Family Homelessness

THROUGH THE LENS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS 2030 AGENDA

UNANIMA
INTERNATIONAL

Foreword

UNANIMA International is a coalition of communities of religious women who bring their voices, concerns and experiences as educators, health providers, social workers, development and community builders to the United Nations (UN). Since obtaining UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) special accreditation in 2005, the organization has committed itself to working for peace and human dignity in response to the needs of our world, by service to our members, the UN and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community based groups through advocacy, collaboration, education and action. UNANIMA International's continued and

evolving focus on women and children/girls who have been displaced has prompted the organization to take a lead role, including research, in homeless advocacy at the United Nations.

Our present focus is on homelessness and displacement as one of several global concerns that we have, and seek to address, at the United Nations. We work with various partners, predominantly other members of civil society, to help influence the policy decisions being made by the UN member states. This mandate has several different components. It is primarily targeted at educating member states, so that diplomats have some inputs and a point of reference from

civil society when they are negotiating and making international policy. We see ourselves as the link between international policy and our local grassroots members of UNANIMA International in the 85 countries in which we serve.

The core mantra of "Transforming our world" is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its pledge to 'leave no one behind, especially those furthest left behind.' This agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It seeks to restore dignity and equality to all people, by eradicating poverty, and in our case homeless families, as the furthest left behind in our world. We believe that what is now called for is a paradigm shift in how we perceive the problems of poverty and homelessness, and that it is time for a revolution on the subject.

If we have only 10 years left from the 2030 Agenda then Transformational change is called for within and outside the UN. We need conscious, focused and inspirational leadership at this time in our history. The former leader of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel said "the power for authentic leadership, is found not in external arrangements but in the human heart. Authentic Leaders in every setting - from families to nation-states - aim at liberating the heart, their own and others, so that its power can liberate the world". What made for transformational change at the UN was that for the first time It recognised poverty, social protection, and inequalities which are interconnected and need to be addressed in a multilateral and comprehensive way. Progress in each area cannot be achieved if the other is missing.

Combating the issue of homelessness is integral in achieving the 2030 agenda. Progress in achieving the eradication of homelessness underpins and can hinder the success and achievement of various goals and their indicators, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 16. This publication on leaving no one behind in the context of Family Homelessness and the 2030 Agenda demonstrates a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to the SDGs, the lived experience, the practitioner, advocacy and policy recommendations and resources, we hope that it will be used by both state and non state actors at the local, domestic and international levels.

Sincerely,

Jean

Jean Quinn, DW
Executive Director
UNANIMA International

Acronyms

CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
HF	Housing First
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NUA	New Urban Agenda
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization

THE 30 ARTICLES OF

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

AS ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1948

FREEDOM & EQUALITY

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL

LIFE, LIBERTY & SECURITY

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE

LEGAL RECOGNITION

LEGAL EQUALITY

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

FREEDOM FROM UNLAWFUL DETAINMENT

FAIR & PUBLIC TRIAL

INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY

PRIVACY

DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

ASYLUM

NATIONALITY

MARRIAGE & FAMILY EQUALITY

PERSONAL PROPERTY

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

SOCIAL SECURITY

FAIR EMPLOYMENT & RIGHT TO UNIONIZE

REST & RELAXATION

HEALTH, WELLBEING & SECURITY

EDUCATION

CULTURE & COMMUNITY

SOCIAL & INTERNATIONAL ORDER

COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY

THESE RIGHTS ARE INDISPUTABLE

Created by American University's online Master's in International Relations

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Introduction

Kirin R. Taylor
**Research Fellow at
UNANIMA International**

In *War on the Family: Mothers in Prison and the Families They Leave Behind*, author and principal investigator Renny Golden stresses the importance of researchers considering women's stories within their full life narratives, particularly when concerning difficult experiences related to livelihood and family.[1] UNANIMA International advocates for Women, Children/Girls and the Displaced with this in mind: experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity/inadequacy are not the whole of an individual's or family's reality. Moreover, within international political issues, we must view Family Homelessness as one human rights issue among many, and seek to understand the histories and contexts from which Family Homelessness has stemmed. Women and Children/Girls, globally, are vulnerable to the personal and familial circumstances,[2] and structural/systemic causes of Family Homelessness, as well as the accompanying subjects of displacement and trauma. However, within the foundations of international human rights law, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* **Article 16.3** it is clearly stated, "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the

State."[3] In the proceeding law which explicitly extended rights to children, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* reflects and expands the above: "Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community."[4]

These premises incite UNANIMA International's mixed methodology, and intersectional, gender, and social justice lenses of analysis. This publication combines evidence from recent literature with the expertise of service-providers, and those who have or are currently experiencing homelessness housing instability. Additional inputs from diverse experts and academics give perspective to the UN's SDGs and the barriers and prospects for their achievement by 2030. This publication will serve as an introduction to some of the most pressing multilateral issues' intersections with Women and Children/Girls' homelessness/displacement and trauma, and relation to human rights. Considering the incontrovertible significance attributed to

families, the barriers to their function across the globe are shocking.

Many testimonies and much evidence and analysis herein will show that this issue has greatly violated

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The urgency of Family Homelessness is displayed two-fold: firstly, due to the great injustices and human rights abuses which are known to directly or indirectly cause Family Homelessness, and secondly, due to Family Homelessness' adverse effects on individuals, families, and communities, best framed within the concepts of trauma and compound trauma.

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human rights, and that we are at a crisis point. These realities and their effects do transcend into the regional and international realms. Therefore, this publication and its partner *Hidden Faces of Homelessness: International Research on Families* made for the Commission on Social Development of 2020, must be seen as catalysts for 1. further research on Family Homelessness, displacement and trauma, 2. Increased international attention to Family Homelessness, and 3. your - the reader's - involvement in addressing and preventing Family Homelessness!

UNANIMA International's Exploration of Family Homelessness across multiple country case studies, and through the lenses of several SDGs, has demonstrated that the development of partnerships, reframing of commitments (such as the New Urban Agenda) to be seen in a human rights context, and sharing of good practices are each necessary for addressing Family Homelessness multilaterally. The issue must be addressed preventatively, though in the short-term also reactively, and through good governance supported by public concern and civic engagement. The initiatives, resources and ideas we highlight, as well as the advocacy and policy recommendations put forth show concern for human rights, and the need for creativity and collaboration in response to even the most harrowing problems.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being at all ages is crucial in achieving sustainable development. According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform significant progress has been made in increasing life expectancy and reducing the number of common killers associated with child and maternal mortality. [5] Unfortunately vast effort still needs to be made in order to achieve each of the targets outlaid in Goal 3. The goal's intersections with Family Homelessness are plentiful and without addressing family homelessness this goal will not be achieved.

Target 3.4 "By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being" is inherently linked with the issue of Family Homelessness.[6] Globally more effort needs to be made to fully address and eradicate ongoing and emerging health issues. Addressing Family Homelessness can aid in achieving this.

"The premise is housing is healthcare."
– Ronald Johnson, Co-Founder of Point Source Youth

■ Analysis

Preety Gadhoke, PhD, MPH

Associate Professor, St. John's University College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences MPH Program

Family homelessness is a global health and human rights crisis.[8] While there is increased attention to eliminate homelessness in recent years, interventions and programs have failed to provide long-term solutions. Having access to quality, affordable, and safe housing is a human right and has serious implications for population health.[9] Housing can "save lives, prevent disease, increase quality of life, reduce poverty, help mitigate climate change."[10] It can further help UN member states achieve the SDGs, including Goal 3 for good health and wellbeing. With the world's urban centers predicted to double by 2050, comes an ever-pressing need for more affordable, accessible, and safe housing. Across the lifespan, the lack of affordable and safe housing places vulnerable populations at risk of stress, illness, premature disease, interpersonal violence, depression, suicide, and premature death.[11]

Families contending with homelessness are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and lack access to basic necessities due to displacement, climate change/natural disasters, domestic violence, loss of employment, disability, multiple comorbidities, and exorbitant medical costs.[12] As such, family homelessness is an "extreme violation of the rights to adequate housing and non-discrimination and often also a violation of the rights to life to security of person, to health, to protection of the home and family and to freedom from cruel and inhuman treatment."[13] Hence, there has never been a more dire need to humanize and depoliticize family homelessness and prevent the subsequent ill health effects.

With the World Health Organization's (WHO) Constitution (1946) envisioning "the highest attainable standard of health as a fundamental right of every human being,"[14] comes the need for a rights-based, evidence-based public health approach. The WHO calls for an integrated solution that is cross-disciplinary and multi-sectoral responses. There are evidence-based approaches that can help alleviate homelessness and, therefore, the dire consequences of such losses of dignity, self-esteem, and livelihoods.[15] Interventions include improved housing, improved access to mental and physical health care services, harm-reduction strategies, such as incorporating trauma-informed care

in schools for children and youth.[16] Public health interventions must address existing problems with shelters, such as poor air quality, dampness, allergens, dust mites, infectious diseases, metal exposure, and accidents in the home with fires and other unintentional injuries.[17]

Recommendations to address the family homelessness and public health crisis include, universal terminology on family homelessness, effective leadership for local policies and programs for families living in homeless, increased funding for evidence-based health programs, and incentivizing local stakeholders to engage in local cross-disciplinary solutions to alleviate homelessness.[18] A majority of the SDG 3 targets will need attention in the context of family homelessness, including and especially:

Target 3.1 (reduce maternal mortality); **Target 3.2** (reduce preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age); **3.3** (eliminate infectious and communicable diseases); **Target 3.4** (prevent and treat non-communicable diseases); **Target 3.5** (prevent alcohol and substance abuse); **Target 3.8** (achieve universal health coverage); **Target 3.a** (tobacco control and prevention); **Target 3.b** (access to health services); **Target 3.d** (strength risk reduction and management).[19] In addition, policies and programs need to take a more holistic perspective on health and wellness to be inclusive of mental, emotional/psychological, physical, spiritual, and social, and communal state of being.[20] Community engagement, making families living in homelessness at the center of this approach, and advocacy to bring dignity through integrated social protection programs is at the heart of the solution.[21]

■ Human Rights

Though the basis of Human Rights is that "everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination," a reality demonstrated most clearly and with the most consequence on family livelihood, is that human rights related to health and wellbeing are neglected, through housing failures and elsewise. The following articles from the UDHR are highlighted to remind nations, and others with political power, that finances, status and identity must not dictate access to healthcare and other necessities which can make a person healthy and whole in the first place. **Article 3** "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."[22] While security of person is often interpreted in a legal sense, and in regard to safety from atrocities such as torture, we must look to this article in a more practical way - how it applies to the health and wellbeing of a person. **Article 25.1** "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment,

sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."[23] UNCRC Article 3, in its entirety, displays the extensive and coordinated concern needed for children and for action on their behalf: **Article 3** "1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration; 2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures; 3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision."[24] The applicability of human rights to Women and Children/Girls and their present sufferings must be recognized.

The information presented in the above analysis, among the others in this publication, displays egregious human rights violations that are not irreparable, but do require a paradigm shift on the issue of homelessness, and fulfillment of the UN 2030 Agenda, as agreed to by the signatories.

" *Homelessness? Frankly it's depressing. And with my story... unfortunately my health got the best of me... and I got here because I had to stop working.. It's like you're lost because you worked all your life and what do you do? Life goes on... paying bills goes on. My first day of being homeless...was a day of ripping and running, all day and doing absolutely nothing but moving. It's like you get up 5:30 for no reason. You stay over here, you leave 12:30 to get over there to stay an hour and a half... standing out there in the brutal cold, the rain. And when you have health conditions it doesn't help. I stayed sick the entire winter until I moved here [into transitional housing]... I'll never forget the day in January it was single digits out there and we had to get up and go. If you don't feel good, they don't want to hear that. You have to get up and be gone... I had no idea that homeless people go through this cycle every day. It's an ongoing cycle from one shelter to the next... And even through my homelessness it hurt me even more seeing women there with their children, homeless. It's horrible, it's really horrible.* "

Note: Brianna was a participant in UNANIMA International's
focus group at My Sister's Place Lodge in the USA

* Name change

■ Responder

Maureen Doherty
BA(HONS), MPsych(Clin), D.Hyp, MAPS
Endorsed Clinical Psychologist

Family Homelessness and health are two issues that are inherently intertwined. In a regional Australian context, an unprecedented crisis in housing affordability ironically coincides with a time when Tasmania's economy is the fastest growing in Australia. Reminiscent of regions, states and cities globally, many homeless women, sleeping rough, couch surfing or sleeping in tents and cars, are survivors of family violence and may also live with mental health conditions or substance abuse that have been exacerbated by trauma. Displaced children are vulnerable to the negative psychological impact of housing instability, maternal distress, educational disruption, and disconnection from established peer networks. Older single women, unable to find work due to age or illness, and with little economic provision for retirement, are growing in number. The addressing of housing and the health of individuals and families must occur simultaneously, to ensure sustainable solutions that work for everyone.

■ Advocacy Recommendations

Acknowledging the role civil society, the private sector, and citizens play in advocacy for resolving issues of health and wellbeing in the context of Family Homelessness, **we recommend:**

- Promotion of Maternal and Child Health, with special concern for infancy and preschool stages

- Improved nutrition and ecosystem health through education at the family level, in educational institutions and in public spaces

- Implementation of universal health coverage (UHC) which will meet the needs of vulnerable populations including families experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, the displaced, and people with disabilities

- Education for health practitioners on trauma-informed care in order to more holistically meet the physical and mental health needs of vulnerable people

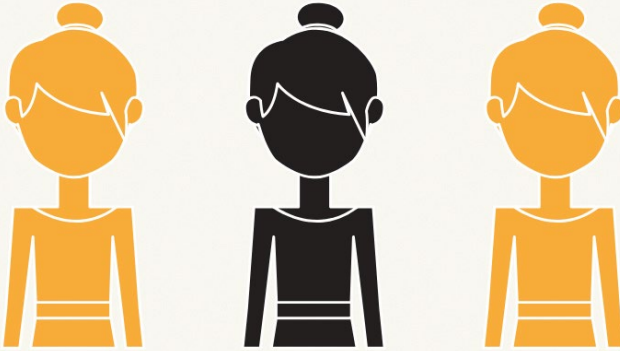- Increased dialogue and reaction to the social and environmental determinants of health

■ Policy Recommendations

We believe the following policy recommendations are essential to addressing and preventing Family Homelessness, and are applicable at the local, national and international levels. **We encourage:**

- The adoption of a holistic definition of health and wellbeing within all health services, and specifically those that support people experiencing homelessness and the displaced. UN-ANIMA International refers to the WHO's definition: "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" [25]

- The promotion of combined Housing First (HF) and Supported Housing models, which are better able to mitigate holistic health threats

- The implementation of policies and services that meet the needs of people experiencing mental health and substance abuse disorders, whom are likely to have experienced traumas

- The implementation of Universal Health coverage and Social Protection policies to support public health, not excluding the health of undocumented peoples, migrants and refugees

- Provision of financial and material resources for the presence of specialized support services on-site or in the vicinity of where people experiencing homeless and housing insecurity reside

"More than **one** of every three women have experienced either physical or sexual violence at some point in their life resulting in both short- and long-term consequences for their physical, mental, and sexual and reproductive health."

United Nations Development Programme. "Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being." Sustainable Development Goals. United Nations Development Programme, 2020. https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-3-good-health-and-well-being.html.

■ Resources

World Health Organization, *Housing and health guidelines*, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/276001/9789241550376-eng.pdf.

IPIECA, *Guide for Integrating human rights into environmental, social and health impact assessments*, http://www.ipieca.org/resources/good-practice/integrating-human-rights-into-environmental-social-and-health-impact-assessments-a-practical-guide-for-the-oil-and-gas-industry/.

UNICEF, *UNICEF Health Systems Strengthening Approach*, https://www.unicef.org/media/60296/file.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND
Family Homelessness and SDG 4

4 **QUALITY EDUCATION**

Ensure inclusive and
equitable quality education
and promote lifelong learning
opportunities for all

As stated by UNESCO, education is not only a human right. It is also an enabler for sustainable development and peace. Each of the Goals in the 2030 Agenda requires access to education to empower individuals and families globally with the skills and knowledge they need to live in dignity, and fully participate in society.[26] While significant progress has been made specifically for girls, and bold efforts have been made to implement universal education goals, over 265 million children are currently out of school.[27] Inherently linked to the issue of Family Homelessness, education remains both a driver and solution to Family Homelessness. For these reasons addressing family homelessness in the context of quality education and lifelong learning and achieving the targets outlaid in goal 4 is integral in ensuring sustainable development.

"A good education provides the best chance for children to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness. Understanding the disparities homeless students counter is an important step toward addressing their unique needs and challenges."

– Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness

■ Analysis

Damien Quinn

6th Class Teacher, Ransboro National School, Sligo, Ireland and Founder of Seomra Ranga (seomraranga.com)

Building on the principle of "leaving no one behind," the UN 2030 Agenda emphasizes a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development for all. Amongst other things, SDG 4 emphasises that all children should have free access to quality primary and secondary education and that this should include vulnerable children. Recent figures estimate that up to 4,000 children are experiencing homelessness in Ireland and there are similarly shocking statistics and realities around the world.[28] Therefore, it makes perfect sense that we should educate children on an issue that is increasingly affecting their generation in a very tangible way.

The Irish primary school curriculum is divided into different curricular areas, each with Strands and Strand Units with suggested aims, objectives and learning outcomes. One of the Strands of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) area of the Irish Primary School Curriculum deals with "Developing Citizenship." Students are enabled to challenge prejudice and discrimination that they come across now and in their future lives. Another is called "Myself and the Wider World." Its objective is to promote the values of a just and caring society in an age-appropriate manner, and to understand the importance of seeking truth, justice and peace. It is against the background of this curriculum structure that my current 6th class pupils (aged 11/12) and myself explored the issue of homelessness.

As the issue of homelessness in general, and child homelessness in particular, has become more prevalent in recent times, I decided to collaborate with Jean Quinn, Executive Director of UNANIMA International, to develop some classroom resources for primary schools that would deal with the issue of homelessness in a child-friendly and age appropriate manner. The Seomra Ranga (meaning "Classroom" in the Irish language) website provides downloadable classroom resources for primary school teachers. The first Seomra Ranga/UNANIMA resource that we made available to teachers was a short presentation, complete with a Teacher Guide, which aimed to stimulate talk and discussion in the classroom as to what Homelessness is, the causes, and what it looks like.[29] The presentation also aimed to challenge pupils' views on Home-

lessness and to provoke them into changing those views.

The second classroom resource that we made available was an "Images of Homelessness Photo Pack," which aimed to stimulate talk and discussion on the topic of homelessness in the classroom.[30] Teachers know that a strong image can provoke much discussion and debate, and this Photo Pack contained lots of strong images to act as a stimulus for talk and discussion. As part of our classroom work, my 6th Class pupils responded to some of the images.

Because Homelessness is such an important and contentious issue at the moment, both politically and socially, children cannot be immune from the discussion. Education is the cornerstone to advancement for all pupils. SDG 4 gives us the impetus to promote learning in all of its forms. Our collaboration with UNANIMA International in providing child-friendly and age appropriate classroom resources on the issue of homelessness gives pupils the opportunity to engage in a meaningful and tangible way with the issue and, as demonstrated, gives them a voice in the discussion and debate. Creating awareness amongst children about the issue of homelessness fulfils both SDG 4 as well as the aims of the SPHE curriculum of the Irish Primary School.

■ Human Rights

Education has both a role in enhancing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness to "escape" the situation, but also a role in preventing homelessness by fostering community, concern for human rights and attention to human rights abuses, and promoting understanding of the structural causes of social injustice. Stereotypes, misunderstandings, and misinformation can perpetuate conditions which lead to Family Homelessness. The following articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) prove relevant: **Article 1** "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood," **Article 26.1** "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit," and **Article 26.2** "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace." Globally, quality education has been intimately tied to wealth and status, and relatedly, though sometimes independently, stability of housing. Accessibility to education for youth is a tenant of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), and the UNCRC, among other interna- tional commitments, in addition to the UDHR. As Family Homeless- ness/Displacement increases, the actualization of educational rights, as human rights, and fulfillment of international obligations becomes more difficult.

As Family Homelessness/Displace- ment increases, the actualization of educational rights, as human rights, and fulfillment of international obligations becomes more difficult.

"I attended primary level at a school called Nduindui [and] at that stage I had to walk every morning to school because there's no school bus for us. It took 45 minutes to 1 hour to walk. High school level wasn't easy for me, because there's lots of disturbance, for example volcanic eruptions and lots more. On Saturday the 23rd of September, 2017, me and my college friends were having our dinner at the college dining hall when all of a sudden we heard a big crush of noise "boom boom" like the sound of a gun. Then we saw a big flame of fire behind the two mountains. Our college teachers came to us and told us to stay quiet and don't be afraid because it's just the volcano who's been asleep and now it's awake, but we were so afraid crying calling our parents name like someone has died...the Government of Vanuatu declared a state of emergency on Ambae island in response to the eruption of Manaro Voui Volcano. 26th of September, 2017, all the Ambaen were evacuated from the island. Our school were warmly welcomed by the Bombua school in Santo. Londua staff had to build lots of tents and shelter for us to sleep in and also have our class activities in because Bombua school didn't have enough class rooms or houses for us. School life in Santo was very hard for us because we didn't use tables to put our books on or have chairs to sit on. We just sat on the lawn and put our books on our thighs and did our writing. And sometimes we didn't have class because of the rain. Our tents/shelter weren't strong enough to hold the water, water went inside, so we had to spend days wandering around doing nothing. "

Note: Keisy submitted a written statement to UNANIMA International

■ Responder

Cynthia A Mathew CJ

*NGO Representative for
Institute of the Blessed Virgin
Mary–Loreto Generalate*

Education is the key to better life for every child. Education empowers. It has a powerful role in preventing and ending youth homelessness. The great initiative taken by UNANIMA International along with others to develop the classroom resources to address the issue of homelessness and to create awareness among the students show that we need an education that is for social transformation. *Although we say that education is key, it is only one part of students' lives. Governments need to put in place social support for families. There needs to be an understanding that education is part of a larger system.* This research publication is a great resource for the Member States to find solutions to end homelessness and for the civil society to advocate to ensure that no one is left behind.

■ Advocacy Recommendations

Acknowledging the role civil society, the private sector, and citizens play in advocacy for resolving issues of education in the context of Family Homelessness, **we recommend:**

- Access to quality education (both formal and informal) and safe, supportive, respectful and inclusive educational environments for all, and particularly youth, the displaced, and people with disabilities
- Promotion of Social Emotional Learning, which is trauma-informed, and "peace education,"

meaning it will foster personal wellbeing, interpersonal relationships, and generally more secure and peaceful societies

- Preschool access to educational resources and experiences, which can have a positive effect and long-term benefit throughout a child's education
- Use of uniforms which equalize the status of children
- Education on the growing phenomenon of Family Homelessness/Displacement

■ Policy Recommendations

We believe the following policy recommendations are essential to addressing and preventing Family Homelessness, and are applicable at the local, national and international levels. **We encourage:**

- Cross-sectoral planning and coordination of education
- Public funding for formal and informal education, with special focus given to preschool and training programs that ensure work skills

- Implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) methods and trauma-informed care in educational institutions
- Funding for the upgrading of educational spaces, with special focus given to increasing accessibility
- Development of explicit learning opportunities for educational staff that promotes understanding of Family Homelessness, respect for women, and trauma-informed practice

37% of primary-school age refugee children are not in school.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR). "STEPPING UP: REFUGEE EDUCATION IN CRISIS – 2019 REPORT." UNHCR. UNHCR, 2019. HTTPS://WWW.UNHCR.ORG/STEPPING

■ Resources

NGO Committee on Migration, *Positive Effects of Innovative Early Childhood Development Programs on Refugee Youth Resilience*, https://ngomigration.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/2016-position-paper-final.pdf.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights, *The Human Rights Education Toolbox*, https://www.humanrights.dk/publications/the-human-rights-education-toolbox.

Common Sense Media, *Educator Toolkit: Social & Emotional Learning*, https://www.commonsense.org/education/toolkit/social-emotional-learning.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality
and empower all
women and girls

Made reference to across a vast number of UN documents and programmes gender equality is well established as a right. According to UN Women, fulfilling this right and the targets laid out in SDG5 is the best chance we as a global community have to meet some of our world's most pressing challenges.[32] An issue globally, Family Homelessness is among the likes of such issues which often affect women, girls and their children more profoundly than their male counterparts. While significant progress has been made in achieving gender equality there is still a long way to go. For example 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15-49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner,[33] one of the leading causes of family homelessness. Not only are Women and girls more susceptible to vulnerabilities that drive family homelessness once facing it they have specific needs, especially when facing the situation of homelessness in the context of families. For these reasons they require tailored approaches to its eradication which must occur in order for the 2030 agenda to be successful.

"Women's equal right to housing must be ensured in all aspects of housing strategies. This includes addressing women's distinct housing experiences, including discrimination with respect to land, property and inheritance, violence against women and the disproportionate impact on women of forced evictions, inadequate water and sanitation and pervasive poverty."

– Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing[34]

■ Analysis

Katelyn C. Jones, PhD

Women, Peace, and Security Fellow and ACLS/Mellon Public Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

SDG 5's overarching goal is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. All SDGs depend on the achievement of SDG 5 insofar as gender inequality is an incontrovertible and integral component of *all* dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. The seventeen SDGs' goals cannot be met without meeting SDG 5. The goal's key targets include:[35]

Target 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere;

Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;

Target 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws;

Target 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

To reach each of these targets, policymakers must give specific and special attention to women and girls' homelessness, because homelessness is simultaneously a root cause, and negative consequence, of the discrimination, socioeconomic inequalities, and violence SDG 5 aims to end.

Discrimination against women and girls takes many forms, but one of the most pressing is inheritance and land rights.[36] Women must have access to, use of, and control over land and other productive resources–such as housing–to ensure their right to equality and to an adequate standard of living.[37] Without secure land rights, women face numerous obstacles in accessing safe and decent housing, engaging in farming and other agricultural activities, and in running home-based enterprises.[38]

Recognizing the interconnection between women's land rights and gender equity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations maintains a Gender and Land Rights Database to track the advancement of gender-differentiated access to land.[39] And the African Union Land Policy Initiative's Campaign for Women's Land

Ownership calls for 30% of land to be in women's names by 2025.[40] The Kilimanjaro Initiative, Deliver for Good campaign, African Women Development Fund, and Landesa Center for Women's Land Rights are all working to make this goal a reality on the continent.[41] As a result of these efforts, Ethiopia has implemented a Women Land Rights Task Force,[42] and Rwanda has instituted specific mechanisms to combat policies that prevent women's land rights.[43] If women and girls globally do not have access to land and housing, equality is impossible, and the SDGs cannot be achieved.

Ensuring women and girls have homes is also integral to eliminating violence against them, including trafficking and sexual and other forms of exploitation. The Polaris Project found that 64% of human trafficking survivors were homeless or experiencing unstable housing at the time they were recruited into their trafficking situation. The promise of safe shelter is a way that traffickers recruit individuals from the street.[44] And the UN estimates that 71% of persons trafficked are women and girls.[45] Some countries have already put in place laws responsive to the fact that addressing homelessness is integral to addressing violence against women. The-

Housing and Land Rights Network reports that in India, the Supreme Court and High Courts have made judgments on homelessness and adequate housing. However, these orders are not always implemented. Data and legal orders support the need to address homelessness to reduce violence, but the political will is not necessarily there.[46] Tackling housing instability and homelessness is a key way to eliminate violence against women and girls, a critical component of SDG 5.

To achieve SDG 5, and the SDGs more broadly, the gender dimensions of homelessness must be addressed. Policymakers must consider the different causes and consequences of homelessness for men and women, boys and girls, to give women access to economic resources, end violence, and empower them at all levels. Accordingly, policies must reflect international human rights standards, address the specific needs of women and other marginalized groups, and include a diversity of perspectives and insights throughout the policymaking process.[47]

◼ Human Rights

In the *Charter of the United Nations* the equality of all people is put forth; this is remarked upon in the preamble of the UDHR, "whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."[48] Placement of this in the preamble signifies a premise for action towards addressing gender inequality to achieve sustainable development and ending Family Homelessness, not in the intricacies of the human rights or international law, but rather in the philosophy behind it. Globally, there is often a gendered experience of poverty, which must be considered when interpreting both the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) which demonstrates that equality and human rights apply to the treatment of children and therefore, "provides an inclusive structure for policy and programme development to promote and protect the rights of children,"[49] and the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW). One of CEDAW's premises is that,

The precedent for policy action in accordance with the above assertion is outlaid in CEDAW, "**Article 2** States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake…," among other clauses in that convention and others.[51]

Maybe my child could have been taken from me, if someone thought: "oh, Liz looks a little bit depressed today." And now looking at where I am and the beauty of the relationship I have with my son. How close we are, and the bond we have… I think, I could have actually missed out on that if I was just a little bit more vulnerable… it's quite terrifying that the capacity of a woman is sometimes determined by someone in an authoritative position… So I don't know if it's about capacity, or courage, because sometimes you're just too scared to challenge that authority because we are told not to do that. But I am so grateful that I did, because the beauty that I have with my child is unconditional, it's the one thing in my life I can say I've done with pride, with beauty, with love. [He] brings his own set of inspirations and encouragement… And ending the relationship with his father is the hardest thing i've ever done in my life. It was the hardest thing because [of] not having a family, myself… We're very healthy now - myself and my son. I would have jeopardized my son's mental health, to have an idea of presenting three people, even though there was hell going on behind the closed door… I am so proud to be a single mother. And this is a beautiful family type. And my son embraces it. He embraces it. We're together. We are two strong, we are two people strong.

Note: Liz participated in a formal interview with UNANIMA International

■ Responder

Hantamalala Rafalimanana

NGO Representative for Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary-Loreto Generalate

Homelessness is gendered: women with children are more vulnerable to homelessness than men. Gender-based inequalities, such as domestic violence and differential access to land, property, housing and economic resources that disadvantage women, can lead to women's and their children's homelessness. Through this publication, UNANIMA International is creating awareness of how eliminating all forms of gender inequality can help end family homelessness.
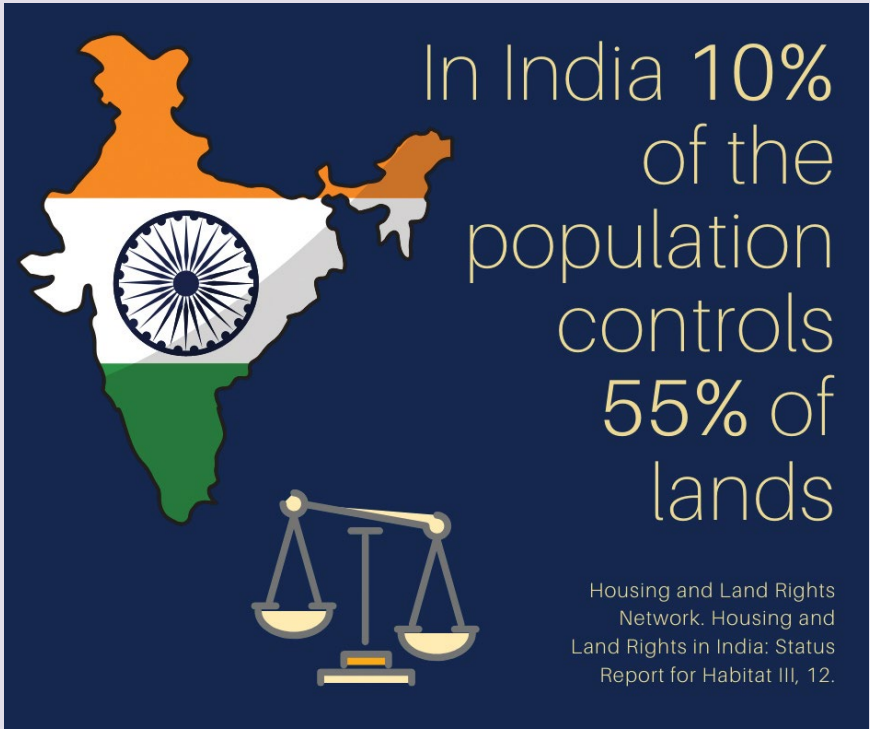
■ Advocacy Recommendations

Acknowledging the role civil society, the private sector, and citizens play in resolving issues of gender inequality in the context of Family Homelessness, **we recommend:**

- National collection of disagregated data on violence against Women and Girls, particularly those with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and migrant workers

- Action to accelerate progress towards the full and equal economic participation of women, in particular advocating for closing the gender pay, pension and social protection gaps; this must be accompanied by recognition of women's unpaid work and services for their families and communities

- Women's inclusion in management and leadership within the workforce and political spaces

- Cross-sectoral initiatives for girls' expanded access to education, legal supports, and opportunities within the economy, society, and politics

- Increased access to and ownership of land and property for women

■ Policy Recommendations

We believe the following policy recommendations are essential to addressing and preventing Family Homelessness, and are applicable at the local, national and international levels. **We encourage:**

- The implementation of gender sensitive policies that address Women and Girls, and specifically vulnerable groups including: individuals with a disability, migrants and refugees, LGBTQI and survivors of domestic and family violence

- The promotion of equal representation at the local, national and international governmental levels, and within the business sector

- Nations without policies prohibiting child marriages, forced marriages and trafficking to develop these in accordance with the UDHR, and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*

- Gender sensitive policies on domestic and unpaid work in accordance with International Labor Organization (ILO) Recommendation 201 (2011)

- Ensuring women's equal right to housing within housing strategies

In India **10%** of the population controls **55%** of lands

Housing and Land Rights Network. Housing and Land Rights in India: Status Report for Habitat III, 12.

■ Resources

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Dr. Ifeyinwa Ofong, Women, Development and Environment (WorldWIDE Network Nigeria), Habitat International Coalition, *Policies to reduce Homelessness among Women and Female Headed –Households*, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/OFONG_Ifeyinwa_Presentation_2-1.pdf.

The Jean Tweed Centre for Women & Their Families, *Trauma Matters: Guidelines for Trauma-Informed Practices in Women's Substance Use Services*, http://jeantweed.com/wp-content/themes/JTC/pdfs/Trauma%20Matters%20online%20version%20August%202013.pdf.
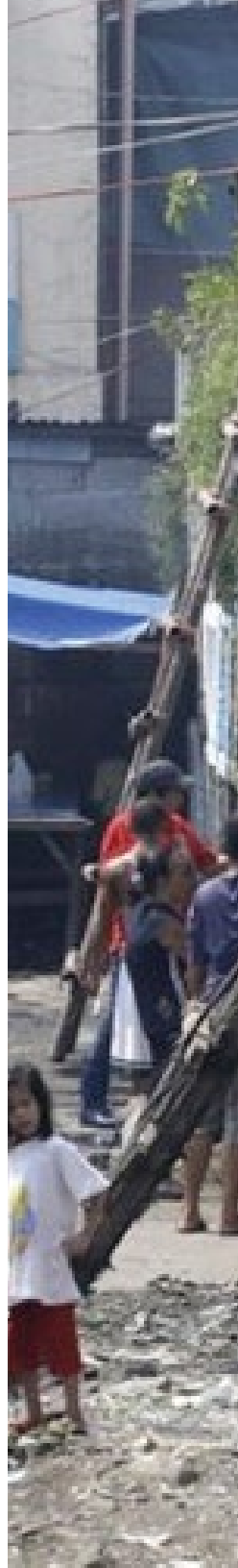
10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequality within
and among countries

Globally, there is a growing consensus that economic growth is not sufficient to reduce inequalities or poverty, rather the three pillars of sustainable development need to be addressed; economic, social and e nvironmental.[52] Focused primarily around economic indicators in order to achieve what is outlaid in goal 10 we are mandated by the endless cross cutting issues plaguing the 2030 agenda to address them through a multidimensional approach. While progress has been made on achieving Goal 10, such as income inequality within and between countries showing evidence of decline further progress needs to be made.[53] Globally, homelessness remains among one of the most visible and growing inequalities. In many of the world's most affluent cities we see people experiencing homelessness barely surviving on the streets that also hold the world's largest financial institutions. While each of the targets of goal 10 can be linked directly to the issue of family Homelessnes **Target 10.2** alone calls for it to be addressed "By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status." Inherently intertwined with family homelessness, the issues of family homelessness and inequalities must be addressed simultaneously if the 2030 agenda is to be achieved.

"There are people who go to work every single day and still experience housing instability. Your ability to be responsive to an ever-changing market, where the cost of living is out-pacing any type of increase in pay, that's not on the individual. And also, when we adopt that mind-set, the folks who suffer are children, right, are the next generation. And oftentimes, it ends up being on women's backs as well."

– Sequoia Ayala, Director of policy and advocacy program SisterLove, Inc.

◼ Analysis

Winifred Doherty

NGO Representative of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd to the United Nations

Article 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights is the article that connects homelessness, Sustainable Development Goal 10, social protection and gender equality. "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being '*themselves and their families*' including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond '*their*' control."[54]

SDG 10 **Target 4** "Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality"[55] demands redistribution policies and gender equality.

The biggest challenge to the fulfillment of these rights today is growing inequality and a backlash against gender equality, not only between countries but within countries. The strategic plan for humanity elaborated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Addressing homelessness, multidimensional poverty and social inclusion is not about people aspiring for a place in the global financial markets or seeking 'handouts,' but women and families seeking sufficiency, wellbeing and security in the face of global processes that exploit through advertising, marketing, the undercutting of wages, the continuance of the gender pay gap and the lack of recognition of women's unpaid care work. Affordable housing and social protection systems for all in collaboration with local initiatives strengthen human dignity, human wellbeing and promote gender equality. Moreover, it is clear that inequalities both between and within countries are detrimental to all people and the natural environment; the effects of inequality are not isolated.

The neoliberal political economy and financialized globalization are causes for concern. Inequalities in capital are rising globally, again, between and within nations. Those who control policy and issue salience, often also have power over land and property and in SDG 10 in particular invites us to connect the dots and is directed to the realization of an adequate standard of living for every person including housing.

According to Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, "Financialized housing markets have caused displacement and evictions at an unparalleled scale…" Privatization of public goods and social services, including the commodification of housing and the financialization of housing projects promoted by financial institutions in the name of public-private partnerships is antithetical to poverty eradication, social inclusion, human rights, the responsibility of the state as duty bearer in the realization of SDG 10, and gender equality.

Rhetoric favoring 'social spending,'[56] in theory, needs to be countered by continually challenging austerity policies in practice that have significantly contributed to the phenomenon of homelessness experienced today. Social spending needs to be prioritized above debt servicing and protected from austerity measures. The current reality of homelessness and states inability to implement social protection floors and gender equality are not inevitable consequences, but are the products of deliberate policy choices to maintain the status quo which is contrary to Article 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights.

■ Human Rights

While the ILO strongly puts forth the need to use a human rights-based approach to the SDGs, they also argue the applicability of this approach to housing.[57] Principles put forth by Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, emphasize the need to use a human rights-based approach to housing and its relation to equality: "**Principle 2**: prioritize those most in need and ensure equality," and thereunder, "35. The right to equality must be understood substantively. This means much more than ensuring equal access to existing housing. It requires positive measures to undo the effects of discrimination and exclusion," and "**Principle 6**: human rights-based goals and timelines," and thereunder, "Goals should address systemic issues such as stigmatization, racial divides, unequal provision of services and transportation, land acquisition and loss of agriculture."[58] The basis for nondiscrimination is reflected in UDHR **Article 2** "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be

made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty." Later UN Documents direct action for the realization of equality. For example, one of the premises of CEDAW is: "the[59] eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women."[60] For Family Homelessness/Displacement, particularly of minorities and refugees,

all the above is extremely relevant. As natural and man-made disasters encourage or necessitate human migration, discussion of refugees' equality also proves pertinent.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) "a refugee has the right to safe asylum. However, international protection comprises more than physical safety. Refugees should receive at least the same rights and basic help as any other foreigner who is a legal resident, including freedom of thought, of movement, and freedom from torture and degrading treatment."[61]

" *She found her little space beside the city's highway road and across [from] a fast food chain sitting under a tree using a discarded carton box to prevent her direct contact with the earth. I see her everyday in that spot except Wednesdays because she goes to a nearby church to hear mass in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She does not beg but just waits for people who pass to donate food, money or even medicines to meet her daily needs and blood pressure low. She shares to me that she prays for all people to be safe, healthy and to have extra resources to spare to people who lived on the streets like her. I was moved by her moral code in life. Her name is Tina, 74 years old, lives a single life and spends most of her time on the streets, though she has a sister who lives in the outskirts of the city with her own family who is equally struggling for their everyday needs. My workplace is about 200 steps from Tina's little space and I regarded her as my older sister. I see her at least once a week and my heart jumps when she smiles at me as she calls out my name 'ma'am Mayet'. I love her and send her messages if I don't see her in her space for many days. The city government passed a law called "Anti-Mendicancy" which prohibits people from giving anything to beggars to discourage begging. However, there are no concrete measures to help street people away from the streets. They are mostly rounded-up during special big events in the city and dumped in a filthy empty building space owned by the government with no provision of water, bathroom, and sleeping bags.* "

Note: Marietta submitted a written statement to UNANIMA International

■ Responder

Solrun Engilbertsdottir

Social Policy Specialist

We cannot talk about inequality without focusing on children living in poverty. Inequality starts with the lottery of birth – who your parents are and where you are born – which accounts for the vast majority of variation in the resources and opportunities available to human beings. Children bear the greatest brunt of poverty, half of the 1.3 billion multidimensionally poor people in the world are children under the age of 18: 663 million children live in multidimensionally poor households.[62] Children living in multidimensional poverty are deprived of their rights to education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and housing. We know that social protection systems play a crucial role in addressing child socio-economic vulnerabilities, and contribute to preventing homelessness and facilitating access to adequate housing. However, the vast majority of children have no effective social protection coverage globally. In order to achieve the 2030 Agenda's SDGs, it is critical that the coverage of social protection is significantly expanded.

■ Advocacy Recommendations

Acknowledging the role civil society, the private sector, and citizens play in advocacy for resolving issues of inequality in the context of Family Homelessness, **we recommend:**

- Promoting the use of language such as "people experiencing homelessness" rather than "homeless people" or "those people"
- Empowerment of individuals and families who are experiencing oppression and disadvantage
- Public support for social protection floors throughout the life cycle
- Transition to (or implementation of) living wages, rather than minimum wages
- Implementation of universal social protection systems in accordance with ILO recommendations, in particular ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) which specifies the responsibility of states in relation to social protection floors and national strategies for the extension of social security and monitoring[63]

■ Policy Recommendations

We believe the following policy recommendations are essential to addressing and preventing Family Homelessness, and are applicable at the local, national and international levels. **We encourage:**

- Investment in quality education for all to mitigate inequalities
- Implementation of policies that reduce inequalities including but not limited to universal health care, labor rights, housing and social protection
- Inclusion of disaggregated data in national censuses and research
- States' application of a Human Rights-Based Approach to international policies and development efforts
- Action to use and convert vacant homes and living spaces, into safe and affordable housing

"A human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development fundamentally shifts the core mission of development from charity to the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil rights."[64]

– The Danish Institute for Human Rights

Men own 50% more of the world's wealth than women, men control over 86% of corporations.

OXFAM INTERNATIONAL. "5 SHOCKING FACTS ABOUT EXTREME GLOBAL INEQUALITY AND HOW TO EVEN IT UP." OXFAM INTERNATIONAL. OXFAM INTERNATIONAL, JANUARY 20, 2020. HTTPS://WWW.OXFAM.ORG/EN/5-SHOCKING-FACTS-ABOUT-EXTREME-GLOBAL-INEQUALITY-AND-HOW-EVEN-IT.

■ Resources

International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Migration Data Portal*, https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=refug_host_perc&t=2018&m=1.

World Inequality Database, https://wid.world/.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights, *Courses in Human Rights-Based Approaches*, https://www.humanrights.dk/learning-hub/content-topic/human-rights-based-approach.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND
Family Homelessness and SDG 11

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Cities and settlements are often considered societal hubs, a place for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development and much more. In the past, and more than likely into the future cities and settlements have played a major role in economic and social advancement globally. With the number of people living in cities are expected to rise to over 5 billion people by 2030,[65] achieving the targets outlaid in goal 11 is of the utmost importance if the agenda is to be achieved. Without their achievement, people living in cities, especially families, are likely to face a vast range of challenges and cross cutting issues that impede on the achievement of the other 16 goals and the agenda as a whole. Goal 11 is closely linked to the issue of Family Homelessness **Target 11.1** specifically states "By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums" and is perhaps the most direct link to homelessness in the SDGs. Target 11.1 along with other United Nations documents including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights specifically give reference to the right to housing as a major challenge to the achievement of Goal 11. For this reason it is integral that Family Homelessness is addressed in order for goal 11 and the 2030 agenda to be achieved.

"Rather than responding to homeless persons as affronts to the senses and to their neighborhoods, citizens and local authorities should see in their presence a tragic indictment of community and government policies."[66]

– Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

◼ Analysis

Chris Williams, PhD
Director at UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat welcomes efforts by UNANIMA International to advocate for the rights of the homeless and address the underlying causes and traumatic effects of Family Homelessness, particularly residential insecurity experienced by families including women and children. Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by UN Member States in 2015, SDG 11 – "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and affordable" is the most important to the reality of Family Homelessness.[67]

Target 11.1 pertains to housing, calling upon the international community "by 2030, to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and to upgrade slums." The first of ten targets, 11.1 raises the bar for governments worldwide to promote policies, investments, and practical action both to prevent the structural conditions that bring about homelessness and to house families deprived of residential security. UN-Habitat, through its policy support to governments and municipalities promotes the "housing at the center approach," that positions housing at the center of social welfare and solutions for sustainable urban development.

Target 11.3 is also highly relevant to the reality of Family Homelessness. It calls upon governments and various non-State actors "by 2030, to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlements planning and management." Planning envisioned by UN Member States encompasses the participation of all stakeholders, including homeless families. This is exemplified by the Housing First policy of the Government of Finland. It recognizes the homeless as "experienced-experts" involving them directly into the processes of planning and program implementation – a model for governments in the developed and developing world.

In addition to housing and planning, the framers of SDG 11 also prioritized public space. **Target 11.7** calls upon governments and local authorities "by 2030, to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities." Public spaces are at times locations where families who lack residential security seek refuge.

Local government policies to achieve Target 11.1 require a commitment to policy alternatives to forced evictions from public spaces, including participatory resettlement to protect the human rights of Families.

Homeless families are particularly vulnerable to disasters. Extreme weather floods, hurricanes and mudslides associated with the advent of the climate crisis disproportionately affect those living in high-risk areas, often locations not intended for human settlement. It was with these issues in mind that UN Member States adopted **Target 11.5**, "by 2030, to reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and the people in vulnerable solutions." As with planning, the preparation of disaster risk reduction policies must include homeless families to ensure the realities of women and children experiencing residential insecurity are embedded in risk reduction strategies and programs.

■ Human Rights

Much of the philosophy surrounding Human Rights, including, "whereas the peoples of the United Nations… have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,"[68] must be actualized within the contexts of cities and communities. UNHDR **Article 22** declares each member of society's "right to social security," and the role of the nation and the international community in such an entitlement, yet the variety of contexts and cultures where actualization must happen should be recognized and considered in the design of social protection, homelessness/housing services, law, etc. Further articles worth discussing are **Article 27.1** "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits," and **Article 29** "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."[69] Safe, secure, and tenured housing should be considered a stipulation for successful and full participation in society. UNCRC **Article 5** asserts the agency that families have in children's upbringing, as relevantly extended to communities: "…to provide, in a manner consistent with

the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention." [70]

The need for strong supports and concern for children from communities, and increasingly from cities filling this role, should not be displaced upon family units or individuals themselves.

One final relevant point is Farha's "**Principle 9**: clarify the obligations of private actors and regulate financial, housing and real estate markets."[71] Not only governments, but also other actors, play a role in societies' achievement of adequate housing for all; within the context of cities and communities, such responsibilities and needs must be clearly defined and then communicated to all actors.

" *When we speak about significant experiences in our lives that help us to change our view, this is one of them: Wanita, a Haitian girl whose dream is to have a "ti kay" (little house), where there is no fear when it rains and where her brothers and mother can live in peace ... In a small morning prayer at school that was her request to Bondye (supreme God), to help her mother to make this come true. She is an intelligent girl, who goes to school impeccably and has her only interest in learning. In the afternoon I went to visit her and it was a cyclonic season and the last rain with wind had left her house [damaged]. And the question that arose from me was why aren't we all be born with the same rights... and able to live with dignity? Where are the politics, economics, and universal rights that humanize life? And from the trench we have to continue dreaming and fighting so that solidarity becomes visible and another world is possible.* "

Note: The above was submitted as a written statement from a Carmelite Sister of Verdruna, originally in Spanish, to a UNANIMA International Board Member

■ Responder

Tony O'Riordan

Chief Executive Officer at Sophia

Home is at the heart of every human settlement; home is at the heart of life itself.

Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services

Providing, safe and affordable homes is the foundation stone of Sophia Housing, but Sophia goes further, the needs of the most vulnerable also include supports that ensure our communities are not just resilient but ensures that the trauma experienced by vulnerable people are addressed and the cycle of homelessness and poverty ends with this generation.

Our communities and services identify this need to go beyond safe and secure and look forward to making Goal 11 of creating inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable communities a reality for all.

■ Advocacy Recommendations

Acknowledging the role civil society, the private sector, and citizens play in advocacy for resolving issues of city and community organization in the context of Family Homelessness, **we recommend:**

- Preventing forced evictions and foreclosures
- Community integration of all people, regardless of background, through increased public opportunities and support systems
- Application and promotion of a HRBA in the implementation of current and future international agreements and agendas, such as the New Urban Agenda
- Support for Housing First and Supported Housing models
- Greater governmental funding and support dedicated towards rural areas and their needs, including climate-smart agriculture and simultaneous creation of response plans in preparation for increasing urbanization

■ Policy Recommendations

We believe the following policy recommendations are essential to addressing and preventing Family Homelessness, and are applicable at the local, national and international levels. **We encourage:**

- The implementation of Human Rights-based policies such as the combined Housing First and Supported Housing models
- Funding, infrastructure, and continued maintenance that allows and encourages safe spaces for youth and families, such as community centers
- The upgrading of slums and inadequate housing to meet the needs of families, not limited to access to sanitation services and safe water
- The implementation of legislation and community services which challenge and mitigate forced evictions and foreclosures
- Preparations for increased rural to urban migration, including expanded services for children and vulnerable groups; simultaneous increased governmental attention to rural areas, to dissuade rapid urbanization

90% of landholdings in developing countries are not documented, administered or protected

Source: UN Habitat. "Land." UN Habitat, 2020. https://unhabitat.org/topic/land

■ Resources

Habitat III Secretariat, *New Urban Agenda*,
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Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur for adequate housing,
The Right to Housing and the New Urban Agenda report,
http://www.unhousingrapp.org/user/pages/04.resources/Thematic-Report-6-
The-Right-to-Housing-and-the-NUA.pdf.

Housing and Land Rights Network, *Guide to Practical Solidarity
for Defending the Human Right to Adequate Housing*,
http://hlrn.org/UA%20Publication%20Eng%20Website%20.pdf.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND
Family Homelessness and SDG 13

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to
combat climate change
and its impacts*

Identified by many as the most significant issue we as a global community face in the 21st century, climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. Unlike its ramifications, climate change is a global issue that leaves no one behind, affecting people and the planet in every country no matter its location or economic status, in a diverse number of ways. According to the detailed *Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees* by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, globally we are reaching established tipping points at alarming rates, so we can no longer ignore its influence; instead, we must mitigate, become resilient and adapt to the changes it is causing.[72] Addressed by the term 'climate crisis,' in recent times individuals and families globally have recognized the urgency for climate action. Many ramifications of climate change including drought, land degradation, sea level rise, conflict, extreme weather events and natural disasters are significant drivers of Homelessness. Inherently linked to displacement and conflict, like many cross cutting issues climate change impacts the poorest and most vulnerable people first and worst,[73] in turn leaving them even more vulnerable to homelessness.

"In the typical family [where I work in rural El Salvador] the husband and wife leave the house every morning to work in the land as farmers. They can grow vegetable, and other crops. But because of the climatic changes they cannot get the expected income from their labor. Most of the time they get loans to cultivate the crops. But at the end, due to heavy rains or heavy drought they do not get expected results. Either they have to sell for a cheaper rate or just destroy them without any profit, so they have trouble settling their loans. Therefore these families can never think of constructing a permanent house"

– Sister Dulcie Fernando, Sister of the Divine Savior, El Salvador

■ Analysis

Paula Braitstein, PhD

Associate Professor,
University of Toronto, Canada

Family Homelessness is on the rise as a result of climate and environmental change. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heat waves, wildfires, droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, aggravating water management problems, reducing agricultural production and food security, increasing health risks, damaging critical infrastructure and interrupting human access to basic services such as water and sanitation, education, energy and transport.[74] Climate *processes* are also at work, including slow onset changes: sea-level rise, salinization of agricultural land, and desertification. Assessments based on improved elevation data show that without existing, augmented or new coastal defences, land currently home to 300 million people is at risk of flooding at least annually by 2050, and land home to 150 million could become permanently below the high tide line.[75] In parallel, large areas are expected to become drier—the proportion of land in constant drought is expected to increase from 2% to 10% by 2050.[76] The proportion of land suffering extreme drought is predicted to increase from 1 per cent at present to 30 per cent by the end of the 21st century. Less rain will have particularly serious impacts for sub-Saharan African agriculture which is largely rain-fed.[77] Agricultural production, including access to food, in many African countries and regions is projected to be severely compromised by climate variability and change.[78]

Meanwhile, melting glaciers will increase the risk of flooding during the wet season and reduce dry-season water supplies to one-sixth of the world's population, predominantly in the Indian sub-continent, parts of China and the Andes.[79] As water resources become scarcer, increases in water-related conflict can be expected, potentially causing millions of refugees and internally displaced people.[80] Natural disasters can have similar affects on livelihood and housing. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita which lashed the Gulf Coast of the United States in 2005, left an estimated 2 million people homeless.[81] And that is in a high-income country with relatively good infrastructure and emergency responsiveness. Whether homes are patently destroyed, rendered unsalvageable or insecure, or slowly inundated by rising flood or tidal waters, climate change is and will contrib-

ute significantly to Family Homelessness.

Climate change is called a 'risk multiplier' because whatever background risks people are facing, for example, housing insecurity and/or homelessness, extreme poverty, or gender inequity, is going to be *multiplied* in the face of climate change; the connection between climate action and the other SDGs is clear. The problem is one of time (the speed of change) and scale (the number of people it will affect).[82] Temporary migration as an adaptive response to climate stress is already apparent. But the picture is nuanced; the ability to migrate is a function of mobility and resources (both financial and social).[83] In other words, the people most vulnerable to climate change are not necessarily the ones most likely to migrate. It is likely that the burden of providing for climate migrants and refugees will be borne by the poorest countries—those least responsible for emissions of greenhouse gases and those with the least cl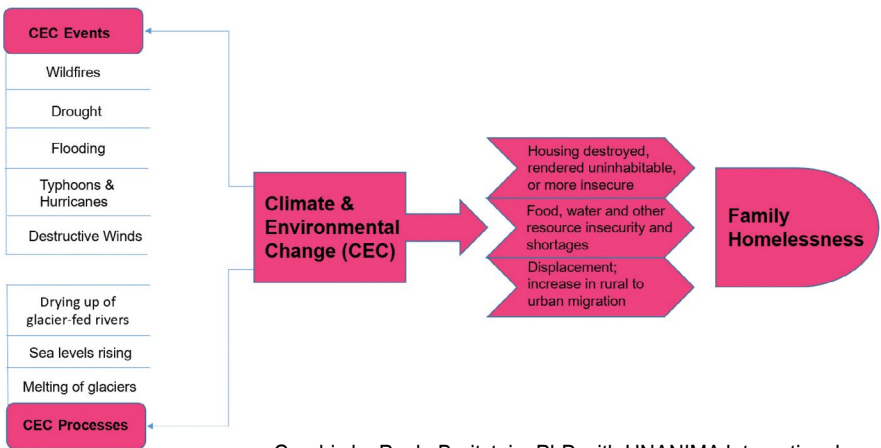out within multilateral diplomatic spaces and processes where climate action is discussed. This relates to **Target 13.A** "Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change…"[84]

Women and Girls, all young children, the elderly and the poor have the highest risk of experiencing the negative effects of climate change

and the fewest options to recover. This may occur through patently losing their homes to flooding or fire. It may also happen through the health outcomes arising from natural disasters and slower climate processes. Climate change is predicted to worsen a variety of health problems including malnutrition, diarrhoeal diseases, and pneumonia.[85] Patterns of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue are changing with rising temperatures.[86] Those families who are already homeless will be more exposed to extreme temperatures and heavy precipitation, vectors of disease such as mosquitoes, and have fewer resources or options to fall back on given weak in-country infrastructure. In the decade from 1994 to 2003 natural disasters in countries of high human development killed an average of 44 people per event, while disasters in countries of low human development killed an average of 300 people each.[87]

Addressing and preventing Family Homelessness is closely intertwined with climate action: addressing and reducing the harms associated with climate and environmental change. SDG **Target 13.2** "integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning," displays the necessity for state action. Investing in meeting basic human rights such as safe and affordable housing will reduce the vulnerability of families who are at highest risk of and/or are already experiencing homelessness and help create a healthier and more resilient population.

Graphic by Paula Braitstein, PhD with UNANIMA International

■ Human Rights

According to the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice's report *Rights for Action Putting People at the Centre of Action on Climate Change*, "Human rights and climate change are linked in three key ways: i) Climate change has implications for the full range of human rights, particularly for people living in situations of poverty, marginalization and vulnerability. ii) A failure to integrate human rights into climate action can undermine people's rights. iii) The integration of human rights into climate change policies can improve effectiveness and result in benefits for people and the planet."[89] While there is no direct mention of the climate or environment in the UDHR, **Article 28** "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized,"[90] is more than sufficient in connecting the dots between SDG 13, Family Homelessness and human rights. Social and international orders are severely interrupted by climate change and abuses of/disregard for the planet and concurrently people

living, and future generations. Multilateral diplomatic engagement, including the actions surrounding the UN 2030 Agenda and NUA are essential for addressing the issue. All nation states should take part in climate action, which the Paris Agreement gave positive direction to; **Article 4**, paragraph 2 specifies the requirement of nationally determined contributions from all signatures, which allows for the communication and guidance of climate action processes.[91] The *Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context* puts forth principles for meeting the right to an adequate standard of living, one of which is **Principle 2** "Prioritize those most in need and ensure equality."[92] The guidelines but forth by Farha use a Human Rights-Based Approach and would address many of the aforementioned risks for family homelessness: "31.

The needs of communities in areas prone to disaster and flooding, such as along river banks and waterfronts, must be prioritized. States must ensure that disaster prevention development plans, such as the building of embankments or flood channels, do not unnecessarily uproot communities and households. "Peoples plans" for relocation and strategies for protection against disasters should be given priority; 32. Strategies must ensure that communities have the resources and technical capacity to build housing that can withstand extreme weather events, earthquakes and other disasters, drawing on local and indigenous expertise and capacities where possible."[93]

Within the context of the Paris Agreement and otherwise in accordance with human rights and international laws, climate action is demanded by nation states for the benefit of people and planet.

" *Mary was born in 1978 in Kakuma, in north-western Kenya in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands of Turkana County. This is a drought-prone region that normally goes through regular cycles of drought and flooding. With climate change these events have become more frequent and more severe. The people in this region are predominantly agro-pastoralists, depending on rain to provide water for crops and grazing livestock. If the rains fail, crops can't grow, especially in the hard and unproductive land of the region; no water for livestock has devastating impacts on both livestock and families who depend on them. Mary was the youngest of six children and an orphan from age 8 when her parents died. She lived with some of the younger siblings with an uncle. As there was no food because of the drought, unproductive soil, and extreme family poverty, she went begging potato peelings from the local hotels to boil into soup. At the age of 10, Mary migrated with two of her brothers to the streets of Eldoret in search of sustenance and some kind of life. Today Mary has six children of her own. Four of them live in Lodwar, the capital of Turkana county, and two live in Eldoret in a Children's Home (aka orphanage). Mary is still heavily street involved and spends most of her days and many of her nights on the street. Mary's lived experience of drought, poverty and homelessness is a good example of the risk multiplication that happens to people already living on the margins.* "

Note: Mary participated in a formal interview with Paula Braitstein, PhD
on behalf of UNANIMA Internationall

■ Responder

HE Samuelu Laloniu

Permanent Representative of Tuvalu
at the United Nations

The adverse impacts of climate change and sea level rise are visible everywhere in Tuvalu where the average land elevation above sea level is 3m. The country is extremely vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise. In most places, groundwater has been replaced by seawater or it is contaminated and unsafe for drinking. Contaminated ground water also makes agriculture extremely difficult. The country depends entirely on rain-water and the irregular rainfalls further makes life difficult. Fish is the main source of protein and increasing fuel prices means many cannot go out fishing.

With food supplies compromised, more than 80% of the food is imported in the form of processed canned foods which sadly contributes to the already very high incidence of non-communicable diseases in the country. What is happening in Tuvalu is also being experienced in other atoll nations as well as low-lying coastal areas around the world. In all these places, climate change and sea level rise compromise food and water security as well as health. Such outcomes are drivers of homelessness and lead to tensions and conflicts within the family and community, making the furthest left behind even more vulnerable. The poor and marginalized communities are the frontline victims of climate change and sea level rise.

■ Advocacy Recommendations

Acknowledging the role civil society, the private sector, and citizens play in advocacy for resolving issues of climate change and environmental health in the context of Family Homelessness, **we recommend:**

- Promotion of and adherence to UN Climate agendas and recommendations
- Support for climate-smart agriculture, particularly in rural areas to reduce rural-urban migration and increase the sustainability of practices
- National transitions to sustainable energy sources; more widespread communal usages of innovative low-cost and sustainable practices, such as the toilet pictured below that uses compost instead of plumbing
- Community, and specifically youth participation in environmental politics and climate action
- Implementation of reforestation and forest maintenance to reduce CO2 emissions

■ Policy Recommendations

We believe the following policy recommendations are essential to addressing and preventing Family Homelessness, and are applicable at the local, national and international levels. **We encourage:**

- Cross-sectoral investment in climate-smart urban infrastructure to create urban resilience
- The inclusion of vulnerable and affected populations in the policy and planning surrounding disaster management, mitigation, adaption and impact reduction
- The creation of special committees for environmental sustainability and ecological wellness at all governmental levels
- The provision of community-based services to homeless families to reduce their exposures to extreme temperatures and vectors of disease
- Development and coordination of emergency response plans for both urban and rural areas

"WITHOUT URGENT GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CLIMATE ACTION, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, SOUTH ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA COULD SEE MORE THAN 140 MILLION PEOPLE MOVE WITHIN THEIR COUNTRIES' BORDERS BY 2050."

World Bank. "Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration." World Bank Group. March 19, 2018. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2018/03/19/groundswell---preparing-for-internal-climate-migration

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LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND
Family Homelessness and SDG 16

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Political unrest, discrimination, violence against women and children, human trafficking, slavery and the militarisation of children remain threats to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.[94] The marginalization of vulnerable groups including individuals and families experiencing homeless burdens the plight of inclusive societies. While progress has been made, such threats continue to impede the achievement of goal 16. The issue of homelessness remains one deeply intertwined with goal 16. The experience of Family Homelessness often leaves victims with lack of security, access to justice and identification and the increased vulnerability to the above mentioned issues. **Target 16.b** specifically states, "promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development." To ensure that goal 16 is achieved policy, regulations and laws must not continue discriminate and criminalise homelessness. Rather they should promote the inclusion of groups like this who are left furthest behind. According to the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (2009) research suggests that specific policies and programmes are needed to target the poorest people to overcome the multiple barriers they face and address the structural causes of chronic poverty and social exclusion.

"We must become more mindful of the many ways racism infects our daily life and undermines peace and justice."

– Pax Christi USA

■ Analysis

Judith Ryder, PhD

Professor and Director,
Criminology & Justice MA Program
St. John's University

SDG 16 is very relevant to both the prevention of and responses to Family Homelessness. One facet of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is criminalization. The following targets[95] should be considered in relation to family homelessness and the criminalization of people experiencing homelessness and poverty, especially women who are mothers:

16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

16.B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Additionally, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) sets a precedent for the evaluation of incarceration with a holistic concern for women and their families.

Over 714,000 women are incarcerated worldwide. This number represents a small percentage of the international prison population, but the female rate of incarceration has surged approximately 53% since 2000, as compared to 20% amongst male prisoners.[96] Globally, African American, Afrodescendent, and indigenous women are disproportionately represented in carceral populations.[96] Although only 4% of the world's female population lives in the United States, that nation accounts for over 30% of the world's incarcerated women, the vast majority of whom are mothers.[98] Globally, a high percentage of women in jails and prisons also report histories of abuse, victimization, and trauma—histories often linked to mental health problems, limited economic opportunities, and criminal behaviors.

Around the world, women generally are much less likely than men to participate in the formal labor market.[99] This may reflect a lack of access to the labor market, which coincides and interlinks with lack of access to justice institutions, and more general social exclusion. Women are more likely to be the

primary caretaker of children: when men are imprisoned women generally continue to raise their children[100] but the caregiving work is not reciprocal when the situation is reversed.[101] One result is that female heads of households experience a higher probability of episodic homelessness or unacceptable living conditions prior to incarceration and also later upon release. Framing the international housing crisis as a crisis in access to justice, a Special Rapporteur report notes that women and their children face not only high housing costs but discriminatory customary laws and traditional practices, as well as unequal access to "title, rental agreements or credit to finance housing."[102]

Women released from custody encounter additional stigma and often are banned from receipt of government housing assistance.[103]

The feminization of poverty and violent or discriminatory living conditions cause many women to turn to economic crimes and drug dealing to alleviate hunger and homelessness,[104] but rarely has that path proved successful to securing their needs and livelihood. Rather, a punitive War on Drugs has swept thousands of marginalized women into the criminal justice system, charged with non-violent, petty survival crimes, including fraud, forgery, shoplifting and theft.

A lack of strong social supports and institutions has contributed to a constant recycling of family homelessness and female incarceration. The gendered pathways that have brought women into these two intertwined systems must be disrupted. To do so, the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 16 of peace, justice, and strong institutions calls upon nations to support women's roles as caregivers, while they are incarcerated, while their children's fathers are incarcerated, and when they return to the community. Governments, employers and trade unions must work to not only expand access to paid job opportunities for women, but to provide the means for affordable childcare. Such steps may foster desistance from criminal activity, provide women and their children financial independence and access to secure housing, while serving to ensure women equal and equitable access to social and economic resources and sustainable routes out of poverty.

■ Human Rights

The actualization of human rights, including the right to adequate housing, must be considered part of the "peace" referred to in SDG 16. In Leilani Farha's report *Access to justice for the right to housing*, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing asserts the roots of the global housing crisis to be "in a crisis in access to justice because without access to justice, housing is not properly recognized, understood or addressed as a human right."[105] Further supporting this, she states: "millions who live in homelessness or unacceptable living conditions have no place where they can claim their right to housing when States have failed to progressively realize the right, imposed forced evictions, or criminalized those who live in homelessness or in informal housing."[106] The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) displays the relevancy of SDG 16 to Family Homelessness and rights surrounding housing, **Article 27** "1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. 2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the

conditions of living necessary for the child's development. 3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing…"[107] Systemic failures, including the lack of access to justice processes, criminalization of the poor and forced evictions take primary caregivers away from their ability and capacity to fulfill such a responsibility. Additional relevant rights are specified in the UDHR: **Article 10** "Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him," and **Article 5** "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."[108] The last-mentioned article should be considered in discussion of the feminization of incarceration and gendered nature of poverty, as mothers may be put in positions and conditions that encourage or demand criminal acts

for which punishments are allotted. Being separated from one's children for non-violent crimes and especially crimes of necessity is cruel, inhuman and degrading - and is a punishment not only for the mothers but families and communities as wholes. We must stop homelessness/housing insecurity and the intersecting causes and issues in order to reduce the perceived need for such responses. The UNCRC and UN 2030 Agenda provide guidance for action. UNCRC **Article 19** incites State Parties to take comprehensive measures to protect children from abuses also explicitly requires, "…effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement."[109] SDG 16 **Target 16.9**, "provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030,"[110] reflects the importance of human visibility to the state.

"There are a lot of vulnerabilities with the issue of poverty. There's also the issue of systemic violence that women face when they try to access systems that are supposed to help them. So the experience sometimes of even going to get a restraining order or going to family court to try and get contact orders that protect their children, and finding that their ex-partner, who often is working and has access to pay for a lawyer, is actually using the system to re-abuse them. And then, you know, they either end up having either 50-50 contact with the children or they actually use their children to the perpetrator of the violence. So there's a lot of women experiencing a lot of distress around the systems and the courts and justice...

The mental health systems and drug and alcohol services don't have a very good understanding of domestic and family violence, they have a really good understanding of the work that they do, but they often fail to see the intersectionality around domestic and family violence. So a woman might be supported for her drug and alcohol issues but she doesn't get a comprehensive service, so then she has to go to another service to get a bit more of a service from there. And there's a lack of cohesion between the services to actually [address them]...The government agencies are siloed, but even non-governmental services they're quite siloed...it's a difficult system problem to navigate."

Note: Kedy participated in an interview with UNANIMA International

■ Responder

Rebecca Keatinge

Managing Solicitor at Mercy Law Resource Center (MLRC), Ireland

Founded in 2009, Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) is an independent law centre and registered charity based in Dublin, Ireland, which provides free legal advice and representation to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. As a community law centre, MLRC enables access to justice for thousands of vulnerable individuals in housing crisis. MLRC does not work through casework alone. MLRC client experiences ground our policy work. MLRC has worked with many homeless families and recently published a report on their lived experiences. In our policy work, MLRC advocates for change in laws, policies and attitudes which adversely impact our client group. MLRC works to strengthen the capacity and decision-making of institutions engaged in housing provision to ensure they act fairly and transparently, as SDG16 necessitates.

■ Advocacy Recommendations

Acknowledging the role civil society, the private sector, and citizens play in advocacy for resolving issues of peace, justice and strong institutions in the context of Family Homelessness, **we recommend:**

• Inclusion of the public, and especially vulnerable peoples in the design and administration of institutions. Consider the following principle: "nothing about us without us"

• Increased access to the labor economy for women, and relatedly increased access to affordable childcare services and educational opportunities

• Collection of disaggregated data for Women's incarceration and poverty, as well as Family Homelessness and displacement

• Promotion of universal birth registration in order to mitigate problems in access to services and justice, and other rights through the guarantee of a state-recognized legal identity

• State adoption of legislation that makes domestic violence illegal

■ Policy Recommendations

We believe the following policy recommendations are essential to addressing and preventing Family Homelessness, and are applicable at the local, national and international levels. **We encourage:**

• Where necessary, adoption of laws prohibting violence against women, and global enforcement of laws

• Implementation of preventative measures to reduce abuses and violence against women and children, including quality education and affordable childcare, with simultanous enforcement of laws which protect women and children, and the use of trauma-informed care within their services

• Investment in accurate civil registration systems and implementation of birth registration policies at the national level, with guided and monitored actions at the local levels

• Additions to census questionnaires to ensure nations measure homeless women, children and families

• Decriminalization of people experiencing homelessness and poverty, and removing barriers in access to justice for these groups

"1 BILLION PEOPLE ARE LEGALLY 'INVISIBLE' BECAUSE THEY CANNOT PROVE WHO THEY ARE. THIS INCLUDES AN ESTIMATED 625 MILLION CHILDREN UNDER 14 WHOSE BIRTHS WERE NEVER REGISTERED."

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Adopted by all 193 United Nations Member States in 2015, the UN 2030 Agenda provides us with a common blueprint to ensure peace and prosperity for people and the planet, through Sustainable Development now and into the future.[111] While progress has been made, we still have a long way to go. Achieving the UN 2030 Agenda requires the address of Family Homelessness, a subject that has thus far been overlooked, deemphasized, and misunderstood. At the heart of the Agenda is the 17 SDGs, perhaps the most urgent call for global action in history. Prevalent in the global north and the global south, action by all countries in a global partnership is needed if we are to achieve all that the landmark agenda seeks to achieve.

As noted by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, more than 90% of the SDGs' targets are linked to international human rights, as laid out in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and international labour standards.[112] As well as being a cross-cutting theme across the SDGs, Human rights are a dominant theme in all UN policies and programmes and offer guidance for implementation on a number of them. They are fundamental in the key areas of peace and security, development, humanitarian assistance, and economic and social affairs.[113]

The eradication of Homelessness is integral in achieving the 2030 Agenda and ensuring individuals and families are able to fully enjoy the Human Rights they are entitled to. Agreed upon by experts, both academic and individuals/families with a lived experience, this sentiment rings true and is detailed throughout this publication. Among the many actions that need to be taken in order to ensure its eradication, is a dialogue that promotes the view of treating homelessness as what it is: firstly a human rights and civil rights issue and secondly a structural and systemic issue. The need for this paradigm shift is evident and long overdue globally. It is only when we come together with one common voice, that we will ensure a future that is just for all people and the planet.

This publication is an original source that may be used in the promotion of human rights, to the benefit not only of families suffering already, but also those vulnerable to homelessness and housing insecurity. It provides reason, analysis and recommends actions on a multilateral approach to addressing Family Homelessness in the context of the SDGs and contributes significantly to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development.

Recommendations

The address and prevention of Family Homelessness is critically important to UNANIMA International. In response to the interlinkages between sustainable development, human rights, and Family Homelessness presented, we give the following recommendations:

- **We encourage** Member States to fully recognise the commitments they have made to date through the 2030 Agenda, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Right of the Child among other United Nations Documents and actively work towards achieving them;

- **We encourage** implementation of the New Urban Agenda using a Human Rights-Based Approach;

- **We encourage** Nation States to address the nature of family homelessness i.e. specifically policies that meet the unique needs of women and children, through gender sensitive policies and resource allocation;

- **We encourage** Nation States to implement Housing Led Initiatives;

- **We encourage** Nation States to Provide Adequate Housing with Support Services for families to address the trauma of homelessness in an effort to break the cycle of generational homelessness;

- **We encourage** Nation States to Expand local government support for the development of affordable family-sized housing;

- **We encourage** Nation States to Implementation of Social Protection policies and programs, specifically ones that ensure access to housing and support systems. Such policies and programs enable Women, Children and the family to break the poverty cycle/ reduce inequalities;

- **We encourage** Nation States to push for government policies that finance, promote and invest in civil society and private sector partnerships with organisations who are currently servicing the needs of the Homeless population;

- **We encourage** Nation States to make policy changes to secure flexible funding for implementation of recommendations;

- **We encourage** Nation States to actively collect disaggregated data on Homelessness, specifically in relation to Family homelessness, women and children.

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Acknowledgements

UNANIMA International

757 Third Avenue, 21st Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA

+1 (929) 259-2105
info@unanima-international.org

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