The State of Homelessness in Developing Countries

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1. Introduction and context

This paper discusses the state of homelessness in countries referred to as 'developing countries', or collectively as the 'developing world' or the 'Global South'. There are no really reliable statistics for homelessness in the developing world. However, the UN's own estimates, and national counts where they exist, suggest the number has increased in the last two decades. The vast majority of the 1.1 billion people estimated to be homeless by the UN (including inadequately housed and street sleepers) live in developing countries. Given the on-going impact of climate change, war/civil unrest, and global economic uncertainty, it is likely that numbers will continue to increase.

The developing world is not homogenous. The diverse socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental contexts of each country exert a strong influence on the drivers and experiences of homelessness, the characteristics of homeless people and the policies and interventions to address homelessness. This paper seeks to highlight this. What follows draws on 20 years of on-going, empirical research, including several hundred detailed interviews with homeless people, across 12 countries since 2000 (see for example Tipple and Speak 2009; Speak 2016)

In the developing world homelessness plays out along a continuum, running, broadly, as follows:

1. 'Rough sleeping', - literally lying down on the street, under a bridge or in a public place to sleep at night - temporary, seasonal short or long term[1].
2. Pavement dwelling, whereby a regular 'pitch' is used over a longer period of time and some very rudimentary shelter of card, cloth or plastic is erected – short to medium term
3. Squatting in the same derelict building on a regular basis – short to medium term.
4. Living in abjectly poor, often dangerous, dwelling (inc. boats and other floating platforms), without security or services and which fails all tests of adequacy – long term or permanent
5. Living in refugee camps without the foreseeable possibility of returning home -long term or permanent

Importantly, the categories above are interrelated, as people flow, or are pushed, from one category to the other and back again. Thus, they cannot be understood, or addressed, in isolation of each other, yet each requires a range of different solutions.

Homelessness, in the form of rough sleeping, pavement dwelling and squatting, can be temporary and cyclical, as in the case of rural households from the Alto Plano in Bolivia who travel to the cities every summer to trade and live on the streets, before returning to their rural homes. It can also be a longer term, even a permanent, state, as in Indian cities, where families live and raise children on the streets.

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[1] Length of time defined by interviewees, on average: short term = days or several months; medium term = less than 5 years; Long term = more than 5 years.

This form of homelessness is the most visible and the most acute but probably not the greatest in proportion in developing countries.

Homelessness in the form of abjectly inadequate, generally informal housing, often referred to as 'slums'[2] tends to be much longer term. There was a decline in the percentage of the urban population of developing countries living in slums between 2000 and 2014, from 39 per cent to 30 per cent. Nevertheless, absolute numbers continue to grow (UN 2015). Much of this housing remains so extremely precarious, and without the most basic of services or security, as to make its occupants little better off than those on the streets or squatting.

People in this category are often evicted and cast into living on the streets and those on the streets move 'up' into slum settlements. For that reason, this paper considers that people in all categories above should be considered as homelessness, but recognises the greater immediate plight of many street sleepers.

A review of policy highlighted that official definitions of homelessness, used for enumeration and intervention purposes around the world, are generally based on 1 of three criteria: location (e.g. on the street, under bridges, in derelict buildings, in precarious location); insecurity of tenure or (e.g. lacking secure title; no fixed place of residence, floating people); quality of housing, shelter or services (e.g. without sanitation or water, lacking adequate protection from the elements, in dangerous condition or precarious location). Some countries also class anyone who does not actually *own* a dwelling as homeless for the purpose of allocating state housing.

However, despite wide spread acknowledgement of the relevance of inadequate shelter in the consideration of homelessness, when it comes to enumeration and intervention, many countries focus attention only on those in categories 1- 3 above. Enumeration is of this group is fraught with difficulty and produces poor statistics. This is because it misses the many who are either not found or deliberately not counted. It also includes many who are not actually homeless but, like the Alto-Plano migrant traders, have a home and consider sleeping on the street as part of a normal temporary economic activity. Enumeration of the inadequately housed is equally difficult, because it requires detailed exploration of housing quality and tenure over time, which is a much bigger task.

2. Drivers of homelessness

The drivers of homelessness are mainly structural rather than a result of an individual's agency. While the drivers of homelessness in developed countries can be linked strongly with unemployment, fractured family relationships and the diminution of the welfare system, drivers in the developing world are more complex and diverse.

Economic Drivers

Probably the main driver in the developing world is poverty, especially a failure of rural livelihoods and lack of rural services and opportunities, coupled with the opportunities offered by booming urban development. Poverty pushes many people to leave their rural homes, initially temporarily, to seek better economic and social opportunities in cities and towns and send remittances home. It is important to stress that migration itself is **not** a driver of homelessness, many people migrate but do not become homeless and many homeless people have not migrated. Migration should be considered as part of the *process of becoming* homeless.

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[2] The word 'slum' is often considered pejorative. It is used here to refer to housing in which lacks access to one or more of the following: improved water source, improved sanitation facilities, sufficient living area, durability or security of tenure.

The economic failure of rural, or urban, livelihoods derives from many complex roots. For example, climate change is destroying homes and terrain or making centuries old farming methods unsustainable, especially across sub Saharan Africa, where movement between different locations, as a livelihood strategy, has long been common (Brockhaus and Locatelli 2013). Intensification of farming in some countries sees smallholders driven off their land or bought out for derisory sums of money. This is the case of smallholders in the Sundarbans area of Bangladesh, where intensification of shrimp farming now virtually dominates the land use and has led to the forced migration of thousands of smallholders (Speak 2018). Economic growth and urban expansion also leads to loss of home and livelihood. For example, in India, the development of Gurgaon satellite city, near Delhi, saw some larger landholders sell for reasonable sums of money. Their landless workers lost their jobs and, like smallholders who sold for little, had no option but to leave to seek work in the city.

To support failing rural livelihoods a migration process often begins with a lone, working aged male seeking temporary work in the city to support the rural household. However, poor wages mean that he cannot afford shelter if he is to send remittances home, so he sleeps on the street. Others join him to assist and eventually the balance tips such that it is more economically viable for the women and children to follow (Speak, 2011; Tipple and Speak, 2009; Kothari, 2003). Mosse *et al.* (2002) noted that, in western India, the poorer the family, the greater is the number of people from it who migrate, leaving fewer to maintain a rural living. With no suitable accommodation for them, entire households end up on the streets, or, if they are lucky, in slum settlement.

Even where an adequate rural livelihood can be maintained, the focus of many Governments on urban development means that rural services, especially schools and clinics, are far behind those of even poorer areas in the city. This too drives people to migrate in search of better opportunities for their children.

Loss of home or displacement

Some developing countries are more badly hit by environmental disasters and the effects of climate change than others, causing the mass destruction of homes and loss of life. At the time of writing, Cyclone Fani affected more than 2.5 million people across Bangladesh and southern India, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people lost their homes in this one event. Over 1.5 million were left homeless after the 2004 Tsunami which hit Indonesia, many remain so today.

Whilst governments and aid agencies rally at times of crisis, those in inadequate housing may slip through the emergency relief net. For example, in Peru, the Government's post disaster relief is only available to those who lose a formally built home which they owned. The many thousands whose informally built dwellings are destroyed can get no support.

Within informal, slum settlements, fire is a much-feared danger. It spreads quickly, kills many and, because of the density of informal settlements, destroys the homes of many more (Arup 2018). Turok (2015) reports that approximately 1000 homes were lost in a single settlement fire in Masiphumelele, Cape Town with 4000 people left without shelter. They not only lost their shelter but also the resources, money and many hours of labour they had put into building it.

In many parts of the world, war and civil conflict are destroying both cities and rural communities and rendering people homeless and workless. Kothari (2015) notes that UNHCR estimates that globally there are nearly sixty million people displaced as a result of war, persecution, and other factors. Almost six million Colombians have been violently displaced as a result of conflict (CODHES, 2014), resulting in around 5% of the population being on the streets and nearly 30% of all families in Colombia in inadequate housing (Ministry of Housing estimates from 2013). In Nigeria, the actions of Boko Haram terrorists has led to the around 650,000 Nigerians fleeing their homes and becoming

displaced internally, with a further 70,000 now living as refugees in neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2014). Homelessness born of displacement frequently lasts for generations. Many of those on the streets or in the informal settlements around Lima arrived in the city fleeing the Shining Path in the 1980s and still fear to return to their rural homes almost 40 years later. In Iraq, the war of 2003 has resulted in millions of people migrating to different cities for safety, where they have settled in makeshift shelter for years.

Eviction

Many of those who end up in the city eventually find their way into an informal settlement. Formal urban development and economic growth increasingly requires the removal of these settlements, regardless of their condition or longevity. The process often involves sudden, sometimes violent eviction of settlers who lose their shelter, belongings and livelihoods. This is exemplified by the recent destruction of the informal settlement of Kathputli, in Delhi, India. Many hundreds of artisans and performers, who earned their living performing around the city, were evicted. Their decades old community, which was built around shared performance areas, was devastated. They were promised new homes to rent in high-rise apartments, which they did not want and could not afford.

Evictions sometimes see the removal of informal settlers to purpose built 'relocation colonies' which are almost always many kilometres away from livelihood opportunities (Speak, 2012; Patel, Sliuzas and Mathur, 2015). Again, in Delhi, the Municipality destroyed several slums near the city centre and moved people 16 kilometres to the relocation colony of Bhalaswa, North East Delhi. They were leased a plot of land for 10 years but given no housing or services at all. Subsequently the Municipality has built many thousands of very small apartments, some only 18 square meters, in 3 and 5 story blocks. These are ostensibly for other slum dwellers in the city. The apartments were completed in 2018 having been under construction for almost 10 years, but to-date, not a single one is occupied.

These evictions not only disrupt communities and livelihoods but, ironically, increases street sleeping as people cannot afford to travel into the city for work so return to living on the streets. They also remove potential communities and shelter for those trying to move off the streets.

Social Drivers

A wave of social and demographic change has swept the developing world in recent years.   Foster (2000) presented evidence that family support networks were beginning to change and, in some cases, fracture entirely, affecting the housing security of more vulnerable people. This change, coupled with the lack of formal welfare and support systems is particularly problematic for some people and underpins much of the increase in street sleeping and its increasing longevity.

Many countries in the developing world are experiencing significant aged populations for the first time and have not yet developed systems of care (Schroder-Butterfill and Marianti 2006). Older people's homelessness is exacerbated by the reduction in the role of the extended family to support those in need. For example, in India, which now has the second largest aged population in the world, rapid economic development has given rise to a newly mobile and affluent middle class of younger people. As they migrate to the cities or to other countries for work, they are less able or willing to care for their older relatives (Speak 2011). The increase in women working outside the home, coupled with an increase in nuclear families, also erodes the support which once protected older people from homelessness.

Divorce, separation and abandonment of women are increasing around the world, resulting in increased female homelessness and female headed households, which are the poorest. War is making many women into widows whilst the tradition of men marrying their brother's widow (Levirate marriage) is diminishing. In many cases can be detrimental to the woman and her children and women refuse to

accept it. However, in some countries, particularly in the Middle East and many parts of Asia, the importance of the performance of respectability, and the greater seclusion of women, make it virtually impossible for a woman to establish an independent home without a male supporter.   Nevertheless, in other countries, especially those in Latin America, and in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is much easier for a lone woman to establish an independent home, and to work, if she can find work. Latin America also has a very strong tradition of community support organisations which provide help.

These social changes are not sudden but have been developing over several generations. Despite this, governments have not developed adequate health and social welfare systems in the developing world to cope with the needs of vulnerable people.

Political and Legal Drivers

Homelessness is highly politicised in both the developed and developing worlds. The institutional and regulatory frameworks established by governments to control access to land and to provide housing can help or hinder the urban poor in their quest for secure housing (Simbizi, Bennett and Zevenbergen 2014). In the developing world, the current failure of many governments to develop pro-poor development frameworks means that the poor have unequal access to land for housing (Bredenoord, van Lindert and Smets 2014). This is problematic in itself but also offers ample opportunity for politicians to make promises of land, housing, tenure, services or settlement upgrading, in exchange for votes. These promises are frequently broken. Even more overtly, homelessness can result from evictions, as a conscious way to ensure votes from more affluent communities, or to control political opposition.

Women, and their children, are made more vulnerable to homelessness owing to a failure of many governments to enforce human rights, and land and property rights, for women (Speak, 2005). This remains problematic in some African countries, while Latin American countries are generally better at supporting women's land rights, and developing innovative tenure systems, to protect women.

Legislation can effectively criminalise homelessness by making it illegal to live in the city without proof of citizenship or without a dwelling to return to at night. In Indonesia, all people above the age of seventeen should possess an identity card called the *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* (KTP) issued by their respective local authority. Without the card one may be sent to prison. However, in order to acquire a KTP a person has to have an officially recognised address. In other countries, specific legislation criminalises street sleeping. This is the case in India, where the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act is used as a tool to imprison those sleeping on the streets. This legal Act is often used to remove street sleepers prior to international events, such as the /commonwealth Games (Dupont 2013).

Failure of housing provision and unaffordability

Underpinning all of the above drivers of homelessness is a complete failure of the *formal* private housing delivery system, which priorities middle and upper income housing. In the face of rapid urbanisation in most of the developing world, governments appear unable to plan for the increase in low income urban populations. This includes failure to provide, or facilitate the provision of, very low-cost housing for the millions of low-income households in both urban and rural areas. Although mass housing for low income households is being built, it is almost always too expensive for the poorest, located away from income earning activities and lacking good, affordable transport links. In many cases it lies empty for years or is 'raided' by higher income groups who can afford a car or public transport.

Mexico has many examples of such housing which is unoccupied for a range of reasons, including the cost, lack credit for extremely low-income households, lack of transport and infrastructure and the environment of violent crime associated with drug cartels. Similarly, in Angola, government policy

produced mass low-income housing which was too expensive and too remote for the lowest income households. Angola has subsequently introduced a programme of assisted self-help house building, for the lowest income groups. However, it too is failing to meet its targets because it is poorly promoted, offers sites in disadvantage locations and is, ultimately, still too expensive, as its finance criteria are set too high.

These are not isolated event in the developing world. Generally it seems that low income housing is being built at the wrong price, in the wrong places, to the wrong design and for the wrong reasons and too often ends up occupied by the wrong groups, or not at all. The author's observations, from interviews with senior officers in planning and housing authorities in several countries, is that many have no idea where the 'affordability level' lies in their own countries and fail to recognise poverty levels.

In some countries, that 'affordability level' amongst the inadequately housed and street sleepers seems impossibly low. Many are struggling to maintain an adequate standard of living even with no housing costs. In India, Bangladesh and South Africa, for example, very little housing is produced at a cost they could afford to rent. Finance for housing construction and ownership is, more often than not, unavailable to those on low incomes. Even when people feel that can repay a loan, as it requires regular repayments and stable, formal employment. This is one of the problems with the Angolan 'Assisted Self Help' programme, discussed above.

Nevertheless, in some other countries the 'affordability level' is higher, and it is not so much poverty but the sheer lack of housing which drives people into inadequate dwellings and informality. For example, in Peru many (but certainly not all) of those who invade the desert and establish informal settlements are far from the poorest in society. Many can afford to rent small dwellings formally, if they existed in the right location for work. They can also access, and afford, housing credit and build, if land is available. In Bogota, Colombia, the consolidation of some informal settlements, and their upgrading into vibrant quasi-formal neighbourhoods, almost entirely by the settlers themselves demonstrates power and determination of people to provide and improve their housing.

The key point is that if constructed appropriately, in the right central locations and available at the right price and tenures, housing *can* be a solution for many in abjectly inadequate housing. The difficulty seems to be location, cost and constraints on finance. This can only be overcome by a radical rethink of how we prioritise central urban land.

However, for those sleeping on the street, or squatting, urban housing-based solutions do not work. Street sleepers in most developing countries need flexible, temporary and virtually free accommodation, so that they can move around the city for work. With the exception of a few emergency night shelters, no such accommodation is included in urban housing policies. Some street sleepers need, more than anything, a way to return to a secure rural home and livelihood, which suggest a shift in focus to rural housing and development.

3. Characteristics of homeless people in the developing world

The socio-cultural context of a country strongly influences the characteristics of homeless , which differ between countries and between the categorise of homelessness. The characteristics of homeless people in the developing world also differ from those in the developed countries. Nevertheless, there are some generalisation we can make.

Gender

Most enumerations of homelessness in the developing world indicate a predominance of men. However, this may not be true everywhere as enumerations use narrow definitions, based on street

sleeping or pavement dwelling. By this definition women will be undercounted.   This is because the cultural context greatly influences the 'visibility' of female homelessness. In some cultures women on the streets face increased danger from abuse, kidnapping and trafficking (Pomodoro, 2001). Therefore, they hide or stay with friends and family. (Edgar 2001; Bimal and Syed 2000).   In devoutly Islamic countries, the cultural unacceptability of women living on the streets means that women and girls are far less likely to be found there, either living alone or as part of homeless households. In Bangladesh, for example, over 75 per cent of identified homeless people are male (BBS, 1999).   Similarly, in Egypt, women and girls remain greatly dependent on their families for accommodation in the face of homelessness (Sayed, 2000).

Conversely, in Latin America, women form a more equal proportion of those counted as living on the street. Similarly, in Ghana and in South Africa, it is common for young women to go to the cities to work in order to earn money to buy household goods to make them more eligible for marriage. While there, they often live on the streets, often in groups, to save money. Both Anerfi (1996) and Korboe (1996) noted a very even gender split amongst younger homeless people in Ghana, with girls constituting about 49 percent of the homeless population. Olufemi (1997) estimates that, in Johannesburg, South Africa, four out of ten street homeless people are women.

If we accept a broader definition of homelessness, including those in abjectly inadequate housing, the gender characteristics of homeless people change. Estimates suggest that female-headed households constitute 70 per cent of the world's homeless population including those in inadequate housing. In a UN study (Kothari, 2005), female-headed households, particularly single mothers living in poverty, were identified as being one of the groups most likely to be homelessness in several countries, including Nicaragua, Argentina, Costa Rica, Peru.

Age

The majority of the 'street homeless' population in developing countries falls within the adult age range, between18 and 59 years old. For example, Olufemi, (1997) estimated that 73 per cent of street homeless people in Johannesburg were aged between 20 and 39 years and 87 per cent are aged between 20 and 49 years. A study of homeless people in Delhi, in 2001 indicated that 80 per cent of homeless people were in the age group 19-58 years (Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan, 2001). However, as discussed earlier, some countries are experiencing increased numbers of older homeless people and it is likely that the age profile will change considerably over time.

Child homelessness is also increasing and in many countries it is certainly quite common to find households with children living on the streets. This household 'street homelessness' can sometimes be very long term, leading to generations of children being born and raised on the streets. This is particularly true in some parts of Asia. Nevertheless, in other cases, for example Peru and Bolivia, family 'street homelessness' is often a more temporary situation, linked with cyclical economic migration. Households migrate from the rural high Andes to live and work on the streets during summer returning to their village homes after a few months trading (Tipple and Speak 2009)

As war and HIV/AIDS produces increasing numbers of orphans the phenomenon of 'street children' appears to be increasing. The term 'street children' includes 'children on the street' who can be found working on and roaming the streets without supervision by day. It also includes the more vulnerable group of 'children of the street', who live and sleep on the street, or in stations and abandoned buildings estranged from their families and without support.

Estimates of the number of homeless children in households or street children in developing countries are exceptionally elusive. Nevertheless, a broad picture can be pieced together based on individual

countries. According to UN sources there are up to 150 million street children, across both categories, globally.

Poverty and Economic Activity

It is a common misconception that homeless people are the visibly destitute beggars – the very poorest in society. This is not necessarily true within developing countries for either rough sleepers or those in inadequate housing. Despite the fact that loss of livelihood is a driver of homelessness, in most developing countries, most homeless people, across all groups, work. Thus, the broad profile of homeless people contains a greater diversity of economic activity and financial standing than it does in developed countries. Homeless people in the developing world generally have very low levels of education, with inadequately housed being slightly better educated than street sleepers (Tipple and Speak 2009). Thus, they also have slightly better jobs and higher incomes.

However, there are strong differences between countries. In South Africa, where formal sector employment was dominant until the mid-1990s, Olufemi (1997) noted that 96 per cent of street sleepers were unemployed prior to becoming homeless and 79 per cent were unemployed after becoming homeless. Conversely, studies of street sleepers and pavement dwellers in Delhi note that the majority in urban centres are informally employed, mainly engaged in occupations such as handcart or cycle-rickshaw pulling, driving, waiting on tables, cooking and construction work (Jagannathan and Halder, 1990; Dupont, 1998; Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan, 2001). In Peru, inadequately housed informal settlers around Lima are often educated to secondary level and have noticeably higher levels of employment.

This difference emphasises the importance of informal economic activity for the homeless as the vast majority of working homeless people in both categories are employed is in the informal sector. Their work is low paid, often temporary, insecure, unskilled and, importantly it does not require the rigid framework of a formal residence, address or bank account which is frequently required for employment in industrialised countries. Thus, it is easier for the homeless of both categories to obtain informal work on a daily basis. Indeed, in many cities, there is a place at which people looking for daily labouring work assemble, waiting to be hired. Even skilled workers with specialist tools may gather there awaiting daily work.

4. Experiences of homelessness

Experiences of homelessness are influenced by the legal and political context of a country, which influences treatment by the police and other authorities. In Peru, for example, the authorities are relatively sympathetic to the plight of informal settlers in inadequate housing. However, they do not easily suffer street sleepers, especially children of the street, who are moved on and sometimes beaten. In all countries, women and girls on the streets are especially vulnerable to rape, kidnap, and trafficking.

Everywhere, homeless people, especially street sleepers, are perceived as criminals and pick-pockets. In truth they are far more likely to be the victims of crime, especially violent crime, than the perpetrators.

Homeless people experience very with poor health, suffering particularly from respiratory illnesses, malaria, anaemia, gastro-intestinal problems and injuries. Even basic health care can be beyond their means, such that, for this group, working long hours with poor food even a small injury or illness can escalate to something more severe. Ironically, the hygiene, health and safety problems associated with night shelters deter many from using them.

Within the developing world the prevalence of mental health problems, substance abuse or alcoholism amongst homeless people, of all categories, differs from country to country. For example, the author's

observations and interviews in Medellin, Colombia (Speak, 2015) noted that street sleepers were more generally destitute, very often drug dependent and begging, than in other countries she has visited. In the case of women, engagement in prostitution was clearly evident. Such activity is seldom the cause of homelessness but rather a result of it. Nevertheless, it colours the public perception, which is reflected in media and in the derogatory language used to refer to homeless people. This sometimes spills over into violence against them.

5. Interventions and policies

In the developing world, policies and intervention to address homelessness in all categories are largely proving ineffective in reducing numbers. There are two main reasons for this. First the sheer scale of homelessness is so immense that the resources it demands are outside the scope of many governments. One reason why enumeration tend to focus on street sleeping, ignoring the greater number in abjectly inadequate housing, is because it will produce a lower number to be provided for.

The second reason why interventions fail is because they are focussed on the provision of formal housing, which demonstrates a lack of understanding of homeless people's needs and priorities. In the developing world, the immediate priority of most homeless people is not housing but income generation. Housing, even shelter, is secondary to this.

Where housing can be the focus is for those in abjectly inadequate housing and for this group there is now ample evidence that in-situ upgrading of poor quality, informal housing works better than relocation. Nevertheless, relocation remains the main approach and ostensibly low-cost housing-based solutions are being developed around the world for the millions of inadequately housed. However, many fail, and are left empty or are 'raided' by higher income groups, simply because to live there would make the low income household, for which they are intended, even poorer. This is because they are almost always in peripheral locations, with poor infrastructure and transport and require the household to give up their existing, generally free, informal housing and move into housing requiring rent, utility charges and transport costs. These housing schemes very often make it impossible to work, such that even those who could afford to, and are willing to, pay a small rent, would not be able to if they accepted the housing.

Night shelters for street sleepers are also almost always peripherally located. Whilst they are essential for many, especially women, children or the elderly, they counterproductive to income generation, the very reason many others have left their home to live on the streets in the first place.

For street children, interventions are generally provided by NGOs with good intentions. However, they can run the risk of failure because they prioritise housing, repatriation and education. The solutions which work best are those which do not force housing or repatriation children but rather act to support children gradually until they regain trust of adults.

For all groups, the prioritising of healthcare, food, and help to become economically stable is of greatest benefit. In most countries the author identified significant NGOs, religious or community groups who supported the homeless, particularly street sleepers, in these ways. Many have developed extremely good practice, in terms of offering vital food, health care and shelter, without being judgemental.

Summary

Homelessness in the developing world is diverse and complex. The drivers of homelessness often lie in either the failure of rural or urban livelihoods, failure of social support or political action and inaction.

Whilst inadequate housing can be addressed, to a degree, by a focus on housing provision, it will require a radical rethink of how we prioritise urban and rural land, and an understanding that housing is more than simply shelter. Housing must not make occupants worse off or add to the stress of impoverished lives.

Street sleeping can be a manifestation of abject destitution and lack of any support for an individual's problems. However, it is often driven by economic need. Importantly, for many, street sleeping is temporary or cyclical and part of an economic strategy.

To stem the flow of migration, or to mitigate its effects, the focus must be on rural and urban employment for the low skilled, in addition to the provision of truly affordable housing and realistically accessible housing finance. This will require a better understanding of what the poor can afford and a re-evaluation of the importance of informal economic activity.

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