

# Depaul Group Strategic Framework 2024-2029

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Homelessness has no place

The UN describes homelessness as ‘a profound assault on dignity, social inclusion, and the right to life,’ and ‘one of the crudest manifestations of poverty, discrimination and inequality, affecting people of all ages, genders and backgrounds.’ UN Habitat estimates that 1 in 5 people around the world, like Jodie (right), currently live in inadequate housing and notes an alarming rise in homelessness during the last decade.

The impact of homelessness is felt most acutely at the local level, and never more acutely than by the people experiencing it themselves. Local responses are crucial because they allow for a nuanced understanding of the specific challenges and needs faced by individuals. This is at the heart of how the Depaul Group operates, our charities are locally led and locally governed. The first UN report on global homelessness stressed that global cooperation and knowledge-sharing will be essential in ending homelessness. The Depaul Group is ideally placed to respond because our local-global group structure allows us to develop a deep understanding of what approaches work locally and take them to scale globally. This presents an unprecedented opportunity to combat the alarming rise in homelessness.

We know homelessness is a growing global issue that transcends geographical boundaries and affects virtually every country on the planet. It is intrinsically linked with a variety of economic, political, and social factors including poverty, lack of affordable housing, physical and mental health, relationship breakdown, climate change, armed conflict and many more, making it a challenging and multifaceted issue to address.

At Depaul we strive to address the question, ‘what must be done’. It is time to act boldly and quickly. Over the next six years (2024-2029), we will pursue an ambitious local-global agenda to significantly grow the number of people across the world who can claim the most basic of human needs - the dignity and security of a place to call home. The strategy will show how we will work to prevent people from becoming homeless, and how we’ll support those experiencing homelessness through our national subsidiaries and global partnerships. It will also have a distinct new focus on elevating the voices of those that are often forgotten and advocating for change.

To bring this ambitious strategic vision to life we will need radical new thinking, be willing to take risks and to invest our limited resources wisely. We will need to be locally-led, agile and committed to the premise that one size doesn’t fit all. We will need to effectively involve those we serve and actively engage with those who share our commitment to creating a society in which everyone, across the world, has a place to call home and a stake in their community.

”The most difficult part is processing that you’re homeless.

It’s hard to understand. It’s waking up every morning and realising I’m not where I want to be in life.

We’re not numbers. We’re people. We’re human beings. We’ve been through so much that has led us to be homeless.

No one chose to be on the streets.”

Jodie, client  
of Depaul Ireland

**Our Mission** is to end homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it.

**Our Vision** is of a society in which everyone, across the world, has a place to call home and a stake in their community.

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## At a glance

**What do we want to do?** We want to end homelessness for more people in more places and change the lives of those affected by it.

Guided by our values, and international standards, we will deliver and further strengthen high quality services; we will work in partnership to scale effective solutions and expand our reach; and we will elevate the issue of homelessness globally to drive changes in perception and inspire action.

**Who are we serving?** As a Group, we will continue to prioritise those who are most in need, focusing our work on the people and communities who are the most marginalised, have the most complex needs, and where a lack of services severely impacts their ability to move towards a more stable future. The complexity of the needs of the people we support is increasing and we will be ahead of the curve to anticipate change and respond to new demands.

**Why is it important?** Homelessness is a growing human tragedy which affects 1 in 5 people on the planet and severely impacts individuals and communities in every country in the world. The Depaul Group is ideally placed to respond to the rapidly rising numbers of people experiencing homelessness by joining up local and global evidence to address and elevate this issue.

**How will we do it?** We have identified strategic objectives falling within four priority themes - service, reach, voice and values. Two strategic enablers underpin our priority themes - our people as well as a focus on income and sustainability which will make this work possible.



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## Our priority themes

### Service

#### Innovation & Impact

We will continue to deliver high-quality and person-centred services, support and housing solutions, enabling people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to progress towards more stable futures. We will work together with our clients and people across the Group to further develop models that can be adapted globally and deepen our understanding of what approaches are most effective. We will be outcomes-focused and evidence-based and will use data and to incubate new solutions and maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our services. We will develop our preventative approaches to reduce new and repeated instances of homelessness, as well as our responses to existing and emerging priority issues. We will embed equity, diversity and inclusion across our services.

### Reach

#### Collaboration & Partnership

Led by those we serve, we will remain open to new opportunities to reach more people through our work and will seek to grow our reach into underserved communities through our existing subsidiaries in Europe and North America. We will work to implement locally led approaches to end homelessness for people experiencing, or being at risk of, homelessness in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. We will expand the Group's global network, engage with faith communities, establish new partnerships locally, regionally and internationally and foster collaboration and learning of evidence based solutions.

### Voice

#### Influence & Amplification

We will elevate the issue of homelessness globally to drive changes in perception and inspire action. We will effectively campaign on, communicate and cascade the issue of and solutions to ending homelessness. To support this, we will develop the role of Depaul International, subsidiaries and our partnerships with Institute of Global Homelessness and Famvin Homeless Alliance as credible global and national advocates for ending homelessness. As a Group, we will work to ensure we speak with one voice by strengthening our shared brand and involve those we support at every level.

### Values

#### Ethos & Excellence

Our values are at the heart of everything we do and as such, we will protect and develop the Vincentian Ethos and values by further embedding them into how the Depaul Group operates. We will work to strengthen client involvement, enabling the people we serve to contribute to the design and delivery of services and to influence decision making at all levels of the organisation. Importantly, we will ensure that our services and organisation are welcoming, accessible and just; and protect the dignity of all people. We also seek to integrate an environmentally responsible mindset into our projects and operations, and strive to maximise our positive impact on both people and the planet.

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## Our strategic enablers

### People

Our people are our most valuable resource and integral to putting our values into practice and turning our ambition into reality. We will develop people strategies across the Group to make sure our staff and volunteers are supported to not only deliver our objectives, but also to achieve their own potential. We will work to ensure our staff feel and are rightly valued and we will invest in their professional development, ensuring consistent opportunities of training exist across the Group and of the standard we expect. We will ensure well-being is a priority for all and put in place measures to help our people ensure it is not negatively impacted by their work. We will nurture workplace cultures that foster growth, innovation, and inclusivity. Within our human resources, we will work to develop investment, succession planning and good practice.

### Income & Sustainability

Significant and sustainable funding will be pivotal to our ability to deliver on our ambition; a greater investment in income generation will be required. We will develop robust income generation strategies which emphasise long-term sustainability and focus on delivering the most impactful return on investment. We will continue to be donor-centric in our approach and will look to build and maintain long-term partnerships with funders who share our vision of a world where everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community. We will also explore the role of digital transformation for the Depaul Group.

“Don’t think it is a small thing to be devoted to the relief of those in distress.”