Make Mothers Matter - MMM

Single Mothers and Homelessness

Side Event - 58th Session of the UN Commission on Social Development
February 18, 2020
UNDESA estimates that globally 8% of households are headed by a single parent.

84% of single-parent households are headed by mothers.

Single-parenthood is on the rise, especially in high-income countries.

Single-motherhood can have many causes but in the vast majority of cases it is not a choice.
Economic and Social Struggles of Single Mothers

- Poverty higher for women than men + increases during reproductive years
- Economic difficulties exacerbated by “motherhood penalty” (access to job market, devalued work, pay gap...)
- Single Mother’s double responsibility challenge: child-rearing/unpaid care work + ensuring the family’s economic survival on one income
- Social isolation + stigmatization: severe in some countries

Source: Oxfam 2020 Report – Time to care
Vulnerability to Poverty and Homelessness

Access to housing: expensive private rental, difficult access to affordable housing + discrimination + risk of eviction

Vulnerability to poverty → increased risk of homelessness

In spite of reliable statistics, a shocking reality:

- In the USA, families in homeless situations represent one-third of the homeless population. 60% were headed by single women with children.
- In France, in 2019, there are almost 500 children homeless in the street every night, many of them new born.
- In the UK one in every 55 single parent families became homeless in 2017-18. In 92% of these the homeless parent was a single mother.

Migrant women particularly at risk
Consequences of Single Mothers’ Homelessness

- Homelessness as a health and mental health risk factor - for both mother and child
- Homelessness impact on a child development and education
- Homelessness and exposure to violence
- Homelessness and family breakdown
- Downward spiral
NOW MORE THAN EVER
THE WORLD NEEDS MOTHERS

Take part.
See change.