

## Contact :

[ruelle33000@gmail.com](mailto:ruelle33000@gmail.com)

06 98 39 70 42

The Association RUELLE ( RUELLE : *Relais urbain d'échanges et de lutte contre l'exploitation* , or in English: Urban Relays of Exchanges and of Struggle against Exploitation ) has as its mission the struggle against all forms of exploitation in the framework of human trafficking (begging, prostitution, forced theft and labour...).

Ruelle's mission is to encourage autonomy for victims so that they can sever their dependence on those who exploit them and, more generally, to break down the operating system of exploitation. One of the aims in assisting exploited people is to prevent victims themselves becoming in turn exploiters as this is, unfortunately, often the case.

A later stage addresses the need to provide these people with the necessary resources to allow them to take control of their own destinies.

Ruelle's activities represent a truly original approach in focusing on three points.

Firstly, those targeted are victims of all manner of exploitation perpetrated in the context of trafficking: prostitution, minors committing delinquent acts for third parties, domestic slavery, victims of forced begging and so on. This approach is justified by our wish to target our efforts on the link existing between the exploited person and his/her exploiter, rather than on the nature of the exploitation. Indeed it is seen that certain victims accumulate several forms of exploitation or that their lives are marked by the *logic of repetition*. Young people who carry out acts of delinquency for their task-masters can find themselves drawn into prostitution or begging. It is, therefore, essential to focus efforts on the link or on the chain of command, irrespective of the form this may take.

Secondly, the method adopted is being pro-active, that is to say based on anticipating situations and not solely on reacting to a call for help. Trafficking victims do not often have at their disposal ways and means of talking to third parties,( especially when they are no longer part of their original community or family), with a view to finding an escape route from their current situation.

Initially they are often unable to verbally identify the gravity of the acts to which they are subjected. It would therefore seem essential to seek out those at risk and to engage in an open dialogue.

We believe that our work is based on an ethic of *responsibility* which requires measures to be taken when witnessing such activities. The situation of these victims is challenging, mobilizing us to act, allowing the victim to build on a team to help escape from such a system. The Council of Europe Group of Experts on Human Trafficking in fact advocates the development of a pro-active approach when dealing with these cases.

The third point which characterizes the originality of our action lies in our multidisciplinary. Our team is made up of a social worker, a lawyer, a psychologist and a socio-aesthician. It is indeed essential to accompany the victim cumulatively in the different aspects and stages of his/her reconstruction. The social work is based on a bond of confidence allowing identification and help with regard to initial needs in terms of lodging, resources, health care etc. The legal expertise helps the person to be recognized as having 'victim status' in the legal sense and the related rights which ensue (residence permits, participation in criminal proceedings, compensation etc.).

The psychological approach will assist in identifying the events and facts which led to victimization and the defence mechanisms which the victim was able, or unable to put into place. The socio-aesthetic approach attempts to restore the self-image and esteem of the victim by working on the body. Indeed many people are unable to verbally develop what they have been through. Care of the body constitutes a step in the rebuilding of the person. These general dynamics aim at removing the victim from the relationship of exploitation.

Ruelle's action can be summed up in the following way: Identification and accompaniment with the aim of escaping exploitation.

In accordance with the pro-active approach situations of exploitation are identified from the information obtained from meeting the individual (the state of fear, distrust, multiple calls on his/her mobile phone, difficulty of meeting the person on his/her own, stereotype speech, etc...). Having made these observations it is important to inform the person, to establish a relationship of trust creating the start of a dialogue with regard to what we are seeing rather than passively awaiting a request for help. We believe that dialogue of this kind is likely to result in such a request.

Accompaniment takes the following forms:

- Informing those who may be victims of human trafficking,
- approaching institutions and associations whose mission it is to inform on the initial needs of the person,
- accompanying people in helping them to recognize that they are victims of human trafficking,
- set up a specific system of accompaniment for minors based on the respect for their best interests in accordance with the recommendations of the U.N. Reporter on trafficking in human beings,
- accompany those who wish to file complaints or to testify against the perpetrators of the crime of human trafficking,
- promoting the recognition of *Victim Status* and related rights by accompanying the person through the various possibilities which will allow them to be recognized as victims,
- supporting and assisting the person in re-establishing his/her physical, psychological and social conditions, with other partners, in order to escape a relationship of exploitation,
- assisting the person to go beyond being recognized as victim to progress to full citizen status,
- finally Ruelle will carry out research and analysis to raise on a national level the problems encountered by the public in trying to obtain full national citizenship.

Five additional modes of activity will be implemented:

- 1) Permanent staffing in our initial contact centres: a welcome centre for asylum seekers, the French Immigration Service and the Police.
- 2) To begin with, individual meetings under the guidance of professionals who suspect cases of trafficking ( to take place in our welcome centre, or other places such as courtroom buildings, prisons, police stations etc...) before we set out to directly meet those people who are involved in prostitution of organized begging.
- 3) Ruelle's own welcome centre: currently staffed on a weekly basis but with the aim of daily staffing when funds permit.
- 4) Group workshops to allow accompanied victims to become, in turn, pillars of support for other victims and to thus make them active participants in the procedure of breaking down the relationships of exploitation.
- 5) A mobile antenna