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# Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution

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United for a world free  
from sexual exploitation

**CAP**<sub>INTL</sub>  
Coalition | Abolition | Prostitution

The logo features a large central purple circle containing the text. It is surrounded by three smaller circles: a red-to-purple gradient circle in the top-left, a purple-to-red gradient circle in the bottom-right, and a red-to-purple gradient circle in the bottom-left. Two thin horizontal lines extend from the right side of the large purple circle.

# Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution

The list of members and activities updated as of October 2017.

# Who we are

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## CAP international

The Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP International) is an **advocacy vehicle** for frontline NGOs and a **global convener for change**.

The **23 members of CAP International** provide **direct assistance to victims of prostitution and sexual exploitation** in Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, the Middle-East and Africa. Our members work with, or are founded by, **survivors of prostitution**.

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## Our mission

The **fundamental objective** of CAP International is **to advocate** for the adoption of 1) **domestic legislation** and 2) **international standards** that:

- eliminate sexual exploitation of women and girls;
- deliver effective protection, support and exit options to prostituted persons and victims of trafficking;
- empower frontline services and survivors of prostitution.

CAP international **empowers** its members in their capacity to obtain progressive legal reforms in their countries and to be heard internationally.

To do so, its members, with the expertise of its Secretariat, define the strategy and priorities of CAP international. Our General Assembly and Board are composed only with elected representatives of our member organizations. CAP international is thus an international abolitionist organization **effectively driven by its domestic NGO members**.

### **Our policy objectives:**

- Decriminalisation of prostituted persons;
- Protection, support and exit options for all prostituted persons;
- No impunity for traffickers, pimps and sex buyers;
- Criminalisation of the purchase of all sexual acts;
- Training for professionals, prevention measures and education for young people.

## Four strategic campaigns



### • **Human rights-based approach:**

The system of prostitution is a violation of human rights and a fundamental obstacle to gender equality. International human rights law recognises prostitution as such, and prohibits its exploitation. For States to respect their obligation to eliminate the exploitation of prostitution to respect human rights, they must implement abolitionist policies.

Our coalition advocates for the universal elimination of the exploitation of the prostitution of others, holding states accountable to their obligations in multiple international arenas, including UN Women, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).



### • **Access to decent work:**

Prostitution of others is not “sex work” but a lucrative system of sexual exploitation and abuse that jeopardises social justice and gender equality efforts. It is incompatible with worker’s rights and “decent work” as defined by the International Labour Organisation.

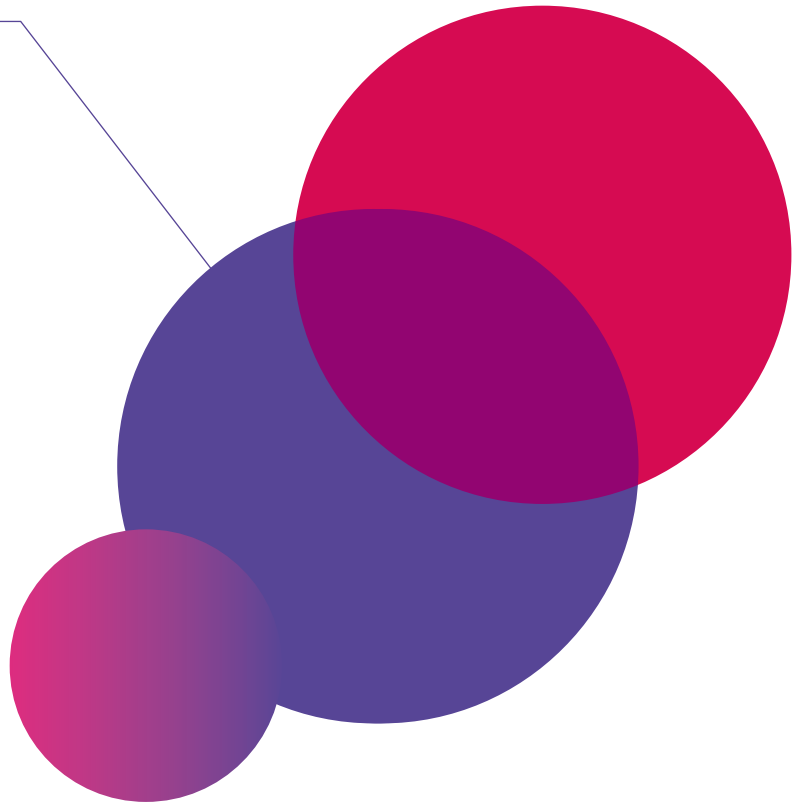
Our coalition works to identify and mobilise trade unions who work against sexual exploitation, and who see the system of prostitution as one of sexual exploitation, not “sex work”.



### • **Last girl first:**

All over the world, and throughout history, the most systemically disadvantaged groups have been overrepresented in sexual exploitation and prostitution. Prostitution is a highly gendered and patriarchal system that disproportionately impacts the poorest women and young children. Victims of incest and sexual violence, indigenous women and children, low caste communities, migrant women and children, and women and girls from ethnic minorities are still the primary victims of sexual exploitation by pimps, traffickers and sex buyers.

Our coalition works to identify, convene and mobilise the most vulnerable groups worldwide, from aboriginal communities in Canada to low-caste communities in India, who are disproportionately affected by the system of prostitution.



• **Parliamentarians for the abolition of prostitution:**

We believe in democratic processes indicating that citizens do not want the system of prostitution in their societies. Here, Members of Parliament play a crucial role in listening to their citizens and translating their calls into comprehensive policies.

Our coalition mobilises hundreds of parliamentarians across the globe to exchange best practices on the passing and implementation of abolitionist policies in MPs' respective countries.

## Membership and governance

CAP International's work is made possible by the collaboration between its members, the Board, and the International Secretariat.

At present CAP international is composed of 23 member organisations. Membership is open to all domestic frontline NGOs working to provide support to prostituted persons and to combat the exploitation of the prostitution of others.

CAP international develops strategic partnerships with existing abolitionist networks, NGOs and broader organisations that support the universal abolition of prostitution.

### Current members

- Apne Aap (India)
- Breaking Free (USA)
- Embrace Dignity (South Africa)
- Exit Prostitution Association (Finland)
- EVA Center (USA)
- Fondation Scelles (France)
- Iniciativa Pro Equidad de Genero (Colombia)
- KAFA (Lebanon)
- KFUKS/Reden (Denmark)
- La CLES (Canada)
- Maiti Nepal (Nepal)
- Medicos del Mundo (Spain)
- Malos Tratos (Spain)
- Marta Center (Latvia)
- Mouvement du Nid (France)
- People Serving Girls at Risk (Malawi)
- Ruhama (Ireland)
- South Kolkata Hamari Muskan (India)
- SOLWODI (Germany)
- Talita (Sweden)
- Unidos vs Trata (Mexico)
- Women@thewell (UK)



## Strategic partners

- Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)
- European Women's Lobby (EWL)
- Equality Now
- SPACE international

## Board

### *Executive Board*

Chair: **Sarah Benson**  
Ruhama (Ireland)

Vice Chair: **Rita Hernandez**  
Unidos vs Trata (Mexico)

Secretary: **Claire Quidet**  
Mouvement du Nid (France)

Treasurer: **Yves Scelles**

Member of Executive Committee:  
**Ghada Jabbour** KAFA (Lebanon)

Board Member: **Ruchira Gupta**  
Apne Aap (India)

Board Member: **Lynda Dearlove**  
Women@thewell (UK)

Board Member: **Diane Matte**  
La CLES (Canada)

Board Member: **Iluta Lace**  
MARTA Center (Latvia)

Board Member: **Philippe Scelles**  
Fondation Scelles (France)

## International Secretariat

Executive Director: **Grégoire Théry**

Communications and Campaigns Officer:  
**Zala Žbogar**

Pro bono advisers

Development Advisor for Latin America  
(pro bono): **Marta Torres Herrero**

Development Advisor for the USA  
(pro bono): **Heidi Phillips**

# Our analysis and our recommendations

## What the system of prostitution is all about

### **A form of violence**

- The vast majority of prostituted persons have suffered from violence, often sexual, before entering prostitution.
- The vast majority of prostituted persons are victims of many forms of violence while in prostitution (physical, verbal, sexual, psychological).
- The repetition of sexual acts without physical desire, but instead experienced as the consequence of financial need, inequality or as an exploitation of vulnerability, constitutes sexual violence in and of itself.

### **An exploitation of inequalities**

- Prostitution is a part of a long patriarchal tradition of making women's bodies available for men's benefit (droit du seigneur, rape, sexual harassment, "conjugal duties", etc.).
- Prostitution exploits multiple forms of inequality: men's domination over women, rich over poor, North over South, majority groups over minorities.
- Minority, discriminated and migrants groups are over-represented in prostitution all over the world.

### **A violation of human dignity**

- By placing the human body and sex into the realm of the marketplace, the system of prostitution reinforces the objectification of all women and their bodies. It is a direct violation of the physical and moral integrity of prostituted persons.
- Prostitution reinforces the domination of men over women, in particular the attitude that women's bodies are available and accessible, which is present in other forms of violence against women such as rape, sexual harassment and intimate-partner violence.



- The system of prostitution fuels and perpetuates trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation.
- Prostitution is a societal obstacle to establishing truly free, respectful and egalitarian sexuality.
- Prostitution is a direct violation of the physical and moral integrity of prostituted persons.

## ● A violation of human rights

- The United Nations Convention of 2 December 1949 adopted by the General Assembly states in its preamble that *“Prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purpose of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person.”*
- The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) asks States Parties to *“take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women”*.
- Further, prostitution is incompatible with articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which state that *“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”* and that *“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”*.

## Our recommendations

CAP international advocates for the adoption and implementation of policies and legislation that include the following:

- Suppression of repressive measures against prostituted persons;
- Criminalization of all forms of pimping and procuring;
- Development of real alternatives and exit programmes for those in prostitution;
- Support policies for survivors of prostitution;
- Prohibition of the purchase of a sex act;
- Policies of prevention and education, to promote equality and struggle against the commodification of human body;
- Development of prevention policies in the countries of origin of prostituted persons;
- Training policies for all actors involved in the implementation of these measures.

# Four years of major achievements and impact

Less than four years after its foundation, CAP international has been able to:



- Federate **23 frontline organisations** providing direct assistance to sexually exploited women and girls from 18 countries;
- Convene **two world congresses against the sexual exploitation of women and girls** in Paris and New-Delhi gathering hundreds of abolitionist participants from 25 countries;





- Organise **six side-events at the United Nations** with its member organisations;



- Mobilise the Governments of Sweden and France to hold the **two first States' sponsored abolitionist side-events** held within the UN official programme of CSW;



- Meet and mobilise **ten Ministers** (from Canada, India, France, Sweden, Belgium) one President (from France), and **dozens of Members of Parliaments**;
- Make **advocacy and public presentations in eight Parliaments** (Ottawa, Roma, Riga, Paris, European Parliament, London, Cape Town and Vilnius);



- Co-sponsor and participate in **twelve domestic advocacy conferences** in Madrid, Beirut, London, Riga, Mexico, Montréal, Paris, New-York, Roma, New-Delhi, Brussels;

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# Prostitution under International Human Rights Law: An Analysis of States' Obligations and the Best Ways to Implement Them

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- Release a legal analysis **report on “Prostitution under international human rights law”** in four languages (EN, FR, ES, and LT);

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**Prostitution et  
droits humains :**  
État du droit  
international  
et des obligations  
qui en découlent  
pour les États.

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**Prostitución bajo el  
prisma de la Legislación  
Internacional de  
Derechos Humanos:**  
análisis de las  
obligaciones de los  
Estados y de las  
mejores practicas  
de implementación

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**Prostitūcija  
starptautiskās  
cilvēktiesību  
likumdošanas izpratnē:**  
Valstu pienākumu  
analīze un labā prakse

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- **Media impact:** Dozens of articles in more than ten languages including outlets such as Reuters, the New York Times and El País

- Release a **monthly newsletter** sent to 2000 targeted contacts;

- Send regular **open letters and official contributions** (CEDAW, UN Women, Amnesty International);

- Develop **four strategic campaigns** on “The last girl first!”, “Decent work”, “Human rights”, “Parliamentarians for the abolition”;

- Mobilise **eleven trade unions in support for our campaign** aiming at promoting access to decent work, and not resignation in the face of sexual exploitation of women and girls;

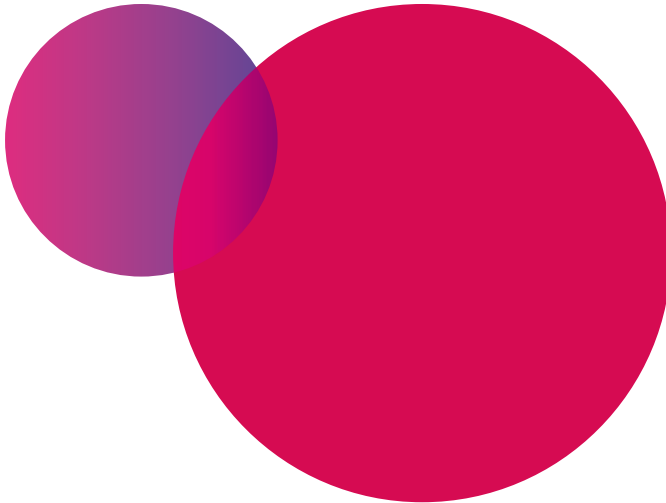


- Provide **powerful advocacy support for Yazidi survivor of sexual enslavement Nadia Murad** in New York, Paris, Brussels and Berlin.





CAP International's 23 members are based in 18 countries on 5 continents.





## Meet the coalition: 23 members

### Apne Aap Women Worldwide (India)



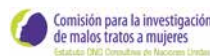
Apne Aap Women Worldwide is an Indian organisation working in brothels, red-light districts and caste-ghettoes of formerly nomadic groups trapped in inter-generational prostitution in Bihar, Delhi and West Bengal. Based on the Gandhian principles of Ahimsa (non-violence) and Antyodaya (uplift of the Last) and Ambedkar's notion of the Anataj - last born, it seeks to link the weakest, most marginalised Last Girl – the Antyajaa – to her basic needs like a safe space, school self-confidence, government issued identification documents and subsidies like low-cost food, housing, health care, legal protection as well as small friendship circles. Apne Aap (self-empowerment in Hindi), has touched over 20,000 lives in Bihar, Delhi and West Bengal, put 66 traffickers in jail and played a key role in the passage of India's first anti-trafficking law-Section 377 I.P.C. It was founded 14 years ago by journalist Ruchira Gupta and twenty-two prostituted women with the dream of a world where no woman could be bought or sold.

### Breaking Free (USA)



Breaking Free was established in October 1996 as a non-profit organisation serving women involved in systems of abuse, exploitation, and prostitution/sex trafficking. Founded by Vednita Carter, survivor of sexual exploitation, Breaking Free helps over 500 women a year escape systems of prostitution and sexual exploitation through advocacy, direct services, housing and education. Main offices are located in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a branch in Minneapolis. Breaking Free's doors are open to women throughout Minnesota and the United States.

## Comisión para la Investigación de Malos Tratos a Mujeres (Spain)



The Comisión para la Investigación de Malos Tratos a Mujeres (CIMTM) is a non-profit organisation founded in 1977 with the goal of eradicating all forms of violence against women in Spain. CIMTM has several programs dedicated at prevention, training and direct assistance to women and children. From its foundation, eliminating the exploitation of prostitution and trafficking in human beings has been a top priority of CIMTM. In a difficult context of trivialization of prostitution, we have successfully raised public awareness and political attention on the exploitative nature of prostitution.

## Comisión Unidos vs Trata (Mexico)



Comisión Unidos vs Trata has the vision of eradicating Human Trafficking in Mexico and Latin America, especially the sexual exploitation of women and girls. We advance with a three fold mission:

In designing and implementing prevention and education strategies, in the rescue, protection, rehabilitation and education of victims of this crime, and in over-seeing that the laws that sanction criminals and protect the victims of human trafficking are applied and strengthened. Comisión is committed to make the full circle of exploitation of women and girls visible: The trafficker, the intermediary and the consumer, and to lobby for the full criminalization of the exploiters as well as for the decriminalization, protection, restitution and rehabilitation of their victims.

## Embrace Dignity (South Africa)



Embrace Dignity is a South African service and advocacy NGO founded in 2011. South Africa is characterised by devastating levels of violence against women –rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse and domestic violence – in a context of high HIV/AIDS prevalence, economic inequality and unemployment. It stands with victims who have been rendered vulnerable to trafficking and prostitution by their economic and social status and supports their exit from prostitution. Embrace Dignity has developed and is piloting an exit programme with survivors of prostitution, advocates for demand focused legislation, and raises public awareness through speaking on public platforms and forming community partnerships.

## **EVA Center (USA)**



The EVA Center is a survivor led, social justice oriented program whose mission is to empower women who have experienced sexual exploitation, (prostitution, sex trafficking), to find solutions to the issues they face and exit the commercial sex industry. We also work to challenge public perceptions and strongly advocate for specialized, survivor led, strength based programming that increases awareness of the many socio-economic and situational factors contributing to women's and girls entry into the sex trade.

## **Exit Prostitution Association (Finland)**



Exit Prostitution Association (pois prostituutiostara ry) is working to diminish prostitution and sexual maltreatment. The main focus has been in preventive and advocacy work and participating in public debate. Counseling work is growing in all target groups.

Youth Exit (Nuorten Exit) works on the domain of primary and secondary prevention of sexual maltreatment and compensational sex of adolescents. The preventive work is done both online and in different public environments. Youth Exit provides awareness-raising workshops for secondary school students and trains multidisciplinary professionals working with adolescents, mainly in the capital area of Finland. On the national level, preventive work is done in forms of online-counseling and social media. The focus of work is on empowerment by promoting sexual self-determination and sexual rights, and providing knowledge.

Youth Exit is a permanently funded function of Exit Prostitution Association.

Exit Prostitution Association also works among substance abusers (Usva-hanke) between the age of 18-25 providing counseling regarding sexual violence, different forms of maltreatment and prostitution.

## ● **Fondation Scelles** (France)



The Scelles Foundation is an independent, non-profit organisation based in Paris (France) that fights against human trafficking and sexual exploitation through analysis, advocacy and awareness initiatives. Through its International Center for Research on Sexual Exploitation (CRIDES), the Scelles Foundation has developed an international database on sexual exploitation with more than 3,000 studies and reports online. More than 100,000 documents are downloaded annually from its website from over 50 countries. The Foundation regularly issues a global report on the state of sexual exploitation. Recognised for its expertise, the Scelles Foundation has developed partnerships with NGOs, experts and political leaders at the national, European and international levels for research, advocacy and training initiatives.

## ● **KAFA** (Lebanon)



KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation is a feminist, secular, Lebanese, non-profit, non-governmental civil society organisation looking for a society that is free of social, economic and legal patriarchal structures that discriminate women. KAFA has been aiming to eliminate all forms of exploitation and violence against women since its establishment in 2005. It fights for substantive gender equality. KAFA has developed a permanent and dedicated programme on prostitution and trafficking in human beings and released the first research project on male sex buyers in Lebanon. KAFA provides assistance to domestic and foreign victims of prostitution, including among the vast population of refugees.

## ● **La CLES** (Canada)

The Concertation des Luttes contre l'Exploitation Sexuelle (La CLES) is a coalition of groups and individuals mobilised against the sex industry. Founded in 2005, La CLES gathers 50 member groups, more than 150 individual members, and many supporters committed to a world free from prostitution. We implement three priority programmes: direct support to women, awareness raising and training, and political advocacy. We have set up a unique "solidarity fund" for women in prostitution in order to support their crucial transition steps towards the exit of prostitution.

La CLES is one of the key coordinators of the Canadian Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution and has been instrumental in supporting the adoption of an abolitionist law in Canada.

## Maiti Nepal (Nepal)



Maiti Nepal was officially founded as a non-profit organization in 1993 to combat human trafficking and protect Nepali girls and women from crimes like domestic violence, child prostitution, child labor and various other forms of violence and exploitation. Maiti Nepal has today grown in national and international prominence with its relentless social activism and on-going rescue efforts. Maiti Nepal's main focus has always been centered on preventing trafficking for prostitution, rescuing victims of the flesh trade and rehabilitating them. This organization also actively works to provide justice for the victimized girls and women through criminal investigation and waging legal battles against the criminals. It provides shelter, essential diet, medical care, counselling, therapy and end-of-life care to a vulnerable population, who have been neglected and shunned by the society.

## Reden and KFUKs Sociale Arbejde (Denmark)



Founded in 1947, KFUKs Sociale Arbejde (YWCA Social Work) is the first Danish NGO providing global assistance to prostituted persons through four centers of Reden (the Nest) in Copenhagen, Odense, Aarhus and Aalborg. Reden International (The Nest International), with its specific focus on people who are identified as victims of human trafficking, was established in 2002 by Dorit Otzen. KFUKs Sociale Arbejde and Reden are involved in advocacy but are, above all, major frontline providers of care and shelter, drop-in services, counseling, various social and health services including group therapy, and a specialised crisis center dedicated towards victims of human trafficking. We are currently developing new prevention programmes with RedenUng. KFUKs Sociale Arbejde and Reden employ more than 100 staff in addition to a large number of dedicated volunteers.

## Marta Center (Latvia)



The Resource Centre for Women (Marta) in Riga, Latvia was founded in 2000 to protect and promote the rights of women that have suffered prostitution, trafficking and other forms of gender based violence as well as other discrimination, to improve their socio-economic situation and facilitate gender equality. They accomplish this by educating women on their rights and providing skills training, legal advice, litigation and support services to help women and girls live their lives free from violence, discrimination and poverty. Marta also lobbies to improve legislation and legal frameworks on issues of equality and violence against women including prostitution, and sets up awareness-raising campaigns in order to educate the general public.

## Médicos del Mundo (Spain)



Médicos del Mundo is a nonprofit organisation founded in 1990. It is an independent, international, humanitarian and social health association, which promotes the defense of the fundamental right to health and a decent life for all people, denouncing situations of injustice and violation of human rights. The lines of action are development cooperation, humanitarian action, social inclusion and social mobilisation. Since 1993 it works on programmes on prostitution in 11 autonomous communities, from an integrated gender approach based on human rights, advocating toward the Spanish state, and guaranteeing and protecting human rights of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and women in prostitution.

## Mouvement du Nid (France)



Founded in 1946, Mouvement du Nid is a French NGO providing assistance to thousands of prostituted persons and victims of trafficking, through frontline offices in 26 cities. Our organisation reaches out to more than 5000 women, men and children affected by prostitution. Mouvement du Nid offers a global human support, including social, psychological, legal and medical services. We also support access to justice, housing, and to employment. Every year, Mouvement du Nid organises training sessions for 3000 professionals (social workers, police officers, judges and lawyers), and carries prevention and educational programmes with more than 20 000 teenagers. In cooperation with 60 women's rights NGOs and with survivors of prostitution, Mouvement du Nid has coordinated the French advocacy strategy towards the adoption of a global and consistent abolitionist legislation in France.

## Ruhama (Ireland)



Ruhama is an Irish NGO working nationally with women affected by prostitution including victims of sex trafficking. The organisation offers a free, confidential, non-judgmental holistic service which is led by women's own priorities. Ruhama's person centered care plan assists women in a broad range of ways including: Emergency accommodation, Counselling & trauma healing, help reporting crimes against them, education and personal development support, Career Guidance, practical help getting housing and social welfare benefit, assistance with immigration issues and many other supports depending on each individual woman's needs. Ruhama is also a lobbying and campaigning organisation which aims to raise awareness and change public attitudes & policies in relation to the exploitation of prostitution and sex trafficking.

## Solwodi (Germany)

SOLWODI (SOLidarity with Women in DISTress) is a non-profit organisation assisting women affected by human trafficking for sexual exploitation, arranged marriage and domestic violence. Founded in 1985 in Mombasa, Kenya by Sr. Dr. Lea Ackermann SOLWODI continued its work two years later in Germany offering safe housing, social welfare assistance and integration programs. Today the SOLWODI network consists of seven safe houses and eighteen counseling centers and offers outreach to women in indoor and street-based prostitution.

## South Kolkata Hamari Muskan (India)

South Kolkata Hamari Muskan is a front-line, anti-trafficking organisation working with second-generation prostituted women and children (prostituted or otherwise) to prevent trafficking and second-generation prostitution in two red light areas of Kolkata—Shonagachhi (Asia's largest red light area) & Bowbazaar (West Bengal, India). SKHM stands by the abolitionist model. SKHM has met survivors who have defined prostitution as sexual slavery. SKHM's values are the women's perspectives.

## Talita (Sweden)

Talita is a non-profit organization in Sweden offering both acute and long - term support to women who have been exploited in prostitution, pornography or human trafficking for sexual purposes. Talita runs safe houses in Sweden, Mongolia and Romania where we offer a one-year program for our target group . We have formed a method for rehabilitation that consists of: safe housing, trauma therapy, psychoeducation, planning for the future and transition to independent living and integration into society. We strive after a holistic approach to each woman's situation and we aspire to create a safe place where new hope can be formed. Talita's motto is to see the whole person, help her the entire way, regardless of where she has been exploited and regardless of whether or not someone pays for her stay at Talita.

## Women@thewell (UK)

Women@thewell is a women-only drop-in centre in Kings Cross, London, dedicated to supporting women whose lives are affected by or at risk of being affected by prostitution. Most women who use its services have multiple and complex needs including problematic drug and alcohol abuse, mental health difficulties, rough sleeping and trafficking. Women@thewell envisions a society in which all women are empowered to achieve their full potential free from discrimination, abuse and neglect. Its mission is to develop a holistic response to their needs and empower women to make choices to improve the quality of their lives. The center was founded by Sister Lynda Dearlove and officially opened in September 2007.



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