



IKAVOD

A holistic approach to helping victims of sexual exploitation

▪ *Review*

The year 2025 is behind us. Looking back, we are so grateful for the many individuals and churches who stand behind our work and support us financially. Since we do not receive any public funding, it is you who make our work possible. A big THANK YOU for that!

2025 was not an easy year. Not a single woman contacted us to leave the sex trade. This was very frustrating for all of us on the staff. We often had lovely, even profound encounters in the brothels and nightclubs, but they seemed to have no effect. Sometimes we were left waiting eagerly for the person to contact us. Sometimes we already had their number and so eventually we contacted them. But

2025



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then after all the waiting, the person backed out or couldn't be reached. In any case, there was no longer any talk of leaving.

In our work, we realise that what is paramount is building trust, and that this can be a lengthy process. So for the coming year we intend to visit the many brothels and nightclubs in Styria and Burgenland more frequently, in the hope that this will contribute to ***building up that trust***.

The main reason why a woman works in prostitution is usually to support her family financially. One example among many: Maia*, whom I have known for a long time, has always struck me as very professional, – as if she had made a deliberate choice to work in prostitution. But one day, out of the blue, she told me that her husband had been wanting her to stop for a long time, but she couldn't see how. Her much-loved, chronically ill parents in Romania needed money every month for medication and medical treatment. So once again it was clear – even for someone like Maia, the reason for her work is her family.

In the run-up to Christmas, we visited all the brothels and nightclubs in Styria and Burgenland, and a few in Vienna too. We brought the women homemade biscuits, along with a calendar in their language. We put a smile on their faces, and some of them told us how much the calendar meant to them.

SABINE KALLAUCH



* Name changed

We spread joy!

▪ *Cyber grooming*

In June, at the 10th anniversary of the Platform Against Exploitation and Human Trafficking, I spoke to around 100 schoolchildren about the loverboy phenomenon. This is a perfidious method used by men to force young women into dependency so that they can be exploited in prostitution. It was important to me to take this chance to talk to young people about cyber grooming. Here is a summary of the presentation:

We hear more and more about cyber grooming, but what exactly is it? It involves mostly adult males gaining the trust of children and young adults with the aim of obtaining intimate images of them. Unknown individuals hide behind user names such as 'cool15' or 'sporty16'. But behind the profile of the seemingly handsome young man, there may well be a 54-year-old man with paedophile tendencies.¹

Contact usually begins with harmless conversations about school, hobbies or computer games. The perpetrators slowly build trust, taking their time. They often show great understanding, **pretending to be the same age** as the people they are communicating with. They address the **natural needs** of their counterparts – the desire to be noticed and appreciated. They give compliments and often willing to make concessions. *If you ... then you will get ...*

After a while, they ask for photos – initially harmless pictures ('You're so pretty, do you have any more photos?'). Then they ask if the other person would be willing to show them "more". Later, they become more direct and ask for nude photos. Groomers often send their own nude photos, or other sexual content ('Have you ever had sex?') to their young chat partners.

Boys and girls are equally affected by cyber grooming. The perpetrators act as helpers and give the children what they crave: **attention**.

The slow pace of the recruitment process strengthens the perpetrator's power over the victim. *They write things such as: You are so special to me, no one is like you. Look how much time I spend with you. You get that from me, the others don't.* They become buddies. This emotional seduction is very effective. Groomers say



things to make the child feel good. And they insist that everything that happens between them remains secret. It is supposed to be theirs and theirs alone, their secret.

But once they have nude photos of their target, they begin to blackmail the child. 'If you tell anyone, I'll publish your pictures at your school,' or 'Send me more, otherwise I'll publish your pictures.'

Some groomers may use a different tactic: they pretend to be modelling agents or talent scouts and promise young people that they will make them famous. Or they might be pretending to be professional gamers on gaming portals or in gaming chats, aiming to help the next gamer generation succeed. Another

grooming strategy: *if a target sends nude photos, the perpetrators sometimes promise a financial reward of some kind.*

These individuals and criminal groups also use what is known as ***love bombing***. The love bomber pretends to have serious intentions and aims to make a person dependent on them as quickly as possible. This is yet another form of emotional abuse.

Perhaps I should mention another related issue here: posting photos of our children on Facebook or other social media is something each and every one of us should consider very carefully. In this day and age we all know a great deal about about what can be done to manipulate photographs, so we should do everything we can to avoid these dangers.

How can you protect your child from cyber grooming?²

- ***Promote trust.*** Take an interest in your child's life – both online and offline – and talk about it together. Let your child know that they can turn to you if they have any problems on the internet and that they can talk about anything with you.
- ***Raise awareness of the problem.*** Talk to your child about the fact that not everyone on the internet has good intentions. Give tips on how to recognise this. Explain that other users are not always who they claim to be.
- ***Avoid prohibitions.*** Some parents, out of concern, forbid their children any internet contact with people they don't know – but in the age of Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc., this is hardly realistic. Our aim as parents should be for our children to learn to use social media responsibly.

2

<https://www.saferinternet.at/zielgruppen/eltern/cyber-grooming-wie-kann-ich-mein-kind-vor-sexueller-belaestigung-im-internet-schuetzen>



- **Strengthen gut feeling.** Encourage your child to listen to their gut feeling, whenever they feel uncomfortable – this could even be about a ‘creepy’ kiss from their great-aunt!
- **Don’t be afraid to say ‘no’ – and practise it.** Train your child to fend off groomers – with statements such as ‘Leave me alone!', ‘I don’t want that!', ‘What you’re doing is illegal!', ‘I’ll report this to the police/I’ll report you!' If from the outset children and young adults resist their advances, potential offenders are quickly put off.
- **Protect personal data and photos.** Make it clear to your child that personal data such as their address, school, mobile phone number, etc. should never be given to people they only know online – and that the same applies to photos. Even within the family, always be careful with photos of children – for example, you should never post anything like a photo of a child having a bath!
- **Meetings should only happen in public.** Agree with your child that they will only meet internet acquaintances in public places (e.g. cinemas, cafés, etc.) and that they must let you know beforehand. Accompany your child if possible and keep them within sight.
- **Stay calm!** Talk to your child about cyber grooming as objectively and calmly as possible. Avoid any impression of panic. Children should not feel that they have to protect their parents – If they have that impression, it’s unlikely they will turn to their parents when they need to.

Cyber grooming is a criminal offence and should be reported to the police.

In Austria, perpetrators face up to two years in prison, and in Germany up to five years.

SABINE KALLAUCH

▪ Annual highlights from our staff

In this section, our staff report on special experiences they had last year.

SABINE

My personal highlight in 2025 was cookies from the Schwarza women's prison! The day before my last assignment in various large brothels in Vienna, where I wanted to distribute Christmas cookies, I was at a meeting of social court assistance staff.

I was a bit worried about the next day because I only had twenty cellophane gift bags of cookies left. Then I heard that as a thank you to their carers, the women from the women's prison had themselves been baking lots and lots of cookies. So, a little hesitantly, I asked if I could maybe have a few. That was how I ended up driving home with seven boxes full of cookies! That evening, I put together 41 gift bags for the next day's assignment and was able to hand out all but one. The whole thing was somehow terrifically satisfying – distributing cookies from women in prison to women in brothels.

KATJA

My highlight of the last KAVOD year was the Easter outreach with Daniela. We were visiting the brothel that is the furthest away from Graz. Anytime we'd been there before, we had hardly seen a soul, but this time everything, absolutely everything, was different. A bunch of people were sitting in the garden around a large fire pit: two of the women who worked there, the owner, her daughter, her daughter's boyfriend, a friend of his – and Jesus. The group invited us to sit down and join them and for an hour or so that is exactly what we did. As always, we shared some little presents. My colleague told them all about the mission work in India she had just been doing, which greatly impressed and even moved the listeners. They were also impressed by fact that we are volunteers and "sacrifice" our time to do all this.

In the car on the way home, we were really "high" on the privilege of having been allowed to go where Jesus often went – the margins of society, where the lonely, the wounded and the marginalised are.



What touched me most were the women's eyes lighting up like children's when they were given small gifts such as cookies or calendars. And the amazement in the eyes of a woman with a latex allergy; she was already pretty happy about the chocolate she had been given, but with the latex-free condoms she was totally delighted. And I was also happy that I was able to hug most of the women.

One Saturday when I met Maria*, she was just leaving the brothel. She hastily took the gift I had for her and told me she had to leave immediately – her taxi was waiting. But after handing out the gifts in the brothel, when I came back outside she was still there. At that point I felt the Spirit of God telling me to do something. I went up to her and said, 'You don't look so good, can we maybe help you in any way?' And I gave her a big hug. She started trembling and crying and told me that everyone thought she was crazy. She had been thrown out of the brothel and everyone had laughed at her. This had all started with a bad experience she'd had with a client after which she had been completely distraught. I assured her that we didn't think she was crazy at all and that we would do anything we could to help her. I promised that Evelin, who like Maria is a Hungarian speaker, would get in touch with her. (*Evelin tells how the story with Maria turned out.*)

I am so glad that I spoke to her. God hears the unspoken voices of those in need.



* Name changed



My highlight was when a loving, beautiful woman in a nightclub hugged and kissed me several times. It reminded me of Mary Magdalene.



*Gottes Versprechen erscheinen
an den dunkelsten Orten!*



EVELIN

For me, KAVOD assignments mean viewing everyone as a person, getting involved and simply helping with heart, respect and energy where support is most urgently needed. Every time we go out we should be increasing dignity, hope and new perspectives.

One special moment for me was when I was able to feel God's presence in a very personal way. On the way to Liezen, we had to buy a toll card for the tunnel. As usual we drove up to the toll booth window, where there was a woman sitting inside. She looked at us for a moment and then said, 'The card is paid, safe journey!' We just looked at each other and didn't understand how that could be, because we didn't have a card and hadn't bought one. Then she said again, very deliberately and clearly, 'The card is paid, safe journey!' We looked at each

other and drove off, bewildered, asking ourselves what had just happened. For a moment or two no one said anything, and then we suddenly started talking and saying the same thing. ‘Maybe Jesus himself was sitting there and said, “It’s paid for!”’

This unexpected moment touched me deeply and showed me that we are not alone on our missions. For me, it was a powerful sign of trust, guidance and divine providence.

In case you’re wondering, on the return journey we had to pay as normal!

The second very special and deeply moving highlight of this year was my meeting with Maria*. (*Emma told you the first part of this story above.*)

After a few times trying to get through to her on the phone, I finally reached her. She was making final preparations to go back home and her daughter was scheduled to pick her up by car that same day. She needed a suitcase. I was able to get hold of one and headed over to give it to her. She welcomed me with a joy that is hard to put into words. I don’t think I have ever been hugged as tightly before – a hug full of relief, hope and love!

During our conversation, she said something that touched my heart deeply: ‘I knew you would come because God doesn’t want to leave me alone!’ That brought home to me once again how concretely and personally God acts.

For me, these moments were powerful evidence that God has a perfect plan. He arranges everything—even things that seem humanly impossible. I was able to experience how God creates space, opens doors, and brings people together at the right time. Maria was so happy that she now had a suitcase she could pack all her belongings in. She was taking everything with her because she was never coming back. She said the best thing she experienced in Austria had been KAVOD! When I gave her some money, she cried and said that was the first money she had ever received without having to do anything for it. I had the chance to pray for her on the street. She even prayed with me and said, crying, that she hadn’t spoken to God for two years, but now she definitely wanted to go to a church at home and tell them everything that had happened to her!

No matter how tired I am, after praying in the car,
I am blessed with strength and joy, as if I were a
changed person!



On the way to the brothels in Burgenland, we saw a rainbow.
On that outreach, one woman opened up to us completely, told us about herself
and showed her vulnerability. We experienced the same thing with two other
women. God is good! All the time!

These and similar highlights give us the strength and hope to continue and not give up. Our calling is to visit people in the places where they 'work' – and sometimes even live. We are there for them, listen to them and explain what we can offer them. What they do with that offer is their own decision over which we have no influence. We want to bring a piece of God's presence into their world, and that often happens through something as simple as a smile or a hug.

▪ *Our graphic designer*

I am Emima Miriam Ilie, the designer behind this newsletter.

I have many years of experience, mainly in print design, and have now started my own business. My motivation: I want to communicate thought-out ideas clearly. In addition to print media, I also design digital applications and websites, illustrate, and take photographs. In recent years, I have worked on numerous projects in the NGO sector, including for KAVOD, combining visual communication with social impact.

A selection of my work can be found in my Behance portfolio:

www.behance.net/emimailie

Please don't hesitate to say Hello:
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■ *Donations*

We continue to depend on your support, both for our running costs and for our missions in Ukraine.

At the beginning of February, we will be travelling to Ukraine again for two weeks, our 17th trip. Generators and emergency power batteries are needed during this cold period because the electricity network has been greatly disrupted by the Russian bombing campaign. Russian attacks have increased significantly in recent months. All of our friends throughout the whole country are now suffering from the consequences of the war.

Thank you for your continued support.

SABINE KALLAUCH FÜR DAS KAVOD TEAM

■ DONATE

If donations are intended for Ukraine,
please **note:** Ukraine

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