

MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing
FROM: HomeBase
RE: A Global Perspective and Approach to Homelessness
DATE: November 18, 2005

Homelessness has been increasing in the United States for two decades, affecting millions of people each year and reaching ever higher up the economic ladder. Today, families, senior citizens and working people are among those threatened. This growth in numbers and reach is occurring against a backdrop of diminishing resources for both homeless programs and mainstream safety net programs. As a result, providers and advocates working on the front lines of this issue too often spin from crisis to crisis, with little opportunity to take a big picture look at the phenomena they are immersed in daily. This memo seeks to provide some of that broader perspective by looking at homelessness around the world.

This memo provides an overview of homelessness worldwide, beginning with a look at the global data from a sampling of countries where statistics on homelessness are collected. It examines the issue of how best to define homelessness around the world and looks at the major causes of this crisis, including underlying economic policies. It identifies the extensive consensus that exists on the policies and programs needed to prevent and end homelessness, providing some examples from other countries. Finally, this memo concludes with an overview of international human rights law, specifically with respect to the right to housing its relation to the fight against homelessness. It provides some points of reflection in considering whether use of the framework and language of international human rights law can strengthen our efforts here at home to create policies and garner the resources necessary to truly address homelessness.

HOMELESSNESS IS A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENA, AND IT IS GROWING

Homelessness is on the increase, not only here in the United States, but also worldwide. An estimated **100 million people across the globe are homeless, having absolutely nowhere to live, and over 1 billion are living in inadequate housing.**¹ These figures are rough estimates, as measuring global homelessness is extremely difficult. Most data are known to be undercounts, relying on service provider statistics that do not include the entire homeless population. Despite the lack of quality data, certain generalizations about homelessness worldwide can be made. First and foremost, homelessness is growing in both industrialized and developing countries. This growth is due to structural changes that have increased the risk of becoming homeless, including cuts in social welfare programs, withdrawal of the state from housing provision, increased commercialization of housing provision, increasingly uncertain unemployment markets, demographic changes, the breakdown of families, and increases in extreme poverty and income inequality.²

¹ Briefing on homelessness and landlessness, presented to the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on March 30, 2005 by Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Miloon Kothari. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/117/55/PDF/G0511755.pdf?OpenElement>

² United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), "Strategies to combat homelessness", pp 2-7, 166. Nairobi, 2000. <http://www.unhabitat.org/programmes/housingpolicy/documents/HS-599x.pdf>

While the specific characteristics of homeless people vary from country to country and between industrialized and developing nations, in general, the homeless come from the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. Depending on the country, this includes women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and immigrants, and those with disabilities (health, mental health or addiction). Overall, homeless people are characterized by poverty, insecurity in how they will meet their basic needs, vulnerability to crime, violence, disease, lack of privacy, and a lack of power to make decisions about their living conditions. Some of this powerlessness is external, the result of non-responsive or overtly discriminatory systems and the lack of papers and documentation to allow asserting of rights. Some is internal, the result of the erosion of self-esteem, making it more difficult for homeless people to advocate for themselves.

Global Numbers On Homelessness Hard To Obtain

In addition to the standard difficulties of counting a mobile and often hidden population, homeless data collection on a global scale is impeded by:

- Limited or non-existent data collection in many countries, especially developing countries
- Variation in the definition of homelessness and the approach to service provision across countries, related to perceptions of the deservedness of those who are homeless and the resources available for social programs. These differences make it difficult to accurately combine or compare data across national borders
- Use of service provider data as the basis for national statistics on homelessness. Not all homeless people access services due to limitations on eligibility, complex requirements that pose barriers to access, and the reluctance of some homeless people to have any interaction at all with the formal service system. Therefore, most countries' homeless statistics are an undercount of the number of homeless people and the demographic data provided reflects only the sub-populations eligible for and accessing services. In addition, the reliance on service providers as the primary source for data on homelessness produces what has been termed the "service-statistics-paradox" in which countries with the most-developed services systems also show the highest levels of homelessness. (FEANTSA. (1999). "Strategies to combat homelessness in Western and Eastern Europe: trends and traditions in statistics and public policy", report prepared for UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi)

For country-specific information on homelessness, see the chart in the appendix to this memo. It provides an overview of homelessness data from a sampling of countries worldwide.

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS DEPENDS ON EACH SOCIETY'S NORMS

Due to the wide variation of economic, political, social and cultural contexts, developing a precise and appropriate global definition of homelessness is difficult. Recognizing that any definition of homelessness must be interpreted against the backdrop of that particular society's norms, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) adopted the following broad definition of homelessness in its 2000 report, "Strategies to Combat Homelessness"³:

... not having an acceptable level of housing provision, including all states below what may be regarded as adequate for the reference society. To classify someone as homeless creates a moral imperative, indicating a state in which 'something must be done' for the victim of such circumstances.

In discussing homelessness, the UNCHS divides the world's countries into three groups: (1) high income, industrial countries including the United States, Western Europe, Canada, Australia and Japan; (2) countries with economies in transition, including Eastern and Central Europe and

³ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), page 37.

the Russian Federation; and (3) developing countries, including many in Africa, Latin America and much of Asia. This division is reflective of the different realities in which people in these countries live. According to the UNCHS definition, people either living in poor quality and unserviced housing or without secure tenure in their housing both should be considered homeless in high income countries, since these situations fall short of the relevant norms. In contrast, for developing countries, people living in marginal or precarious housing would not be considered homeless, as these conditions are shared by a significant percentage of people in the society. Classification of those with marginal or precarious housing as homeless would render the term meaningless and divert attention and action from the urgent needs of those without any housing whatsoever.⁴

For many people, even the broad UNCHS definition is too narrow, as the reality of homelessness is more than just lack of adequate housing. Homelessness is also a form of social exclusion and marginalization, characterized by a lack of social ties and relations and “carrying implications of belonging nowhere rather than simply having nowhere to sleep.”⁵

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is caused by a multitude of factors. Some factors result from poor decisions or bad luck, including health problems, mental illness, addiction, divorce and domestic violence, lack of education and job skills, environmental disasters, and man-made crises such as armed conflicts and ill-planned urbanization. Demographic factors are also identified as causing homelessness,

Poverty, Economic Globalization & High Housing Costs Key Forces Behind Homelessness

The driving forces behind homelessness are poverty; rapid economic globalization, which has worsened inequality in housing and land ownership; increasing trends towards privatization of public services and land speculation; lack of affordable housing options; unplanned and involuntary urban migration; large-scale development and infrastructure projects, including dams that have lead to mass displacement; and ongoing conflicts around the world.

--Habitat International Coalition, summary of remarks by the Special Rapporteur on Right to Adequate Housing, Miloon Kothari, in his briefing on homelessness and landlessness to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, April 2005
<http://www.hic-net.org/articles.asp?PID=223>

driving a demand for housing that exceeds available supply. In most countries of the world, resulting largely from a reduction in household size, the number of households is growing at a much higher rate than both the population overall and the housing stock. In high income, industrial countries, more people are living alone rather than with extended family, and they are living longer. In countries with economies in transition, economic pressures are driving migration from the countryside to cities, where the housing stock is insufficient to accommodate the new migrants. In developing countries, there is rapid population growth in cities, resulting from

both population growth and economic migration from rural areas. This growth fuels a demand for housing that not only far exceeds the current supply, but also exceeds the scale of housing production achievable by formal sector housing developers.⁶

While it is true that each individual case of homelessness may be attributed in part to personal factor(s) listed above and demographic factors fueling the housing supply deficit, the recurring context and common denominator of every story is poverty. In the last couple of decades, both

⁴ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), page 38.

⁵ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), pages 15-16.

⁶ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), page2-3.

the number of people affected by poverty and the extremity of their poverty has increased. This is the result of systemic factors and policy choices that have worsened the conditions and opportunities for those with the least resources, creating greater income inequality worldwide.

In the United States, we have identified the systemic roots of homelessness as the lack of affordable housing, cutbacks in welfare and social programs, and the dearth of jobs paying a living wage. These issues are the result of (1) market-driven economic policies that seek the withdrawal of the state from provision of housing; (2) reductions in government spending on social services; and (3) greater freedom for business from government regulations, including wage and safety standards and restrictions on facility relocations. These policies were initiated during the Reagan administration and continue to set the context for discussions about how to address social and economic needs in our country.

What is less explicitly recognized is that these economic policies, known variously as Reaganomics, Thatcherism, the Washington Consensus, neoliberalism, market fundamentalism, and structural adjustment, are causing homelessness and worsening poverty all over the world. Actively promoted, and some would say imposed, by the U.S. Government and international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank, and strongly supported by multi-national corporations, these policies seek to create a world where there are no controls or government interference in the market and where the market mechanisms of competition and efficiency determine not only economic matters, but social matters as well.

The spread of these policies is often termed economic globalization, as the goal is to create one integrated global market with no barriers to the movement of capital, goods and services. Globalization has been defined as “a process of interaction and integration among people, companies and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology.”⁷ It is broad reaching in its effects, impacting not only the economies of the world, but also the environment, culture, politics, and people’s health and well-being. While some effects of globalization are deemed positive, there is a worldwide social justice movement decrying the negative effects of economic globalization on the poor countries and poor people of this world.

**5 Key Components Of
Neoliberalism / Market Fundamentalism**

- 1) The Rule Of The Market: freeing business from government regulation, greater openness to international trade and investment (including speculation in housing and land to turn a profit), deunionizing of labor forces in order to reduce wages and eliminate worker rights, and eliminating price controls.
- 2) Cutting Public Expenditures For Social Services: reducing government spending on the safety net, including education, housing and health care, and on public goods such as maintenance of roads, bridges and water supply.
- 3) Deregulation: reducing government regulation (of the environment, job safety etc.) to allow market forces to self-regulate.
- 4) Privatization: selling of state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors.
- 5) Eliminating The Concept of The “Public Good” Or “Community”: replacing it with “individual responsibility” so that poor people are responsible to find solutions to their lack of housing, employment, health care etc.

-- CORPWATCH, Fact Sheet: “What Is Neoliberalism?”,
<http://corpwatch.org/article.php?id=376>

⁷ Factsheet: What is Globalization? www.globalization101.org/globalization

Advocates of these economic policies point to market theory, which stresses the effectiveness of the market in efficiently allocating resources, in arguing that the outcomes will be greater economic activity and thus, greater wealth for everyone. It is true that market theory practices have increased wealth for some, but not for the poor. Around the globe, the real world results of these policies have been the same: a marked increase in income inequality, both within nations and between nations; reductions in affordability of housing; cuts in social welfare systems; increased speculation in housing and land; withdrawal of the state from housing provision; increased evictions and foreclosures; increasingly uncertain employment markets; breakdown of families and social networks; and increases in extreme poverty, including homelessness. According to Miloon Kothari, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, “Globalization and the process of increasing integration have limited the capacity of States to provide adequate resources for fulfilling the economic, social and cultural rights of their citizens, including housing and essential social services.”⁸ This is because of macroeconomic factors that affect the availability of resources available to governments for social spending.

These outcomes should come as no surprise; the market is an institution that creates and reinforces inequality, especially for those who have fewest assets. The market functions like the board game Monopoly; those with the most resources (money and property) gain more and more, while those with the least, slowly but surely, fall further and further behind.

The Impact Of Neoliberal Economic Policy Around The World

- ◆ **HIGH INCOME, INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES:** While some have moved more quickly (United States and United Kingdom) and others more slowly (Scandinavian Countries), all have been implementing market-oriented economic policies. These include privatization of public / social housing and other public enterprises, reductions in subsidies for housing and utilities, and dismantling of welfare and social programs through reductions in funding, greater restrictions on eligibility and shifting of responsibility to non-governmental organizations. In addition, the mobility of corporate capital, enhanced by the processes of economic globalization, results in more uncertain employment markets and the existence of fewer, full time stable jobs that pay a living wage. The outcome is more people falling into poverty and a growth in extreme poverty, including homelessness.
- ◆ **COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION:** These countries are transitioning from a planned economy to a market economy. Previously, state provision of housing and employment was so complete that homelessness and unemployment were illegal. Now, with the introduction of market-oriented economic policies, the share of the population living below the poverty line has increased, and homelessness has appeared and is growing. Job losses and unemployment rates have increased with the elimination of employment security and housing, and utility costs have skyrocketed with the withdrawal of state subsidies. As a result, more households are falling into arrears and facing eviction or foreclosure.
- ◆ **DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:** In developing countries, the imposition of structural adjustment programs as conditions of further aid by the World Bank and other international lenders have caused reductions in public expenditures by the state in housing development, food subsidies, social services and other areas. This has worsened the conditions of the poor in these societies and contributed to the appearance of homelessness, particularly among young people.

-- United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), pages 3-7, 44-45, 151-152, 160-162.

⁸ Kothari, Miloon. “Privatising human rights: the impact of globalisation on access to adequate housing, water and sanitation”, Habitat International Coalition, 2003. <http://www.hic-net.org/articles.asp?PID=194>

There Is Broad Consensus On the Policies And Programs Needed To Effectively Address Homelessness

A year 2000 report by the UNCHS, “Strategies to Combat Homelessness,” affirms and reflects much of what we already know about the types of policies and programs which are effective in addressing homelessness, at least in regard to high income, industrial countries. The similarity between approaches around the world is itself a result of globalization, an outcome of the enhanced ease of communication and information-sharing resulting from the technological advances of the last decade. The information presented here is most directly relevant to high income, industrial countries, such as the United States. In developing countries, differing contexts, such as the magnitude of poverty, the low tax bases and the limited resources of the governments, the lack of existing welfare services, the lack of developed infrastructure and the rapid growth of urban populations, may require different approaches.⁹

Effective Housing, Economic and Social Services Policies are Necessary to Prevent and End Homelessness

Efforts to address homelessness should occur within a public policy framework encompassing housing policy, employment policy and social safety nets. These policies not only provide a backdrop that can prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place, but also they determine the long term effectiveness of the programs put in place to help people who do become homeless. Key elements are policies which work towards the goal of full employment, establish and strengthen safety nets, facilitate an adequate supply of affordable housing, prevent unjust evictions, and seek to prevent exclusion, marginalization and criminalization of those who are poor, homeless and/or minorities. According to the UN’s Strategies for Combating Homelessness report, “Other emergency actions, though necessary for compassion’s sake, are fire fighting at best and expensive tokenism at worst.”¹⁰

Government policies to address the housing needs of people living in poverty are essential, as a purely private-sector, market-based approach does not work. Scott Leckie, Director of the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions in Geneva, says that “The legal housing market in every country in the world, no matter how rich or poor, fails to provide the necessary housing supply for the poorest 40 per cent of the population.”¹¹ According to Peter Marcuse, Professor of Urban Planning at Columbia University, this is due to the fact that “the housing industry is geared to meeting the needs and preferences of those willing to pay the most, and uninterested in those unable to pay even the least.” He goes on to note that uncontrolled and inefficient market conditions including sprawl, speculation, segregation and financing, increase the cost of housing unnecessarily. Therefore, governments must intervene, providing resources to meet the needs of those not served by the market and enacting regulations to correct the inequalities that markets accentuate. Marcuse suggests that these actions should include progressive tax policies to raise revenues to fund housing allowances and the development of affordable housing (both public housing and non-profit operated units), anti-speculation taxes both to hold down the price of housing and to raise revenues, rent control policies, and legislation to prevent unjust evictions and foreclosures.¹²

⁹ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), page 99.

¹⁰ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), page 153.

¹¹ <http://www.share-international.org/archives/homelessness/hl-mlarroof.htm>

¹² Marcuse, Peter, “Housing on the Defensive”, Habitat International Coalition, September 2004. <http://www.hic-net.org/articles.asp?PID=227>

Similarly, our market-oriented economic system results in an uneven distribution of wealth, leaving many with inadequate income to pay for basic necessities at their actual costs of production.¹³ Addressing this inequity requires government intervention that could include public works policies, living wage laws and guaranteed minimum income laws. Government policy should also ensure that a basic safety net is in place so that people are able to access essential services and receive assistance in integrating themselves back into society and the economy. These services include health and mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment, education, employment and training services, debt counseling and others.

<p style="text-align: center;">Finland</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Guaranteed social security and social/health services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Denmark</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A national comprehensive social protection framework</p>
<p>The Finnish constitution guarantees all residents in Finland basic social security and social and health services throughout their lives. This social protection system includes three basic elements: preventive social and health policy, social and health care services and social insurance.</p> <p>Government housing policy is directed at ensuring a socially and regionally balanced and stable market, eliminating homelessness and improving the quality of housing. In order to achieve this goal, government funding for social housing production is being scaled to achieve a steady production of 10,000 new dwellings annually. The state-funded Housing Fund finances and administers all social housing through a variety of mechanisms, including State housing loans, interest subsidies for bank housing loans, direct grants, State guarantees for bank housing loans, housing allowances and tax relief.</p> <p>Legislatively required services include housing services (service housing, supported accommodation and housing advice to prevent loss of housing), guidance and counselling on social welfare benefits and other forms of social security and their use, money management and debt counselling and rehabilitating work experience for long-term unemployed people. In addition, many municipalities have voluntarily started to offer social lending services in order to prevent financial exclusion and indebtedness and help improve people's ability to manage their situation.</p> <p>-- Networking in the fight against homelessness, FEANTSA, Summer 2003, Prevention Of Homelessness In Finland, FEANTSA, July 2004, Finland National Report 2004 For The European Observatory On Homelessness: Policy Update, September 2004 http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/country.asp?ID=5&Page=22</p>	<p>Denmark has a national comprehensive social protection framework to prevent social problems, including homelessness. All citizens, regardless of their employment history, are eligible for social benefits if their income falls below a certain level, and if disabled, are eligible for income support from the social disability system. (The social benefit level is enough to pay rent and cover basic costs of living).</p> <p>They also have access to free health care, mental health services, and drug and alcohol treatment services. Regarding drug treatment, in 2003, a guaranty of treatment was established so that there is a maximum of 14 days between an application for treatment and the beginning of actual treatment. There also are rules that set rents at a reasonable level for low-income groups and for disabled people, there is special rent support.</p> <p>For those who become homeless, there is more targeted support to address each individual's specific needs, including drug rehabilitation, debt counselling, assistance in how to use different service facilities in the neighborhood, and help and advice in creating a social network. For those at-risk of homelessness, support is provided to help people maintain their housing.</p> <p>The social legislation requires that assistance be provided based on a consensus between the local authorities and the individuals requesting aid, such that they must be involved in the decision making about which services to accept and how to receive them.</p> <p>-- Prevention Strategies concerning homelessness in Denmark, Danish National Report 2004 For The European Observatory On Homelessness: Policy Update http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/country.asp?ID=4&Page=22</p>

¹³ Marcuse, page 2.

A Comprehensive, Integrated Array of Programs is Needed to Help People Back Into Housing for the Long Term

In addition to the aforementioned policy framework, targeted interventions aimed specifically at homeless people are also necessary. Daniel Biau, Executive Coordinator of Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya, states that to deal with the completely homeless population, governments should intervene directly: "Absolute homelessness is a bit like absolute poverty. It's a question of survival. You have to provide a safety net. These people are so poor they must be assisted directly."¹⁴ This assistance must be comprehensive and integrated, addressing housing, income and service needs, and it must encompass programs that range from emergency assistance to those that assist in long-term reintegration in society. The following is a summary of key programs and lessons:

- ◆ **Prevention** programs should be a part of society's safety net, targeted to address the specific factors that are known to lead to homelessness. This includes programs to help people overcome poverty, access needed services and care, and prevent housing loss. In the case of youth, it is particularly important to focus attention on addressing the circumstances that cause them to leave home.

The Netherlands

Early Intervention To Prevent Housing Loss

40% of the housing-market in The Netherlands is managed by social housing co-operations. Recognizing that prevention is better for both the client as well as the co-operation, many co-operations have developed a system of preventive home support. People who are on the verge of losing their housing, whether for social reasons or financial reasons, are allowed to maintain their housing if they voluntarily accept supervision from a home-support team, who visit them weekly and take over their financial management, typically for a period of 1-2 years. Over 90% of the time, these interventions have resulted in people being able to maintain their housing and avoid homelessness. The home support-teams are a collaborative effort between local authorities, social housing-providers and providers for homeless people.

The costs of preventive home-support are much lower than the costs of accommodation in a shelter: 24-hour shelter accommodation for one year costs about 20,000 euro, while the cost of supporting one household against eviction for one year is about 5,000 euro.

-- Prevention Strategies in the Netherlands, June 2004 <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/country.asp?ID=12&Page=22>

- ◆ **Individualized Assistance Based On Effective Assessments:** Programmatic assistance should be specifically tailored to meet people's individual needs, recognizing that each case is different and therefore requires a unique package of interventions. This requires both effective assessment as well as availability of the full range of services needed. In addition, it is important to recognize that there are different types of homelessness that require different types of responses, including transient and chronic homelessness.
- ◆ **Data Collection, Planning and Evaluation:** Data gathering to understand the scale and nature of homelessness is vital. Accurate information can facilitate effective targeting of interventions to different categories of homeless people, help guide reconfiguration of services to enhance effectiveness, and enable monitoring of the cost-effectiveness of measures, an aspect of increased importance given limited budgets.

¹⁴ Leach, Monte "A Roof Is Not Enough", <http://www.share-international.org/archives/homelessness/hl-mlarroof.htm>

Data Collection on Homelessness In Europe

FEANTSA (The European Federation of National Organizations Working With the Homeless) has developed a European typology for data collection on homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS). It provides a simple but comprehensive definition of housing vulnerability that includes 4 broad conceptual categories: rooflessness, houselessness, living in insecure housing and living in inadequate housing. These are broken down into operational categories that are applicable in all countries and then into sub-categories that take into account national differences in perception and response.

CONCEPTUAL CATEGORY		OPERATIONAL CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	
ROOFLESS	1	Living in a public space (no abode)	1.1 1.2	Sleeping Rough Contacted by outreach services	
	2	Stay in a night shelter and/or forced to spend several hours a day in a public space	2.1 2.2 2.3	Low-threshold/direct access shelter Arranged (e.g. low budget hotel) Short-stay hostel	
	HOUSELESS	3	Homeless hostel / temporary accommodation	3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4	Short-stay homeless hostel Temporary housing (no defined time) Temp. housing (transitional defined) Temporary housing (longer stay)
4		Women's shelter / refuge	4.1 4.2	Shelter accommodation Supported accommodation	
5		Accommodation for Asylum seekers and immigrants	5.1 5.2 5.3	Reception centres (asylum-seekers) Repatriate accommodation Migrant workers hostels	
6		Institutional Discharge	6.1 6.2	Penal instit. (period defined nationally) Institutions (care and hospital)	
7		Specialist Supported Accommodation (for homeless people)	7.1 7.2 7.3 7.4	Supported accommodation (group) Supported accommodation (individual) Foyers Teenage parent accommodation	
INSECURE HOUSING		8	No tenancy	8.1 8.2	Living temporarily w/ family or friends (not by choice)(Hsing/SocSvc records) Living in dwelling without a standard legal (sub)tenancy (excludes squatting)
		9	Eviction Order	9.1 9.2	Legal orders enforced (rented hsing) Re-possession orders (owned housing)
	10	Violence	10.1	Living under threat of violence from partner/family (police recorded incidents)	
INADEQUATE HOUSING	11	Temporary Structure	11.1	Mobile home/caravan (which is not holiday accommodation)	
			11.2	Illegal occupation of a site (e.g. Roma/ Traveller/Gypsy)	
			11.3	Illegal occupation of blding (squatting)	
12	Unfit Housing	12.1	Dwellings unfit for habitation under national legislation (occupied)		
13	Extreme Overcrowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding		

--http://www.feantsa.org/files/indicators_wg/policystatements/indicators_policystatement.pdf

- ◆ **Use of Information Technology:** Computers are being used to facilitate client access to services by creating accessible databases of housing and services available in a community, thus streamlining information as well as referral and case management services. Some programs also seek to empower homeless people by offering them access to computers and the Internet to search for employment, prepare cover letters/resumes, gain computer-based skills and write about their experiences for newsletters, websites and blogs.
- ◆ **Involvement of Homeless People:** Solutions to homelessness should be developed in consultation with the affected population. This means involving clients in decisions about how services should be structured and delivered.
- ◆ **Empowerment:** Homeless people often need assistance in asserting their rights to benefits and other services for which they are eligible, due both to complicated application processes and diminished self-esteem caused by the experience of homelessness.
- ◆ **Outreach** is a critical means of reaching out to homeless people, especially those most removed from the service system. Outreach activities should be grounded in the culture of the street and take into account the client's perspective on his or her situation and needs, rather than requiring that he or she conform to mainstream perspectives. Development of trust between the outreach worker and client is vital to effective assistance. Formerly homeless people can be especially effective in providing outreach services.
- ◆ **Health care services** especially preventative care, must be relevant to street life and responsive to the client's point of view, recognizing the short-term perspective that develops when one is living focused on day-to-day survival. Youth, in particular, need education about proper nutrition and hygiene.
- ◆ **Specialized training** is important for social workers, teachers, police officers and others working with the homeless and at-risk, particularly the street population, so as to increase sensitivity and effectiveness in serving these individuals. There is a need to move beyond stereotypes, negative labels and attitudes that blame the victim.
- ◆ **Employment Generation:** Employment generation efforts, especially those that both provide work and address homelessness, such as renovation of facilities for use as shelter or housing, peer outreach activities, drug and alcohol counseling and shelter security and janitorial services, are effective. It is also important to assist homeless people who have developed niche occupations such as garbage collection, recycling, car cleaning and car parking security, to access the assistance available for small scale business enterprises. In order to best contribute to building self-esteem as well as developing skills and generating income, work should be seen as useful rather than just a "make-work" scheme.

Ottawa, Canada

Creating Employment & Training Opportunities -- NoSort Recycling

In May 1994, NoSort Recycling began through Rideau Street Youth Enterprises as a federally supported pilot project employing 13 young street adults on a full time basis for six months. It offers a recycling service tailored to the needs of local businesses.

The program is oriented to providing longer-term solutions for young street adults by demanding a six-month commitment towards the development of skills and education. Participants do not receive welfare payments during the program, but rather commit themselves to six months of full-time employment and returning to school. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are provided with a \$2,000 voucher that is used toward either returning to school or starting up a small business.

NoSort Recycling has approximately 200 contracts with local businesses to pick up recyclable garbage. Revenue is generated through the collection and the sale of recycled products to a local waste management company.

--Pomeroy, S. and Frojmovic, M. (1995). "Inventory of responses addressing homelessness", Canada Mortgage & Housing Finance Corp.

- ◆ **Affordable Housing:** From a global perspective, “the overwhelming majority of housing built in the world today is built by the people who live in those houses, and by the communities in which they live.” Success stories are in places with strong community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations and where the government has acted as a facilitating rather than repressive force.¹⁵ The Habitat Agenda, adopted at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), calls for governments to engage in “enabling” strategies that facilitate and encourage all actors (public, private and community sectors) to take action to develop and improve housing. However, recognizing the immediate needs of vulnerable groups such as homeless people, the Habitat Agenda also calls for specific targeted actions and grants to assist them.¹⁶ In most countries, this includes direct government funding of affordable housing development and allocations for housing allowances/subsidies, which are often needed at least initially to help homeless people get re-stabilized in housing.
- ◆ **Supportive Housing:** People who have health, mental health or addiction disabilities requiring ongoing services need supportive housing in order to maintain their housing and health for the long term. The intensity of service provision varies over time depending on the evolving needs of the client.

Australia

Developing Low-Cost Housing -- Project Habitat 21, Beyond Shelter

Project Habitat 21 provides homeless people with service-enriched affordable housing. Unemployed homeless people and volunteers work together to build homes, which they can then purchase at affordable prices. Housing development is coordinated in selected locations so that service-enriched facilities can be provided within the housing complex or in cooperation with local government. Service facilities include child care centers, library and computer centers, handyman workshops, sport facilities, social centers, and vegetable gardens.

Housing costs are kept low through the use of volunteer labor, low cost materials and modular designs; affordable finance terms and very low cost 99-year renewable land lease provisions. The lease provisions ensure continued affordability by stipulating that should the property be sold, Beyond Shelter has first buyer right at a price based on the original price plus allowance for inflation and any added capital value.

To qualify as homebuyers, individuals must enroll in a Beyond Shelter program that provides education and training in money management as well as a specific job skill in which they are likely to succeed. Joint ventures are undertaken with local employers to train people to meet the specific needs of local industrial or commercial jobs.

-- From the Newsletter of FEANTSA – The European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless, “Habitat 21: An innovative approach to homelessness in Australia”, Spring 2004, pages 3-4.

- ◆ **Inter-agency and Cross-disciplinary Cooperation:** Given that homelessness is typically caused and prolonged by multiple inter-related housing, health, social service and employment factors, inter-agency and cross-disciplinary collaboration and coordination is necessary to remove barriers to services, avoid gaps and duplication in service provision, and allow for the development of individualized packages of services provided across multiple organizations. Rather than planning and implementing policies within one sector, there is a need for inter-organizational and cross-professional collaboration in problem definition, resource mobilization and funding, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This requires trust, mutual respect, common knowledge and smooth contacts among partners.

¹⁵ Scott Leckie, Director of the Center on Housing Rights and Evictions, quoted in “A roof is not enough – a look at homelessness worldwide”, <http://www.share-international.org/archives/homelessness/hl-mlarroof.htm>

¹⁶ Habitat Agenda, Chapter IV B. Adequate shelter for all and C. Vulnerable groups and people with special needs. <http://www.unhabitat.org/programmes/housingpolicy/>

- ◆ While the need for greater collaboration and partnerships between agencies is broadly recognized, there are also concerns that this approach may inadvertently be promoting a unified approach to homelessness across different agencies, rather than allowing for a diversity of professional perspectives and services. From the perspective of homeless people, ‘partnerships’ of local agencies may even at times be understood as a bureaucratic control machine rather than as an arrangement that improves their access to services.¹⁷
- ◆ Access to Mainstream Services: The existence of a service system for homeless people separate from mainstream programs is both inefficient and ineffective. In addition, effectively addressing the underlying issues causing an individual’s homelessness often requires ongoing assistance from mainstream programs, not simply an emergency response. In order to fulfill this ongoing role, mainstream programs must be adapted to meet the special needs of homeless people.

Scotland

Building Partnerships and Enhancing Access to Mainstream Health Services

In September 2001, the Scottish Executive issued guidelines directing the country’s local Health Boards to give priority to homeless people in the way they deliver their services. The Health Boards were required to develop Health and Homelessness Action Plans, based on an assessment of need in their area. The planning processes were led by the Health Boards but also involved the local authorities, particularly the aspects dealing with housing and social work, the voluntary sector and homeless people. As a result, there is now greater awareness of the existence of homeless people by the health services sector, enhanced understanding of their needs and efforts underway to restructure services and build partnerships to meet those needs.

Examples of positive outcomes from the local planning processes include:

- ◆ The town of Perth had a large number of people sleeping outdoors who were not interested in engaging with health workers. In order to better reach this population, the health services sector worked with the voluntary sector to open a day center that provides healthy breakfasts. By providing homeless people with something that was a priority for them, a warm place and a meal, the health workers were able to develop relationships, build trust and eventually introduce health services in a non-threatening way to this population.
- ◆ In the capital, Edinburgh, a problem with skin infestations among homeless people was identified. However, once treated, people returned to the streets and got reinfested -- many times it was because they were dog owners and their dog was the source of the infestation. To better address this issue, the Health Board set up a partnership with the People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA), a non-profit veterinary service, to treat the dogs. Health workers are present on site and make contact with people and link them with treatment for their own health issues. Even people who won’t invest in their own health are sometimes willing to take care of their dog’s health -- so the treatment of their dogs becomes an opportunity to engage them in services as well.

-- From the Newsletter of FEANTSA – The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless, “Health and Homelessness: a big step forward in Scotland”, Winter 2003, pages 14-16.

- ◆ ***Special Approaches Needed For Children and Youth, (particularly those living on the streets):*** Programs serving this population should be flexible, adapted to their sub-culture and focused on building trust. Rather than imposing the perspectives of adults, programs for youth and children must be respectful of their point of view, taking into account their reality and unique needs. A key focus should be on addressing educational and job training needs, as the goal is not only to help children and youth exit homelessness today, but also to prevent them from becoming homeless adults in the future.

¹⁷ FEANTSA. (1999). “Strategies to combat homelessness in Western and Eastern Europe: trends and traditions in statistics and public policy”, report prepared for UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi.

Campbelltown, Australia

Providing A Welcoming Place For Youth -- Drum Information Café

The Drum Information Café is part of the Burnside Youth Resources Center, which also includes other agencies offering accommodation, legal and health services for youth ages 12-24. The Café offers a non-threatening means for young people to gain information, access to youth workers and counseling, basic support services, such as showers, laundry and material assistance, and referral to specialist services within and outside the complex. In addition, Café staff performs advocacy, negotiation and mediation with youth and their families. The Café is public transit accessible and is structured to offer a safe and welcoming environment where youth can relax and access information and services on their terms.

Crane et al. "Homelessness among young people in Australia, Early intervention and prevention", pp. 92-3.
<http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/nyars/homeless/index.html>

- ◆ **Long-Term Reintegration Into Society:** Programs to address homelessness are moving beyond emergency and crisis responses such that their aim is to help to reintegrate homeless people back into society and put in place long-term solutions to address their exclusion and marginalization.

A GLOBAL ACTION AGENDA -- PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

*"Homelessness is not only the most severe violation of housing rights, it also reflects a status where all aspects of universally accepted human rights are open to abuse, violation and unfulfilment. Whichever definition of homelessness is used, persons suffering from this status are to a large extent, excluded from the opportunities enjoyed by most other members of society. Furthermore, they are also often unable to properly integrate in their societies."*¹⁸

Falling within what are termed economic, cultural and social rights, the right to housing is an internationally-recognized human right, interpreted as guaranteeing access to housing that is safe, habitable and affordable. Specifically called for in a number of human rights accords to which the United States is a party, this right obligates states to take steps towards the realization of adequate housing for all, and therefore to undertake measures to prevent homelessness.¹⁹ According to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, among the steps to be taken immediately, regardless of the status of available resources in a given country, is the adoption of a national housing strategy, which "defines the objectives for the development of shelter conditions, identifies the resources available to meet these goals and the most cost-effective way of using them and sets out the responsibilities and time-frame for the implementation of the necessary measures." The

Definition of Adequate Housing

According to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, housing is more than just four walls and a roof. In order to be adequate, it must, at a minimum, provide legal security of tenure; adequate space, facilities and infrastructure for health, security, comfort and nutrition; affordability; accessibility; proximity to services and employment; and cultural adequacy.

-- From general comment No.4 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, issued in 1991,
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/comments.htm>

¹⁸ UNCHS (Habitat), "Position Paper on Housing Rights", March 2001, page 7.
<http://www.unchsh.org/programmes/housingrights/documents/housing.PDF>

¹⁹ Briefing on homelessness and landlessness, presented to the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on March 30, 2005 by Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Miloon Kothari, paragraphs 15 & 16.
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/117/55/PDF/G0511755.pdf?OpenElement>

strategy “should reflect extensive genuine consultation with, and participation by, all of those affected, including the homeless, the inadequately housed and their representatives.”²⁰

However, while this country has long recognized civil and political rights, it has historically treated economic, social and cultural rights as having less stature. The right to housing is not recognized, and millions of people each year find themselves homeless throughout the United States. Our domestic debates on the issue tend to be cast in the language of “needs” and there is little acknowledgement that access to affordable housing is an internationally-recognized right; nor is there awareness that there are international principles which can be applied to evaluate government progress in realizing these rights.

These international principles include that of “minimum core content,” which holds governments accountable for ensuring that significant numbers of individuals are not deprived of essential human needs. The current existence of large numbers of homeless people in the United States can be considered a prima facie human rights violation, indicating a failure by the U.S. government to satisfy essential human needs. Another of these principles is that of “non-regression,” which states that governments cannot take actions that worsen people’s access to their economic, social and cultural rights. The reduction in the supply of affordable housing in the United States, due to government policies that reduced funding for the development of new housing and allowed the loss of precious existing units, can be considered a violation of the principle of “non-regression.”

International Human Rights Law

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights , Article 25, says "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 lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." [*The U.S. has endorsed and was instrumental in drafting this Declaration.*]

The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11, says "The State Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and the right to continuous improvement of living conditions." [*President Carter signed this Covenant, although Congress has not yet ratified it. In addition, the City Councils in San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley have signed resolutions supporting this Covenant.*]

American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (American Declaration), Article, 11 says "Every person has the right to the preservation of his (or her) health through sanitary and social measures relating to food, clothing, housing, and medical care, to the extent permitted by public and community resources." [*This Declaration is binding on the U.S. under international law.*]

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 24 & 27 says “State parties shall pursue full implementation of [the child’s right to the highest attainable standard of health] and ... shall take appropriate measures ... to combat disease and malnutrition ... through the provision of adequate nutritious foods ... State parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate to the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. ... State Parties...shall...in case of need provide material assistance and support...particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.” [*President Clinton signed this Convention, although Congress has not yet ratified it.*]

In this country’s current political climate, housing and social service programs are severely under-funded and in constant threat of additional cutbacks; meanwhile, the ideology of the market is largely unchallenged. Given this situation, it is highly unlikely that the federal government is going to acknowledge a right to housing to deal with homelessness.

²⁰ From general comment No.4, paragraph 12 by the Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, issued in 1991, <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/comments.htm>

Why, then, would it make sense to consider adopting the language of human rights in our work to address homelessness? There are a number of reasons considering such an adoption:

- ◆ ***Housing should be viewed as a right, as it is central to one's life and is essential to the attainment of other rights.*** According to Chester Hartmann, Director of Research for the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, housing “is at the core of one's social and personal life, determining the kinds of influences and relationships one has and access to key opportunities and services (education, employment, health care).”²¹ Michael Stone, Professor of Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, states that a right to decent affordable housing “builds as well upon the recognition that the political and civil rights for which we have struggled and continue to struggle have little practical meaning or utility for those among us whose material existence is precarious.”²²
- ◆ ***A transnational threat merits an international response.*** Transnational economic pressures are causing and exacerbating the underlying structural causes of homelessness: skyrocketing housing costs, low wage employment and cutbacks in social services. Housing and land prices are being pushed up not only by domestic factors, but also by pressures from monied foreign investors purchasing property and/or speculating to turn a quick profit. Employment is increasingly uncertain and low paid as corporations, seeking to minimize costs for labor and materials, move around the globe without any thought to the impact on communities left behind. Governments, in keeping with the tenets of neoliberal economic policy, continue cutting public expenditures, including key safety net programs. Given that the poor and their advocates around the world are fighting similar battles against the excesses of the neo-liberal economic model, it makes sense to take a more international perspective in framing the issues and our response. It is both inspiring and empowering to cast our local struggles as part of a global people's movement, working to realize basic human rights, in particular the right to housing. Such solidarity strengthens the movement as a whole, as well as particular individuals.
- ◆ ***A human rights argument is the best counter to neo-liberalism,*** which claims that markets are the most efficient way to distribute income, goods and services and that homelessness and poverty are an inevitable by-product. Those who argue for the efficiency of markets fail to recognize the social costs of the poverty and inequality of wealth created and exacerbated by markets. It is neither efficient nor humane to have millions of people unable to afford housing and accessing crisis and emergency services for shelter, food, health and mental health care. A human rights perspective challenges the ideology of the primacy of the market, asserting that, rather than the market dictating its rules to society, society should set rules and limits on the market which place fulfillment of human rights as a greater good than so-called market efficiency and profit-maximization.
- ◆ With respect to the housing market, Chester Hartmann of the Poverty and Race Research Action Council argues that “the profit-maximizing behavior of all actors in the market – landowners, developers, builders, materials suppliers, real estate brokers landlords, even homeowners-- at all points works against assuring that everyone has decent affordable housing, absent a legally enforceable right to housing and explicit commitment of resources to its realization.” Hartmann goes on to question whether “the for-profit system of production, management, and finance that overwhelmingly dominates the way housing is produced in the United States is consistent with a right to decent, affordable housing. Hartmann further questions whether, alternatively, such housing can be reached only through conscious and large-scale development of public and other non-profit permanently affordable units”.²³

²¹ Hartman, Chester. “The Case for a Right to Housing”. Housing Policy Debate, Vol 9, Issue 2, Fannie Mae Found. 1998, p229

²² Stone, Michael E. Shelter Poverty: New Ideas on Housing Affordability. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1993, p. 314

²³ Hartman, Chester. “The Case for a Right to Housing”. Housing Policy Debate, Volume 9, Issue 2, Fannie Mae Foundation, 1998, p. 230, 240.

- ◆ ***If we do not assert access to housing as a right, it will continue to be treated as a welfare issue.*** In order to move beyond token gestures and charity, there is a need for redistribution of resources and power, including progressive taxation to fund the development of public housing and non-profit affordable housing to meet the needs of those not served by the market, rent controls and anti-speculation taxes to hold down the price of housing and regulation of eviction and foreclosures to protect against unjust loss of housing. A human rights perspective moves the argument beyond issues of charity and compellingly argues for action that redresses the fundamental inequities perpetuated by the unregulated market and individualistic and self-serving behavior.

- ◆ ***Framing issues of homelessness within a human rights paradigm strengthens all the existing arguments for increased government action*** to address homelessness by focusing on government's obligation to take meaningful action on this issue, and provides new tools for analyzing and challenging policy and budget decisions that undermine the right to housing. According to Dr. Padraic Kenna, Irish Council for Social Housing, it "offers a consistent international and historical basis for examining current developments, and maintaining a coherent position in advancing the rights and position of homeless people." "Without a contextual human rights dimension, homeless agencies are reduced to negotiating with government officials and other funders over minor details and minor resource allocation decisions, and to competing with each other over favored resources." Application of a human rights framework transcends the minutiae of local and managerialist approaches and recognizes homeless people's dignity, rather than simply treating them as units of service delivery.²⁴

Government Obligations Under International Human Rights Law

International human rights law stresses that all States possess a *minimum core obligation* to ensure that its citizens are able to satisfy their rights, at the very least, at minimum essential levels.

To do this, governments have three types of obligations:

- 1) Respect-Bound Obligations: ensuring that the State itself does not take any actions that interfere with people's human rights;
- 2) Protection-Bound Obligations: ensuring that other parties do not infringe on people's human rights;
- 3) Fulfillment-Bound Obligations: requiring that governments take positive steps (legislative, administrative, judicial and budgetary) to ensure that deprived people's human rights are met. Governments are obliged under international law to progressively realize economic, social and cultural rights, moving "as expeditiously and effectively as possible" toward fulfilling these rights and making "full use of their maximum resources."

In addition, deliberate steps backward are considered a violation of international law. Governments are also required to carry out their obligations in a non-discriminatory manner, meaning that their policies cannot discriminate against particular groups in intent or effect.

-- from UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, "General Comment 3: The Nature of States Parties' Obligations", Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Fact Sheet 21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing", and Center for Economic and Social Rights, "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Guide to the Legal Framework", January 2000.

- ◆ ***The reason that it does not seem politically attainable at the moment is no reason not to assert what is right.*** Now is the time to begin laying the groundwork, educating people and raising consciousness about the right to housing and little by little challenging the current construct that markets are the one and only way to produce and distribute housing, and that poverty and homelessness are inevitable.

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²⁴ Kenna, Padraic, Irish Council for Social Housing, "Housing Rights – A Fresh Approach", Homeless in Europe: The Newsletter of FEANTSA – The European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless, Autumn 2003, p. 4.

Appendix I. Country-Specific Data On Homelessness

More high income, industrialized countries are represented in the following chart than developing countries, as they have more data to report. However, it is acknowledged that homelessness and poverty have an undeniably strong presence in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where “it is common for at least 30 per cent of the urban population to occupy makeshift dwellings in illegal settlements with little infrastructure or to crowd into cheap and dilapidated tenements and boarding houses.”²⁵ Worldwide, the highest incidence of poverty is found in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa where nearly one half of their respective populations live in poverty. The bulk of the world’s poor live in Asia, with nearly two-thirds in India and China alone.²⁶ In addition, please note that the previously mentioned limitations in interpreting and comparing this data (see box on page 2). Depending on how the countries collect data, numbers may refer to nightly, weekly, monthly or yearly counts. Therefore, the homelessness incidence figures may not be directly comparable.

* Homelessness Incidence = % of the total population that is homelessness (Total Population Figures from <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0004379.html>)

** The Gini index is a measure of income inequality. It is a percentage between 0 and 100 where 0 is perfect equality and 100 is perfect inequality. Country’s Gini Index figure taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_income_equality

Country	Homelessness Data
<p>Australia</p> <p>Homelessness Incidence: 0.5%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 35.2**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 100,000 homeless people on any given night, 58% male and 42% female ◆ Almost half the homeless population (46%) are youth age 12-24 or children ◆ 23% in boarding houses, 49% staying with friends and relatives, 14% sleeping rough / on the streets and 14% staying in publicly-funded crisis services (SAAP -- Supported Accommodation Assistance Program) ◆ Number of people accessing SAAP services grew 7% from 2000/01 to 2002/03. ◆ Domestic and family violence is the most common cause of homelessness (22%), followed by eviction / loss of previous housing, family / relationship breakdown, usual accommodation unavailable, and financial difficulty <p style="text-align: right;">-- Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations, 2002 / 2003 National Statistics, http://www.afho.org.au/index.htm</p>
<p>Belgium</p> <p>Homelessness Incidence: 0.2%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 25.0**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 18,880 homeless people (12,680 in Flanders, 5,000 in Wallonia and 1,200 in Brussels) ◆ Women are a growing percentage of the homeless population (over 1/3), mostly due to domestic violence. Over 40% of the homeless population are youth b/w ages 21 and 30 ◆ 57% are single, most have low levels of educational attainment and low levels of employment, 60% are in debt, 75% have health problems and most have a history of institutionalization and a dependency on care. <p style="text-align: right;">-- Belgium National Report 2004 For The European Observatory On Homelessness: Statistical Update, November 2004 and Prevention strategies, Flemish regional report for Feantsa, June 2004 http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/country.asp?ID=1&Page=22</p>
<p>Canada</p> <p>Homelessness Incidence: 0.4-0.8%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 33.1**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 130-260,000 are estimated to be homeless nationally “Strategies to combat homelessness”, UNCHS, 2000, pages 42-43

²⁵New Internationalist. (1999). Issue 276, URL: <http://www.oneworld.org/ni/issue276/facts.html>

²⁶ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), page 8.

Country	Homelessness Data
<p>China</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 44.7**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 150,000 homeless children under age 16, mostly from underdeveloped rural areas, according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs. http://www.humanrights.cn/zt/03102407/200312003112490705.htm ◆ More than 670,000 urban vagrants and beggars, including more than 114,000 children and youngsters and roughly 130,000 elderly people received help from aid stations and centers by the end of November 2004. "Network to track vagrants to start", by Wang Ying, China Daily, 12/22/2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-12/22/content_402423.htm
<p>Denmark</p> <p>Homelessness Incidence: 0.1%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 24.7**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 7,974 homeless people over the course of 2002 (includes only those accessing publicly-funded services and accommodations), 75% are men ◆ 58% are between the ages of 30 and 49, 20% are under age 30, 22% are 50 or over ◆ 62% receive their income from social assistance or social pensions and only 5% from employment <p style="text-align: right;">--Statistical up-date for Denmark for 2002, FEANTSA, http://www.feantsa.org/files/national_reports/denmark/denmark2003_statistical_update.pdf</p>
<p>Finland</p> <p>Homelessness Incidence: 0.2%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 26.9**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 8,190 single homeless people over the course of November 2003 ◆ 54% are in the region of the capital, Helsinki, 81% are male, 19% are youth, and 3% are immigrants ◆ 6% (500) living outdoors, 18% (1480) living in shelters and hostels, 16% (1310) in institutions (prisons, hospitals, etc), 4% (340) prisoners on the verge of release and 56% (4560) doubled up with families and friends ◆ 415 homeless families and couples, 76% in the region of the capital ◆ 19% are immigrant families <p style="text-align: right;">--Finland National Report 2004 For The European Observatory On Homelessness: Statistical Update, September 2004 http://www.feantsa.org/files/national_reports/finland/Finland_statistics_2004.pdf</p>
<p>France</p> <p>Homelessness Incidence: 0.4%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 32.7**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 261,000, including 42% temporarily doubled up with third parties, 20% living in bed and breakfast hotels, 21% living in reception centers, hostels and social hotels (does not include asylum centers), 16% living in impoverished shelters and 2 % sleeping on the streets. Statistical Update On Homelessness And Housing Insecurity, France, National Report 2003 http://www.feantsa.org/files/national_reports/france/france2003_statistics_update.pdf ◆ 30% are foreign nationals ◆ Overall, most (97%) homeless people are in touch with the service system, although street homeless have a lower contact rate - 10% have had no contact within past year ◆ Nearly 90% have worked at some time in the past, 30% are currently working and 36% are actively seeking work ◆ Three times the hospitalization rate of the overall population, 24% for psychological causes, 15% for accidents and violence, 13% for drinks and drug abuse and 3% for attempted suicide <p style="text-align: right;">--France Nat'l Report 2004 for The European Observatory On Homelessness: Stats Update Nov 2004 http://www.feantsa.org/files/national_reports/france/France%20statistics%20update%202004%20(english).pdf</p>
<p>Germany</p> <p>Homelessness Incidence: 0.5%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 28.3**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 410,000 homeless people over the course of a year ◆ 23% of all homeless persons (without repatriates) are women, 22% children and young people under 18 years of age, and 55% are men ◆ 5% are sleeping rough (have no abode), 10% are women <p style="text-align: right;">-- Statistical Update On Homelessness German Nat'l Report for European Observatory On Homelessness, June 2003 http://www.feantsa.org/files/national_reports/germany/germany2003_statistical_update.pdf</p>
<p>Hungary</p> <p>Homelessness Inc.: 0.3-0.5%*</p> <p>Gini Inequality Index: 24.4**</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 30-50,000 homeless people, almost half are in Budapest <p style="text-align: right;">-- http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/country.asp?ID=16&Page=22</p>

Country	Homelessness Data
India Gini Inequality Index: 32.5**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Estimates vary from 2.3 - 18.5 million homeless ◆ 600,000 people are estimated to be pavement dwellers ◆ 45.7 million people are estimated to live in slum housing or doubled up <p style="text-align: right;">-- "Strategies to combat homelessness", UNCHS, 2000, pages 48-49.</p>
Ireland Homelessness Incid.: 0.1%* Gini Inequality Index: 35.9**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 5,581 homeless on any given night, majority in Dublin, 70% single homeless <p style="text-align: right;">-- National Report for the Republic of Ireland, 2003-4: Data, Policy and Research Up-Date http://www.feantsa.org/files/national_reports/ireland/Ireland_combined_updates_2004.pdf " Tackling Homeless in Ireland", Irish Council for Social Housing http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/country.asp?ID=9&Page=22</p>
Japan Gini Inequality Index: 24.9**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 25,296 homeless people were living in public places (parks, riverbanks and streets) in 2003 according to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, most are in Tokyo, Osaka and other large cities. ◆ 97% are male and the average age is 56 years old ◆ 87% cite problems with employment as their reason for homelessness, including being unable to find enough work, having lost their job due to being laid off or their company folding, or being too old or ill to work. ◆ 36% are former day laborers, while 40% had full-time jobs before they became homeless. <p style="text-align: right;">-- "25,296 without homes: survey", Hiroshi Matsubara, The Japan Times, March 23, 2003, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?nn20030327a2.htm</p>
Netherlands Homelessness Incid.: 0.2%* Gini Inequality Index: 32.6**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 30,000 homeless ◆ 1000 are street homeless ◆ Women are 26% of shelter users and youth under age 18 are 10% <p style="text-align: right;">-- http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/country.asp?ID=12&Page=22</p>
Russian Federation Gini Inequality Index: 45.6**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 350,000 people lived on the streets in 1997 (official estimate by the Ministry of the Interior based on those using homeless facilities). ◆ Other estimates used wider definitions of homelessness and put the number of homeless at 10 million, of which 5-6 million are adults and the rest children. 30% of the adults are women. "Strategies to combat homelessness", UNCHS, 2000, pages 47. ◆ During 1990's, homeless population changed from being ex-prisoners and long-term alcoholics to being recent migrants, families with children and a growing number of young people. S. Stephenson: "The Russian homeless: old problem, new agenda", in S. Hutton and J. Redmond, eds.: <i>Poverty in transition economies</i> (London, Routledge, 2000), pp. 14-34.
United States Homelessness Incidence: 0.2-0.3% over the course of week and 0.8 – 1.2% over the course of a year* Gini Inequality Index: 40.8**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 444,000-842,000 people are estimated to be homeless in an average week. ◆ Approximately 2.5-3.5 million people are homeless during the course of a year. 24-39% are estimated to be children. "America's Homeless II, Populations and Services, February 2000, Urban Institute, http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/900344_AmericasHomelessII.pdf ◆ 49% of homeless people are African-American, 35% Caucasian, 13% Hispanic, 2% Native American, and 1% Asian ◆ 30% have an addiction disorder and 23% have a serious mental illness ◆ 40% of homeless men are veterans and approximately half of all women and children who are homeless are fleeing domestic violence. National Coalition for the Homeless, Fact Sheet #3: Who is Homeless?, May 2004. http://www.nationalhomeless.org/who.html