



# The Impact of Personal & Family Circumstances on Homelessness

Jean Quinn, DW



# Obtaining a Picture

- Variations in definitions.
- The absence of an internationally agreed definition of homelessness hampers meaningful comparisons
- Definitions varies across countries because homelessness is culturally defined based on concepts such as adequate housing and security of tenure
- Many Governments lack the resources and commitment to measure homelessness and the complexity of the issue
- Homelessness is considered embarrassing
- Fear of being labelled as homeless and losing children





37% of households are having difficulty maintaining housing

1069 families in emergency accommodation

34K Homeless households

81K homeless adults with 31K children

Emerging presence of homeless population

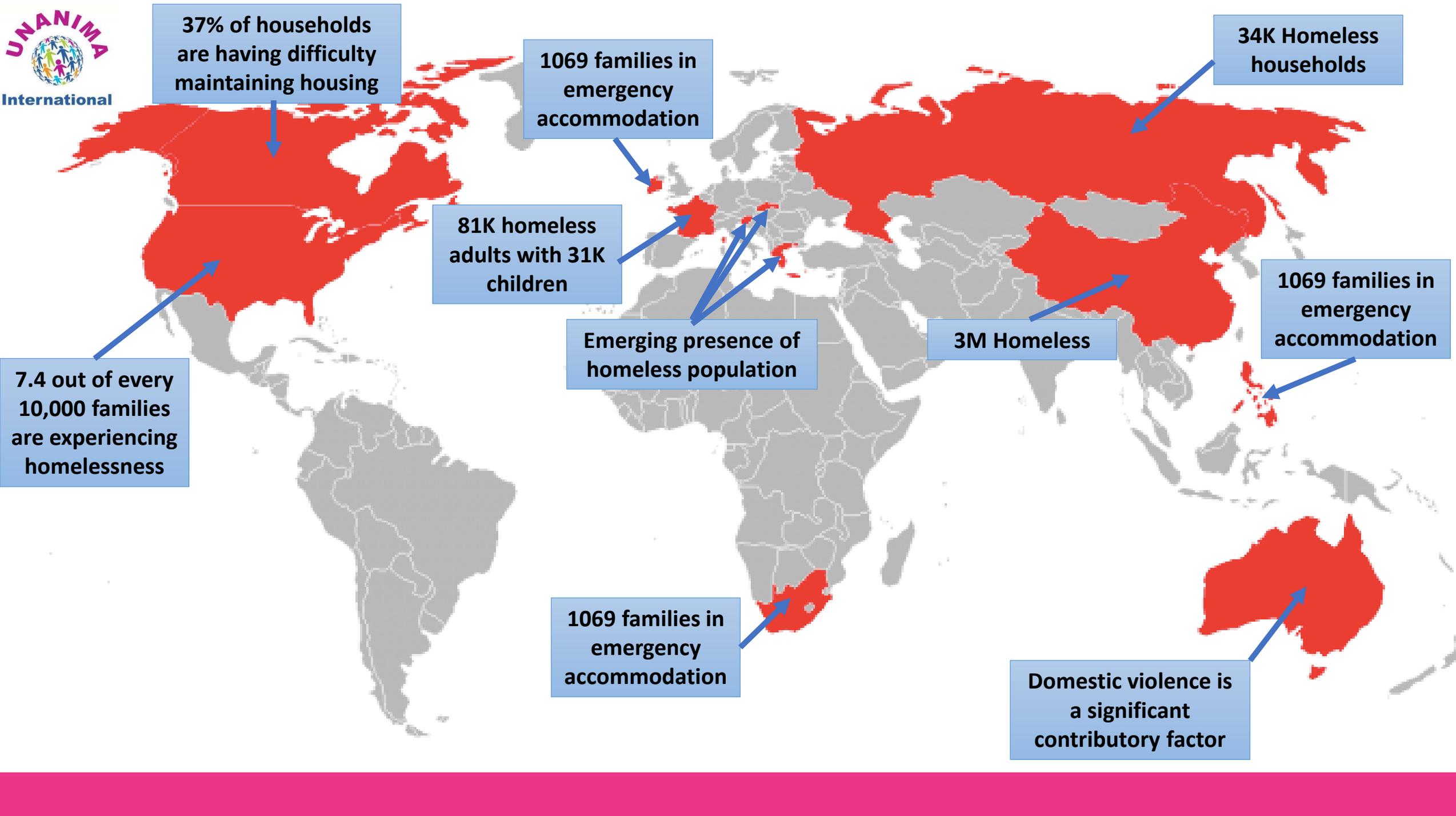
3M Homeless

1069 families in emergency accommodation

7.4 out of every 10,000 families are experiencing homelessness

1069 families in emergency accommodation

Domestic violence is a significant contributory factor



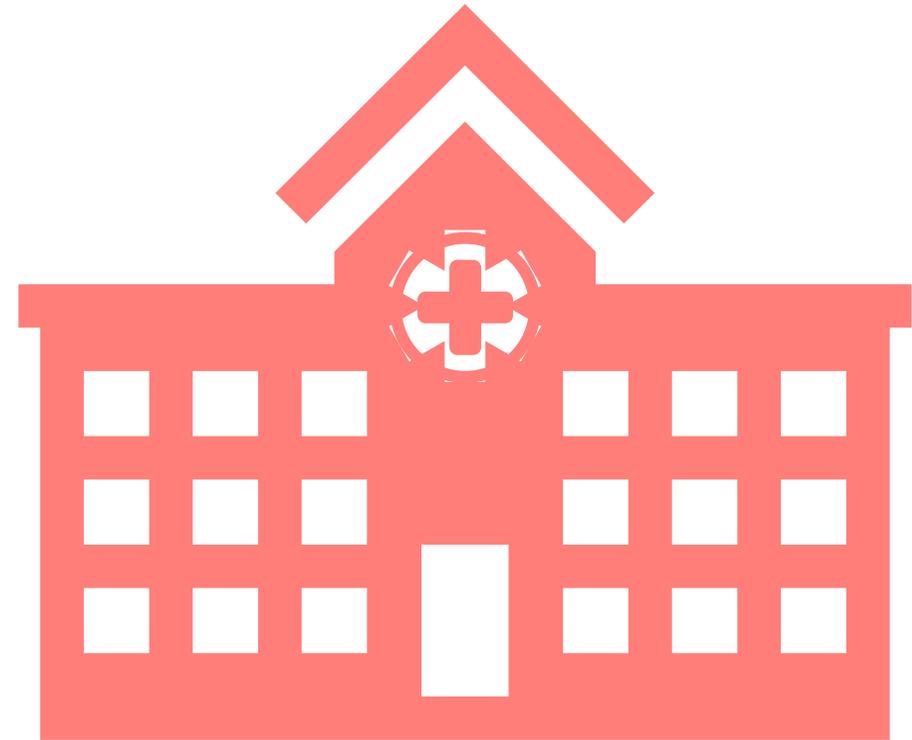
# Causes

- Shortage of affordable housing
- Privatization of civic services
- Investment speculation in housing
- Unplanned and rapid urbanization
- People losing their homes and lands to Highways and Industries
- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Family breakdown
- Lack of services and access to facilities for those experiencing mental illness, alcoholism/ substance abuse
- Displacement caused by conflicts and natural disasters
- Domestic Violence
- Lack of Social Protection systems including floors



# Domestic Violence

- **Global Issue**
- **Leading cause of homelessness for women and children**
- **Suffer the physical and psychological consequences**
- **Support systems are taken**
- **Negative ramifications across various sectors of the social system**
- **Affects development of nation**



# Mental Health



- Homelessness amplifies poor mental health
- The needs of people experiencing mental illness are similar to those without mental illnesses
- Safety, Adequate Housing, Medical Care, Food and Support, all of which become harder to access when experiencing homelessness
- The stress/ trauma associated with experiencing homelessness can create anxiety, fear, depression, sleeplessness and substance misuse

# Alcohol & Drug Use



- **Driver and Consequence**
- **Homeless women are ore likely to use alcohol and drugs then other women**
- **Turned to as a method of coping**
- **Exacerbate Mental Health and Addictions**
- **Interfere with the ability to build a stable Family and life**

# Lack of Social Protection Including Floors

- **Driver and Consequence**
- **Plays a significant role in the stability and vulnerability of the individual and the family**
- **Plays a major role in the composition of the homeless population in any given nation**
- **leaves individuals and families subject to further vulnerability when homelessness occurs**



# Displacement through Natural Disaster and Conflict



- **Displacement and Homelessness common outcome**
- **Loss of family members, family separation, loss of possessions, and the experience of trauma and depression are all commonly associated with these types of displacement**
- **Vulnerable groups suffer more through further disadvantaged & unequal access to assistance; discrimination in aid provision; enforced relocation; sexual and gender-based violence; loss of documentation; recruitment of children into fighting forces; unsafe or involuntary return or resettlement; and issues of property restitution**

# Homelessness & the Family

- Homeless Families are one of societies most disadvantaged
- Families need more basic supports beyond decent affordable housing to thrive. Food, education, employment, child care, transport, health/ mental health care, trauma informed care, and child care services
- Homelessness is a devastating experience that can significantly impact the health and well-being of the individual and the family
- Often causes ongoing issues throughout the life cycle



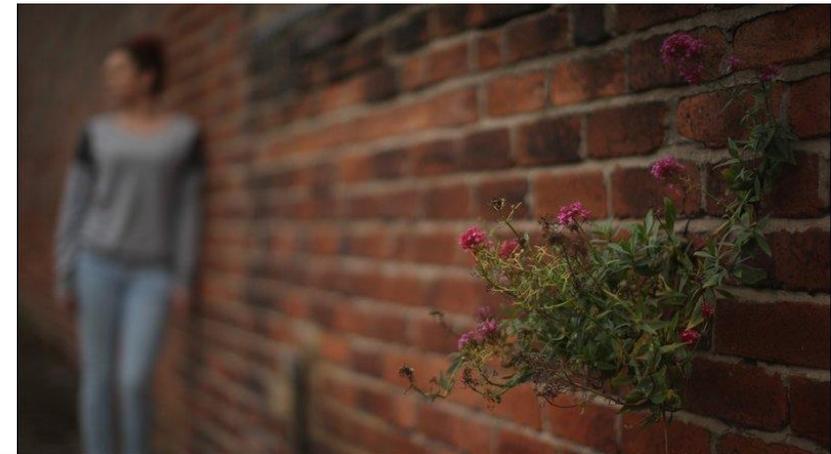
# Family Homelessness & Trauma

*“When you’re going through homelessness, you’re putting your hand out....it’s all one hurdle after another ...it’s constant ticking boxes, it’s mental torture, to the point where I couldn’t get up and do what they were asking me to do without a drug in my system....you’re constantly looking over your shoulder, you’re constantly feeling under threat. I think my mindset back then was cut it off, do yourself in before the system does you in, that type of thing. That’s the mentality I was walking around with. I was 23 when I tried to end it all, I’m 29 now and when I look at it, I’ve come a long way.”*

*- Sarah, 29*

*“You want to voice the truth, what’s actually going on with everything but you’re sometimes afraid and your voice is gone”*

*- Amanda, 18*



# Homelessness & Adequate Housing

**The term adequate housing is present in a number of UN documents. Among the most notable:**

- **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)**
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**
- **The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)**
- **1996 Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements.**



**“We will take positive measures to improve the living conditions of homeless people with a view of facilitating their full participation in society and prevent and eliminate homelessness”**

**-New Urban Agenda (2016)**

# Families the Key to Achieving the SDGs?

*“the very achievement of development goals depends on how well families are empowered to contribute to the achievement of those goals. Therefore, policies focussing on improving the well-being of families are certain to benefit development”*



**-Former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon**

# Family Homelessness Policies



- **Family & Gender Sensitive Social Protection**
- **Low Income, Public & Federal Housing Assistance**
- **Permanent Supportive Housing**
- **Housing First**

# Family & Gender Sensitive Social Protection

**Family and gender sensitive social protection policies and programs are directly associated with the effectiveness of policies designed to reduce Family Homelessness**



# Low Income, Public & Federal Housing Assistance

- **Nation specific**
- **Highly successful as they significantly reduce family homelessness**
- **Ensuring that families remain together, there is access to stable housing and families remain out of the shelter system**
- **Successful in the global north and global south**



# Good Models of Adequate Housing



# Permanent Supportive Housing



**Combines affordable housing assistance and support services for individuals and families living with mental or physical illness, or those who require other supports to maintain a home**



# Holistic Support



# Housing First Policy

**Works on the basis that the issue of homelessness can be eliminated through shelters and emergency accommodations being replaced by immediate housing options and supported rental housing**



# Solutions & Recommendations

We encourage Member States to:

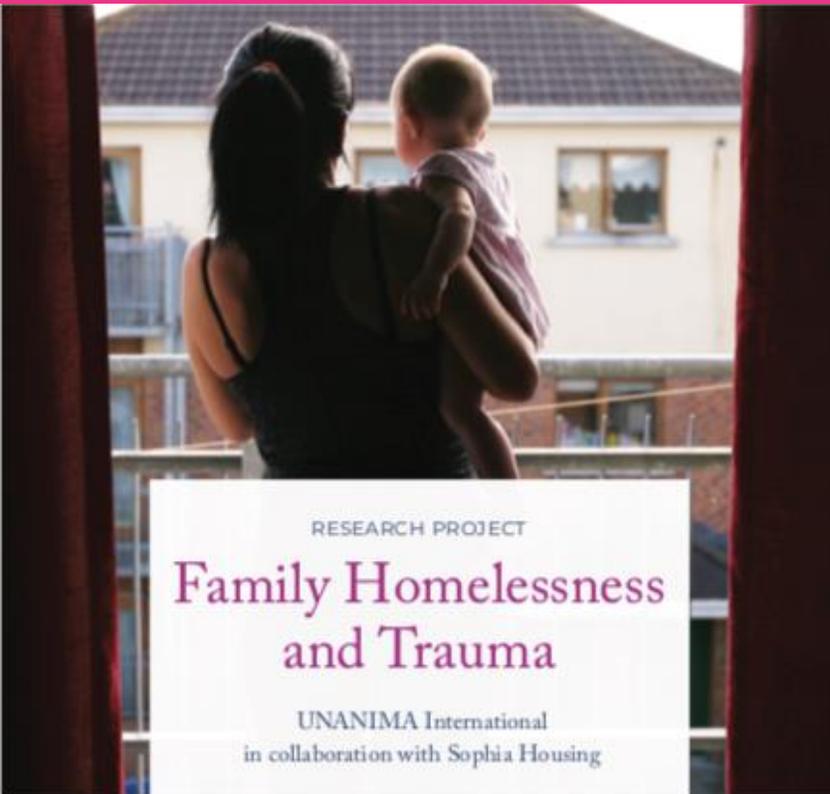
- Fully recognise the commitments they have made to date through the 2030 Agenda, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Convention on the Right of the Child among other United Nations Documents and actively work to achieving them.
- Address the nature of family homelessness i.e. specifically policies that meet the unique needs of women and children, through gender sensitive policies and resource allocation.
- Implement Housing Led Initiatives
- Provide Adequate Housing with Support Services for families to address the trauma of homelessness in an effort to break the cycle of generational homelessness
- Expand local government support for the development of affordable family –sized housing
- Implement 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.
- 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.
- Make policy changes to secure flexible funding for implementation of recommendations
- Actively collect disaggregated data on Homelessness, specifically in relation to Family homelessness, women and children



***Don't Talk About Us,  
Without Us!***



# Research & Publications



RESEARCH PROJECT  
**Family Homelessness  
 and Trauma**  
 UNANIMA International  
 in collaboration with Sophia Housing



WRITTEN AND PREPARED BY  
 UNANIMA International at the UN Juan Quinn DW and Molly Gerke  
 With inputs from John Mc Eoy, Sophia Housing and Winifred Doherty



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Dignity and  
 Well-Being

Practical Approaches to Working with  
 Homeless People with Mental Health Problems