



News from the UN & Around the World

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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 6th Edition of UNANIMA International's News from the UN and Around the World. Here at the United Nations, many of the NGOs are now engaging in conversations on Homelessness/Displacement with Women, Children, Girls and our Sisters and Brothers on the street.

I would like to share with you a piece of Art by artist Luke Jerram (pictured in the Reflection section on the last page). The life sized glass sleeping figure was made to highlight the growing numbers of hidden and invisible homeless people, especially women who are the furthest left behind in our world. Shrouded in a blanket made of glass, the ghost-like figure, which has no gender, is a vulnerable and fragile form.

Perhaps you could take time to look at it, and ask yourself what do you see in the image? How does the image make you feel? How would you feel if you were the person in the image? What will you remember most about the image?

The artist Luke Jerram is quoted as saying: "for every person you see sleeping on the streets there are many others, sleeping in hostels, hotels, and other kinds of insecure housing. I was interested to see whether the sculpture would be ignored and treated like street furniture as homeless people often are in a city." I hope the artwork will raise awareness of the problem and that all of us will feel moved to make a difference.

Jean

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Whats Happening at the UN
2. Human Rights Council
3. Civil Society Conference
4. Grassroots Stories
5. Our Board and Staff
6. Resource Section

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FAMILY HOMELESSNESS:

A REFLECTION FROM KIRIN TAYLOR - RESEARCH FELLOW AT UNANIMA INTERNATIONAL

As UNANIMA International advocates for Women and Children/Girls, the upcoming World Homeless Day (October 10th) presents an unmissable opportunity for us to shed light on a human rights issue which affects these populations disproportionately. As noted in previous UNANIMA International research and presentations, for women and families, their homelessness and/or housing insecurity can often be invisible or disguised. 'The purpose of World Homeless Day is to draw attention to homeless people's needs locally and provide opportunities for the community to get involved in responding to homelessness, while taking advantage of the stage an "international day" provides.' (<http://www.worldhomelessday.org/>)

Viewed through an international lens, and using social justice methodology, our explorations of family homelessness reveal a need for expanding the discussion and definition of homelessness. It so often suggests "street homeless" with the most visible populations being men and veterans, thus leaving out women and families. Both groups of people need attention. The point is, without bringing the most vulnerable groups to light we cannot understand the issue of homelessness holistically. Moreover, a lack of attention to Family Homelessness presents the following detriments (among others):



1. Service providers will not have the necessary insight to address the unique and complex needs of families who are homeless, housing insecure, or impoverished.
2. Those who do suffer from "invisible" homelessness will not be included in service plans, and more importantly: strategies for systemic change. Policy design and implementation alike are proven far more successful when informed by those affected, at every stage of the process.
3. Nation States may avoid responsibility and accountability for a large portion of the homeless/housing insecure population, with little public knowledge of this governmental failure and its ill effects.

Homelessness has recently been gaining attention from the international community. UNANIMA International has played a role in this. But we recognize that this is not enough. Evidence of the growth of Family Homelessness throughout the world, seemingly not unique to one region or the next, displays the timeliness of our own research mandate for Family Homelessness/Displacement and Trauma.

As part of civil society at the United Nations, and through our affiliations and reach as UNANIMA International, we are taking the opportunity of World Homeless Day to reiterate our demand for increased issue salience to Family Homelessness. We present this to the United Nations, all governments, civil society, businesses, and citizens around the world.

Important Upcoming Dates

October 10th	World Mental Health Day
October 11th	International Day of the Girl Child
October 15th	International Day of Rural Women
October 16th	World Food Day
October 17th	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
October 24th	United Nations Day
November 16th	International Day for Tolerance
November 20th	Universal Children's Day
November 25th	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
November 31st	World Cities Day

WHATS HAPPENING AT THE UN

NGO Committee Updates

NGO Major Group (NGO MG)

The NGO MG has been extremely busy over the last couple of months, with the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July, and the SDG Summit in September. Throughout this period this group has facilitated and contributed significantly to the voices of Civil Society being heard at the UN in reference to the SDGs. This group is now looking to contribute to the dialogue on HLPF Review and Reform.

NGO Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH)

The Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH) is currently focused on preparation for the upcoming 58th Commission for Social Development in February 2020. With Homelessness being part of the theme, this group is working alongside NGO CSocD to put together significant advocacy materials, campaigns, and strategies to ensure Homelessness remains at the forefront of advocacy.

NGO Committee on Social Development (NGO CSocD)

In September NGO CSocD held an information meeting to update and inform existing members on the workings and mission of the Committee, which was extremely well attended. NGO CSocD is also currently preparing for the upcoming 58th Commission for Social Development, which will be held in February 2020.

NGO Major Group
ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS: TOGETHER.



NGO COMMITTEE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ECOSOC United Nations
Economic and
Social Council

The Hidden Faces of Homelessness

Women and Children/ Girls are often the furthest left behind and can be said to be "the Hidden Faces of Homelessness". UNANIMA International wants to give a voice and a face to the hidden families, especially Women, Children/Girls, experiencing homelessness.

The theme of the 58th Commission for Social Development is "Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness." UNANIMA International is putting together a collection of faces, voices and experiences of those who have experienced homelessness, to share at the United Nations in February 2020.

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.



#MakingaHome4Everyone

Human Rights Council - Geneva

by Molly Gerke, UNANIMA International Executive Assistant

In September I had the opportunity to attend the first week of the 42nd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body that works within the United Nations system. Their mandate is to promote, protect and strengthen human rights globally, as well as addressing instances of human rights violations, and providing recommendations to remedy them. Each year the Human Rights Council holds no less than three regular sessions in March, June, and September, as well as special sessions when required.

Over the week this experience enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the way in which the UN functions in Geneva, specifically in the context of Human Rights. With a slightly different way of functioning than the United Nations Headquarters in New York, I found myself in awe of the way everyone seemed able to stand up and give a voice to the issues they were passionate about.

While a large portion of my time was spent attending the Human Rights Council, I was also able to sit in on a number of other meetings, including The Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as a number of side events. Being in Geneva also enabled me to visit places such as the UN High Commission for Refugees, and meet with fellow civil society and NGO representatives and groups, whose mandate is also to serve people furthest left behind. During these engagements we discussed the most efficient and effective ways to advocate in the Geneva context, and how to ensure a Human Rights based approach to advocacy can be achieved.

During this session a variety of themes were discussed, including but not limited to: The Right to Social Security; The Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation; Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples; The Right to Development; and a global call for concrete action against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance. Each thematic session had inputs from Member States, Experts, including Special Rapporteurs, and Non-Government Organizations, among others. It was compelling to hear about the links between each of the issues and Human Rights, and to draw connections to our work at UNANIMA International.

You can watch sessions of the Human Rights Council by going to UNTV at <http://webtv.un.org> and searching "42nd Meeting, 42nd Regular Session Human Rights Council." In total, 37 resolutions and 14 decisions were adopted by the council during the 42nd Session. A number of the decisions that were made were in reference to the outcomes of Universal Periodic Reviews. To see if your country was included in these decisions, or to read more about the documents adopted by the council, you can find a comprehensive list of links at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session42/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx>



United Nations Civil Society Conference - UTAH

The United Nations Civil Society Conference was held in Salt Lake City, Utah from the 26th-28th of August, 2019. This year the theme was “Building Inclusive and Sustainable Cities and Communities.” The conference brought together over 5,000 representatives from over 130 countries, with an astounding 40% of them being young people aged between 18 and 32. Over the three days participants were able to participate in Plenary Meetings, Thematic Sessions, Side Events, Town Halls, Special Events and a Youth Hub, each adding to the diversity and richness of the conference. You can watch a number of these events by visiting this link <https://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/slc-conference>

The conference boasted over 200 side events over the three days, with the focus ranging from Homelessness and Trafficking, to Renewable Energy and Entrepreneurship. UNANIMA International co-sponsored an “Intergenerational Dialogue for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies,” at which Executive Assistant Molly Gerke was a speaker and facilitator of a breakout group. The event provided a space for intergenerational discussions on four thematic areas; Homelessness, Climate Change, Safe Spaces and Inequalities. Participants were given time to share and discuss the issues their generation faces, then propose intergenerational solutions and/or actions that can be taken to ensure these thematic areas are addressed, and the promotion of sustainable cities and communities occurs.

Through our participation in the NGO Committee on Migration, UNANIMA also co-sponsored an event titled “Integrating Migrants into Inclusive, Sustainable and Peaceful Communities.” At the closing of the conference two documents were presented to H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the United Nations General Assembly.

The first, was an Outcome Statement and the second, a Youth Climate Compact. The Outcome Statement (which can be found at <https://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/content/68th-United-Nations-Civil-Society-Conference-Outcome-Statement>) outlines a global vision for building inclusive and sustainable cities and communities by 2030. Adopted unanimously by conference participants during the closing session, this document proposes steps that communities around the world can take to meet the goals of the 2030 agenda, and the goals laid out in the document by 2030.

The Youth Climate Compact, which can be found at: <https://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/content/youth-climate-compact-0>, was produced by the youth attending the conference. It details steps to reduce the devastating effects of the climate crisis, and adaptive actions our communities must take in both mindset and structure. The adopted versions of both documents are extremely comprehensive and are appropriate to be used at the UN, as well as being readable by, and accessible to, individuals at the local level globally. They are in the process of being translated into the six official U.N. languages, as well as a number of others. Once complete, these translations will be able to be found at the above websites.

UNANIMA International was especially pleased to see the mention of Homelessness and Family in the outcome document, and happy that both documents are gender sensitive and inclusive of many of the vulnerable groups that we focus on as an organization. For further information on the conference please visit: <https://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/68th-un-civil-society-conference>



United Nations General Assembly and High Level Week

The 74th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 74) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the 17th to the 30th of September, 2019. Each September UNGA brings together leaders from all around the world to discuss and work together on a wide array of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations. Along with the General Assembly's High-Level Debate, the session also included many High Level events such as the Youth Climate Summit, NYC Climate March, UNGA Civil Society Forum, the Climate Summit, UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and the SDG Summit. High-Level meetings and discussions were also held on Universal Health Coverage, Financing for Development, the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons; and the progress made in addressing the priorities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

As there was only limited space for Civil Society representation during the General Assembly, UNANIMA International, like many other Civil Society Organizations, were only able to attend a limited number of events inside the UN. As such, we followed closely through UNTV, and were updated by other civil society representatives that we work with in NGO Committees, Working Groups and Major Groups. One of the many activities UNANIMA International was able to participate in outside of the UN was the NYC Climate march, which occurred on Friday, September 20th. UNANIMA International staff, interns and the Board of Directors marched alongside young climate activist Greta Thunberg, and approximately 250,000 people showing their commitment to combating climate change.

Climate marches didn't just take place in NYC . They happened all over the world. Did you participate in one? If you did, we would love to hear your stories. You can send them to: info@unanima-international.org. If you are interested in any of the events that happened during the General Assembly/High Level Week, be sure to visit <http://webtv.un.org> and search via the event names above. You can also find links to these on our Facebook page.



INTERN REFLECTIONS

Catherine Ferguson Scholar- Sr Rashmi Mattappally

Three weeks at the UN has been an awesome experience to feel the way the world is moving. Being in the US, especially at the UN for the first time, brought the Global Realities very close. My time with UNANIMA International began with a guided tour around the United Nations Headquarters that was extremely informative. Everyday, new doors were opened, bringing more light on the efforts made by many committed people at the UN and around the globe, regarding Efforts to End Homelessness,, Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Change, the Culture of Peace, Migration, Gender Equality (Leaving No Woman behind), and so on.



I was very happy to get a better understanding about UNANIMA and about the impact made by Religious at the UN (RUN) and Civil Society. There were many opportunities to listen to many outstanding leaders talk on various topics. I was really inspired by his Excellency, the King of Ghana, who talked about the 'Culture of Peace,' and Greta Thunberg, a sixteen year old activist who challenged the world to act fast to save the future generation. Some of the side-events like 'Season of Creation, Laudato Si' by Christina Leano, Associate Director of Global Catholic Climate Movement, Inter-Religious Healing Prayer, the World Peace Festival hosted by 'United for Human Rights' and 'World Fellowship of Inter Religious Councils' (WFIRC), and the Quaker Meeting of 'Earth Silence, Holding the World in Light' were very enlightening. One unique experience was to be present for the opening prayer before the UN General Assembly where the delegate of the Pope, UN Secretary General, and the President of 74th UN Assembly were present alongside many diplomats and outstanding Church Leaders.

It was wonderful to attend the UNANIMA Board meeting where we had the opportunity to meet the members of the Board and also to share about ourselves. I could experience a true sense of solidarity among us. Sharing from those doing research on 'Homelessness' under the guidance of UNANIMA International brought home the importance of tackling the growing issue of homelessness in the world. I am looking forward to the time I have left to benefit more from all my experiences.

Immersion Experience - Michelle Brodrick

You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world.

Matthew 5:13-16

Matthew's gospel calls us to be agents of change; to contribute to our community and enhance others' lives in the same way that salt enhances and transforms. Over the past three weeks as an Intern with UNANIMA International, I have been witness to a vibrant and passionate community of people working to bring about systemic change and achieve a more just world. I have been able to attend events with other NGOs including working party meetings to stop trafficking in persons and major world events such as the Global Climate Strike. I have heard impassioned pleas that change, across many sectors, is just too slow. H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés stated at the informal High-Level Event, Joining Forces to achieve Gender Equality, 'We cannot accept that it will take 108 years, more than a century, to close the global gender gap, and 202 years to achieve economic parity'. And Greta Thunberg called world leaders out with her speech at the Climate Action Summit on September 24th. We must continue to fight for change as we move closer to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Most importantly I have been witness to the essential work that is taking place with UNANIMA International in shaping the definition of 'Family Homelessness' and of the need to prioritise this growing social problem as a human rights issue. This week several students from New York University presented their capstone projects to UNANIMA International highlighting their research on family homelessness in India and the Philippines. What was evident from their work was the challenge in determining the full extent of family homelessness and the impact of the trauma experienced by women and children experiencing homelessness.

I look forward to hearing about the work of UI in the lead up to the fifty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD58). It will take place in February 2020 at the United Nations Headquarters with the priority theme of 'Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness'. As an educator I have been reminded of the importance of broadening my understanding of family homelessness and to consider ways that I ensure my community is inclusive and welcoming for all. We are all charged with this responsibility yet for many families who experience homelessness there are many barriers to accessing quality education. By not remaining silent we give hope to others, enhance other people's lives and help to build our community. This is how we can be the salt of the earth and a light to others.

GRASSROOTS STORIES

Ruth Group For Widows - Malawi

THE GROUP OF RUTH IN SITIMA

Bringing hope, freedom and meaning of life is one of our ways of “Loving without Borders” and acting upon issues of Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation. This is manifested as I pray, give of my time, and share food and joy with the women who are less privileged, thus giving them hope that they still exist despite the death of their beloved husbands.

AIM OF THE GROUP OF RUTH

“Ruth” is a group of and for widows. This group was started in 2014 by three widows: Loveness Monica Phiri, Mary Chimole, and Maria Makina, who had a feeling of being left out in society because they were not included in any activity of the Parish. They are midlife and elderly women. The group was formed to give each other support, encouragement and hope.

I joined the group to give my prayerful support, listen to their concerns, give them hope that God is always with them, and to be with them in times of their need, especially as a coordinator of their group at the Parish level. Since then, they are included and recognized as one of many groups that exists in the Parish. This group meets once a month in one of the outstations in the Parish, or at the Parish itself, to have Bible sharing, pray together, and discuss how best they can support each other. They visit each other in their homes when one falls ill, dies or is bereaved, and they contribute what little food or money they have to put together a meal. Each outstation has its members and they take turns visiting and hosting each other during their meetings, which mainly occur on Sundays. They have a spirit of the First apostles that no one should be in need. They try as much as possible to receive sacraments, and they have an annual retreat at the parish.

CHALLENGES

Like any other woman in the world these widows meet a lot of challenges. Generally, these women have no source of

income apart from having a small scale farm, which brings them a bag or two of maize annually. They have no funds to buy fertilizer in order to have better yield. Some of them have children, grandchildren, or nieces and nephews who are orphans. Some of these children and wards are still in school or colleges. It is not easy for them to pay school fees or the school development fund.

As much as they would like to commit themselves to be at the service of the church activities, they are busy trying to source funds to alleviate their poverty. Some members of the Ruth Group were infected / affected by the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. They lack proper medication, and they are unable to join others in prayer at outstations due to lack of transport. Most of these widows were also the victims of floods. Some of them had their houses and gardens washed away by the heavy rains.

To love without borders, as a community, we periodically pray with them and answer their needs. We also share the developments of this group with the delegation team. Last year, the delegation, in conjunction with the Friends of Wisdom, provided them with 50kg of cream of maize.

In addition to what the Delegation of Malawi give them, the Marie Louise Community also shares whatever it has with these widows, although it is not enough for all of them. Just like any other group, in order to raise their standard of living, they need capital in order to start small businesses that could generate income and cater to their daily needs.

*By Sr Margarita Maria Kamangira -
Marie Louise Community –
Malawi Delegation JIPIC*





UNANIMA International Board Meeting - September 2019

Top: Back Row: Pat Flattery CND, Pereka Nyirenda RSC, Janet Peterworth OSU, Ellen Sinclair SDS, Stacy Hanrahan CND, Ces Martin NDS, Anne McCabe SM, Susan Seeby CSA, Eileen Davey SUSC, Maureen Foltz CCV, Janice Belanger SASV, Margaret Fyfe CSB, Kathleen Scanlon RJM, Cathy Sheehan DW, Molly Gerke, Renaude Gregiore

Front Row: Nonata Bezerra SND, Margaret Scott AIC, Jean Quinn DW, Barbara Spears SNJM, Hortense Demia-Mbailaou SP, Barbara Jean Head OSU

Bottom left: Barbara Spears SNJM, Margaret Fyfe CSB, Jean Quinn, DW, Margaret Scott AIC, Cathy Sheehan DW

Bottom middle: Barbara Spears SNJM, Eileen Davey SUSC, Cathy Sheehan DW

Bottom Right: Ellie Ballard, Kirin Taylor, Jean Quinn, Rashmi Mattappally, Michelle Brodrick, Molly Gerke

UNANIMA Farewells

We say a fond farewell to two of our UNANIMA International Board Members who are stepping down this year: Stacy Hanrahan from Congregation de Notre Dame; and Anne McCabe from The Congregation of Mary. We greatly appreciate all of your valuable contributions towards strengthening UNANIMA International as an organization, and your vision working towards the goals of our mission.

RESOURCE SECTION

Examining Inequality

<https://www.gatesfoundation.org/goalkeepers/report/2019-report/?download=true#ExaminingInequality>

UNHCR

<https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2018>

UN Annual Report

<https://www.un.org/annualreport/>

Reflection- Art by Luke Jerram

Photo Credit Mark Simmons

<https://www.lukejerram.com/invisible-homeless/>



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