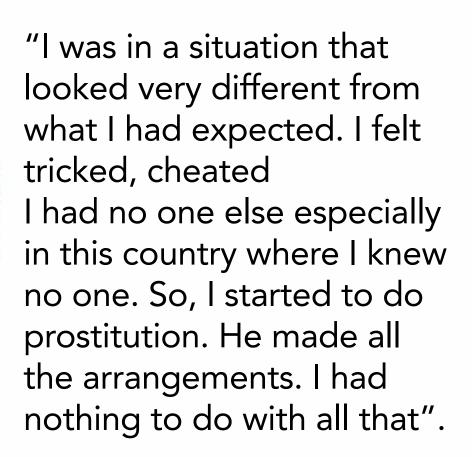


# Annual Report 2021



\*loana's Story – page 9

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## **Our Vision**

Ruhama's vision is a world free of sexual exploitation of women, where all women's lives are valued.

## **Our Mission**

Ruhama's mission is to support and empower women impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking by providing safe, accessible, psychological, and practical assistance to co-create opportunities to enhance their lives. Ruhama raises public awareness and advocates to influence policy that will support and protect women.

## **Our Values**

**Dignity:** We create a respectful, caring, and confidential environment where our staff, volunteers and service users are valued.

**Integrity:** We demonstrate integrity, accountability and transparency in our practices, organisational systems, and structures.

Collaboration: We work in partnership and collaborate to achieve our mission.

Diversity: We strive for inclusivity and gender-equality in an environment that respects difference.

**Quality:** We are committed to quality through evidence-based practice, innovation, and continuous improvement of our services.

# **Chair Foreword**



2021 represents the second year of the international coronavirus pandemic with it's so very significant impact on every aspect of our general way of life.

Despite this Ruhama staff through their resilience, commitment and innovation successfully engaged with nearly 400 women, representing a 20% increase in comparison to 2020. Service provision expansion was seen with our Counselling and Trauma Therapy and Education and Development services. With the Bridge to Work programme supporting 40 women in terms of job

coaching and assistance in commencing or maintaining employment.

In line with strategic priorities identified in 2021 Ruhama has:

- Launched 'Get the Full Picture' campaign telling the personal stories of those impacted by human trafficking.
- Formed a Service User Engagement Group directly involving service users in the design of services.
- Providing training on prostitution and sex trafficking to 600 participants, enabling them to have necessary tools to identify and signpost potential victims of sexual exploitation.
- Become fully compliant with the Charities Regulatory governance code.
- Moved to new premises which has enabled generally more appropriate accommodation for attending service users and importantly capacity for expansion and growth.

Activity increases identified have demonstrated that the demand for sexual services persists and as such vulnerable women continue to be under significant threat and danger.

I would like to express my thanks to staff and volunteers for their exceptional dedication in providing services to some of the most marginalised women in society.

I would also like to express my thanks to all those who supported Ruhama either as funders, donors or strategic partners.

IAN CARTER CHAIRPERSON

# **CEO Foreword**



Twelve months ago, we were adjusting how we worked and altering our priorities as the COVID 19 pandemic swept across the globe. We knew we faced unprecedented uncertainty as the virus continued to hit. We also knew we had a resilient team that would help us navigate that uncertainty. The team has delivered an outstanding performance given all the challenges of COVID-19.

In 2021, we began to embed our model of practice and trauma informed approach to ensure integrated pathways for women accessing Ruhama. We increased our statutory funding from the Department of Justice over 2021 which allowed us to expand and develop trauma therapy, the education and development programme and run a human trafficking awareness campaign.

In 2021 we increased more individual support contacts by 21.5% from 2020. This was mainly due to our increased service provision across the teams, Casework, Trauma Therapy, Outreach, Education and Development, and increased visibility in the Midlands. We increased the number of groups on offer and set up new groups including an intercultural group, which is significant as the majority (85%) of women accessing Ruhama are migrant women spread across 56 nationalities.

We expanded and developed Assertive Outreach to provide outreach and inreach in addiction, homeless and direct provision services, to reach a very vulnerable and hidden cohort of women who are at risk and or experiencing sexual exploitation.

Ruhama continued working on both national and international levels to influence policy and legislation to protect and support women impacted by sexual exploitation. We ran 'Get the full picture campaign' and are partners in the civil society Beyond Exploitation campaign alongside the National Women's Council and the Immigrant Council of Ireland. Sexual exploitation and sexual violence continue to remain hidden and unspoken about within society hence, campaigns are critical to raise awareness and start this important conversation.

We are living in extraordinary and challenging times, as COVID is easing off and becoming more manageable across the world, another emergency has taken hold with the war in Ukraine. Despite the challenges, we are very excited about the year ahead. We have a wonderful new building which allows for the growth and expansion of Ruhama. We are one of the chosen charities for the Lord Mayor's Charity Ball 2022. We are partners with the Sexual Exploitation Research Programme (SERP) in research on exiting pathways (the first of its kind in Ireland). We will be rolling out our new peer mentoring programme and responding to the Ukraine emergency through training and support to work with those at risk of sexual exploitation.

Ruhama would not exist without our dedicated and committed staff who go above and beyond for our service users. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the staff, volunteers, Board trustees, funders, partners, and supporters who contribute directly and indirectly to the important work of Ruhama. Finally, I wish to acknowledge our service users whose strength and resilience continues to motivate and inspire us to reach greater heights.

#### BARBARA CONDON CEO

# **Executive Summary**

COVID 19 tested us all last year, but we surpassed even our own expectations of what we are capable of. Our collective efforts to support women impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking was our top priority in 2021. Thanks to the resilience and commitment of our staff, service provision remained constant and even expanded during this uniquely challenging time.

Ruhama engaged with 369 (174 new) women over the year, an increase of 21.5% from the previous year. 136 of them were victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. 2021 clearly showed that despite public health restrictions, the demand for sexual services persisted – and with it, vulnerable women found themselves in danger.

Of the 369 women who engaged with the service over 2021, 323 women engaged with the casework team. We expanded our team with a new role, Assertive Outreach Caseworker to provide outreach and inreach in Addiction, Homeless and Direct Provision services.

The ongoing development and expansion of our counselling and trauma therapy service was a key strategic priority for 2021. 69 service users accessed this service representing an increase of 68% from 2020.

205 service users participated with our education and development team an increase of 15% from the previous year. In 2021 we substantially increased our group work through our Health & Wellbeing programme and introduced a new intercultural group.

The Bridge to Work programme supported 40 women in 2021 with job coaching, assistance in commencing employment and supporting women to maintain employment.

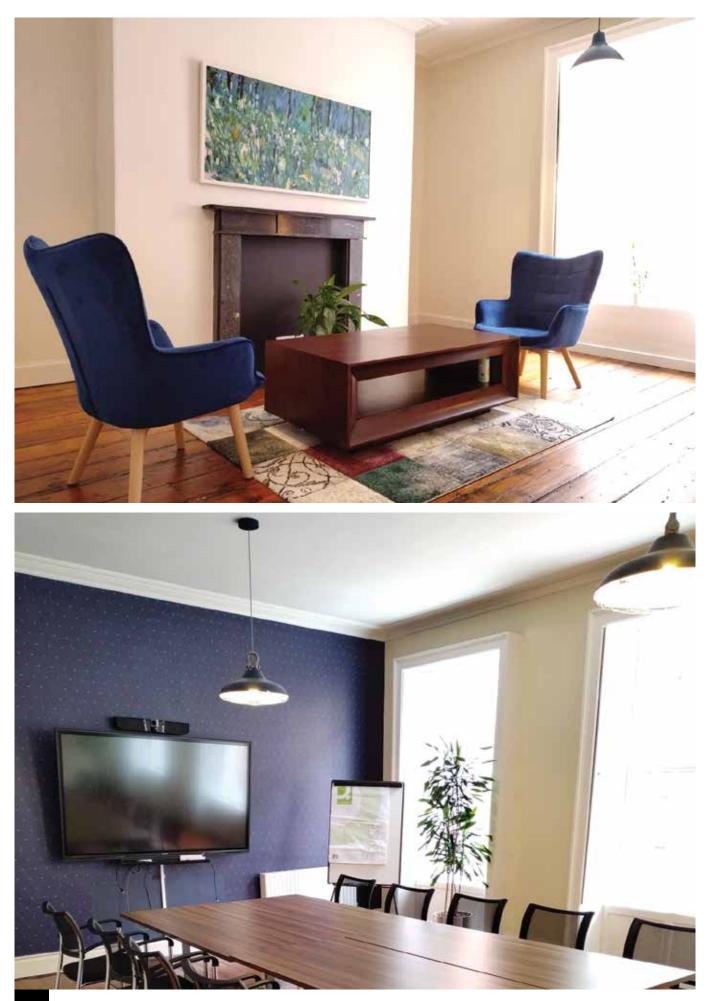
In 2021 Ruhama formed a service user engagement group. The aim of the group is to have service users directly involved in the development and improvement of services to ensure wide participation across the organisation from women with lived experience and expertise.

Ruhama successfully launched 'Get the Full Picture' campaign to raise awareness of the prevalence of human trafficking throughout Ireland and told the stories of those impacted by it.

Training on prostitution and sex trafficking reached 600 participants in 2021. Training was delivered to Gardaí, schools, social care students, domestic violence services, addiction services, homeless services, direct provision staff and residential care staff.

In 2021 Ruhama became fully compliant with the Charities Regulator Governance Code.

Ruhama's move to a new premises on Castle Street, Dublin 2 in December ensured the ongoing growth and expansion of Ruhama.



# 2021 Human Impact

15% Increase in Education & Development

**21.5%** overall increase in 1-1support

68% increase in Counselling & Trauma Therapy

Victims of Trafficking 28 New to Service

**369** Women

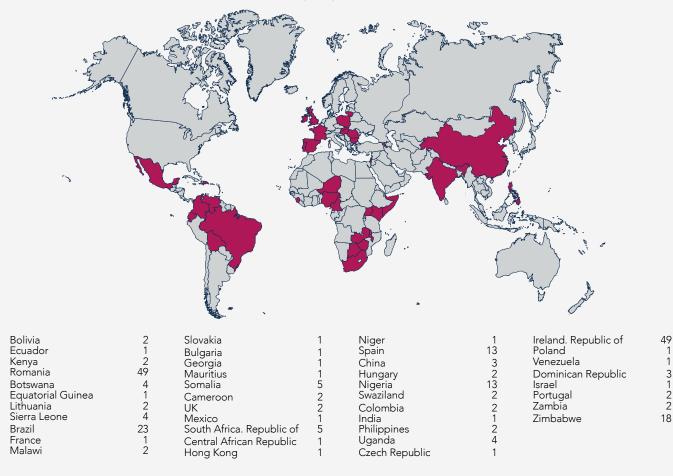
56 Nationalities 136

Women in Prostitution **144** New to Service

233







# Women in Prostitution Engaged with Ruhama

# Victims of Human Trafficking Engaged with Ruhama



# **Ioana's Story**

My name is Ioana, and I am from Romania. I was brought up in an orphanage, I struggled there. Life was tough but I survived.

I finished school and got a job and went to live with my boyfriend Andrei. We had known each other a long time. The next year, our daughter Ana was born. Andrei left to get a job in Italy and met another woman and left me.

I became depressed. Life was not easy. I was working and trying to make the best wage I could to bring up my daughter on my own.

Some months later, I got to know a man called Stefan. He said that he had friends in Ireland. He said he could get me a job as a cleaner in a hotel if I wanted. I thought that this might be a way to improve my life. I was worried about bringing my daughter, but Stefan offered to help. He said I could leave her with his mother, Elena, I was sad to leave my daughter, but I was happy that she was with Elena who was always kind to me.

I really liked Stefan and was very grateful to him. I thought he was being a good support helping to get me a good job. No one had ever helped me to do anything before.

We travelled to Ireland together. It was my first time in

another country, I didn't know any English and I was nervous

arriving in a new place.

When we arrived, Stefan brought me to a house, in Dublin city, I think. After a few days, I started to ask about the cleaning job he had promised, Stefan avoided talking about. He just kept saying that it would be ok.

A few days later, Stefan came to me suggesting that I could

have sex with men I argued with him and tried to convince

him to look for another job for me. But he said that I didn't

have a choice. I didn't speak the language and to remember

that I had to earn money if I was to have a roof over my

head and pay money for my child. He sounded so angry

with me. I was afraid.

He would tell me that it would not be for long, that he loved me and would promise that we would save money and build a house together. He would convince me that we were together in this situation.

I was confused and started to wonder if I had done the right thing to leave my country and my daughter. I was in a situation that looked very different from what I had expected. I felt tricked, cheated I had no one else especially in this country where I knew no one. So, I started to do prostitution. He made all the arrangements. I had nothing to do with all that. Men started coming to the house and I had to have sex with them. So many men. Never stopping. At all times of the day and the night. Sometimes I had to meet them in other places. I don't even want to talk about what that was like. I want to blot it from my mind and my life. I feel ashamed about what I did, what I had to do in that situation and before all that, I had thought the orphanage was a nightmare.

In all of it, I was telling myself that it was a way I could send money home for my daughter. She would benefit in the end. I would think about what I could do for her; how I could give her a better life than I had had.

Stefan promised to sort out the payments home that his mother needed more money to take care of my child. What I was earning was not enough. I felt bad about that. So, he wanted me to work more. I refused. But he got violent verbally and physically. So, I worked more. But he took more as well, I was left with almost nothing just to buy the basics to live.

Over the months, we were in many places –different towns

and different houses and apartments. I would wake up and

he would tell me to pack up and be ready quickly. I was never

sure where I was or where I was going next.

Stefan is still watching me all the time. If I am out, he phones me all the time to check up where I am and what I am doing. He checks my phone when I come in, he listens if I try to make or take a call. At night, he takes my phone anyway.

If I do anything wrong, he threatens to beat me. Even worse,

he says that he will tell his mother to bring my daughter to

the orphanage and leave her there. That she would be better

off without me; that I am a bad mother. That terrifies me.

So I am still here.

# Strategic Priority 1: Develop and deliver a diverse range of

# services to women impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking

## Casework

In 2021, 323 women engaged with Ruhama's casework team, based in Dublin and the Midlands.

Ruhama offers support to women using a case management model and a trauma informed approach. Casework includes one-to-one emotional support, advocacy, accompaniment, and referral depending on the development of individual care plans. Care plans are based on each woman's own self-identified priorities. Exploring the resulting psychological and physical harm of prostitution is a key component of this support. Another important element is support negotiating the justice system. Case work also involves provision of interpretation services, support through the legal and immigration processes, assistance accessing sexual health, maternity, dental and addiction support, and general health services.

Throughout 2021, the Ruhama casework team conducted 1,156 meetings with women across a variety of areas. The Ruhama casework team worked with service users to co-create goals around Physical, Mental & Sexual Health, Addiction, Family, Relationships, Self-Care, Legal, Selling Sex, Human Trafficking, Financial and Accommodation.

During 2021 Covid-19 continued to present challenges for our service users that necessitated additional emergency supports. Ruhama responded by providing the delivery of emergency care packs. These care packs were funded by the Department of Justice. We delivered 99 emergency packs across 17 counties (consisting of food vouchers, essential supplies, and phones).

"A big thank you to Ruhama and all the workers for your support and encouragement. I came to Ruhama in 2019 when I lost hope and at the point of committing suicide but with the help of Ruhama, my Caseworker, and Counsellor I am getting better."

(Ruhama Service User)



## Ruhama in the Midlands

Ruhama has a base in the Midlands in partnership with Merchants Quay Ireland and the HSE. Due to Covid-19 it was difficult to develop the service, but in 2021 there was an increase in women accessing the service in the Midlands. Support included 1-1 casework, advocacy and training to Gardai and other front-line professionals in rural areas.

# Outreach

In 2021, two Ruhama caseworkers provided our street outreach services via the outreach van. The outreach van has been in operation since our inception and provides emotional support, sexual health packs and onward referrals to Ruhama and other relevant services. Several additions were added to the outreach route in 2021 including the Phoenix Park, Finglas, and Ballymount.

Sexual exploitation is hidden, even more so where someone has an addiction, resulting in a very hard to reach cohort. In order to reach a vulnerable, diverse and hidden population who are unlikely to visit Ruhama, our Assertive Outreach Caseworker worked with addiction and homeless services in inner city Dublin. Engagements increased collaboration and relationship building, referral pathways, and support to women who required our services.

66 X Interagency/outreach and Inreach meetings were conducted (Chrysalis,

Safety Net, Merchant's Quay Ireland, FEED, De Paul, Community Response, Kevin St. Garda station C, Ana Liffey, Cedar House, Haven House Cross Care, Arc, SOILSE, Little Britain St. Pavee Point, Coolmine, Spire hostel, Tallaght Drug & Alcohol Task Force, North East Drugs & Alcohol Task Force, NOVAS, Spirasi).



# **Counselling & Trauma Therapy**

69 service users availed of 753 hours of counselling and psychotherapy. All victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation have been subjected to significant human rights violations and experienced multiple traumas. However, there may be less certainty around women in prostitution because the debate on whether they 'choose' to sell sex seeks to negate their experiences within the sex trade as traumatic, preferring to paint a picture or myth for the public of the high-class escort.

Drawing on over 30 years direct experience and international research, we can state clearly that women impacted by prostitution are traumatised. Some by the inherent harm of the sex trade and some by early adverse childhood experiences, such as sexual and physical abuse and abject poverty.

Sex buyers think women want to make big money as escorts, the reality is poverty is a key driver into the sex trade and a key factor that prevents women from exiting.

We believe that all trauma survivors should be able to access, and remain engaged with services where they feel safe, supported, and encouraged to heal and grow. Ruhama's counselling team consists of therapists from diverse backgrounds and trainings to enable delivery of a specialised trauma informed counselling service for women impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking. Using the CORE-OM feedback and evaluation tool, an overall decrease in anxiety, depression, and a reduction in the risk of suicide was reported.

Ruhama's trauma approach is developed from Janet (1886) and Herman (1992) phased approach to trauma treatment. Trauma Therapy is an essential element of healing and recovery from sexual violence. This approach ensures that we maximise the potential for positive outcomes and enhance the quality-of-service user's lives. Counselling in Ruhama does not operate in isolation and is part of the service user wrap-around care plan for all service users.



"When I started, I was anxious all the time, I could not see any good thing in my life or any good thing in me. Now I see myself as a human again. Now I am relaxed, I sleep again, and I see opportunities".

(Ruhama Service User)

# **Education & Development**

The aim of the Education service is to facilitate services users' learning and development pathways. We believe in the transformative power of education, both at the personal and societal levels. We offer a range of opportunities to help participants set and achieve their own unique learning goals.

Education opportunities on offer included:

- Progression Planning (including Guidance Counselling): working with service users to develop their education pathway and to review it as they moved forward.
- 1-to-1 Service: a personalised education service: where service users work with a tutor, on a one-toone basis, on specific skills.
- **Group programmes:** a range of in-house programmes, some focusing on health and wellbeing, others on skills and career development.

We worked with 205 service users from all parts of Ireland: participants of all ages, nationalities (from over 40 countries) and educational backgrounds.

Ruhama volunteers contributed 1,330 support hours to the education and development programme.

Highlights included:

- A new beginners ICT course in partnership with Codec.
- Education information Evenings: CAO options and applications, and further education courses.
- **Ongoing online delivery of services:** This facilitates the participation of women in any geographical location often during the evening time.
- Parents Under Pressure Programme, run in partnership with Coolmine Therapeutic Community: This parenting programme is specifically developed for families who are facing multiple adversities including parental substance abuse, mental health problems, family conflict and financial stress.
- **Parenting and Creativity Programme** co-produced by a service user and volunteer to incorporate creativity through the forum arts to connect and enhance relationships with parents and children.
- Social Media: Development of a Social Media Module to run in 2022.



We supported women in practical ways to progress in accredited education. Our guidance counsellor worked with service users to access grants, scholarships, and other financial supports. Ruhama was able to offer contributions to college registrations/fees and equipment for courses.

In 2021, there were positive outcomes for service users in relation to accredited education. 62% of Education and Development service users participated in QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland)-certified courses.

Feedback from our WRAP programme participants

# "It lifted my spirit to never give up."

"Thanks so much for this wellness course

because it is a life changer for me."

"It showed me that there are a lot

of things I can do to keep myself

well; that I have some power and

control over this."

"Having time to think and talk about wellbeing every week was helpful. It was a relaxing class where I felt comfortable to share or not to share."

Group	Attendees	Outcomes
Capacitar & Trauma Healing	31	<ul> <li>Gained tools to keep well and heal from trauma</li> <li>Learnt how to practise self-care techniques</li> <li>Experienced increased sense of wellbeing</li> </ul>
STEPS	27	<ul> <li>Gained insight about what blocks them from reaching their potential</li> <li>Practised effective goal-seeing</li> <li>Engaged in more positive self-talk</li> <li>Improved self-belief /self-efficacy</li> </ul>
Self-Care Group	39	<ul> <li>Helped restore contact with others</li> <li>Increased self-care techniques</li> <li>Improved mental health &amp; well- being</li> </ul>
Shaping Your Future	24	<ul> <li>Improved job-seeking skills</li> <li>Explored education, volunteering and career opportunities in Ireland today</li> <li>Became more confident, hopeful, motivated about moving forward</li> </ul>
WRAP	25	<ul> <li>Developed their own wellness plan as a personalised tool to achieve personal wellness goals</li> <li>Identified mental health triggers and how to overcome them</li> <li>Increased control of their physical and mental wellbeing</li> </ul>
Parents Under Pressure & Parenting & Creativity classes	18	<ul> <li>Developed positive &amp; secure relationships with their children</li> <li>Deepened understanding of the value of creativity for parents &amp; children</li> <li>Participated in the first peer led creativity group of parents</li> </ul>
Codec - ICT Basic Skills, ICT Advanced Skills, Coding	24	<ul> <li>Gained basic knowledge of coding for web design</li> <li>Developed confidence &amp; interest using ICT</li> <li>Enhanced basic skills in ICT (internet use, word processing)</li> <li>Identified career opportunities in ICT</li> </ul>
Succeed At College Workshop	20	• Explored skills, practices and positive attitudes to succeed at college
Education Information Workshops	107	<ul> <li>Gained support/increased motivation in a community of peers</li> <li>Received information and guidance on education progression pathways: Further &amp; Higher Education System, College Applications, Funding Optio</li> </ul>
Intercultural Group	29	<ul> <li>Space for service users to share their culture and learn about the different cultures.</li> <li>Participation in samba drumming along with producing pieces of art and storytelling.</li> </ul>

# Bridge to Work Programme

The Bridge to Work Programme engaged with 40 service users in 2021. 70% of the support provided by the Bridge to Work programme was working one-to-one with service users to build confidence, improve communication skills, and increase their understanding of Irish culture and the workplace.

The complexity of leaving prostitution cannot be overstated. A lot of time in the bridge to work programme is preparing women to be job-ready.

Employment and employment protection within the Irish workforce is a new landscape for many of our service users. We also provided funding for training for service users to upskill which enabled them to move within their company or change jobs for improved pay and conditions. We designed and developed online workshops which included interview skills and how to thrive in the workplace. These courses were designed based on skills and knowledge gaps identified.

26 women were supported to gain employment. We developed partnerships with employers which led to 4 paid internships. These paid internships provided valuable work experience. One intern secured a full-time permanent job.

"The programme helped me a lot to search for jobs and update my CV. I learned that I had day-to-day transferable skills. That was amazing. It was a big challenge for me because I didn't know where to start - we started from scratch. Ruhama taught me how to prepare for interviews and deal with stress. Now, I can be confident enough during an interview. My internship was one of the best experiences of my life. I discovered myself in ways that I didn't expect."

#### **Bridge to Work Intern Participant**

## Training

Ruhama delivered training to more than 600 participants in 2021 about sex trafficking and Prostitution. Ruhama carried out training to front-line workers on Trafficking. This training is run over 2 modules. The aim of this training was to increase awareness of the signs and indicators of Sex Trafficking and how to respond in a trauma informed way.

Training was tailored to suit the different cohorts of attendees. Training was delivered to staff of the following entities: Sligo Rape Crisis Centre, Mayo Rape Crisis Centre, DePaul, Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre, Focus Ireland, Merchants Quay Ireland, An Garda Siochána, MASI, King Thomond Hotel Reception Centre, TUSLA, ISPCC, Focus Ireland, DORAS, Daffodil Care, Crosscare, Chrysalis Drug Project, SONAS, Teach Tearmainn Housing Association, ODVSS, Wexford Rape Crisis Centre, Cope Galway Domestic Abuse Service, Coolmine Therapeutic Community, Wexford Women's Refuge, Laois Domestic Abuse, Blanchardstown East Community Mental Health Team, Bray Women's Refuge, Meath Women's Refuge, Saoirse Domestic Violence Services, Spirasi, Irish Family Planning Association, Ana Liffey Drug Project, Wexford Women's Refuge, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Dublin Simon Community.

Training was also delivered to secondary schools, further education colleges and technological university students.

Participants reported positive outcomes from Ruhama training including:

- An increased understanding of prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland
- Feeling equipped to identify signs and indicators of sex trafficking
- A more in-depth understanding of trauma informed practice
- Raised awareness on the issue of working with women in recovery who have been impacted by sexual violence and exploitation
- Greater understanding of Ruhama's service and wider services available to victims of trafficking

Ruhama delivered 2 webinars during 2021 on supporting women in recovery who have been impacted by sexual violence and exploitation and the role of domestic abuse support services in supporting victims of sex trafficking in Ireland.

# **Service User Engagement**

## **Service User Involvement**

Service user involvement, put simply, is about making sure that the voices of people are heard; that they can shape and improve services they use, can influence policy, and bring about change.

People who use services are experts on how they should be developed and delivered. They have first-hand experience, know what they need, what works well and what does not. Ultimately, service user involvement is a litmus test of Ruhama's values in action: a key performance indicator of the organisation's commitment to its values of dignity, integrity, collaboration, diversity, and quality.

#### **Survivor Voice**

Ruhama service users are in the main so-called survivors: impacted by some form of sexual exploitation, with the loss of power and control that inevitably entails. But they are also strong, resilient women moving forward positively with their lives. An important part of the journey forward is the ability to use their survivor voice, when and how they wish, both within Ruhama as service users and beyond.

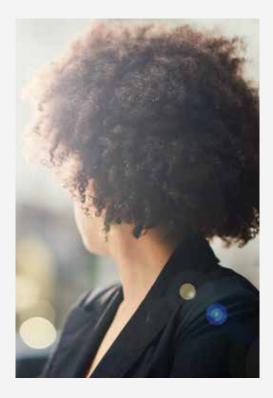
Ruhama strives to include survivor voice in a meaningful and ethical way to inform our organisational processes and our policy position on prostitution and sex trafficking. We value the expertise of survivors. By taking a trauma-informed approach and engaging with survivors, we enhance our service provision, reframe structures of power within our organisation and inform more effective policies and interventions at a broader societal level.

Survivors in Ruhama suggested a range of platforms be available to them so that their voices can be heard in different ways. Survivor voice plan of action includes podcasts, videos, case studies, peer support, service users delivering training and presentations and speaking at public engagements. We are developing a peer mentoring programme to help build capacity and train women to mentor and support their peers. It is important that the experience is positive, powerful, impactful; not tokenistic, re-traumatising or exploitative.

In 2021, service users participated in the following:

- Feedback on services: All service users were invited to feedback on all Ruhama services through a wide variety of mechanisms including focus groups and group evaluations.
- **Co-design & co-deliver services:** Service users worked with Ruhama staff to codesign and co-deliver services e.g., interculture group, shine group, parenting creative group. A large number also engaged in the consultation phase of Ruhama's planned peer mentoring programme.
- Collaborate with partners in service review & development: Service users collaborated in the consultation phase of a Mental Health Project led by the SICDATF (South Inner-City Drugs & Alcohol Task Force) Mental Health Project; a project ultimately aimed at improving service provision.

- Participate in research: Service users contributed to two important projects, namely INHeRE (INclusive and Holistic care for Refugee and migrant victims of sexual violence in Belgium, UK and Ireland) and Authentic Voices on Human Trafficking, a report by the National Rapporteur, IHREC (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission). Service users also attended an information session from SERP (Sexual Exploitation Research Project, UCD), in advance of the collaborative research project -Pathways to Exit - which will take place in 2022.
- **Contribute to campaigns:** Service users contributed to Get The Full Picture, Ruhama's autumn campaign to raise awareness of the prevalence of human trafficking in Ireland and the stories of women who have survived it.
- Engage in service user engagement group: Service users were directly involved in setting up the group and outlining key themes and areas of interest they wanted to focus on including designing service user charters of rights, social activities, and sexual health workshops.



"They told me I was going to work for them for 4 years to pay for my travelling, they had my passport, all my documents, all my identity so you have to work and pay it off. That was not what I was told in my country, I was told I would be working in a shop and I would have a place of my own to live and after a year I could get my girls but when I got here it was a whole different story."

Ruhama Service User

# Strategic Priority 2: Advocate and campaign to reduce

# the prevalence of prostitution and sex trafficking

Ruhama engages in advocacy and awareness raising activities at national, European, and international level to advance the strategic advocacy goal of the organisation. Ruhama believes that prostitution and sex trafficking is a form of gender-based violence and lobbies through multiple channels to have this enshrined in law and advocates for supports for victims of this type of violence.

#### National Advocacy

Ruhama is a unique voice at national level advocating for the rights and needs of victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Ruhama participates in multiple national forums including the Observatory on Violence Against Women, the National Human Trafficking Stakeholders Forum, the oversight committee for the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Mapping the Victims Journey subgroup as part of the Review of Protections for Vulnerable Witnesses in the Investigation and Prosecution of Sexual Offences (O'Malley). In addition, Ruhama provides briefings to Oireachtas committees, Ministers, and other public representatives on the needs of women impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking.

#### European and International Advocacy

Ruhama's advocacy work at European and international level is largely based on the process of sharing of information across jurisdictions to inform best practice in policy and frontline supports. Ruhama participates in numerous forums at this level including the European Women's Lobby, the EU Civil Society Platform, and the Fundamental Rights Platform. In addition, Ruhama provides international expertise on prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation and engages in lobbying activities at EU and UN level. Some key contributions to this area in 2021 include:

- Participation in the 3rd Round Evaluation process with Council of Europe GRETA colleagues, including providing expertise in human trafficking for sexual exploitation through written submissions and roundtables
- Provision of frontline and advocacy expertise to the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report in its assessment of Ireland
- Persistent lobbying efforts at EU level for the inclusion of prostitution as a specifically recognised form of violence against women in the upcoming EU Directive on Violence Against Women and Girls
- Provision of expertise to a number of international projects including developing best practice training to multiple stakeholders on Inclusive Holistic Care for Migrant victims of sexual violence (INHeRE) project. We also participated and spoke at TAIEX workshop on the implementation of the law prohibiting the consumption of prostitution (European Commission).



#### Beyond Exploitation Campaign

In addition, Ruhama has participated on a multi-agency basis in a number of other awareness raising campaigns – in particular, the Beyond Exploitation campaign. Beyond Exploitation is Ireland's civil society campaign for equality and freedom from sexual exploitation. It is led by National Women's Council, in partnership with Ruhama and the Immigrant Council of Ireland. The campaign supports the most vulnerable and silenced people in prostitution to have a voice, advocating for policies and measures that give all women a real choice not to be bought or sold for sex, and preventative measures to halt the exploitation of girls. Beyond Exploitation advocates for full, integrated supports and opportunities that allow all people in Ireland to choose not to enter prostitution because of poverty, migrant status, or discrimination, and that allow people to leave prostitution if that is their choice.

"After a very successful launch in 2021, the Beyond Exploitation campaign has worked closely and tirelessly with Ruhama its partner organisation, to highlight the ongoing issues connected to commercial sexual exploitation such as the need for statutory funded exit routes. The campaign is always informed by research and Ruhama contributes greatly to this body of evidence. Through our advocacy work together both politically and creating public awareness, Ruhama will continue to play a vital role in the Beyond Exploitation campaign achieving its objectives and goals".

Mia de Faoite, Beyond Exploitation Co-ordinator

## Get the Full Picture Campaign

In 2021, Ruhama ran the successful 'Get the Full Picture' campaign. It was an innovative campaign that was developed in collaboration with survivors of human trafficking. It aimed to highlight the prevalence of human trafficking for sexual exploitation throughout Ireland and told the stories of those who are impacted by it.

#### https://www.ruhama.ie/campaigns/getthe-full-picture-campaign/

The campaign focused on raising awareness of the issue by a series of: Outdoor advertising, radio ads and social media

#### National Radio Advertisements

https://www.ruhama.ie/wp-content/ uploads/Radio-Ad-1.mp3

https://www.ruhama.ie/wp-content/ uploads/Radio-Ad-2.mp3

#### Short Film

#### https://youtu.be/R\_Qaxv9YGqM

The process began with an in-depth survivor consultation between Ruhama service users, Ruhama frontline team members and two collaborative artists – Colm Mullen and Sinéad Dowling. This part of the campaign was centred on creating an authentic creative representation of the stories of women who had experienced human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Facilitated by the artists, Ruhama service users lent their voices and experiences to the development of a series of images and a powerful video on the topic of their experiences. Some of the key messages that arose from these consultations revolved around the prevalence of human trafficking happening all over Ireland, the importance for the public to understand that this is an Irish problem, the presence in their communities, and that it can happen to anyone. The Want less trafficking? Don't buy sex

Stop the stigma Break the silence Save a life

#getthefullpicture at www.ruhama.ie

Supported by USIPTU



final direct product of this collaboration was a series of images for exhibition and video based on the women's experiences that can be accessed on the Ruhama YouTube channel.

Ruhama ran national and regional radio advertisements based on the conversations held during the consultation. Additionally, Ruhama had a series of outdoor billboards in Dublin and Drogheda and hung a banner from Liberty Hall. The feedback in relation to this advertising was overwhelmingly positive and focused on the impact of the language used and the deeply empathetic message portrayed in it.

The campaign was launched in the Museum of Literature, Dublin on November 23rd by Lord Mayor of Dublin, Allison Gilliland. Attendees ranged across the political, NGO, law enforcement, survivor activist, and private partner spheres. The campaign launch received broad media coverage across print, radio and digital platforms and the engagement with Ruhama social media channels spiked significantly.

One of the key goals of the campaign was to educate the public about not only the prevalence of human trafficking in their communities, but also how to respond and report suspected human trafficking if encountered. To achieve this, a specific webpage was created on the Ruhama website outlining potential signs of human trafficking and outlining how to report. These signs and actions were also repeated by Ruhama representatives through various media channels in order to empower the Irish public to act in cases of suspected human trafficking.



# \*Marcia's Story

My name is Marcia.\* I was born in a large city in Latin America I have one son and I come from a family of simple, humble, hard-working people. I finished my studies at secondary school and went on to train and work as a hairdresser.

I was in a relationship with the father of my son from when I was at school. But six months after the baby was born, things got difficult, and we split up. From that time, I have been a single parent.

I am lucky to have a group of close friends I have known all my life. Through my work, I met lots more new people - including Fernanda who worked as a sales rep for a hair products company.

My life was fine, but ever since I was a little girl, my goal was to open a salon of my own. I was going to work hard to make that a reality. I wanted to make sure my son had a good education and a bright future. I also wanted to be able to support my parents as they got older.

I was saving but knew it would take a long time. Fernanda

reckoned I was right: it would definitely take years. I began to

wonder if there was a way to save more money faster.

Fernanda told me that she travelled to Europe for seasonal work. She said that if I was interested, she could probably put me in touch with the person who had helped her. That sounded like a great idea. If someone could put in a good word for me, that might help.

So, through Fernanda, I was put in touch with Ligia. We never met in person, but we talked a lot on the phone. Ligia sorted out all the travel arrangements and the accommodation. I travelled to Ireland on a tourist visa. It was the first time I had ever left my country, so I was happy that someone helped with the planning. I arranged that my sister would look after my son.

As soon as I landed in Dublin airport, a taxi driver took me to a town in what I now know as the midlands of Ireland. He left me at the door of the apartment building. I had already got a message that the key to the apartment was in the hallway, so I just went in and waited.

My next instruction was a total and terrible shock to me.

I was told over the phone that I had to do prostitution.

I could not believe it. I was horrified, disgusted. Never in my

life had I ever thought of doing that. Never. That was not

me. It never would be. It was not the way I was raised.

I instantly refused to do it.

But Ligia was adamant that I had no choice. I was going nowhere until I had paid my debt. I was no longer a free agent. She made it clear that I had thousands to pay back: for the flights, what I owed her and the fee for Fernanda. Fernanda's fee? That was the first I had heard of it.

I realised then that Fernanda had tricked and sold me. She had trapped me, like an animal in a snare. In prostitution, there are so many things I hate to talk or think about. But what Fernanda did hurt me deeply. I felt utterly betrayed and unbelievably sad.

I realised that even if I got money, ran away and went back

to Latin America, there would be no escape. I owed so

much to Ligia. I – and my family -would be tracked down

and punished. Getting in contact with the police back home

would be a waste of time

So I eventually had to accept – or at least live with - my dreadful new reality. Maybe this could be a quick way to put together the money I need for my business, I would tell myself. It will not be forever. I knew it would affect me. But once I got home, I would be able to deal with whatever psychological impact my decision would have had on me.

And so began the other life. The life as the woman advertised online as Marina Luz. It was the life of a woman doing prostitution, in a foreign country, with almost no English. Going through the motions, doing things the other me would never do. Not wanting anyone from her other life to know what was really happening.

I would get home eventually. I would be back with my child, my friends and family, my real life. This dreadful other life would end. Somehow, I knew that it might not be so easy to blot out or recover from things I had lived through.

Some weeks after I started working for Ligia, I realised how little money I was actually able to keep. I had to pay €700 every week for the rent; I had to hand over 50% of the money I got from clients. Then there was the cost of the ad for the website, taxis, and food. I also had to pay back the debt I owed.

I needed plenty of money for taxis because for several months, I had to move from place to place. I was given instructions by phone and just had to go where I was told. All arrangements with clients were managed by Ligia – and sometimes by her partner, who I know had connections with a drugs cartel.

I never saw Ligia or anyone, really. But I was controlled all

the time. I was under surveillance, and it was frightening.

It made me anxious. I think the phone might have been

tracked. Someone knew if I was out and for how long.

Someone was always constantly calling, always checking up.

The months passed, every day the same awful routine. Then one day, a client tried to assault me and steal my money. I grabbed a knife and pushed him out of the apartment. I got very scared and called Ligia, she didn't seem to care at all. All she was interested in was making sure I got back to work because another client was on the way.

I felt depressed, angry, ashamed, dirty. It was my fault for being so stupid to get into all this. How would I start to get my life and my dignity back? Would I even get out alive?

How would I survive and live my normal life again? Could I

ever be happy again? Who could I ever trust again?

The assault experience convinced me that I had to leave. I realised that to Ligia I was nothing, less than nothing. A thing. A thing that brought her money. I told Ligia that I wanted to go back home. Over and over again, she reminded me that I had to pay back my debt first.

What would I do? If I stayed, the torment of Marina Luz would continue. If I ever got back home, I would not be safe. In my country, there is so much corruption and no guarantee that the authorities would protect me if I owed money, especially to people in the criminal world. The decision I eventually made was just to run away.

I'll always remember the exact moment I walked into the Garda station. That day was the start of the rest of my life.

\*All names have been changed. Case study details have been translated into English.



# Strategic Priority 3: Ensure Ruhama has the structure,

# capacity, and resources to deliver its mission

## Financial Position at Year End 2021

Our Financial Statements for 2021 show total income of €1.085m with expenditure of €1,075m resulting in a surplus of €10,314.

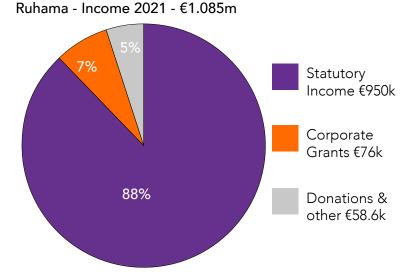
Throughout 2021 Ruhama continued to develop innovative and unique collaborative partnerships with corporate partners along with building and strengthening relationships with current partners. This strategy and our ongoing focus and attention to strong financial management is now evidenced in our year end position and validates our commitment to building the reserves for the organisation. Ruhama's Reserves Policy concentrates on building unrestricted reserves as a key element of the strategic priorities for the organisation in line with the principles of good governance for effective future planning.

In keeping with best practice for charities in Ireland, all Ruhama's salaries are in the lower range of the sector. No staff member received an annual income of or in excess of €80,000. This illustrates Ruhama's unwavering commitment to serve women impacted by sexual exploitation while expanding our services nationally.

At the date of approving this report and the financial statements, there are no uncertainties about the organisation's ability to continue as a going concern for the next 12 months.

#### Income

Statutory funding represents 88% (€950k) of our 2021 operating budget with Corporate Support and Donations representing the remaining 7% and 5%, respectively.

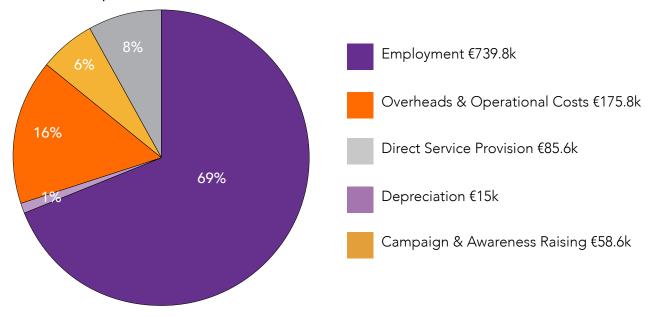


Ruhama works in partnership with statutory agencies to provide our essential services. Ruhama acknowledges the financial support it received from a range of government departments, including the Department of Justice, HSE Social Inclusion CH06, HSE CH07 South Inner City Drugs Alcohol Task Force, the National Lottery, and Dublin City Council. Ruhama's staff work collaboratively with various state officials to ensure that service provision is run on a value for money basis which meets national policy. We would also like to acknowledge onceoff funding awarded in 2021 to facilitate the move to our new premises from the Department of Justice.

#### Ruhama Annual Report 2021

#### Expenditure

Total expenditure in 2021 was €1.075m representing an increase of €48k against expenditure levels in 2020. This increase was attributable to costs associated with moving into our new premises, and our 'Get the Full Picture' campaign.





#### **Corporate Support**

Corporate support continued to play an integral role in our daily operations, allowing the organisation to increase the quantity and quality of service provision. New corporate funding streams allowed us to create innovative solutions for emerging problems impacting the women we work with and build up our education fund for our service users to enable them to engage in further education. The Community Foundation of Ireland led the support on a number of these initiatives in key areas.

Financial support was provided in 2021 from the Community Foundation of Ireland, Soroptomist International, JTI, and the RTE Comic Relief Fund. Ruhama's partnership with Codec Limited provided support for our Bridge to Work Programme.

#### Plans for the Future & Building Reserves

To continue and develop our services, we must source new funding avenues for the organisation. Whilst we have successfully grown our statutory and corporate support in 2021, we are committed to attracting new corporate donors and seek increased multi annual state funding.

# Financial Statement 2021

Income & Expenditure 2021		
Annual Funding	2021	2020
Department of Justice - Victims of Crime	609,868	413,380
HSE Social Inclusion CH06	118,824	118,824
South Inner City Local Drugs & Alcohol Task Force (HSE CHO7)	100,824	100,824
Euopean Social Fund/PEIL "Bridge to Work" project 2017-20	-	86,507
Department of Justice - Bridge to Work Programme	45,890	-
Other grant income	148,813	98,569
Donations/fundraising	61,488	148,819
Total income	1,085,707	966,923
Total expenditure	(1,075,393)	(1,034,325)
Operating suplus/(deficit) for the year	10,314	- 67,402
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2021	2021	2020
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	13,645	22,020
	13,645	22,020
Debtors	38,482	51,730
Cash at bank and in hand	442,518	360,635
Total current assets	481,000	412,365
Creditors: amount falling due within one year	(211,799)	(186,398)
Net current assets	269,201	225,967
Total assets less current liabilities	282,846	247,987
Funds of the organisation		
Restricted reserves	(24,257)	537
Unrestricted reserves	272,558	237,450
Total Funds	248,301	237,987

# Governance

Ruhama is constituted as a company limited by guarantee without a share capital. Its purpose, objectives and how it conducts its business are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The company is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority in Ireland in compliance with the Charities Act 2009 and has charitable tax status with the Revenue Commissioners CHY 10733.

The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees who work in a voluntary capacity. Trustees are recruited based on skills, knowledge, and experience. Trustees do not receive any remuneration in respect of their service.

Ruhama's Board had thirteen voluntary Trustees in 2021. No expenses were paid to Trustees. No contracts or arrangements of material interest to a director were entered into during the financial year.

Ruhama is committed to having appropriate systems and controls in place. The Board of Trustees made the decision to no longer accept donations from Religious Organisations with effect from 1st January 2022. A full review and updating of all Ruhama's policies and procedures was conducted during 2021.

Ruhama has fulfilled all obligations under the Lobbying Act 2015 and to the Charities Regulatory Authority. Ruhama is compliant with the Charities Governance Code.

To maintain standards of best practice across all areas of our organisation, the Board and Management adhere to the recommendations outlined by the Charities Regulator. We comply with the statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP) and Fundraising Principles.

The Board of Trustees met on eight occasions during 2021. Board sub-committees met quarterly except for the Audit, Finance and Governance subcommittee who met approximately every six weeks prior to Board meetings.

## **Board Membership**

#### **Board Standing Committees**

The Board is assisted in its work, ensuring good governance and quality service delivery is maintained through sub-committees and working groups. Board sub-committees comprise of Board Trustees and external co-optee's for expertise, when required.

In 2021 the following Board sub-committees met:

#### Audit, Finance and Governance (AFG)

Donagh O'Farrell (Chair), Carolann Minnock, Barbara Condon, and Adrienne Molloy (in attendance).

#### Premises

Donal Dunlop, Billy Coman, and Barbara Condon.

## Board of Trustees 2021

In 2021 there were thirteen Trustees who served on the Board of Ruhama;

Board Trustees	Board Meetings Attended	AFG Meetings Attended
lan Carter (Chairperson)	8/8	
Billy Coman	7/8	
Noreen O'Shea	7/8	
Dr. Samuel Gower	5/8	
Nóra Ní Loinsigh	6/8	
Donagh O'Farrell (Appointed 10 March 2021)	6/6	7/7
Carolann Minnock (Appointed 10 March 2021)	6/6	7/7
Dr. Gabriel Fitzpatrick (Appointed 26 October 2021)	1/2	
Donal Dunlop (Resigned 10 March 2021)	1/1	1/1
Ethna McDermott (Resigned 27 January 2021)	1/1	
Myriam McLaughlin (Resigned 17 February 2021)	1/1	1/1
Dr. Nusha Yonkova (Resigned 18 March 2021)	1/2	
Suzanne Farrelly (Resigned 25 August 2021)	4/4	

# **Current Board Trustees**





Carolann Minnock



Donagh O'Farrell









**Declan Daly** 



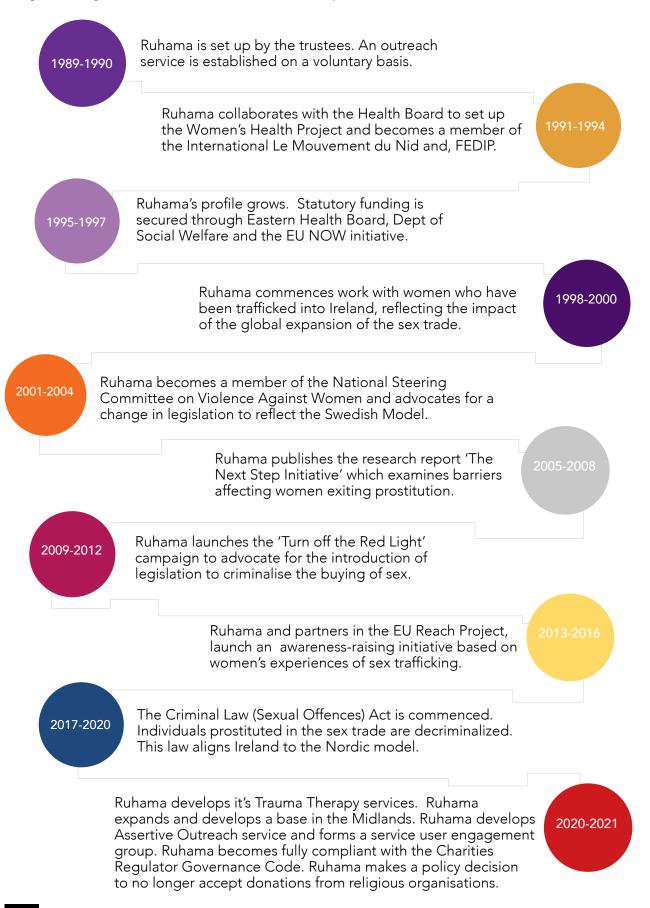
Lizzie Mansfield



Pauline Houlihan

## **Ruhama Milestones**

Throughout our 32 years we have grown and innovated to ensure we fulfil our mission. Though much has changed during this time the cornerstone of our response has remained constant.



# **Ruhama Staff**

CEO	Barbara Condon
Head of Finance & Operations	Adrienne Molloy
Service Manager	Sheila Crowley
Volunteer & Training Manager	Neasa Ní Fheinneadha
Interim Operations Manager (Maternity Cover)	Jacqueline Blanchfield
Policy & Communications Officer	Aimée Millar
Caseworker (Resigned July 2021)	Michela Panichella
Caseworker	Hailey O'Shea
Caseworker	Jennifer Roche
Caseworker	Poliana Aniculăesei
Trauma Therapist	Katie Dobosz
Midlands Caseworker	Clare Feely
Assertive Outreach Caseworker	Georgina O'Neill
Education & Development Co-ordinator	Anne O Keefe
Education & Development Officer	Trish O'Brien
Education & Development Assistant	Aniz Duran
Bridge to Work Co-ordinator	Kim Haugh
Organisational Administrator	Nazanine Nolan
Receptionist	Jenisa Torres Ruiz

# Staff Development & Training

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is strongly encouraged internally and externally. In 2021 Ruhama provided and/or supported the following training for staff:

Staff Training and Development	
Trauma Informed Care	Management & Supervision
Introduction to Motivational Interviewing	ISL (Irish Sign Language)
Suicide Intervention Training	Capacitar Facilitator Training
Parent's Under Pressure Facilitator Training	Emotional Freedom Technique Training
Train the Trainer	Dual Diagnosis Training
Report Writing	Mental Health Training
Work Plans and Progress Reports	The Freedom Programme
Key Working and Care Planning	Reflective Practice for Practitioners
Children First Training	Health and Safety Training

# Volunteers

Volunteers generously gave 1856.5 hours of their time to Ruhama in 2021. Volunteers continue to support Ruhama's work in areas such as education, counselling, training, and befriending.

In our volunteer survey volunteers reported:

- Feeling satisfied as a volunteer
- Feeling they were having an impact in their work
- Feeling supported in their volunteer role

"I have been a volunteer with Ruhama since training with them in 2018 and after 2 years in Outreach I am now working with some of our service users in Education. I have realised how fortunate I have been in my own life that I never had to experience any such traumas as they have endured. I must say I am in awe of their resilience and fortitude in overcoming the horrendous events experienced in their lives and their intense desire to learning and studying to make a better life for themselves"

(Ruhama Education Programme Volunteer)

# Acknowledgments

Ruhama wish to acknowledge the following for their support throughout 2021:

- Department of Justice
- Health Service Executive (HSE Social Inclusion CH06)
- South Inner City Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (HSE CH07)
- Community Foundation Ireland
- JTI Ireland
- Ann Pratt Foundation
- Public Representatives
- Garda National Protective Services Bureau

- Organised Prostitution Investigation Unit
- All NGO partners
- Faith Based donors
- Donors & Fundraisers
- Codec
- Soroptomists Ireland
- Paypal
- Mags Murphy
- Lord Mayor of Dublin Alison Gilliland

Ruhama is funded by the Department of Justice, HSE Social Inclusion CH06 and HSE CH07 (South Inner City Drug and Alcohol Task Force).



## How you can get involved and support our work

There are lots of ways to get involved in our work supporting women impacted by prostitution and/or sex trafficking – whether it is through engaging employees in an impact day, fundraising individually or as a group, partnering with us in an initiative, or applying to be a volunteer. We'd love to hear from you about how you feel you could contribute.

Check out **www.ruhama.ie** and go to "Get Involved" to learn more.

Alternatively, email **admin@ruhama.ie** to get in touch with us directly.

## Follow us. Get in touch.

Ruhama 4 Castle Street Dublin 2 +353 1 836 0292 admin@ruhama.ie www.ruhama.ie /ruhamaagency

- f /ruhamalreland
- in /company/ruhama



Company Registration Number: 209799 CHY: 10733 Registered Charity Number: 20027827