



UNANIMA International News from the UN and Around the World

JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER
Edition 28



Executive Director's Reflection

Dear Friends,

I have recently returned from Nairobi, Ireland, and Spain, where I had the privilege of meeting ordinary women with extraordinary experiences. These women have demonstrated exceptional courage, strength, and leadership in making sure no one is left behind—especially women, children, and girls. Often these efforts are at great risk to themselves.

Meeting these women during my travels, one trait stood out for me, and that was courage. It takes a lot of courage to stand up and speak out, and courage to act even if it means you might suffer. Women have long been recognized for their strength and determination in the face of adversity. They have a unique resilience that inspires courage in others.

In Nairobi I met women of courage at the Polycom Girls Pan-African women-led organization. Polycom Girls was established in 2004 in response to sexual violence and exploitation experienced by girls in Kibera's informal settlement in Nairobi.

In Ireland I met women of courage who consistently give of themselves to the issues of homelessness—

especially as it affects women, children, and girls. Sophia Housing, which I founded almost 27 years ago, stands out as a place of courage for women who experience homelessness and receive services of excellence from other women.

In Madrid I met the Carmelite Sisters of Charity Vedruna—a very welcoming community of women religious following in the footsteps of an extraordinary woman of courage, Joaquina Vedruna y de Mas (1783 -1854). It was in Madrid that I had the great honor of awarding UNANIMA International's 2022 Woman Of Courage to Helena Maleno Garzón.

Helena is a Spanish Moroccan human rights defender, journalist, and researcher. She is the founder and CEO of Ca-minando Fronteras (Walking Borders) and has bravely stood up for the rights of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking, despite threats from the Moroccan government.

Courageous women's voices, visions, and perspectives are essential. The more diverse a group, the stronger the group will be, because they will bring their unique backgrounds, their perspectives, skills, knowledge, and experience. Courageous women create and inspire a better world for all of us.

Sincerely,

Jean

[Donate to UNANIMA International](#)

What's Happening at the UN



The UN Civil Society Conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from May 9-10, 2024. This was the first-ever UN Civil Society Conference held in Africa. The event brought together representatives from Civil Society, government officials, senior United Nations figures, youth activists, academia, other stakeholders, and media. Of the participants, 70% were from Africa, 52% were women, and 40% were under the age of 35. The focus of the conference was on the upcoming [Summit of the Future](#) and efforts to involve Civil Society and gather inputs into the process. UNANIMA International has been closely following the Summit of the Future process, following the call in the Secretary General's 'Our Common Agenda' report in 2021. Our goal is to center the issue of homelessness in deliberations.



Prior to arriving in Nairobi, UNANIMA International prepared a document with [recommendations on the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future](#), calling on participants to consider how different manifestations of homelessness intersect with the thematic and priority issues as outlined in the Pact.

Pre-conference Activities

On Wednesday, May 8, ahead of the UN Civil Society Conference, Executive Director, Jean Quinn, and Deputy Director, Liana Almony, attended two rewarding meetings with UN agencies headquartered at the United Nations Office in Nairobi.



Alongside fellow faith actors at the UN, they met with **Iyad Abumoghli (Director of the Faith for Earth Coalition at the UN Environment Programme)** to discuss value-led climate action and our shared responsibility as stewards of the environment. Dr. Abumoghli does significant work to bring civil society together for global climate justice. During the meeting he emphasized the importance of a better multilateral system. The Faith for Earth Coalition was established to engage faith actors at the policy level, to provide religious environmental literacy training, and to support advocacy and awareness around climate change among all constituencies. He encouraged faith-based organizations to come together on the basis of the shared intrinsic relationship between faith and the environment, and incorporate these principles in their multilateral advocacy.

UNANIMA International (and the Working Group to End Homelessness) had a private meeting with H.E. Michal Mlynár (Acting Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General of UN-Habitat) to discuss opportunities to center the issue of homelessness and housing injustice in global policy making. Mr. Mlynár was very supportive of our advocacy priorities, including the establishment of an international day on homelessness, and integration of homelessness prevention and housing justice into global agendas such as the Summit of the Future and the World Social Summit. He also discussed the Secretary-General's upcoming report on homelessness for 2025, with a particular focus on Central and Southern America, Africa, and Asia, and committed to driving significant progress to end homelessness



UN Civil Society Conference 2024, Day 1



The first day of the Conference—Thursday May 9—focused on analyzing the five chapters of the Pact for the Future and its annexes: sustainable development and financing for development, peace, and security; science, technology, innovation, digital technology; youth and future generations; and transforming global governance. The day included a plenary session where civil society presented recommendations from the workshops, and an interactive dialogue with the six co-facilitators of the Summit of the Future processes: Germany and Namibia for the Pact for the Future, Jamaica and the Netherlands for the Declaration on Future Generations, and Zambia and Sweden for the Global Digital Compact.

A highlight of Day One included the workshop UNANIMA International co-sponsored, titled: **“Why universal social protection is essential for inclusive development, peace, and security in the present and future,”** alongside Save the Children International, Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, Global Call To Action Against Poverty, Institute of the

Blessed Virgin Mary/Loreto, International Presentation Association, and Building Blocks for Peace Foundation. The speakers at the event were Jane Anyango (Founder, Polycorn Development Project, Nairobi), David Lambert Tumwesigye (Global Policy & Advocacy Lead, Child Poverty, Save the Children International) ([download his presentation](#)), Umberto Cattaneo (Public Finance Economist, Universal Social Protection Department - SOCPRO, International Labour Organization - ILO) ([download his presentation](#)) and Cyrilla Heyi (Program Manager, Child Rights Governance, Africa Platform for Social Protection - APSP) ([download her presentation](#)). The event was moderated by Ingo Ritz (Director, Global Call to Action Against Poverty - GCAP).

A video recording of the event is available [here](#).

2024 UNITED NATIONS CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

SIDE EVENT: SOCIAL PROTECTION:
Why universal social protection is essential for inclusive development, peace and security in the present and future.

Thursday, 9 May 2024 1300-1430 Hrs (EAT) Tribe Hotel Nairobi, Kenya

Speakers

- Jane Anyango
Director, Polycorn Development Project
- David Lambert Tumwesigye
Public & Advocacy Lead, Child Poverty, Save the Children International
- Umberto Cattaneo
Public Finance Economist, International Labour Organization
- Ingo Ritz
Director, Global Call to Action Against Poverty

Co-hosts:

Save the Children, UNICEF, UNANIMA International, ILO, APSP

SCAN ME

For more information contact:
Ana Zehalac - Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (ana.zehalac@item.org.nz)
David Lambert Tumwesigye, Save the Children International (david.lumwesigye@save-the-children.org)

UN Civil Society Conference 2024, Day 2

The second day—ImPact day—began with an interactive dialogue which sought to create opportunities for participants working on similar issues to come together and advance plans for the coming months, concluding with a report back from representatives of each ImPACT Coalition. UNANIMA International participated in, and were represented at, the ImPACT Coalitions on:

Gender Equality

There was strong emphasis on the importance of gender equality and the role of civil society in driving positive change. Civil society organization actively promoted gender equality, quality of inclusive education, culture as an enabler of sustainable development, freedom of expression, human rights, and the ethical implication of digital and emerging technologies.

Children's Rights and Participation

This ImPACT Coalition was convened by Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages, and the ChildFund Alliance in collaboration with UNICEF and the Office of the UN Secretary-General on Violence Against Children. In this packed session on children's rights, children from across Africa spoke out and advocated for their inclusion in global policymaking. "If children aren't involved then it's not a Pact for the Future. It's a pact of the past."



Towards the World Social Summit

During the session there was a strong focus on poverty eradication, social protection, and social cohesion. Participants highlighted that the World Social Summit is a significant opportunity to place people at the center, rather than governments and economies. Participants also discussed the question: "what does building a new

social contract mean to you?” and Jean emphasized the importance of addressing homelessness.

Migration

During the conference, UNANIMA International joined fellow members of the NGO Committee on Migration to form an ImPACT Coalition on Migration. The group met multiple times throughout the conference to discuss how to integrate issues related to migration within the other ImPACT Coalitions.



At the closing session, UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, referenced the German philosopher, Jurgen Habermas, noting that:

“one of the key ideas is on intercommunication between civil society and the political realm in modern democracies: how it shapes decision-making; and how it is vital to creating laws and policies that are acceptable to citizens ... Civil society is an essential bridge between people and their representatives – part of the glue that holds democracies together.”

He went on to say that:

“Our new ImPact coalitions promise a new era of engagement. These models of collaboration span ages, regions, and

sectors. And focus civil society’s energy and expertise for maximum impact on the challenges we face. I invite you to bring this spirit to the Action Days we are holding as the Summit of the Future Begins.”

In his address he said time and again he had witnessed the enormous impact of civil society in every corner of the world, easing suffering, pushing for peace and justice, standing for truth, and advancing gender equality and sustainable development, with many working at personal risk. He said the involvement of civil society was crucial to tackling the many problems being faced by the world today, including when responding to crises, closing the digital divides, and revitalizing the collective approach to peace and security.

The 2024 UN Civil Society Conference Co-Chairs, Nudhara Yusuf and Carole Ageng’o, circulated their [reflections on the conference outcomes](#) a few days after the Conference. The [“ImPact for the Future Outcome Package”](#) was also presented on May 30th in the post-Conference Town Hall, which captured the co-chairs’ summary and recommendations across workshops, plenaries, and the discussions in interactive dialogues, and finalized information on the ImPact Coalitions.

Reflection on the UN Civil Society Conference 2024

The 2024 UN Civil Society Conference was a valuable opportunity to connect with representatives and fellow advocates from UN Member States and agencies, civil society organizations, and grassroots communities from across the globe, and learn from one another's diverse insights and experiences. Looking ahead to the Summit of the Future and beyond, it is imperative to keep this momentum going and continue to engage in meaningful multi-stakeholder collaboration. There have been many well-founded critiques of the Summit of the Future, the Pact for the Future, and how this year's Civil Society Conference will influence these proceedings. But civil society are people of hope, and there is also a well-founded hope that these renewed commitments to multilateralism represent influential steps forward towards a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable future for all.

Post-Conference Activities - Visiting Grassroots Organizations

Following the Conference, UNANIMA International had the opportunity to visit a variety of grassroots organizations in Nairobi, dedicated to empowering and providing holistic support to local women, children, and girls experiencing extreme poverty and homelessness. These included:



Polycom Girls

Polycom Girls is a Pan-African women-led organization that was established in 2004 in response to the sexual violence and exploitation experienced by girls in Kibera's informal settlement in Nairobi. Based in Kenya, they provide a variety of programs, opportunities, and resources to empower and improve the lives of women and girls in their local communities and beyond. Their models of support include mentorship programs, life skills forums, hygiene and sanitation

services, "talking boxes," and more.

Through their work they help women and girls discover their leadership capabilities, build their confidence, make informed choices, and promote gender equality for all. During UNANIMA International's visit to their primary office in Kibera, Jean and Liana spoke with Founder Jane Anyango, and incoming Director Anne Agar, about their programs and advocacy activities. They also spoke with some mentors and mentees of Polycom Girls, who highlighted the challenges girls face in their community and how the Polycom Girls mentorship program seeks to navigate and address them.



Mukuru Promotion Centre

The Mukuru Promotion Centre (MPC) is a non-profit organization that carries out a number of initiatives to address homelessness. These include provision of education and welfare services for children and youths, provision of rehabilitation services to street children in the Mukuru slums, and the eventual reintegration to their families, and empowerment of homeless families economically through establishment of businesses.



Deputy Director, Dinah Maina, showed Liana around Mukuru, and they visited the MPC's Songa Mbele na Masomo Children's Centre (a school for children with disabilities), the MPC Rehabilitation Centre for Street Boys (which offers a 12-month residential program for boys between 8 and 16 years), and one of the MPC Primary Schools. Some areas of Mukuru were being demolished on the day of the visit due to flooding concerns, leaving inhabitants scrambling and with nowhere to go. There were many children missing from school that day so as not to be separated from their families, and because their school

uniforms and books had been lost in the floods. In one of the pre-school classes there were only 12 out of 67 students present in school that day, and in the 8th grade there were 23 out of 64 students present.

Cara Girls Rescue Centre

Cara Girls Rescue Centre is an NGO which helps women, children, and girls experiencing homelessness, especially those escaping violent, exploitative, and abusive situations. During a visit to the Centre in Ngong, Kenya Cara Projects Director, Edwina Kwallah, showcased their holistic model of care, including psychosocial and trauma-informed support, a sustainable housing project, an education center, and a women's empowerment program. In particular, Edwina highlighted the "Girl Boss" program, which empowers teen moms by teaching them trade skills such as tailoring, beadwork, and cooking. This builds the capacity, financial independence, and resilience of girls who were not able to attend school, equipping them with skills to support themselves and their children.



High Level Political Forum

The Annual High Level Political Forum will take place at the United Nations from July 8-17, 2024. This year's theme is: "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating Poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions." There will be an in-depth review of five Goals:



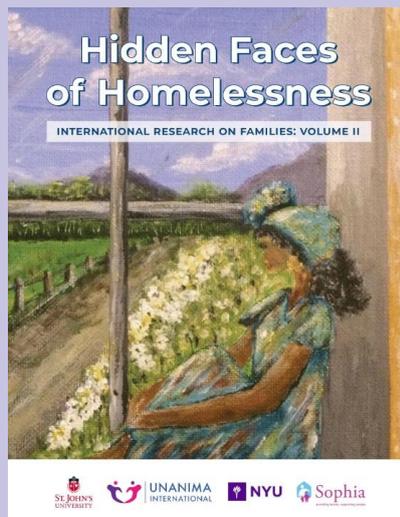
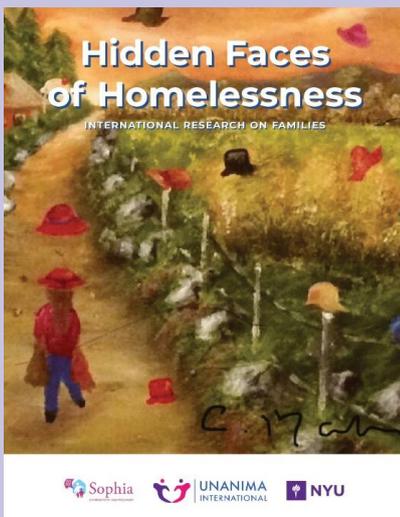
The presentations of 38 voluntary national reviews (VNRs) will begin on Friday, July 12. They will continue through week two, and conclude on Wednesday, July 17. The countries presenting are:

Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belize, Brazil, Chad, Eritrea, Georgia, Columbia, Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Honduras, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Palau, Peru, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen, and Zimbabwe

Additionally, during the second week, the three-day ministerial segment will convene jointly with the ECOSOC high level segment, from July 15-17. The general debate will address the theme, 'From the SDG Summit to the Summit of the Future.'

Research Update

UNANIMA International is pleased to announce a third volume in our previously published series of works on the "Hidden Faces of Homelessness." The aim of this endeavor is to update and enhance these publications to reflect the current state of family homelessness globally, incorporating the latest research, and showcasing new insights and perspectives from Member States, academics, advocates, grassroots communities, and other stakeholders. This new publication will be launched in the Fall of 2024.



Woman of Courage Award Ceremony



Executive Director, Jean Quinn, awarded UNANIMA International's 2022 Woman of Courage Award to Helena Maleno Garzón at an award ceremony in Madrid, Spain, held on May 19, 2024. The Award Ceremony was organized and hosted by Sister Montserrat Fenosa, and the Sisters of the Provincial Team of Vedruna Europe. The event took place at the Colegio Mayor Vedruna (Vedruna Residence Hall) and was attended by representatives from the Conference of Religious, various civil society and Church institutions that work with migrants, including a lawyer from Coordinadora de Barrios and La Merced Migraciones, Patricia Fernández, and the parish priest of San Carlos Borromeo, Javier Baeza. The Archbishop emeritus of Tangier also sent a very significant message that was read at the ceremony.

Helena Maleno Garzón was awarded UNANIMA International's 2022 Woman of Courage for her work as a researcher, journalist, and activist who stands up for the rights of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking who attempt to reach Europe by sea and land. In her reporting she has denounced human rights violations on the Spanish Southern Border and works with migrant communities in defense of their rights.

In 2002 Helena founded Ca-minando Fronteras (Walking Borders), an organization that rescues sea vessels carrying migrants that are in danger of sinking and provides support for them once they arrive in Europe. It is estimated that she has saved at least ten thousand lives through her work relaying the locations of sinking sea vessels to Spanish naval authorities.

Ca-minando Fronteras also works to reunite families by gathering information about those that are missing or have disappeared during their journey across the sea. Helena continues to do this work despite ongoing judicial harassment and threats from the Moroccan government and the Spanish police,

who have criminalized her efforts.

Presenting the 2022 Woman of Courage Award to a woman of such strength, bravery, and unwavering commitment to the lives and human rights of asylum seekers, was a privilege for UNANIMA International. The ceremony was an emotional and lively event, complete with African dance performers and percussionists. We look forward to working with Helena in the future.



To read more about the event, check out the news articles below:

- o [Religion Digital article](#)
- o [Vedruna article I](#) - “Jean Quinn, the representative of religious women to the UN who gets governments to “think with their hearts”
- o [Vedruna article II](#) - “UNANIMA presents the ‘Woman of Courage’ award to Helena Maleno, ‘the woman who has saved the most lives in the Strait”

To read about UNANIMA International’s previous recipients of the Woman of Courage award, go to <https://unanima-international.org/woman-of-courage/>

Grassroots Stories



Advocacy and Empowerment Activities in Nigeria by the Religious Sisters of Charity

In Nigeria, the Religious Sisters of Charity over the last three years have been engaged in advocacy and empowerment programmes for the prevention of human trafficking through awareness education in both secondary and primary schools in Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, and Delta State.

Committed to the abolition of human trafficking, Religious Sisters of Charity creates awareness through its annual road walk, especially on July 31, and February 8, which are international days of awareness creation. During these road walks songs are sung, signs are carried with slogans such as: “STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING,” “OUR GIRLS ARE NOT FOR SALE,” and “HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS A CRIME.” Fliers are distributed and talks are given at intervals during the road walks.



Partnerships/Collaborations

Our collaborations and partnerships cut across Religious bodies, NGOs, and government agencies and include: The Arise/NCWRAHT, Talitha Kum; NGOs Advocacy for Children and Vulnerable Person’s Network (ACVPN), Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), Rights and Welfare of Traumatized Wives and Youths Initiative (RAWTWAYI), and Government Agencies such as National Agency Prohibiting Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).

Areas of Focus:

Awareness

Awareness education is being carried out in schools, markets, churches and communities. We also go to the slum areas. We use visual aids, such as posters, projectors that display videos if there is electricity, and a hall to accommodate the students.



Rescues

We have been able to rescue some victims of human trafficking and domestic violence with the assistance of the Nigerian Police and NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of trafficking in Persons).

Education

We also engage in skills acquisition training for women and girls for their empowerment and self-reliance. They also learn how to start and improve their businesses.

Rehabilitation

Last year through the support of the Conrad Hilton Foundation, nine young women were empowered and rehabilitated. They had counseling to overcome trauma and were able to engage with other recovering victims and have social interaction through the creation of WhatsApp groups. St. Anne's development Center has empowered many young women who are doing very well with their families and contributing to society.



Achievements

- 86 people have undergone counseling
- 173 women have benefited from our skills acquisition programmes
- We have taken care of 21 orphans
- Helped 3 asylum seekers
- Undertaken 8 advocacy visits to anti-trafficking agencies
- Created a human trafficking awareness campaign in 53 schools with 61,075 beneficiaries

Challenges

We are faced with the following challenges in the course of our programmes and activities:

- Cost of transportation due to the increase in the cost of petroleum products.
- Financial constraint in pursuing legal cases as well as rendering legal aid services to victims of child abuse and human trafficking.
- Having enough shelters to house the young women who decide to run away from exploitative situations or human trafficking
- Lack of office space. We have an office but not big enough to acquire some privacy when dealing with victims.
- Family members covering up the misdeeds of their loved ones. This makes it difficult to prosecute the perpetrators due to lack of cooperation from the families
- Inability to take actions in encouraging young girls who are being exploited by human traffickers and are in schools and want to remain in the situation because there is no hope of them if they left for their home.
- An alternative education program needs to be put in place so that when girls are rescued, they can continue their education without being re-trafficked.
- Bad roads are a big challenge especially during the rainy season

Our Recommendations

- We recommend that governments to consider private sector partnerships in providing adequate budgetary allocations to relevant organizations responsible for supporting human trafficking victims
- More shelters should be established across the six geopolitical zones of the country for victims and those who work with victims should be well equipped and trained. NGOs and organizations working in this area should be supported

Appreciation

We wish to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to Miseen Cara, Conrad Hilton Foundation, JRS/Global solidarity Fund, Arise and Talitha Kum for their generosity in assisting us to reach out to those in need.

Thank you,
Sr. Justina Suekime Nelson RSC



Resources



Justice Coalition of Religious

High-Level Political Forum

On Sustainable Development

8-17 July 2024

OUR COMMON AGENDA

Report of the Secretary-General

United Nations

2024 UNITED NATIONS CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE
in Support of the Summit of the Future

ImPact for the Future

Outcome Package



Upcoming Events

July

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF): 8-18 July 2024

September

UN General Assembly: 10-24 September 2024

Summit of the Future: 22-23 September 2024

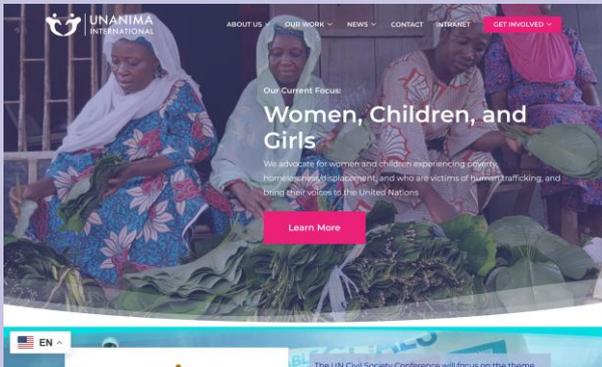
International Days

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| July 11 | World Population Day |
| July 15 | World Youth Skills Day |
| July 18 | Nelson Mandela International Day |
| July 30 | World Day Against Trafficking in Persons |
| August 9 | International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples |
| August 19 | World Humanitarian Day |

Check out our Publications:



Check out our website:



UNANIMA International Board of Directors, March 2024

Stay Connected!



unanima-international.org

Copyright © UNANIMA International. All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

[Donate to UNANIMA International](#)