

La Strada Mission Statement

La Strada Network

The La Strada network is a network of nine independent women's rights NGOs in the Netherlands (STV), Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Moldova. It aims to prevent trafficking in human beings, especially women and children in Central and Eastern Europe.

La Strada Mission

The La Strada mission is threefold:

- to make the issue of trafficking in women visible and to influence authorities, the media and public opinion so as to address this violation of human rights;
- to educate women and girls about possible dangers of trafficking
- to refer victims to support networks.

To achieve these aims, La Strada has developed a multi-disciplinary approach programme, consisting of:

- Information & Lobbying
- Prevention & Education
- Social Assistance to victims of trafficking.

La Strada Philosophy

Trafficking reflects the poor social and legal position of women in many countries. It encourages deceit, abuse, violence, debt-bondage, blackmail and deprivation of human rights. Trafficking currently flourishes in sex work, the domestic labour market, and the commercial marriage market.

The La Strada programme is based on a human rights approach. Female migrants, domestic workers and sex trade workers must have their rights protected. States are accountable for violations of human rights, including forced labour and practices akin to slavery. Trafficking in women is a complex problem, therefore, strategic responses are necessarily multi-faceted. The different fields and interests include: migration, organised crime, sex work, human rights, violence against women, the feminisation of poverty, unequal economic relationships, etc.

Any analysis and matching solution in relation to these issues should be carefully questioned in terms of its effects for the women concerned:

- which interests are being served ?
- whose problems are being addressed ?
- might the solution produce more problems for the women concerned ?

The primary goal must be to improve conditions of the women involved. To do so requires dialogue. Instead of excluding sex workers from the debate – as has been unquestioned for centuries – their participation is an essential condition.

La Strada Country Programmes

The key priority of the La Strada network is to focus on the importance of improving the position of women and to promote their universal rights, including the right to choose to emigrate and to work abroad and to protect them from violence and abuse. La Strada considers that one of the primary needs of women is their right to freely work, with just compensation and under proper conditions, whether in their own country or in a country with a demand for their labour in accordance with the legal framework of that country and international conventions.

Trafficking occurs in countries where sex work is legalised and also in countries where it is not legalised. La Strada does not advocate the abolition of prostitution. The La Strada network does not consider that focusing the debate on the abolition of sex work will directly lead to the protection of the human rights of women.

The La Strada approach is in line with international laws: La Strada acts in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime of 2000, and its linked Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings. Our work is also in line with recommendations of various European conferences and meetings, such as the Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the OSCE Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings and the EU Council Framework Decision of 19 July 2002 on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

The La Strada offices and STV have demonstrated success in implementing a broad range of programmes, policies and interventions to improve the well-being of victims of trafficking and in advocating for a human rights-based response to trafficking. We are united in our commitment to advancement the human rights, protecting victims of trafficking and ending the scourge of human trafficking.

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