

Institute of Global Homelessness Vanguard Program

A global partnership for cities,
states, and countries committed
to taking concrete action to
prevent and end homelessness



George and Tanya Ruff
Institute of Global
Homelessness



About the Institute of Global Homelessness

The George and Tanya Ruff Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) drives a global movement to end homelessness. Our vision is a world where everyone has a home that offers security, safety, autonomy, and opportunity.

Founded in 2014, IGH is the first organization to focus on homelessness as a global phenomenon with an emphasis on those who are living on the street or in emergency shelters. IGH is an initiative of DePaul University, based in Chicago, USA and Depaul International, based in London, UK.

We work towards our vision through three interconnected priorities:



See.

Advocating for homelessness to be prioritized, consistently defined, measured, and addressed through global and national policy.



Solve.

Partnering with cities and countries to advance action to prevent and end homelessness.



Share.

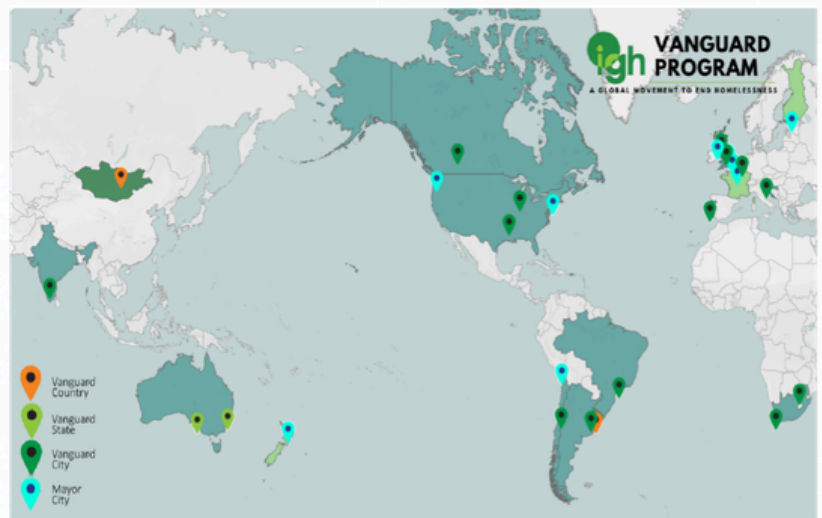
Accelerating progress by connecting people, evidence, and effective practice across the globe.



The Vanguard Program

At the center of our Solve strand of work, and our efforts to prevent and end homelessness globally, is the Vanguard Program.

Through the Vanguard Program, IGH works intensely with a select group of cities, states, and countries committed to taking concrete action to prevent and end homelessness. Each partnership responds to local context and capacity, with partners committing to meaningful qualitative and quantitative goals and working with IGH to make progress towards them.



Our Vanguard Cohort

Our cohort currently includes 18 cities, states, and countries across six continents:

Countries: Mongolia • Uruguay

States: New South Wales • South Australia

Cities: Bengaluru • Brussels • Buenos Aires • Cape Town • Chicago • Edinburgh • Glasgow • Greater Manchester • Lisbon • Little Rock • Rijeka • Santiago, Chile • São Paulo • Tshwane



Our approach

Vanguard partnerships are tailored to local circumstances, but our approach is built around five core elements.



1. Convene and understand

Bring together government, civil society, people with lived experience and other key stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of homelessness in the local context, including existing data, policies, services, systems, strengths and gaps.



2. Set goals and develop an action plan

Agree to meaningful quantitative and qualitative goals based on local context and capacity. Develop a shared action plan that identifies priorities and maps out the work of the Vanguard partnership.



3. Provide tailored technical assistance

IGH support is tailored to local priorities and can span areas including prevention, Housing First, outreach, shelter transformation, governance, data and evaluation. IGH works alongside partners to support implementation, drawing on its global network of experts and advisors.



4. Measure progress

Support partners to strengthen data, measurement and evaluation, monitor progress against agreed goals, and regularly enumerate homelessness.



5. Global knowledge exchange

Connect partners with the wider Vanguard cohort and IGH's international network to exchange experience, evidence and effective practice through direct exchanges, webinars, and annual Vanguard Summits.



Vanguard partner progress

Vanguard partnerships reflect different local contexts, priorities and starting points. Across the cohort, IGH has supported progress in areas ranging from homelessness measurement and prevention, to Housing First, policy development, and system reform. Successes include:

Rijeka, Croatia

Assisted Rijeka to conduct its first street count.

Santiago, Chile

Supported the Chilean Ministry of Social Development and Families to launch and scale a Housing First program, now housing more than 800 individuals.

Tshwane, South Africa

Collaborated with the City of Tshwane, which adopted a Street Homelessness Policy — the first of its kind in South Africa.

Greater Manchester, UK

Coached Greater Manchester on goal setting and strategies to end homelessness, with the city reporting a 57% reduction in rough sleeping.

South Australia, Australia

Conducted a homelessness review and advised stakeholders in Adelaide on strategy and housing policies, contributing to the creation of a \$20 million Prevention Fund by the South Australian Government.

Uruguay

Supported the Ministry of Social Development to expand and implement evidence-based policies and programs spanning employment, prevention, and housing with supports.

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Provided technical support to the City of Buenos Aires in piloting a rent subsidy program for families experiencing homelessness.



Connecting Vanguard partners to our wider global work

The Vanguard Program is at the heart of our Solve strand of work, but the experience, evidence and leadership of our Vanguard partners also contribute directly to IGH's wider global work through our See and Share work strands.

See.

We advocate for homelessness to be prioritized, consistently defined, measured, and addressed through global and national policy.

IGH works to ensure homelessness is visible in international policy and development agendas. We engage with the United Nations, Member States and international partners to strengthen the definition and measurement of homelessness and advocate for its inclusion in global and national policy.

This work has helped secure three UN resolutions on homelessness, including the first in the UN's history, using IGH's framework for defining homelessness. Our formal partnership with UN Habitat supports work with countries on homelessness measurement and policy, while our Global Homeless Data Map strengthens the international evidence base.

Vanguard partners bring local experience directly into this global work.

We include representatives from Vanguard cities in UN events and international policy discussions, and draw on their evidence, case studies and experience in our submissions and engagement with the United Nations. Evidence from Vanguard partners has subsequently been reflected in UN reporting, helping connect practical action at city level with global policy.



Share.

We accelerate progress by connecting people, evidence, and effective practice across the globe.

IGH creates opportunities for practitioners, policymakers, researchers and people with lived experience to learn from one another and to share evidence about what is — and is not — working to prevent and end homelessness.

Our knowledge sharing work includes international webinars and events, the IGH Resource Hub, and the International Journal on Homelessness — the first peer-reviewed academic journal focused on global homelessness. IGH also convenes the biennial International Journal on Homelessness Conference, bringing together participants from across the world to exchange research, policy and practice.

Vanguard partners are an important part of this exchange.

Representatives regularly contribute as speakers and participants in IGH webinars, sharing their experience with an international audience and learning from work elsewhere. Vanguard partners also participate in the biennial International Journal on Homelessness Conference, extending the exchange of learning beyond the Vanguard cohort and connecting partners with a wider global community working to prevent and end homelessness.

An aerial photograph of the Chicago skyline, showing the city's skyscrapers, the Chicago River, and Lake Michigan. The image is partially obscured by a white curved shape in the top left corner, which contains the IGH logo.

Becoming a Vanguard partner

IGH works with cities, states, and countries demonstrating the leadership and commitment needed to take concrete action to prevent and end homelessness.

We welcome conversations with places interested in exploring whether a Vanguard partnership could support their ambitions and accelerate progress.

To start a conversation with IGH reach out to Julia Wagner, IGH Program Director:
jwagner@ighomelessness.org