

CURRENT STATUS OF THIRTEEN EXIT PROGRAMMES FOR PROSTITUTES

Background

Aim of RUPS

In December 2008, the then Ministry of Justice instituted the 'Exit Programmes for Prostitutes Scheme' (*Regeling Uitstapprogramma's Prostituees*, or RUPS). This temporary subsidy scheme ran until 1 July 2011.¹ RUPS subsidies were issued in order to set up, facilitate or run exit programmes for prostitutes (Section 2 of RUPS). Under the scheme, 'exit programme' was defined as: a programme in which prostitutes receive support in finding work or daytime activities not related to prostitution. Municipal authorities and civil society non-profit organisations that coordinated such programmes (or helped to do so) were eligible to apply for the subsidy. In total, €14.5 million worth of subsidies was made available. In practice, the *setup, facilitation and running of exit programmes* came to take on a variety of forms. Some exit programmes already existed prior to RUPS, and used the subsidy to expand (such as in Rotterdam). In Groningen, the subsidy was also used to conduct research into the needs and wishes of the target group (street prostitutes in particular).

Aim of the exit programmes

Although the RUPS subsidies were spent on a wide variety of activities, most programmes nonetheless had the same goal: to coach and support prostitutes wanting to leave the prostitution industry. As part of the exit programmes, prostitutes were assisted with problem areas in their lives, such as alcohol/drug dependence, debts, lack of appropriate living space and/or psychosocial problems.²

Results 2011

When the RUPS evaluation was conducted in April 2011, an estimated 800 prostitutes had taken part in one of the exit programmes, and approximately 300 prostitutes had left the prostitution industry. It proved impossible to provide exact numbers of participants and ex-prostitutes, as there had been no clear registration process for details on new, transferring or leaving participants in the various projects.³

¹The scheme's original envisaged term was a maximum of two years (until the end of 2010), but it was ultimately extended twice.

²CCV (2011). Evaluatie van de Regeling Uitstapprogramma's Prostituees [Evaluation of RUPS].

³CCV (2011). Evaluatie van de Regeling Uitstapprogramma's Prostituees [Evaluation of RUPS].

The study

Research aim and question formulation

Now, two years since RUPS was discontinued, the Research and Documentation Centre (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum, WODC) of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice wishes to research the current status of exit programmes that had made use of a RUPS subsidy. Did the RUPS scheme lead – as intended – to a continuation of the exit programmes after the subsidy had ceased? Do the exit programmes still exist? And what have these programmes achieved? The core research question was as follows:

What is the current status of the prostitute exit programmes that were scheduled to be taken over locally after discontinuation of RUPS in 2011, and what is the policy vision of the relevant municipalities regarding help with terminating prostitutes' work activities?

To answer this broad question, the following component questions were formulated:

- What is the status of each of the thirteen prostitute exit programmes that were handed over to local parties when RUPS was discontinued?
 - Who is running the programme?
 - What are the aims of the programme?
 - Which partners are involved in running the programme?
 - Who are the programme's target groups?
- What are the programme results, to the extent they are available?
 - How many participants are there currently?
 - How many prostitutes have successfully exited the industry?
 - Which objectives/expectations were/were not fulfilled?
 - If programmes have been modified or discontinued, what is/are the reason(s)?
- Have any other exit programmes been set up in the relevant municipalities? What information is available on any such programmes?
- What is the policy vision of the relevant municipalities regarding help with terminating prostitutes' work activities?

Research method

The study was carried out over a short period (June-July 2013), and is descriptive in nature. In addition to the 2011 RUPS evaluation, we also examined progress reports by the exit programmes and subsidy acquittal reports by the organisations running them. We also conducted telephone interviews with policy officers working in municipalities that have/had an exit programme, and with employees of the organisations that run/ran the programmes. In total, 26 interviews were conducted with persons who, in most

cases, had years' worth of knowledge and expertise in the field of prostitute exit programmes. Despite the study's short duration (June-July 2013, part of which also coincided with the summer holiday period), we were able to interview all relevant parties. Information about the programmes has been obtained by different parties and – if necessary and possible – some respondents were asked at a later moment to verify data. Concept texts were submitted to respondents who asked for this.

However, not all interviewees supplied the desired information while the study was being conducted. This meant that in some cases it was not possible to paint a complete picture of the exit programme. For example: for some exit programmes it was possible to list the partners involved, but not to describe their role in the exit programme. We received an incomplete overview of results (participant numbers and successful exits) from two of the exit programmes.

We would very much like to thank all interviewees for taking the effort to provide us with detailed information. Furthermore, we would like to thank the members of the supervisory committee⁴ for their contributions to the study and their critical view on the presented reports.

Results of the study

What is the status of each of the thirteen prostitute exit programmes that were handed over to local parties when RUPS was discontinued?

Of the thirteen exit programmes that were set up or expanded under the RUPS scheme, twelve were still operating in mid-2013. Only the exit programme in Breda had been discontinued (in mid-2011). Since RUPS was discontinued, the municipalities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Deventer, Eindhoven, Haarlem, Rotterdam and Utrecht still continue to issue earmarked funds for the support of exit programmes. The municipalities of Arnhem, Nijmegen and Zwolle issue non-earmarked subsidies to institutions who carry out activities alongside the exit programme within the municipality. The exit programme in Groningen no longer receives municipal funding, but still exists nonetheless. For its Asja II project, Fier Fryslân receives funding from the national government.

Who are running the programmes?

In most cases, the exit programmes are run by the same organisations that did so under RUPS. In The Hague, the Spot 46 service centre (part of SHOP) was opened in October 2011, which has run the exit programme since. In early 2013, the domain of De Kern Maatschappelijke Dienstverlening (an implementing organisation in the IJssel-Vecht region) was expanded to include several of the surrounding municipalities; prior to that, Carinova ran the exit

⁴ The supervisory committee consisted of the following members: J.A. Nijboer Phd (formerly Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, chairman), A. Daalder MSc (WODC) and S. Bloemberg MSc (Ministry of Security and Justice/DGRR).

programme for these municipalities. De Kern Maatschappelijke Dienstverlening has also been running the exit programme in Deventer since early 2013; Scharlaken Koord is currently phasing out its activities there.

Table 1.1 The organisations running the twelve existing exit programmes

Amsterdam	Scharlaken Koord and P&G 292
Arnhem	IrisZorg
Asja II	Fier Fryslân
The Hague	SHOP/Spot 46
Deventer	De Kern Maatschappelijke Dienstverlening (Scharlaken Koord phasing out activities in 2013)
Eindhoven	Salvation Army/Leger des Heils
Groningen	Stichting Terwille
Haarlem	Scharlaken Koord
Nijmegen	Municipal Health Service (GGD)/Special Care Line (Meldpunt Bijzondere zorg, MBZ), IrisZorg and NIM Maatschappelijk Werk
IJssel-Vecht region	De Kern Maatschappelijke Dienstverlening, (in 10 municipalities), Verian (1 municipality) and Zorggroep Oude en Nieuwe Land (1 municipality)
Rotterdam	Humanitas PMW
Utrecht	De Tussenvoorziening

Which partners are involved in running the programmes?

The organisations running the exit programmes work closely together with parties that operate in the fields of health care, assisted living, help with finding work or daily activities, debt assistance, benefits, enforcement and victims of human trafficking. The exact partners vary from programme to programme.

What are the aims of the programmes?

The objective of nearly all exit programmes is the same as it was under RUPS: to guide and support prostitutes in their efforts to leave the prostitution industry. Participants mainly receive welfare services to help with common problems, such as alcohol/drug dependence, psychiatric and/or psychological problems, or debt.

In The Hague, the programme objective was modified following the discontinuation of RUPS. Before RUPS ended, the objective was to assist prostitutes who wished to leave the prostitution industry. This objective has been expanded, and the programme now aims to help prostitutes work in a professional (or more professional) manner. This not only includes those who wish to exit the industry, but also those becoming active therein, or who wish to take on or continue their work with a more professional approach.

The goal of the Asja II project is to provide support, security, protection, assistance and treatment to girls who are either victims of forced prostitution or who are at serious risk thereof.

What are the target groups of the programmes?

Most exit programmes still target the same groups as under RUPS: all prostitutes living and/or working in the relevant municipality or region. In some municipalities, prostitutes must actually live in the municipality or region to be eligible for the exit programme (e.g. in Arnhem). Unlike other exit programmes, the Asja II project has national coverage.

The Asja II project targets girls and young women who are either victims of forced prostitution or who are at serious risk thereof. Since RUPS was discontinued, the exit programme run by Stichting Terwille in Groningen has expanded its target group to include victims of loverboys (also at national level). The exit programme in Nijmegen also targets a similar group: prostitutes who work in street or youth prostitution (often victims of loverboys) and girls/young women and boys/young men who are at risk of ending up in the prostitution industry.

In principle, the exit programmes in Arnhem and Eindhoven are intended for all prostitutes, but focus more on street prostitutes in practice. Eindhoven, however, has seen a post-RUPS expansion of the target group. Although the exit programme was only intended for street prostitutes with a permit for the former managed zone, other prostitutes may now also participate in the programme.

What are the results of the programmes, to the extent they are available?

How many participants are there currently?

According to the available data, around 1,750 prostitutes and potential/actual victims of human trafficking or forced prostitution have taken part in exit programmes since RUPS began.⁵ The greatest participant numbers are in the municipalities of Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam. The Asja II project also has a large number of participants (see Table 1.2).

Based on the available data from a number of exit programmes (Amsterdam, Asja II, Deventer and Haarlem), it can be stated that at least 235 of the participants were confirmed potential/actual victims of human trafficking or forced prostitution; this is equal to thirteen per cent of the total number of participants.

Since the RUPS evaluation in 2011, the number of participants has more than doubled; at that time, the total (estimated) number of participants was just over 750. The exit programmes have therefore had more participants since RUPS was discontinued than while it was still in effect.

⁵ The time period used for this calculation runs from the issue of the first RUPS exit programme subsidy until late 2012/mid-2013.

Numbers of current participants were known for nine of the twelve extant programmes while the study was being conducted. In July 2013, there were nearly 300 programme participants in total.

Table 1.2 Participants in the thirteen exit programmes

	Participants since the introduction of RUPS*	Figures taken from	Participants during the RUPS evaluation	Participants still in exit programmes (July 2013)
Amsterdam (Scharlaken Koord)	289	Jan. 2008 - July 2013	100	30
Amsterdam (P&G 292)	396	Jan. 2008 - Jan. 2013	100	44
Arnhem	27**	Start 2010 - end 2012	27	8
Asja II	139	Start 2009 - July 2013	41	29
Breda	29	Feb. 2010 - July 2011	28	Discontinued
The Hague	195	April 2009 - July 2013	147***	25
Deventer	53	Oct. 2009 - July 2013	9	5
Eindhoven	26	Sept. 2009 - July 2013	16	16
Groningen	46	April 2010 - end 2012	20	N/A
Haarlem	53	Mid-2010 - July 2013	11	15
Nijmegen	37	Late 2010 - mid-2013	15	N/A
IJssel-Vecht region	21**	2010 - mid-2013	11	N/A
Rotterdam	243	Start 2009 - July 2013	134	70
Utrecht	195	Start 2009 - end 2012	103	54
Total	1749		762	296

* The time period used for this calculation runs from the issue of the first RUPS exit programme subsidy until the applicable date when the figures were collected. For Amsterdam and Utrecht, the initial date used was the start of the year in which a RUPS subsidy was issued.

** Incomplete data. The actual figures for current participants and participants that have successfully exited the industry are expected to be (somewhat) higher.

*** The number 172 was mentioned in the 2011 RUPS evaluation. An evaluation of the exit programme performed by the implementing organisation showed that 172 assessment interviews had been carried out, which had resulted in 147 actual participants.

How many prostitutes have successfully exited the industry?

A prostitute who has 'successfully exited the industry' is defined as someone who successfully completed the exit programme and has stopped working in the prostitution industry, according to the implementing organisation's information at the time.

Since RUPS was started, 1002 prostitutes and potential/actual victims of human trafficking or forced prostitution have successfully left the industry. This figure represents 57% of the total number of exit programme participants (see Table 1.3), and includes at least 139 potential or actual victims of human trafficking and/or forced prostitution (Asja II).

During the RUPS evaluation in April 2011, the (estimated) total number of successful exit cases was at least 310. This means that the number of prostitutes who have successfully left the industry has grown significantly since RUPS was discontinued.

Table 1.3 Successful exit cases from the thirteen exit programmes

	Successful exit cases since the introduction of RUPS*	Successful cases as a % of participants	Figures taken from	Successful exit cases during the RUPS evaluation
Amsterdam (Scharlaken Koord)	226	78%	Jan. 2008 - July 2013	71***
Amsterdam (P&G 292)	198	50%	Jan. 2008 - Jan. 2013	59***
Arnhem	4**	14%	Start 2010 - end 2012	2
Asja II	139	100%	Start 2009 - July 2013	N/A
Breda	10	34%	Feb. 2010 - July 2011	3
The Hague	91	47%	April 2009 - July 2013	58***
Deventer	35	66%	Oct. 2009 - July 2013	2
Eindhoven	4	15%	Sept. 2009 - July 2013	N/A
Groningen	27	59%	April 2010 - end 2012	0
Haarlem	41	77%	Mid-2010 - July 2013	9
Nijmegen	12	33%	Late 2010 - mid-2013	0
IJssel-Vecht region	8**	38%	2010 - mid-2013	8
Rotterdam	148	61%	Start 2009 - July 2013	51
Utrecht	59	30%	Start 2009 - end 2012	47
Total	1,002	57%		310

* In most cases, the time period used for this calculation runs from the issue of the first RUPS exit programme subsidy until the date when the figures were collected. For Amsterdam and Utrecht, the initial date used was the start of the year in which a RUPS subsidy was issued.

** Incomplete data. The actual figures for current participants and participants that have successfully exited the industry are expected to be (somewhat) higher.

*** The RUPS evaluation adds the following footnote to this figure: 'This figure is relatively high, since it also includes people who have left the prostitution industry but who are still officially completing a programme or receiving aftercare.'

Interviews give the impression that the risk of relapse is high, as many prostitutes have to deal with problems such as alcohol/drug dependence, mental disorders, and debt (sometimes in combination). Long-term success rates are lower than the initial success rate; how much lower is not known. Due to the fact that, after their participation in the programme, ex-prostitutes often 'fall off the radar' of the organisation running the exit programme, in many cases it is not known who stays out of the industry and who does not.

Prior research by Dekker et al. (2006) showed that many prostitutes cease working in the industry only temporarily: 44 per cent of the over 350 prostitutes interviewed had stopped working in the industry at some point in the past. Reasons for re-entering the industry included income that was either low or too low from jobs in other sectors, debt, or inability to find other work.⁶

Which objectives/expectations were/were not fulfilled?

Interviewees were generally happy with the results achieved by the exit programmes. One interviewee mentioned that they had initially expected a

⁶Dekker, H., R. Tap and G. Homburg (2006). Evaluatie opheffing bordeelverbod. De sociale positie van prostituees 2006 [Evaluation of lifting the ban on brothels: the social position of prostitutes 2006]. Amsterdam: RegioPlan.

larger number of participating prostitutes. When asked about the number of ex-prostitutes and the possible long-term ineffectiveness of the programme, interviewees stated that for a large number of prostitutes, leaving the industry is not a realistic option. To be able to exit the prostitution industry, prostitutes first must be helped with their (multiple) problems. As such, there is close cooperation with parties active in fields such as addiction treatment or debt counselling within the programmes.

If programmes have been modified or discontinued, what is/are the reason(s)? As mentioned previously, the exit programme in Breda was discontinued. Both this municipality and others in Brabant (the exit programme covered a regional area) were not prepared to finance the exit programme themselves due to the limited number of new participants.

Have any other exit programmes been set up in the relevant municipalities? What information is available on any such programmes?

As far as we are aware, no additional exit programmes have been set up in the relevant municipalities where such programmes were set up or expanded while RUPS was available.

What is the policy vision of the relevant municipalities regarding help with terminating prostitutes' work activities?

In the interviews with staff in the relevant municipalities, they were asked about their policy vision regarding help with terminating prostitutes' work activities. In some cases, interviewees cited the objective of the relevant exit programme as a municipal standpoint; to the best of our knowledge, however, no formal policy standpoint on this topic exists in the relevant municipalities.

In conclusion

Of the thirteen exit programmes that were set up or expanded with the help of a RUPS subsidy, twelve are still operating now. Many municipalities finance these programmes by issuing either earmarked or non-earmarked subsidies to the implementing organisations. The number of participants has more than doubled since RUPS was discontinued. When data was collected from the implementing organisations, over half of these participants had ceased working in the prostitution industry. How long ex-prostitutes stay out of the industry, is not known.