

# → Ending ← Homelessness

→through The Sustainable Development Goals←

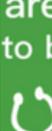
**1** Ending homelessness is key in ending poverty



**2** The homeless are one of the most food insecure populations in the world



**3** Homeless individuals are more likely to be exposed to health threats



**4** Education prevents sustained homelessness throughout an individual's life



**5** Homelessness presents unique and difficult challenges for women and gender minorities



**6** Without a home it is often difficult to access necessities such as clean water



**7** Clean energy=less climate impact=less natural disasters=less displaced people

**8** Without a home many struggle to obtain decent work and achieve professional goals



**9** Improved infrastructure includes adequate housing for all



**10** Homelessness is the most visible sign of the growing economic and social inequalities that must end



**11** Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums

**12** Responsible production means producing housing for all



**13** Victims of climate disasters can become homeless as a result

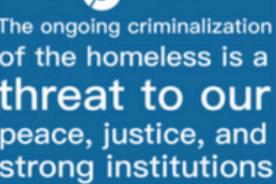


**14** Access to marine resources creates economic independence

**15** The Amazon is home to many indigenous communities and should be protected



**16** The ongoing criminalization of the homeless is a threat to our peace, justice, and strong institutions



**17** It will take the effort of the United Nations, Member States, Private Sector and Civil Society to end homelessness



by Jo Padgett Herz

To achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, we must eradicate homelessness around the world. While the SDGs do not explicitly mention homelessness, the issues of those who experience homelessness are systematically tied to the SDGs. Working to achieve the SDGs helps to end homelessness and working to end homelessness helps to achieve the SDGs. Global issues that the SDGs work to address such as health, hunger, violence, education, economics, women and children, access, and climate change are integral in the experience of those who are homeless. We need a renewed focus on a common language for homelessness and aligned measurement

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# The Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – acts as a shared blueprint for “peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future” (see UN website for the SDGs). There are 17 SDGs as pictured below in *Figure One*. They act as a call to action for all member states to progress their countries towards a more inclusive, sustainable, and fair world. Important issues addressed in these SDGs are improving health and education, reducing inequality, spurring economic growth, and addressing climate change. The Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) provides support for capacity-building pertaining to the SDGs through inter-agency coordination, stakeholder engagement, partnerships, communication, outreach, and knowledge management.

All UN member states are signatures of the SDGs, and for this reason, the goals are a powerful tool when advocating to member states on behalf of vulnerable or marginalized social groups such as those who live without homes. Member states can opt into regular presentations of their progress at the national and local levels. They take place in New York in July.



UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>)

## What is Global Homelessness?

Current statistics on global homelessness are inaccurate, and outdated. According to Habitat for Humanity and national reports, an estimated 100 million people or more in the world are homeless. (United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights 2005). This figure mainly refers to individuals experiencing street homelessness. While that is roughly 2% of the population, it is estimated that 20% of the world's population, 1.6 billion people, lack adequate housing (Habitat 2005).

The United Nations Statistical Division groups homeless persons into two categories: (a) Primary homelessness (or rooflessness). This category includes individuals who live in streets or without shelter. (b) Secondary homelessness. This category includes those with no primary residence but move frequently between accommodations. This may include shelters, dwellings, and other's homes. Also included are those who take up long term residence in 'transitional' shelters or similar accommodations for the homeless. This category also refers to persons living in private shelters but report having 'no usual address' on their census form (UNSD 2008). The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and UN Habitat convened an Expert Group Meeting on Homelessness in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2019, comprised of 15 international experts on homelessness, where they categorized homelessness into:

- People living on the streets or other open spaces
- People living in temporary or crisis accommodation
- People living in severely inadequate and insecure accommodation
- People who lack access to affordable housing (EGM Nairobi 2019)

Definitions of homelessness are wide ranging from those who lack a physical home, to more broad definitions including those experiencing inadequate housing, such as slums. Leilani Farha, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing recommends an expansive definition of homelessness. A narrow definition does not recognize the element of social exclusion that homeless individuals face in society (United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights 2005).

Some state governments have broader definitions. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics recognizes four categories of homelessness; in addition to 'primary' and 'secondary' homelessness, 'tertiary' homelessness refers to people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis, while a 'fourth category' includes people in housing situations close to minimal living standards (i.e. people living in caravans). The European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) developed a typology of homelessness and housing called ETHOS (European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion). Its definition includes rooflessness, houselessness, insecure and inadequate housing. People living in insecure accommodations (i.e. reliant upon family or friends, illegal occupation, etc.), those living under threat of eviction, those living in nonconventional structures, and people living in crowded housing are examples of those included in FEANTSA's definition (United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights).

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*The Expert Group in Nairobi described homelessness as: "Homelessness is a condition where a person or household lacks habitable space with security of tenure, rights and ability to enjoy social relations, including safety. Homelessness is a manifestation of extreme poverty and a failure of multiple systems and human rights"*

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Homelessness is both a cause and effect of institutionalized, complex and multi-faceted social and economic oppression. Causes of homelessness include a lack of housing affordability, increased housing costs, privatization of civic services, conflict, rapid urbanization, and physical and social violence against homeless and other social minorities (United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights 2005). General Comment No. 4: The Right to Adequate Housing notes that "effective monitoring of the situation with respect to housing is another obligation of immediate effect." Specifically, this calls for the collection of data regarding homeless persons and families, those inadequately housed and without ready access to basic amenities, those living in "illegal" settlement, those subject to forced evictions and low-income groups (United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner on Human Right, 1991).

"Drivers of homelessness identified are:

- Structural: Poverty, inequality, un- and under-employment, insecure and vulnerable jobs, ill-health or disabilities, discrimination and social exclusion, lack of affordable housing, the commoditization of housing, forced eviction, urbanization, rural-urban migration, displacement due to national disasters, extreme weathers, conflict
- Personal or family circumstances: mental health, domestic violence, relation break-ups, substance misuse

In order to effectively address homelessness, it needs to be addressed from the following three domains: Security (legal title, ability to pay rent, etc.); Physical (durability, protection, etc.); and Human (social, family life, safety, etc.)" (Nairobi, 2019).



Graphic by Community Solutions, 2019

Ending homelessness will profoundly affect everyone in a society. Working to achieve the SDGs helps to end homelessness and working to end homelessness helps to achieve the SDGs. This section will serve to emphasize and analyze the intrinsic links between the SDGs and homelessness. First, it is important to remember Goal 11.1, which explicitly sets forth the goal to provide housing for all humans:

### Goal 11.1



## Access

With inadequate or no housing comes inadequate or no access to necessary services. Access to electricity, public programs, transportation, education, government, internet, and other information systems are human rights that need to be upheld. This lack of access can be extremely detrimental to both the individual and the society. The lack of these necessities is what causes further issues. Without access to clean water, illnesses are more frequent. Without access to education, upward economic mobility is extremely difficult. Without economic mobility, women and children often face more disadvantages. Without economic mobility, it becomes difficult to access those important opportunities that can improve an individual's life.



1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030

achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

1.3.1: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing

children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable

**1.4** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

**1.4.1** Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services



**3.5.1** coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders

**3.8** Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

**3.8.1** Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)

**3.8.2** Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income

**3.9.1** Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution

**3.9.2** Mortality rate attributed to unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene for all (WASH))

**3.9.3** Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning

**3.B** Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries,

provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all



**5.5.1** Proportion of seats half by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

**5.5.2** Proportion of women in managerial positions

**5.6.1** proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

  
**6.1** By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

**6.1.1** Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services

**6.2** By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and

hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

**6.2.2** proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water

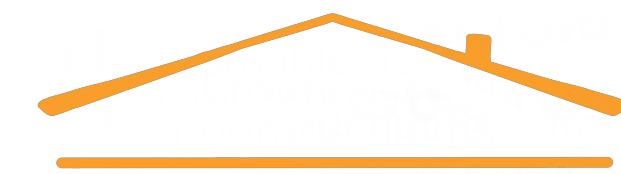


**7.1** By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

**7.1.1** Proportion of population with access to electricity



**9.1.1** Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road



**11.1** By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

**11.1.1** Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing

**14.B** Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets



**15.B** Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation



## Climate Change

Climate change threatens everyone on Earth. Recently due to anthropogenic causes, the effects of climate change such as natural disasters, rising temperatures, changes in precipitation, and rising sea levels are being felt more frequently and more intensely. As a result, human populations are being forced from their homes. As of now, people who flee their homes as a result of climate change do not fall under the “refugee” definition which means they do not get the same international support. This leaves those people fleeing from natural disasters susceptible of human rights abuses which includes homelessness (Refugees International 2018). For example, during a human-made wildfire in California that lasted 11 days, about 14,000 residences were destroyed leaving all those who inhabited them forced to find temporary shelter or living without homes (Forbes 2018). Additionally, there could be a massive exodus of the populations from the countries in the Pacific Islands as a result of rising sea levels in the near future. As the sea destroys their countries and cultures, they will be forced to relocate and find new housing in other countries. The Pacific Island nations make up a population of 2.3 million (Worldbank 2019). If the effects of climate change continue to intensify, more people will become homeless. Having preparations and natural disaster protocols to manage the housing crisis after an event will be more important than ever in years to come.

In order to accomplish the UN climate change goals by 2030, nations around the world need to reduce their effect on the environment and the atmosphere. This cannot be possible without solving homelessness. Globally, people without homes lack access to trash pick-up or recycling services. Additionally, many people are forced to practice illegal dumping habits since the cost of proper disposal of objects like tires, furniture, used oil, and other construction material is too high. Those with low income which includes the homeless population of the world, are more likely to contribute to anthropogenic debris in the environment which has many negative effects on the ecosystem of an area (White 2013).

Those living in inadequate housing, slums, or with no homes often lack access to a reliable energy source. The people in these situations often find themselves

disconnected from the electrical grid and are forced to create their own energy sources. It is estimated that 1.3 billion people do not have access to electricity and around 3 billion people cook or heat their homes with open fires or simple stoves using biomass or coal to fuel their fire (Oxford University). Without access to an affordable, reliable, or sustainable energy source, these people will continue burning fossil fuels and other unsustainable resources. Addressing the problem of energy access and the use of fossil fuels in developing nations contributes to finding a solution to climate change.



**1.5** By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

**1.5.1** Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people

**1.5.2** Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)

**1.5.3** Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies



**7.1** By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

**7.1.1** Proportion of population with access to electricity

**7.1.2** Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology



**12.2** By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources



**13.1** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

**13.1.3** Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies

**13.1.1** Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people

**13.1.2** Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies



**14.4** By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics



**15.2** By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

## Economics

While some may argue that solving homelessness would be very costly, there are many economic reasons for a country to make efforts to end homelessness. Research shows that caring for the homeless can be incredibly costly. In the United States of America, the chronically homeless person costs the taxpayer an average of \$35,578 per year. This is reduced by 49.5% when they are placed in supportive housing. Finland has found that by providing housing right away instead of the medium to long-term housing other countries may provide, saves money in the long run. By creating stable living conditions based on already existing mainstream services instead of creating expensive emergency services, the taxpayer ends up saving money in the long term (Foster 2017; Flaming, Toros & Burns 2015; National Alliance to End Homelessness 2015).

Additionally, there can be many economic benefits in assisting the homeless population. According to a case study in the city of Tshwane, South Africa, by the University of South Africa, the homeless population have great economic potential. Unfortunately, in South Africa the supply of labor is greater than the demand for labor. Many homeless people find themselves without opportunities to become economically liberated. If governments around the world, like South Africa, created more economic opportunities for people of all social classes, more people would rise from poverty and as a result have the ability to afford a home. Furthermore, many homeless people have skills and experiences that could be assets for their communities. Employing and allowing the homeless to contribute in the economy reduces homelessness and also benefits the country (Mangayi 2017)



**1.1** By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day

**1.2** By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

**1.2.2** Proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in

poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

**1.4** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

**1.4.2** Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure



**8.2** Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification,

technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors

**8.3** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation,

entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial service

**8.3.1** Proportion of informal employment in non-agricultural employment, by sex

**8.5** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

**8.5.1** Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age, and persons with disabilities

**8.5.2** Unemployment rate, by sex, age, and persons with disabilities



**10.1** By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

**10.1.1** Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 percent of the

population and the total population

**10.2** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

**10.2.1** Proportion of people living below 50 percent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

**10.4** Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

**10.4.1** Labor share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers



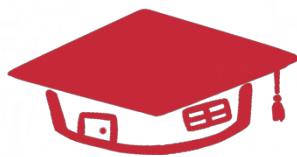
**14.7** By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism



**15.6** Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed

## Education

Accessing education can be difficult to impossible to those who are homeless. Whether that is continuing adult education, or early childhood education, it can all be critical to ending the cycle of homelessness for a family or community. In fact, research suggests that those who have more education are likely to be homeless for shorter durations than their less educated counterparts. What does this mean for a country? By investing in inclusive education systems, they can lower the rates of homelessness. In turn, working to end homelessness can increase the number of citizens who can access education. More education can mean more economic, social, and political opportunities for all citizens (North, Pollio, Smith, & Spitznagel 1998).



**4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

**4.1.1** proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 3/; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

**4.2** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-

primary education so that they are ready for primary education

**4.3** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

**4.3.1** participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

**4.5.1** Party indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous people and conflict-affected, as data becomes available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated

**4.6.1** Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex



**12.8.1** Extent to which (i) global citizenship

education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment

## Health

Without access to quality medical care, homeless individuals are at risk for many health issues. They are more likely to come into contact with infectious diseases, putting the safety of the entire public at risk (Hwang, Kiss, Ho, Leung, & Gundlapalli 2008). The rates of sexually transmitted diseases are also notably high within this population. Survival tactics such as survival sex and prostitution force homeless individuals to put themselves at risk for disease (Caccamo, Kachur, & Williams, S. P. 2017). Mental illness is also prevalent in the homeless community. Some research even suggests that homelessness can lead to the development of mental illness (Johnson & Chamberlain 2011). These health concerns can have gravely negative effects for both individuals and societies. It is in the interest of public health to address homelessness.



**3.3** By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases

**3.3.1** Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population by sex, age and key populations

**3.3.2** Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population

**3.3.3** Malaria incidence per 1,000 population

**3.3.4** Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population

**3.3.5** Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases

**3.4** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

**3.4.1** Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease

**3.4.2** Suicide mortality rate

**3.5** Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

**3.5.2** Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) with a calendar years in liters of pure alcohol

**3.9** By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

**3.9.1** Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution

**3.9.2** Mortality rate attributed to unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene for all (WASH))

**3.9.3** Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning



**5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

# Hunger

The homeless are one of the most food insecure populations in our world today (Lee, & Greif 2008). Hunger, often characterized by malnutrition, can have deeply negative effects on one's health, especially among children. Maternal and childhood chronic hunger results in risk for poorer general health, including chronic conditions and asthma. They can struggle to reach developmental milestones including motor skills, activity levels, and motivation. It can increase a child's anxiety, irritability, aggressiveness, and oppositional behavior towards peers. All of this can increase a child's risk for developmental, physical, and emotional disorders. Consequently, care needs are enhanced. In countries without universal healthcare, both "developed" and "developing," this increases health costs. Moreover, some will face limited or no options for such health services, regardless of price. This can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and homelessness that is beyond the control of the family (Effects of Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness on Children and Youth n.d.; Kersey, Beran, McGovern, Biros, & Lurie 1999, Kirkpatrick, McIntyre & Potestio 2010).



**2.1** By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

**2.1.1** Prevalence of undernourishment

**2.1.2** Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

**2.2** By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons



**12.3.1** Global food loss index

## Violence

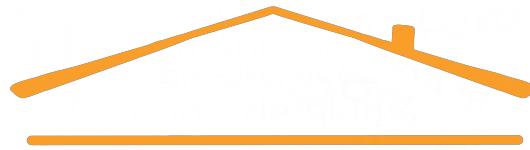
Structural and domestic violence are some of the main drivers of homelessness. Those experiencing homelessness are also at risk to be exposed to violence at higher rates, both in terms of bystanders, and victims. Homeless mothers and children are especially affected by violence from strangers, and interpersonal violence. Increased rates of sexual violence have shown to be a predictor of repeated homelessness. Meaning that those who become homeless are more at risk of sexual violence, and thus more at risk of staying homeless or becoming homeless again. Domestic violence and economic strain have shown to increase aggressive and isolationist behaviors among children. Once again this can trap families in cycles of poverty, homelessness, and domestic violence (Bassuk, Perloff & Dawson 2001; Conner, Cox, Duberstein, Tian, Nisbet & Conwell 2005; Anooshian 2005).



**5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

**5.2.2** Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

**11.1** By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and



affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

**11.5.1** Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population



**16.1** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

**16.1.1** Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age

**16.1.3** proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months

**16.1.4** Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live

**16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

**16.2.2** Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation

**16.2.3** Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

**16.3** Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

**16.3.1** Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms

**16.9** By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

**16.B** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

## Women, Children, and Gender and Sexual Minorities

Homelessness endangers the lives of vulnerable people, particularly women and children. Homeless women are more likely to be assaulted aggravatedly and/or sexually than their housed counterparts. In Toronto Canada, homeless women 18-44 years of age were 10 times more likely to die than the general population of women in Toronto (Cheung, & Hwang 2004). Research in South Africa suggest that homeless women lack health security, education, and awareness (Olusola Olufemi 2000). Homelessness can have a terribly negative impact on a pregnant woman's health, which can lead to health complications for them and their children. This can lead to a low birth weight, longer hospital stays, and a higher chance of receiving neonatal intensive care. All of these complications can lead to an increase in healthcare costs that can exacerbate already difficult economic situations for these women. Increasing the likelihood that they and their child will remain homeless. If we are to close the gender gap in any realm of society it is important that we protect the most vulnerable women in our societies.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community, referred to also as gender and sexual minorities (GSM), are at a high risk for homelessness. In the United States, they are 120% more likely to become homeless than their non-GSM peers (Chapin Hall, 2017). GSM youth represent 40% of homeless youth in the United States, despite being only 7% of the total youth population (True Colors United). They are also at greater risk of "high levels of hardship." This includes assault, trauma, exchanging sex for basic needs, and early death. Black youth who identify as LGBTQ, particularly young men, have the highest rates of homelessness. In Canada, LGBTQ youth are nearly 30% of all homeless youth. According to the "Human Rights Watch World Report 2019," violence against youth and adults who identify as LGBTQ in Honduras is so severe that it is a motivator of internal displacement and external migration in search of protection. It is estimated that 1 in 5 Transgender people have unstable housing or are at risk or in need of shelter services in the US. In Europe, while unclear, research in the UK quotes a figure of 25% of homeless people identifying as GSM. However GSM people make up only about 7% of the general population. (Covenant House)



**2.2** By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons



**3.1** By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births **3.1.1** Maternal mortality ratio

**3.1.2** proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel



**4.2.1** proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex

**3.2** By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births

**3.2.1** Under 5 mortality rate

**3.2.2** Neonatal mortality rate

**3.7** By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs

**3.7.1** proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods



**5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

**5.6.1** proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

**5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

**5.2.2** Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

**8.5** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

**8.5.2** Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment, or training

**8.7** Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child



labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child

labor in all its forms

**8.7.1** proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labor, by sex and age



**16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against

and torture of children

**16.2.1** Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month

**16.2.2** Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation

**16.2.3** Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

**16.9.1** Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

## Globally Agreed Upon Language

As of now, there is no global definition of homelessness at the UN and most countries do not have recent data of the homeless population. If the UN promoted globally agreed language on the subject, it would not only prevent countries from ignoring their homeless citizens but would allow counties to more easily collaborate in measuring and solving this issue. In drafting resolutions, negotiations are incredibly integral. Agreeing on the words used to describe an action can drastically change how agreements are interpreted. The difference of just a word or two can mean that thousands of people are or are not considered homeless. This is why deciding on a definition or a global description, while important, should be taken very seriously. Homelessness shows up, and will always show up, differently in every corner of the world. The solutions proposed should be based in an international framework without dictating how countries prioritize or address those experiences locally. (IGH)

## Measuring Homelessness

It is impossible to end homelessness without the most accurate and comprehensive data possible on it. Measuring homelessness helps us target solutions and understand the gaps in our understanding. Data is needed to hold member states to account and to lobby for greater funding. If we are to track our progress in ending homelessness, then we need to measure the homeless population. “Because measuring the homeless population is difficult and resource intensive, local governments have had to develop systems that are flexible enough to accommodate differing local circumstances yet also consistent enough to aggregate local data and get a holistic picture at the nation level” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2012). Countries that do measure homelessness use different methods based on different definitions, so it is difficult to establish a global data or a cross-country comparison.

## Human Rights Approach

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is one of the most important frameworks for the UN. In promoting the rights of all humans everywhere. For 71 years, it “has become a yardstick by which we measure right and wrong. It provides a foundation for a just and decent future for all and has given everywhere a powerful tool in the fight against oppression, impunity and affronts to human dignity.” Addressing the structural causes of homelessness is critical, as they are the main drivers of homelessness. Homelessness should be viewed as a violation of human rights.

*Article 25 states that “(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, **HOUSING** and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”*

It is important to keep in mind that while the word “homeless” never shows up in the UDHR or the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations has declared housing as a human right (The United Nations, 1948, art. 21.3).

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