



**Annual
Report
2020**



“Looking back, I could never have imagined that I would be trafficked. That it would happen to me. But it did. Like it does to so many women. But I also would never have thought I would escape and survive this agony. But I did. Like so many others do too. At this point, I am starting to be me again.”

***Bunmi's Story pg 10**

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Our Vision

Ruhama's Vision is of a world free of the 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

Ruhama's values guide our behaviours. Our interactions with one another, our engagement with our service-users and our collaboration with other stakeholders are integral to our work. They underpin our organisation's culture and demonstrate our commitment to social justice.

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



2020 was a year of unprecedented challenge, necessary innovation and lasting change for Ruhama and other frontline services across the domestic, sexual and gender-based violence sector. The arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic to Ireland and the resulting public health measures changed the landscape for all service providers and the environments of our service users in many unique ways. This report outlines the ways in which our service changed and grew to adapt and support some of Ireland's most vulnerable cohort.

In times of crisis, a connection to our organisational identity formed the bedrock of the continuation of our service provision. 2020 saw Ruhama engage in multiple discussions about the vision, mission and values of our organisation going forward. While this work was completed in early 2021, the time spent considering these identifying aspects of the organisation in 2020 firmly crystallised a commitment to service provision that developed throughout the pandemic. In its early stages, when the practicalities of virtual supports, online learning and connection seemed overwhelming, it was the core values, identity of Ruhama and staff commitment that provided the conviction to the organisation to deliver pathways to maintaining our frontline service. As a testament to that conviction, this report has been laid out in five sections, each highlighting these core values: quality, collaboration, diversity, dignity and integrity.

In line with our priorities for 2020, Ruhama advanced a number of key strategic goals across the organisation. Substantial work was carried out on identifying the direction and purpose of the organisation in consultation with the Ruhama staff and Board trustees. Ruhama also worked towards more robust governance structures at Board level.

A key aspect of service provision developed during the year was the expansion of the Trauma Therapy Service. In addition to this, geographical expansion of Ruhama to the Midlands Region increased the reach and accessibility of services outside of Dublin. Work was ongoing throughout the year at national and international level to advocate for the needs of our service users and to contribute to policy formation that meets those needs.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who support Ruhama as funders, donors or strategic partners to enable Ruhama to deliver our frontline service. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the staff and volunteers of Ruhama for their exceptional and unwavering dedication to providing a responsive, holistic and empathetic service to some of the most marginalised women in society.

IAN CARTER
CHAIRPERSON

CEO Report



2020 marked an extraordinary year both in Ruhama and globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Every element of our organisation came together to meet the needs of service users, to solidify existing support pathways and to create new pathways in response to emerging needs. As an organisation, we have come through the COVID-19 pandemic having overcome challenges, reached new heights of innovation and having brought lasting positive change to the organisation.

Over 2020, our services adapted to a format of blended service provision. While this presented challenges in the form of overcoming the digital inequality divide for service users and in adapting to online working for staff, there were positive outcomes also. The migration to online service provision meant that physical location was no longer a potential barrier for service users to participate in group

work or 1-1 sessions that may have previously been scheduled in Dublin. During the summer of 2020, Ruhama was working with service users in every county in Ireland. In addition to this digital expansion, Ruhama also expanded a physical presence with the commencement of a caseworker in the Midlands region.

Our trauma therapy and counselling services also expanded over 2020, with a combined 392 hours of counselling provided to 41 service users availing of the service. Additionally, it became clear with the emergence of the pandemic that our service users experienced particular vulnerabilities, and this prompted a need for an emergency outreach service during 2020. This included the delivery of 152 emergency care packs, 129 good grub packs and 51 IT/telecoms devices to assist service users in bridging the digital divide to avail of services inside and outside Ruhama.

Awareness raising and training efforts continued throughout 2020. In addition to the “We Don’t Buy It” campaign, the introduction of lockdowns and the emerging data that highlighted an increase in the prevalence of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, Ruhama joined with other colleagues in the sector in the #StillHere campaign to highlight the continued presence of support organisations. Throughout 2020, Ruhama delivered training in prostitution and human trafficking to nearly 500 participants. The aim of the training is to create an awareness of how to identify the signs of sexual exploitation and crucially, how to signpost individuals seeking support. This is critical because sexual exploitation remains very hidden and unspoken about within society. This was further evident during the pandemic leading to Ruhama’s report, “Taking the Pulse on COVID 19, The Experiences and Needs of Women in Prostitution during COVID 19: Forgotten Voices of the Pandemic”.

Although 2021 still presents a lot of unknowns and more uncertainty, I am looking forward to the further development and growth of Ruhama. We plan to move to a more suitable premises and develop service user engagement across the whole organisation. We will also run a trafficking campaign later in the year. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the staff, volunteers, Board trustees, funders, partners and supporters. In times of uncertainty and facing into the unknown of COVID-19, our shared sense of purpose, exemplary commitment, and dedication to our service users came to the fore in so many different ways. Finally, I wish to pay tribute to our service users whose resilience and courage drive us onwards and inspire us to reach new heights every day.

BARBARA CONDON
CEO

Executive Summary

2020 was a year like no other that presented both challenges and opportunities for Ruhama. The COVID-19 pandemic led to changes in all areas of the organisation from frontline service provision to awareness raising and the provision of training. Ruhama engaged with 305 women over the course of the year, 129 whom were suspected victims of human trafficking. 2020 showed very clearly that despite public health restrictions, the demand for sexual services persisted – and with it, vulnerable women found themselves in incredibly difficult situations.

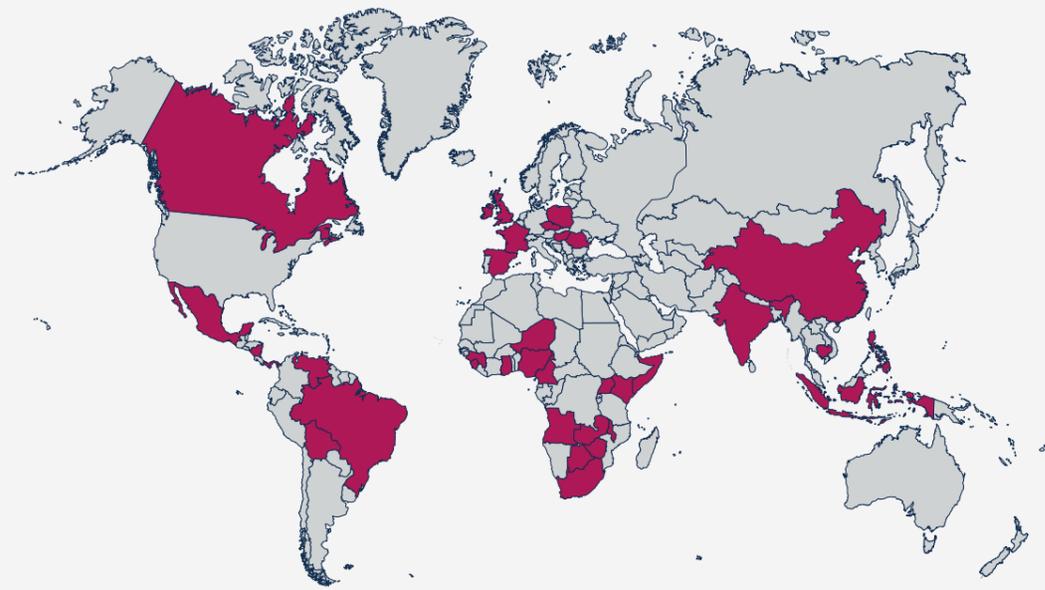
Of the 305 women who engaged with the service over 2020, 267 women engaged with the casework team across a range of areas, including emotional supports, information around rights and entitlements, access to justice, housing supports and assistance with drug and alcohol issues. Recorded outcomes from these interventions were overwhelmingly positive such as 98% of service users reporting an improvement in their wellbeing and 97% of service users who were victims of human trafficking reporting a greater awareness of their rights and entitlements.

Developing our counselling and trauma therapy service was a key strategic priority for 2020. 41 service users accessed the counselling and trauma therapy service, amounting to 392 hours of counselling. Using the CORE-OM feedback and evaluation tool, a significant improvement in the reduction of anxiety, depression and a reduction in the risk of suicide by 7.5% was reported.

179 service users engaged with our education and development team, 107 of whom were victims of trafficking. Service users accessed groups and classes, guidance counselling and 1-1 support in engaging with education and development opportunities. Ruhama volunteers contributed 769 hours to provide 1-1 sessions, groups, classes, and workshops to the service. The Bridge to Work programme supported 52 women throughout the project. This included providing job coaching, assistance in commencing employment and supporting women to maintain employment.

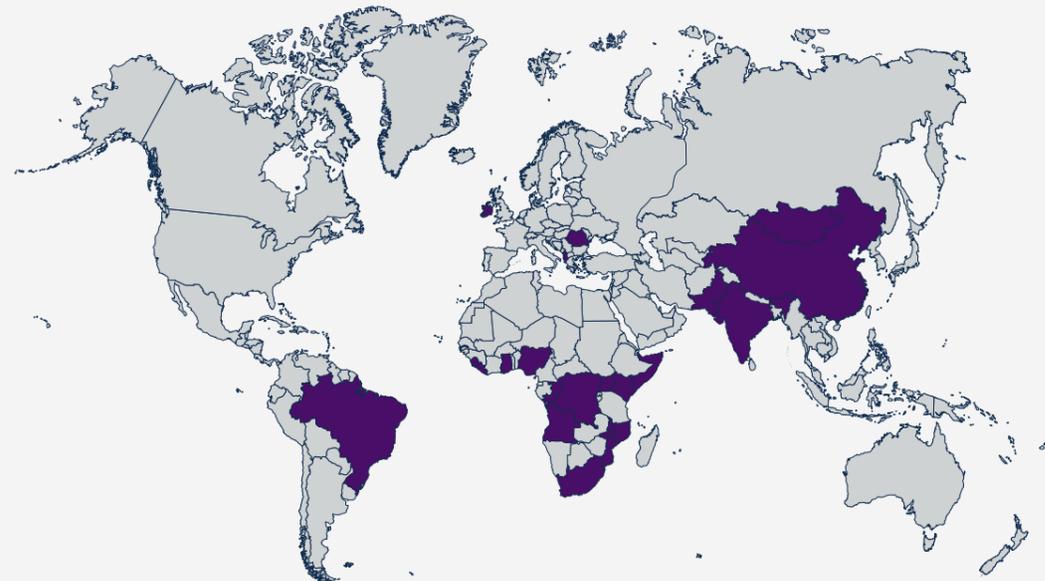
Awareness raising efforts and the delivery of training adapted to almost entirely digital formats as the pandemic took hold globally. Ruhama participated in campaigns such as “We Don’t Buy It” and “#StillHere”, two campaigns highlighting key issues that became even more pertinent throughout the pandemic – that the demand for sexual services is a key driver in sexual exploitation and that Ruhama remained open as a frontline service throughout the pandemic to support an extremely vulnerable cohort. Training on prostitution and sex trafficking reached almost 500 participants over 2020, providing them with the tools to identify and support potential victims of sexual exploitation as well as educating the public about the realities of the sex trade in Ireland.

Women in Prostitution Engaged with Ruhama



Ireland	45	Bolivia	2	Cambodia	1	Malaysia	1
Brazil	25	Cameroon	2	Canada	1	Mauritius	1
Nigeria	18	China	2	Czech Republic	1	Mexico	1
Zimbabwe	18	Hungary	2	Equatorial Guinea	1	Nicaragua	1
Romania	13	India	2	Eswatini	1	Niger	1
Botswana	4	Kenya	2	France	1	Panama	1
Poland	4	Philippines	2	Ghana	1	Somalia	1
Republic of South Africa	4	Spain	2	Hong Kong	1	United Kingdom	1
Sierra Leone	4	Zambia	2	Indonesia	1	Venezuela	1
Uganda	3	Angola	1	Malawi	1		

Victims of Human Trafficking Engaged with Ruhama



Nigeria	57	Malawi	4	Angola	1	Mexico	1
Zimbabwe	16	Sierra Leone	3	China	1	Moldova	1
Ireland	6	DRC	2	Gambia	1	Mozambique	1
Albania	5	Kenya	2	Georgia	1	Republic of the Congo	1
Brazil	5	Mongolia	2	India	1	Somalia	1
Ghana	5	Pakistan	2	Kosovo	1	Uganda	1
Romania	5	Republic of South Africa	2	Liberia	1		

2020 Human Impact

305

Women Supported

129

Victims of Trafficking

29

New to the Service

176

Women in Prostitution

68

New to the Service

500

Training Participants

267

Women in Casework

179

Women in Education and Development

52

Women in Bridge to Work

41

Women in Counselling & Psychotherapy

50 Nationalities

Accessed Ruhama Services in 2020

485

Outreach Packs Delivered

1,692

Volunteer Hours

36

Women Received Crisis Support

*Bunmi's Story

I was born in Oyo State, Nigeria. I was lucky to get sponsorship to go to college where I studied International Relations. Shortly after I graduated, I got a job, which involved a lot of foreign travel.

This was a really exciting experience for me. On one of my trips abroad, I met a woman – Grace - who suggested that I stay in the UK: that I would get a more highly paid job there. While I loved my job, it was true that my salary was low. She was right that I would probably get more money in the UK, even doing a job requiring lower qualifications.

Back in Nigeria some months later, Grace rang to ask if I was interested in a childcare job, with a good family, in London. It was an opportunity I could not refuse. For several months, everything was perfect: the work, the money, the new life. I was shocked and upset when the family said they no longer needed me.

I had to go home. I was confused and unsure of what to do next. I could not find employment. A friend introduced me to a woman, Auntie Bose, who had family in Europe. If I wanted to go back, I could get a job in their African restaurant. They were always looking for staff. They would arrange all the transport and I could pay them back.

I flew to London and then on to Belfast, which I did not know at all.

Following instructions I had been given, I waited to be collected by a man who brought me to Bose's family.

Her cousin, Mama Jane, explained that unfortunately, there was a problem with the job. I was so upset. What was I going to do? Mama Jane reminded me that I now had a huge debt: at least €25,000 for the journey and weekly food /rent money. She told me I could now work for her instead. This would involve having sex with men for money. I was horrified and tried to plead with her. In the end, however, I had no choice. Mama Jane took my passport, bag and phone, which left me feeling alone, vulnerable, frightened.

And so, the nightmare began. I – and another girl in the house

- had to have sex with so many men every day and night. It was

sickening and humiliating. If I refused. I was beaten. How would I

ever escape this hell?

But eventually, incredibly, I worked out a plan and escaped. But the following years were so difficult. Living under a false name, getting casual work, trying to keep alive and safe. I had physically fled the abuse and violence, but it haunted me.



I struggled on until I got ill. A HIV diagnosis was dreadful - but in the process, I disclosed to my doctor what had happened to me. One positive from the disclosure was that I ended up coming to Ruhama. With the help of my caseworker, who constantly encouraged me, I started to heal. She reassured me that I would get through it. She helped me understand my rights; introduced me to the counsellor, supported me to make a report to the Gardaí; and provided me with basic necessities (care packs, food).

2020 was a challenging year for everyone. But having so many Ruhama groups online was a blessing. It gave me a space to continue the healing process, a chance to work on my wellbeing; it helped me feel less isolated; it gave me hope and confidence. I learned so much and I met new people.

Listening to other women – like myself – in Ruhama who have done so much to move on has been inspiring and challenging

It has made me realise that if they could do that, then maybe I could too. That has given me hope and joy. I am now absolutely certain that I can retrain as a professional again - but in this country. Life is brighter now. I have a place in college and am excited at the thought of studying again. I can now allow myself set goals for the future. I am volunteering in my community and love being able to give back to others at this tough time. I have started to live again.

Looking back, I could never have imagined that I would be trafficked. That it would happen to me. But it did. Like it does to so many women. But I also would never have thought I would escape and survive this agony. But I did. Like so many others do too. At this point, I am starting to be me again.

Quality

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

Ruhama is committed to the provision of a high-quality service throughout all aspects of the organisation. In 2020, public health restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic led to some limitations on the face-to-face development of the inter-personal relationship and trust building that forms the basis of referral and service provision at Ruhama. While challenging, the impacts of COVID-19 on Ruhama's services became the basis of major innovation across all sectors of the organisation. Virtual casework, consultations, counselling sessions and workshops became the norm and throughout the year, Ruhama worked with service users in every county in the Republic of Ireland. Undoubtedly, public health measures gave rise to a blended style of service provision that has provided the organisation with long-standing tools for greater expansion and service delivery across counties that we had previously not been able to reach.

Casework

In 2020, 267 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. Throughout 2020, the Ruhama casework team conducted 971 meetings with women across a variety of areas and made over 6,000 telephone contacts / interventions with service users.

The Ruhama casework team worked with service users to co-create goals around the following areas:

- Health: Physical, Mental & Sexual
- Addiction
- Family
- Relationships
- Self-Care
- Legal
- Selling Sex
- Human Trafficking
- Spirituality
- Financial
- Accommodation

Throughout the pandemic caseworkers continued to meet service users face to face when delivering emergency care packs and emergency issues/assessments where remote working was not appropriate.



Michela Panichella, Caseworker engaging with a Service User

Education and Development

In 2020, our Education and Development team worked with 179 women across every county in the Republic of Ireland.

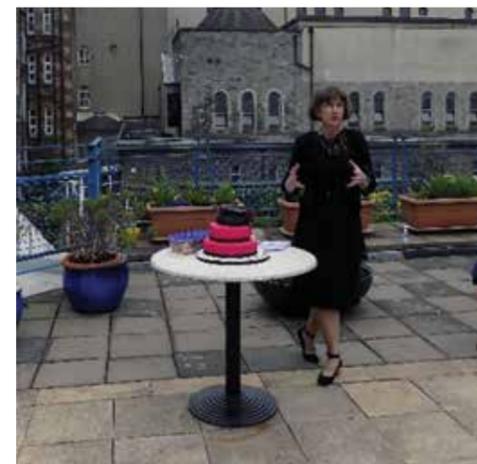
The pandemic world posed new challenges for our education and development team, stretching the service further than we ever thought possible. It pushed us to innovate and develop, to respond in new ways to new realities. The online mode of delivery necessitated by public health measures highlighted the sharp digital divide for service users. Many service users had no laptops or tablets, many had poor internet connectivity, and several were completely new to technology. All the while trying to access services in some difficult physical circumstances such as shared living spaces in Direct Provision centres or caring for babies, toddlers, and children often attempting homeschooling simultaneously.

A number of groups were also launched over 2020 in response to the needs of service users, that are now embedded in our service provision following positive feedback from participants:

- Parent peer support group
- Coding and Web-Design course, run in partnership with CODEC
- Education Information Evenings: focusing on the education system in Ireland, college courses, applications for further and higher education courses, scholarships, funding

Key Outcomes from One-to-One Education and Development Services

- 55% increase in service users compared to 2019
- 50% increase in class attendees
- 61% of service users participated in QQI certified courses



Anne O'Keeffe, Education and Development Co-ordinator

Group Work

Over the course of 2020, Ruhama staff and volunteers delivered/facilitated 21 groups and classes across a myriad of areas ranging from education, self-care, employment, and coding/IT skills. A number of service users attended multiple groups/classes.



Trish O'Brien, Education and Development Assistant

Group	Attendees	Outcomes
Capacitar	51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learnt a range of wellness practices • Learnt how to practise self-care techniques • Experienced increased sense of wellbeing
STEPS	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gained insight about what blocks them from reaching their potential • Engaged in more positive self-talk • Improved self-belief/self-efficacy
Self-Care Group*	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced isolation & increased support network • Increased self-care techniques • Improved mental health & well-being
Shaping Your Future	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified skills, strengths and interests • Improved job-seeking skills • Became more confident, hopeful and motivated about moving forward
WRAP	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed their own wellness plan as a personalised tool to achieve personal wellness goals • Increased control of their physical and mental wellbeing
Preparing for College	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gained information about the CAO application process
Parent Peer Support*	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced isolation during lock down • Increased parenting skills • Increased peer network

Group	Attendees	Outcomes
ICT	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gained basic internet skills • Gained a better understanding of positives and challenges of ICT • Increased confidence using ICT
Career Development (PayPal)	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gained an overview of the work of PayPal • Increased their knowledge on career development (CV's, interviews, workplace skills) • Built network
Education Information*	16	<p>Participants obtained information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of third level and further education establishments • Various college entry routes • The SUSI grant process • Financial assistance for further learning
Craft Workshop	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of achievement • An improvement in well being and calmness
CODEC Coding Workshop*	5	<p>Participants increased their knowledge and skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Development • Big Data & Analytics • Project Management • Basic HTML visual studio code and GitHub

* Denotes a group that was run for the first time in 2020



Michael Rossney, Interim Bridge to Work Project Co-ordinator speaking at the 2020 Graduation Event for Bridge-to-Work

Bridge to Work

The Bridge to Work programme¹ engaged with 52 service users over the course of the project, providing support throughout the employment process from the point of application to gaining employment. This project was supported by the Irish government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020. The project was due to conclude on June 30th but due to the unforeseen complexities of COVID-19, it was extended until the 30th of September 2020.

In 2020, COVID-19 had a drastic effect on the employment market in Ireland. The Central Statistics Office noted that at its peak, over a million citizens were availing of pandemic related social welfare payments. This difficult environment for employers and employees alike meant that accessing the employment market became increasingly challenging. Our Bridge to Work Co-ordinator met this challenge head-on by assisting service users who lost their jobs during the pandemic to gain alternative employment in other sectors such as grocery, retail and healthcare. Our Bridge to Work Co-ordinator developed new online coaching services during the pandemic. The Co-ordinator also developed a series of online workbooks as an employment guide toolkit for securing and maintaining employment in Ireland.

The specific objectives of the programme were to:

- Develop and implement a package of holistic supports which promote personal development and work experience for service users.
- Provide educational and job coaching support for women
- Create work placements for service users and enable access to employment
- Breakdown barriers to employment and inclusion

Key outcomes noted from the Bridge to Work Programme Evaluation

52 service users were enrolled on the programme and availed of mentoring. 17 availed of targeted job coaching and successfully obtained employment through the programme. Five group courses of Shaping Your Future were funded by the programme. The last was run online in Spring 2020.

Following the successful evaluation of the Bridge to Work programme, the Department of Justice has agreed to fund this programme for another two years. We look forward to developing Bridge to Work in 2021 and engaging new potential employers in order to secure a diverse range of work placements and potential employment for women.

¹ Strict Entry Criteria for programme prohibited the inclusion of any service user who was already on a Job seekers payment or who was undocumented in Ireland.



Counselling and Trauma Therapy

41 service users availed of 392 hours of counselling and psychotherapy – an increase of 50% from 2019.

It goes without saying that 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 30 years of 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.

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. With this in mind, Ruhama staff trained in ‘Trauma Informed Care’ in 2020. In addition, in the last quarter of 2020, Ruhama substantially increased the capacity of the counselling team to eight therapists from diverse backgrounds and trainings so that we could deliver a specialised trauma informed counselling service for women impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking.

Aims of Counselling and Psychotherapy

The first aim of therapy is to make the client feel safe. Trauma steals the client’s sense of control over her own life; therefore, a fundamental principle of recovery is to restore autonomy to the person. Ruhama’s trauma approach is developed from Janet (1886) and Herman (1992) phased approach to trauma treatment.

Counselling in Ruhama does not operate in a vacuum and is part of the service user care pathway. It is one component of a wrap-around care plan. Because all staff in Ruhama are trauma informed, the service user will be working on phase 1 – safety and stabilisation in every other programme in Ruhama simultaneously. This multi-disciplinary approach allows the service user to develop a sense of stability across many aspects of their life, promoting self-regulation, self-worth and healing.

Ruhama therapists do not encourage service users to move out of phase 1 into phase 2, working with the traumatic memories until the person feels safe, experiences stability, and has a good level of day-to-day functioning. It must be stated that structural and environmental factors that are outside the person’s control can seriously curtail their chances of feeling safe and stable. Women who are waiting on an immigration application decision and those who are living in Direct Provision are likely to remain within phase 1 until these issues can be resolved.

Outcomes

Data is gathered pre, interim and post-therapy, using the Core-Outcome Measurement. Service users who attend therapy experience a statistically significant reduction in negative symptoms of Trauma, including hyper-arousal and intrusive thoughts as well as a reduction in anxiety, body pain, depression, and risk of suicide. The data also shows that participant daily functioning increases and as a result there is an overall quality of life increase.

1. Establish Safety & Stabilisation

2. Processing & resolution of trauma memories

3. Integration - that is applying what was learned in phases 1 & 2 into living

*Carmen's Story

I was born in Colombia, in a region where there was a lot of violence. I come from a very big family. I worked for many years as an administrator in a company. But I always had the dream of going to university and getting a degree in psychology.

"I wanted to study psychology because I wanted to help people.

In my country, there is terrible violence and people have suffered so much. Lives, families, communities have been torn apart and people need help to heal and build a better world."

Eventually I moved closer to that dream. I enrolled in a college with a great reputation and started studying, while working at the same time. I loved it. By this time, I was also married and we were working extremely hard to pay our rent and bills.

Many of my siblings had emigrated. One of my brothers who was in Spain suggested I move there. He was doing well and reckoned we would have a much better life there. We thought about it and made the decision to leave – which we did before I had finished by degree.

Life in Spain was calmer. We got a mortgage and bought our own apartment. We were delighted when our two children were born. We were earning more than in Colombia but the cost of living in Spain was much higher.

A few years later, our marriage broke down. It was even more difficult then. I was struggling all the time on my own: trying to work, to look after my children and to pay for everything. I could not sleep with the stress. How were we going to survive?

A friend suggested that I move to Ireland to work as an escort. It was what her sister was doing. I was initially shocked at the idea as it was not something I would have considered doing. "But the more I thought about it, the more I realised it might be the only option left for me.

"In 2015, I came to Ireland for the first time. I knew little or nothing about the country or the language. I made contact with my friend's sister and she helped me get started. I moved around the country a lot – Dublin, Naas, Galway, Limerick, Cork..."

As an escort, it is very expensive to cover all your costs (rent, ads...). It was hard to make enough money to pay for everything. Still, I struggled on and managed to pull together enough money to pay my costs and send some money home for a few years.

I would go home to Spain as often as I could. My life there is completely different. It is with my children. I am a mother and soon to be grandmother there. I hate being away from them for long periods of time, but it is the only way I can make enough money for my family.

"With the pandemic, life changed completely – for the worse.

Suddenly, there was almost no work. I could not travel back to Spain easily. But I still had to pay bills here: for advertising, for rent, for food and for sending money back home. I was terrified about what I was going to do."

Then I heard about Ruhama from one of my friends here in Ireland. She told me about the support she was getting. I was so desperate I thought that I might contact them. Maybe they could help me in some way too. I finally decided to make the call.

"Over this last year, Ruhama has helped with practical things like food, health issues, self-care supplies and vouchers. Without that, I do not know how I would have managed. I was earning almost nothing and I did not qualify for a state payment."

Ruhama is also helping with English. I have been here for many years, yet I speak very little English. I was always meaning to learn but when you are moving around, having clients at all different times and trying to earn money, going to class is not the priority.

I am an escort here in Ireland, but it is not what I want to do forever. I would like to have other options; to get a different job where I can make a good living. Yet how could I ever get any other work here if I do not have the language?

"Life is still hard. But my situation is certainly better than it was in 2020. I feel supported. I feel less alone. I feel more hopeful about the future."

Starting English classes this year has been good. I am happy to have sessions that suit me. I have now finally managed to use Zoom properly. At times it is so frustrating. Learning a language is not easy. It is going to be a very, very slow process.

Collaboration

We work in partnership and collaborate to achieve our mission

At Ruhama, we know that we go further together. Collaboration is a cornerstone of our work and the people we support, our service users, are key stakeholders and are central to these partnerships. From a frontline perspective, collaboration is a key part of the co-creation of care plans with service users. Co-creation and collaboration in this way provides opportunities for service users to have autonomy over the direction of their care and ensures that a highly personalised service can be provided to secure the optimal outcomes for them.

Partnerships with private sector companies provide for exchanges of skills, expertise, and development opportunities. Ruhama also delivers training to and receives training from external bodies to mutually benefit other frontline services. Ruhama also collaborates with other state and non-state entities in our advocacy work to pursue essential policy and legislative outcomes. In addition, the organisation collaborates to raise awareness about the needs and life experiences of service users and other women who are engaged with the sex trade in Ireland.

Networks and Forums



Members of the Ruhama team, with colleagues across the Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Sector meeting with Val Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Ruhama participated in a number of networks and forums at national and international level in order to advance the advocacy and policy position of the organisation. This is in addition to participating in dialogues with institutions on issues related to sexual exploitation such as the Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe, the institutions of the European Union and the United Nations.

At international level, Ruhama participated in the Coalition Against Prostitution (CAP), the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) and the European Women's Lobby (EWL). In conjunction with colleagues around the world, Ruhama used these platforms to lobby public policy stakeholders on the needs of victims of sexual exploitation, to exchange information on the best practice methods of service provision and to deepen our mutual understanding of the operation of the equality model across the world.

At national level, Ruhama participated in numerous forums on the topic of human trafficking and domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, namely the Observatory on Violence Against Women, the Human Trafficking Stakeholders Forum and the monitoring committee on the Second National Strategy on

Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. Over the course of 2020, Ruhama contributed to work on the reform of the National Referral Mechanism and other supports for victims of human trafficking.

Ruhama in the Midlands

Ruhama expanded our physical presence across Ireland by establishing a presence in the Midlands in collaboration with Merchants Quay Ireland and the HSE in late 2020. The expansion of services in this way facilitated greater access for service users to the crucial supports that Ruhama provides. While the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a move to online provision of service where possible, it is undeniable from the perspective of availability of services that having a physical presence in locations outside Dublin is crucial to the accessibility of the service.

Training

Ruhama delivered training in the area of prostitution and sex trafficking to almost 500 participants from a range of different sectors. Ruhama provided 9 training sessions throughout 2020 on the topics of "Know Sex Trafficking and Prostitution" and "Trafficking Training". The aim of these training sessions was to raise awareness about the Irish sex trade and equip participants with the knowledge to recognise potential victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Participants reported several positive outcomes from these training sessions, including:

- Developed more in-depth understanding of sex trafficking and prostitution in Ireland
- Increased awareness and knowledge in how to deal with the signs of human trafficking
- More informed about the law
- Felt better equipped to be victim centred and make sensitive interventions
- Had a greater awareness of the services available hence better able to refer victims to appropriate services

In late 2020, the Department of Justice funded Ruhama to deliver trafficking training. This included content relating to knowing the signs of sex trafficking and trauma informed responses to suspected victims of sex trafficking. This training will be rolled out to frontline professionals over 2021.

Advocacy and Awareness

Throughout 2020, Ruhama engaged with different campaigns relating to: reducing demand for sexual services, informing the opinions of potential sex buyers about the realities of the sex trade in Ireland, and raising awareness about the availability of services relating to violence against women throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



Barbara Condon, CEO (top left) contributing to SERP Webinar on Sexual Exploitation during COVID-19

“We Don’t Buy It” Campaign

Ruhama led the “We Don’t Buy It” campaign with our partners, the Men’s Development Network, the Sexual Violence Centre Cork, and SPACE International. In the aftermath of the introduction of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, partners felt it was timely to again raise awareness of the illegality of paying for sex in the context of reducing the demand for sexual services.

While the initial planning phases of the campaign took place in 2019, much of the execution of the campaign took place over 2020. Following the Dublin launch of the campaign in early March 2020 and the subsequent emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the campaign altered its direction, targeting digital media and radio advertising, and culminating in a webinar in December 2020 in conjunction with the 16 Days of Activism. This webinar on the topic of “Prostitution Under COVID-19” took a multidisciplinary approach to examining the impacts of COVID-19 on the sex trade in Ireland and the frontline and state responses to it. The webinar had more than 100 attendees from Ireland and overseas. A recording of the webinar can be accessed on the Ruhama YouTube page.



Barbara Condon, CEO, speaking at the launch of the We Don’t Buy It campaign



[L-R] Seán Cooke (Men’s Development Network), Mary Crilly (Sexual Violence Centre Cork), Rachel Moran (SPACE International) and Fiona Broadfoot (Survivor-Activist)



“#StillHere” Campaign

With the introduction of lockdowns and associated public health restrictions, it became clear that a sustained campaign to raise public awareness about the availability of services relating to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence was essential. Ruhama engaged with partners across the sector to promote the #stillhere campaign to assure potential service users and the Irish public that services were still available.

Furthermore, this digital, radio, and print campaign emphasised that the restrictions associated with public health measures and the lockdowns could potentially exacerbate the issues that drive women to engage in our services and engaged the Irish public to increase awareness of these issues.

Policy and Submissions

2020 was an important year for the policy and legislative environment for combating sexual exploitation in Ireland. Following the passage of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, a review of the legislation was commenced in 2020. The review provided an opportunity for Ruhama and other stakeholders in the area to provide written submissions on the operation and implementation of the law to date, emphasising positive outcomes to date and opportunities for development in this area. Some key points of Ruhama’s submission include:

- The introduction of the Equality model in Ireland is a progressive legislative development and is to be welcomed
- It is disappointing that the first conviction for sex buying did not take place until 2019 and emphasised that victim centred, gender-based approach to policing is essential to advancing more convictions
- Convictions for sex buying bring awareness to the full decriminalisation of those selling sexual services and this is crucial to fulfil the normative aspect of the law
- Our service users now feel more confident approaching An Garda Síochána and experience better outcomes when doing so
- Comprehensive statutory exit pathways are essential to the implementation of the law as envisaged and successfully implemented in other jurisdictions

The Impact of COVID-19 on Women in Prostitution

In late 2020, Ruhama produced a comprehensive report entitled, “Taking the Pulse on COVID 19, The Experiences and Needs of Women in Prostitution during COVID 19: Forgotten Voices of the Pandemic”. The report highlights that Covid-19 has had and continues to have a detrimental impact on the lives of women who sell sex on the street and in off street settings such as apartments, brothels, and selling images online. The pandemic has made a bad situation worse with the choices for those currently in prostitution becoming more limited and it has also led to more women being at risk of entering prostitution. Furthermore, the women involved have faced significant challenges in areas such as lack of finance, housing, social isolation, and safety issues but are also facing

additional challenges in accessing support due to stigma and fear of disclosing their specific circumstances. The link to this report is available on the Ruhama website.



Key recommendations from the report include:

- Access to finance via an emergency fund and an assistance payment scheme for women seeking to exit prostitution
- Provision of access to suitable housing and accommodation, including gender specific accommodation for victims of trafficking
- Increasing provision of exit supports for women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking This includes;
 - increased access and opportunities to education and development programmes
 - increased provision of adequate trauma therapy and trauma informed responses
- Effective implementation of the current legislation, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 with a particular focus on adequate resourcing of An Garda Síochána to ensure enforcement of the legislation
- Ongoing awareness raising campaigns, education, and research opportunities to bring about change in the sex trade in Ireland
- Implementation of a Spent Convictions Bill so that previous convictions of women in prostitution can be expunged
- Eradicating women’s poverty in Irish society as a matter of urgency to eliminate one of the key push factors for women entering the sex trade

Diversity

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

Investment in diversity at Ruhama is rooted in a wider equality that is embodied across the whole organisation. We practice accessibility and inclusion in all our teams – frontline provision, administrative support, and volunteers. We acknowledge that many of our service users can face stigmatisation in Irish society for a variety of reasons and believe that by role modelling diversity through our organisation, we can help to combat that stigmatisation. We hold a fundamental belief that the key tools to advancing a diverse organisation are accessibility and range of services, inclusion of service users in the formation of policies and services, and actively seeking out diverse support teams who can bring that experience to bear in relating to service users.

Service User Engagement

Throughout 2020, Ruhama undertook to develop a formal service users forum with the assistance of an external facilitator funded through the South Inner City Drug and Alcohol Task Force and staff. Ruhama work with one of the most marginalised groups in Irish society and are committed to working collaboratively to maximise the involvement of service users in the design and delivery of services. We recognise that appropriate and meaningful service user engagement and consultation can enable greater inclusion and significantly improve the quality of service delivery in organisations.

“You showed me that a different life is possible and that I have rights”

A series of workshops were conducted over the autumn/winter period to assess what this group could look like and identify some of the envisaged outcomes of the group in 2021. Participants acknowledged that there was service user engagement across the organisation in some less formalised ways, but that a potential specific group aimed at greater service user involvement in the assessment of service and formation of policies would be a positive step forward. Provision was duly made at the end of 2020 for the continuation and expansion of the group.

The invaluable insights of service users throughout this process have created an important pathway for a more inclusive service and we all look forward to seeing the outcomes from this group in 2021.

Many service users were facilitated to take part in research projects with third parties in order to bring their lived experiences to the centre of research relating to the area of commercial sexual exploitation. In addition to participating in external research projects, Ruhama service users also provide important expertise relating to Ruhama’s own advocacy work. Putting Ruhama’s service users at the centre of our advocacy work is vital and ensures that the policies that we advocate for are reflective of the needs of survivors. This ensures that the policies and legislative frameworks we advocate and lobby for are those that best serve the needs of survivors and those still active in the sex trade.



Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of Ruhama. Volunteers contribute enormously to the running of the organisation across multiple areas and over the course of 2020, Volunteers contributed almost 1,700 hours of volunteering time to Ruhama – the equivalent of 242 workdays. Our volunteer team represents men and women from diverse backgrounds that bring a myriad of skills to bear at Ruhama. Diversity and inclusion is utilised throughout the organisation to expand and improve the delivery of services at Ruhama to the benefit of service users, staff and volunteers.

Volunteer Hours at Ruhama

Area	Format	Hours
Tutoring	1-2-1	497
Befriending	1-2-1	407.5
Counselling/ Trauma Therapy	1-2-1	301
Outreach	1-2-1	215
Guidance Counselling	1-2-1	195.5
Parent Peer Support/ ICT	Group Class	68
Holistic and Craft Workshop	Group Class	8

Support and professional development provision for volunteers:

- Boundaries training every 6 months
- Group Supervision for counselling volunteers
- One to one supervision for volunteers
- Monthly volunteer support meetings
- Development and training opportunities - ongoing

We wish to extend our most sincere thanks to the volunteers who have contributed so much through their time, dedication and commitment to Ruhama.

Dignity

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

Dignity is a cornerstone value at Ruhama and it is of fundamental importance that our service users, staff, and volunteers feel valued and respected in all their interactions with, and within Ruhama. Outreach and emergency responses to the pandemic were the key ways Ruhama assisted in the creation of dignity for our service users by providing financial, mental health and other supports.

Outreach

Ruhama's outreach service over 2020 had a number of strands; the late-night mobile van service which operates in the 'red light areas' in Dublin, prison outreach to the Dochas Centre, and contact with services which offer support to key groups (homeless, addiction, social services).

Outreach work is key to the dignity of our service users. When it comes to service users who may not have ready access to Dublin or the Ruhama offices, outreach is a vital link for service users to the supports they need.

Volunteers were involved in the important work of street outreach via the Ruhama outreach van, and 18 service users were seen in the first quarter of 2020. Unfortunately, as a result of the public health restrictions, the outreach van was unable to conduct street outreach for the remainder of the year. Outreach volunteers continued to support Ruhama and our service users by contributing to the delivery of emergency care packs which will be outlined in more detail in the next section.

Towards the end of 2020, Ruhama began the recruitment process for an assertive outreach caseworker with a specific remit related to developing outreach. The aim of this role is to outreach and in-reach to hard-to-reach cohorts across multiple areas and sites.

Emergency Response to COVID-19

COVID-19 presented unprecedented issues for our service users that necessitated additional emergency supports from Ruhama. Service users had difficulty in providing for basic needs for themselves and their families and meeting other financial obligations.

Ruhama responded by providing the delivery of emergency care packs. The packs provided essential items including sexual health packs, financial assistance (vouchers), food items, clothing items and IT tablet/mobile phone(s). These emergency care packs were funded by the Department of Justice. During 2020, we delivered the following across 23 counties:

- 152 Emergency care packs
- 129 Good Grub food parcels
- 30 IT Tablets
- 12 Phones
- 9 Laptops

"I am overwhelmed by your kindness and zeal to make sure that I am comfortable. God bless you. Today you brought genuine smile to my face"



"Thank you so much for the vouchers, I just received it today, you really don't know this kindness from Ruhama has supported us for the Christmas. It is a life saver."



Emergency Care packs delivered to service users throughout the pandemic

“It was so unexpected to get the package. I cried when I opened it. I felt someone cared. And it meant I had more to share with my daughter.”

We also assisted with food hampers and vouchers at Christmas. We acknowledge that Christmas can be a very challenging time for service users financially. Over this period, with support from our funders and volunteers, we delivered:

- Christmas Food Hampers (donated by students at CUS, Leeson Street)
- Christmas Care Packs (funded by a private donor via The Community Foundation of Ireland)

During 2020, Ruhama also continued to provide emergency supports to women in crisis situations where immediate and critical support was required. 36 service users received assistance with urgent accommodation and housing needs, and emergency packs containing toiletries, pyjamas, underwear, and other necessary items were also provided.

According to a survey monkey questionnaire issued during 2020, 96.6% of service users said they were happy with our response to meeting their needs during the pandemic.

“My 9-year-old daughter had been using a tiny bicycle and wrote to Santa asking for a new bike for Christmas but I couldn’t afford it as they cost over €100. With the help of the Ruhama vouchers, my little girl got her bicycle from Santa this year.”

Integrity

We demonstrate integrity, accountability and transparency in our practices, organisational systems and structures

Strategic Priorities

The Chief Executive delivers a progress report on strategic priorities implementation actions at Board meetings. Ruhama’s four key strategic priorities for 2020 were:

1. Strategic Direction and Purpose
2. Governance/Control and Assurance Provisions
3. Service Delivery
4. Policy

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 2020. 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 outsourced a governance specialist to review the governance of the organisation and the performance of the Board and implemented the recommendations suggested.

Ruhama has fulfilled all obligations under the Lobbying Act 2015 and to the Charities Regulatory Authority.

Ruhama signed up to the Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland in 2018 and is working towards compliance with the Charities Governance Code.

In order 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 ten occasions during 2020. Board sub-committees met quarterly with the exception of the Audit, Finance and Governance subcommittee who met 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 2020 the following Board standing sub-committees met:

Audit, Finance and Governance

Karen McMenemy (Chair), Myriam McLaughlin, Colm O’Dwyer, Dr. Nusha Yonkova, Donal Dunlop (replaced Karen McMenemy following her resignation) and Barbara Condon (in attendance).

HR

Billy Coman (Chair), Suzanne Farrelly and Barbara Condon (in attendance).

Premises

Donal Dunlop (Chair), Billy Coman, and Barbara Condon (in attendance).

Board of Trustees 2020

In 2020 there were thirteen Trustees who served on the Board of Ruhama;

- Colm Bowden resigned from the Board in February 2020
- Colm O’Dwyer resigned from the Board in May 2020
- Ian Carter joined the Board in May 2020
- Karen McMenemy resigned from the Board in July 2020
- Nora Ní Loinsigh joined the Board in July 2020

Board of Trustees	Meetings Attended (Eligible Meetings in 2020)	Audit, Finance, and Governance Sub Committee Meetings (Eligible Meetings in 2020)
Colm O’Dwyer (Chair)	5/5	4/4
Ian Carter (Chair)	5/5	
Noreen O’Shea	10/10	
Karen McMenemy (Secretary)	5/6	5/5
Nora Ní Loinsigh	4/5	
Myriam McLaughlin	10/10	9/9
Donal Dunlop	8/10	4/4
Colm Bowden	0/2	
Dr Nusha Yonkova	9/10	8/9
Billy Coman	9/10	
Suzanne Farrelly	10/10	
Ethna McDermott	9/10	
Dr Sam Gower	8/10	

Current Board Trustees



Ian Carter
CEO RCSI Hospital Group & CEO
Beaumont Hospital



Sr. Noreen O’Shea
Social Worker, Community
Coordinator in Limerick



Nora Ní Loinsigh
Barrister-At-Law



Dr Sam Gower
Clinical Director of Funded Care
Services, Midlands and Lancashire
Commissioning Support Unit



Carolann Minnock
Pro Bono Associate, Arthur Cox



Donagh O’Farrell
Finance Director, Siemens
Healthineers



Billy Coman
Former Local Authority Director of
Services

Financial Statement 2020

Income and Expenditure 2020		
Annual Funding	2020	2019
Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, Department of Justice and Equality	413,380	350,000
The Health Service Executive (HSE CHO6)	118,824	118,824
South Inner City Local Drugs & Alcohol Task Force (HSE CHO7)	100,824	100,824
European Social Fund/PEIL "Bridge to Work" project 2017-20	86,507	65,660
Other grant income	98,569	133,707
Donations/fundraising	148,819	162,899
Total income	966,923	931,914
Total expenditure	(1,034,325)	(849,582)
Operating surplus/(deficit) for the year	- 67,402	82,332
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019		
Fixed Assets	2020	2019
Tangible assets	22,020	13,057
	22,020	13,057
Debtors	51,730	22,304
Cash at bank and in hand	360,635	584,941
Total current assets	412,365	607,245
Creditors: amount falling due within one year	(196,398)	(314,913)
Net current assets	215,967	292,332
Total assets less current liabilities	237,987	305,389
Funds of the organisation		
Restricted reserves	537	10,170
Unrestricted reserves	237,450	295,219
Total Funds	237,987	305,389

Staff 2020

Over the course of 2020, there were some changes to our staffing team as it grew and developed. We wish to express our sincere thanks to all staff members who contributed to our work over 2020

POSITION	NAME
CEO	Barbara Condon
Head of Finance & Operations	Tomás McElhinney
Policy & Communications Manager (Resigned August 2020)	Amanda Keane
Policy & Communications Officer (Appointed September 2020)	Aimée Millar
Policy & Communications Intern (February - June 2020)	Ellie McMahon
Service Manager	Sheila Crowley
Caseworker (Resigned August 2020)	Maire Ní Shuilleabhain
Caseworker	Jennifer Roche
Caseworker	Poliana Aniculăesei
Caseworker	Michela Panichella
Midlands Caseworker (Appointed November 2020)	Clare Feely
Education & Development Co-ordinator	Anne O'Keefe
Education & Development Assistant	Trish O'Brien
Bridge to Work Co-ordinator (Resigned February 2020)	Elaine McGauran
Interim Bridge to Work Project Co-ordinator (April - September 2020)	Michael Rossney
Volunteer & Training Manager (Maternity Leave July 2020)	Neasa Ní Fheinneadha
Volunteer Manager (Maternity Cover)	Tessa Stockburger
Organisational Administrator	Nazanine Nolan
Receptionist (Resigned June 2020)	Jenny Bolton



Ruhama staff celebrating International Women's Day 2020

Staff Development and Training

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is strongly encouraged both internally and externally. In 2020 Ruhama provided and/or supported the following training for staff:

Training	
Motivational Interviewing	Psychometric Training in Education Assessment
Trauma Informed Care	Diploma in Traumatology and PTSD
Suicide Intervention	Media Training
Professional Boundaries in the workplace	Fire Warden Training
How to use the HSE Initial & Comprehensive Assessments & Care Plans booklet	Capacitar Facilitator Training
Work Planning and Logic Model	First Aid Training
Key Working, Care Planning & Case Management	Body Rights
Keeping Notes & Records	Understanding Trauma
Assessment & Care Planning	Certificate in Management Essentials
Governance Code	Professional Certificate in Fundraising 2020

Acknowledgments

Ruhama wish to acknowledge the following for their support throughout 2020:

- Department of Justice
- Health Service Executive (HSE Social Inclusion CH06)
- South Inner City Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (HSE CH07)
- European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Community Foundation Ireland
- JTI Ireland
- Ann Pratt Foundation
- Public Representatives
- Garda National Protective Services Bureau
- Garda Quest Team/Organised Prostitution Investigation Unit
- All NGO partners
- Donors & Fundraisers
- Jesuit Education Fund
- Paypal
- Codec
- Soroptomists Ireland

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



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
à Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service



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 [ruhama.ie](https://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.

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