



Inauguration of the "St Vincent de Paul" village in Peru, a concrete result of Vincentian collaboration

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

## OUR PATH AHEAD

Frederic Ozanam once said that *"Charity must never look to the past, but always to the future, because the number of its past works is still very small and the present and future miseries that it must alleviate are infinite."* His words resonated with us and we kept them in mind when we started to conceptualise our path for the future. Unsurprisingly, we set ourselves ambitious objectives that reflect the strength and determination of the worldwide Vincentian Family.

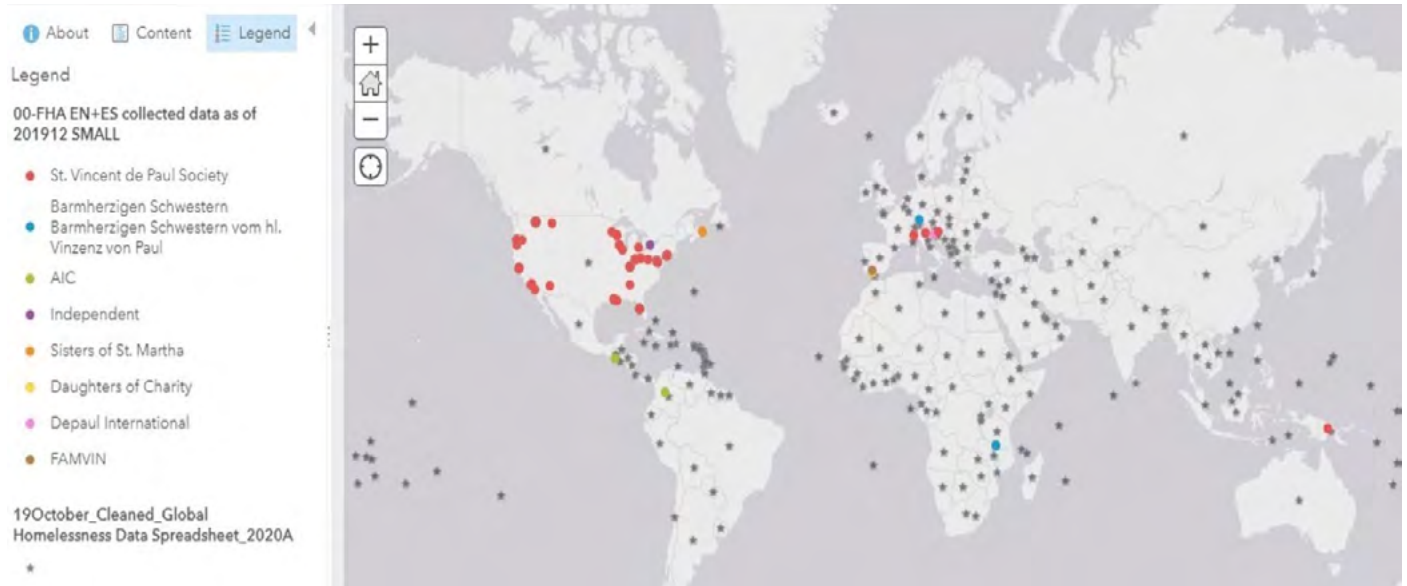
Over the past few years, we have focused our efforts on street homelessness as one of the most severe expressions of people not having a home. The practical responses we saw on the ground, showed us that the Vincentian Family operates in virtually any environment. Whilst we will continue to serve those living on the streets, we will focus on the needs of [slum dwellers](#), [refugees](#) and [internally displaced people](#) in the coming years. Oftentimes, they live in appalling conditions and of those that have been displaced, many not only have to cope with the shock of losing a home but also with the oft-traumatic journey towards safety and the challenges of starting a new life.

Reflecting on what more we could do to support Vincentians respond to their plight, helped us to sketch our path for the future. As ever, those we serve are at the core of everything we do with our central objective being to **improve and transform the lives of homeless people** – this time with a focus on slum dwellers and displaced people. Within this, we will also consider issues that affect these groups disproportionately such as climate change, gender inequality and human trafficking, and explore their connection points to homelessness. We will seek collaboration with Vincentian groups that already work in these areas so we can incorporate their expertise in our approaches.

We will also continue to **build global capacity** in the Vincentian Family by organising international conferences and webinars to support knowledge exchange. It is also crucial for us to **encourage structural change** – as Vincentians we know that *"it is not enough to do good, it must be done well"* (St Vincent de Paul). And our ability to affect systemic change will in turn create more positive futures for the poorest. This extends to the **community**

**engagement** that we will seek to facilitate over the next years – ensuring that we spotlight the expertise available and enable developments at grassroots level. Last but not least, we understand that **communication for social change** is an important building block. We need to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people, slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people and the challenges

they face; and we need to ensure that their voice is heard not only in our communities but globally. We are excited about what the future holds and look forward to you joining us on this path; and whilst much is still to come and the path is long, let us remember these words of St Vincent de Paul: *“Nature makes trees put down deep roots before having them bear fruit, and even this is done gradually.”*



Screenshot of the Vincentian Mapping interface

## Vincentian Mapping Project

If you ask Vincentians why their work with homeless people is essential, you will receive a number of answers ranging from their dignity as human beings and children of God to the importance of following in the footsteps of Vincent who, in times of war and of peace, dared to care for the foundlings, the homeless, the refugees in Paris and many other regions of France. The common thread will certainly be a passionate heart that allows other people's lives to touch theirs and motion them to service and transformation.

If you ask a politician, UN member or representative who has limited knowledge of the Church and the Vincentian Family the very same question, they will want to know who is it we are talking about and what is it that we do.

This need to embrace who we are and what we do has inspired many initiatives, like the first gathering of Vincentian Family Leaders in Rome in January 2020. For those who participated to this event, we cannot forget the feeling of awe and belonging as we heard and experienced the diversity of Vincentian branches, ministries and vocations represented at the event.

Since 2017, the Famvin Homeless Alliance has been trying to gather data on all Vincentian homelessness projects in the world in order to increase our visibility, foster networking, encourage unified advocacy and secure strategic collaboration. The end goal is to be united as a

Vincentian Family to end homelessness and the systems that cause it or maintain it.

While humility is a key value for our Vincentian Family, we understand, in the words of St Vincent himself, that "humility is in no way contrary to magnanimity" (SVP, XI:273). By acknowledging who we are and the amazing work we do together in the service of homeless people, we build strength to do even better together and to have our and their voices better heard by the international organizations and governments who make decisions that affect the homeless population.

[The FHA's mapping program](#) has borne poor results so far, but we are confident that our coming together, [in a map first](#) and in action most importantly, will enable us to embrace the world in a network of charity where everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community. We trust that the dream will come true.

Please contact us [to put your ministry on the map](#) if you help homeless people, slum dwellers, IDPs or refugees, or if you know of a Vincentian homelessness ministry. Note that we will always treat your information sensitively and will not disclose contact information without your permission.

We really need your help to make progress! Send us an email at [homeless@famvin.org](mailto:homeless@famvin.org). We will welcome all information available from any service in any part of the world.



## FHA Conference on Refugees, IDPs and Human Trafficking



*Syrian refugees trying to arrive in Greece*

After much delay following the pandemic, the FHA will be hosting its second conference, which will be a hybrid event combining in-person and virtual opportunities, ensuring accessibility for all members of the Vincentian Family. From 25th to 27th October 2021, the FHA is inviting the Vincentian Family to gather in Seville, Spain, learn new information, share experiences and build capacity on the theme of refugees, internally displaced people and human trafficking.

The FHA will shine a spotlight on the Vincentian response to the homelessness experienced by internally displaced persons, refugees and trafficked persons. As these groups are often entirely without shelter or live in temporary or crisis accommodation, they are included in the [Institute of Global Homelessness](#) (IGH)'s definition of homelessness, [recognised by the United Nations](#). For example:

- By the end of 2019, 2.5 million people in Nigeria had been displaced by conflict following the insurgency of Boko Haram (Internal Displacement, 2019).
- In 2016, 24.2 million new natural disaster displacements were brought on by sudden-onset natural hazards (Internal Displacement, 2019).
- In 2019, the Indian Government evicted 1 million people from indigenous tribes from their homes to enable development projects to go ahead because they had not met the legal criterion to live there, despite having lived in such areas for centuries (Washington Post, 2019).

- The socio-economic conditions in Venezuela led to, on average, 5,000 people leaving every day in 2018. In total, the severe lack of food, medicine and essential services has displaced 3.6 million people (UNHCR, 2020).
- There are nearly 26 million refugees globally, around half of whom are children, and 4.2 million asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2020).
- In 2016, an estimated 40.3 million people worldwide were victims of human trafficking (Unseen UK, 2018).

Many VF branches around the world work with these groups and have developed different services ranging from emergency assistance and social support to advocacy and prevention. The conference will provide an opportunity to connect with these Vincentians, foster partnerships within and beyond and improve VF services worldwide.

Over the three days, we invite Vincentians to join us as we take you on the journey embarked upon by IDPs, refugees and trafficked persons. Through key-note speeches, panels and workshops from experts and refugees and trafficked persons themselves, and visits to local Vincentian projects supporting these groups, we hope to inspire a community of VF practitioners who can locally and globally better the situation of these vulnerable people through advocacy and concrete actions.

We will start releasing more information soon on our website and social media channels. If you are interested in taking part, you can also send us an email at [fha.info@famvin.org](mailto:fha.info@famvin.org) and we will keep you up to date.

# From big to small, changing lives in the Philippines

Under the most difficult circumstances, the innovative and hardworking Vincentian spirit flourishes. In the Philippines, a country battered by poverty and natural disasters, several projects of [the “13 Houses” Campaign](#) (alongside many other local Vincentian initiatives) are working to change the lives of thousands of homeless people.

These projects diverge in scale and approach, depending on local realities, but share a common goal. This diversity not only shows the power and creativity of Vincentian branches working together, but also how the “13 Houses” Campaign is flexible enough to encompass different projects and aspirations.

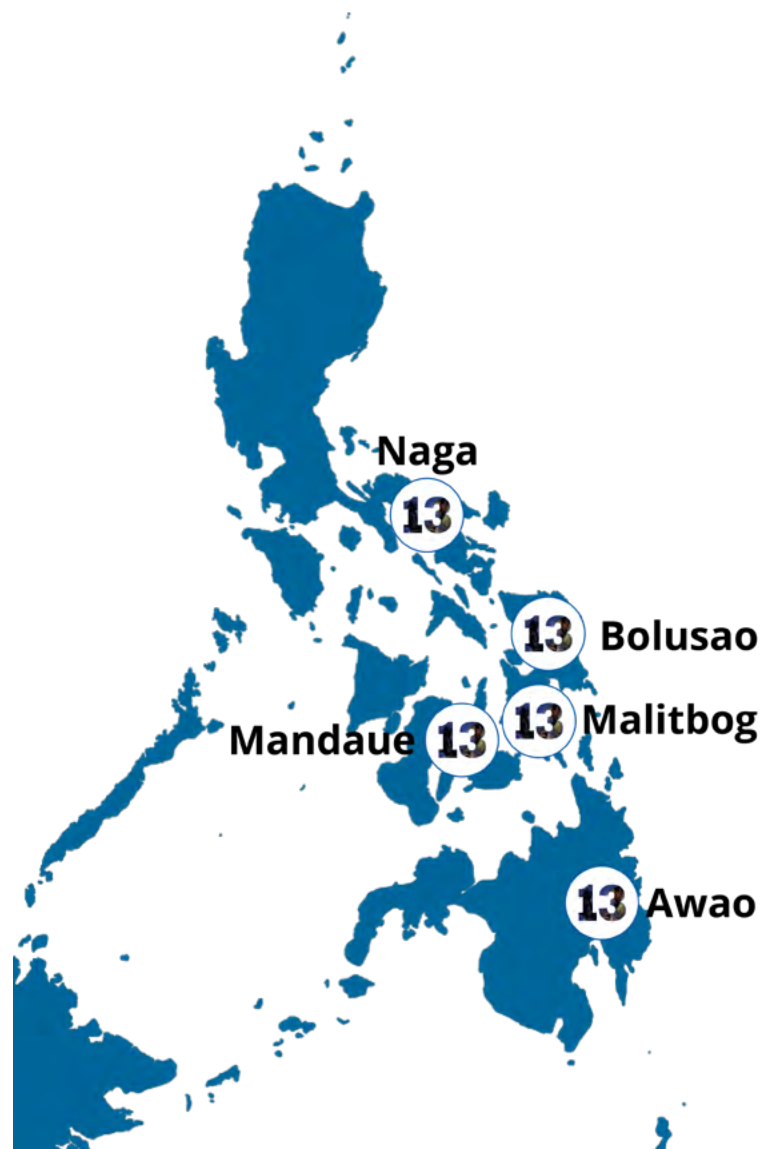
This builds on top of 150 years of Vincentian presence in the Philippines, a country which, with 85 million faithful, is the third biggest Catholic country in the world. The scale of the Vincentian work reflects the needs of the country, as a staggering 43% of the total population lived in slums in 2018, according to World Bank data. Also, its geographical location makes it prone to the onslaught of increasingly stronger typhoons, making it a frontier of climate change.

That is why supporting people displaced by natural disasters is such a big focus of the “13 Houses” Campaign in the Philippines, helping to relocate families or making their homes more resilient. For that reason, the [Vincentian Foundation](#), promoted by the Congregation of the Mission, is supporting people displaced by typhoons in Bolusao (East Samar) and Awao (Davao de Oro). The main goal is to empower communities to acquire local land and build new and better houses. The Vincentian Foundation is pioneering a collaborative project between grassroots organisations, local authorities, the private sector and the Church. The plan is to build hundreds of houses for families in Awao, Bolusao and other communities in the country.

These projects go beyond just building houses. They will help the community to develop themselves integrally, and they will address other issues such as health, education, livelihood and spirituality. Having a proper roof over their heads will empower them to live a life worthy of a human being, creating lasting and systemic change.

[The AIC](#) is also supporting victims of more recent typhoons. In Naga City, they are helping families to rebuild their houses after they were devastated by three typhoons weeks apart in 2020. The combination of light materials and strong wind caused widespread destruction.

The Ladies of Seton Unit of the AIC Philippines supported the house repairs of 40 families and then focused on 10 families who are among the most vulnerable but have their own land, given to them by the government. Family members who are skilled in carpentry and masonry will



help in the construction and provide for their families. They have teamed up with the Department of Trade and Industry for livelihood starter kits.

Finally, the [“Just One House”](#) project aims at showing that it can all start with “just one house” helping one family and then develop to reach many. Moved by the deplorable living conditions of a family she visited in a very poor area near her, and noting the absence of other Vincentian branches around her, a member of the [Vincentian Marian Youth](#) living in Malitbog reached out to her network of friends and family. In a matter of weeks, the project has raised funds and built 10 houses, and now aims to rebuild a total of 30 houses. It is receiving support from local authorities, the community, and many Vincentians in the Philippines.

Vincentians in the Philippines are showing how to transform lives and create a better future for the poorest of the poor. From small local initiatives to big scale projects, we can end homelessness, one house at a time!



## through the “13 Houses” Campaign!



*The community in Lawaan, Bolusao, Eastern Samar having a discussion and orientation on savings mobilization.*



*Blessing of a new home built by the “Just One House” project.*

## The 13 Houses Campaign keeps growing!



**43**

**Countries**



**67**

**Projects**



**1548**

**Houses**




**5959**


**People**





You can find all the information about the Campaign and the lives Vincentians are changing [on our website!](#)


 [vfhomelessalliance.org](http://vfhomelessalliance.org)

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**Famvin Homeless Alliance**

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