



Famvin Homeless Alliance Strategic Plan 2022-2024

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“The response to the pandemic is therefore dual. On the one hand, it is essential to find a cure for this small but terrible virus, which has brought the whole world to its knees. On the other, we must also cure a larger virus, that of social injustice, inequality of opportunity, marginalisation, and the lack of protection for the weakest.”

Pope Francis, General Audience, 19th August 2020

In 2017, the Vincentian Family created the Famvin Homeless Alliance (FHA) to mark the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism. The objective was to bring a global initiative to life to support established and emerging homelessness projects across the globe. It was a practical response to helping the rising numbers of people living on the streets as well as refugees, internally displaced people, and slum dwellers living in inadequate housing. Vincentians united behind the vision **“that everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community”** and reflected on what more they could do to help the poorest.

The enthusiasm and creativity of the Vincentian Family helped to house 7,418 people through the 13 Houses Campaign across 47 countries¹ and supported advocacy efforts at the United Nations that cumulated in the adoption of the first resolution defining homelessness, after the first debate on the issue in a generation. The engagement of the Vincentian Family also brought together over 100 Vincentians from across the world to discuss street homelessness and resulted in a group of 14 volunteer ambassadors who are dedicated to advance service provision for the homeless in their environments. Everyone helped us to make great progress towards our project aims – aims that continue to be as relevant today as four years ago:

- Improve and transform the lives of homeless people
- Build global capacity in the Vincentian Family
- Plan together
- Encourage structural change
- Use measurement and data
- Provide learning opportunities
- Reach out to Vincentians and the homelessness sector.

As we move into the next strategic cycle, we reflected on all the progress made thus far; and on the path that lies ahead. We reflected on what worked well, on the inspiring efforts of the Vincentian family; and on the

¹ As of 30th of November 2021

activities that were less successful and need re-thinking. We also reflected on what we set out to do in the very beginning; and how current events across the world have influenced our focus and ambition.

For example, we were heavily affected by the Coronavirus pandemic with a virus that laid open social inequalities across the world. Pope Francis so poignantly highlighted within that context that we must “cure a larger virus, that of social injustice, inequality of opportunity, marginalisation, and the lack of protection for the weakest”². Our work with Vincentians on the ground also showed that we cannot neglect the impact of climate change on the poorest. In fact, Pope Francis stressed in *Laudato Si’* (2015) that “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” (#49). And the unrest in the United States brought to the fore the deep impact of discrimination and social injustice on our communities – calling to mind the Pope’s words that “the time has come to put an end to age-old prejudices, preconceptions and mutual mistrust that are often at the base of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. No one must feel isolated, and no one is authorized to trample on the dignity and rights of others”³.

In our reflections, it became clear that we must consider these themes where they intersect with homelessness and seek expertise from parts of the Vincentian Family that already work across these issues. In turn, this would enable us to respond holistically to the complexity of poverty, marginalisation and social inequality that so often result in homelessness and housing insecurity. We envision forming collaborative partnerships with experts, existing and emerging groups from across the Vincentian Family to consult on these issues and incorporate their knowledge in our activities – working in solidarity to achieve the best outcomes for people that are homeless.

We also considered the target groups of the FHA and how they have been represented over the past years. We recognised that whilst we had always been cognisant of the broad spectrum of homelessness, our initial focus was leaning towards street homelessness as one of the most severe expressions of homelessness. For the next strategic cycle, we are therefore keen to focus our efforts on supporting Vincentians that help those who have been displaced by conflict and violence, disaster or forced land acquisition, as well as those living in inadequate housing in the many slums around the world.

Numbers on these vulnerable groups are truly staggering. Currently, 1 in 7 people on the planet lives in a slum with estimates expecting 1 in every 4 people – a total of 2 billion – to live in slums by 2030. In some countries, as much as 90% of the urban population live in slums⁴. About 80% of people living in slums or in informal settlements are attributed to three regions: Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (370m), sub-Saharan Africa (238m) and Central and Southern Asia (227m)⁵. The situation is just as dire when looking at refugees and internally displaced people. At least 79.5m people around the world have been forcibly displaced from their homes at the present moment – amongst them are 45.7m internally displaced people, nearly 26m refugees and 4.2m asylum-seekers. About 68% of the world’s displaced people come from just five countries – Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar – and 40% are children⁶.

Behind these numbers stand individuals – families who have been forced to leave everything behind; children who were separated from their parents; men and women who try to make a living, a home, in the most uninhabitable environments. If we want to provide help, we need to hear their stories and seek to better understand some of the issues they face and the drivers behind their marginalisation.

² General Audience, 19th August, 2020

³ Meeting with the participants in the Pilgrimage of the Gypsies, October 26th 2015

⁴ <https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/what-we-do/slum-rehabilitation/what-is-a-slum>

⁵ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-11>

⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>

One of these drivers is climate change. Over the past decades, the impact of climate change on displacement has become more apparent. For example, in 2017, 18.8m internal displacements were disaster-related⁷ – making the effects of climate change a major driver for displacement. Additionally, Ramin (2009)⁸ considers that climate change and urbanization will interact over the coming decades with events such as prolonged droughts triggering in-migration to urban areas, likely resulting in higher numbers of slum dwellers.

We also know that other themes, such as human trafficking, affect refugees and people from poor communities disproportionately. Displacement weakens or destroys support structures and oftentimes displaced people lack documentation and have limited access to education, employment and other opportunities – opening doors for traffickers who appear to offer a lifeline and access to a better life. Traffickers are also known to specifically target impoverished communities, promising brighter futures and thus exploiting their vulnerability⁹.

Through our work on the ground, we have also recognised one recurrent theme that we have not yet addressed in more detail: the effects of gender inequality on poverty and homelessness. Women across the world are more likely to live in poverty than men, their salaries are lower and they often hold insecure jobs in the informal economy with little protection¹⁰. In many countries, women also continue to encounter major barriers to land ownership, even where laws and policies are protecting these rights¹¹ – a major obstacle to building a safe home, livelihood and future.

Recognising the complexity of the issues that affect refugees, internally displaced people or those living in informal settlements and slums, the FHA developed a strategy that seeks to support the Vincentian Family in their efforts to help these communities. To do so, our Strategy 2022-2024 will work along three interconnected strands that will feed into the overarching project aims:

1. Practical responses to the needs of slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people;
2. Cross-cutting themes including climate change, gender inequality and human trafficking;
3. Systemic responses and advocacy.

With this, we acknowledge that homelessness cannot be solved in isolation and that we require the expertise that is available across the Vincentian Family and across a broad range of issues to affect lasting change for the poorest of the poor. We will seek to engage and collaborate with members and groups of the Vincentian Family across each of these strands, and look to their expertise, so the Famvin Homeless Alliance can work more effectively towards its vision of a world where everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community.

The following paragraphs seek to illustrate the three strands in more detail to highlight how they will be embedded within our overarching project aims.

1. Practical responses to the needs of slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people

This strand focuses on how we can support slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people in a practical manner. The Vincentian Family is very active in this field and much expertise is available from practitioners on the ground. The FHA aims to galvanise that expertise and create a space in which innovative ideas and projects can be shared and developed. The 13 Houses Campaign will act as a conduit and, over the next three years, have a special focus on sustainable, systemic responses to the needs of refugees, slum dwellers and internally displaced people. Within this strand, we will also

⁷ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/>

⁸ Ramin, B. (2009) Slums, climate change and human health in sub-Saharan Africa. *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*. Access: <https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/12/09-073445/en>

⁹ <https://www.unhcr.org/4794b4322.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women>

¹¹ <https://stand4herland.org>

explore far-reaching solutions to poverty and inequalities in access to opportunities by considering existing and developing Vincentian initiatives such as micro-financing and scholarship programmes.

2. Cross-cutting themes including climate change, gender inequality and human trafficking

In this strategy, we are giving consideration to the cross-cutting themes that affect the poorest amongst us disproportionately. Pope Francis highlighted that “we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature”¹². We were moved by these words as they so resonated with the reality we witness on the ground. This strategy will take a holistic approach and explore the multiple vulnerabilities that must be addressed when wanting to respond to the plight of homeless people. Where these themes intersect with homelessness, we will seek to connect with and learn from Vincentian Family members and other like-minded groups that already work across these themes, so their expertise can inform our initiatives – ensuring we understand and respond holistically to the realities of the people we are here to serve.

3. Systemic responses and advocacy

Over the past years, we have heard one thing repeatedly: the importance of systemic responses to homelessness. There is a deep-rooted understanding within the Vincentian Family that we cannot solve such a complex issue without looking at the underlying structures that drive and maintain poverty, injustice and social inequality. We are therefore committed to working closely with any forums that share these goals to exchange learnings and encourage systemic and sustainable responses to homelessness. Additionally, we will elevate the expertise at grassroots level and utilise their knowledge to inform best practice approaches and advocacy. We will also continue our efforts at the United Nations and will, in consultation with the existing Vincentian Family delegations at the UN and the Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH), formulate activities in the area of global homelessness linked to concrete outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals. This is especially important as our work with slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people, as well as the cross-cutting themes of climate change and human trafficking, correspond to 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals¹³.

Additionally, we are keen to continue to explore the potential of joint emergency responses across the Vincentian Family. Whilst this, in its implementation, would signify a very practical response to crises, we believe that a first step would involve a joint commitment of the Vincentian Family to create the structures and systems required to effectively implement this.

These interconnected strands informed the development of our 2022-2024 Strategy, added depth and focused our priorities going forward. The following section will highlight our goals for the next strategic cycle as well as the different approaches we will take to achieve them. Please note that some of the approaches will cut across several goals as they are intrinsically linked. Whenever possible, we will seek to develop partnerships and work with existing or emerging forums that will enable us to achieve our goals.

¹² Laudato Si', sec.139, 2015

¹³ Goal 1: No poverty; Goal 2: Zero hunger; Goal 3: Good health & well-being; Goal 4: Quality education; Goal 5: Gender equality; Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation; Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth; Goal 10: Reduced inequalities; Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities; Goal 13: Climate action; Goal 15: Life on land; Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions.

Goal 1: Improve and transform the lives of homeless people

Activities	KPIs
Strategy 1: We will develop practical, long-term and innovative responses to the needs of homeless people with a focus on slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people.	
We will continue to develop the 13 Houses Campaign to specifically encourage responses to the needs of slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people and consider relevant cross-cutting themes such as climate change, gender inequality and human trafficking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of this strategic cycle, we will have 13H projects in 100 countries. • FHA communications will increase their focus on slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people during this strategic cycle. • We will publish at least two focus papers on relevant cross-cutting themes during this strategic cycle.
We will explore the potential of long-term and sustainable interventions to reduce homelessness, poverty, and social and economic inequality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2022, we will have collated research on micro-financing models across the Vincentian Family and beyond. • By the end of 2023, we will have collated research on the potential of scholarship models as an option to improve access to opportunities through education.
We will build partnerships with relevant existing and emerging Vincentian forums/groups and other stakeholders to consider cross-cutting themes such as climate change, gender inequality and human trafficking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2022, we will have identified relevant Vincentian forums/groups. • By the end of 2023, we will have run a forum to discuss cross-cutting themes related to homelessness with relevant Vincentian forums/groups. • By the end of this strategic cycle, we will have developed learning materials on slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced people as well as relevant cross-cutting themes; seeking expertise from existing expert forums/groups whenever possible.
Strategy 2: We will utilise the global Vincentian presence, and potentially other faith groups, to respond more effectively to global crises.	
We will build partnerships with relevant existing and emerging Vincentian forums/groups and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2022, we will have identified relevant Vincentian forums/groups. • By the end of 2023, we will have run a forum to discuss Vincentian responses to crises.
We will work with the Vincentian Family to develop the strategies and structures needed to respond to global crises more collaboratively and effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will run one 13 Houses appeal and one emergency appeal per annum. • We will collaborate in the development of an emergency response protocol by the end of this strategic cycle.
We will support knowledge sharing across the Vincentian Family on effective local and global emergency responses to crises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will run one international webinar on effective emergency responses.

Goal 2: Build global capacity in the Vincentian Family

Activities	KPIs
Strategy 1: Share Vincentian expertise through international conferences and workshops and the development and usage of best practice networks such as the IGH's Communities of Impact with a focus on social impact, sustainability and innovation.	
We will actively build networks and share best practice for Vincentians working with slum dwellers, refugees and displaced people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will run an international conference on refugees and internally displaced persons at the end of 2021. • We will run an international conference on slum dwellers in 2023. • We will run two webinars per annum on relevant cross-cutting themes.
We will seek close collaboration with the Ruff Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) on core areas of interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FHA will support the efforts of the IGH by promoting the DePaul University homelessness credential programme across its networks. • The FHA will support IGH's efforts to exchange knowledge and best practice on themes relating to homelessness by promoting its communities of impact and, when possible and needed, facilitate the participation of Vincentian speakers.
Strategy 2: Develop partnerships and networks beyond the Vincentian Family and across the Church to multiply the impact of the work of the FHA and Vincentian Family.	
Engage the Church more specifically as we go forward, especially around areas such as World Day of the Poor and Catholic Social Teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FHA will work to have one World Day of the Poor focus on homelessness by the end of this strategic cycle. • We will continue to promote the work of the FHA within the Vatican, particularly in relation to the application of Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti through (a) participation in relevant sub-committees, and (b) providing evidence of need and good practice.

Goal 3: Encourage structural change

Activities	KPIs
Strategy 1: Support structural change at United Nations level to ensure sustainable futures for people who are street homeless, displaced or living in slums.	
In consultation with the existing Vincentian Family delegations at the UN and the IGH, we will agree on activities in the area of global homelessness linked to concrete outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2022, the FHA will have participated in a meeting between the IGH and existing Vincentian Family delegations at the UN to agree on future strategies and activities. • FHA will use its networks to support the work of the IGH and Vincentian Family at the UN.
We will bring the voice of people who are street homeless, displaced or slum dwellers to the UN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FHA, in collaboration with relevant partners, will organise at least one event at the UN during this strategic cycle.

Strategy 2: Support local advocacy across the globe to encourage structural change at grassroots level.	
We will support the development of local advocacy through training and other learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will organise one webinar per annum in the area of local advocacy. • We will facilitate at least one learning exchange per year to support the development of local advocacy initiatives.
We will elevate the impact of local advocacy through effective communication across FHA's media channels and through our network of ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide a platform for local advocacy efforts by (a) sharing information across our social media channels, (b) spotlighting advocacy efforts through features on our website, and (c) seeking to link them in with global efforts whenever possible.

Goal 4: Community engagement

Activities	KPIs
Strategy 1: Develop strategies to effectively spotlight expertise and facilitate developments at grassroots level.	
We will use available communication channels to effectively highlight the expertise available across the Vincentian Family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During this strategic cycle, we will provide a platform for Vincentians to share their experience of engaging their communities to end homelessness at a local level.
We will develop activities that involve communities more explicitly in solving homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2022, we will have collated research on innovative community initiatives within and beyond the Vincentian Family. • By the end of this strategic cycle, we will have developed an online resource that provides a blueprint for the development of these initiatives.

Goal 5: Communication for social change

Activities	KPIs
Strategy 1: We will raise awareness of the plight of homeless people, slum dwellers and displaced people and effective responses to their needs.	
We will use data to create a map of Vincentian projects across the world that focus on supporting people that are homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2022, mapping for Europe and Latin America will have been completed. • By the end of 2024, mapping for Africa, Asia and Oceania will have been completed.
We will seek to support IGH's Better Data project and their partnership with UN Habitat to improve the data and expertise that is available on global homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout this strategic cycle, the FHA will increase its collaboration with the IGH by (a) utilising its networks to make available local homelessness data with the aim of improving global data on homelessness; and (b) helping to provide Vincentian expertise when and where needed.
Spotlight forgotten crises across the world with a focus on displacement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will run a campaign to highlight forgotten crises during this strategic cycle.
Elevate the voice of the poor through communication, campaigns and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During this strategic cycle, our campaigns and appeals will have a clear commitment to elevating the voice of the poor via e.g. (a) the active involvement of people with lived experience, (b)

	impactful stories and pictures, and (c) the utilisation of data.
Strategy 2: Support effective communication across the Vincentian Family by actively pursuing/utilising all available communication channels.	
Develop effective and efficient communication pathways across the Vincentian Family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2022, we will have developed a contact list of communications managers within the Vincentian Family, focusing on National Councils and branches. • We will share FHA’s key communications with relevant Vincentian stakeholders. • By the end of this strategic cycle, we will have increased our current communications audience by 50% across key indicators. • We will contribute as requested to communications forums of the global Vincentian Family.

As Vincentians, we are drawn to the poor and we consider their plight in all its forms. We seek to change lives, provide opportunities, and offer hope for the future. This strategic plan encapsulates these elements and sets ambitious targets for the Famvin Homeless Alliance so we can build on, and further expand, the work that has been done so far.

“Have courage, trust in Our Lord, who will be our help in the work we have begun and in the undertaking to which He has called us.”

St Vincent de Paul