

News from the UN & Around the World

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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we come to the end of another year at UNANIMA International, with its many joys and challenges, we continue our efforts to highlight homelessness. Homelessness will be addressed at the United Nations for the first time in history, at the 58th Session of the Commission for Social Development, in February 2020. Thus, it is a unique and opportune time to push for progress, action, and a paradigm shift on the issue.

Homelessness is a painful reality for many women, children, and girls, and it is particularly highlighted at Christmas time, when families gather to celebrate. The fact that homelessness persists and is increasing, is a challenge to what we honor and value in our world. Walking through the streets in New York these days, and experiencing the hustle and bustle of this wonderful city, I often find my eyes turned away from the glitter and dazzling lights as I stand on street corners, shocked by the never ending number of homeless people bedding down for the night on the street.

And so my friends, wherever you are in the world, as you take time to celebrate Christmas, let's think of the deeper meaning, and how the great meaning of the Christ child can be manifested in the lives of those in need. Perhaps this a time to ask ourselves how can we become instruments of joy in our world now, and welcome the homeless family, the refugee, and the migrant, sharing with them the joy in your life.

As I wish each of you a blessed Christmas, I ask you to join with UNANIMA International in fighting homelessness in our world. On behalf of the team in New York—Molly, Eliza, Kirin, Alina, Xishi, and Stacy—I wish you a joyous Christmas, and a blessed 2020.

Jean

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Whats Happening at the UN
2. UNANIMA International's Symposium on Women and Children Experiencing Homelessness
3. Intern Update and Introductions
4. Grassroots Stories
5. Regional News
6. New Look

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WHATS HAPPENING AT THE UN

NGO Committee Updates

Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH) and the Commission for Social Development (CSocD)

WGEH and NGO CSocD are working together in preparation for the upcoming 58th Commission for Social Development. With the theme "Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness," the joint effort of these groups is ensuring the voice of Civil Society gets heard. The committees have been working together on a number of documents and strategies, including but not limited to: the civil society declaration, talking points, and an advocacy strategy. The social media team has recently launched a social media campaign for the remainder of 2019 and 2020 in the lead up to the Commission. Please keep an eye out for this and like, share and repost across your social media platforms. Let's make this issue go viral!

NGO Major Group - Migration (MG)

The NGO Committee on Migration is currently working on the follow up and implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. In celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the monthly meeting in November had a number of guests speak on the rights of children in relation to Migration. For more information you can visit their website <https://ngo-migration.org>

NGO Major Group
ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS: TOGETHER.



World Children's Day

Each year on the 20th of November World Children's Day is celebrated across the globe. Established in 1954, it is celebrated to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and the continued improvement of children's welfare. It gives us all an inspirational platform to advocate, celebrate and promote the rights of children and push dialogues that build a better future and a better world for children.

November 20th is a special date for Children for many reasons as on this date in 1959 the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and in 1989 the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a monumental document for each of us! Not only does it establish the rights of a vulnerable group each and every one of us has been part of, but it is also the most ratified document in UN history.

This year we celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among the numerous events held globally, the United Nations had a wonderful celebration with a wide range of speakers and advocates including UNICEF ambassadors David

Beckham and Millie Bobby Brown. With a "Kids Take Over" portion of the event we heard from Children all over the world about the issues they face, and the successes they have achieved. If you would like to watch the event you can visit: <http://webtv.un.org/search/part-1-of-4-high-level-meeting-on-the-30th-anniversary-of-the-adoption-of-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-1-general-assembly-31st-plenary-meeting-74th-session-2-interactive-segment/6106802319001/?term=2019-11-20&sort=date>

Did you celebrate World Children's Day? If you did, send us a story about how you celebrated!



International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Each year on the 17th of October the United Nations and people all around the world celebrate International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. This day is an opportunity to celebrate and promote a dialogue and understanding between people living in poverty, their communities, and society as a whole. "It represents an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and struggles of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard and a moment to recognize that poor people are in the forefront in the fight against poverty." (United Nations, Report of the Secretary General, A/61/308, para. 58). As we know, poverty is not solely an economic issue, it is a multidimensional issue that incorporates a lack of both income and the basic capabilities to live in dignity. This is why it is important that we all get involved in addressing it.

This year the theme of the day was "Acting Together to Empower Children, their Families and Communities to End Poverty". This theme was chosen as a celebration of 2019 marking the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In New York, we celebrated at the United Nations at an event organised by, ADT4th World, UNICEF, UNDESA, the NGO Committee for Social Development, and Burkina Faso and French Missions. The event reflected on the rights that this landmark human rights treaty sets out to achieve including: the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. Unlike previous years, the United Nations welcomed a large number of

children to take part and attend the event, giving the room an atmosphere like no other.

As part of the planning committee, UNANIMA International was involved with the organization of this event. We were delighted that Elizabeth (Liz) Madden was able to represent UNANIMA International, speaking to her lived experience and the Rights and Empowerment of Children from a Parent's perspective. Liz spoke eloquently, moving the hearts of many in the room. Along with much recognition and congratulations, she received a heartfelt thank you and mention from the French Ambassador who closed the event. If you would like to watch the event and listen to Liz and many other wonderful speakers addresses you can watch it here:

<http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/watch/international-day-for-the-eradication-of-poverty-2019-theme-acting-together-to-empower-children-their-families-and-communities-to-end-poverty/6095666629001/?term=>

In the evening UNANIMA International also had the opportunity to co-sponsor an event hosted by Mercy International Association at the United Nations Church Centre. In celebration of the day we were all treated with an uplifting musical performance by well known Liturgical singer and songwriter, David Hass. Attendees had the opportunity to enjoy and join in the performance, as well as attend a meet and greet at a reception afterwards.



UNANIMA International's Symposium on Women and Children/Girls Experiencing Homelessness/Displacement

UNANIMA International hosted a “Symposium on Women and Children/Girls Experiencing Homelessness/Displacement” at the Baha’i International Community Center, in New York, on October 17th, 2019. The event comprised presentations by thematic experts in the area of Homelessness, as well as an individual with a “lived experience.” The symposium was hosted in preparation for the 58th Session of the Commission for Social Development, which will take place in February 2020. This Commission will be a landmark occasion, as for the first time in the history of the United Nations, Homelessness will be discussed as part of the priority theme: “Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for all to Address Homelessness”. The goal of the symposium was to lay the groundwork for the paradigm shift that is needed in understanding homelessness, highlight the particular plight of homeless women and children/girls, and focus on how to best advocate for them during this upcoming Commission and into the future.

The event was moderated by Sr Angela Reed, of Mercy Global Action. She introduced Fr Guillermo (Memo) Campuzno, C.M. from the Congregation of the Mission and The Working Group to End Homelessness, who gave an overview of the issue. He emphasised the role of civil society to advocate for affordable housing and social protection systems for women and children, who are systematically “left behind.” Delegate from the Irish Mission, Caoimhe Ní Chonchúir, echoed this sentiment when she said that civil society must make governments accountable.

The next speaker on the panel was Leilani Farha, the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Homelessness, and Human Rights. According to Leilani, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the way we view homelessness. Instead of criminalizing homeless people when they try to do the things required to survive as a human being, we need to see homeless people as “rights holders” who have been failed by the State. Thus, this shift requires a human rights framework, and an understanding that homelessness results from the failure of the government to effectively implement the right to housing.

Renata Kaczmarek from the UN Focal Point on the Family, spoke of homelessness being a socio-economic issue, and having largely resulted from the financialization of the housing market, whereby housing has become a commodity. Chris Williams, Director of UN Habitat, spoke about the need for social protections in policy making in order to prevent people from falling through the cracks due to issues such as a failed prison system, drug abuse, addiction, economic detriment, and other causes. He urged members of coalitions to support other coalitions, as they are all connected to the same goal of achieving Human Rights and helping the furthest left behind.



Symposium Continued...

The next panelist was Elizabeth Madden, who is a community activist, and works for the Cork anti-poverty agency in Ireland. She shared her "lived experience of family homelessness," and her experience with Sophia Housing (an Irish housing and support agency founded by Executive Director of UNANIMA International, Jean Quinn). She emphasized the importance of service providers providing support that empowers the individual. Sophia Housing Projects Manager, John McEvoy, followed with his presentation on "Family Homelessness/Displacement from the Perspective of NGO Service Providers." He spoke about the serious lack of affordable and adequate housing, and the situation in Ireland, whereby the government relies on the private sector to deliver social housing solutions, and relies almost exclusively on the NGO sector to provide homeless services.

The final panelist was UNANIMA International Research Fellow, Kirin Taylor, who presented UNANIMA's "Research on Family Homelessness/Displacement." Kirin described the goals of this research as the identification of good practices in how to serve the homeless; data estimates for family homelessness across eight case study countries; the documentation of lived experiences which will be shared within the UN and used for educational campaigns; and a preliminary analysis of Family Homelessness, which will be organized thematically, in response to the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

This concluded the symposium, which presented varied perspectives on the issue of homelessness, urged a paradigm shift that views homelessness as a violation of human rights, and helped to focus on the goals and advocacy needed for the upcoming 2030 Commission for Social Development.



SYMPOSIUM ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN/GIRLS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS/DISPLACEMENT

October 17, 2019
10am to 12pm, at the
Baha'i International Community Center
866 United Nations Plaza, New York City

Moderated by **Angela Reed, RSM** - Mercy Global Action

Panelists:

Guillermo Campuzno, C.M. - Congregation of the Mission: WGEH: "An Overview on Homelessness."
Leilani Farha - UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing: "Housing, Homelessness, and Human Rights."
Chris Williams - Director, UN Habitat: "United Nations Human Settlements Programme."
Elizabeth Madden - Community Activist, Ireland: "The Lived Experience of Family Homelessness and Grassroots Advocacy for Women and Children Experiencing Homelessness."
John McEvoy - Sophia Housing, Dublin: "Family Homelessness/Displacement from the Perspective of NGO Service Providers."
Renata Kaczmarek - UN Focal Point on the Family: "Families and Homelessness/Displacement."
Kirin Taylor - UNANIMA International Research Fellow: "Research on Family Homelessness/Displacement"



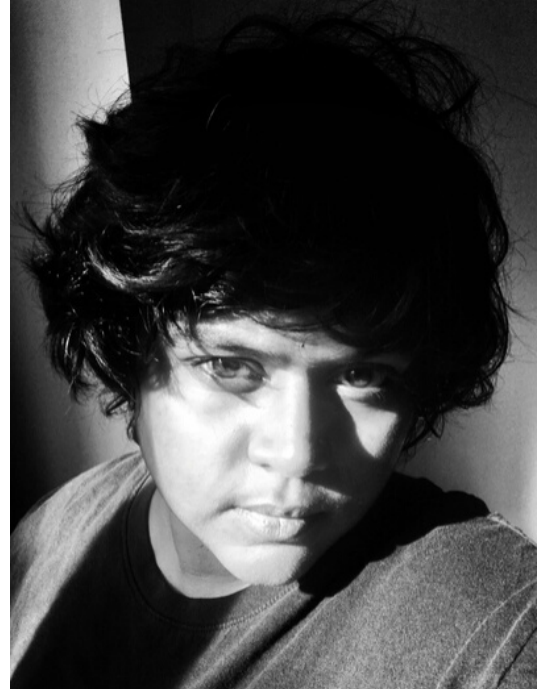
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INTERN UPDATE & INTRODUCTIONS

Research Volunteer - Alina Tiphagne

Alina Tiphagne was born in Madurai, India. Growing up in household with two social activists, she started photographing stories on land rights, bonded labor, caste discrimination, tribal settlements, political demonstrations, and development programs. Alina's work has been published by Amnesty International, The News Minute, and Telepolis (Germany). Additionally, she has mobilized support for, and helped organize several social justice campaigns; she has traveled throughout India, and elsewhere addressing social issues ranging from female infanticide to protection of the environment. She is a recent graduate from the International Center of Photography in New York and continues to work on stories about conflict, gender, humanitarian crisis, and immigration rights. She joined UNANIMA International as a volunteer for Family Homelessness/Displacement and Trauma research, contributing an international lens and wonderful, ethics and justice-based ethnographic skills.



Graduate Data Science Intern - Xishi Chen

Xishi grew up in China. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in Statistics at Columbia University. Xishi has a passion for volunteer work, and she has experience working as a data analyst and a data scientist for several different companies. Recently, Xishi joined UNANIMA International as a data scientist intern, combining data analysis and research about homelessness.



The Hidden Faces of Homelessness

We are reaching out to everyone in your community and beyond to send us videos, stories, voice recordings, art or other multimedia for contribution. We are especially interested in hearing the voices of Women and Children/ Girls who have a lived experience of Homelessness/ Displacement and Trauma. If you have any questions or would like to contribute something please contact info@unanima-international.org.



GRASSROOTS STORIES

SALVATORIAN SHELTER PROJECT - Sri Lanka

'Sister, please come and see how I am living' This is a request I hear from many families, when I walk around the villages in Puttalam District. It was in 2015 that we Salvatorians started the shelter project in Sri Lanka. Thus far we have been able to build more than 200 houses for families who had no proper shelter, with the support of grants from collaborators and other provinces. I am grateful to God for this generous support.

Before I started the project I took a walk around the villages. Along the way I could see houses with coconut leaves which we call cadjan. These houses are temporary shelters with one room, where the whole family cooks, sleeps, and conducts all of their daily affairs. It is very dark inside. Every year they must rebuild as the coconut leaves decay. It is difficult to save money for new coconut leaves.

In these homes, the husband and wife leave the house every morning to work on the land as farmers. They grow vegetables, and other crops. But because of the climatic changes they cannot get a guaranteed 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 the expected results. Either they have to sell the crops at a cheaper rate, or just destroy them without any profit. Hence, they have trouble settling their loans. As such, these families can never think of constructing a permanent house.

After having seen their plight the idea was born to help them to live in a decent house that they do not have to keep on building every year. Every year we allocate the funds received from our donors to different families. However, we have many families on the waiting list. So, those families who get this blessing of funds are really fortunate. In this way we try to make a difference in the lives of the families, giving them dignity and hope for the future.

After finishing construction, we hand over the house to a family. Their joy and gratitude cannot be expressed with words. Most of the time it is expressed with tears of joy. We thank those generous people who share their life with those who are in need.

Sister Dulcie Fernando
Sisters of the Divine Savior



"Having seen the joy in the eyes of the 'roofless people,' we feel encouraged to continue our commitment to the Salvatorian Shelter Project."

-Sister Dulcie Fernando, SDS

BON SECOURS - USA - Welcoming the Future with Audacious Hope

The theme of the General Chapter of the Congregation of Bon Secours called us to be both bold and hopeful in the midst of a reality that can engender timidity and fear. As our Sisters, Ministry Volunteer, Associate and Young Adult representatives gathered for two weeks at our Retreat and Conference Center in Marriottsville, Maryland, we prayed, laughed, danced, and dreamed a new future together. Assisting, nudging and challenging us forward and inward were our speakers and facilitators: Anne Hayden, MM, Jesuit Cardinal Barreto of Huancayo, Peru, Carol Zinn, SSJ from LCWR, Shannon Curran, Director of Ministry Volunteers for CBS, Vincentian Father Jose Cristo Rey from Spain, and our very own Jean Quinn, DW, from UNANIMA International.

Jean shed light on one of the thoughts from Carol Zinn: "We are women with hearts big enough to hold both boldness and fear." Jean invited us to image Wisdom setting her table, welcoming all to dine as we are all wrapped and enveloped in God. Therein lies our strength and our fear – the stranger is our table mate, sitting at our elbow – what is it that s/he is asking of us, how will listening and responding effect the way I live, the choices I make? We were invited to make room for houses of welcome, to get out of our comfort zones, to be truly audacious, to be conscious of the displaced persons in our midst and in our global village. Shannon Curran shared that ministry volunteers living in the community really experience the move from a driven

life to a called life. This is not easy for any of us, as the needs are so great and our resources seem to be so few. But again, Jean Quinn shared with us that true, lasting change is slow and painful at times, requiring patience and courage.

Specifically with regard to the environment and climate change, Cardinal Barreto reminded us that the G-7 has pledged 100 billion dollars for weapons, and a mere 20 million for the Amazon. This represents their hypocrisy. We must have the courage to call them out, but also to direct our own energy toward the environment and not toward negativity. Jose Cristo Rey, CMF challenged us with these words: "A congregation without on-going formation does not deserve initial formation, because we will be leading others into deformation."

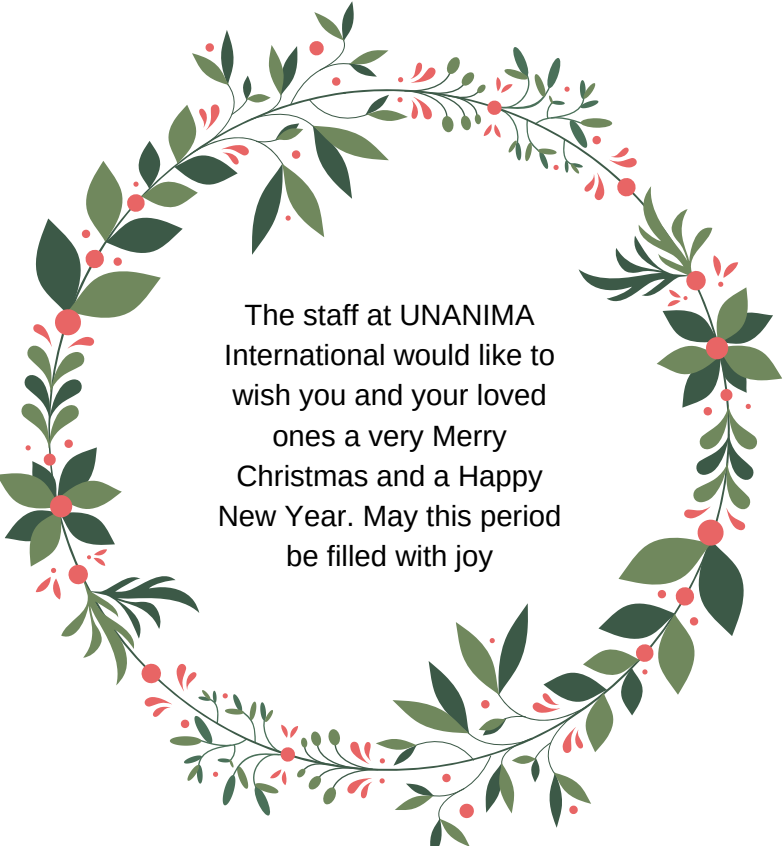
Jean's presence and message gave us great hope in recalling that the NGO's at the UN are a living sign of interculturality and inter congregational impact as together we both dine at and serve Wisdom's table where need and abundance meet. Carol Zinn shared Albert Camus' reflection that "the only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that our very existence is an act of rebellion." May our rebellion become a force for wholeness in a world so broken by greed, suffering, fear, and violence. May we all be women who dare to welcome, indeed to midwife, the future with audacious hope!

Fran Gorsuch, CBS



UNANIMA International's New Look

In December 2019 UNANIMA International will be launching our New Look! You might have seen our new logo across our social media pages and in this edition of UNANIMA International's News from the UN and around the World. In the coming days we will be launching our new website where you will find updates from the UN, information on our programs, stories from the grassroots, information and links to our coalition partners, our Women of Courage and all you need to know about UNANIMA International. Stay tuned to our social media's for an official notification when our new Website goes live!



The staff at UNANIMA International would like to wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May this period be filled with joy

Important Upcoming Dates

December 1st -	World Aids Day
December 2nd -	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
December 3rd -	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
December 5th -	International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
December 10th -	Human Rights Day
December 18th -	International Migrants Day
December 20th -	International Human Solidarity Day

December 2019 marks a year of UNANIMA International News from the UN and Around the World. If you have feedback on the newsletter's content or design please send your comments to info@unanima-international.org

Don't forget to Like and Follow UNANIMA International's Social Medias