



THE 13 HOUSES CAMPAIGN

Global Collaboration – Local Solutions

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*For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you clothed me,
I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison and you came to me.*

Matthew 25:35-36

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Famvin Homeless Alliance (FHA) was commissioned by the Heads of the Vincentian Family in 2017 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of the Vincentian Charism. We aim to bring together the global Vincentian Family to provide practical help and encourage systemic change for the estimated 1.2 billion people in this world who are without a place to call home.

This definition of homelessness includes street homeless people; refugees and internally displaced persons; as well as those living in slums and inadequate housing.

With the help of the entire Vincentian Family, the FHA is working to make a real and sustainable difference to the lives of thousands of homeless people globally by:

- encouraging the growth of new services;
- building a network of Vincentian groups working across the broad spectrum of homelessness;
- supporting and developing existing and emerging leaders;
- sharing best practices across the different parts of the Vincentian Family;
- lobbying for structural change in support of homeless people at a national, regional and global level;
- developing and making available formation materials in support of this initiative which reflect our shared Vincentian Spirituality.

For more detail on the aims and plans of the FHA please visit our website: vhomelessalliance.org

Become a member of the FHA on our website now. You will receive access to formation materials, a research hub, training opportunities, conferences and more.

FAMVIN HOMELESS ALLIANCE

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?

The Vincentian Family has a 400 year tradition of service to the poor in many different areas including homelessness. In that sense the mission of the FHA is very familiar territory for most Vincentians working across the world. However, although the Vincentian Family works extensively with homeless people, it is usually in isolation from other Vincentians sharing the same charism and mission.

The FHA is now providing a structure to bring Family members together, allowing them to tell their stories, share their knowledge and collaborate locally to achieve common global goals for the benefit of homeless people.

These goals include establishing the first worldwide map of Vincentian homelessness work; creating a communication network so we can share our experience and knowledge; and developing an authentic Vincentian voice for homeless people at the UN and in other global institutions. Finally, we aim to inspire a series of collaborative, action-based projects which will make a real difference to the lives of homeless people across the world. One example of how we might make a difference is the 13 Houses Campaign.



When you are called from your prayers or the Eucharistic celebration to serve the poor, you lose nothing, since to serve the poor is to go to God.

You must see God in the faces of the poor.

Vincent de Paul

ORIGINS

In considering how we could work together today on a practical response to homelessness, we drew inspiration from the collaborative work of the Vincentian Family almost 400 years ago.

It started when Vincent was assigned the equivalent of one million dollars by Louis XIII as an endowment for his Congregation's mission in 1643. Vincent chose to use the money to build 13 small houses close to Saint-Lazare, the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Mission, to care for abandoned children. The ongoing costs of these houses were supported by the Ladies of Charity while the Daughters of Charity cared for the children. By working together the Vincentian Family helped thousands of children who would have otherwise died on the streets.

But this Vincentian partnership did so much more for homeless people. It delivered aid to displaced people in the war zone of Alsace Lorraine and supported and housed refugees fleeing from the battle zone. It provided the Name of Jesus Hospice in 1652 to shelter, clothe, feed and train older people living on the streets or in the slums of Paris. It was responsible for the launch of Les Petites Ecoles (the little schools) that brought the gifts of literacy, numeracy and education to the poor – enabling them to escape the inter-generational poverty that often ended in homelessness.

Today, we are confronted with the same problems that Vincent faced, but on a global scale. Of the 7 billion people on this planet almost 1.2 billion are homeless – they have been displaced, live in slums or on the streets of our cities. Many of them are turned away in their greatest time of need – a stark reminder of those words that dampen the joy of Luke's infancy narrative: "There was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7)

We are inspired by Vincent's 13 houses. He saw a need and responded with concrete action. Today, we see the need of over one billion men, women and children.

THE 13 HOUSES CAMPAIGN

The 13 Houses Campaign has been created in response to their needs; learning and borrowing from the spirit of St Vincent himself.

THE CAMPAIGN

For us, Vincent's 13 houses are an inspiration not a formula. Today's 13 Houses projects will inevitably look different in each country according to the local community's needs. In some places it could be developing housing or shelters for homeless people. It might be the refurbishment of derelict flats, or the development of an urgently-needed soup kitchen to welcome the poorest around a table. It might be a visitation project aimed at welcoming refugees into a country or supporting them in the various encampments across the world. It may be a project you are already planning, or one that is yet to be conceived. Whatever form it takes, it is a local, practical response with a long-term view addressing this global issue of homelessness.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

We want the 13 Houses Campaign to improve and transform the lives of 10,000 homeless people around the world over the next 3-5 years. More than that, we want to see 13 Houses projects in each of the 156 countries where the Vincentian Family works. The FHA is ambitious for the poorest – because St Vincent taught us to be.



Are we then to remain passive in the middle of a world which is suffering and groaning?

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

HOW WILL THE 13 HOUSES BECOME REALITY?

With your help.

The 13 Houses Campaign relies on the ingenuity and collaboration of members of the Vincentian Family at a local level. It might be a partnership between two branches or perhaps a partnership with like-minded groups. St Vincent taught us that pooling resources and commitment magnifies our impact.

In most cases projects developed will include the provision and/or improvement of housing as one of their core goals. However, above and beyond that, inspiration should be drawn from St Vincent's approach of providing additional support to help the poor in their journey out of poverty. A prime example are the "Petites Ecoles" which helped break the cycle of poverty and homelessness by teaching specific skills.

HOW WILL THE FHA SUPPORT YOU?

Members of the FHA have access to a wide range of resources that help in the development of 13 Houses projects. These include:

- templates to help plan, manage and raise funds for projects
- opportunities to link up with other members of the Vincentian Family to:
 - ◊ exchange knowledge and expertise
 - ◊ build bridges between the rich and the poor
- featured examples of projects on the FHA website and social media to raise awareness
- participation in regional and international conferences to test ideas and learn from others
- financial support for your project (via the Solidarity Fund, depending on eligibility)
- provision of one-to-one support to develop local projects, when needed.

THE 13 HOUSES CAMPAIGN

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

There are many ways to get involved in the 13 Houses Campaign.

I. CREATE A 13 HOUSES PROJECT

Any 13 Houses project will start with an idea – no matter how big or small. If you have seen people in your community that experience some form of homelessness, we invite you to reflect on that archetypal Vincentian question: What must be done?

Bring your ideas to paper and talk about it with other groups within the Vincentian Family and/or partners that can help to make the idea a reality. Do not forget to talk to the people you would ultimately like to help. As St Vincent said, “The poor have much to teach you.”

After establishing need and support for your idea, use the project development tools you can access after becoming a member of the FHA, to further structure your thoughts and assess what path you should take to bring your project to the next level.

Also, think about how local and/or global collaborations could help you. The Vincentian Family has a wealth of expertise and there could be people in other countries able to share their experiences of similar projects with you. The FHA is in place to support you along the way. Our online platforms provide the opportunity to talk about ideas or existing projects and reach out to other members of the Vincentian Family for support. We are always happy to hear about your project and how we could help you!



I am now completely convinced that when one does a deed of charity one need not worry about where the money will come from: it will always come.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

II. SUPPORT THE SOLIDARITY FUND

The Solidarity Fund has been set up to support poorer branches to receive the vital funds needed for them to realise their 13 Houses projects. By donating money to the Solidarity Fund, you offer financial assistance to the countries and branches without the funds to help the poorest in their own community. The Solidarity Fund is held and distributed by The Congregation of the Mission International Fund. If you are in a position to contribute financially please first contact the Famvin Homeless Alliance via FHA.info@famvin.org and we will provide you with more information.

III. VOLUNTEER YOUR EXPERTISE

If you have in-depth knowledge in a specific field, why not make that expertise available to the wider Vincentian Family? Many individuals, groups and branches have big ideas but lack the resources to bring them to life. Your expertise might be exactly what is needed and could help to bring a 13 Houses project to the next level. Get in touch with the FHA to let us know about your professional background and we will let you know when we think a Vincentian in another country could benefit from your skillset.

IV. BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

Support the 13 Houses Campaign by talking about it to your friends, church group or work place. Help us to raise awareness of the scale of global homelessness by sharing articles on social media platforms and by encouraging people to become a member of the FHA. Follow our own social media platforms on Twitter and Facebook. You will find details at the end of this leaflet.

THE 13 HOUSES CAMPAIGN

WHEN WILL IT ALL START?

You can join the Campaign at any stage. The 13 Houses Campaign runs over 3-5 years:

SEPTEMBER 2018 - Pilot phase across several countries with different geographical, cultural and economic challenges and different levels of financial and human resources. This allows the FHA to learn more about the implementation of the 13 Houses Campaign and make adjustments.

NOVEMBER 2018 - Global Campaign Launch at the FHA Conference in Rome. The conference provides a first opportunity to listen to current practitioners across the Vincentian Family, develop collaborations and consider potential projects.

DECEMBER 2018 ONWARDS - Development of 13 Houses projects around the world. The FHA is available to offer support throughout this phase.

The 13 Houses Campaign is inspired by Vincent's life, by his actions and commitment, and his understanding that we are at our best when we collaborate. We invite all members of the Vincentian Family to become a part of this global expression of solidarity and to use the Campaign as an opportunity to "devote ourselves with renewed love to serve persons who are poor, and even to seek out those who are the poorest and most abandoned" (St Vincent de Paul).



I know that you are combining all your efforts so that you may be of but one heart and one will and may thereby act only with the desire of accomplishing the will of God.

Saint Louise de Marillac

GET IN TOUCH

We invite you to get in touch with the Famvin Homeless Alliance at any point. We are happy to answer any questions you may have in regards to the FHA or the 13 Houses Campaign.

The best way to reach us is via Email: FHA.info@famvin.org

www.vfhomelessalliance.org



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With God's help, you will continue to succeed in your leadership and in your duties, because Our Lord's work is accomplished not so much by the multitude of workers as by the fidelity of the small number whom He calls.

Saint Vincent de Paul