

News from UNANIMA International

Highlights

Executive Director's Reflection

Upcoming Dates

What's Happening at the UN

UNANIMA International Presentations

Advocacy 101 Training

Update on Mukuru Slums

Grassroots Stories

Resources

Contact Us

unanima-international.org

+1 (646) 933-1268

info@unanima-international.org



Executive Director's Reflection

Dear Friends,

As I write this reflection, I am aware we are beginning the season of Advent, which is a time of hope. To be a person of hope one must live through

challenging times. We have the possibility of hope in the challenges we are experiencing right now, such as the COVID-19 pandemic on a global level, the poverty around us, homelessness/displacement, the loss of migrants seeking a refuge of hope in another country, global warming, environmental disasters, and so on.

During these times of anxiety, there are strong signs of hope and solidarity, and a sense and desire for togetherness. This spirit of global togetherness gives us hope. When speaking to world leaders in 2020, the UN Secretary-General emphasized the need for solidarity and global cooperation, a time for all of us to be witnesses of hope for others.

Stories of Hope:

The President of the UN General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid, said that his presidency would be one of hope. He believes that given the devastation, the despair, and the heartache that all of us have experienced in the past 18 months, it is time that the United Nations, as a world body, encompasses the entire international community, and stands up and gives hope to all its 193 countries. The UN-



Charter says, "We the Peoples." And so, it is time that we the people unite in giving the hope that people desperately need.

He said on issues such as climate change and equitable access to vaccines, that he would 'never give up hope that humanity will rise to the occasion.' His priorities for the coming year include leading by example to help the UN reach the "gold-standard" on issues such as gender equality, investment in young people and multilateral cooperation, and the idea that global challenges require unified global action.

The 17 Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals:

These young leaders hail from India (2), the UK, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, Iceland-Australia, Indonesia, the Republic of Maldives, Malaysia, Columbia, the USA (2), Bangladesh, Uganda, Tunisia-Iraq, British Columbia, and Mexico. They are recognized for their outstanding leadership in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in areas of education, disability, farming, epidemiological expertise and data analytics, sustainability and ethics in the fashion industry, water filtration solutions, women's rights, building healthcare facilities serving underprivileged communities, affordable foods, news and media, digital schools, sanitation services, writing, hunger and food waste, advocating for indigenous women and girls, as well as an invention to contain oil spills at the source, and the repurposing of plastic soda bottles to create sustainable light sources. These inspiring young people give us much hope for the future.



Upcoming Dates

December 2 - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

December 3 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 10 - Human Rights Day

December 18 - International Migrants Day

December 25 - Christmas Day

January 1 - New Year's Day

January 24 - International Day of Education

February 1 to 7 - World Interfaith Harmony Week

February 7 to 16 - 60th Commission for Social Development

I am writing this reflection in Dublin (Ireland), where at this time of year we see the brent geese flying over the skies most evenings. It is a gift to look up and experience the wonder. It is poetry in motion, and these birds bring us hope from the natural world. It is hope that will sustain us in our efforts to help those furthest left behind. Thus, may the season of Advent bring hope and joy to all of you.

Sincerely,
Jean



Christmas Blessings & Happy New Year

UNANIMA International would like to take a moment to reflect on all that we have achieved and the positive moments we as a global community have shared and experienced in 2021. May your hearts and homes be filled with love and joy this festive season. With love from all of us from UNANIMA International.



What's Happening At the UN?



COP26

The 26th annual UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) convened in Glasgow, Scotland from October 31st to November 12th, 2021. COP26 serves as the main set of meetings for UN Member States to discuss and come up with commitments to mitigating climate change. According to a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it is estimated that current activity on the planet will cause a global warming temperature increase greater than the 1.5C target set in the Paris Climate Agreement if serious and ambitious climate policies were not pursued at COP26.

UNANIMA International closely followed the COP26 proceedings alongside other civil society organizations and climate activists. Civil society representatives, youth climate activists, and women and girls were notably absent from the COP26 negotiations. Overall, the lived experiences and testimonies of those most directly impacted by climate disasters and changes were not effectively heard.

After the conference ended, scientists evaluated the commitments made by Member States at COP26 and found that we are still set to exceed the 1.5C target. This greatly concerns NGOs, the Member States in the Global South that are most impacted by climate change, and indigenous communities across the planet.

Progress also continues to be hampered by inadequate “carbon neutrality” commitments, the overwhelming presence of multinational corporations with ties to fossil



fuels at COP26, and yet another promise by developed countries to provide developing countries with \$100 billion (a pledge they initially aimed to complete by 2020, now they expect to by 2025). Some positive developments occurred, however—fossil fuels were mentioned in the Glasgow Climate Pact, and Member States are required to report on their climate change progress every two years.

Civil society plays an important role in the UN system. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), like UNANIMA International, were able to put pressure on decision-makers at COP26 and other climate change meetings. They can also bring the perspectives, voices, and the people themselves at the grassroots level to places of power. Climate change requires people-centered solutions. Civil society and grassroots leaders can and will continue to organize, engage in direct and indirect advocacy, and call attention to climate injustices happening across the globe.



NGO Committee Updates

NGO Commission for Social Development



In collaboration with the International Presentation Association, UNANIMA International submitted a written joint statement for the 60th Commission for Social Development (CSocD60). The priority theme for the Commission for Social Development is “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.”

In the joint statement, the International Presentation Association and UNANIMA International focused on the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls throughout the pandemic. Some of these vulnerabilities include a greater risk of experiencing domestic violence, poverty, homelessness, and other traumatic experiences. In addition to providing policy recommendations that were informed by various studies, UNANIMA International and the International Presentation Association drew attention to the need for Trauma-Informed Care and housing with supports.

Committee on Migration

The NGO Committee on Migration has met regularly throughout October and November. UNANIMA International is part of the Subcommittee for Children in Migration and the Subcommittee on Xenophobia, Racism and Social Inclusion. The Subcommittee for Children in Migration has pursued two primary advocacy projects this season: 1) making Early Childhood Education and Care of migrant children a priority of UN Member States through meetings and correspondence with political candidates



in New York City; and 2) creating a three-minute advocacy video clip that highlights the lived experiences of migrant families with young children amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The video clip is to be shared with UN Member States and government officials once it is complete.

UNANIMA International has helped the subcommittee with outreach to find families and community-based organizations in NYC to interview for the advocacy video. Additionally, subcommittee members are writing to different politicians and candidates-elect in NYC to include Early Childhood Education and Care into their plans when they are in office. All messages sent were tied into work at the UN and the Sustainable Development Goals. The committee also hosted an Advocacy 101 workshop in November (see the link on Advocacy 101 Training Section for more details).

Working Group on Girls

UNANIMA International recently became a member of the Working Group on Girls and has



attended meetings throughout November and December. The Working Group on Girls helps elevate the voices and needs of girls globally, supports girls' full and equitable participation in international meetings and events, and allows girls to advocate on their own behalf





in local and global arenas. Since November, the Working Group on Girls has produced a climate change toolkit and has been working in partnership with UN Women on coordinating conversation circles with girls on the topic of climate change. A Global Conversation Circle took place on Saturday, December 11th. Our Executive Assistant, Lara Hicks, is an active contributor to the Girl Engagement Subcommittee and has been working with other NGO representatives on planning and executing the working group's climate conversation circles.

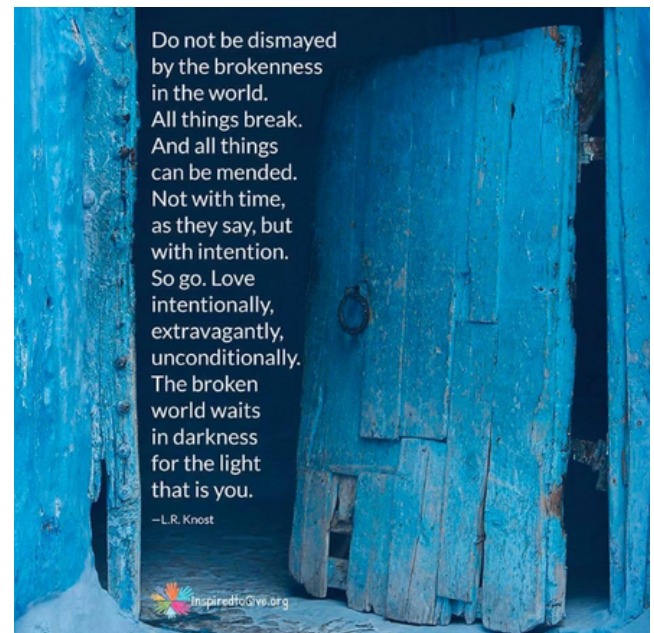
General Assembly Adoption of the First Resolution on Homelessness December 2021

The Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, which focuses on Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues, approved by consensus a draft resolution on homelessness in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution urges Member States to end all forms of discrimination against individuals experiencing homelessness, address the structural drivers of homelessness, and to decriminalize homelessness.

The delegate from Madagascar, speaking for the African Group, introduced the text and expressed that those who are unhoused are at an increased risk of contracting diseases like COVID-19. The resolution would urge Member States to ensure that homelessness policies comply with their international human rights obligations and are consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Some of the structural drivers of homelessness include general poverty, a loss of housing and livelihood, a lack of decent job opportunities, in addition to limited access to affordable housing, social protection, and land. High costs of utilities, energy, and healthcare are also mentioned. Lastly, the text requests the Statistical Commission to “establish global indicators on social protection and access to adequate housing, as well as statistics to monitor homelessness as a way to avoid excluding those who are not ‘visibly’ homeless, through quantitative and qualitative data.” Click [here](#) to read the Third Committee Press Release which discusses the draft resolution and its adoption in more detail.

Jean Quinn DW - on behalf of UNANIMA International and MaryAnn Dantuano Ladies of Charity (Vincentian Family), Executive members of the Working Group to End Homelessness, acted in a consultancy capacity with the Member States on the draft resolution.



UNANIMA International Presentations

Ransboro National School Presentation, Sligo, Ireland

For the past few years UNANIMA International have been invited by Ransboro National School to share our work on advocacy at the UN. This gathering of young eleven- and twelve-year-olds is always full of life and energy.

Children have a keen sense of fairness. Talking about the work of NGOs at the UN helps them see and call out what is fair and unjust in our world, especially around the issues of homelessness, lack of education, housing, and the environment. Enabling

conversations about these issues empowers these young people to voice their concerns and question unjust situations around them. The questions from the students were wonderful and questioned many unjust structures: Who makes decisions? Who suffers in our world and why? What is needed to create change?

Thank you to Mr. Quinn for creating this space to inform the students about social justice issues nationally and globally. This classroom is a space of hope because the students get a glimpse of the kind of society in which we could live, and get the opportunity to develop the critical thinking needed to make our world a better place.



Trauma Informed Care Presentation at Cork



Jean Quinn, DW (Founder of Sophia Housing) gave the opening address to an EU Conference on Trauma Informed Practice held in Nano Nagle Place, Cork, Ireland on Monday the 8th of November 2021. The City of Cork is working to become a Trauma Informed city and was designated a World Health Organization Healthy City in 2012. As such, this was an ideal setting for the EU conference on Trauma Informed Practice.

Jean briefed those in attendance on the work of UNANIMA International in advocating at the United Nations for the rights of women and children experiencing extreme poverty. Addressing the theme of the conference, Jean stated that “often children

and families have adverse experiences that traumatize them, and services need to respond with compassion, kindness and professionalism and have an understanding and empathy for the impact that Trauma has had on people who have experienced homelessness.” The EU Conference, organized by SMES Europa and Sophia Housing, had representatives from eight different countries and had contributions from experts in the area of Trauma Informed Practice and homelessness including:

- Dr. Sharon Lambert (University College Cork)
- Dr. Peter Cockersell (Chief Executive of Community Housing and Therapy U.K.)
- Dr. Brian McLean (Clinical Psychologist with Acquired Brain Injury Ireland)
- Mr. Colm Kelleher (Lord Mayor of Cork City, Ireland)



Catholic Care for Children Webinar



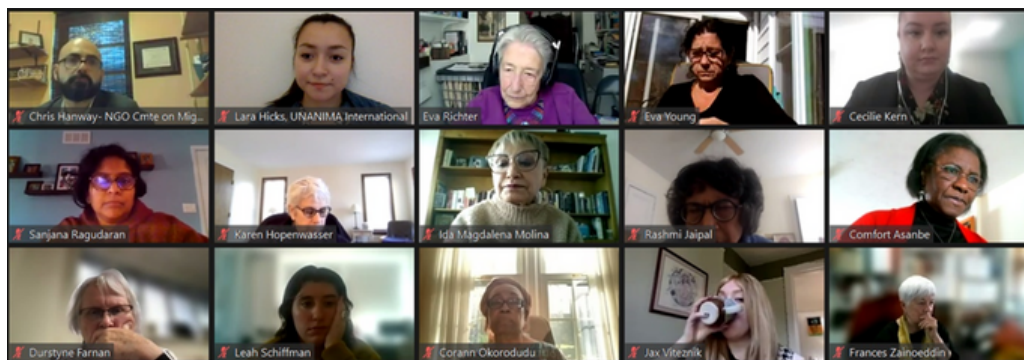
On November 29th, the International Union of Superiors General hosted a webinar on



“Care Beyond Institutionalization,” which included a presentation by Jean Quinn, Executive Director of UNANIMA International, which was titled: “Care Beyond Resolutions.” This webinar focused on Catholic Care for Children, which was formed by the Union of Superiors General to promote a continuum of care for children otherwise institutionalized (in orphanages) or in alternative care situations. Catholic Care for Children envisions a world where all children can grow up in safe, nurturing families and is actively reducing the need for institutional care by encouraging and facilitating family- and community-based care for children. Jean’s presentation looked at how this model and reforms for children in alternative care at the international level, can make an immeasurable difference in the lives of children without families.

Advocacy 101 Training

On November 18th, the NGO Committee on Migration hosted an interactive webinar titled "Advocacy 101: Increasing Collaboration and Communication with Permanent Missions." The webinar was led by



experienced advocates, and participants learned about conducting effective advocacy and engaging with government representatives to the UN. In the first half of the session, Pamela Morgan (Chair, Zonta International, UN Committee) and Professor Eva Richter (Focal point, NGO Subcommittee on Xenophobia, Racism and Social Inclusion) gave an informative presentation on best practices for meeting with Permanent Mission Representatives. In the second half of the webinar, attendees were split into groups and participated in a simulation of a Mission Meeting. Thank you to our friends at the NGO Committee on Migration for preparing us for many advocacy initiatives ahead!



New Executive Assistant / UN Representative with UNANIMA International



It has been such a privilege to join the UNANIMA International team as the new Executive Assistant/Assistant UN Representative. So far, I have been able to meet the team both in person and by Zoom, as well as friends of UNANIMA International from other nongovernmental organizations. I am so appreciative of the warm welcome I received from the UNANIMA International team and Board of Directors - their support has been tremendously impactful.

What drew me to UNANIMA International was the organization and team's commitment to bringing the stories and testimonies of displaced women and girls to the United Nations. I am especially passionate about migration and displacement advocacy, as I am the daughter of a Filipina immigrant that left her rural, oceanside home to work abroad and give her family greater financial security. Growing up in this transnational familial context shaped my vision of a world where

people could see each other for more than their place of origin. There is power in "place," and every family deserves a place to reside that is not only adequate or structurally sound but is also a safe home. It is unfortunate that this vision is not yet a reality, but the work done by civil society gives me hope and motivation. I feel so humbled to be able to play a small part in the achievements of civil society organizations in the UNANIMA International Executive Assistant role.



Although I am new to the position, I am a familiar face to the UNANIMA International team. This past spring, I served as a Climate-Induced Displacement Research Intern for the organization with two other Syracuse University graduate students. Throughout my internship, I was able to attend UN events such as the 59th Commission for Social Development, the 65th Commission on the Status of Women, and others. I also had the unique opportunity to present research findings on Mining-Induced Displacement at the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues in March 2021. The internship helped acquaint me with UNANIMA International's advocacy work, mission, and the rich community of NGOs that are elevating the lived experiences of the world's most vulnerable communities.

As part of my introduction to the Executive Assistant role, I received an internal induction and an external induction. My external induction allowed me to have conversations with NGO representatives we frequently work with and learn more about how civil society can affect positive change at the United Nations.

I attended a particularly helpful orientation for new UN Representatives. The orientation featured experienced advocates – including our very own Executive Director, Jean Quinn, DW – to share their experiences in UN advocacy and grassroots engagement.

I am learning so much about myself, civil society, and the many processes of the UN while in this position. Throughout it all, I am most grateful for the relationships I am beginning to form and the stories from UNANIMA International's past that people have shared with me as I find my footing. Of the advice I've received since stepping into this role, I found that a conversation I had with one of UNANIMA International's dear friends has stuck with me the most. She encouraged me to find the issues in UNANIMA International's foci that light a fire in me and to pursue them meaningfully throughout my work. I am eager to continue following this advice as we approach the new year and a new season as an organization.

Update on Mukuru Slums

In October, UNANIMA International received an update from our partners on the state of the Mukuru Slums in Nairobi, Kenya. Eric Godia shared with UNANIMA International that there are ongoing demolitions at the Mukuru slums area. The construction and demolition activity taking place is set to pave way for a new road. Unfortunately, this new road is cutting across the slum and is leaving residents homeless. The Kenyan Police are closely monitoring the construction process. The Mukuru community is facing numerous challenges due to the demolitions, some of the issues affecting residents include access to adequate housing, proper sanitation, clean water.





This update comes after dangerous flooding that swept away shelters in Mukuru over the summer. These floods also posed a threat to families' safety and housing conditions. To watch videos of the flooding sent to us from Mukuru, please click [here](#).

A UNANIMA International team member visited the Mukuru Slums as a part of field research for our publication, Hidden Faces of Homelessness: International Research on Families, Volume I. The testimonies and experiences captured from focus groups and semi-structured interviews at Mukuru were used to inform a Kenya country case study for the publication

Hidden Faces of Homelessness: International Research on Families, Volume I. The testimonies and experiences captured from focus groups and semi-structured interviews at Mukuru were used to inform a Kenya country case study for the publication, as well as highlight the prevalence of hidden homelessness among urban, slum-dwelling families. To read more about life in the Mukuru Slums and how homelessness manifests itself in Kenya, click [here](#).



Grassroots Stories:



Asylum-Seeking Advocacy, Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

On Friday, December 3, five Sisters of Bon Secours in the USA participated in the public witness of Catholic Sisters at the White House, urging President Biden to stop the misuse of Title 42 which expels asylum seekers at the US/Mexican Border back to Mexico and prevents them from presenting their asylum case.

—Sister Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ

Climate Change Actions by Women and Students, Sisters of Charity, Zambia



On November 16th, the Maamba Pastoral Team were given 50 assorted trees to plant by Maamba Mine. We had requested for these trees. We will plant them when the rain starts. They will definitely start growing and will grow well till June /July 2022 when water usually becomes scarce. [There is] no backup system to our water shortages! If we had something, even a hand pump we would ensure that all the trees will be fully grown in just a few years. I am often overwhelmed by our 10 poor women who have prepared these pieces of land to plant maize so that they might have a bit food for next year. But [there is] no maize seed to plant! It is just too expensive.

–Sister Pereka Nyirenda, RSC

Resources

[COP26 Climate Summit Final Decision](#)

[United Nations Climate Change](#)

[Understanding COP – COP26 Coalition](#)

[Justice Coalition of Religious UN Orientation Resources](#)

[Catholic Care for Children \(CCC\) Information](#)

[The Sustainable Development Goals Report](#)

[2021](#)

[Advocacy: Justice and the SDGs Toolkit](#)

[Abdulla Shahid \(General Assembly President\)](#)

[at Peacebuilding Commission's annual session](#)

[2021](#)

[2021 Advent Reflection Guide incorporating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

Our Publications: Click on the images!

