

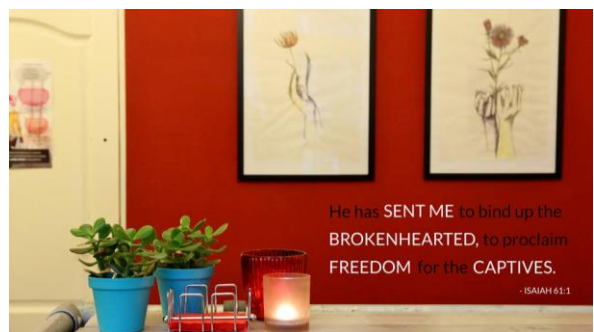


## 2016 Overview

### Cafe:

This year was again one with a lot of contact with women working in prostitution on the streets of Riga. Three times a week we opened the doors of our café and served soup, coffee or tea, and fresh baked goods; most importantly we offered a listening ear and the love of Jesus.

This past year we had 80 different women visiting our café. We know that there are more women working on the streets of Riga because we still meet women that we have never met before. But 80 of these women received God's love, a safe place, a healthy meal, and practical help when they needed it.



We had 8 different interns working with us in Riga (without a gap of even a week in between). Interns from all over the world- Latvia, Germany, USA, New Zealand and Australia- joined to help reach the women while they also learned more about working in this type of ministry.

A few new Latvian volunteers joined our team and we provided 2 volunteer trainings over this past year as well.

Also, this year we saw a number of women from the street make the decision to change their lives and move to our women's center.

*One woman came to the café on Tuesday and asked for one of the long-term staff she knew from a few years ago when she came regularly to the café and had even visited our apartment to help with cooking and baking. She told us she wanted to go to the center because "I have to change my life." We talked with her and arranged to meet again the next day. We then explained the program, the rules, and spent time getting to know her and understand her motivation. We told her that if she really wanted to go to the center, that she could return the next day to complete the application process. She returned and completed all the paperwork. We then made plans for her to move to the center the next morning and when we arrived at the café, she was waiting for us. She had not brought anything with her except her passport, so she asked if we had clothes at the center because she didn't want to return to the place she had been living. Because we have a boutique full of clothes and provide everything she needs, she could leave that morning and start her new life immediately. She has now been at the center for 6 months and it's truly amazing to see how the Lord is bringing healing, restoration, and life change.*

This was a situation where everything went according to the book because she was ready for a change. It hasn't always gone that smoothly, but we are thankful to see what is possible for women when they are ready to make the decision to leave their old lives.

*In June, we organized a retreat at the center for a few of our women who have gotten off of the streets in the past few years. Only one of the women wanted to come as the others were too busy or weren't interested for a variety of reasons. Thursday night in the café, we talked with two women who were still on the streets and asked them if they would be interested in coming to the center for a weekend of fun, Bible study, good food and a break away from the city. Both women were waiting for us at the café the next morning. We had a lovely weekend at the center and one of the ladies decided to stay after the weekend and she is still at the center now. Last year, she had lived at the center for two weeks, but this time, she has been here for 7 months. The other woman returned to Riga after the weekend, but a few months later she came to the café after being beaten up by her "boyfriend" and wanted to go to the center. She moved to the center for one week, but then returned to the streets and her "boyfriend." We can see her desire for a different life, but her old life and people keep pulling her back.*



The café continues to offer women a consistent and safe place where they know that they can come when they need help. Though some women return to the streets and are not yet ready to take steps towards a new life, we know that their time in the café is impactful. Even if it is years later, like with the woman from the first testimony, when they are ready for change, women know where to find us.

In addition to our regular weekly outreach nights, we also hosted a BBQ and Christmas party at the café. It's amazing to do something special and different for the women- they loved it and we did too!



## Old Town Outreach:

Old town outreach took place on 22 Friday evenings in 2016. Outreach participants from Freedom61, YWAM, local churches, and visitors averaged about 7 people per outing. We contacted 30-50 men each evening through both conversations and booklets. We spoke with men from many different countries, but a majority were from UK, Germany, Scandinavia, the USA, Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, other European nations.

Of the groups that we spoke with, men came to Riga for a variety of reasons. Some were there for business meetings, some to just visit the city on vacation, some for stag parties. Few men stated they explicitly came to Riga for strip clubs and prostitution. With each group, we had the opportunity to raise awareness about the realities of sexual exploitation and help them start to think about this issue, whether they were participating in it or not.

Several experiences from 2016 give a general feel for the conversations and experience for most of the outreach:

*One of the men that we spoke to from the UK told us how he really did not want to be there. His friends were there to visit strip clubs and he went along with them not fully realizing what they would be doing. We told him that he really did have a choice and could leave if he wanted to and that if he felt uncomfortable knowing what they were doing wasn't right, he didn't have to join. Moments like this show how important this work is.*

*While talking with another group from the UK, we told them what we were doing, and one of the men said to us, "Prostitution? Oh, I'm all for it! They need money, and I have it." We explained to him that often the women don't choose it and don't want it, but are driven to prostitution because of their life circumstances, and not because of desire. Before we left them, we emphasized to him to remember when he stands before a girl later that evening that she didn't want to be there and that there is so much more than what he could see.*

With the booklets we designed and printed, we were able to be creative to reach men. On one occasion, there was a group of twelve men sitting at an outside cafe and we approached them, but with the music it was too loud to talk. Instead we pulled out the booklets and handed them to one of the men and told him to pass it around. When we walked by later, we could see that they were still passing it and that everyone had looked at the booklet.



## Women's center

In 2016, we had 10 different women at our center. Most women have stayed for at least a few months, but several left after much shorter periods of time. At the end of 2016, we had 6 women living at the center and the longest stay was greater than 6 months.

In addition to having more women living at the center, we have also seen growth in the depth of relationships and community. After all the prayers, dreams, and plans for the center, it's amazing to see the reality unfolding as the women living here see greater healing and restoration coming into their lives. While the process is not always an easy one, God has been so faithful. We asked one of the women to share a little about her time at the center:



*"God is showing me specifically how I need to participate in activities and learn while I am here because all of these things are things that I will use in the rest of my life. The groups and activities here have taught me many new things...I'm learning patience in my interactions with people and in things like sewing. Instead of just starting things and then leaving, I'm learning to also finish things. Just a couple of weeks ago, I could have hit someone, but today I understand that I don't need to be aggressive but can just normally talk to people. In the 5 months being here, the things God has shown and grown me in are that I know more about myself, my future, my relationships with people, and how to control and manage emotions. Even reading the Bible, before I didn't understand anything. Now, I not only read it for myself, but every night my roommates and I read the Bible before bed and talk about it together.*

*The main thing though is that I accepted Jesus here. After I accepted Jesus, I started to feel how God was actually working in me and changing me from the inside. Every day, there's something new that he is doing.*

*There aren't any days that God isn't working with me. To get to be a blooming flower, you need to go through a growing process. And before, I couldn't do it by myself and wouldn't walk through things. For so many years, I believed in God, but not in the way I do now. I needed people to help me understand and all those seeds that people put in the ground, now are in my brain and are growing. Even the ability to see how I am changing is a big, new thing for me."*

It's truly incredible to witness God's transformation in the women's lives here and although it can be difficult, our team is grateful to get to walk alongside each woman for this season of their journey. Our center team itself changed quite a bit last year too with different people coming and going. Throughout 2016, we had 3 interns from Canada and the USA working with us for 6 months. Another couple from USA/Russia worked at the center for 8 months before moving to Riga, where they continue to serve currently. At this moment, we have 3 fulltime staff members at the center and are praying for more to join. We are also building our volunteer team and have been encouraged to see many people from the local community invest a few hours a week in the lives of the women living at the center.



Last summer, we undertook a large project of renovating the center roof. We started in May with help from a team from Holland and finished the project a few months later. We raised almost 40.000 euros for this project and now have just a few thousand euros left to pay. It's amazing to have a new roof that we know will not be leaking.



## 2017

There are quite a few changes coming up in 2017. At this moment, we don't have any interns and have a small full-time team continuing the work in Riga and at the Center. The founder of Freedom 61, Lysette Klop, will be back in Holland for 6 months this year and others from our team will be leaving later in the year. We are praying for wisdom and guidance and need to see breakthrough in more full-time staff, interns, and volunteers. We know the Lord will provide.

We will also be focusing increasingly on business opportunities for the women we are working with this year. We have a partnership with Dignata (jewelry) [www.dignata.org](http://www.dignata.org) and the Simple Kind (children's dresses) [www.thesimplekindclothing.org](http://www.thesimplekindclothing.org) that will continue to grow throughout 2017.



## 2016 Financial Overview

<b>Donations</b>	<b>€51329.87</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>€50572.94</b>

### Café- Riga

<b>Donations</b>		<b>€7883.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Transportation	Fuel, vehicle repairs	€1741.00
Grocery expenses	Groceries for soup, desserts, coffee, tea, etc. in café	€1500.00
Printing	Freedom 61 promotional materials	€389.07
Christmas expenses (specified donation)	Christmas outreach in café, gifts, activities, and meals for women at center	€500.00
Staff expenses	Annual staff retreat, monthly staff days, meetings with staff members, goodbye gifts	€640.88
Ministry expenses	Café and apartment supplies, ministry meetings with women, helping with practical needs for women in café	€625.80
Rent- apartment/office	Monthly rent not covered by occupants	€2274.00
Office expenses	Office supplies	€86.86
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>€7757.61</b>
Remaining		€125.39

### Women's Center

<b>Donations</b>		<b>€43446.87</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Grocery expenses	Center meals	€2269.96
Household Expenses	Cleaning supplies, garbage removal, water filters, etc	€551.75
General Expenses	Women's expenses (doctors' visits, medications, glasses, clothing, etc.), Program supplies (fabric, sewing materials, art projects, etc.), & Psychologist fees	€1244.91
Transportation	Vehicle repairs, inspection, insurance, & fuel	€1915.20
Office Expenses	Internet bills, office supplies, printing class materials	€245.50
Utilities	Electricity bills	€1008.92
Heating expenses	Wood pellets	€2215.66
Maintenance expenses	Materials, small repairs	€78.62
Furnishings	3 sewing machines, 1 laptop computer	€796.88
Tax & bank expenses	Property tax, bank fees	€187.93
Building Repairs	Roof repairs (total repairs cost 40,000- remainder to be paid in 2017)	€32300.00
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>€42815.33</b>
Remaining		€631.54