker.¹¹ Globally, **sex buyers are aware, yet uncaring, about the harm and violence of prostitution.** Sex buyers are more likely to hold misogynistic attitudes about women, commit rape and be sexually aggressive.¹² They are inspired by what they see in pornography, and like to use prostituted women to re-enact scenes of sexual violence.¹³ Ruhama's 2017 'A Penny for Your Thoughts Campaign' revealed that a majority of sex buyers still sought 'sexual services' from a woman, even when she explicitly said she had been trafficked.¹⁴

Sex buyers repeatedly indicate that the biggest deterrent to them buying sex comes from the risk of public exposure and criminalization. The good news is that most men in Ireland do not buy sex. **However, the 8% that do perpetuate and fuel a multi-million Euro criminal trade based on the exploitation of women.**¹⁵

"Look, men pay for women because he can have whatever and whoever he wants. Lots of men go to prostitutes so they can do things to them that real women would not put up with."

Sex Buyer¹⁶

6

Prostitution is a violation of women's bodily autonomy

'My body, my choice' is a rightly popular feminist slogan about bodily autonomy for women, and women's fundamental right to make free, unrestricted decisions about their bodies. Advocates of the sex trade attempt to portray prostitution as bodily autonomy for women, and assert that all is fine once everyone involved is a 'consenting' adult. In reality, prostitution ends up being **'her body, his choice.'** As Carol Pateman puts it: "Prostitution is not mutual, pleasurable exchange of the use of bodies, but the unilateral use of a woman's body by a man in exchange for money."¹⁷

Sexual consent should be freely given, without coercion, enthusiastic, ongoing throughout sex and exchanged on the basis of equal power. Why then do the parameters for consent change so drastically in prostitution? In paying for sex, men are purchasing women's right to say no to sex, allowing him to do what he wants on and inside her body. That is not 'consent.' We cannot teach young people about consent, mutuality and pleasure when men are negotiating women's sexual boundaries with money. Women's sexual pleasure is completely absent from discussions on prostitution – **everything is centred on his experience, his pleasure.** Ultimately, prostitution encourages male sexual dominance and power over women's bodies, and is wholly incompatible with women's bodily autonomy.

"No man has ever died from not having sex. Women are dying every single day in the sex trade."

Fiona Broadfoot, Founder of Build a Girl project and prostitution survivor

13 Farley, M. (2007). 'Renting an Organ for Ten Minutes:' What Tricks Tell us about Prostitution, Pornography, and Trafficking. In: D. Guinn and J. DiCaro, ed., Pornography: Driving the Demand in International Sex Trafficking, 1st ed. Los Angeles: Captive Daughters Media, pp.144-152.

14 'What Irish sex-buyers are really thinking: Ruhama's latest campaign reveals the cold reality of Irish sex-buyers' attitudes to the women they pay for sex' (2018). Available at: <https://www.ruhama.ie/assets/Press-Releases/What-Irish-Sex-Buyers-Are-Really-Thinking-Ruhama-Press-Release-18th-January.pdf>

15 The 'We Don't Buy It' campaign: <http://wedontbuyit.eu/>

16 Farley, M., Bindel, J. and Golding, J. (2009). Men who buy sex: who they buy and what they know. San Francisco: Eaves London and Prostitution Research and Education.

17 Pateman, C. (1988). The Sexual Contract. 1st ed. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, pp.189-218.

18 Banyard, K. (2016). Pimp State. 1st ed. London: Faber & Faber Limited. [page 67].



The Nordic / Equality legislative model is the most effective in tackling demand and reducing sexual exploitation.

There are three overarching frameworks for prostitution legislation: full criminalization, full decriminalization (legalization) and **partial decriminalization**.

As members of the Turn Off the Red Light campaign, **we advocated for many years for the partial decriminalization Nordic/ Equality Model of prostitution legislation that was introduced in Ireland in 2017.**¹⁹ This law decriminalizes the individual in prostitution, continues to criminalize pimps and other third party profiteers, and criminalizes the sex buyer. This recognises the central role that buyers play in driving sexual exploitation through their demand. **To be wholly effective, this model must also include effective policies that prevent people from feeling they have no choice but to enter the sex trade, and provide supports to exit. These policies should encompass everything from social welfare entitlements, childcare, immigration support and affordable housing options.**

Supporters of **full decriminalisation** claim it puts the power firmly into the hands of those whose bodies are on sale. Some are well intentioned in their advocacy for this model as they believe this proposition to be true. Others have more sinister motives as this approach **also decriminalises pimps, brothel keeping and the purchase of sex.** Decriminalizing pimps puts the power firmly in their favour, over the women they prostitute, and increases sex buyer demand by normalising their actions.

"The results [of the Nordic/ Equality Model] are very positive: demand has decreased substantially; there are few people in prostitution; and Sweden is a considered a market of low interest for trafficking for sexual exploitation."

[Joint statement from Swedish and French Ministries of Foreign Affairs](#)



Vulnerable and marginalised women and girls are the most likely to be commercially sexually exploited.

Women from minority ethnic and racial groups, those from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic classes, impoverished women, women who have previously been subjected to sexual violence, refugee and asylum seeking women, transgender women: these are the women who are overrepresented in the sex trade.²⁰ Calls to decriminalise the sex trade so they can earn a living are dangerous. These women deserve better. It creates a separate 'class' of women if we say that prostitution is okay for some women but not others.

"Black women are at the bottom of society's barrel. If you refuse to stand with us to condemn prostitution, you can no longer say, 'Sisterhood is powerful'. You would be betraying us if you support the buying and selling of the bodies of black women and girls."

Dr. Vednita Carter, founder of Breaking Free and prostitution survivor

19 Sweden enacted this model in 1999 as a core component of wider legislation aimed at ending violence against women and increasing gender equality. Other countries have also introduced this model following Sweden: Norway; Iceland (hence the renaming as the Nordic Model); France; Northern Ireland; the Republic of Ireland and Israel.

20 Farley, M. (2015). 'Slavery and Prostitution: A 21st Century Abolitionist Perspective.'. In: B. Martin and J. Brooks, ed., Linking the histories of slavery in North America and its borderlands, 1st ed. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

9

Prostitution is not 'a job like any other.'

How many jobs involve **daily vaginal, oral and anal penetration with penises, fingers, fists and a whole host of other objects?**²¹ Demands to view prostitution as legitimate work erase the reality of the sex trade and the harm and violence it inflicts upon the women trapped within it.

Prostitution is not work. Germany legalised prostitution in 2002, claiming that women in prostitution would be then be entitled to employment contracts and social protection and that this would reduce their vulnerabilities and clean up the trade. This has not happened. 99% of women in prostitution in Germany (the vast majority of whom are non-German) do not have a contract and are considered 'self-employed.'²² It's estimated that there are 400,000 individuals in prostitution in Germany. By 2013, only 44 had officially registered in prostitution to join the national insurance scheme.²³ Furthermore, **prostitution encompasses everything the ILO define as sexual harassment in the workplace.**²⁴ Irish trade unions, including the Irish Congress of trade Unions (ICTU), have recognised that prostitution is not work and fought for the legislation alongside us in the Turn Off the Red Light campaign.

"We should be campaigning to end the poverty [...] that may drive some women into prostitution. Just because a financial transaction takes place does not mean prostitution is a job like any other."

Sue Ferns, Senior Deputy General Secretary at Prospect Trade Union²⁵

10

Survivor testimonies expose the truth about prostitution.

There are many **survivors of prostitution who have taken the brave step to come out and speak about their experiences.** Many of these women who have been exploited within the sex trade deal with various degrees of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders.²⁶ Women who speak out about their experiences risk re-traumatization, judgement and abuse each time they tell their story. **Survivors speak of violence, assault, rape, humiliation and the fear that they have gone through in their time in the sex trade.** These experiences must be central in any discussion about prostitution.

"Misogyny, patriarchy, racism and sexism are entrenched in the system of prostitution."

Micky Meiji, Founder of Kwanele survivor movement and prostitution survivor

21 WHISPER. (2009). Help Wanted: Women and girls do YOU want this job? [online] Available at: <http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/Help%20Wanted-%20Women%20and%20Girls%20Do%20YOU%20want%20this%20job%3F.pdf> [Accessed 8 Apr. 2019].

22 'Report by the federal government on the Impact of the Act Regulating the Legal situation of Prostitutes.' Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth [Germany] (2007). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/federal_government_report_of_the_impact_of_the_act_regulating_the_legal_situation_of_prostitutes_2007_en_1.pdf

23 'Germany rethinks its liberal ways on sex workers' The Guardian (2013) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/30/german-brothels-illegal-feminists-fight-law-prostitution>

24 The ILO defines sexual harassment as a sex-based behaviour that is unwelcome and offensive to its recipient. Sexual harassment may take two forms: 1) Quid Pro Quo, when a job benefit - such as a pay rise, a promotion, or even continued employment - is made conditional on the victim acceding to demands to engage in some form of sexual behaviour; or, 2) hostile working environment in which the conduct creates conditions that are intimidating or humiliating for the victim. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_decl_fs_96_en.pdf

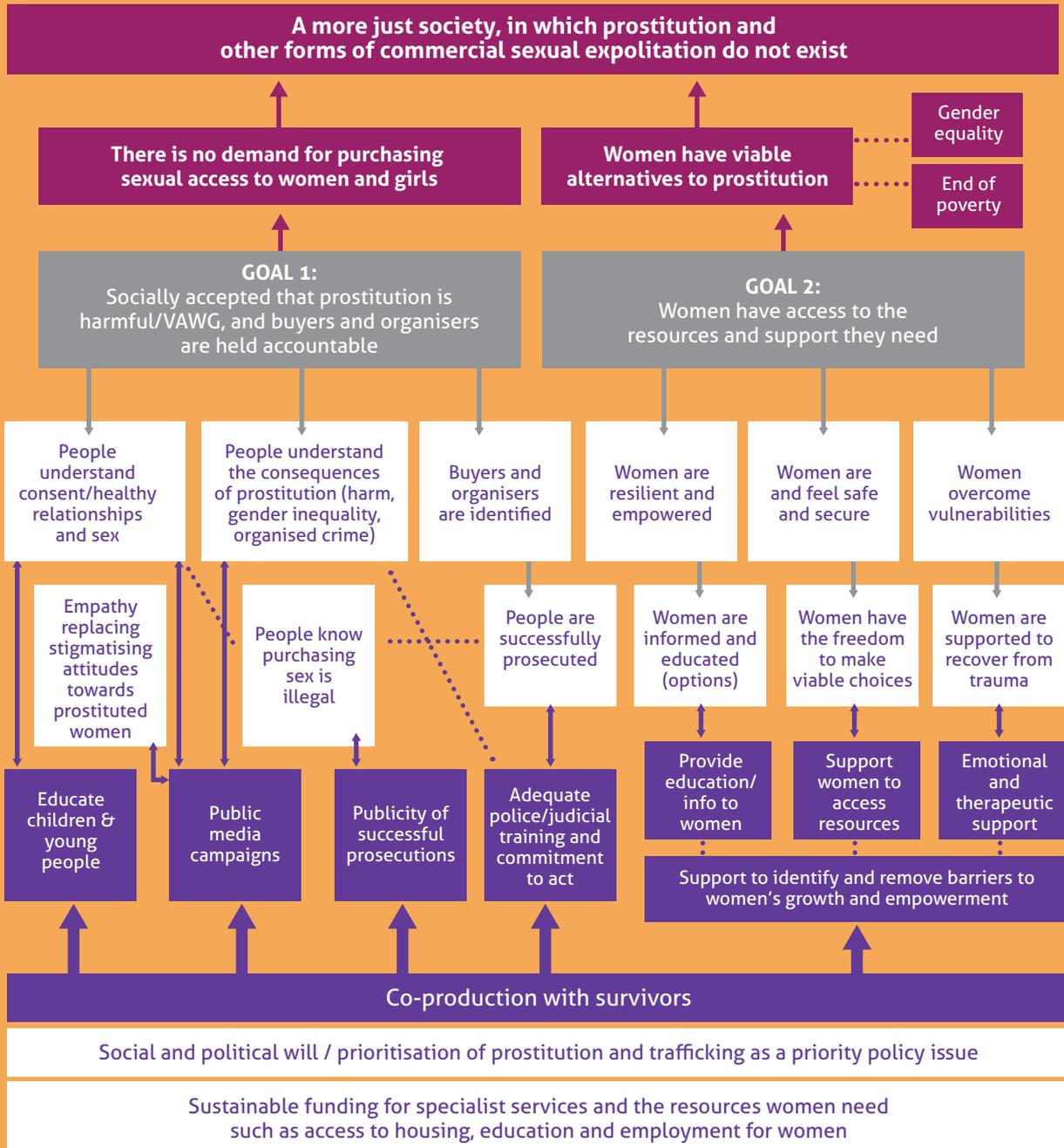
25 Female trade unionists against the system of prostitution and its exploitation: <http://www.cap-international.org/activity/video-in-the-uk-female-trade-unionists-against-the-system-of-prostitution-and-its-exploitation/>

26 Farley, M., Cotton, A., Lynne, J., Zumbo, S., Spiwak, F., Reyes, M., Alvarez, D. and Sezgin, U. (2003). Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries. Journal of Trauma Practice, 2(3-4), pp.33-74.

Note: A large part of the research cited here can be found on the Prostitution Research Website: <http://prostitutionresearch.com/>.

Mapping our theory of change

We have mapped out the elements that need to be in place in order to end prostitution. Ultimately, in order to truly achieve a world without prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, a whole of society approach is necessary.*



* This vision map was developed as a part of the development of Ruhama's Strategic Plan 2019-2024.

Advocacy, Communications and Training

Advocacy at home and abroad

Together with our frontline endeavours **we also work at the national and international levels to influence the development of broader policies that will enhance the lives of the women we support.** We advocate for the effective implementation of policy and legislative frameworks that both prevent and tackle commercial sexual exploitation. In addition to our work alongside our national allies, we are also involved at the international level with a many frontline and advocacy organisations dedicated to combatting the harms of the global sex trade.

All of our advocacy, communications and training work complements, and is informed by, our frontline work over three decades in supporting women affected by prostitution in Ireland. A central element of this work is to campaign for the full protection of those who find themselves at the coal face: selling - or sold – for sex. In carrying out this work we undertake a number of activities, including:

- **Public awareness-raising of the harms of prostitution** and trafficking and promoting the **rights of individuals** who have been subjected to commercial sexual exploitation
- Advocating for **legislative and policy change which protects and decriminalises those exploited** in the sex-trade, **tackles the demand** that drives it and **heavily penalises those who organise and profit from prostitution**
- Supporting **survivors of prostitution to raise their voices** against exploitation
- Providing **training and other resources to key professionals** in a position to support and respond empathetically to vulnerable individuals affected by prostitution.

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

Following years of concerted campaigning by the Turn Off the Red Light (TORL) campaign, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act was enacted in 2017, following the example of countries including Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Canada (with restrictions), Northern Ireland and France.

Now in Ireland, **sex-buyers are criminalised** in acknowledgement of the role they play as the drivers of demand in perpetuating the sex-trade, as well as inflictors of violence upon those within it.

For the first time also, **individuals in prostitution are decriminalised.** In enacting this progressive legislation, Ireland became one of a growing number of countries to recognise the inherent exploitative nature of prostitution, including the **inextricable links between prostitution and sex-trafficking.** Throughout 2018 Ruhama continued to focus on the **implementation of the Act to target demand, as well as policies to give expression to the spirit of the law, namely: protection and support to those in, or at risk of prostitution and trafficking.**



Marking the one-year anniversary of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 outside Leinster House in March 2018.

We will continue to advocate for full and effective implementation of the law as we move forward into 2020 when, as embedded in the legislation, the law will undergo a comprehensive review.

Influencing policy & legislation at home and abroad

Throughout 2018, Ruhama also continued its work to highlight the importance of taking a **multifaceted approach to end sexual exploitation, and providing appropriate, coordinated responses to victims and survivors.** We worked with and alongside a number of allies in a broad range of domestic forums, including:

- The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC)
- The Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women

- The National Monitoring Committee of the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence 2016-2021
- The Victims' Rights Alliance
- Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) Awareness Raising Group
- AHTU Roundtable
- South Inner City Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (SICLDATF) Treatment and Rehabilitation Committee

Outside of the domestic context, **we also shared our expertise and experience in other jurisdictions focusing on the issue of prostitution.** We made a number of submissions in this area, including to:

- The U.S. Department of State's Annual Trafficking in Persons report
- The Policing Commission of Ireland
- UK Conservative Party Human Rights Commission Inquiry into the Reform of Prostitution Law
- The Policing Authority of Ireland on priorities for 2019

In March 2018, **Ruhama was represented at the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) at the United Nations in New York.** The event was chaired by Ireland in 2018 and, as an NGO member of the Irish Delegation to CSW62, Ruhama had the honour to partner with the Irish Permanent Representation to the UN to hold an official side event. The event was addressed by our Ambassador to the UN, Geraldine Byrne Nason, and the Minister for State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, David Stanton.



Attending CSW62: Prof. Siobhan Mullally (GRETA), Minister David Stanton, Ghada Jabbour (KAFA), Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, Grégoire Théry (CAP International), Sarah Benson (Ruhama), Cherie Jimenez (EVA project), Rita Hernández (Comisión Unidos Vs Trata)

The event was entitled: "Presenting Challenges & Considering Solutions to Sex Trafficking and Other Forms of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls." Ruhama CEO, Sarah Benson, emphasised the need for coordination and collaboration across support services, police and healthcare providers to ensure a holistic response to the needs of victims.

As chair of CAP International (Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution) - an international coalition of 26 abolitionist frontline NGOs - **Ruhama's CEO attended a formal meeting with UN Secretary General, António Guterres alongside three CAP colleagues.** The focus of the discussion was on **the need for UN agencies to observe international human rights instruments related to prostitution, and to use appropriate language consistent with this.** The CAP delegation also urged the Secretary General to ensure UN agencies do not endorse the full decriminalization of prostitution, which includes the decriminalisation of pimping, and instead **adopt the position of decriminalisation of prostituted persons only, as is compatible with human rights law.**



Meeting the UNSG: Sarah Benson (Ruhama), Mickey Meji (Embrace Dignity, South Africa), António Guterres (UN Secretary General), Ghada Jabbour (KAFA, Lebanon), Grégoire Théry (Executive Director of CAP International).

In 2018, Ruhama was also represented at the EU Civil Society Platform Against Trafficking in Human Beings, which convenes twice annually in Brussels.

Raising Awareness and Calling for Action

In 2018 Ruhama also engaged in a wide variety of other awareness raising activities and initiatives across a broad range of platforms. **We engaged people in person, via mainstream media and across the social networks** to let them know about our work and the services we offer, and to raise awareness of the harm the sex-trade causes to individuals trapped in it, based on our own frontline experience and those of our partners - including survivor activists.

Representatives of Ruhama and our allies engaged in dialogues with public-representatives, business professionals, community groups, students and individuals.

Ruhama was represented, and spoke, at a wide range of events including:

- Fondation Scelles' #SEXPLOITED conference, Paris
- 'Gender Equality + YOU' Conference, Vienna.
- Dublin City North Youth Sexual Health Conference
- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Ireland Conference
- Monaghan Women's Network conference against human trafficking and prostitution
- International Social Work and Development Conference
- Baltic & Central Asia conference on Sexual Exploitation, Riga

Attending the
Dublin City North
Youth Sexual
Health Conference
in Croke Park



'A Penny for Your Thoughts'

A highlight of our awareness raising work in 2018 came from sharing the results of the innovative 'A Penny for Your Thoughts' campaign that we ran in 2017. A creation of Dutch artist Marian van der Zwaan, the campaign ran over a number of weeks in the autumn of 2017. The multi-city art project was designed to raise awareness of sex-trafficking and capture the responses from callers to a fictitious woman who shared 'her story.'

The campaign offered an unfavourable insight into the minds of sex-buyers in Ireland.

'Andreea' – a silhouette image posed seductively above a phone number – was 'advertised' in a variety of busy public locations across Dublin and some online prostitution webpages. **Callers were greeted by the voicemail message of a bubbly young woman with an Eastern European accent who promised a fun, 'sensual' time. But her story quickly took a dark turn when 'Andreea' revealed she had in fact been trafficked into Ireland's sex trade.** She closed the voicemail by asking the caller to leave her a message with their thoughts.

In just 20 short days, 'Andreea' received over 1,000 contacts, including hundreds from male sex buyers. However, very few of them were concerned about her exploitative situation. In fact, their primary concern was how she could 'service' them – **82% of contacts were enquiring about the sexual services 'Andreea' provided. Incredibly, over 60% of those leaving voice messages were men who still asked about her 'availability' despite having heard her disclosure of exploitation and suffering.**

The campaign served to both raise awareness of the plight of victims of sex-trafficking in Ireland, as well as expose the need once again the need for laws that target sex-buyers in order to stop the demand that fuels sex-trafficking both domestically and internationally.



ANDREEA

"I just wanna come for about 30-45 minutes and how much do you charge for that? And what services do you provide? Sexual Services. Do you do everything? French kissing... anal?"

Voice mail left for 'Andreea' from a sex buyer

Sharing knowledge, experience and best practice – Training

Through 2018 Ruhama delivered free, dedicated training to a wide range of professionals on the issue of prostitution and sex-trafficking.

We delivered our Know Human Trafficking training on a number of occasions in 2018. The training was developed as a part of our European Union funded REACH project, and is aimed at professionals who need to be equipped with the knowledge to identify the signs of sex-trafficking, and respond in a safe, proactive and victim-centred way.

We also delivered our bespoke training to An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. This training focuses on the need for law enforcement officers to understand the vulnerabilities and risks faced by individuals affected by prostitution, and how they can best respond to them as actual or potential victims of crime – not offenders.

Additionally, we provided training sessions to a number of other frontline organisations on the island of Ireland, including Northern Ireland throughout 2018.



Volunteering at Ruhama

As ever, we want to say a MASSIVE thank you to all of our volunteers!

We simply could not deliver our wide and varied range of services without our volunteers.

We are incredibly grateful to them for their **time, dedication, and their generosity of spirit**. Ruhama's volunteers are highly-skilled and also go through intensive training before they begin volunteering with us. Their commitment and work is empowering some of the most marginalised women in Ireland to overcome traumatic experiences and realize their potential in a safe and supportive environment.

Our volunteers work closely with our staff, and contributed **an incredible 1804 hours working with Ruhama in 2018, which is equivalent to 258 full working days**.

Our volunteers provide a wide variety of services, including:

- Outreach to women in on-street prostitution
- Counselling
- Art therapy
- Jewellery making
- Massage and other holistic therapies
- English language tuition
- Literacy and numeracy tuition
- IT classes
- Study support
- Third-level preparation
- Career-guidance counselling and coaching
- Building CVs and interview skills
- Communications and awareness-raising
- IT and administrative support

This is what some of our volunteers have to say about their experience:

"While some of the situations we come across can be difficult, I find it incredibly rewarding and have learned a lot through my experiences with the women we encounter, many of whom are among the most resilient individuals I have ever met. The most important thing for me is that each time I go out in the van, I am demonstrating solidarity with these women."

Michelle, Outreach Van Volunteer

"The women I've worked with are great. I find their resilience and facility to adapt to ever changing situations inspiring."

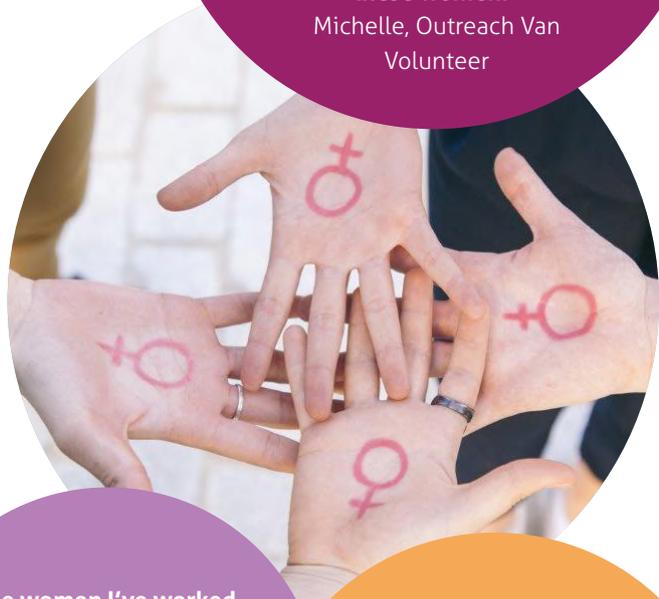
Jo, Volunteer Language Tutor

"I learn so much from the women, we learn from each other."

Laura, Jewellery-making Volunteer

"It has challenged me to go to the safety of my home at the end of a night, when I know women are out there in - literally and figuratively - stormy conditions with nowhere safe to go themselves."

Karen, Outreach Van Volunteer



Financial Summary

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

| Income and expenditure 2018 | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Annual funding | 2018 € | 2017 € |
| Anti-Human Trafficking Unit; Department of Justice and Equality | 325,000 | 310,000 |
| The Health Service Executive (HSE CHO6) | 118,824 | 118,824 |
| South Inner City Local Drugs & Alcohol Task Force (HSE CHO7) | 100,824 | 100,824 |
| European Social Fund/PEIL "Bridge to Work" project 2017-20 | 59,371 | 26,376 |
| Other grant income | 71,373 | 87,759 |
| Donations/fundraising | 93,264 | 97,132 |
| Total Income | 768,656 | 740,915 |
| Total expenditure | (756,721) | (723,555) |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) for the year | 11,935 | 17,360 |

| Balance sheet as at 31st December 2018 | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Fixed Assets | 2018 € | 2017 € |
| Tangible Assets | 5,691 | 11,382 |
| Debtors | 19,870 | 9,753 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 432,232 | 365,047 |
| Totals | 452,102 | 374,800 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | (229,202) | (164,050) |
| Net current assets | 222,900 | 210,750 |
| Total assets less current liabilities | 228,591 | 222,132 |
| Funds of the organisation | | |
| Restricted reserves | 5,534 | 11,010 |
| Unrestricted reserves | 223,057 | 211,122 |
| Total Funds | 228,591 | 222,132 |

Independent Auditor's Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Ruhama for the year ended 31 December 2018 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes. The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102. The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 December 2018 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to the going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you, whereby:

- The directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate: or
- The directors have not disclosed in the financial

statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the charity's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that in our opinion:

- the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

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 and the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the directors' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of our obligation under the Companies Act 2014 to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions specified by Sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made.

Responsibilities of director for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: [http://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/Auditing-standards/International-Standards-on-Auditing-for-use-in-Ire/International-Standards-on-Auditing-\(Ireland\)/ISA-700-\(Ireland\)](http://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/Auditing-standards/International-Standards-on-Auditing-for-use-in-Ire/International-Standards-on-Auditing-(Ireland)/ISA-700-(Ireland)). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Ian Lawlor

Date: 9th April 2019

for and on behalf of
JPA Brenson Lawlor Chartered Accountants
Statutory Audit Firm
Argyle Square
Morehampton Road
Donnybrook
Dublin 4
D04 W9W7

Our Financial Supporters

Statutory Funding

The majority of our funding in 2018 came from statutory sources. Over 70% of our funding came from the following state entities:

- The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the Department of Justice and Equality
- The Health Service Executive (HSE CH06)
- The South Inner City Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (HSE CH07)
- The European Social Fund (ESF) under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 'Bridge to Work' Project 2014-2020
- The Dormant Accounts Fund

We sourced the remainder of our 2018 funding through fundraising, donations and non-statutory grants. As always, we are grateful to everyone who supported us financially in 2018 as you all helped to make our vision and mission a reality.

Whether it is a one-off donation, financial support under a company's Corporate Social Responsibility mandate, or our core statutory grants, every donation is making a difference in the lives of the women we support. Finally, we want to thank all those who carried out fundraising activities to raise money for Ruhama in 2018. Your bake sales, quiz nights, marathons, sponsored silence, bridge nights, and all the other activities, are keeping our essential work going. We also wish to acknowledge the generosity of those who donate gifts and hampers for distribution to women at various times during the year.

We continue to be accountable for every cent that comes to Ruhama, and we operate as efficiently and effectively as we can to ensure that the benefit is felt by the women we support.

To find out more about how you can support Ruhama's work, including by making a donation, please log on to our website: www.ruhama.ie

Statutory Funders 2018:



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Combhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020
Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in your Future
European Social Fund



ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund

Commitment to Governance

In addition to ensuring high quality service delivery, Ruhama is always striving to ensure excellent governance and practice as a registered Charity.

Ruhama:

- Has signed up to the Governance Code
- Has fulfilled all obligations under the Lobbying Act 2015 and to the Charities Regulatory Authority
- Has developed a clear code of governance for the Ruhama Board of Directors to ensure best practice in this regard
- Maintains transparency and full reporting to our many diverse grant makers.

Remuneration of Ruhama Staff

Financial reporting at present requires that we list the number of staff members who earn over €60,000 per annum in our accounts. At present one salary exceeds this amount in Ruhama, however; we note all salary levels below in the interests of transparency.

During 2018 Ruhama had a paid staff team of 14 employees, four of whom were employed full-time. Our whole-time equivalent was 10.7. Salary breakdown in 2018 (*based on full-time salary rates which are pro-rated to each employee's contract hours) was as follows:

Salary per annum:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| between €60,000-€70,000 | 1 person* |
| between €50,000-€60,000 | 1 person* |
| between €40,000-€50,000 | 7 persons* |
| between €30,000-€40,000 | 3 persons* |
| between €20,000-€30,000 | 2 persons* |

As a service organisation, our staff team delivers the vast bulk of our output through their dedicated, professional support and advocacy for women affected by prostitution and trafficking, and this is where we concentrate our resources. Nearly all our staff in 2018 operated in a frontline capacity. Nine staff worked primarily frontline in their focus (66% of total staff hours), one staff member engaged in both frontline and other work (9%) and four staff focused primarily on administration/finance/fundraising/advocacy/training and/or communications (25%). We have the support of a further three team members who assist with our administration, including reception, and are with Ruhama through the state Community Employment scheme.

We also have a trained and supervised volunteer team of between 40-45 people at any one time, without whom we could not offer the broad range of 'wrap-around services' to women. Our volunteer team ensure that we can offer unique, flexible, responsive, comprehensive support and outreach services in a holistic, but also extremely cost-effective, way.







Follow us. Get in touch.

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