The Impact of Personal & Family Circumstances on Homelessness

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON "AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS FOR ALL TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS"
NAIROBI, KENYA FROM 22ND -24TH OF MAY 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

Family Homelessness is unfortunately a growing phenomenon around the world. Homelessness is often considered embarrassing, a taboo subject, and governments tend to understate the problem. In 1962 Thomas Kuhn wrote **The Structure of Scientific Revolution.**[1] In it he defined and popularized the concept of "paradigm shift". Kuhn argues that scientific advancement is not evolutionary, but a series of "peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions" one conceptual world view is replaced by another". We believe 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. We need urgently a paradigm shift away from the many abusive attitudes and beliefs that circulate around homelessness. We need to start this dialogue by viewing and treating homelessness as what it is: a human and civil rights issues.

Obtaining an accurate picture of homelessness globally is challenging for several reasons:

- What is most problematic is the variations in definitions. Homelessness can vary from simply the absence of adequate living accommodation to a lack of permanent residence that provides roots, security, identity and emotional well- being.
- The absence of an internationally agreed definition of homelessness hampers meaningful comparisons
- Definitions vary 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 to measure the complexity of the issue
- Homelessness is considered embarrassing and so Governments understate the problem
- Some parents, especially Women may not wish to be labelled as homeless for fear of losing their children

1.1 Statistics

Measuring Homelessness is costly and often subject to producing skewed figures and data; Cities may under-count or under-state due to embarrassment or ineffectively obtain reliable numbers due to the transient lifestyle people experiencing homelessness face, whilst individuals may avoid officials due to shame and fear of arrest. Such factors contribute to difficulties obtaining accurate numbers around homelessness in many countries, especially in developing countries[2]**. In Russia** for example, the most recent census report **34,000** homeless households, however political figure Sergey Mironov suggests that there may as many as **5 million peopl**e experiencing homelessness in the Russian Federation.[3] **Manila, the capital of the Philippines**, is reported to have the largest homeless population of any city in the world, estimates of the homeless population vary from **several million**

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[1] Kuhn, T. (1962)
[2] National Coalition for the Homeless (2009)
[3] Goble (2017)

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to tens of thousands.[4] In the world's billion-plus populations, **China and India reported numbers of 3 million and 1.77 million** homeless respectively.[5]

Family Homelessness is a growing social problem affecting families around the world. It is understood and manifests itself in diverse economic, social, cultural and even linguistic context globally and affects both the Global North and the Global South. In the **USA it is estimated there are almost 60,000 families** with children homeless on any given night, this means that **7.4 out of every 10,000 families** are experiencing homelessness[6]. **Canada**, one of the most affluent countries in the world, is also seeing child and family homelessness continue to become a serious and growing issue. More than **37% of Canadian households** are having difficulty maintaining housing, more and more families are relying on Emergency accommodation.[7] In **South Africa** the issue of homelessness has stemmed largely from the apartheid period. Growing unemployment, consistent lack of affordable housing, poor social cohesion, and economic and social policies are among the identified factors contributing to the issue. While no official number exists, it is estimated that the South African homeless population is **approximately 200,000.**[8] Combined data from the **Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Specialist Homeless** Services suggests that on any given night in 2016 there was **116,427** people **homeless in Australia**, this number has continued to rise.[9] While there is very little Australian research exploring mother's views on their homeless experiences, it known that domestic violence is a significant contributory factor most commonly associated with family homelessness.[10]

There is a growing trend across many **European Countries** of an increase in family homelessness. **Feansta** - European Network of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (2017) study showed that homelessness once the preserve of single individuals now sees a growing percentage of families. This study also shows that in 2017 an **emerging presence in the homeless population** is found in **Slovenia, Slovakia, and Greece**. Data from **France** indicates a rather high proportion of families among homeless people. A total of **81,000 homeless adults were accompanied by 31,000 children**. Homeless families made up 29 per cent of all homeless people (12% single parents and 17% couple with children). However, it should be noted that this data included both migrant populations who were homeless and those who can access emergency accommodation, therefore experience among French Citizens maybe significantly lower.[11] **Ireland** has seen an unprecedented growth of family homelessness since 2014 and a growing incidence of children in emergency settings, particularly in the Dublin region. During March 2017, 815 of the **1069 families in emergency accommodation**, 76% were residing in commercial hotels due to capacity limitations in homeless emergency accommodation.[12] In some **European countries, family homelessness** is now consistently

[4] Laccino, L. (2010)
[5] Chamie, J. (2018)
[6] National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2018)
[7] Raising the Roof. (2015)
[8] Rule-Groenewald, C. (2018)
[9] https://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au (2019)
[10] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018)
[11] Duée, M. and Yaouancq, F. (2019)
[12] Homelessdublin.ie. (2018)

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above 20% of the total homeless population.[13] Displacement caused by war and poverty has increased the number of families seeking asylum in Europe and contributed significantly to this increase.[14]

2. CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

The causes of homelessness across the globe are multifaceted and often specific to the social, economic, environmental and geographic context of a population. However, some contributing factors consistently stand out, including**:**
- **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**

2.1 Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is a global issue reaching across national boundaries as well as socio-economic, racial, cultural and class distinctions. It is a wide spread and deeply ingrained issue that has serious implications on women's health and well-being.[15] Domestic Violence is widely ignored and poorly understood. It is also a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. When Women are caught in this situation and need to leave their homes, they not only suffer the physical and psychological consequences of losing their homes, their support systems are taken from them as well. This, in turn often has negative ramifications across various sectors of the social system and consequently affects the development of a nation.[16]

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[13] FEANTSA The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless AISBL (2017)
[14] FEANTSA (2017) et al
[15] Kaur, R. and Garg, S. (2008)
[16] Macias, C. (2015)

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2.2 Mental Health

Many women worldwide who are homeless suffer significantly with mental health issues. Their characteristics vary from country to country, as do their reasons for homelessness. Homelessness amplifies poor mental health.[17] The stress and/ or Trauma associated with experiencing homelessness can create anxiety, fear, depression, sleeplessness and substance misuse. 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.[18]

2.3 Alcohol and Drug Use

Homeless women are more likely to use alcohol and drugs than other women.[19] They are coping with highly stressful situations – such as family conflicts, dysfunctions, financial situations, lack of housing and support and care of children in stressful situations. Drugs and alcohol are often turned to and used as a means of coping during such times. This creates further issues as Mental Health and Addictions interfere with a family's ability to build a stable life for women and children.

2.4 Lack of Social Protection Systems including Floors

The capacity of individuals, especially women to form and actively maintain an autonomous household has been shown to be directly dependent on their family status, economic status and the extent to which they are able to access social protection systems to support their housing and financial needs. Social policies, specifically social protection systems including floors, not only play a significant role in the stability and vulnerability of the individual and the family but also play a major role in the composition of the homeless population in any given nation.[20] Access to appropriate Social Protection Systems with floors in the form of health care, social supports, including housing and income security, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injuries, maternity or loss of a main income have the ability to ensure Homelessness does not occur. Lack of such systems and policies leaves individuals and families subject to vulnerability when adversities that cause homelessness occur.

2.5 Displacement through Natural Disaster and Conflict

Displacement and Homelessness is a common outcome of Natural Disaster and Conflict. While the modalities in which the loss of the home occurs in these situations may vary the human experiences of those displaced by natural disasters and conflicts are very similar. Loss of family members, family

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[17] Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2019)
[18] Institute of Medicine and Committee on Health Care for Homeless People (1988)
[19] Wenzel, S., Green, H., Tucker, J., Golinelli, D., Kennedy, D., Ryan, G. and Zhou, A. (2009)
[20] Baptista, I (2010)

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separation, loss of possessions, and the experience of trauma and depression are all commonly associated with these types of displacement. [21] In both conflicts and natural disasters, vulnerable groups suffer more, individuals experiencing homelessness or made homeless by such events are no exception to this. Rather they are often further disadvantaged by 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. [22]

3. HOMELESSNESS AND THE FAMILY

Those experiencing Family Homelessness (Women and their children) are one of societies most disadvantaged and at- risk populations. Family Homelessness once viewed as episodic and situational, has become chronic. Housing is essential to ending homelessness, but alone it is not sufficient. It is well established in international human rights law and its interpretation that housing is not just a physical structure of a roof and walls. Families need more basic supports beyond descent affordable housing to thrive. Food, education, employment, child care, transport, health/ mental health care, trauma informed care, and child care services are among the significant support services needed to break the cycle of Homelessness. The impact of Homelessness on mothers is profound. Many experience anger, self-blame, sadness, fear and hopelessness. Furthermore, Mothers experiencing homelessness often have significant histories of domestic violence. [23] For them, the experience of becoming homeless is another stressor amidst already complicated traumatic experience.

 "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

Children also experience high rates of acute health problems while homeless. The Homelessness experience bombards a child with stressful and traumatic experiences which has profound effects on their development and ability to learn. Violence also plays a significant role in the lives of those experiencing homelessness. While affecting all adversely such events often have lasting effects on children. Children who witness violence are more likely than those who have not to exhibit frequent aggressive and anti- social behaviour, increased fearfulness, higher levels of depression and have a

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[21] Ferris, E. (2008)
[22] IASC operational guidelines on the protection of persons in situations of natural disasters. (2011)
[23] Family and Youth Services Bureau | ACF. (2016)

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greater acceptance of violence as a means of resolving conflict.[24] Furthermore, given that the scale of family homelessness is a new phenomenon, the impact of trauma on families (women and children) who are experiencing homelessness has not yet been quantified. This begs the question; Are these the experiences we want children to live with?

"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**

3.1 Family Homelessness and Trauma

Homelessness is a devastating experience that can significantly impact the health and well -being of the individual and the family, especially women and children. Often families experiencing homelessness have experienced ongoing trauma in the form of childhood abuse and neglect, domestic violence and community violence, in addition to the trauma associated with the loss of a home. Traumatic experiences impact how children and women think, feel, behave, and relate to others, and trauma that goes unrecognised and unaddressed can have potentially devastating implications for development across the life span.

Within Homeless services settings, a lack of awareness of trauma increases the risk of causing additional harm. The call now within these services is to adopt a holistic trauma-informed care as good practice. Services that are competent in trauma informed care lead to substantially better outcomes for women and children. The ground-breaking work of Peter Cockersell (2018) titled "Social Exclusion, Compound Trauma and Recovery" outlines that "Compound Trauma describes a situation in which a person experiences a sequence of traumatic events usually beginning in infancy or childhood. (Cookersell P, 2018 p17). Maguire N. (2009), in a wide-ranging study highlights the prevalence of the experience of trauma in childhood in the lives of people experiencing homelessness. Williamson (2018) outlines the impact a service can make when it works from a trauma sensitive model or one that seeks to create a Psychologically Informed Environment. Williamson (2018) also outlines that a Psychologically Informed Environment recognises the experience that people have been through before and while being homeless. Services that are competent in trauma informed care lead to substantially better outcomes for service users, especially women and children.

4. HOMELESSNESS AND "ADEQUATE HOUSING"

Although the term "Homelessness" is sparse throughout the vast number of Declarations, Agreements, Agendas and other documents produced by the United Nations, it continues to be identified as an emerging and growing issue globally. While in its most basic form often homeless refers to a lack of shelter, this, in conjunction with the implications of having no formal shelter is undeniably a Human Rights issue. Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Leilani Farha, suggests

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[24] National Research Council, Institute of Medicine, Youth Board on Children, Joseph, J. and Feit, M. (2014)

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"the right to adequate housing should be viewed as the right to live somewhere in peace, with security and dignity. Such adequacy should include security of tenure, availability of services, materials, infrastructure and facilities, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy." If adequate housing is to be achieved, then homelessness should not be occurring. The term "adequate housing" is one that can be found throughout a number of UN documents.

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

- **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.**

At the Housing and Sustainable Development Conference (Habitat III) in Quito (2016), UN Members committed to ending homelessness and progressively recognising the right to adequate housing through their commitment to the New Urban Agenda (2016). Although the language used is not as strong as some of the above, this document includes perhaps the most notable mention of homelessness. Specifically, the sentence stating the following:
"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"

4.1 Could Families be the key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?

The "family"[25] is the fundamental social unit of all modern societies[26]. They are the base from which we learn to communicate, empathise, compromise and adapt within vital social structures. The importance of the family is reflected in many national public policies, these policies play an important role in national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, in 2010 stated *"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".* Given the realities and understanding of how families contribute to social progress they are key to finding the most effective route to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite this, global data on families is lacking. Prompted by Ban Ki-moon's call on governments and relevant stakeholders to support data collection and research on family issues and the impact of public policy on families, data on families has slowly increased since 2014. Affirmative action by Non-government organisations and UN agencies to this call for investment in families, specifically through oriented policy and programme design, implementation and evaluation has led to significant research and outcomes on Families and their interaction with development. Examples of this include a team of policy experts including Dominic Richardson, UNICEF Innocenti Education Officer, and their compiled synthesis report titled "Key **Findings on Families, Family Policy and the Sustainable Development Goals**" to

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[25] Here the family is defined by "an intimate domestic group of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating, or legal ties."
[26] Bennett, W. (2012)

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analyse how these policies are being used to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Combatting the issue of Family 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. Goal 11, Goal 1 and Goal 16 each have targets that can be directly associated with homelessness. Perhaps the most direct reference to ending homelessness is target 11.1. This was confirmed in the 2015 Summary of the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate Housing Ms Leilani Farha who proposed a bold international initiative to end homelessness in keeping with target 11.1 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as this commits to ensuring access for all to adequate housing. Equally target 1.3 could provide economic security for individuals and families over the life cycle especially when encountering the risk of homelessness.

Families experiencing Homelessness remain among the most vulnerable of populations whose situation is often exacerbated by their distinct lack of access to public services and support. Their experience is inherently intertwined with a number of crosscutting issues and specific indicators identified by the 2030 agenda. With no formal address these individuals and their family often struggle to obtain even the most basic of services, satisfy their needs, and obtain their rights or fully participate in society. The struggle to obtain food (Goal 2), attend or access educational institutions (Goal 4) and access healthcare (Goal 3) and limited access social protection is often associated with the homeless experience. These instances continue to add to the feeling of marginalisation experienced by these individuals during an already difficult situation. In the Habitat's Factsheet on The Right to Adequate Housing it was highlighted that poverty is a common denominator in the experience of homelessness. Often directly associated with lack of social security systems, unemployment, disaster and conflicts families experiencing homelessness are made even more vulnerable[27]. Such situations further exacerbate a widening gap in inequalities, having the reverse effect of what Goal 10 sets out to achieve. Family Homelessness poses a threat to the achievement of all 17 goals which are inherently intertwined. Such findings and interlinkages further demonstrate the need for a paradigm shift surrounding homelessness causality and poverty.

Article 21 of the Declaration of Human Rights (1948) explicitly states everyone has the right to adequate housing. Furthermore, this set of rights were given a new impetus towards implementation within the SDG's in the commitment to implement social protection systems and measures for all, including floors and elaborated in ILO Recommendation 202. As well as denying this basic Human Right homelessness, or a lack of adequate shelter, actively promotes social exclusion and the enjoyment of basic Human Rights. Furthermore, without proof of residency, homeless persons and families often face adversities in obtaining or are excluded completely from the ability to vote, access to health care or the enjoyment or social services.[28] This also has the potential to impede on the obtaining of rights set out in Articles 12, 17, 21, 22, 23.

When focusing on Family Homeless the Convention on the Right of the Child (1989) must also be considered. Lack of adequate housing forced evictions and homelessness often cultivates a profound negative impact on a child's life. Due to their specific needs, such events frequently lead to stunted

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[27] Moya, E., Chavez-Baray, S., Loweree, J., Mattera, B. and Martinez, N. (2017)
[28] Farha, L. (2015).

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growth and development in all cases. It creates a barrier to the enjoyment of various Human Rights including health, education and personal security. Therefore, when Family Homelessness occurs Articles 9, 16, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) are subject to being breached. In its *State of the World's Children 2005* report, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that over one in every three children in the developing world does not live in adequate housing. Given the pervasiveness and the impact of Family Homelessness and lack of adequate housing on children, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has, rightly since stressed the universal character of the right to adequate housing putting emphasis on the fact that this should apply to every child without distinction or restriction of any kind.[29]

5. SOLUTIONS TO FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

The issue of Family Homelessness and providing effective solutions are critically important to UNANIMA International. For this reason we make 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 Convention on the Right of the Child among other United Nations Documents and actively work to achieving them.
- 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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[29] UN Habitat. (2018)

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6. FAMILY HOMELESSNESS POLICIES

Globally a number of nations have implemented a range policies to combat Family Homelessness. While policies and programs to address Family Homelessness come in a variety of forms the following policies are among the most common and have seen successful outcomes across the globe.

6.1 Family and Gender sensitive Social Protection Policies and Programs

While sound social protection policies have contributed significantly to reducing Family Homelessness globally, it is shown that family and gender sensitive social protection policies and programs are directly associated with the effectiveness of policies designed to reduce Family Homelessness. Among many studies, including Batista's 2010 study on Women and Homelessness, it was found that social spending on families is directly proportional to the economic status of household, especially those lead by women, and the number of families experiencing homeless. An example of this can be seen when comparing the situation of family homelessness in Europe and the United States of America. It was found that while the situation in Europe of women experiencing family homelessness may be more fragile than that of men, this fact is counter- balanced by more amenities', which are less available in the US. This finding is linked to the fact that the United States devotes a significantly smaller share of social spending to families, compared to that of western Europe. This is depicted in the economic situation of the two region's female lead households.[30]

6.2 Low Income, Public and Federal housing assistance

Globally low income, public and federal housing assistance programs have become established as one of the most successful housing-based solutions to reduce homelessness. While federal housing program are nation specific, they allow housing to be attainable to individuals and families at risk or experiencing homelessness. Studies show that low income, public housing and federal housing assistance is highly successful at reducing family homelessness and in ensuring that families remain together, stably housed and out of the shelter system.[31] Successful examples of such programs include the Netherlands, who offer direct financial assistance to all qualified renters; Brazil whose housing authority commits to buying finished units or finding renters for them, reducing developer risk and financing cost; the United States who have implemented a voucher system and India who implemented the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) Scheme in 2015. This is an initiative provided by the Government of India which aims at providing affordable housing to the urban poor. [32]

6.3 Permanent supportive housing

Initially pioneered in New York City in the 1980s, permanent supportive housing has proven to be a

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[30] Baptista, I (2010)
[31] Coalition for the Homeless, 2019
[32] McKinsey Global Institute (2014)

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successful and cost-effective solution to addressing homelessness. The supportive housing model 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. While such housing initiatives are often run by civil society and the private sector, investments in such initiatives have proven to successfully reduce homelessness, specifically family homelessness in various nations. As well as addressing homelessness, trauma informed care models often used in conjunction with supportive housing contribute to significantly reducing resources needed to maintain emergency health, accommodation and institutional care services. They also significantly decrease the risk of children entering the welfare system.[33] Examples of such successes can be seen through Sophia Housing in Dublin, Ireland, and the Non-Violence Centre for Women, Victoria, Australia.

6.4 Housing First Policy

The Housing First principle has been implemented in various cities, regions and nations across the globe as a way of combatting homelessness. This 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. While it may not sufficiently address the entirety of issues that arise through family homelessness the Housing first initiative has seen success in numerous places globally. One such example of this is Finland, the only EU country in which homelessness continues to decrease despite the economic recession and social pressures. In 2015, homelessness decreased for the first time to fewer than 7,000 people, this success had been widley attributed to the implementation of a nation-wide Housing First policy.[34]

7. GOOD NEWS STORIES AND GOOD PRACTICES

Sophia Housing is a supported housing NGO based across Ireland, which has successfully been providing support and housing for the most vulnerable in Irish Society for over twenty Years. Most recently Sophia Housing was recognised for its good practices in the manual for European Homeless and Mental Health Service Providers –*Dignity and Well-Being: Practical Approaches to Working with Homeless People with Mental Health Problems.* Sophia Housing provides accommodation as well as services that provide holistic support to families, couples and individuals. Their innovative projects have been created with the support of other Civil Society organizations and the Irish Government, with the understanding that Women and Children's needs when emerging from the trauma of homelessness are multiple and complex. Their service model is one of supporting people into homes of their own as quickly as possible, as this is believed to be the most satisfactory approach in the short term and the most enduring. Sophia's approach is service efficient and has proven to be cost effective over time. Their evidence based approaches can contribute immensely to addressing Family Homelessness.

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[33] Rice, D., Dohler, E., Katch, H. and Bailey, P. (2016)
[34] Ministry of the Environment, 2016

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In India, the Kerala Government's Mission LIFE (livelihood inclusion and financial empowerment) has recently launched a flag-ship program to provide shelter and security to the homeless in the region. Under the initiative, the state will be providing shelter to approximately 430, 000 homeless families. The program focuses on four major areas: Affordable housing, improving public infrastructure, strengthening agriculture, and improving management of natural resources and has been successful in creating public private partnerships in the process.[35] With the first phase of the project complete many family have already been housed in newly built housing complexes containing units with decent living space and amenities such as: waste management, health services and power back-up. With great success so far the second phase of the program will provide homeless families who have land will be given financial assistance. It is hoped that within two years Kerala will have provided house for all homeless families eliminating homelessness in the region.[36]

8. RESEARCH ON FAMILY HOMLESSNESS

UNANIMA International in collaboration with Sophia Housing Ireland/ Europe and New York University (NYU) will seek to address the emergent phenomenon of Family Homelessness and its associated Trauma. Our particular interest lies in providing a voice to Women and Children experiencing Homelessness. While Family Homelessness is a global issue faced by many nations, no global definition has been agreed upon. In the context of this project, the working definition of Family Homelessness is: *Families who do not have consistent residency or the support needed to maintain a residency of their own who live episodically, temporarily or chronically in temporary housing, including shelters, locations not intended for human habitat or settlements.*

We will seek to adopt a holistic approach in researching the structural causes and factors of family homelessness as well as the frequently associated compound trauma experienced by the affected adults and children. Through a multifaceted approach we will also explore Family Homelessness and trauma caused by displacement affecting migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, taking into account the distinct legal framework upon which those groups are governed. This research will include some quantitative data by providing statistical data from governments and civil societies, taking into account the absence of definition and the subsequent discrepancies and peripheral nature of the data. As this research seeks to address the emergent phenomenon from a human rights perspective, it was established that conducting qualitative research would be best suited to put forth the human experience of those families. The research has been designed to contain questions and the conduct of semi-structured interviews of small sample size population across several countries, namely USA/Canada, Europe, Australia, Asia, and Kenya.

By studying the root causes, the experiences and the outcomes through a range of different perspectives, this research has the potential to provide detailed and informative outcomes and recommendations appropriate at the regional and international level. Exploring the challenges, good practices and wider issues surrounding Family Homelessness, this research will play an important role in documenting the trauma faced by families who experience homelessness. Such outcomes will

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[35] Express (2019)
[36] Nidheesh, M. (2019)

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inform service providers and policy makers such as National Government Departments to set good standards. It also has the potential to provide the resources for creating trauma informed models of support and effective services for homeless families. It is hoped that these outcomes will contribute to a paradigm shift in how we perceive the issues of Homelessness and Poverty that is so badly needed, and promote a dialogue where Homelessness is finally viewed as a Human Rights issue.

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