



Our vision is that everyone has a place to call home
and a stake in their community

Make us count in 2020!

2020 will be a crucial year to make homeless people count. In February, for the first time in its entire history, the UN will release a report on homelessness written by the Secretary General.

This is an opportunity to begin a global strategy to end homelessness – an opportunity we must seize. Currently, there is no strategy at all. Every other major social issue is tackled globally to some degree. Not homelessness. In fact, countries don't even agree on a definition. And there is no global measurement either. At the UN right now, homeless people aren't just ignored – *they aren't even numbers*.

You might think, so what? But this matters. Put bluntly, it is preventing us from ending homelessness. How can you solve a problem if you don't know its size? Any credible strategy must have good data and information. This means we can design programmes that respond to need systematically. We can identify gaps and help those people too. We can hold governments to account and keep track of progress. Measurement is key.

But how can you measure a problem if you don't agree on what the problem is? That's why we need a definition. When countries agree broadly on what 'homelessness' means, then we can begin to measure it. The UN has the power to both agree a definition of homelessness and to measure it too. The UN claims to measure global poverty –

but how can you measure poverty if you don't measure its most visible manifestation, homelessness?

So the FHA, alongside the [IGH](#) and the [NGO Working Group to End Homelessness](#), is launching the campaign "Make Us Count". We are taking the voices and expertise of homeless people themselves to those grand chambers at the UN. And we have an open letter, signed by leading homelessness charities and experts telling the UN that, yes, definition plus measurement is the start of a global strategy. A strategy the UN must lead. During the campaign there will also be the presentation [a new book co-edited by our coordinator Mark McGreevy](#) on homelessness and Catholic Social Teaching.

It is easy to turn a blind eye to something we can't see. But homelessness - in its most extreme form, on the open street - is different. It is conspicuous and jarring. It's right in front of us, on a street corner, outside a train station, on the steps of a church. Homelessness is personal: it is manifest not in a statistic or a concept or a film, but in a real person – a person who often asks you directly for help.

And yet, these people have been ignored at the UN – until now. This is our chance to begin a global strategy. This is our chance to make homeless people count. Visit makeuscount.com for more information and to find out how you can get involved.

The FHA out to meet the Spanish Vincentian Family

From November 11th to 13th 2019, the [FHA team](#) and [Commission](#) gathered in Madrid to discuss the work of the Alliance. They also took the opportunity to better understand the work carried out by the Vincentian Family in Spain and their projects with homeless people.

On November 12th, they met with the different branches of the Family to explain the FHA's goals and work, such as the 13 Houses Campaign, the Vincentian Mapping and the advocacy work at the UN. The [AIC](#), [Daughters of Charity](#), [Congregation of the Mission](#), [SSVP](#), [AAM](#), [VMY](#) and [Misevi](#) attended. Among the participants was Sr Rosa Tere Vicedo, Daughter of Charity and [FHA volunteer ambassador](#) in Spain.

During the afternoon, the FHA team and Commission members visited two projects carried out by the Daughters of Charity: [The Integral Programme St Vincent de Paul Justice and Charity](#), that offers a soup kitchen and meets the basic needs of individuals and families living on the street. They also visited the flats managed by the [Marillac Foundation](#) that the Sisters make available for refugees and homeless people, with all the support they need to rebuild their lives. Finally, they enjoyed a presentation on the 13 Houses project that the Daughters carry out

alongside the Society of St Vincent de Paul. They want to expand it to all the branches and several cities across Spain.

The FHA team and Commission members got a great feeling of the priceless work that Vincentians carry out in Spain. This country already hosts two 13 Houses projects, in Madrid and [Seville](#) and they hope to see more collaborative projects and new outpourings of solidarity towards the international Vincentian Family.



The World's Big Sleep Out



On the 7th of December, people around the world joined in an enormous act of global solidarity to support people who have no choice but to sleep on the streets. From Los Angeles to London; from New Delhi to Manila and Brisbane, people slept out for one night to raise awareness of the global scale of homelessness and to raise urgently needed funds for organisations that work to help those that are homeless or housing insecure.

Whilst this one night out could not compare to the plight of people who have to sleep on the streets, on benches, in derelict buildings or other unsafe places all across the world; it did help to shine a spotlight on this social issue. To solve it, all of us need to come together in collaboration

to provide practical solutions and to advocate for change.

On the night, many members of the Vincentian Family joined in – true to their unwavering commitment to the poor. Teams from [DePaul University](#) slept out in Chicago; [Depaul Ukraine](#) and supporters braved freezing winter conditions in Kharkiv; and in London, the team of the Famvin Homeless Alliance volunteered throughout the night - offering tea and chats.

The thousands of people sleeping out on this one night showed us that there is much compassion for homeless people all across the world; and that people are devoted and ready to join us in our efforts to end homelessness.

14 ambassadors to spread the word about the Alliance

Our 14 volunteer ambassadors are already spreading the word about the Alliance all over the world. Since the launch of the FHA in 2017, it has been clear the team will need all the help possible to achieve its ambitious objectives. As a global initiative, not everything can be carried out by our small team. That is why the FHA launched the volunteer ambassadors programme, whose first results we are starting to see.

[The 14 ambassadors](#) represent the diversity of the Vincentian Family, including people from different ages, backgrounds, continents and branches. Our ambassadors work in their communities and within existing Vincentian Family structures to encourage engagement and help those serving our homeless neighbours. They were chosen after an application process and they will remain in their volunteer role for two years.

[They all came together in Paris in July](#) for a three-day training session that combined presentations on the FHA and the 13 Houses Campaign with workshops on specific skills and visits to places associated with the Vincentian tradition. They also drafted their work plans for the following two years, setting their ambitions as ambassadors and how to fulfil them.

Since July, they haven't stopped presenting the FHA and the 13 Houses Campaign wherever they could and encouraging Vincentians to join the Alliance. The Vincentian Family in Nigeria is going to organise a conference on homelessness after a presentation by our ambassador, Christiana Oronsaye (AIC). Father Ricardo Cruz CM in Peru is bringing more branches on board to carry out projects like the one he is



working on in the North of the country. [Ada Ferreira \(SSVP\) in Brazil spoke about the Campaign](#) in front of an audience of several thousand during a televised Vincentian event. Our ambassadors from Lebanon and Rwanda, Rodolph Haddad and Father Henri Matsinga CM, organised a visit of Lebanese missionaries to a refugee camp in Rwanda.

These are only a few examples of the work they are doing. Want to get in contact with one of our ambassadors? Message us and we can link you up.

Frander Vindas, Costa Rica, our youngest ambassador

As a young lay Vincentian, I can't stop thanking God for this experience. I have the chance to commit myself and to try to get the Costa Rican Vincentian Family involved with the FHA. We may have difficulties and issues, but I believe that working together we are stronger, and from a humble small dream we can make a difference for homeless people.

Getting to know the different realities of the other ambassadors and how they are responding in their countries, encourages me. As St Vincent was never alone in his work, I feel supported by the other ambassadors, the FHA team and the whole Vincentian community globally.

My experience in Paris opened my eyes to the huge amount of people left in the cold, in precarious conditions, displaced for political reasons or catastrophes or other reasons. But as Vincentians, we have the opportunity to change their lives through love, simplicity and justice. Giving them back that place called home, under the teaching of St Vincent de Paul.



13 Houses Campaign – how much can happen in one year?

The 13 Houses Campaign is one-year-old! In the past 12 months, the Campaign has grown from a single house in [Little Rock, Arkansas](#) (USA) to 37 projects in 28 countries. And this is only the beginning! We are expecting 24 new countries to join in the coming months!

A year ago, we launched the Campaign to change the lives of 10 000 homeless people around the world in 3 to 5 years. Since our first beneficiary, Vincent, moved to his new house in Little Rock, more than 3200 people have been housed by the Vincentian Family branches working together!

More than 500 houses are planned or have been built. Some of them are for victims of natural disasters, like in Rwanda and [Guatemala](#); others, for migrant workers, as in [New Zealand](#); or to provide better accommodation for people living in slums, like in [India](#). But not all “13 Houses” projects involve building houses or that number.


In [Spain](#) and [Colombia](#), Vincentians have organised outreach services to go to the most marginalized living on the streets; in [Peru](#) they support Venezuelan refugees fleeing their country.

As we move forward, we stay true to the values and goals that inspired us to launch the Campaign, and aim to have at least one project in each of the 150 countries where the Vincentian Family is present in the world. If you want to join the Campaign with a new project, or want to contribute to the Solidarity Fund that supports Vincentian 13 Houses-projects in need of funding, please [visit our recently updated website](#), and contact us.


In this past year, Vincentian 13 Houses campaigners have achieved a lot. Help us to achieve even more and keep changing the lives of homeless people around the world! Join the 13 Houses Campaign!





13 Houses projects: ongoing (dark blue) or planned (light blue)


 vfhomelessalliance.org

 fha.info@famvin.org

 [@vfhomelessalliance](https://www.facebook.com/vfhomelessalliance)

 [@famvinalliance](https://www.instagram.com/famvinalliance)

 [@famvinalliance](https://twitter.com/famvinalliance)

 [famvin-homeless-alliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/famvin-homeless-alliance)