



# KAVOD

A holistic approach to helping victims of sexual exploitation

## ■ *Human dignity is inviolable*

The name KAVOD comes from the Hebrew and means dignity. It has also been translated as the glory of God. This refers to the fact that every human being is created in the image of God.

This sacrosanct dignity is what we long to give back to people in prostitution, something they lose through working at this job, through everyday humiliations, and through the trauma they have often endured in their personal lives.

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December 10, 2023 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the first article, we read about human dignity.

Article 1 of human rights:

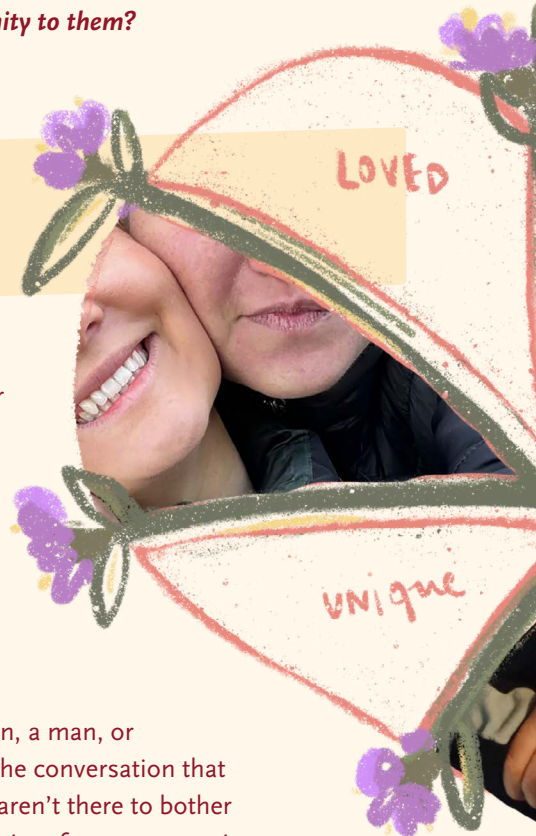
***All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and shall act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.***

***But how do we go about restoring this dignity to them?***

First of all, through the attitude of our hearts. How am I looking at that person standing before me? How am I interacting with them? Through my posture, my eyes, my words, what am I reflecting? Our constant prayer is: ***Lord, show me this person as you see them.***

And we often sense this prayer being answered. When we are knocking on doors in brothels, going into night clubs or onto the streets where the women are, each person we see is never “a prostitute”. We see a person – a woman, or a young girl looking back at us with her beautiful eyes. Sometimes we also see deep sadness, hopelessness, or lifelessness.

After we have politely said hello to a woman, a man, or trans person, at their place of work, often the conversation that follows consists of small talk. After all, we aren't there to bother them. We have to respect it if there is little time for a conversation,



although we experience time and again that customers are sometimes sent away or have to wait. But often they give us their number, and then we call them back.

Our colleague in Graz, Emanuela, is a real blessing in this. She has Romanian roots, just like most of the women we meet, and this makes communication so much easier. It does happen that we sometimes refer people to other NGOs who help people in the same field, but whenever anyone who wants to quit the business, we are there for them.

One of the major barriers that stop women leaving prostitution is that their families are dependent on what they earn. For some time now we have been trying to give Romanian churches the chance to become more involved in our work. We initiated a project where churches can take on a sponsorship for any woman who has just quit prostitution during that time when she has no earnings. In the period immediately after she quits, it's vital for her to be cared for in a safe house, where she might also get some useful instruction in German. It's not unusual for this transition period, before she is able to take on a regular job, to last up to a year. The sponsorship is designed to cover this time: the financial support the church provides goes to the woman's children back in her home country. We are grateful for the two Romanian churches that have begun to support women in this way.



## ■ Christmas Outreach

***A big shout out to our Christmas cookie baking supporters this year: the Emmaus Fellowship in Graz und the Christian International Fellowship in Vienna. The Emmaus Fellowship, with the active support of Pastor Florin, even baked and decorated gingerbread ! A big round of applause!***

In Styria this year we covered a grand total of 6712 km – in all weathers, after dark, in the snow. But it has been worth it.

We met Stella\* in one of the night clubs we visited. After she read the bible verse on the calendar we'd given her, she started crying. She shared her telephone number and soon after Emanuela called and her and our contact with her began to deepen. In subsequent conversations we got to know her as a despairing young woman whose inner life was broken in pieces. What she really wanted was to quit, but she needed a few more days before she was able to take the final step. Just before midnight, she called Emanuela from a club. "I just can't go on any more, I need to get out of here right now." Emanuela picked her up straight away, that first night put her up in her own home and the second in a hotel room we paid for. There followed a meeting with Florin, the pastor mentioned above, during which Stella committed her life to Jesus. Two days later, liberated and relieved, she flew to Spain where her children live with their grandmother. She was determined to break completely with her lover boy pimp. From us she will be receiving contact details of local organisations who will help her, along with much prayer that she makes a success of her new life.

Stella\* contacts us at the beginning of the new year. She is pregnant and wanted to get out. We referred her to Solwodi in Vienna and she is now very happy that her life has taken a turn for the better.

\* Name changed



## ■ *Looking back on Ukraine*

*On our latest trip we re-visited villages liberated from Russian occupation and spoke in churches there.*

One of them was only two kilometers from the Russian border. A pastor and his wife are still there looking after the people. We also visited four organizations which were new to us. Among them was a facility for the reintegration of ex-offenders called “*The Safe Haven*” in Kharkiv. The director was in prison for the first time at 15 and for the last time at 40. *Safe Ukraine* is an organisation that has already managed to bring back 200 Ukrainian children taken unlawfully to Russia. It also runs 4 refugee centres and a home for sexually abused children. Another group, *YOUTOO*, looks after children from vulnerable families. We will perhaps be working more closely with them in the future, as they really liked the idea of Andreas teaching bicycle repair to these fatherless kids.

*In Ukraine we covered a total of 22.000 km this past year.* We are planning our next trip for February. In the long run, we will need a new bus. On the last trip, the turbo broke down on the last day and we had to stay four days longer until everything was repaired.



If anyone would like to **support us financially for the Ukraine**, you can do so on the KAVOD account with the note Ukraine. We also need donations in kind this time, especially warm clothes for men and we are collecting Lego, especially for older children for the YOUTOO organization. These donations can be handed in to us in person.

## ■ Finances

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Our work and the salaries of Sabine and Emanuela are financed entirely by donations. ***This is possible thanks to your support, for which we are very grateful.*** However, we have had a large financial hole in the last few months, which is why we would like to ask you to consider supporting us with a standing order this year.

## ■ February 8<sup>th</sup>

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***The World Day of Prayer against Human Trafficking has been held on February 8 since 2015.***

The Pope wrote in November 2013:

***“I have always been pained by the situation of those who are victims of various forms of human trafficking. I would like to hear the call of God who asks us all: ‘Where is your brother?’ (Gen 4:9). Where is your brother, the slave? Where is the one you kill every day in the small illegal factory, in the network of prostitution, in the children you use for begging, in the one who has to work in secret because he is not legalized? Let’s not pretend that everything is fine! There are many types of complicity. The question concerns everyone!”***



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<https://www.vaticannews.va/de/vatikan/news/2021-02/papst-franziskus-menschenhandel-gebetstag-8-februar-initiativen.html>

The CIG in Vienna will have an event that day.

## ■ *Our Vision*

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*At the beginning of the new year 2024, once again the painting “Wunderregen”, which symbolizes the shelter we would like to open.*

All that we report in this letter gives us further reason to enter the New Year with confidence. We expect that God will continue to lead and use us.

It is our heartfelt wish that many women will dare to make a new start this year and leave prostitution.



*“Wunderregen“ by Dorothée Widmer  
<https://heartwings.ch>*

***Thank you for your support!  
Sabine and the KAVOD team***



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