

# Police Work and Victim Protection



# Dear Readers,

“We’ve got a woman here who may have been subjected to women trafficking. Can we send her to you?” At FIZ Makasi, we often have police officers on the phone requesting an appointment for potential victims of women trafficking. The police remain our main source of referrals for women subjected to trafficking. In this leaflet, we would like to shift our focus to examine policing against trafficking.

Identifying trafficking in human beings, be it in the sex trade or in other industries, requires proactive investigative work. Since there are no best practices for any industries outside of the sex trade in Switzerland, we will focus on this industry here.

What are the best practices for police investigations with regard to outdoor sex work? Trust instead of repression. This is highlighted by CIPRO’s work in the Swiss Canton of Vaud and by Christiane Howe’s ethnographic research. Proactive police work in sex salons can also take into account the needs of the victims, as demonstrated by FIZ staff members in an interview on the role of victim protection during police raids.

We would also like to provide an insight into the training courses FIZ provides police officers and other authorities. Role-play, for example, is used to prepare them for crisis situations.

The emblematic pictures used in this leaflet were taken by self-taught photographer Nina Lanzi, who studied political science and is now an intern at FIZ.

We hope you enjoy reading this brochure.

With best regards,  
Susanne Seytter and Rebecca Angelini

## Leaflet 58 | 2016

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Emblematic pictures  
in this newsletter  
© Nina Lanzi



# Non-repressive investigative work

Experts now agree that trafficking in human beings can only be successfully addressed if investigating and prosecuting authorities work together with victim protection organizations. This requires all parties involved to be specialized in the field of trafficking in human beings, while police investigations should be carried out proactively and be non-repressive. This is the only way that cases of trafficking in human beings can be exposed, victims protected and perpetrators brought to justice.

Fifteen years ago in Zurich, FIZ organised the first Swiss roundtable against trafficking in human beings. The idea was to encourage cooperation between prosecution and victim protection stakeholders and any other relevant players addressing trafficking in human beings. At the beginning, there was a palpable mutual scepticism. Feminists were confronting public officials. While one side approached the situation “from the bottom up”, focusing on survivors of trafficking and their situation, the other was used to approaching the issue “from the top”, championing law and order and countering illegal immigration in Switzerland through repressive means.

## Different roles

Very quickly, all stakeholders at the roundtable became aware of their different roles, and all those involved were soon united in a joint endeavour: combat human trafficking by protecting victims and bringing perpetrators to justice. Since then, many cantonal anti-trafficking roundtables have been established in Switzerland, with several cantons signing a cooperation agreement with FIZ.

Exposing trafficking in human beings is not easy. Survivors rarely open up about what they faced on their own initiative. They fear reprisals, are traumatised and many do not trust the authorities. Some feel indebted to the perpetrators; others shield the perpetrators out of fear or dependency. Identifying trafficking in human beings therefore requires a well-trained eye. It is nearly impossible to put perpetrators behind bars without a victim’s statement. The victims have to bear enormous pressure and responsibility, compounded by intense trauma in most cases. This highlights how important it is to have dedicated victim protection, not only to enforce human rights, but also to facilitate prosecution.

For years, most cases of trafficking have been referred to FIZ Makasi by the police. And these referrals to FIZ Makasi come almost exclusively from police units which have been especially trained to identify trafficking in human beings. Following Hamburg’s example, Zurich city police corps was the first to establish a specialized investigative unit dedicated to outdoor sex work and related areas. Its task is purely investigative and non-repressive. This unit does not give fines for work without a permit, nor does it request to be shown residence permits. The police unit can therefore establish a relation of trust with presumed victims and refer them to FIZ Makasi. Similar models have been implemented in other regions, such as in the Canton of Vaud (see information box regarding CIPRO).

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### Considerable differences between cantons

However, there are considerable differences between the different cantons when it comes to investigating and prosecuting trafficking in human beings. A high number of cases in one canton does not necessarily mean the phenomenon occurs more than in others. Instead it indicates that the chances are higher in that canton that affected persons will be identified and protected, in this case by proactive investigative police units working with dedicated prosecutors and victim protection organisations. In other regions, despite awareness among the authorities, there is a lack of political will to allocate the necessary resources to supply the specialized, non-repressive investigative units with sufficient staff and technical equipment.

### The fight against human trafficking has changed

Over the last few years, sex work in Switzerland has been increasingly regulated. Outdoor sex work has been curbed in many places, and red tape for legal sex work has increased. These measures may mainly stem from a political effort to protect potential victims of traffickers in the sex industry. However, in reality, these measures tend to make violence and exploitation less visible. Sex workers increasingly have to work illegally, either in private rooms or hotels, or they are more dependent on owners of large brothels.

Furthermore, there is increasing awareness of the fact that trafficking in human beings does not only occur in the sex industry. Trafficking and exploitation can also take place in private households, in agriculture, in the hospitality industry and in the building trade. Labour inspectors need to be trained and specialized in identifying trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation, and other authorities need to be made more aware of this issue.

Due to sex work regulations, specialized and proactive, non-repressive police work has become more difficult. Yet it is more important than ever – not only in the sex industry but also in other industries.

Rebecca Angelini

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## Best practice in the Canton of Vaud

The *Cellule d'investigation dans le milieu de la prostitution/ CIPRO (Investigative division for the sex industry)* in the Canton of Vaud and in Lausanne investigates directly in the sex industry. CIPRO police officers forego a repressive approach, focusing on building an atmosphere of trust. This mirrors best practice in anti-trafficking.

Canton of Vaud's three police inspectors and the Lausanne criminal police have a decidedly empathetic approach to sex workers. This allows them to move freely through the relevant streets and brothels, where they can identify victims and perpetrators when they see them. Their mission is to expose anyone attempting to alter working conditions at the cost of sex workers.

Vital to this approach is building and maintaining a relationship founded on trust with all those involved in the sex industry – no grey areas and no concessions whatsoever. This is no mean feat. Many sex workers come from countries where they are stigmatised and discriminated against on a daily basis. This explains why they have little or no confidence in the police. To earn credibility, inspectors must also protect women working without a permit.

The aim is to protect sex workers and defend their rights. CIPRO sought inspiration from NGOs such as *Fleur de pavé* in Lausanne or *Aspasie* in Geneva, two NGOs that are committed to defending the rights of sex workers.

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Ethnographic research

# Police work in street prostitution areas

In three different German cities, sociologist Christiane Howe shadowed different police units working preventively as part of an ethnographic study. The following is a short excerpt from an article published in 2016.<sup>1</sup>

Certain urban neighbourhoods are populated with residents of varying origins, with equally varying interests. There are those who have always lived there and those who have moved more recently or just immigrated from other countries. There are also drug users and/or street sex workers and those who belong to the party scene. For all these people and with them, a whole infrastructure has been established. Police work in these neighbourhoods focuses among other things on visible and easily identifiable sex workers working in the streets – predominantly women, but also a few men. The police work consists, on the one hand, in obtaining concrete information on the outdoor sex work world: what is going on here? Who does what? Who influences what? On the other hand, police aim to make street sex workers accustomed to their presence, making it clear to the women and men working the streets that they are there, approachable and – particularly for those who may be subjected to violence and human trafficking – that sex workers can lodge a complaint with them. These police units are also well connected with local support organisations.

## Village structures

Verbal as well as non-verbal communication are the most essential practices: a stroll every few days in and out of the neighbourhood's bars and up and down its streets. In this way, short encounters and episodes, greetings, exchanges and passing chats occur. Information is relayed, questions are asked, help is requested, conflicts are resolved, and checks, research and observations are made. Women often talk about their working conditions and any problems with proprietors, colleagues, boyfriends or their family. Sometimes, they mention something that happened in the neighbourhood. Many stories circulate. The neighbourhoods are structured a bit like villages. As one police officer puts it: "If we make one false move, the story gets around within a millisecond. We couldn't possibly sprint to the other side of the neighbourhood before the story gets there."

The daily presence of police officers generates a basis for trust and (work) relationships. It enables the officers again and again to talk to the women, register statements, and to examine them within a greater context (and therefore check them). The consequence of this is that they are "in the know". The police know the state of play, can assess a situation quickly or use their contacts. This greatly reduces the need for old-fashioned surveillance and control or traditional police activity.

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**Information is relayed;  
questions asked; help requested;  
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made.**

However, the situation is characterized by a certain asymmetry of power, raising the question of how one behaves towards the police – pointedly avoiding or taking no account of them, quickly passing by or acknowledging their presence with a greeting. Stakeholders on the streets are, in a way, obliged to greet (at least with a nod) or speak to the officers. They usually also assume or fear that the police know more than they let on. This asymmetry is also made apparent by the personal questions police can ask and have a right to ask, expecting to get an honest answer; and by their power to request identity papers or accompany them to the police station. At the same time, neighbourhood residents turn to those police officers with whom they are familiar, treating them as confidants (e.g. when they need help or information) or sometimes exploit them for their own ends (e.g. in cases of conflict). Despite the asymmetry in power, the interactions are therefore decidedly interwoven.

Christiane Howe

<sup>1</sup> In *Polizeiliches Wissen. Formen, Austausch, Hierarchien* (Police Knowledge. Forms, Exchange, Hierarchies), ed. by Jonas Grutzpalk, Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaft, 2016

## Victim protection during raids

# Clearly defined and differentiated roles

If there is evidence that victims of trafficking in human beings are at a certain location, the police intervene. It is vital that presumed victims are immediately referred to a specialized counsellor in charge of supporting them directly following a raid. This is where FIZ support comes in. FIZ director Susanne Seytter and Makasi deputy head Eva Danzl tell us more.

### FIZ works with police during raids. Why?

**Susanne Seytter:** You must first understand that we do not actively participate in the raids. FIZ and police have clearly defined and differentiated roles. We only come in after a raid, then we speak with the women and inform them of their rights. The police's objective is to compile information on perpetrators as quickly as possible. FIZ's objective is to protect victims.

### Can you give a concrete idea of what this cooperation looks like?

**Susanne Seytter:** In the cantons where we have cooperation agreements, our contact informs us about the imminent intervention. We need to know the time, the approximate number of potential victims and the languages they speak. Most of our preparation is logistical. We never know exactly how many cases there will be, but we usually have enough advisors and interpreters on stand-by to react flexibly. To accommodate possible new arrivals to the Makasi programme, we reserve places in our shelters or organize alternate housing within our network. We also ensure that Makasi counsellors have the time and capacity for the follow-up support needed. In addition, we speak with police about the local infrastructure to arrange for separate rooms for our meetings.

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**FIZ is not a supplier of willing witnesses.**

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### When and where do survivors of trafficking encounter Makasi advisors?

**Eva Danzl:** FIZ Makasi is not present at the scene of the crime. We wait in another building and the police bring the presumed victims to us. It is critical that our talks and police questioning do not take place in the same room, and that police are not present during our talks. Several waiting and meeting rooms are needed.

### Do the women trust FIZ counsellors or do they perceive FIZ as an extension of the police?

**Eva Danzl:** It is difficult for the affected persons to believe that FIZ Makasi does not work for the police. After all, it is the police who just brought them to the building where FIZ counsellors are waiting. We explain who we are and that our duty of confidentiality prevents us from giving information to anyone, including the police. When the women understand that we are there to support them, whether they cooperate with the police or not, they lower their guard a bit. Raids are always a scary experience for victims of trafficking in human beings. The police may have forced their way into the building in riot gear, and many women experience this as an attack and fear for their lives. When they speak with Makasi counsellors, they are still in shock. We ask them how they are feeling, bring them food if they are hungry or a sweater if they are cold, or we go outside with them for a smoke. Only then do we broach the topic of potential exploitation. The initial meeting may last one to two hours, depending on the woman's state.

### How do the consultations proceed?

**Eva Danzl:** That really depends. A woman may tell a completely fabricated story and insist it's true: "I'm a tourist. I just wanted to see the Basel Carnival." Or: "I arrived at the train station and took a taxi here." If a counsellor cannot reach her on an emotional or rational level, we inform her of her rights and obligations and what we offer.



Another woman may start with an invented story, but after a question or two, it quickly becomes clear that the story can't be true. When she notices that the counsellor is familiar with the milieu and exploitation mechanisms, and understands loyalties and fears, she can instil confidence. She then tells of her life in her home country and about false promises that were made to her and her life in Switzerland. There is often an enormous fear of perpetrators who might threaten or harm their families. Some women are far too afraid to bail out or to cooperate with the police. We tell these women what we can offer them, give them our telephone number or promise to contact them again in a few days.

Other women clearly want to escape the violence and exploitation. They want to come with us and take advantage of the reflection period they are offered to decide whether to cooperate with the authorities or not. These women are also

horribly afraid of the possible consequences of their decision, but they enter the Makasi programme all the same.

#### **What happens when women decide not to cooperate with the police?**

**Susanne Seytter:** The women are free to decide. Their decision to cooperate with the police or not must be respected and we support them regardless. FIZ is not a “supplier” of willing witnesses. Trafficked women are traumatised, shocked and afraid. They need peace and quiet, and time, to decide whether to testify or not. Deciding to join the Makasi programme and take advantage of the 30-day period of recovery and reflection is already a big step. And if they decide against testifying after this time, the police have to accept that decision.

Interview: Shelley Berlowitz

FIZ training for police officers

# Respect, Awareness, Empathy

Many survivors of human trafficking are referred to FIZ by the authorities, usually by the police. The police can effectively identify evidence of trafficking in human beings only if they are aware of this issue. This is why for many years FIZ has been offering training courses to the police and other criminal prosecution agencies.

In the course of their everyday work, police officers, social workers, migration authorities, health personnel, public prosecutors and other related professionals are likely to encounter potential victims of trafficking in human beings. Knowledge about human trafficking and a sensibility for the situation of trafficked people are essential prerequisites for a professional conduct. This becomes obvious when comparing the amount of cases of identified human trafficking in different Swiss cantons: the number of cases of trafficking in human beings has increased only in the cantons in which criminal prosecution offices and related professionals have taken part in specialized training in human trafficking.

## A special partner: the police

In 2015, 38% of new cases concerning suspected human trafficking came to FIZ via the police. In the years prior to that, it was nearly half of cases. The police are therefore one of FIZ's central cooperation partners. In addition to organiz-

ing various information events for state agencies such as social services or victim aid offices, for over ten years FIZ has been carrying out an annual special training day-course at the Swiss Police Institute (SPI) during the *Anti-trafficking training week*.

## Role play

This training course at the SPI is devised by FIZ in cooperation with both cantonal and national police and administrative staff members. The course begins with a presentation of the FIZ Makasi programme offered to women affected by human trafficking, followed by a discussion on cooperation between police and victim support stakeholders, and their differing roles. The majority of the day-course, however, consists of role plays. The aim is to simulate four different scenarios between a police officer and a woman who has presumably been targeted by traffickers. One scenario, for example, takes place at passport control and involves a



young woman in a car travelling out of the country. The woman is sitting in the back seat, staring apathetically at the floor. Her passport is shown to the control officer by the couple accompanying her. Under a pretext, the control officer brings the young woman into an office. The simulated encounter begins at this precise moment. Makasi counsellors take on the role of the presumed trafficking victim, while officers are given the task of questioning and interrogating her.

### Victim-sensitive questioning

The directives are clear: police are to practice creating a safe atmosphere, to gain the questioned person's confidence, to explain that they must ask uncomfortable questions, but that these are not directed towards the questioned person herself. During interrogation, police must explain the rights of victims of criminal acts in Switzerland. After all, the aim is to understand what has happened, to document defining elements, to identify the means of pressure and coercion the women are subjected to, and to clarify the social and

economic situation. During initial contact, it is counter-productive to hope to garner all necessary information for a continued investigation. It takes time to gain the woman's trust, to respond to her immediate needs and so alleviate the situation.

The simulated interrogations and interaction between questioner and questionee vary greatly, Sara Donath explains: "I have played the same role over many years and each time I react differently to my counterpart. Depending on the person's questioning style, my reactions range from extreme discomfort in their presence to a desire to pour out my heart to them. A role play may be a simulated situation, yet it always evolves into an authentic and conceivable scenario that feels realistic." The course therefore gives rise to fruitful conversations as well as prime examples of less successful scenarios. Both have high educational value for the participants.

### Three messages

The role play is followed by a discussion on the crucial points arising from the questioners' behaviour and the questionees' observations during the simulated scenarios. The focus is on well-meaning and constructive criticism, encouraging participants to further develop their competence in questioning people affected by human trafficking. They should adopt and recognize alternative questioning approaches. FIZ relays three central messages to police: respect the victim, be aware of your own behaviour, and show empathy.

A questioner's facial expressions, gestures, spatial distance, physical position in relationship to the questioned person as well as their voice, body language and eye contact all form part of the non-verbal communication. These messages are often more decisive in reaching the woman and in inspiring willingness to cooperate than the actual questions or motives regarding criminal prosecution and investigation. Questioners must realize that questioned persons react to the police officer's approach. It is vital that police officers do not treat their counterparts as mere sources of information. They must respond their needs sensitively and humanely. As Sara Donath highlights: "The last thing victims of trafficking need during questioning is to feel they are being controlled. This is exactly what they experienced when they were exploited. What they need is a caring environment, time and an open ear."

Nina Lanzi

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### Non-verbal communication is often a decisive factor.

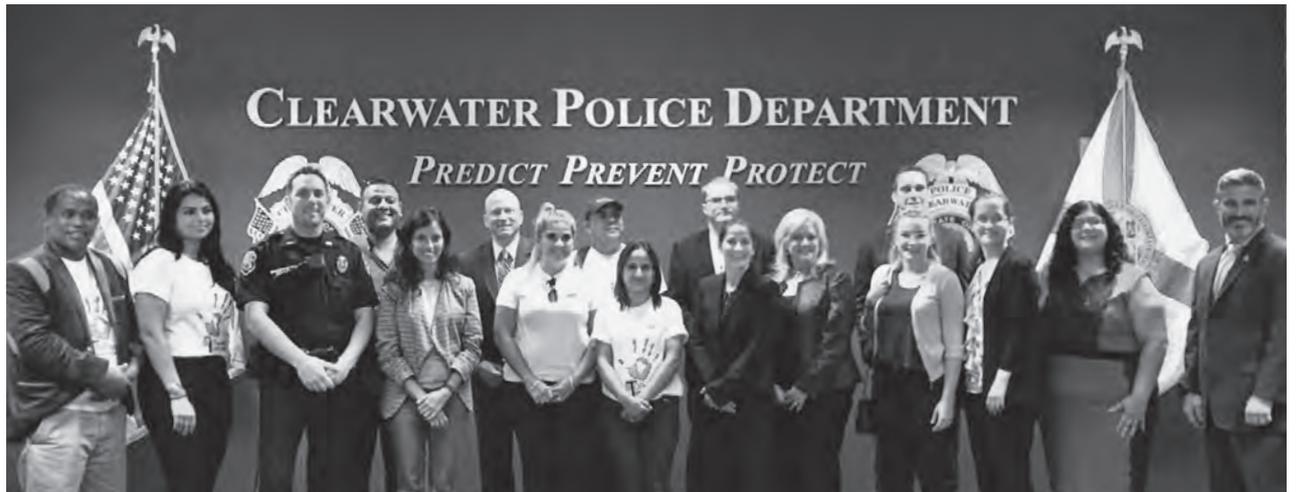
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## Networking, Exchange, Understanding

# FIZ in the USA

Professional networking, discussions among experts, international understanding: for 75 years, these have been the objectives of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), which was established by the US Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In January and February, FIZ member of staff Rebecca Angelini joined an IVLP delegation which travelled throughout the USA. Here is her report on the visit.



Rebecca Angelini of FIZ with participants from Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Iraq, Argentina, India, Nepal, the Republic of Latvia and government representatives and NGOs from Florida. © FIZ

*“Minors handed over to human traffickers.”* This was the Washington Post headline on 6 February 2016 targeting the American Department of Health and Human Services, the department responsible for placing unaccompanied underage refugees in foster homes for the duration of their legal status procedure. According to a US senate report, in 2014, several dozen minors were placed with human traffickers and exploited in a variety of industries. The news generated many discussions among the IVLP delegation visiting Washington D.C. at that time. The delegation had been invited by the US Ministry of Foreign Affairs to learn about American efforts to address trafficking in human beings.

As in Switzerland, the effort against trafficking in human beings in the USA also faces the challenges resulting from a federation of states. In the USA, as in Switzerland, criminal prosecution and victim protection lie in the hands of the individual states or cantons, which makes for great regional disparities. Delegates from centrally governed countries found this difficult to grasp. Discussions therefore mainly focused on how regional governments and authorities can commit to better fulfil their obligations – an issue that greatly preoccupies us in Switzerland due to the enormous cantonal differences in identifying or protecting victims.

After touring the nation’s capital, the group visited Baltimore, Tampa, Denver, Boulder, San Francisco and Sacramento, stopping not only at federal agencies, but also at NGOs and civil society stakeholders. What was striking

in all states was the lack of federal funding for victim protection. Volunteers fill the gaps, bringing with them a profound religious/evangelic – and therefore missionary – influence from the organizations active in this and other social support areas. Another problematic aspect in the U.S. is the illegal status of sex work. Compounding the dangers of exploitation and violence that go hand in hand with illegal work, thousands of sex workers in the U.S. are burdened with a criminal record for practising illegal prostitution. This makes renting an apartment or changing professions practically impossible. In Florida, the IVLP delegation was introduced to a lawyer who does nothing apart from handle cases demanding that the courts erase his clients’ criminal records.

Most inspiring during the three-week tour was the exchange among the 24 participants, who included experts in trafficking in human beings from prosecution and related authorities, representatives of victim protection NGOs, and international institutions such as the IOM or the EU. They came from 24 highly different countries such as Argentina, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Romania, Turkey and the Solomon Islands, bringing together a plethora of practical knowledge and perspectives. A unique, valuable and lastingly powerful experience that will provide FIZ with new ideas for their own activities as well as for cross-national cooperation.

# FIZ News

## FIZ crosses borders

In November 2015, an international women's conference took place in London.

The congress was organized by *Global Women's Strike (GWS)*, *Women of Colour in GWS*, and *Payday*, a network of men working with GWS. Lucia Tozzi represented FIZ at the riveting discussion on feminism, and brought many inspiring impressions back with her.

In January 2016, Kelechi Mennel, head of Makasi, represented FIZ at a meeting in Budapest. The Hungarian Interior Ministry had invited the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and FIZ to report on a project launched to protect women returning to Hungary who have been subjected to trafficking in human beings. The project has already been implemented in Belgium and Holland, and since Switzerland is one of the primary destinations for Hungarian women, the Hungarian authorities are interested in collaborating with our country.

Over the last three years, the NGO, *Les Amis du Bus des Femmes (ABDF)* and

Nigerian sex workers have compiled a **Handbook on Women Trafficking in Nigeria**.

In February 2016, the new publication was launched in Paris. Makasi staff member Lina Rasheed represented FIZ at the event, where in-depth discussions on Nigerian women trafficking took place. There were many sex workers, experts and NGO staff members in the audience.

Over the past five years, FIZ has counselled 25 Bulgarian women survivors of

trafficking. To better identify cases and intensify prevention and protection, we are working on a Swiss-Bulgarian joint project with our sister organization *Animus* in Sofia. In February 2016, the new project manager, Serena Dankwa, brought FIZ interests and ideas to a **coordination and networking meeting in Sofia**. Serena is a doctor of social anthropology. She is also a new FIZ staff member, working in the public relations department.



GWS Conference, plenum session. Photo: © GWS

## FIZ is awarded the Ana Orantes Prize

Every year for five years, *Asociación de Mujeres Españolas en Suiza (Association of Spanish Women in Switzerland)* has honoured an organization based in Switzerland fighting violence against women with the Ana Orantes Prize. On International Women's Day, the association's president, Pilar Velázquez, presented the prize, along with a cheque for 850 Swiss francs, to Olinda Sanchez, FIZ counsellor. Thank you for the solidarity and support!



Presentation of the Ana Orantes Prize.  
Photo: © Asociación de Mujeres Españolas en Suiza

## A 24/7 safe place

To ensure 24-hour protection, FIZ, the Zurich municipal police, the cantonal police force of Zurich, the women's shelter Zurich Violetta and the Winterthur women's shelter, as well as the counselling centre for women Flora Dora, formalised a new, more efficient agreement in 2015. The police escort victims directly to the relevant shelter where they are taken in. On the following day, or as soon as possible, FIZ Makasi staff takes over advising and counselling. When capacity allows, the women are moved to a Makasi apartment or to other FIZ accommodation. Women sometimes also remain in the women's shelter and FIZ assumes case management.

## The first FIZ retiree: Toy Meyer

At the end of 2015, Toy Srismorn Meyer was the first FIZ staff member to retire. Toy began her work as a freelancer as early as the 1990s and became a counsellor in 2001. More recently, she became a member of the executive staff. We thank Toy for all she has done for FIZ and wish her all the best for her retirement!



Toy Srismorn Meyer.  
Photo: © Steven Hamburger

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