



International

# News from the UN & Around the World



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## A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Recently, I have been reading the new book by Joan Chittester “The Time is Now: A Call to Uncommon Courage”. In the book she draws on the wisdom of the prophets, both ancient and modern, to help us confront societal forces that oppress and silence the sacred voices among us. She offers us a vision to combat compliance and propels us towards creating a world of Justice, Freedom, Peace and Empowerment. She invites us to participate in a vision for a world greater than the one we find ourselves in today. She is clearly a woman who speaks truth and power. She poses the question: “What will you do here and now, in this world, in our time? Simply stand there looking on?”

As I was reflecting on her book, I was reminded of my recent trip to the Philippines and meeting our UNANIMA International members there. These women were clearly women who did not stand there and do nothing, but got involved in their country’s pain and did something daring about it. They are voices for the voiceless in Manila and are reaching the furthest left behind in their country. They are carriers of a prophetic message for our time, and their message is clear: they want no one left behind. As I journeyed with them in the Slums of Manila I was touched by their passion, compassion and a righteous anger at the injustices they confront on a daily basis. In this issue and the following issues of our newsletter we will continue journeying with those furthest left behind in our world.

Please share with us the stories of the people you journey with in your part of the world.

Jean

## HIGHLIGHTS

1. Family Homelessness: What do the Children think
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5. Grassroots Stories
6. Resource Section

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# FAMILY HOMELESSNESS: WHAT DO THE CHILDREN THINK



#MakingaHome4Everyone



**Ransboro**  
National School

## UNANIMA International Speaks to Students in Ireland

Our 6th grade primary school pupils in Ransboro, Sligo, Ireland (mostly aged 12) have been recently learning about and discussing issues relating to poverty, famine and homelessness in the world. In Geography we have been learning about the term “Developing Countries” and looking at the causes of famine, including war, drought, disease and natural disasters. We discussed a more equal sharing of the world’s wealth where richer countries could be encouraged to give greater financial help to very poor countries.

In Religion we further read about issues of justice in developing countries. We learned about farmers in these countries often not owning the land that they worked and how they were growing “food crops” to feed their families and “cash crops” to sell for money. We read about the work of Irish NGOs like Trócaire and Oxfam Ireland who are working in developing countries to develop Fairtrade practices for local farmers.

It was in this context that we viewed images that Jean Quinn, Executive Director of UNANIMA International in New York, had taken on a recent trip to the Philippines. To say that the images had a profound effect on the pupils would be an understatement.

We viewed the “homes” that families were living in—mostly self-constructed—and the pupils were amazed at the conditions in which children, especially, were living. The pupils compared these primitive “constructions” to their own homes where they have every comfort the developed world has to offer.

Jean kindly agreed to speak to the pupils on video via WhatsApp from the UNANIMA office in New York on the afternoon (Irish time) of Thursday June 6th. She spoke to the pupils about the homelessness and poverty that she witnessed on her trip to the

Philippines. She told them about her advocacy work with UNANIMA International in the United Nations and how she and her organisation are trying to advocate at the UN for homeless families throughout the world, especially women and children. Jean explained to the pupils that part of the problem in dealing with homelessness is that there is no clear worldwide definition of what “homelessness” is, and that different countries are working from different definitions. She further explained that UNANIMA International and other NGOs are working on creating a definition of “homelessness” that can be agreed upon by all.

Jean explained to the pupils that being “homeless” did not simply mean people who are living on the streets, but that homeless people are also people who are living in hostels, hotels and temporary accommodation. The pupils questioned Jean on the work that she has done and the countries that she has visited as part of her work. They were interested to find out more about poverty and homelessness in different countries. Our call with Jean lasted almost an hour and it certainly made our book learning much more concrete when we heard first hand the issues surrounding poverty and homelessness throughout the world. It’s safe to say that the pupils now have a deeper and a more enlightened understanding of these issues and hopefully they will, in their own way, become advocates for people living in poverty and experiencing homelessness.

Damien Quinn- Class Teacher,  
Ransboro National School,  
Knocknahur, Sligo, Ireland.  
[www.ransboro.ie](http://www.ransboro.ie)

# WHATS HAPPENING AT

# THE UN



ECOSOC | United Nations  
Economic and  
Social Council



## NGO Committees Update

### Working Group to End H



In preparation for CSocD the working group held an Open Dialogue/ session on "Affordable housing and social protection systems to address homelessness". Attended by a wide range of stakeholders, this dialogue provided a space for everyone to learn and explore the topic as well as discuss what they see as important issues and outcomes that need to be addressed.

### NGO Committee on Social Development (NGO CSocD)

This month the Grassroots subcommittee started analyzing the results from the inequalities survey we mentioned in the last newsletter. Thank you to everyone who contributed! We will share the results with you soon. For more information on this committee you can visit their website: <https://ngosocdev.org> or search them on Facebook.



### NGO Major Group (NGO MG)

As the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) fast approaches, this Major Group is ramping up preparations through advocacy efforts, side event planning, and input into voluntary national reviews and declarations. This year the Major Group will be holding a side event focused on inequalities and human rights. If you are interested in following the HLPF or finding out more about the Major Group's activities, you can visit their website <http://www.ngomg.org> or follow them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/NGOMajorGroup/> and Twitter @NGOMajorGroup

NGO Major Group

ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS: TOGETHER.

## World Environment Day

On the 5th of June each year the UN and people around the world celebrate World Environment Day. It is the "people's day" for doing something to take care of the Earth and encourages worldwide awareness and action to protect our environment. Since its humble beginnings in 1974, the event has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in over 100 countries. Around the world people now do "something" at the local, national and global level.

Each year, World Environment Day has a specific theme that draws attention to a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme for 2019 is "air pollution". Air pollution is a growing issue around the world in both developed and developing countries. Household air pollution alone causes about 3.8 million premature deaths each year, with the vast majority of these occurring in the developing world, and 60% of these deaths being among women and children.

It is certainly an issue that needs attention! You can visit this website to see how people around the world took action on World Environment day:

<https://www.worldenvironmentday.global>

Did you take action and celebrate World Environment Day? We would love to hear about it!



# What you need to know about the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)

2019 marks the fourth year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a Universal Framework for Development relating to most aspects of society and our planet. Initiated in July 2016, a special meeting called a High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), is now held every year to review specific Goals and allow countries to present a Voluntary Report on Progress. As it is the fourth year, there will be two sessions of the HLPF.



The first will take place under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council with the theme “Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality”. This session will take place in July where the selected Goals: Education (Goal 4), Decent Work and Economic Growth (Goal 8), Inequalities (Goal 10), Climate Action (Goal 13), Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (Goal 16), and Partnerships, (Goal 17) will be discussed, and the Voluntary National Reviews of 51 countries will take place. Some of us here in New York and potentially Members at the national level will be following and/or contributing to the National Voluntary Reviews and Reports.

The second HLPF will occur under the auspices of the General Assembly (SDG Summit) and will take place in September. During this summit each of the 17 Goals will be discussed while the heads of state are present, and the Global Sustainable Development Report will be considered, in addition to other issues. This is a document issued every four years which reports on the progress of all the Goals at a global level.



## International Day of Families

May 15th, 2019 marked the 25th Observance of the International Day of Families and 25th Commemoration of the International Year of the Family. Celebrated at the UN and around the world, the International Day of Families reflects the importance the international community attaches to families and their role in development. While the definition or the idea of what is meant by “family” has changed greatly and can be very different depending on where you live in the world, the United Nations still recognizes the family as the basic unit of society. As recognized by former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, they are the base from which we learn to

communicate, empathise, compromise and adapt within vital social structures. The importance of the family is reflected in many national public policies and these policies play an important role in national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The International Day of Families provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them. It has inspired a series of awareness-raising events, including national family days. In many countries, this day is an opportunity to highlight different areas of interest and importance to families.

This year at the UN, the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Global Communications Civil Society had a commemorative event titled, “Families and Climate Action: Focus on SDG13”. At the event the diverse panel discussed an inter-generational approach to sustainability, sustainable development education, sustainable family farming from the indigenous perspective, and good practices. If you would like to watch the event follow this link: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/it-takes-a-family-25th-observance-of-the-international-day-of-families-and-25th-commemoration-of-the-international-year-of-the-family/6039080579001/>

# Nairobi Reflection- Expert Group Meeting on “Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for all to address Homelessness”

Jean Quinn DW, on behalf of UNANIMA International, was invited to take part at the expert meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2019. The meeting took place at UN-Habitat as part of the preparation for the 58th session of the Commission on Social Development. The meeting was organized by the Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) of the United Nations. The objective of the expert group meeting was to review major drivers of homelessness, identify existing gaps and priority areas for interventions, and make specific policy recommendations on effective housing and social protection policies to address homelessness in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNANIMA International were asked to present a paper on “The Impact of Personal and Family Circumstances on Homelessness.”

Family homelessness, as we all know, is a growing phenomenon around the world. Homelessness is often considered embarrassing, a taboo subject, and governments tend to underestimate the problem. UNANIMA International believe what is called for now is a paradigm shift in how we perceive the problems of poverty and homelessness, and that it is time for a revolution on the subject. Obtaining an accurate picture of homelessness globally is challenging for many reasons, especially as each country defines homelessness differently. As such, is difficult to make a cross-country comparison. . So, one of our immediate tasks was to look for a common definition of homelessness in order to move our agenda forward. We also agreed that homelessness should be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and it needs to be measurable. Addressing Homelessness should be framed within the 2030 Agenda, in particular with the principle of “no one should be left behind” and to “reach the furthest left behind first”.

In looking at the drivers of homelessness we had to look at a broad spectrum of complex issues, among them, housing, health, domestic violence, mental illness, addiction issues, and racial and gender discrimination. Housing is a major issue which contributed to putting homelessness on the map. However, housing alone is not sufficient to ending homelessness, it requires a multi- disciplinary approach in order to break the cycle of homelessness.

Looking at specific policy recommendations on effective housing and social protection policies at the meeting was important for the group. There needs to be a strengthening of social protection policies, and systems with floors. Coverage of social protection measures for all must be expanded, including to those people who are homeless. These policies enable women, girls, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, the LGBTQI community, and families living in extreme poverty, to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and reduce inequalities.

The outcome document from our meeting will be made available to all in due course. What was important for UNANIMA International was to bring the voices of women and children to the table and “not to talk about us without us”





Top: Back Row -Stacy Hanrahan, Barbara Jean Head, Nonata Bezerra, Cathy Sheehan, Ellen Sinclair, Anne McCabe, Fran Gorsuch, Janice Belanger, Margaret Fyfe, Margaret Scott, Maureen Foltz, Pereka Nyirenda, Josee Therrien, Ces Martin, Eileen Davey Front Row- Barbara Spears, Jean Quinn, Lucille Goulet, Mary Akinwale and Janet Petersworth  
 Bottom left: Jean Quinn DW, Executive Director & Molly Gerke, Executive Assistant. Bottom Middle: Board of Directors Executive Committee  
 Bottom Right: Eliza Gelfand, Administrative Assistant

# MEET OUR NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

In June UNANIMA International welcomes our new Administrative Assistant, Eliza Gelfand, to our team.

Eliza earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at The University of Melbourne in Australia. Shortly after, she began working as an English teacher in Japan, before traveling extensively and then settling in New York. She completed her master's degree in Library and Information Sciences at Long Island University and then worked as a School Librarian in a Jesuit High School. Her experiences with the Jesuits and being part of an institution that strongly values service and social justice, led her to seek out work in a mission-based organization that was making a difference.

Are Homelessness and Displacement an issue Individuals and/ or Families in your area face? If you would like you share your experiences and reflections please contact [info@unanima-international.org](mailto:info@unanima-international.org)

# REGIONAL NEWS

## UNANIMA International Alive in the Philippines

After months of communications and two meetings, the UNANIMA group of sisters from the Philippines representing five congregations, ACI, CCV, DW, NDS and SDS, was very eager to welcome Sr. Jean Quinn, executive director of UNANIMA International. After the very first encounter, there is no doubt that this feeling was mutual.

May 6 marked the first meeting at the Daughters of Wisdom's community where, after a warm welcome and joyful greetings, Sr. Jean proceeded to share her objectives in coming to the Philippines, that of representing UNANIMA International, looking at Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, visiting projects for women and children with a focus on homelessness and displaced persons, and appointing a regional link with UI.

At the La Sagesse Rehabilitation and Development Center, she gave a comprehensive presentation of UNANIMA and its mission to the staff and parents of the children and young adults with special needs. To her surprise and to everyone's excitement, a group of students presented two cultural dances as Sr. Jean was joyfully congratulated and honored for her Golden Jubilee of religious life.

On May 7, the Carmelite Sisters of Charity of Vedula gathered the group in Tagaytay at their home for abandoned and neglected children. How blessed these sixteen children are to live with the sisters in a safe and peaceful home, to be well taken care of, educated, and prepared for a bright future. Nothing could stop them from performing, singing, dancing for the visitors, sharing their stories, and playfully interacting with the sisters. Yes, these children experienced homelessness, but they live now in a home where they grow and glow, thanks to the sisters' generous commitment and enduring love.

On May 8, with our heart, mind and body, we really touched homelessness and allowed homelessness to touch us, as the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart led the group in two squatter areas. Poor, unhealthy, dangerous, overcrowded living conditions did not succeed in creating chaos, discouragement, or depression for these people decisively set not only to survive but to have a dignified and productive life. As we left "The Creek", we witnessed a feeding project in the back of a municipal structure where hungry children, assisted by some parents and the sisters, were treated to a delicious lunch. "I was hungry, and you gave me food." (Mt 25:35)

The last visit, under the care of the Sisters of the Divine Savior, brought us to the Diocese of Novaliches where the sisters are involved in Pastoral Care for Children and Vulnerable Adults. We gathered in what I would call a sacred room where victims of extrajudicial killings shared their horrifying stories. We felt each woman longed to tell her side of the event, very



different from what the police report portrayed, in which a husband or brother or son was mercilessly killed by the police in the President's inhumane war against drugs.

We met courageous women, including brave sole parents, teaching us about enduring commitment, strong faith, and unwavering love. We then witnessed resiliency, collective responsibility and solidarity in a successful project of the village: a huge garden showcasing how the people, following an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan, can sustainably produce their own healthy vegetables from organic fertilizer, made from organic solid wastes, generated by the residents. There is hope in working together.

During our very last meeting back at the Daughters of Wisdom's convent, Sr. Jean collected our reactions where only positive comments were heard for and from all. Indeed, these four days created a special bond between us as we honored each congregation's dedication to life, life to the full. Satisfaction and gratitude were rated very high and will remain such as this historical UNANIMA project is forever engraved in the memory of our hearts. We are wholeheartedly behind Sr. Eloisa A. Holdiem, SDS, our new regional link person to UNANIMA International. Together, we will continue to be messengers of hope and joy for all our sisters and brothers in need, especially the women and children, the homeless, and the victims of injustice.

What contributed to the success of our UNANIMA event of May 6-9, 2019 was the presence and attitude of simplicity and openness from Jean. Each sister felt personally welcomed and honored by Jean who kept affirming us and encouraging us to commit to the poor with more passion. She was always ready to go to all suggested places without hesitation or preference. And once in the area, she always strived to engage in dialogue with the people, making them feel important and listened to. In spite of the scorching heat and tiring task, her energy was high and contagious. Gently and lovingly, she led us throughout the whole time.

My gratitude also goes to the sisters from the different congregations who took their responsibility to heart, providing travel and lunch during their assigned day.

Yes, we will meet again!

Liane Rainville, DW

# GRASSROOTS STORIES

## Mamans Hekima- Women supporting Women and Working together



Mamans Hekima is an exciting project involving groups of women in Kisangani in the DRC. The women first began to come together in 2012 to support each other in the daily challenges of their lives. They began as a small group of women with great energy and enthusiasm. The women come from various backgrounds and faith traditions, but they all face similar challenges - financial challenges, education for their children, family illness and lack of knowledge and information on their rights.

**In the Beginning ...** Initially the women needed to overcome their uncertainties of each other due to their different backgrounds and faith traditions. However, with support, training, and encouragement, they were soon working together. Financial constraints are one of the greatest challenges facing these women and they wanted to develop ways of increasing their own financial independence. The women organise themselves into groups of up to twenty women, depending on their own interests.

**Moving on....** At the end of 2017 the project received funding from the Roncalli International Foundation (Roncalli) to enable more groups to be formed, to enable training to be organised, and to purchase materials and equipment for income generating activities. In 2018, two new groups were established, and the existing groups were strengthened. Each group now has a management committee that supports the group and monitors the selling process of their products and merchandise, and advises the group on the right time to sell their produce.

**Support provided...** In 2018, one hundred and twenty women participated in the project. The women organised themselves into six groups and participated in the various training opportunities offered by the project. These training sessions covered issues such as civic education, women's rights, family planning, managing the family budget, and managing their income generating activities. The project has received very good local support with several of the trainers providing their services freely. Women's contributions and income from the activities of the first projects contributed to this project

**Challenges faced...** Some of the challenges faced by the women during this time included a reduction in the paddy production and the instability of the electricity supply, which hampered the optimum sale of the rice produced.

What has changed? Through the small but increased income realised from the sale of their produce the women now have greater economic independence and have greater control over the family finances. They are now able to buy more food for their families, their children go to school more regularly, and they can bring their children to the local health clinic when they fall ill. These women's groups are taken as role models in their neighborhood. They gained greater self-esteem and respect in the community. The influence of the project is visible. Several other women are interested and seeking our support, two groups of 20 women (40 women) have already organized themselves and are waiting for support to start their training.

**The Next Steps....** There is still a huge need to provide additional training to sensitize the women and their families to all forms of exploitation. There is an expressed wish from the women to provide additional training on family planning for themselves and their husbands. The women also wish to develop their income generating activities so they can continue to provide educational opportunities for their children and to be able to undertake necessary and essential repairs on their homes.



# Convent of Jesus and Mary Sialkot School

The ancient city of Sialkot was once a flourishing agricultural area that was full of beautiful, green, flowering trees, shrubs, flowers and crops, especially wheat and rice. The air was free from pollution and the skies were a clear blue. On bright days one could see the Kashmir mountain peaks covered with snow. The two rivers – the Tavi and Chenab, were life-giving for the surrounding environment and for fish.

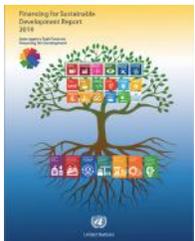
With all this beauty, Sialkot has also become an industrial city. As the growth of industry has increased around the world, Sialkot has been influenced by these effects. Hence much cultivated land has been ruthlessly taken over for factories and residential areas. This has caused much loss to the environment in many ways, including the uprooting of trees, less areas for cultivation, water polluted with chemicals, and fresh air replaced by fog and bacteria, causing many diseases.

We, the Sisters of Jesus and Mary, who founded this school in 1856, have seen a drastic change over the years. Inspired by our third Priority, "Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation", we have tried to animate our pupils to become more aware of this and begin a Campaign to Plant Trees. The pupils took this up enthusiastically by planting trees in their own homes and in the surrounding areas. The school organised a 'Tree Planting Day' and in addition, a parent donated thirty saplings to plant around the school. This is an ongoing project and we plan to plant trees in other areas of Sialkot this year. May Sialkot once again, become a city free from pollution and gain its original beauty.

- Sisters from the Convent of Jesus and Mary Lahore, Pakistan



## RESOURCE SECTION

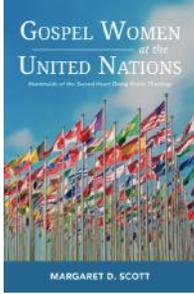


### Financing For Development Report

To see this report visit <https://developmentfinance.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/FSDR2019.pdf>

### Margaret Scott, ACI Book

Margaret's book "Gospel Women of the United Nations" can be purchased by searching its name on Amazon or Google books.



### UN Human Rights Appeal Report

To see this report visit <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/AnnualReportAppeal.aspx>

**Don't forget to Like and Follow UNANIMA International's Social Medias**



Find this report here: <https://www.fmreview.org/education-displacement>

### Forced Migration Report

#### Important Upcoming Dates

June 15th	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
June 24th - July 12th	Human Rights Council 41st Session
July 2nd	International Day of Cooperatives
July 9th -15th	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Sixth Session
August 9th	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
August 12th	International Youth Day