



**RUHAMA**

Supporting Women Affected by Prostitution

# **Annual Report 2011**

# Contents

<b>Chairperson’s Foreword</b> .....	3
<b>Chief Executive’s Welcome</b> .....	4
<b>About Ruhama</b> .....	6
<i>Ruhama’s Mission Statement</i> .....	6
<i>Values Informing Ruhama’s Work</i> .....	6
<i>Services Offered by Ruhama</i> .....	6
<i>Directors</i> .....	6
<b>Ruhama Service Report</b> .....	7
<i>Introduction</i> .....	7
<b>1. CASEWORK</b> .....	7
<i>Increase in Numbers</i> .....	7
<i>Dangers of Indoor Prostitution</i> .....	7
<i>Moving On</i> .....	9
<i>Minors Exploited in Prostitution</i> .....	9
<b>Service Report Statistics</b> .....	10
<i>Number of Women in ALL Casework</i> .....	10
<i>Locations in Ireland of NEW Suspected Victims of Trafficking (VoT)</i> .....	14
<b>2. DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION</b> .....	15
<i>In-house Programmes Offered by Ruhama in 2011</i> .....	15
<i>Barriers for Women Accessing Education and Development Opportunities</i> .....	16
<b>3. RESETTLEMENT</b> .....	17
<i>Barriers for Women Accessing Housing</i> .....	17
<b>4. STREET OUTREACH</b> .....	18
<i>Violence</i> .....	19
<i>Reporting Crime and Security</i> .....	19
<i>Drugs/Alcohol and Homelessness</i> .....	19
<i>Health</i> .....	20
<i>Entering/ Returning to Prostitution</i> .....	20
<i>One Woman’s Testimony – ‘The Paradox’</i> .....	20
<b>Policy Work</b> .....	22
<i>Election Manifesto</i> .....	22
<i>Turn Off the Red Light</i> .....	22
<i>Submissions to State Departments</i> .....	23
<b>Communications</b> .....	24
<i>Media Work</i> .....	24
<i>Social Media</i> .....	24
<i>Students</i> .....	25
<i>Training</i> .....	25
<i>Conference and Seminars</i> .....	25
<b>Volunteers</b> .....	26
<b>Financial Summary 2011</b> .....	28
<i>Financial Supporters</i> .....	29
<i>Independent Auditors’ Report to the Members of Ruhama</i> .....	29

## Chairperson's Foreword

Ruhama provides a unique service in Ireland. For women affected by the sex trade, marginalised, and often rendered invisible, Ruhama represents a safe place where prostitution is an issue that does not need to be hidden, which will not be judged, and where the deep complexity of a woman's experience of prostitution is understood. For over two decades this organisation has helped women who find themselves trapped in the sex trade.



Valerie Judge - Chairperson

There is no other service in Ireland to assist women in the often complex process of exiting from prostitution, despite the reality that up to and over 90% of those in prostitution wish to get out.<sup>1</sup> Ruhama is committed to remaining a supportive presence for women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking, in their often dangerous personal journeys.

Behind each statistic presented in this report is an individual story, a personal experience where a woman may have been trafficked, or otherwise coerced, into a life from which she wishes to leave, but her escape may be threatened by danger and fear. When she seeks help, Ruhama helps her to regain her life, and to access the life choices that most of us can expect, for ourselves, our sisters, our mothers, our daughters and our friends.

A key strategic focus for Ruhama is to communicate publicly the harm caused by the sex trade, and the need for statutory provision, to reflect society's compassion towards those in prostitution, while bringing those who profiteer from the prostitution of others, to account. Ruhama continues to engage in public awareness initiatives and contributes to public debate and consultation processes on this important issue.

The primary focus of Ruhama's efforts is as always on the needs of the women who access and who want to access our services. Meeting these needs cannot be sustained without the continued support of our donors and statutory funders.

Facing continually increasing demand for its services, Ruhama has at the same time suffered significant cuts to its statutory funding. We recognise the economic reality that is affecting the whole country and we thank our statutory funders and donors for their recognition of the value of Ruhama's work. It is critical to the ongoing provision of service that funding is sustained in coming years in line with other voluntary service providers who partner statutory provision. Although times are hard, it is in hard times that organisations such as Ruhama who focus on social justice and frontline service delivery are most required.

I wish to convey my sincere thanks to the Ruhama team led by CEO Sarah Benson, including, in particular, the growing number of volunteers who are carrying out exceptional work in difficult times. This has been another extremely busy year for the board and I would like to thank my colleagues for all their support and the significant time commitment they have each made to their board responsibilities.

**Valerie Judge**  
Chairperson,  
Board of Directors

---

<sup>1</sup> Farley et al. 2003.

## Chief Executive's Welcome

In our twenty second year of offering services to women affected by prostitution, Ruhama was busier than ever. Services are in high demand. I hope that this report will exemplify the importance of providing a holistic, creative and responsive service to women who are exploited in the sex trade in Ireland.



Sarah Benson - CEO

The commercial sex trade in this country remains very active and highly organised. There are numerous criminal gangs organising and profiting from the prostitution of vulnerable women and girls right across the island of Ireland in urban and rural settings. While Ruhama continue to work with significant numbers of Irish women, the majority of those exploited in the indoor sex trade are migrant women, and this is reflected by the fact that in 2011 Ruhama supported women of 36 different nationalities – an increase from 31 in 2010. This small island remains a destination for traffickers, pimps and procurers from all corners of the globe. For the women and girls, far from home, isolated and often highly controlled or literally coerced through trafficking, prostitution itself is an intrinsically dangerous and damaging experience.

Prostitution and trafficking are issues that most people give little consideration to as it doesn't really touch their lives. But every woman Ruhama meets is someone's daughter, sister, or mother. No parent thinks of prostitution as a viable positive choice for their child and yet these women and girls are bought and sold for the sexual satisfaction of a minority of Irish men in every corner of Ireland. This is despite the devastating consequences for the mental and physical wellbeing of the women involved. It is highly important that we as a society take responsibility for the exploitation that happens on our own doorsteps.

The experiences women reported to Ruhama in 2011 sadly echo those reported by women every year for the last 22 years of Ruhama's existence as a frontline service; physical and sexual assault; degrading and humiliating verbal abuse; hypervigilance and constant tension due to the perpetual risk of the unknown that might occur when responding each day to knocks at the door from strangers who have paid to have sex with you; feelings of isolation – from other people and from the rest of society; panic attacks, depression, and suicidal feelings.

At the same time, because Ruhama offers a holistic and non-judgemental service that responds to women's needs, ranging from practical educational and career planning to crisis situations, immigration, health, family, housing and legal issues. Women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking engage with Ruhama for a broad variety of supports and services – some big and complex, some small and simpler. In the course of working collaboratively we share not only the serious challenges but also their hopes, dreams, plans and successes.

Despite an extremely challenging funding climate, Ruhama managed to not only sustain but enhance its unique service delivery in 2011. The organisation supported 241 women; 200 in casework and 41 exclusively through street outreach, representing an increase of 18% on 2010. The in-depth advocacy and support service offered through casework and development resulted in 1,057 face to face

contacts with women, over 13,000 telephone calls and more than 4,300 text supports. In addition, Ruhama's outreach van which engages with women in street prostitution went out on 102 occasions for over 350 hours.

This exceptional output in such tough times was made possible by a significant piece of work undertaken by the Ruhama team to evaluate and enhance both service delivery and also our interagency co-operation, both of which are in the best interests of the women we serve. It also required difficult decisions and great solidarity with the work by the staff team for which I am extremely grateful. As the economic climate worsens and we see demand for support increase, it becomes a highly critical time with the services hanging in the balance. Ruhama is exceptionally thankful for the generosity of its supporters and donors without whom we could not survive. The relationship with our statutory funders is very important to us and we hope that they will continue to recognise and value Ruhama's frontline work.

Collaborative working has always been a key component of Ruhama's work and this is especially important given the highly diverse and complex needs that women affected by prostitution and trafficking present with. Positive working relationships with Gardaí, HSE services, housing, legal and migrant support agencies, charities, addiction services and many others (both in Ireland and overseas) make it possible for Ruhama to offer creative advocacy and support to women using our services. I would like to express our thanks to all and look forward to continuing partnership at a time when collective, joined up responses are more important than ever to try to prevent highly vulnerable women and girls from slipping through the cracks in our social system.

Of particular note in 2011 is Ruhama's enhanced outreach relationships with the HSE Women's Health Service and the Dochas Centre for Women. Also in 2011, Ruhama offered supports and collaborative working to some residential care units for minors, in recognition of the particular vulnerability to exploitation in prostitution of children in care. Ruhama additionally piloted, with Garda co-trainers, a very successful training day for police on the issue of prostitution, which will continue to be delivered to Gardaí and PSNI in 2012.

Internally we have a highly motivated and dedicated staff and volunteer team, including the voluntary Board of Directors. I would like to express my own personal thanks to each and every person for their time, energy, expertise and enthusiasm, which sustains the work of the organisation. Also as an organisation, we are very grateful to those who assist our work through expertise in IT, communications and other individual acts of support and kindness.

However, my final word goes to those extraordinary women with whom we engaged in 2011. Despite some of terrible hardships and adversity, there are also tales of amazing tenacity, bravery and creativity from women whom it is a privilege to know.

*Sarah Benson*  
CEO

# About Ruhama

## *Ruhama's Mission Statement*

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

## *Values Informing Ruhama's Work*

- being non-judgmental
- placing a high value on equality, inclusivity, cultural diversity, dignity and respect
- affirming every woman's right to society's protection and respect
- commitment to learning and to continual service improvement
- accountability to funders and to the women we work with

## *Services Offered by Ruhama*

- Individual casework support and advocacy
- Out of hours emergency response
- Provision of accommodation to vulnerable women in emergency situations
- Provision of one to one and group training and development opportunities
- Support into mainstream training and/or employment
- Support with resettlement (including social welfare, budgeting and tenancy agreements)
- Mobile Street Outreach in Dublin's "Red Light" areas
- Outreach service to other key agencies/services
- Emotional and psychological support including access to counselling
- Practical support (material needs) in certain circumstances
- Interpretative support
- Referral to other key agencies that can offer supports
- Delivery of Training and awareness sessions to groups on the issue of prostitution and trafficking
- Advocating and campaigning on the issue of prostitution, including trafficking to raise awareness and support positive change in social attitudes and policies, and minimise the ongoing harm to women and girls through the sex industry

## *Directors*

**Chairperson:** Ms. Valerie Judge

**Company Secretary:** Mr. Peter O'Neill

Sr. Sheila Murphy, O.L.C.

Sr. Bernadette McNally, R.G.S.

Dr. Mary Scully

Mr. Colm O'Dwyer

Ms. Catherine Joyce

Sr. Frances Robinson, O.L.C.

Ms. Catherine Nolan

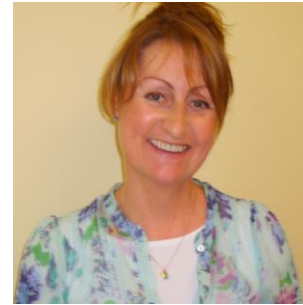
Ms. Zuilmah Wallis

Mr. John O'Reilly

# Ruhama Service Report

## Introduction

Ruhama's frontline services are highlighted in this section and comprise the following four areas of work: Casework, Education and Development, Resettlement, and Street Outreach.



Sheila Crowley – Service Manager

## 1. CASEWORK

Improving the ability of Ruhama to respond to the needs of its client group was a great challenge in 2011, particularly in light of the constraints which began to be significantly felt due to the economic climate. Nonetheless, a comprehensive review of our care and case management system was undertaken in 2011 to maximise effective good practice supports to women. A consultation process took place during the first quarter of the year, which included a pilot programme and focused interviews with a number of our client group. By September 2011, Ruhama had implemented a strength based, person-centred planning framework. Each care plan is individualised as it is intended to recognise and reflect the unique circumstances that each woman experiences. A key factor of the care plan is that it considers aspirations, skills and capabilities expressed by the woman rather than an over-emphasis on problems and barriers. Within the process, the woman's voice is given prominence as ultimately it is her self determination that will shape her future.

*"I need to get out now, I don't want to do this, I'll do anything else, please, there must be something else."*

*~ Kirsty (not real name)*

### Increase in Numbers

Of particular note to casework in 2011 was an **increase of over 80%** of women affected by prostitution in **General Casework**<sup>2</sup>. Sixty women accessed Ruhama's **General Casework** in 2010 while this number **increased to 109** in 2011.

This increase can be attributed to enhanced outreach and interagency work with services including the HSE Women's Health Service and their sexual health support services. This afforded Ruhama the opportunity to see a much clearer picture of the indoor sex trade, particularly highlighting the degree of third party involvement with women in the organised sex trade.

### Dangers of Indoor Prostitution

In the "Outreach" section of this Service Report, the experiences of violence on the street reported by women are highlighted. There is a commonly expressed view that being in street prostitution is more dangerous than indoor prostitution, however, this is not necessarily the reality. The experience for women in indoor prostitution is no less dangerous and also has added complications that women have to cope with, and which have significant consequences for both physical and emotional wellbeing.

---

<sup>2</sup> The term 'General Casework' denotes work with women who have involvement/experience of prostitution, but who are **not** also victims of sex trafficking.



**Some examples reported by women are highlighted below:**

- *Women discuss feeling a constant state of tension due to the risk of something 'going wrong'. This can be a buyer pushing for sex acts that she does not want to perform or a direct attack and assault. Another contributor to the stress and tension, particularly for Irish women, is the possibility that a person they know, even a male family member, might be on the other side of the door as a buyer.*
- *Women have been raped, robbed and physically assaulted. Even in cases where there was more than one woman/person in a premises, attacks happening behind closed bedroom doors could not be heard and so no assistance was given.*
- *A large number of organised gangs, of different nationalities, effectively control the indoor sex trade. These are dangerous individuals, and women (particularly vulnerable migrant women who are effectively isolated and without supports in Ireland) are very fearful of reporting abuses perpetrated on them by pimps to Gardaí.*
- *In some cases, women reported having problems with organised criminals either attempting to drive them away from a particular area where they are operating, or trying to coerce them into being pimped by them.*
- *Men pay for sex for between a minimum of a half hour up to several hours, which requires women to put on a persona of someone who finds each buyer interesting, attractive and agreeable no matter what they are like. It also requires women to take on a persona of their own as the 'escort' the man expects her to be. Women rarely, if ever, reveal the truth about themselves to buyers (name, age, life circumstances). This can result in what is known as 'splitting' and can have significant negative consequences for mental and emotional health.*
- *Women in on-street prostitution talk about being able to keep their clothes on and have relatively quick engagements with buyers. They rarely kiss men and usually only engage in 'straight' sex acts. For women indoors they have to entertain buyers for longer periods of time and in a far more exposed manner, fulfilling demands for almost any sex act, often very rough.*
- ***While it is not credible to hold women who may be assaulted responsible for the actions of perpetrators by suggesting that they can somehow 'detect' when a man will be violent, there are nonetheless some techniques that women can use to make a very basic 'risk assessment' of a buyer. If he appears under the influence of drugs/alcohol or if he seems particularly agitated, aggressive or even too quiet, can make a woman more vigilant. Women on-street talk about being able to lean into cars and smell the breath of a man to see if he is intoxicated or see if there is anything on the car seats that could pose a threat. They also note their belief that it is easier to call attention in a street or to try to get out of a car than a locked room. For women indoors, particularly those who are pimped and have no opportunity to even speak to buyers for more than a moment before they arrive to have sex with them, there is no meaningful way to assess if someone is a potential threat.***
- *Victims of Trafficking are predominantly exploited within the confines of the indoor sex trade.*



## *Moving On*

A critical element of Ruhama's model of work is to support women to independence, and that of course means reaching a point on a woman's journey when we part ways. This is when women that have been receiving support within casework have decided, along with their caseworker that they no longer need to utilise the services and support of Ruhama. This is a very positive step and an extremely successful milestone for both the women and Ruhama, where women are looking forwards and actively progressing their own self-identified life goals.

Initially, when a care plan is devised and developed within casework, the woman outlines what goals she has and what she believes her needs are across a range of areas including health, legal issues, accommodation, education etc. As supports are put in place and the women start to realise their goals, their strength and confidence increase.

Every month as new faces come through Ruhama's doors, there are familiar ones saying goodbye, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish these amazing women all the best in their future endeavours.

## *Minors Exploited in Prostitution*

Ruhama has always been aware of the serious issue of underage prostitution. In particular, children who are without family supports and/or have a pre-existing experience of abuse are highly vulnerable to grooming and coercion into prostitution. Ruhama works proactively with services that support vulnerable young people. In 2011, Ruhama worked with a number of agencies including the HSE Separated Children Team and several residential care homes to provide additional support around the complex issue of prostitution. Prostitution was a reality for children as young as 14 years old. In keeping with the 'Children First' national guidelines for the protection and welfare of children, Ruhama takes direct referrals of children in circumstances where they are 'aging out' towards adulthood and are also in the care of statutory services. In 2011, Ruhama supported three minors whose support is continuing now they have turned 18.

**"There were meetings about me, there were meetings with me – meetings to talk about my 'risk-taking behaviour'; it always felt like my fault. Everyone thought it was something I was choosing to do. Then I met my Caseworker and for the first time somebody said it's not what you are doing – it's what they are doing to you that is wrong. I needed someone to say that."**

**~ Zoe (not real name)**

## Service Report Statistics

Ruhama supported a **total of 241 women** in 2011, representing an **increase of 18%** since 2010. 200 women were supported in **ALL Casework** and 60 women were supported in Street Outreach (19 women were supported in both Casework and Outreach).

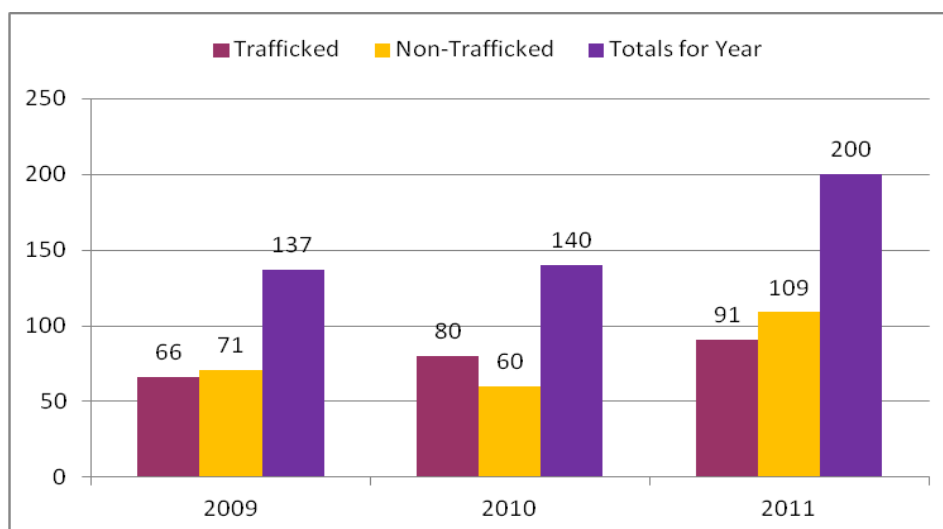
	Street Outreach Service	Casework	Less no. in both Street Outreach & Casework	Total Number of individual women in 2011
<b>No. of Women</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>241</b>

All women who engage with Ruhama are offered our **Casework Service**, consisting of working with a caseworker to identify needs and priority issues the woman would like support with. Engagement with Ruhama can be for a short time, or in more complex cases, can last a number of years.

### Number of Women in ALL Casework

	2010	2011	% Increase in 2011
<b>Casework – General</b>	60	109	82%
<b>Casework – VoT</b>	80	91	14%
<b>Total</b>	140	200	43%

**Chart I: Total Number of Women in ALL Casework (200 Women)**



Ruhama supported **200 women in ALL Casework** in 2011 (**Chart I**). This is an **increase of 43%** since 2010 and **46%** since 2009.

### Type of Contact with Women in Casework (200 Women)

- **1,057** Face to Face
- **13,223** Verbal Telephone\*
- **4,327** Text Supports\*

### 152 Accompaniments in 2011:

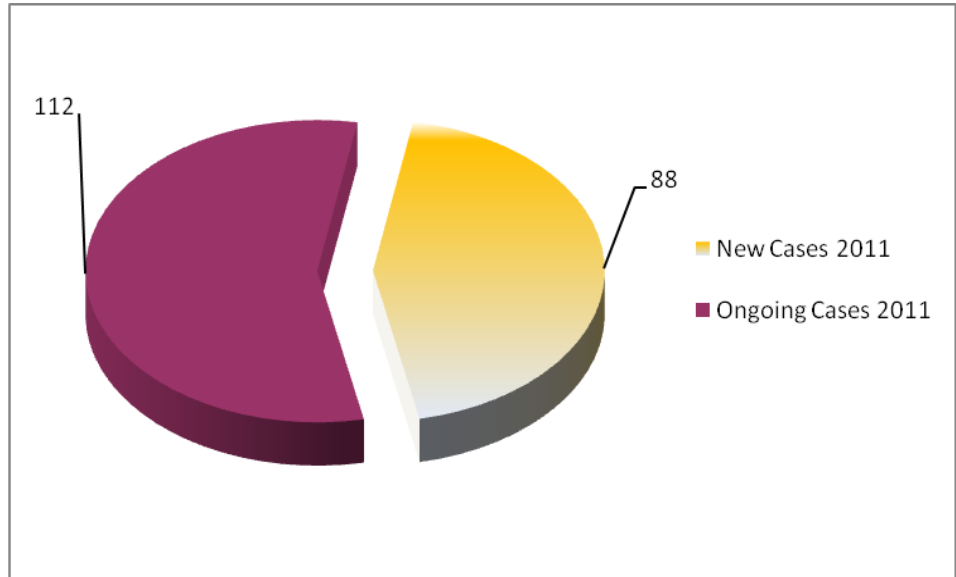
- **Legal** (Statement taking process, court, meetings with legal profession)
- **Medical**
- **Case meetings**

\* This includes 3<sup>rd</sup> party calls on behalf of women and direct contact with women.

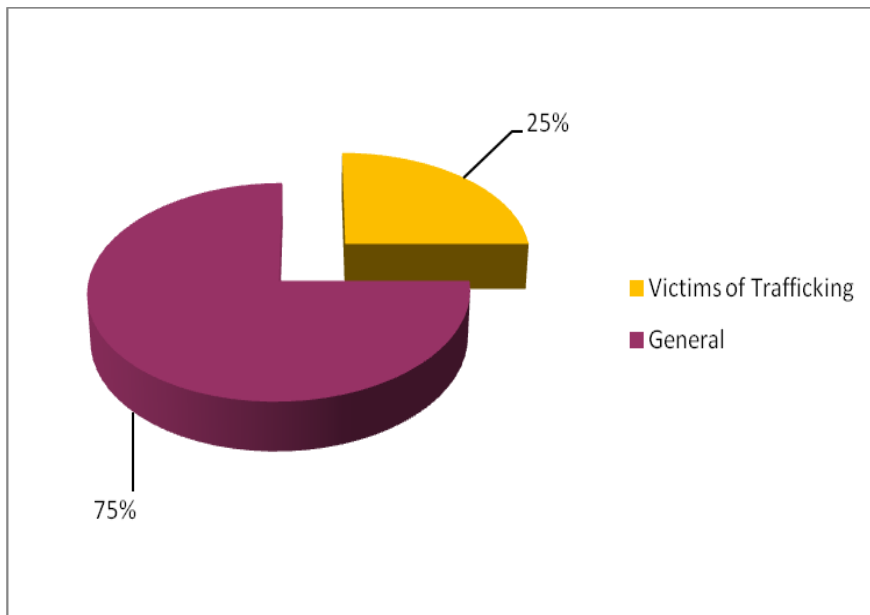
*Breakdown of Cases in ALL Casework 2011*

**Chart II: Breakdown of ALL Casework into New & Ongoing Cases (200 Women)**

Of the **200** women supported in *ALL Casework* in 2011, **88** of these cases were *new referrals* (i.e. Woman's first encounter with Ruhama was in 2011; *Chart II*). Given the huge complexity of cases whereby some women are supported in the medium to long-term, **112** were ongoing.



**Chart III: Breakdown of NEW Referrals into General & VoT Casework (88 Women)**



In 2011, Ruhama received a total of **88 new referrals** to *ALL Casework* (*Chart III*)

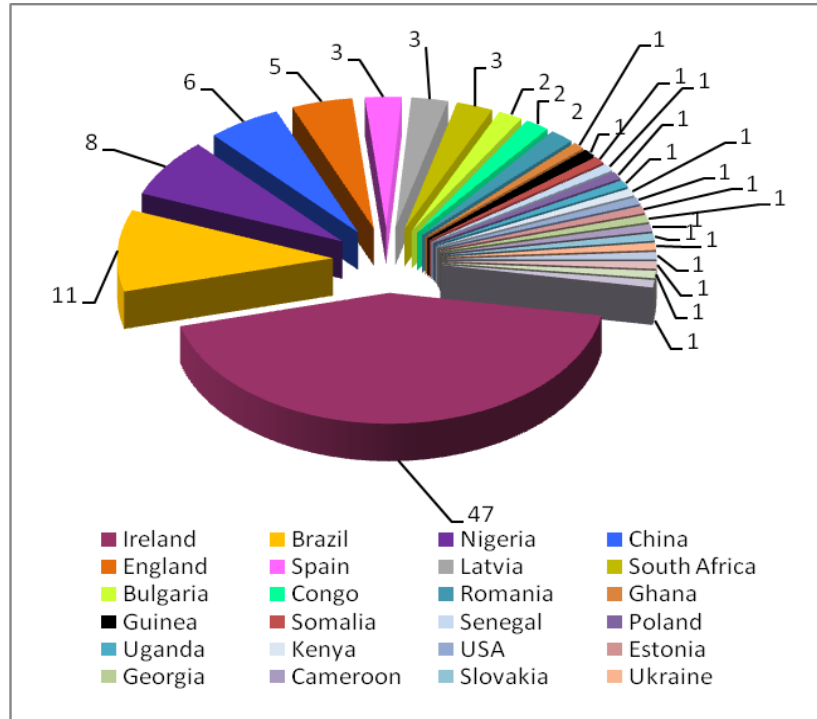
- **22** women, representing 25% were victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and were supported in *Victims of Trafficking Casework*
- **66** women, representing 75% were affected by prostitution, but were not identified as victims of trafficking, and were supported in *General Casework*.

### Countries of Origin – All Casework

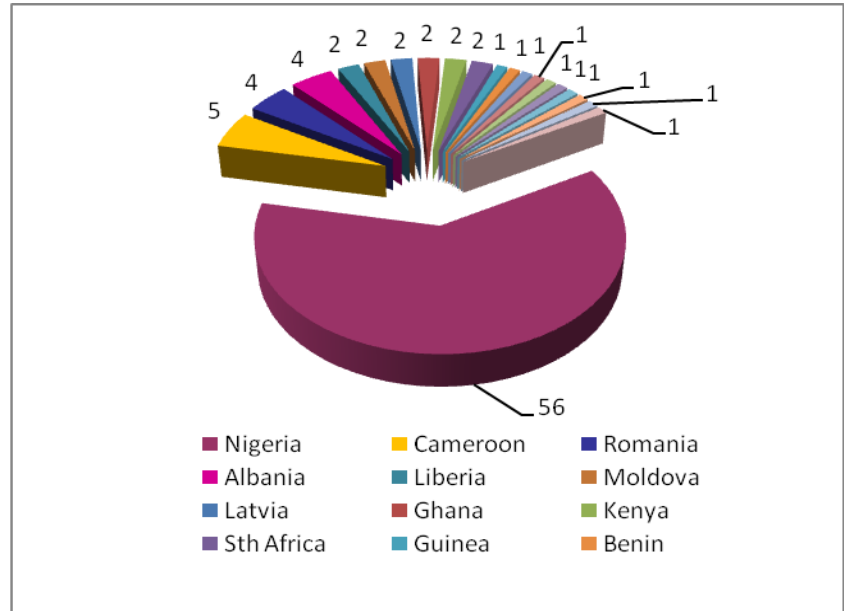
The **200** women supported in *ALL Casework* during 2011 came from **36 different countries**.

**Chart IV: Countries of Origin – General Casework (109 Women)**

The **109** women supported in *General Casework* came from **28 different countries** (Chart IV). The majority came from Ireland (47 women, representing 43%), with Brazil, Nigeria, China, England, South Africa and Latvia as the next largest cohort.



**Chart V: Countries of Origin – Victims of Trafficking (VoT) Casework (91 Women)**



The **91** women in *VoT Casework* in 2011 came from **20 different countries** (Chart V). The majority came from Nigeria (56 women, representing 62%), with Cameroon, Romania and Albania as the next significant cohort. Other women came from countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.

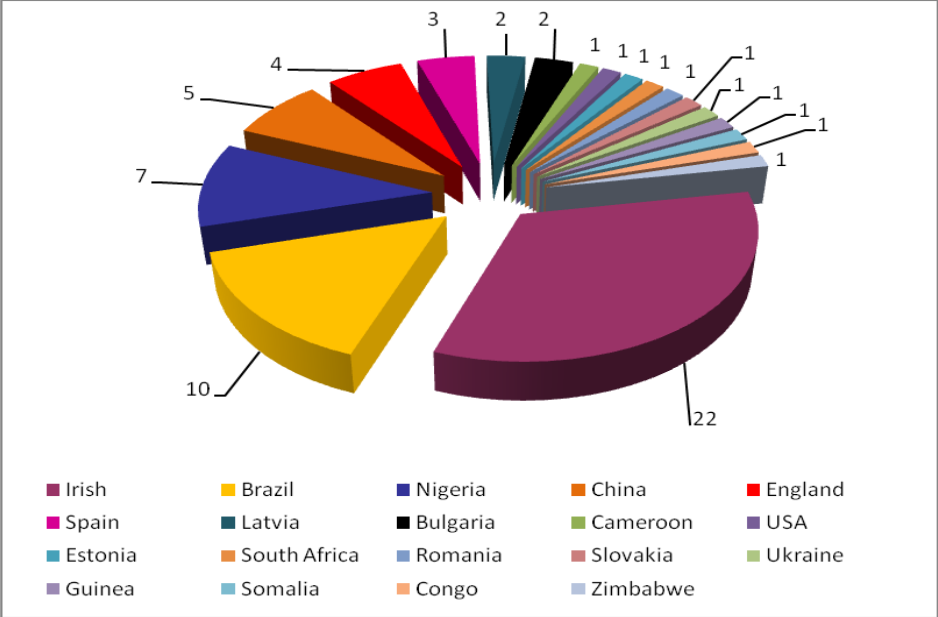
*Countries of Origin – New Referrals*

**Chart VI: Countries of Origin – NEW Referrals to General Casework (66 Women)**

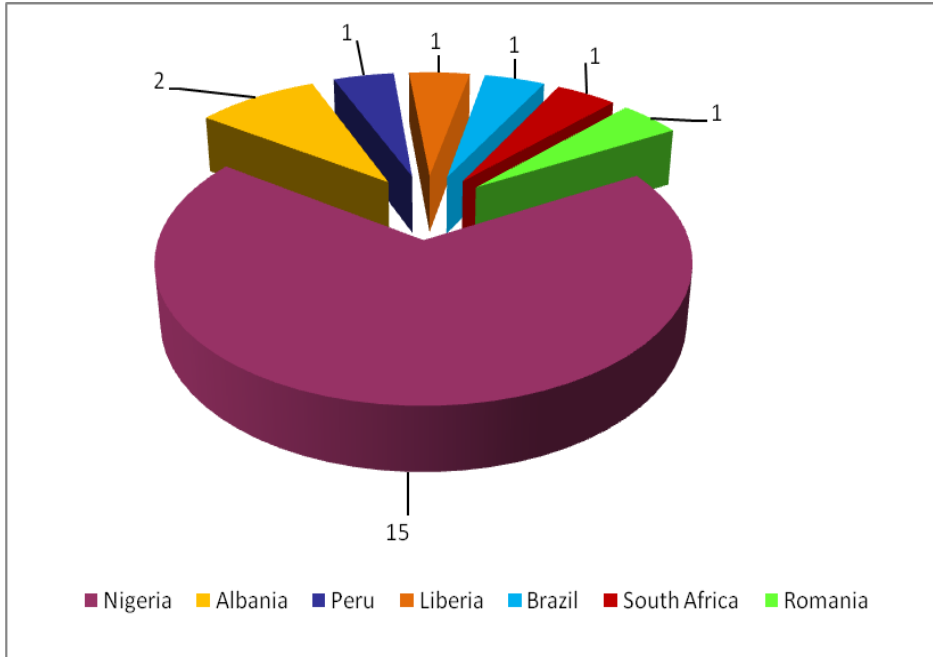
The 66 new referrals to General Casework were from 19 different countries (Chart VI).

The largest number came from Ireland representing 33%, with Brazil (15%), Nigeria (10%), China (7.5%), England (6%) and Spain (4.5%) following.

Others came from countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and America.



**Chart VII: Countries of Origin – NEW Referrals to VoT Casework (22 Women)**

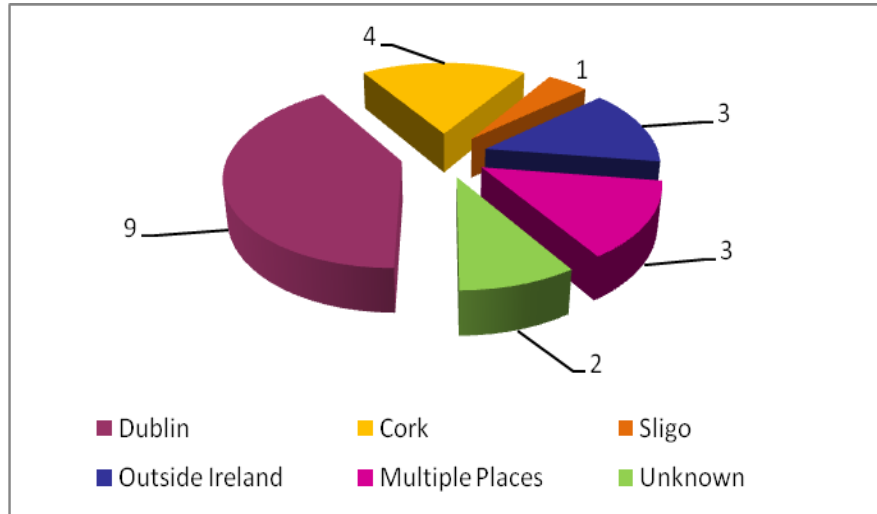


The 22 new referrals to VoT Casework were from seven different countries (Chart VII). The largest number of women came from Nigeria (68%) and Albania (9%). Others came from Eastern Europe, South America or Africa.

*Locations in Ireland of NEW Suspected Victims of Trafficking (VoT)*

**Chart VIII: Locations of New Suspected VoT (22 Women)**

Ruhama received **22 new referrals** of suspected victims of trafficking in 2011. Seventeen (17) of these new referrals were trafficked into and within Ireland (**Chart VIII**). Three were trafficked into other countries, escaped and took refuge in Ireland. The locations in which two women were trafficked are unknown.



## 2. DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

*“I think the first classes I did in Ruhama laid the foundation for what I am doing now. Those first classes gave me the confidence to go on with my education.”*

*~ Una (not real name)*

A cornerstone of service delivery in Ruhama is Development and Education. This is a tailor-made service for each woman and is as individual as the woman herself. The main objective of engaging in Development and Education is that women will identify and move forward with certain career and educational goals, which they have identified via a combination of her individual care plan and an in-depth assessment with her career guidance counsellor.

In 2011, **77 women** participated in a range of programmes in the Education & Development section of Ruhama, this is an increase of 33% since 2010.

### *In-house Programmes Offered by Ruhama in 2011*

In-house Development included:

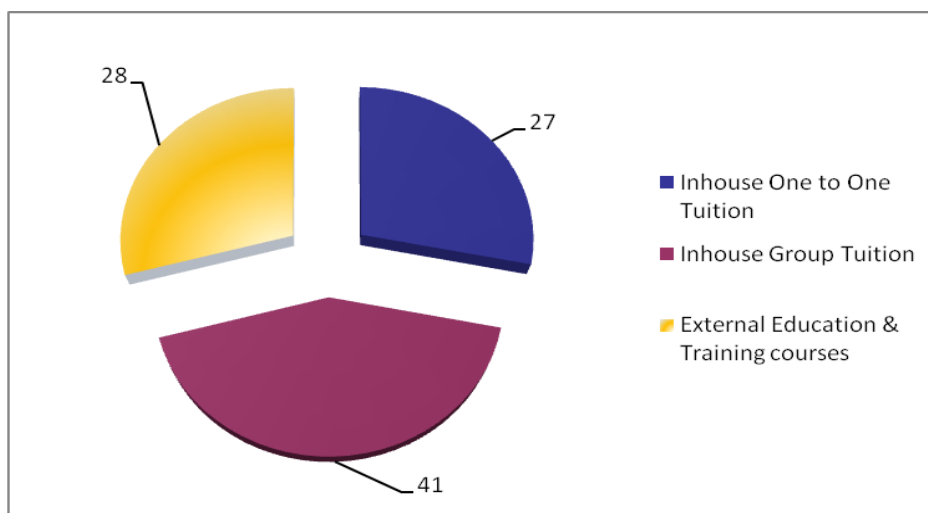
- Group and one to one classes in
  - English
  - Math
  - Literacy
  - Computers
- There were also group sessions provided in:
  - The STEPs Programme (Steps to Excellence for Personal Success)
  - Personal Effectiveness
  - Sexual Health Education (including Speak Easy course)
  - Art Classes
  - Sewing Classes
  - Music Workshops

*“I couldn’t have got through my exams without the study support from Ruhama.”*

*~ Sophie (not real name)*

A number of women went on to access courses in their own local community.

**Chart IX: Breakdown of Education & Development and no. of women attending each category**



*Chart IX* illustrates that 27 women participated in one to one tuition, and 41 women participated in group tuition within Ruhama, while 28 women undertook external training and education courses.



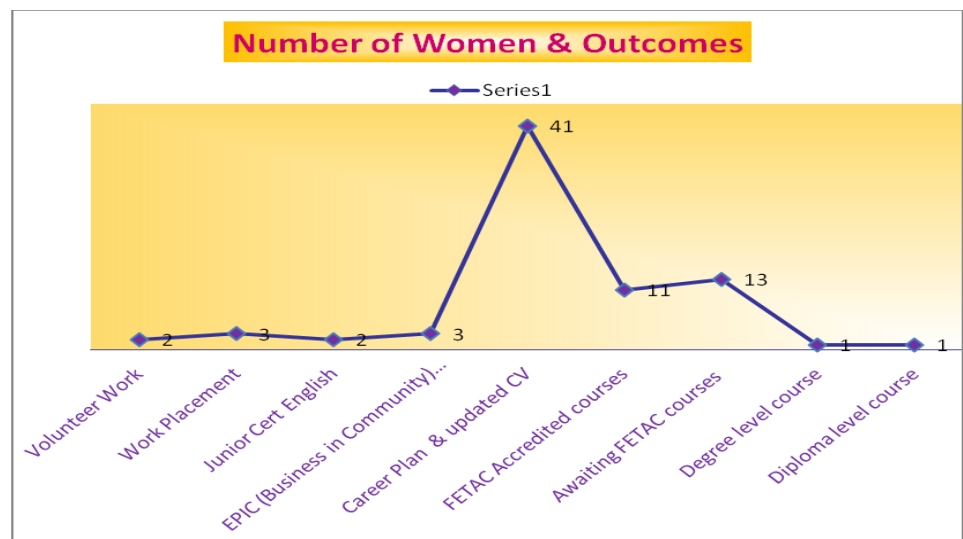
### Barriers for Women Accessing Education and Development Opportunities

Initial consultations with women showed that they were very aware of the need for personal development and educational attainment in order to make significant life changes. 2011 was a year where it remained evident that women find accessing educational opportunities difficult for a number of complicated reasons as follows;

- The accessibility of quality and **affordable childcare** acts as a barrier to women's education both in Ruhama and externally. Ruhama has responded proactively by supporting access routes to community crèche facilities, giving grants towards childcare, accessing courses which provide childcare on site and delivering Ruhama courses in facilities with childcare.
- A majority of women involved in street prostitution who accessed Ruhama services via the Outreach Van led chaotic lives due to their **drug misuse**. Ruhama has noted that this particular cohort of woman may not access the full services offered, particularly those available in education and development. Ruhama has proactively engaged with low threshold drugs services to ascertain what kind of interaction with education best suits the client needs, and with this in mind developed a number of once-off workshops that women could access without having to sign up for regular classes.
- Women who hold **Stamp 2** permission can study in Ireland. Ruhama worked with a number of women in 2011 who paid substantial fees to learn English but could not maintain these classes because they were required to move around in prostitution (typically go 'on tour' every 6-8 weeks). Ruhama offered a number of women flexible English classes which could take place with a one to one tutor when they were in Dublin; they would have assignments to complete when they were outside Dublin which would be reviewed on return.
- Education may not have been a large part of women's lives before entering prostitution but Ruhama offers career guidance so that women can plan a future which may include education.

**Chart X: Number of Women Achieving the Following Outcomes in 2011**

*Chart X* illustrates the various outcomes in relation to women engaging in education and development opportunities with Ruhama during 2011.



### 3. RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement is a unique feature of Ruhama's service delivery. Ruhama has a dedicated worker who assists women to secure housing and accommodation, which suits their individual needs. Women are supported in accessing social welfare entitlements and benefits as well as negotiating the necessary paper work involved.

**"It was all a bit overwhelming at first but the resettlement worker showed me how to fill in all the forms and she showed me where to go so it got easier."**  
~ Jenny (not real name)

Each case can be complex and challenging. Some women have been in the asylum process with an allowance of only €19.10 per week for a number of years and find themselves faced with having to secure private accommodation. Other women have lost their accommodation, and in some cases, their benefits because of past chaotic drug use or other life challenges and need to renegotiate the system. In 2011, 22 women availed of Ruhama's resettlement service.

**20 women were successful in receiving benefits/entitlements**

**14 women moved to private or transitional accommodation**

**"Even after I had my own place, the resettlement worker spent time with me looking at bills and showing me how to budget my money."**  
~ Martha (not real name)

**21 women developed budgeting skills for managing their households**

#### *Barriers for Women Accessing Housing*

- Women searching for accommodation in the private rental sector find accessing benefits increasingly difficult. Women receive a deposit from their community welfare officer but only after they make a request and have an address. Landlords however, will give the property to the first person who can pay the money up front, creating an impossible situation for women who come from direct provision, as they are not allowed work and only receive €19.10 per week.
- New regulations regarding registration for housing means that since the beginning of May 2011, women have been receiving letters from Dublin City Council stating that they are 'not eligible' to go on the housing list as they 'do not have the required 5-year residency status' namely a '**Stamp 4**'. This creates difficulties in relation to women qualifying for rent allowance as they are expected to have a letter from their local housing authority before they will be considered for rent allowance, thereby generating a '*Catch 22*' situation.
- Ruhama advocates with the relevant authorities to try to ensure positive outcomes for women on an individual basis. However, a systematic change is required to acknowledge and remove these barriers for those migrants coming through the Irish Immigration system.

***"I finally have a place that I can call home; I like doing it up and keeping it nice – I feel safe there."***  
~ Jackie (not real name)

#### 4. STREET OUTREACH

In 2011, a team of 25 people comprising both staff and volunteers, carried out street outreach in the 'red light' districts of Dublin on **102 nights** (357 hours). The van workers met with **60 women**, commonly on multiple occasions. Nineteen of these women also engaged with Ruhama's in-depth casework service.

The uptake of casework through referral from the street outreach service has increased by **217%** since 2010.



**The Street Outreach Van (women pictured are not clients of Ruhama)**

**2010: 6** women met in Street Outreach engaged with Ruhama's Casework  
**2011: 19** women met in Street Outreach engaged with Ruhama's Casework

The Ruhama Van is a purpose adapted vehicle, providing a non-judgemental, safe space where women engaging in street prostitution can sit and access information, get referred to casework or other agencies if they wish, or just have a listening ear along with a hot drink and snack.

*"I'm just here to make the rent – this is my first time out, my partner spent the social welfare"*  
~ Roslyn (not real name)

It is impossible to provide a highly accurate statistical analysis of the women supported through the van. This is due to the varying nature of the engagements with the van whereby in-depth interviews/assessment are not in keeping with the informal open engagement with women which allows them to set the tone or focus of the discussion with the van worker. What we are able to accurately reflect however, is the broad experiences of women in prostitution who we meet.

Each individual woman met has a set of experiences, thoughts and feelings unique to her but there is a commonality in the daily reality for women involved in on-street prostitution. The following are just some of the main issues that have affected women engaged in street prostitution in 2011.

*"I hate being out here. I just need one job and I'm out of here."*  
~ Claire (not real name)

## *Violence*

One of the most prevalent issues faced by women in on-street prostitution is threat, or actual experience of violence. Women have experienced:

- verbal threats and intimidation
- robbery
- physical assault with weapons (by buyers/pimps)
- conflict with other women involved in prostitution
- buyers bringing them to remote places, threatening not to pay them and abusing them
- members of the general public (both male and female) who have driven about in groups in cars throwing eggs, bottles and water at women
- sexual assault rape
- being strangled

The street is not the only place these women are vulnerable to violence; many reported domestic violence and some spoke of physical and sexual assault in their own communities by men or groups of men. Some women also spoke of their experiences of sexual abuse as children.

## *Reporting Crime and Security*

- The policing of street prostitution, particularly on the Northside of Dublin has in recent times targeted the buyers for arrest while focusing more on the welfare and safety of the women themselves. The presence of Gardaí was consistently noted throughout the year either on foot, in car or undercover.
- In relation to reporting crimes against them, women spoke more positively in 2011 of the Gardaí when they felt their reports had been taken seriously, and affirmative or even preventative action had been taken. However, some women cited negative experiences in reporting a crime in the past as a reason to not want to report a more recent crime.
- Ruhama, in collaboration with women themselves and the two other agencies who operate street outreach to women in prostitution in Dublin (HSE Women's Health Service and Chrysalis Community Drug Project) facilitate sharing of information between women and the Gardaí relating to dangerous individuals on the street who target women in prostitution. Distribution of alarms and discussion of strategies to try to minimise risk of attack are also a part of the work; however, there is simply no way for those who are the victims of crime to always effectively prevent attacks occurring where there are individuals motivated to perpetrate harm.

## *Drugs/Alcohol and Homelessness*

- Drug and/or alcohol usage is common amongst women who access the outreach van. Women frequently comment that they felt they could not come out and face prostitution without alcohol or a mind altering substance. For many, the funding of their addiction is the primary motivation for engaging in prostitution.
- On a number of occasions women were heavily intoxicated and intervention was required by Ruhama workers to ensure that women received medical treatment or assisted to get home safely.
- A number of women were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Some women were facing eviction particularly in circumstances where they were finding it difficult to cope with day to day life. In Dublin, and indeed across the country, there is a serious shortfall of "women-only" emergency accommodation to meet the needs of women (often with chaotic needs) who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes. Women express serious concerns about their vulnerability in mixed gender hostels.

## Health

- Women spoke frequently of both their poor mental and physical health in relation to their experiences of prostitution and also more generally.
- Several women presented with mental health challenges and on a number of occasions women spoke about feeling suicidal or having suicidal tendencies. There were occasions where immediate intervention was required to seek medical assistance. Women spoke about their difficulties in accessing mental health services.
- A small number of women were pregnant while involved in prostitution.

## Entering/ Returning to Prostitution

- While most women entering street prostitution for the first time in 2011 appear to be doing so primarily to fund addictions (their own, and sometimes their partners), Ruhama has also noted a small number of women re-entering prostitution after some years exited. Commonly, those who had not been out for a number of years said that their drug dependency was what initially got them into prostitution but they've returned due to another financial need. For any woman who has been in prostitution in the past, the vulnerability to re-enter is always present. Some women reported having re-entered to finance rent or other pressing debts but in order to cope with being in prostitution were finding themselves re-entering addiction also.
- Notwithstanding the particular experience of women re-entering prostitution, when any women spoke about being involved in prostitution their attitude was unanimous: "I hate doing this," "I don't want to be doing this," "This is not me – this is not who I am." Providing exiting support for women is a critical part of Ruhama's model of work.

*Ruhama's support focus to women in these situations has primarily been for caseworkers to collaborate with them and advocate for social welfare benefits and housing services. The objective is to resolve the most pressing financial needs for these women, who report finding a return to prostitution extremely difficult from both a safety and mental health perspective, and who wish to exit as soon as possible.*

## One Woman's Testimony – 'The Paradox'

Every year, Ruhama tries to ensure that the voices of the women we engage with are represented. There are so many different experiences of prostitution: trafficking, the indoor 'escort' industry, and the experience of street prostitution. In this year's report, we are privileged to have the searingly honest words of Miriam (*not real name*), who shares her testimony about the challenges of addiction and prostitution. Her piece, entitled '*The Paradox*' speaks volumes about the isolating, harmful experience of not just addiction, but prostitution itself, and the need for society not to turn their backs on those who may be at their lowest ebb.

## *The Paradox*

“Just get clean, do a detox”; “Well you wouldn’t have to do that if you didn’t take drugs”; “It’s your choice to stay there, nobody’s forcing you”. Society was making those statements on the assumption that I actually lived in the same world as them, that I saw it the same way but as an addict I did not, and as a prostituted woman I certainly didn’t. For in my world of addiction (heroin/cocaine), my thought process had become unraveled, my mind was consumed with a need that over-shadowed everything. As an addict, I was already aware of my place in society, for I was now among the most hated and feared, and yes I realise many addicts inflict a lot of pain and fear within their families and the community in general, but many too are a product of their environment for which no proper infrastructure has ever been installed to create real options and instill a sense of self-worth and value. Unfortunately in Ireland we are, and always have been prepared to wait until the damage is done.

For me as an addict, I was fortunate with an education, a work ethic, a basic sense of right and wrong, but obviously my life was not perfect; my self-esteem/worth was lost somewhere as I picked heroin up at 33 years of age. In fact it was the set of values I was raised with that actually brought me to the street, as I had an expensive habit but crossing the line into crime, robbery, etc. was not an option for me, but I knew I had a valuable commodity for I had a female body which I could sell.

And so the paradox begins, at first you believe you can be strong enough to cope for a short time until you sort your mind out, figure out getting clean. I had a sick child at home so she was my priority, I was her full-time carer. I never believed when I walked out on the street that first night that it would not only own me within a very short time but that it would take from me everything I thought I once was. Initially it does what it’s intended to do; it pays for your habit but other things were happening that I wasn’t fully aware of at the time. I was now completely cut off from family; the shame was too much for them. I hadn’t a friend in the world that could maybe remind me of who I was. My only human contact was with the men who bought me and the women who sold themselves beside me. That isolation is painful but the most dangerous thing for me was I had become comfortably numb – I had to, and how I did that was increase my heroin habit in order to remain numb. Although I never got stoned, I always had enough inside me to shut out what I couldn’t face.

And then the inevitable happens – rape/sexual assault. For me it came in the form of a gang rape that lasted what seemed like forever, and in many ways it will, for from that night on, I no longer lived, I just existed, and not only did I continue to see the world in a different way, I no longer saw humanity. And heroin now became not just something I needed to physically function and stay somewhat numb, it was now the oxygen which I needed to breathe. And the worm has now turned. You now take heroin to cope with being bought, where it began with selling yourself to cope with heroin.

Welcome to the paradox that unfortunately very few of us escape from, I am one of those lucky few and have somehow managed to turn existing into living again; but, it took an incredible amount of inner strength and tears, some of which I have still to shed, backed up by support from a team of people who believed in me.

*~ Miriam (not real name)*



## Policy Work

Ruhama works to influence policy changes relating to the issues of prostitution and sex trafficking. Our policy work is informed by our front line services and we are particularly concerned with policies which impact negatively on women affected by prostitution; primarily those which act as contributing factors in women's entry into prostitution, or act as a barrier in their exiting out of prostitution. We continue to advocate for the rights and protection of women who are victims of sex trafficking.



**Gerardine Rowley,**  
**Communications & Policy Manager**

### *Election Manifesto*

Ruhama sought to have the issues surrounding prostitution and sex trafficking on the agenda of the next Government by launching an election manifesto, which was sent to all the political parties and independent candidates seeking election. Our election manifesto remains a live document and part of our ongoing advocacy with policy makers.

#### **Summary of Election Manifesto 2011**

##### **1. Legislative Change**

- a) The Government to acknowledge prostitution as harmful and adopt a Swedish legislative framework, which criminalises the purchase of sex by buyers and decriminalises the selling of sex by prostituted people.
- b) To enact Spent Convictions legislation, which would include the crime of soliciting by women involved in prostitution.
- c) To enact legislation to address the role of technology in advertising and organising prostitution.

##### **2. Support Services for Women Affected by Prostitution and Human Trafficking**

- a) Resource NGOs and other support services to help women exit prostitution.
- b) Appropriate accommodation for victims of trafficking.

##### **3. Prostitution and Sex Trafficking – A Policing Priority**

- a) Increased resources for Gardaí to effectively combat prostitution and sex trafficking.

### *Turn Off the Red Light*

Ruhama is a core group member of the Turn Off the Red Light campaign which was launched in February 2011. The campaign is run by an alliance of civil society organisations, unions, NGOs and individuals. The campaign has the support of over 50 organisations and its aim is to end prostitution and sex trafficking through lobbying the Government to introduce legislation to criminalise the buying of sex.

As core group members, Ruhama has been involved in organising and promoting the campaign. We have taken part in political briefings informing policy makers of the harm of prostitution, the prevalence of organised criminality within the trade and the importance of legislation to curb demand.



In September 2011, Ruhama, in partnership with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, co-hosted a visit to Ireland by representatives of the Swedish & Norwegian police to highlight how the police enforce legislation in countries where the purchase of sex is a criminal offence. During their visit, the Swedish police had a closed meeting with An Garda Síochána and gave presentations to an invited group at a roundtable meeting in the afternoon. Ruhama was one of the speakers at this session.



Left: Jonas Trolle and Patric Cederlof from the Swedish police



Right: Theo Dorgan (Chair of campaign launch) and Diarmaid Ó Corrbuí (Chair of Ruhama 2011) at the launch of the TORL campaign

### *Submissions to State Departments*

Each year Ruhama meets with officials from the US State Department and supplies information on the issue of sex trafficking in Ireland. This information is incorporated in their annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report.

The Department of Justice and Equality, Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) carried out a mid-term review of their National Action Plan in 2011. Ruhama contributed to this review and highlighted the unequal access to the Administrative Procedures for victims of trafficking (ie victims in the asylum process are not allowed access) and the State's refusal to choose a human rights approach in granting victim's protection (the state's protection stipulates co-operation with a criminal investigation and does not grant protection on humanitarian grounds)

Ruhama represent at and contribute to a number of forums, including:

- AHTU Working Groups X 3 (*National Referral Mechanism, Awareness Raising Group and Sexual Exploitation Groups*)
- National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women (*Dept. of Justice*)
- Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women (*Sarah Benson is currently the Irish expert for the EWL Observatory*)
- Women's Human Rights Alliance
- South Inner City Local Drugs Task Force – Care and Case Management Steering Group

## Communications

Ruhama is committed to raising awareness of the issues surrounding prostitution and sex trafficking with the public, relevant professionals and policy makers.

Key messages in our communications work include; dispelling the myth that prostitution is harmless, highlighting the extent of the Irish sex trade and recommending specific policy changes to address the issue. Another key message is making our service known to women involved in prostitution. This focus is even more pertinent in recent years, given the increased number of migrant women in the Irish sex trade, finding themselves in a foreign land and unaware of local support services.

We have seen some progress through an increased awareness and vigilance by the public on the issue of human trafficking. Our public profile has also increased referrals to our service.

### Media Work

Ruhama has an active media presence, which includes responding to interview requests and issuing press statements. During 2011, the launch of our Statistic's Report and the Turn Off the Red Light campaign, along with various criminal cases and Garda operations, created a lot of media coverage, discussion and debate on the issue of prostitution and trafficking, with Ruhama as a key contributor.



Above: Sarah Benson – Ruhama CEO speaking on RTE's iWitness

Some of the highlights for the year included interviews on RTE Radio One 'Today with Pat Kenny', RTE TV News, Today FM 'The Last Word', a two day feature article on human trafficking in the Irish Examiner and three day feature on human trafficking in the Evening Herald to name a few.

With the expansion of the sex trade to every county in Ireland, prostitution has become an issue of concern on local radio and in provincial papers. An increasing and substantial amount of Ruhama's media work is with the provincial media.

### Social Media

Ruhama has embraced social media and have started up active Facebook and Twitter accounts which have a constantly growing following. These accounts facilitate an engagement with a broad range of people and groups with an interest or a stake in the issue of prostitution and trafficking both in Ireland and overseas.



You can find Ruhama on Facebook and Twitter

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ruhama/184601381504>

<http://twitter.com/RuhamaAgency>



## *Students*

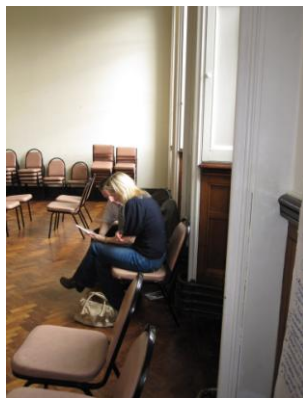
With limited resources, Ruhama tries to respond to requests for interviews, information and talks from students at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level colleges.

A network has been established with Belvedere College and the Catholic University School in Dublin. Ruhama gave talks to senior boys in these schools and the students supported the work of Ruhama through fundraising and donating Christmas hampers. A welcome development from these networks is the introduction of a module on prostitution in the RE curriculum by Belvedere College.

## *Training*

Ruhama provides training on the issue of prostitution and sex trafficking to a range of voluntary and statutory organisations. Priority is given to requests by front line professionals who may encounter women affected by prostitution in their work.

In 2011, Ruhama developed and delivered an in-depth pilot training course on the issue of prostitution to members of An Garda Síochána and the PSNI. This pilot course was co-ordinated by the NBCI (National Bureau for Criminal Investigation). Ruhama staff and Gardaí from Operation Quest, who are experienced in policing organised prostitution, were co-trainers. Following its success, the training will be rolled out twice a year to members of the Gardaí and PSNI.



Training was also provided to managers from RIA (Refugee Integration Agency) hostels in Waterford city and Ruhama gave input at the Garda Anti Human Trafficking in-service training.

Pictures: During the Garda training in policing prostituting participants were split into small groups to work on exercises



## *Conference and Seminars*

Ruhama was invited to speak at a wide range of conferences, lectures and seminars in 2011 including:

- Garda Seminar on Organised Prostitution held in Templemore and attended by officers from all over the country.
- The Soroptimists International Newry & Mourne Conference on Human Trafficking
- The North Inner City Domestic Violence Action Group
- Foyle Women's Aid, Derry
- Royal College of Surgeons Ireland – Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery

## Volunteers

Volunteering is an undertaking that can demonstrate the strength of a society. It is a powerful display of the regard in which we hold others. Individuals come together as a community in an effort to enact positive change no matter how large or small and to demonstrate that each person matters.

It is difficult to fully assess the vast impact that volunteering has on Irish society as a whole, but for Ruhama the huge role volunteers play in our organisation is tangible.



Tara Brown -  
Volunteer Coordinator

In 2011, **52** volunteers were part of the Ruhama team across a broad spectrum of areas such as one to one tutoring, outreach, counselling, holistic therapies, administration, IT support, career guidance, housing support, fundraising and communication.

*“I am very proud to say that I am an Outreach Van volunteer with Ruhama! I have been volunteering for a few months at this stage and am finding the experience hugely rewarding. In the outreach van we offer support to women involved in on-street prostitution. That can be through a cup of tea and a chat on a cold night or by helping women to take the first steps towards exiting prostitution by way of an introduction to Ruhama’s dedicated case working staff.*

*Initially I was anxious about the prospects of driving a large van around Dublin’s “red light” district late at night but I had no need for any concern as new volunteers receive comprehensive training over the course of a couple of months and undergo an induction period where they are paired with experienced staff and volunteers.*

*On a personal level, I cannot speak highly enough of the people I have met through my work with Ruhama. There really is a diverse range involved from all backgrounds and walks of life, whether it be the women we meet on the street or the other volunteers and permanent staff and my life is richer from having met them all.”*

*~ Alma (Ruhama Volunteer)*

Volunteers accumulatively contributed **3,107 hours** of their time and skill to supporting our work, which equates to **444 working days**. Without the support and expertise of volunteers, Ruhama's ability to deliver some frontline services would be greatly reduced or in some cases, not possible at all.

Volunteers are an integral part of our team and like any paid professional working in this area it is vital that volunteers are adequately supported in their role. Ruhama holds regular team meetings, consistently reviews our best practice and policies, and offers comprehensive volunteer training.

Even within the volunteer team, Ruhama is limited by staff resources as we are deeply mindful of the necessity to sufficiently support our volunteer's work. In the current economic climate, it is important to maintain a balance, which ensures the quality of services and also the quality of the volunteer's experience with Ruhama.



Volunteers work at the Ruhama Stand at the International Bazaar



Volunteers attend the day out at the Chester Beatty Library



Ruhama stand at European Year of the Volunteer

2011 marked the European Year of the Volunteer where across Europe we celebrated the contribution of volunteers at local and international level. In addition to our annual volunteer lunch, Ruhama held a coffee and cake morning in the Silk Road Cafe followed by a tour of the Chester Beatty Library to mark this occasion and recognise the central role of volunteers.

Furthermore, we participated in the European Year of the Volunteer Roadshow where our Volunteer Coordinator had the opportunity to showcase the work of Ruhama's amazing team of volunteers to the general public.

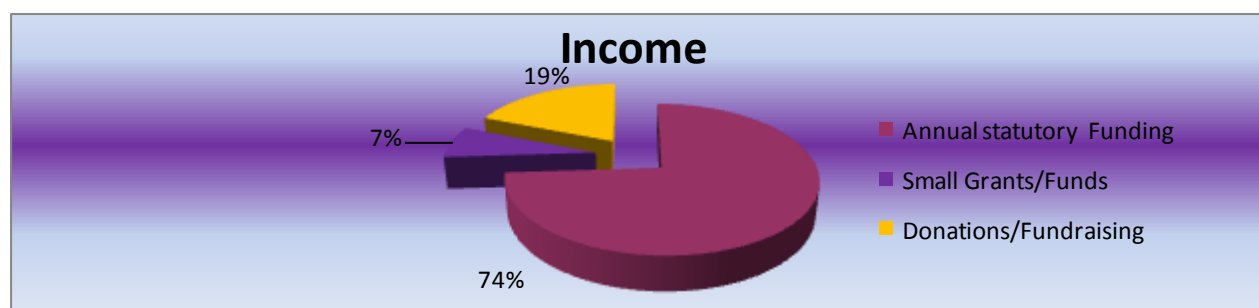
Ruhama would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteer team for their committed support and the difference they make in the lives of the women they work with, their colleagues, and the community as a whole.



# Financial Summary 2011

Ruhama – A company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital

<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2011</b>		
	<b>2011€</b>	<b>2010€</b>
<b>Annual Statutory Funding</b>		
<i>Anti Human Trafficking Unit Dept. of Justice &amp; Equality</i>	225,000.00	250,000.00
<i>HSE</i>	129,560.00	136,379.00
<i>SICLDTF</i>	50,636.00	50,636.00
<i>SICLDTF EMERGING NEEDS</i>	51,724.00	51,724.00
Other Small Grant Income	43,960.00	123,165.00
Donations/Fundraising	116,796.00	104,796.00
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>617,676.00</b>	<b>716,700.00</b>
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>		
Operating surplus/(Deficit)	4,401.00	(10,030.00)
<b>Other Income &amp; Expenses</b>		
Interest receivable	40.00	68
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	4,441.00	(9962)



<b>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2011</b>		
	<b>2011€</b>	<b>2010€</b>
<b>Fixed Assets – Tangible assets</b>	3,936	3644
Debtors	17,748	15,275
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>260,100</u>	<u>241,788</u>
	277,848	257,063
<b>Creditors: amounts falling Due within one year</b>	(117,837)	(138,201)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<u>160,011</u>	<u>118,862</u>
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<u>163,947</u>	<u>122,506</u>
<b>Capital and Reserves</b>		
Income and Expenditure account	126,947	122,506
Deferred reserves	<u>37,000</u>	-
Funds	<u>163,947</u>	<u>122,506</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012 and signed on its behalf by directors Catherine Joyce and Mary Scully.

### *Financial Supporters*

Ruhama has a lengthy, positive and productive history with its statutory funders and values the continuing relationship with them – particularly in the current challenging economic climate.

The organisation has, in response to reductions in statutory funding over the last three years affected a rigorous cost saving initiatives to try to maximise frontline service provision while making savings on outgoings. Ruhama operates in a highly streamlined fashion and as our shortfall between our statutory funding and our outgoings will remain for the foreseeable future we must continue to actively protect our service through application for small grants and of course fundraising.

We would like to pay tribute to all our generous donors and fundraising supporters. There are individuals and organisations that have been stalwart in their contribution to Ruhama’s success, in some cases over many years. Our donors and supporters range (to name a few) from corporate bodies, international funders, community foundations, women’s groups, artists of music, literature and theatre, religious congregations, and individuals who have held events and raised sponsorship. Every euro raised, granted or donated is hugely appreciated and we hope that this warm support will continue into the future when it will be more important than ever.

*To explore the many ways in which you can support Ruhama, including making a donation, please visit our website [www.ruhama.ie](http://www.ruhama.ie) and click the “SUPPORT RUHAMA” button on the home page, (if reading this in soft copy you can access this page directly here: <http://www.ruhama.ie/page.php?intPageID=235>), or phone our fundraiser on 01 8360292.*

### *Independent Auditors’ Report to the Members of Ruhama*

In our opinion the financial statements:

Give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the company’s affairs as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 and of its surplus for the year then ended, and have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2009.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the company. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

**Signed by:** Liam McQuaid  
**Duignan Carthy O’Neill**  
**Chartered Accountants**  
**9<sup>th</sup> May 2012**