


Launch of the 2018 Ruhama Annual Report



In April, we launched our **2018 Annual report**, detailing the support we provided to **313 individuals in prostitution** last year – including **122 victims of sex trafficking**. The vast majority of those who sought support were women, reflecting the **highly gendered nature** of the sex trade. The report chronicles **3 decades** of our frontline work with some of Ireland's most vulnerable and marginalised women. It also delves into 'The Truth About Prostitution', based on international research and our direct frontline work with those affected.

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Pride Celebrations in full swing at the Ruhama offices

Happy Pride 2019 from the whole Ruhama team! We marked the important occasion by dressing up, sharing our support online and joining the celebrations taking place in Dublin city.

Ruhama supports a small number of people from the **LGBT community** in Ireland every year. These services are **free** and **confidential** and we're here to help in whatever way we can. Text **REACH** for free to **50100** for a support **call back** or pop us an email on support@ruhama.ie to talk to someone.



DONATE HERE



GET SUPPORT



VOLUNTEER



Bye Bye to Sarah: Best of luck at Women's Aid 🙌



After 9 years as CEO, we're very sad to see the brilliant **Sarah Benson** moving on from Ruhama. However we're delighted that she'll stay working in the realm of ending violence against women, in her new role as **Executive Director of Women's Aid**.

Big thanks to Sarah for being a **constant and steadfast advocate** for women affected by prostitution. Sarah helped our organisation grow, evolve and get better at what we do. She was instrumental in lobbying for **progressive legislative change** in Ireland to prevent commercial sexual exploitation. We wish Sarah the best in her next adventure bringing her expertise to Women's Aid.

Spread the word: We're recruiting for Volunteers!

Our Volunteer Recruitment for 2019 is now open!

Help improve the lives of women affected by prostitution by volunteering on our **Outreach Van**, which supports women in street prostitution or for our **Education and Development** or **Counselling services**. Find out more and how to apply by emailing our Volunteer Manager Neasa on volunteer@ruham.ie.



Thanks to Ellen for her incredible work over the years



Our wonderful **Ellen** left the Ruhama team recently after a number of years as **Housing & Welfare Officer**, fighting to access **safe and suitable accommodation** for women affected by sex trafficking and prostitution.

We gave her a big send off with a pot luck lunch and a team hangout. We wish Ellen all the best in the future and say a big thank you to her, for her **incredible and invaluable work** over the years, assisting women nationwide.

Welcoming Barbara Condon: New CEO of Ruhama

We're delighted to announce that **Barbara Condon** has joined Ruhama as our **new Chief Executive Officer**. Barbara has over **20 years of experience** in healthcare provision with specific expertise in **rehabilitation, social justice, addiction** and **mental health**. Under Barbara's leadership as CEO of the **Finglas Addiction Support Team (FAST)**, the service has become a rehabilitation centre of excellence, innovation and quality in the field of substance misuse. Barbara also brings 15 years of experience at senior management level to our team. We are **very excited** about this new chapter and are looking forward to Ruhama evolving and growing further under Barbara's leadership into the future.



Ruhama attend April CAP congress in Germany



In April, Ruhama attended CAP International's 3rd World Congress in Mainz, Germany entitled '**Prostitution: Neither Sex Nor Work**'. The congress kicked off with a **survivor street demonstration** in Mainz, calling for an end to commercial sexual exploitation. We heard from many survivors, organisations, health professionals and academics during the congress, ending with an **open declarative letter** to Chancellor Angela Merkel and the German government, to address the violence of prostitution in Germany.

Brussels meeting to tackle trafficking in Europe

Ruhama attended a June meeting of the EU Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human Beings in Brussels. Hosted by EU's Anti-Trafficking coordinator, Myria Vassiliou, it brought together **organisations working on trafficking issues**, including Europol, UNODC, Eurojust and the Fundamental Rights Agency. **Serious concerns** were raised about the numbers of women and girls being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the EU. A core takeaway was that EU Member States must focus on **detering demand** and **bringing exploiters to justice**. We also paid a visit to our Brussels Call allies at the European Women's Lobby while over there!



Finally I Can Be Me

Astrid's Story

Ruhama offered support to Astrid* by way of casework, counselling and education and development assistance. This is her story.

I am a lesbian woman. That is something that I don't say too often and only my closest friends know I am gay. In May 2015, Ireland became the first country to legalise same sex marriage through a referendum. You might wonder then why in a country like Ireland, where people actually voted for equal marriage, I still struggle to say the words 'I am a lesbian woman'.

I grew up in a country where it was illegal for me to express my sexuality. Before the vote in Ireland, my country's president even attempted to bring in a law that would see gay people put to death. Sometimes I am angry when I think about my country but mostly I am sad. I worry about people like me, who are still suffering there.

I had a difficult childhood. I was sexually abused by my uncle and his two sons when I was a child, when I had to live with them. My parents didn't care or notice. I was scared and alone. Now, as time has moved on, I think; what kind of people think it's ok to allow grown men to abuse a girl but refuse to accept same sex love? I was only able to escape the situation when I became an adult. I accepted the help of a woman but she said I had to pay her the money back by going into prostitution. I was in prostitution for nearly 4 years.

During that time I continued to suppress my sexuality when men paid for sex with me. I was relieved to escape my uncle's home but the brutality of day to day life in prostitution haunts me to this day. I still struggle to talk about it. After I paid her back I came to Ireland and even though I knew I was gay, I had never been with a woman properly. I still couldn't tell anyone that I was lesbian here, because the people I lived with would condemn me.

"Now, as time has moved on, I think; what kind of people think it's ok to allow grown men to abuse a girl but refuse to accept same sex love?"

Ruhama were part of my journey to finding myself and moving past the sexual abuse I had suffered and the trauma of prostitution as an adult. Their counselling, courses and casework all provided me with a safe space to explore who I was and develop as a person. Once I became more confident, I wanted to explore my sexuality and I started dating. I am happy to report that I have had some embarrassing dating experiences but also some great ones! I have also made lots of friends and I am enjoying being me.

*Details have been changed to protect confidentiality.



Piloting The Coffee Academy

Bridge to Work
Employment Programme



Helping women learn hospitality skills and access
work opportunities in a supportive environment

The Growth of Cafe Culture in Ireland

Walk around Dublin and you cannot help but observe the phenomenal growth of '**cafe culture**' in Dublin and Ireland. Despite our love of tea, research shows that a third of Irish consumers buy a coffee outside of the home at least once per day. The growing popularity of the café culture has resulted in a **strong demand** for skilled Baristas and cafe staff.

To tap into this growing trend, Ruhama have developed an exciting new initiative called '**The Coffee Academy**'.



What is the Coffee Academy?

It's a specialised work experience programme run under the wider Bridge To Work Employment Programme. It comprises of five key elements:

01

Barista Training

Making an espresso, steaming milk, pulling shots, temperature and consistency

02

Online Training

Online Training: Focusing on HACCP 1 + 2 and Allergens

03

Work Placement

Six weeks, 10 hours per week. The participant will learn skills in Customer Service, Teamwork, Till Operations, Serving Coffee and Catering, Safety Procedures and Cleaning

04

Ongoing Support

From the Bridge To Work coordinator and employer

05

Employment

Participants will work with the Bridge to Work programme coordinator to secure employment

Our Key Programme Aims:

- ✓ To create a bespoke **pathway into employment** within the hospitality sector
- ✓ To **break down existing barriers** to employment e.g. a woman's low level of confidence
- ✓ To facilitate women **secure work experience** in a safe supportive environment

Support for the participants:

- ✓ The **programme coordinator** works closely with participants throughout the Academy
- ✓ Weekly **support meetings and phone calls** with the coordinator
- ✓ We provide **financial support** to cover travel and subsistence
- ✓ Support from coordinator after the Academy to **secure employment**: including CV preparation, job application and interview support

Find out more
about the
programme on
elaine@bridgetowork.ie or
086 045 3683

Piloting The Coffee Academy and improving

The Coffee Academy was designed based on feedback from Dublin's coffee community and launched as a pilot programme initially with four participants and four employers. The programme coordinator met with cafes to explain the concept and how they could facilitate work experience for participants. Employers rotated participants on a weekly basis to train them in different aspects of hospitality, communicated with the programme coordinator and gave feedback and if appropriate – provided a reference at the end of the placement. We are committed to continually improving this model with feedback from participants, employers and the wider community.





Women's Mini Marathon 2019: Well done everyone

Team Ruhama crossed the finish line in June! Well done to Amanda, Meredith, Neasa, Kay, Trish and Poliana who all ran this year's **VHI Women's Mini Marathon** for Ruhama.

Big **thanks to all** who supported, donated and joined in our efforts online – we truly appreciate it.

Thanks to Newpark School for no uniform day in aid of Ruhama

Big thanks to the the students in Ms. Mackey's 3rd year CSPE Class at **Newpark School** who raised a sum of money in aid of Ruhama through a **non-uniform day** in May. Your support in helping improve women's lives is so appreciated.

Shoutout to thank the Justice & Peace Group for recent donations

A big thanks to the **Johnstown Justice and Peace Group**, which raised an incredible €2,000 for Ruhama as part of this year's Women's Mini Marathon. Thanks to Geraldine, Olivia and everyone in Johnstown for their continued support.

Paypal Gives: Ruhama is chosen as recipient charity

Paypal has named Ruhama as a chosen charity for its '**Paypal Gives**' programme. We are so grateful to the teams in Ballycoolin and Dundalk for their support for our **Education and Development Programme** and look forward to working with them throughout the year.

TAKE ACTION

DONATE

United for a world free from sexual exploitation!

3RD WORLD CONGRESS AGAINST THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

3rd World Congress against the sexual exploitation of women and girls



Find out more at www.capworldcongress.org

After Paris (2014) and New-Delhi (2017), CAP international and its 27 member organisations from 22 countries will hold their 3rd World Congress against the sexual exploitation of women and girls in Mainz.

This Congress is hosted by SOLWODI, German member organisation of CAP intl, Armut und Gesundheit e.V., and organised with the support and participation of the whole abolitionist movement in Germany.

The Congress will be opened by a Survivors' Day on the 2nd of April in the afternoon. An extraordinary group of prostitution survivors from Germany and all over the world will call on German's authorities to fully revisit their harmful public policies on prostitution. An international public conference will then gather, on the 3rd and 4th, 300 participants and 40 speakers from 30 countries, including:

- Survivors of prostitution and trafficking,
- Representatives of domestic, regional and international abolitionist NGOs
- Renowned academics and journalists
- Ministers and Members of Parliaments
- Representatives of Intergovernmental organisations

This public conference will address the realities of prostitution and sexual exploitation in the world, their severe impact on health, and their consequences on sexual violence and gender inequalities. It will also highlight the extremely preoccupying situation in Germany, the "brothel of Europe". With this World Congress, the organizers aim to raise awareness and empathy in order to break the isolation, indifference, exploitation and discrimination faced by hundred of thousands victims of prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

International and German NGOs will formulate together concrete recommendations to put an end to the exceptionally high level of impunity enjoyed by sexual exploiters and abusers and to create the conditions for prostitution and exploitation-free societies.

Tags: [slider](#)

NEWS

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Mar

CSW62 SIDE EVENT: PRESENTING CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERING SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT SEX TRAFFICKING AND OTHER FORMS OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS - USA

The global prevalence, and highly gendered nature, of sex trafficking and related forms of sexual exploitation of women and girls, ...

30
May

LETTER FROM 85 NGOS CALLING ON ILO STANDARD SETTING COMMITTEE TO REFRAIN FROM USING LANGUAGE OF "SEX WORK" OR "SEX WORKERS" IN THE ILC CONCLUSIONS ON ENDING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK - Switzerland

The International Labour Conference took place in early June in Geneva, Switzerland. Within this context, there were developments in the ongoing ...

2
Apr

3RD WORLD CONGRESS AGAINST THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS - France

Find out more at www.capworldcongress.org
After Paris (2014) and New-Delhi (2017), CAP international and its 27 member organisations from 22 countries ...

Newsletter

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