The Invisibles' Right to the City: A Policy Research on Homelessness in the Philippines

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Joly Homes Foundation and
Association Soeur Emmanuelle Philippines, Inc.
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About the organizations:

Joly Homes Foundation, Inc.

Joly Homes Foundation is a non-profit organization in the Philippines working on housing justice and inclusive urban development. JHF co-creates community-led models on housing, enterprise and community development with grassroots organizations in informal settlements and relocation sites.

Association Soeur Emmanuelle Philippines, Inc.

Asmae Foundation Philippines supports local actors who work for the most vulnerable children by promoting their autonomy through education and protection. Faithful to the values of listening and reciprocity, conveyed thirty years earlier by Sister Emmanuelle, the current teams of Asmae continue to work in concert with local associations by providing advice and support.

The research was conducted In partnership with:

Kariton Coalition

Kariton Coalition is a coalition of CSOs and faith-based organizations directly working with homeless street families. Formed in the height of the pandemic, it attempts to create a CSO-led quick response system on reports related to human rights violation of homeless street individuals and families and people living in extreme poverty in Metro Manila while advocating for a national policy that will uphold the rights of the homeless.

I. Homelessness in the Philippines

There are an estimated 4.5 million homeless people in the Philippines as of 2018[1]. About two-thirds of them are in metropolitan Manila[2]. This is said to be the most in any urban area in the world.

The figure highlights the concentration of people living in extreme poverty within the economic center of the country. The COVID-19 pandemic makes things worse, as the lockdowns prompted an increase in joblessness in the country[3]. With such increase comes a projected increase in poverty levels, and the possible rise of the number of homeless people[4]. For the already homeless, the impact of the health crisis makes evident the reality of disproportionate access to food, shelter, healthcare, and other services between them and the other residents of the city[5].

In addition, among the approximately 4.5 million homeless individuals are an estimated 250,000 children in street situations (CISS), i.e., children living in streets and other public spaces, or living in shanties in slum communities[6]. The number might be a gross underestimate, as there might be as high as one million. A 2018 baseline study by Asmae Soeur Emmanuelle (ASMAE) Philippines highlights that a majority of CISS engage in income-generating activities like begging, peddling, and jeepney barking[7]. That said, these children are exposed to both physical, legal and psychological risks, with them having had experiences of being victims of vehicular accidents, being subjected to arrests/involuntary rescue by law enforcers, resorting to vices, and even that of being bullied in school.

Such issues are related to their family situations. The children's reasons for being homeless are tied to their immediate families; their parents could have been separated, deceased, or incarcerated, while some simply abandoned them. In the same study, ASMAE Philippines points out that 36% of the children surveyed do not live with their parents. The remaining 64%, though living with their families, still experience the same health risks, lower educational attainment, and collective family incomes lower than the mandated daily minimum wage[8]. The homelessness of children and of their families is an issue that needs to be resolved primarily in terms of provision of services.

However, effective provision of services must be linked to a clear definition of the homeless. Unfortunately, there are difficulties in this area. First, while there are two laws that serve as

[1] 2018 estimate by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).
[2] Chandran, Rina. "Manila's Homeless Set to Move into More Empty Homes If Official Handover Delayed." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, March 28, 2018.
[3] According to Rappler (2021) and The Guardian (2021), NEDA projects that around 177,000 people will fall below the poverty line, and 444,000 rendered unemployed by the 2-week reinstitution of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in 2021.
[4] Ongcal, Alecs. "Manila's Newly Homeless Tell of Survival in Lockdown ." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, October 8, 2021.
[5] Philipp, Jennifer. "The State of Homelessness in the Philippines." The Borgen Project, June 30, 2020.
[6] ibid.
[7] ASMAE Philippines. Baseline Study on Children and Families in Street Situations in Manila, 2018.
[8] ibid.

cornerstones of housing provision for the urban poor in the Philippines, namely the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (RA 7279), and the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development Act (RA 11201), these do not contain an explicit and clear definition of the homeless.

Second, pronouncements and programs that attempt to define the homeless face the challenge of uniform adaptation across concerned agencies. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR), in their Advisory on the Rights of People Experiencing Homelessness[9] crafted at the height of the pandemic-induced lockdowns, uses the term 'homeless street dwellers'. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), through its Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Homeless Street Families (MCCT - HSF), offers a more developed classification distinguishing between 'families *on* the street', 'families *of* the street', 'homeless street families', and 'community-based street families'.

These are relatively recent attempts to define the homeless. As such, there is a need to ascertain the level by which the government--both at the national and local levels--adapts these definitions. The difficulty of addressing homelessness in the Philippines might rest in the absence of an overarching--if not uniform--definition of who the homeless are. The problem of definition has its practical implications, since certain governmental programs effectively yet inadvertently exclude the homeless.

For example, Manila North Cemetery (MNC) dwellers are deemed ineligible to partake of socialized housing programs. This is because they are not categorized as informal settler families (ISFs); instead they are classified as 'homeless' or 'dwellers'. This is because they reside in a public space. Such categorization in turn stems from the Supreme Court (SC) mandamus on the Manila Bay cleanup, which linked the category of ISFs to the waterways. This figured in the shelter plans of certain local government units (LGUs), where those living on the streets are least prioritized, or not mentioned at all[10].

The protracted if inadvertent exclusion of the homeless already have had detrimental effects in their potential to gain sustainable benefits from the urban space. They have been effectively rendered invisible in government programs, despite being part of the population living in extreme poverty.

This policy research seeks to address three interrelated questions. First, what are the existing policies in the Philippines for the homeless? This policy research as such examines the various ways by which the government has attempted to address the issue of homelessness. Governmental interventions are categorized in four key areas, namely: social protection, basic services, housing services, and social safeguards for the homeless.

The second question is: What accounts for the 'invisibility' of the homeless? This policy research as such reviews the ways by which governmental interventions define and count the

[9] Commission on Human Rights. "Advisory on the Rights of Persons Experiencing Homelessness and Destitution During Pandemic", 2021.
[10] Reyes, Carl. "Eternal Slumber and (Im)permanent Dwellers: Intersectional Informality in a Metro Manila Cemetery," 2022.

homeless. A key argument is that the homeless are rendered invisible due to the lack of an overarching definition of who they are. The definitions seem to be specific to offices implementing projects/programs for the homeless, rendering governmental interventions arbitrary.

The third question is: What are some policy directions that can be adopted to address the issues of the homeless/homelessness? In mapping the currently existing interventions, this policy research identifies gaps in policy and programming within the key areas identified, with the aim of providing a set of policy and/or program recommendations. While this policy research intends to form a basis for national legislation, it can also be of use to partners in the NGO sector in anchoring future projects and programs for the homeless.

The policy research draws insights from a review of national and local policies and local policies. We cover a selection of cities in Metro Manila, where homelessness is established to predominantly occur. The policies reviewed are coded and analyzed using four (4) areas of policy: social safeguards, social protection, basic services, and housing services. These policy areas are informed by the World Charter for the Right to the City. The World Charter for the Right to the City identifies rights to what the city can provide, such as decent shelter, living wages, treatment with dignity and respect, and protection from harassment by the state. It also adds rights to free organization, social security, and health and education. Definitions of the homeless are also gleaned from the policies, when available.

Insights are also gleaned from key informant interviews with selected government officials and civil society representatives concerned with the homeless (see Annex 1 for the list of interviewees). Data from the interviews are coded and analyzed based on the following themes: definition of the homeless, especially its distinction from ISFs; existing policies and/or programs catering to the homeless; and recommendations for policy for the homeless.

II. Existing Policies, Programs, and Services for the Homeless

We begin with a discussion of the existing governmental policies, programs and/or projects catering to the issues of the homeless. The discussion focuses on four key areas, namely: social protection, basic services, housing services, and social safeguards. We see that the interventions are skewed towards provision of social safeguards, especially given the precariousness of homelessness.

II.A. Social Safeguards

Social safeguards are measures that aim to prevent, reduce, mitigate, or compensate for the negative impact of development projects. Development in the cities can potentially displace the homeless violently, and leave them without a place to stay. It also aids in the prevention of social exclusion.[11] These policies are designed to shape rescue operations and programs that intend

[11] Amakella Pathways. “The Need for Social Safeguards in Development Projects.” Amakella Pathways, January 18, 2022.https://www.amakella.com/social-safeguards-policies/#:~:text=Social%20safeguards%20refer%20to%20the,%E2%80%9Cdo%20no%20harm%E2%80%9D%20approach.

to take them out of the streets so that they return to a dignified life and prevent their exposure from the dangers in public spaces. Put simply, these can be understood as mechanisms to protect their human rights against state abuse and involuntary displacement.

A landmark legislation in this context is the repeal of the Anti-Vagrancy Law of 2012.[12] This law decriminalized vagrancy through amending Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code. Prior to the repeal, vagrants included:

1) Any person having no apparent means of subsistence, who has the physical ability to work and who neglects to apply himself or herself to some lawful calling;
2) Any person found loitering about public or semi-public buildings or places or trampling or wandering about the country or the streets without visible means of support;
3) Any idle or dissolute person who ledges in houses of ill fame; ruffians or pimps and those who habitually associate with prostitutes;
4) Any person who, not being included in the provisions of other articles of [the RPC], shall be found loitering in any inhabited or uninhabited place belonging to another without any lawful or justifiable purpose.[13]

Although vagrancy is already decriminalized, mendicancy, which is a condition the homeless can easily fall into, is still considered a crime under the Mendicancy Law of 1978.[14] It is important to note that one of the explicit objectives of the law is the prevention of "the exploitation of infants and children through mendicancy", and the provision of "habilitative services for those already exploited or in immediate danger of exploitation"[15], through the provision of "an integrated developmental package of preventive, habilitative, interceptive, remedial, and/or rehabilitative services".[16] Section 7 of the law also mandates LGUs to "provide socio-economic programs and establish operating units including reception and action centers, sheltered workshops, constitute homes and other facilities for mendicants" in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The DILG also has a Memorandum Circular (MC) titled Guidelines on Requesting for Police Assistance in Demolition or Eviction Activities under the UDHA. Section 3 explicitly states the objectives of the MC:

a. Prevent, and if not, to stop the hostility and violence arising from the Demolition and/or Eviction of Underprivileged and Homeless Citizens;
b. Safeguard from hostility and violence, not only the affected Underprivileged and Homeless Citizens but also the representatives of government agencies and police personnel, involved in the Demolition and/or Eviction.[17]

The key aspect of the MC concerns the procedures of the pre-demolition conference that need to be followed in the processes involved in demolition and eviction activities. Parties that should

[12] RA 10158
[13] RPC, Act No, 3815
[14] PD 1563
[15] Section 2.b
[16] Section 2.c
[17] DILG MC 2014-82, s2014

be represented in the pre-demolition conference must include “representatives of the affected families, [and the] landowner (in case of privately owned property)”.[18] It is important to note that in the MC, “underprivileged and homeless citizens” pertains

> to the beneficiaries of the UDHA and to individuals or families residing in urban or urbanizable areas whose income or combined household income falls within the poverty threshold as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and who do not own house facilities. This shall include those who live in makeshift dwelling units and do not enjoy security of tenure.[19]

It is also worthy to note that dwelling in public places such as “sidewalks, public cemeteries, roads, parks and playgrounds” are covered by what the MC refers to as “Extra-judicial Eviction and Demolition”.[20]

Notably, LGUs enact measures to regulate the use of force by state authorities, particularly for children. The Quezon City Children’s Code of 2012 mandates the government to provide special protection for CISS. It also ensures that rescue operations should be conducted in accordance with child-friendly protocols. In this ordinance, rescue is seen as a reaching out process where children are informed of available assistance. Recently, the City of Manila, through Executive Order 40 series of 2022 mandates that police must not detain, but instead turn over children to health and welfare authorities. It also mentions that the police should follow the manual in handling children at risk, and children in conflict with the law (CICLs).

Some LGU services also provide transitional shelter for the homeless to stay. The Quezon City government’s Social Services Development Department has the Bahay Aruga. It is intended for the homeless and neglected elderly who are city residents and need temporary shelter. Valenzuela City also maintains a Bahay Kalinga Halfway Home since 2012, particularly targeted towards neglected children. It serves as a temporary shelter for “street wanderers, foundlings, and those recovering from abuse”.[21]

Efforts to bring the homeless out of homelessness, including those that intend to relocate them out of cities, is understood by this policy research as part of social safeguards. These efforts arguably are informed, on the one hand, by the continuing perception of the homeless as a disturbance in the peace, order, and security of the city. On the other hand, there is also the reality of scarcity of resources, especially that of affordable living spaces that LGUs have to contend with.

The balik-probinsya program has been a feature of policies to relocate the homeless. By returning them to the countryside, the program has sought to remove people out of homelessness and prevent their return on the streets. As early as 2003, the DSWD has included it on its guidelines for the Sagip Kalinga Project, along with other provisions such as

[18] Section 6.a
[19] Section 4
[20] ibid.
[21] City of Valenzuela. Valenzuela City Opens Bahay Kalinga Halfway Home, 2012.

"counseling, educational assistance, medical/hospital referral, effective parenting, and para-legal training program".[22] As late as 2021, DSWD has included balik-probinsya as a measure against homelessness in their Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajaus (see Annex 4).

LGUs have also adapted the balik-probinsya program. For example, the Quezon City government's Comprehensive Development Plan 2021-2025 has included the strengthened balik-probinsya program as a resettlement option, both for resolving the prevalence of ISFs in danger areas, congestion in poverty-marred areas. This has also been operationalized in their Social Services charter, as the LGU also offers balik-probinsya transportation assistance for individuals/families in crisis situations.

II.B. Social Protection

Social protection is a set of policies and programs intended to reduce poverty and vulnerability through provision of protection from shocks such as hazards or sudden loss of income, improvement of one's capacity to manage risks, and ultimately provision of livelihood and employment opportunities. Social protection includes labor market interventions, which are intended at providing and enhancing opportunities to work, and ensuring the rights and welfare of workers; social insurance, which are designed to cushion risks connected to unemployment, injury, old age, health conditions, and disability; social welfare, which are interventions to support the poor for them to meet their basic requirements; and social safety nets, which involve mechanisms addressing shocks brought about by economic downturns, disasters, and calamities.[23]

The DSWD, in coordination with LGUs, has several social protection programs catering to the needs of the homeless. There is the MCCT - HSF, which provides access to job and livelihood opportunities for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) beneficiaries. The Enhanced Support Services Intervention (ESSI) Guidelines for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Beneficiaries provides grants aimed at developing "the capacity of beneficiaries in engaging [*sic*] to income-generating projects or to seek employment leading to a more stable source of income for their families".[24] Specifically in terms of social protection, ESSI provides Cash For Work (CFW), "a short-term intervention providing an allowance or stipend to program beneficiaries participating in or undertaking preparedness, relief, rehabilitation or risk reduction projects in their communities" Projects under CFW might also include those "identified community development activities that may be deemed necessary by the community to respond to the development needs of the Pantawid beneficiaries particularly the [homeless shelter families (HSFs), indigenous peoples (IPs)] and other vulnerable groups". Projects with CFW grant "shall have a maximum of eleven (11) days with payment rate of 100% of the prevailing regional minimum wage per individual at the time of the project proposal preparation". There is also the Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajaus, still of the DSWD. This stipulates the provision of livelihood assistance via the

[22] Administrative Order 56, s2003
[23] Philippine Statistics Authority. Social Protection Statistics, n.d.
[24] DSWD MC 06, s2021

Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) Program for community-based street families. The program also supports job seekers by providing resources for capacity-building, such as enrolling in vocational courses (see Annex 5).

II.C. Basic Services

Basic services refer to necessary systems in the public sector that meet basic human needs. According to the United Nations (UN), basic services include water, sanitation, hygiene, energy, mobility, waste management, health care, education, and information technologies.[25] People living in street situations most definitely experience deprivation of these services; some of them resort to illegal means to gain access to water and electricity. Homeless people are also exposed to health risks, complicated by uneven access to effective public health facilities and services.

The DSWD has several programs providing basic services for the homeless. The MCCT-HSF gives education grants ranging from PhP 300 - PhP 500 per month for each child of the beneficiary household. It also includes a health grant of PhP 500 per beneficiary household. The Sagip Kalinga Project, discussed at length above, also contains provisions for educational and medical assistance.

The ESSI also provides grants for Small-Scale Community Projects aimed at addressing "the identified community needs and/or felt needs of the beneficiaries within the Purok/Sitio level". Priority projects include those concerning "food, water, sanitation, farm-to-market road, disaster, and small infrastructure". A minimum of five (5) qualified 4Ps household beneficiaries qualifies a group/community for a minimum grant per household beneficiary of PhP 25,000. The maximum total grant amount for the group/community is PhP 375,000.

The DSWD, in coordination and cooperation with LGUs, through the Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajaus mandates activities aimed at providing basic services. Activity Centers are to be utilized for providing values and skills education, as well as medical missions to CISS. Camping Projects are avenues for the provision of social services for both the CISS and their families. The program also stipulates the provision of educational assistance, including school feeding programs. More importantly, the program contains Reintegration to the Family and Alternative Parental Care Arrangements, where "reach-out activities are conducted in coordination with the various agencies concerned on the welfare of street children in accordance with the Protocol to Reach Out to Street Children developed by the [Council for the Welfare of Children or] CWC. The arrangements are to provide "appropriate interventions shall be provided to the reached-out children, especially those found to be abandoned or neglected". The program also includes a Community Service Project aimed at encouraging CISS, especially those categorized as 'batang hamog', to continue their education (see Annex 6).

[25] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Introducing Indicator 1.4.1, March 2018.

Basic services provision for Manila City homeless is stipulated in the Oplan Sagip: Kalinga ng Ina ng Maynila policy.[26] The said EO gives the Manila Health Department the responsibility of providing "check-ups to reached out clients (Children at risk, CICLs), immediate referral and treatment", including the issuance of "medical certificates during operations". District hospitals in turn are mandated "to provide immediate medico-legal services", including the administration of swab tests. The EO also gives to the Manila Department of Social Welfare (MDSW) the responsibility of leading "city-wide reach out operations", and of conducting "assessment and referrals".

II.D. Housing Services

Finally, housing services refer to the provision of shelter by the state. This policy research identifies initiatives that aim to provide permanent housing or legitimate rental options for the homeless as part of housing services. Currently, the Philippine government has three types of socialized housing by method: completed housing projects, where units are directly turned over to beneficiaries; incremental housing, where beneficiaries are given a loan to improve their current housing and settlements; and the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), for organized associations to collectively avail of a housing loan. However, the homeless cannot afford these options as most of them are part of the extremely poor.

At the national level, the DSWD's MCCT-HSF provides shelter assistance worth 4,000 Php for a maximum of 12 months. As a safeguard, payments are made directly to the lessor and not coursed through the beneficiary. DSWD revamped rental housing through the Alternative Family Home (AFH) under the ESSI. It is intended to " be the means for the program to provide permanent housing for homeless street families in coordination with the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) and the concerned Local Government Units (LGUs)".[27] Under this program, homeless street families including transient IPs who do not have a province to return to or avail the balik-probinsya program can be provided with an expanded rental subsidy amounting to 6,500 Php per month. This is available for a year, and can be extended by a further six (6) months. The AFH can be availed simultaneously with other programs under the ESSI.

Local housing services for the homeless indicate that housing rental as a policy has cascaded to the LGUs (see Annex 7). Quezon City's Housing Community Development and Resettlement Department Citizens Charter mentions a rental housing program for the "underprivileged, homeless, and ISFs who cannot afford economic or low-cost housing". According to the charter, the monthly fee for the rental housing is 800 Php, and increases every three years. Tenants can renew their lease every three years, with a maximum tenure not exceeding 25 years. The Caloocan City government also provides rental assistance along with options to relocate. The city's local shelter plan stipulates that rental assistance can be availed by the homeless, amounting to 4000 pesos a month for a year. While relocation is also possible, the homeless

[26] Manila Executive Order 40, s2022
[27] DSWD MC 06, s2021

are excluded in the in-city, lot only option. This makes off-site relocation as the only viable alternative for the homeless in Caloocan, as with many local governments.

II.E. Key Themes in Government Policies, Programs, and Services for the Homeless

This review shows the presence of several policies and programs for the homeless, both at national and local levels. Two themes cutting across the services reviewed in this policy research are worthy of note. First, programs that exist to protect the homeless are connected to the issue of housing the homeless. Social safeguards and housing services (see Annexes 3 and 7) are primarily geared towards keeping the homeless out of the city. This can be attributed in part to how policies and their definitions emphasize the plausible reasons for homelessness.

A key policy to note in this regard is the balik-probinsya program. Instituted as early as 2003, this policy research argues that it has been a feature of social safeguard policies ever since and has seen a resurgence during the pandemic-induced lockdowns. Moreover, initiatives that intend to house the homeless in the city are mostly limited to provision of grants for rental housing. Those who reside in streets and public spaces are not prioritized in terms of affordable, permanent housing, much less of the in-city variety (see Annex 7).

Second, there is emphasis on the sub-sectors among the homeless, as well as on the plausible reasons for homelessness. A significant vein of policies addresses the issue of children in street situations; policies exist under social protection (see Annex 4) and basic services, primarily educational initiatives (see Annex 6). Other policies pay close attention to the plausible reasons behind homelessness, such as internal migration (i.e., the homeless supposedly coming from the countryside), or ethnicity.

Notwithstanding the impacts of these governmental intervention on these sub-sectors of the homeless population, what can be argued is that such policies and/or programs have only circled around the larger issue of how best to address the actual conditions of the homeless. Arguably until the MCCT-HSF and succeeding social welfare policies (see Annex 5), the homeless are neither seen in terms of being a family living in/on the streets, nor is chronic homelessness acknowledged as a policy problem. This relates to the question of how the homeless are defined.

III. Defining and Counting the Homeless

Defining the homeless is a big gap this policy research has found. This gap cuts across national and local levels of government, civil society organizations, and even that of global actors. It must be noted, however, that attempts at defining the homeless are not lacking; this policy research has found multiple definitions across national and local levels of government, as well as emergent descriptions from civil society. A key observation is that the various definitions of the homeless seem to be project/program-specific, tied to the offices implementing them.

This rather limited interoperability shows the lack of a unified definition of the homeless and homelessness in the country.

Closely tied to this is the task of comprehensively counting the homeless. The Philippine Government says that there are around 1.8 million families considered as informal settlers, though that number already includes homeless persons. However, these are only estimates and do not consider the differences between the homeless and the ISFs that were detailed by the definitions earlier. Regarding the counting of the homeless per se, the extent of the homelessness issue in the Philippines has yet to be accurately assessed in the absence of a definitive census.

III.A. Defining the Homeless

At the national government level, attempts at defining the homeless can be gleaned from both housing and social welfare policies (see Annex 1). Starting with housing policies, the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992[28] mentions the homeless, yet limits its definition as the beneficiaries of the said law. On the other hand, the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Act of 2019[29] makes no distinctions between an ISF--who occupies or rents a housing unit in a slum community--and the homeless.

National social welfare policies, on the other hand, distinguishes the homeless from ISFs by emphasizing attributes of street dwelling. The Guidelines of the Sagip Kalinga Project (DSWD AO 56, s2003) defines the homeless as those who spend significant time on “streets, markets, parks, premises of malls and public areas, adopting these spaces as their homes, as a source of livelihood, or both”, the category including “street dwellers, street children, mendicants, bush, indigenous people, beggars, and the like”. The MCCT-HSF, in turn sees the homeless as:

> “[Those displaced] either by fire, demolition, family crisis, or false hopes on an improved life in the Metropolitan had no choice but to go to the street. They reside in sidewalks and pavements where they also sleep, eat, play, take a bath, etc. Some of them have push carts which serve as their homes and source of livelihood as they use the cart as “sari-sari” store from which they sell fruits or other store items to earn their income.”

The MCCT-HSF also maintains a taxonomy of homelessness; it distinguishes between families on the street, families of the street, homeless street families, and community-based street families. These distinctions are carried on in succeeding DSWD policies concerning the homeless. The Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPS, especially Bajaus (2021) uses the category of ‘community-based street families’ to refer to those who have homes in relocation sites but chose to stay on the streets due to a lack of livelihood in the relocation areas. Community-based street families, however, are perceived as returning to their relocation homes on a regular basis.

[28] RA 7279
[29] RA 11201

The Enhanced Support Services Intervention (ESSI) Guidelines for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Beneficiaries (2021), on the other hand, defines homelessness not simply as a result of displacement, but also as a result of unaffordability of urban housing:

> "[The homeless are those] who do not own or cannot afford for decent housing facilities for human habitation. Including those who find themselves living in the open air (such as in abandoned buildings and vehicles, sidewalks, parks, car parks, stations, cemetery, under the bridge) or in makeshift dwelling units with no basic facilities, push carts and do not enjoy security of tenure. These are families who have lost their homes due to natural and/or uncontrolled human-made phenomena (IV.A)"

Furthermore, the ESSI guideline introduces a three-fold categorization of the homeless. First and most common is *transitional homelessness,* which refers to people spending the least time being homeless and having a "strong desire to extricate themselves from homelessness". Second is *episodic homelessness,* where push and pull factors converge. According to the memorandum, people still "hope to stabilize their lives, [but] such hope is edged with despair". Lastly, *chronic homelessness* refers to a state where one has no "realistic hopes of the future", and there the condition is accepted by the homeless. While these distinctions are helpful, they can be further substantiated by characterizing actual conditions among the transitionally, episodically, and chronically homeless.

The Commission of Human Rights' Advisory on the Rights of People Experiencing Homelessness (2021), in introducing the category of 'homeless street dwellers' crosses these definitions while providing specificities on the type of housing, and the people who are usually vulnerable to sliding into homelessness:

> "[H]omeless street dwellers' ' pertain to individuals or families living in structures made of transient materials, or on the streets or public places and do not have a house to stay. These include people working on the streets who may have been evicted from their illegal settlements and refused to go to relocation sites or who came from relocation sites, from which they do not wish to return to, for various reasons. Some come from provinces in hopes of getting a decent livelihood, possibly victims of human trafficking. Some stay on the streets for lack of safe places to stay, such as those victims of domestic violence and some manifest mental health conditions needing immediate attention. They may also be categorized as those coming from an ethnic minority group who work as seasoned laborers."

The CHR mentioned in an interview[30] that it based its definition from several sources, key of which was the "Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context". The said report propounds a human rights-based definition of homelessness, focusing on three dimensions:

> (a) The first dimension addresses the absence of home--both the absence of the material aspect of minimally adequate housing and of the social aspect of a secure place to establish a family or social relationship and participate in community life;

[30] CHR personal communication, 2023

(b) The second dimension considers homelessness as a form of systemic discrimination and social exclusion, recognizing that being deprived of a home gives rise to a social identity through which 'the homeless' is constituted as a social group subject to discrimination and stigmatization;
(c) The third dimension recognizes those who are homeless as rights holders who are resilient in the struggle for survival and dignity. With a unique understanding of the systems that deny them their rights, homeless people must be recognized as central agents of the social transformation necessary for the realization of the right to adequate housing.[31]

The Report adds that defining homelessness in terms of human rights "undermines 'moral' explanations of homelessness as personal failures to be solved with acts of charity"; what is then emphasized are "patterns of inequality and injustice that deny those who are homeless their rights to be equal members of society".[32]

Differences in the definition of the homeless between housing and social welfare policies are also evident at the local government level. In some local housing policies, no distinctions are made between ISFs and the homeless. For example, the citizens charter of Quezon City's Housing Community Development and Resettlement Department mentions that their beneficiaries are the "[c]ity's underprivileged and homeless constituents or informal settler families (ISFs)". The Quezon City DILG office often uses the category of ISFs to include the homeless, although a distinction is made based on response mechanisms, with ISFs the focus of housing programs of the local housing department, while the homeless are the focus of welfare programs of the city social welfare development office.[33] It is important to note here that this distinction between ISFs and the homeless that is based on response, i.e. protection mechanism is an observation also shared by the CHR.[34] Manila City's Local Shelter Plan (2020-2025) defines the homeless in their glossary as those "households living in public spaces such as parks or along sidewalks, and all those without any form of shelter". The Manila City DILG office shares this characterization, although just like that of Quezon City, it often conflates the homeless with ISFs.[35]

In some instances, the homeless are not mentioned at all. Caloocan City's Local Shelter Plan (2021-2025) does not define the homeless, but deems it distinct from ISFs in their count.

Informants involved in social policies at the local level reflect the DSWDs distinction between ISFs and the homeless. An informant from the QC DSWD office maintains that the homeless are different from ISFs in that the homeless are those with no permanent/fixed houses, and whose abodes have no structure, including those residing in public cemeteries.[36] An informant from the City of Manila Department of Social Welfare (MDSW) defines the homeless in the

[31] A/HRC/31/54, 2015: 5-6
[32] ibid.
[33] QC DILG personal communication, 2023
[34] CHR personal communication, 2023
[35] Manila DILG personal communication, 2023
[36] QC DSWD personal communication, 2023

same terms, noting that the homeless are not qualified for programs for ISFs, especially those which concern relocation and housing.[37]

While the homeless have received inconsistent mention and distinction from ISFs, certain local policies have mentioned specific sub-sector, that of street children, children in street situations (CISS), and children in conflict with the law (CICLs) instead. An example is Quezon City's Children's Code of 2012[38], which notes that some children are "neglected, defined as malnourished, ill-clad, and without proper shelter", conditions brought about by homelessness. Another is Oplan Sagip: Kalinga ng Ina ng Maynila, which does not provide a direct definition of homelessness, but is an order concerning CICLs, and Children at Risk.[39]

Civil society groups also have their particular understandings of who are the homeless, and what homelessness means. It must be noted that their understanding stems from their experiences in providing services and catering for the needs of the homeless. As such, part of their definitions is an emphasis on the usual behaviors of the homeless, as well as to why they are homeless.

Arnold Janssen (AJ) Kalinga Foundation defines the homeless primarily in terms of the absence of a dignified way of living. They include those living or sleeping in pavements, as well as those who are employed but lack means of board and lodging. The homeless also include those who essentially "live off" the streets; for example, mendicants ("nabubuhay sa limos"), and scavengers ("nabubuhay sa pangangalakal)".[40] AJ Kalinga Foundation mentions as well that there are those who are chronically homeless, and those that are generational, in the sense that there are those who are born on the streets.[41]

Martha's Hot Kitchen defines the homeless in largely the same way as that of AJ Kalinga Foundation; however, they explicitly mention that they adapted the CHR definition. Martha's Hot Kitchen also mentions that there are a variety of reasons why people resort to homelessness. Such includes the inability to go back to the province, given the mobility restrictions caused by the government's COVID-19 response, as well as those who actually chose to dwell on the streets. A main reason as to why some people choose to remain on the streets is because there is livelihood in the streets ("dahil may kabuhayan sa kalye"), primarily that of scavenging that can earn them PhP 150 to PhP 300 a day.[42]

RADIC differentiates ISFs from the homeless. For them, the homeless are characterized primarily by their mobility and more crucially by their inability to access government services, given their dependence on provisional housing (pushcarts or "kariton"). This leads to the homeless being in a state of abject poverty.[43] The ISFs, on the other hand, are able to have a

[37] MDSW personal communication, 2023
[38] SP 2180
[39] Manila Executive Order 40, s2022
[40] AJ Kalinga personal communication, 2023
[41] ibid.
[42] Martha's Hot Kitchen personal communication, 2023
[43] RADIC personal communication, 2023

more direct access to services because of their higher degree of formal housing and identification. They are also more organized, and have more regular sources of income.[44]

Street Believers share RADIC's characterization of the homeless. Based on their experience and on their observations of behavioral patterns of the homeless to whom they cater, the homeless are dependent on highly informal methods of income generation; they also lack access to government services, especially since some of them have criminal records.[45] To completely capture Street Believers' definition of the homeless, it is worth quoting at length what it considers as "Background of the Homeless impacting past to present behaviors":

1. Inconsistent income
2. Lack of employment opportunities in origin
3. Little to no formal education
4. Lack family support/family dysfunction (violence on either side)
5. Early pregnancies
6. Criminal record in origin/Tattoo
7. Little to no government support
8. Poor Mental Health (depression, hopelessness, illness).[46] .

III.B. Counting the Homeless

With the lack of a unified definition, there are no clear parameters to ground the number of who are considered homeless. The real extent of homelessness in the country, and the appropriate policies and/or programs to address their needs, have yet to be completely ascertained. Much like the policies that define the homeless, this policy research finds that attempts to count them have been specifically tied to programs and projects (see Annex 2). Together with the lack of a unified definition, these render the homeless arguably invisible in policy.

At the national level, the Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajaus (DSWD) tasks street facilitators to profile children, but not necessarily count them or their families. Profiling is also mentioned by the ESSI, similarly tasked at the community level. It mandates that a community profile be used to provide the minimum data, and this can be "enhanced and expanded as needed."[47] In both DSWD policies, there is no explicit mention of whether there is a consolidation of said profiles at the national level, whether these profiles will be used to count the homeless, or if it can be used by other agencies.

Local housing policies also struggle in counting the homeless, likely stymied by how they define homelessness, or the lack thereof. This results in censuses of the homeless which are likely undercounts. For example, the shelter plans of Manila City and Caloocan City note that the LGUs have 1986 and 195 homeless households, respectively. The policy research is limited from probing into where these homeless households are located, as no breakdown is provided in both documents.

[44] ibid.
[45] Street Believers personal communication, 2023
[46] ibid.
[47] DSWD MC 06, s2021

IV. Current Challenges and Policy Recommendations

The discussion so far has shown that there indeed are a variety of government interventions aimed at mitigating, if not solving, the issues of homelessness for the homeless. These interventions can be classified as: social safeguards, social protection, basic services, and housing services. As already mentioned, bulk of the government policies has been focused on social safeguards, to the extent that homelessness is treated as a hindrance to urban development.

However, despite the presence and variety of interventions, a key problem is the lack of a uniform--if not a singular--way of defining the homeless. At the government level, most definitions are tied to programs, or protection mechanisms. As discussed earlier, the DSWD itself distinguishes between different types of homelessness in terms of locus (i.e., on the street, of the street, community-based), or in terms of duration (i.e., transitional, episodic, chronic); yet these characterizations fail to cut across other national government agencies (see Annex 1). This parallels the terrain of programming for the homeless. Issues of the homeless are also usually framed in terms of social welfare provisions, which do not necessarily include housing, or currently the possibility that they can stay in the city. Another problem, in connection with that of defining the homeless, concerns the question of who counts as the homeless.

As such, we have the following policy recommendations, informed by the discussions so far, and by the inputs from the interviews with policy implementers, and representatives of civil society organizations.

IV.A. Recognizing the Homeless

First, this policy research recommends the recognition of the homeless as a sector. Interviews with both the government--especially the DSWD and the CHR--and the non-government actors put the need ‘to render the sector visible’ as a priority. It is not that there are no definitions of the homeless; the issue is that there are a multitude of attempts at defining who the homeless are, leading to inconsistent characterizations.

This policy research sees that recognition emphasizing actual conditions, rather than the plausible reasons for being homeless is crucial for a more uniform or standard definition of the homeless. Targeted approaches should be guided by a standard definition of homelessness. Definitions that implicate homelessness as a result of personal circumstances such as family issues, the level of hope one feels, as being from the countryside, and even ethnicity (see Annex 1). Though important, they actually complicate an already complex issue. It diverts the attention away from the central problem of addressing the actually existing conditions the homeless are experiencing. This policy research sees that at times, these plausible reasons predetermine the roster of policy options for the homeless. For example, the presumption that they are from the provinces warrants balik-probinsya as a primary and blanket solution.

It must be added that a standard way of defining the homeless should be based on human rights. As the "Report of the Special Rapporteur" propounds, defining the homeless should emphasize the "patterns of inequality and injustice that deny those who are homeless their rights to be equal members of society".[48] This is important to consider since based on the CHR, interventions at the level of policy must balance between respecting the inherent human rights of the homeless as to their choices, which might include the decision to stay on the streets in connection to their economic rights, and that of ensuring that the homeless attain a life of dignity.[49]

A standard definition of the homeless is also important in ensuring coordination and collaboration between the national and local levels of government. Respondents from the DILG acknowledge that local governments have the autonomy to define who they think are the homeless, often conflating them with ISFs, which as already been discussed leads to inappropriate responses, or the crowding out of the homeless by the ISFs as to the benefits of the programs.[50]

An important step would be reviewing Section 3(a) of the Magna Carta of the Poor (RA 11291) to include the homeless in the basic sectors. An explicit mention of the homeless as part of the basic sectors would be critical in ensuring their visibility, which can pave the way to more appropriate responses to their issues. Currently, Section 3(a) of the law provides the following definition of the basic sectors:

> *Basic Sectors* shall refer to the disadvantaged sectors of Philippine society including farmer-peasants, fisherfolk, workers in the formal sector including migrant workers, workers in the informal sector, indigenous people and cultural communities, women, persons with disability, senior citizens, victims of calamities/natural and human-induced disasters, youth and students, children, urban poor and members of cooperatives (Section 3(a) RA 11291 Emphasis in original).

A crucial part of this recognition is that of having a robust database of the homeless. Respondents from the government, especially from the DILG and the DSWD, stress the importance of data to know the gravity of the situation and help in its resolution. The DSWD's most recent program, Oplan Pag-abot (2023) shows some promise in realizing the goal of producing a homeless database through its nascent profiling efforts.[51] This hopefully leads to the homeless gaining a legal identity, which as previously mentioned is crucial to their access to services. However, given the early days of the program, it remains to be seen what definition/s they are using, as well as if these efforts to profile and count the homeless will be considered and adopted as definitive by all concerned government instrumentalities.

IV.B. Strengthening government-civil society collaboration

[48] A/HRC/31/54, 2015: 6
[49] CHR personal communication, 2023
[50] Manila & QC DILG personal communications, 2023
[51] Department of Social Welfare and Development. DSWD's Oplan Pag-Abot to establish database of families, individuals in street situations, 2023.

This policy research sees the need for *closer collaboration between civil society and government*. Closer collaboration can be along the fronts of data sharing, knowledge sharing, and service interventions. Several things can be learned from NGOs involved in addressing issues concerning the homeless.

There are those who cater to the needs of the homeless, following frameworks that prioritize the humanity of the homeless. Operationally, interventions focus on the provision of psychosocial support and psycho-spiritual formation. AJ Kalinga Center, for example, understands its interventions in terms of recreating their self-image, reclaiming their self-respect, and restoring their self-worth.[52] As such, they provide services in accordance with this 7-station process: "1) welcoming, 2) profiling, 3) clothing, 4) bathing, 5) grooming & affiliation, 6) meals & bonding, and 7) sending off".[53] Crucially, there is an understanding that the homeless can "graduate" or "transition" out of homelessness through these interventions.

Street Believers is another NGO that primarily provides integration services through counseling and family reconciliation programs. They also have support services though a savings program, and assist the homeless in accessing government services. Street Believers' interventions are embedded within the principle of "building of trust through love and compassion".[54] Trust is understood as intrapersonal (being able to trust oneself), and interpersonal (being able to trust others).

This policy research, it must be noted, does not push that the government do these services, primarily of the psycho-spiritual end. The government instead may opt to acknowledge, and if possible, partner with and learn from what these organizations are doing. According to our interviews with these organizations, there seems to be a lack of recognition that their services exist, and are contributory to the welfare of the homeless. In a context wherein problems become so complex that the government cannot address them alone, participation of, and collaboration with these groups has to be considered.

Considering inputs from civil society organizations makes apparent that permanent housing, while important, is not seen as the primary problem of homelessness. This is because of the acknowledgement by these organizations that there is livelihood in the streets.[55] Furthermore, what is at stake in the condition of homelessness is their dignity as humans. These organizations prioritize this in their interventions, and believe that it cannot be solely provided by the provision of permanent housing alone.

Even those in the government see that many of those relocated choose to return to being homeless.[56] They also mention the challenges of social preparation for the homeless. Considering the inputs of the CSOs mentioned, it also appears that the notion of social

[52] AJ Kalinga Center personal communication, 2023
[53] AJ Kalinga Foundation, Inc. 2021 Annual Report, 2022.
[54] Street Believers personal communication, 2023
[55] AJ Kalinga, Street Believers, and Martha's Hot Kitchen personal communication, 2023
[56] MDSW personal communication, 2023

preparation for the homeless must also be rethought. It also cannot be a parallel of the social preparation given for the ISFs.

IV.C. A central role for local governments

Local governments are the primary touchpoints of government services. The provision of a wide range of services, including those concerning housing and social welfare are devolved to LGUs by the Local Government Code of 1991. Civil society organizations also usually work with and through LGUs.

As discussed earlier, LGUs have enacted ordinances and programs that cater to the welfare of the homeless and CISS. However, there might be a need for closer coordination and collaboration with national-level initiatives. For example, the 4Ps program of the national government could be better integrated in the programs and projects of the local social welfare development offices, in effect making the LGU "own" the program.[57]

As also mentioned above, autonomy of LGUs enables them to have their own definition of homeless and homelessness. This inevitably produces different response mechanisms, and perspectives on how to view the homeless as a beneficiary. Although it is tempting to claim that the problem can be solved by standardized solutions,[58] what should be prioritized really is a standardized definition of the homeless.

Not every LGU, however, shares the same type of program, let alone have defined the homeless, as some of them have done autonomously (e.g., City of Manila). A further complication is that segments of the homeless population are transient in nature, crossing administrative boundaries. This is claimed by both the local government and civil society. The transient nature of the homeless leads LGUs to more selective responses aimed towards their "legitimate" homeless constituents.

Local governments should therefore be capacitated to be able to respond to the needs of the homeless, working within a standard definition. At the same time, they should be enabled to collaborate and coordinate with fellow local governments, especially in governing the chronically homeless. To that end, some inter-LGU governance arrangements (or metropolitan ones, for adjacent LGUs) might also be explored in a national policy for the homeless. This is consistent with Article X, section 13 of the 1987 Constitution, which stipulates that LGUs "may group themselves, consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services, and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them in accordance with law".

V. Conclusion

[57] QC DSWD personal communication, 2023
[58] CHR personal communication, 2023

Homelessness is an issue that continues to hound the Philippines, given the country's rapid pace of urbanization. The problem is rendered palpable in the wake of the government-imposed lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Homelessness exacerbates the poverty experienced by individuals and families (including children) eking out a living in the urban spaces. As such, and in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG) 11 that aspires for "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"[59] urbanization, homelessness must be seen as an important and urgent policy problem.

Fortunately, the Philippines has several governmental interventions catering to the needs and issues of the homeless. As this policy research has done, the governmental interventions can be classified in four key areas, namely: those that provide social protection; those that provide basic services; those that offer housing services, primarily grants for rental housing; and those that mandate social safeguards for the homeless. Local government units, as well as civil society organizations also play crucial roles in addressing the concerns of the homeless.

What is rather unfortunate is that most of these policies are focused on keeping the city 'clean' of the homeless, through interventions nudging them to go back to their provinces, or affording them grants for rental housing instead of prioritizing provision for in-city, permanent and affordable housing (see Annexes 4 and 7). Reflective of the policies is the close attention paid to the plausible reasons behind homelessness—such as internal migration, presuming that the homeless predominantly come from the countryside—instead of focusing on their actual conditions. Governmental interventions also emphasize sub-sectors among the homeless, which arguably lead to rendering some of them invisible.

It is this 'invisibility' of the homeless that is at the heart of the policy problem. It is not the lack of attempts at defining the homeless that contributes to this invisibility. The actual problem is the lack of an overarching *operational* definition of the homeless, that is, a definition that is focused on the actual *indications* of homelessness. As this policy research has hopefully shown, there are various definitions of the homeless from government—both at the national and local levels—and civil society; however, these definitions tend to be project/program-specific, tied to the offices implementing them, and anchored on the assumptions about the causes of homelessness the offices propound (see Annex 1). Counting the homeless is rendered incomplete, therefore, in the absence of an overarching definition.

This policy research as such recommends three main action points. First, recognize the homeless as a sector. This can be primarily done through a review of Section 3 (a) of the Magna Carta of the Poor (RA 11291). Recognizing the homeless as a sector necessitates an emphasis on their actual conditions rather than the plausible—and arguably presumed—reasons for homelessness. Such recognition can also contribute to a more robust accounting of the homeless.

Second, strengthen collaboration between government and civil society organizations catering to the needs and issues of the homeless. There is much the government can learn from NGOs involved in the issues of the homeless/homelessness. NGOs also need the support of the

[59] https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11.

government to continue, if not also to scale up, their interventions. Recognition of NGO interventions by the government is a crucial start for stronger collaboration between the two.

Third and last, emphasize the central and crucial role of local governments. Given their proximity to their constituents, as well as the powers afforded them by law, LGUs are important touchpoints of government services. LGUs need to have closer collaboration and coordination with national government agencies, and among each other. A national policy for the homeless needs the enablement of inter-LGU—or for contiguous LGUs, metropolitan—governance arrangements.

Annex 1. List of interviewees for the policy research

Affiliation	**Category**
Department of Interior and Local Government (Manila)	National Government
Department of Interior and Local Government (Quezon City)	National Government
Department of Social Welfare and Development (Quezon City)	National Government
Commission on Human Rights	National Government
Manila Social Welfare and Development Office	Local Government
Kariton Coalition – AJ KALINGA Foundation	Civil society
Kariton Coalition – Martha's Hot Kitchen, Capital City Alliance Church	Civil society
Kariton Coalition – Street Believers	Civil Society
Kariton Coalition – RADIC	Civil society

Annex 2. Select policies and laws that define the homeless

Year	Governance Level	Policies/Laws	Legal Basis, as indicated
1987	National	1987 Constitution, Article 13 Section 9: Mentioned the “underprivileged and homeless citizens” as beneficiaries of urban land reform, housing, and the provision of adequate employment opportunities.	
1992	National	Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (RA 7279): “Homeless” refer to the beneficiaries of the said law.	
2003	National	Guidelines on the Sagip Kalinga Project (DSWD Administrative Order 56, Series of 2003): “Homeless” are called “informal dwellers”. They were defined as those spending significant time on public areas, using these as homes and sources of livelihood.	Executive Order 15 Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination (RA 7610) Administrative Code of 1997, Section 2 Chapter 1 Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160)
2012	National	Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Homeless Street Families (MCCT-HSF, DSWD): Offers a developed classification, distinguishing between families on the street, families of the street, homeless street families, and community-based street families.	Executive Order 15 General Appropriations Act of 2012 and 2013 Administrative Order 16, Guidelines for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).
2015	National	Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajau (COMPRE,DSWD): Employs a different category from the MCCT-HSF, which are the following: Community-based street families, and street children.	
2018	Local	Quezon City Comprehensive Socialized Housing Code of 2018 (QC Ordinance No. SP-2771, s2018: “Underprivileged and Homeless Citizens”are city residents who are below the poverty threshold, and also refers to those who have makeshift dwelling and without tenure.	Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA, RA 7279) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 11
2019	National	Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development Act (RA 11201): Both the “ISF” and “homeless” were used in the law, but only the “ISF” was defined as “households living in a lot, whether private or public, without the consent of the property owner; or those without legal claim over the property they are occupying; or those living in danger areas	1987 Constitution, Article 13 Section 9 Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (RA 7279)

		such as esteros, railroad tracks, garbage dumps, riverbanks, shorelines, and waterways”	
2019	National	Magna Carta for the Poor (RA 11291): Homeless are not explicitly mentioned among the basic sectors recognized by the law. Closest sectors mentioned in Section 3(a) include the informal sector and the urban poor.	
2020	Local	Manila Local Shelter Plan 2020-2025: Homeless refers to individuals or households living in public spaces such as parks or along sidewalks, and all those without any form of shelter.	
2021	National	CHR Advisory On the Rights of People Experiencing Homelessness (CHR (V) A2021-004): Homeless street dwellers are considered as those living in structures of transient materials, living in streets and public spaces.Plausible reasons of homelessness (economic, human trafficking, ethnicity) were mentioned.	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 11 (1) General Comment No. 4, Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
2021	National	Enhanced Support Services Intervention (ESSI) Guidelines for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Beneficiaries (DSWD MC 06, s2021): Defines homeless families as those who do not own or cannot afford for decent housing facilities for human habitation. Including those who find themselves living in the open air or makeshift dwelling. It also classified homelessness as: transitional, episodic, and chronic.	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act (RA 11310) Magna Carta of the Poor (RA 11291) Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997 (RA 8371) Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 Administrative Order No. 10 Series of 2018: Adopting the DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Pantawid Pamilya Indigenous Peoples Framework United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 21

Annex 3. Select policies and laws related to counting the homeless

Year	Governance Level	Policies/Laws	Legal Basis, as indicated
2015	National	Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajau (COMPRE,DSWD): Street facilitators will be deployed to organize and profile children, but not necessarily count them or their families.	
2018	Local	Quezon City Comprehensive Socialized Housing Code of 2018 (QC Ordinance No. SP-2771, s2018: The Local Housing Board (LHB) is tasked with ensuring "the registration of underprivileged and homeless families as socialized housing beneficiaries", with the LHB to "assume the role of a city registration committee as constituted under pertinent guidelines, rules and regulations" (Art. II, Sec. 2.1.o).	Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA, RA 7279) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 11
2020	Local	Manila Local Shelter Plan 2020-2025: According to the current housing situation of Manila, there are 1986 total homeless households in Manila with an annual target of 331 households relocated from 2020-2025.	
2021	National	Enhanced Support Services Intervention (ESSI) Guidelines for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Beneficiaries (DSWD MC 06, s2021): Documenting and collecting information of beneficiaries is embedded in the community/beneficiary profiling activity of the social preparation phase of the Enhanced SSI framework. A community profile template that should provide the minimum data; this template "can be enhanced and expanded as needed".	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act (RA 11310) Magna Carta of the Poor (RA 11291) Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (RA 8371) Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 Administrative Order No. 10 Series of 2018: Adopting the DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Pantawid Pamilya Indigenous Peoples Framework United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 21
2023	National	Oplan Pag-abot (DSWD): No definition was articulated, but the homeless will be counted. They will be profiled and undergo biometrics as the first step towards a legal identity. DSWD is undergoing the creation of the database.	

Annex 4. Select policies and laws covering social safeguards for the homeless

Year	Governance Level	Policies/Laws	Legal Basis, as indicated
2003	National	Guidelines on the Sagip Kalinga Project (DSWD Administrative Order 56, Series of 2003): Sagip Kalinga is aimed to rescue informal dwellers through the provision of balik-probinsya program, counseling, educational assistance, medical/hospital referral, effective parenting, and paralegal training.	Executive Order 15 Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination (RA 7610) Administrative Code of 1997, Section 2 Chapter 1 Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160)
2012	Local	An Ordinance Enacting the Quezon City Children's Code of 2012 (SP 2180): It mandates the government to provide special protection for street children and ensure that rescue operations should be conducted with respect and dignity in accordance with child-friendly protocols. It defines the rescue to be a reaching out process where the children know about available assistance and that the goal of it is to enable them to decide on a better option in life.	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Quezon City Child and Youth Welfare Ordinance (SP-572 S-97) Philippine National Strategic Plan for Children (2000-2025) (Child 21) Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (RA 9208) An Act Providing For The Elimination Of The Worst Forms Of Child Labor And Affording Stronger Protection For The Working Child (RA 9231) Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 (RA 9262) Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 (RA 9344) Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 (RA 9775)
2012	National	Repeal of Anti Vagrancy Law (RA 10158): Section 2. Effect on Pending Cases. – All pending cases under the provisions of Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code on Vagrancy prior to its amendment by this Act shall be dismissed upon effectivity of this Act. Section 3. Immediate Release of Convicted Persons. – All persons serving sentence for violation of the provisions of Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code on Vagrancy prior to its amendment by this Act shall	Revised Penal Code (Amendment to Article 202)

		be immediately released upon effectivity of this Act: Provided, That they are not serving sentence or detained for any other offense or felony.	
2012	Local	Valenzuela Bahay Kalinga Halfway Home: In 2012, the city government inaugurated a Halfway home for abused and neglected children called the Bahay Kalinga. It is a former impounding facility of the city police. It is a temporary shelter for street wanderers, foundlings, and those recovering from abuse.	
2014	National	Guidelines on Requesting for Police Assistance in Demolition or Eviction Activities under the Urban Development and Housing Act: Provided guidelines to prevent hostility and violence from demolition and eviction.	Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (RA 7279) Executive Order No. 152
2015	National	Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajau (COMPRE,DSWD): Comprehensive Balik Probinsya Project, “aims to provide street families who opt to return to their respective provinces a comprehensive package of services which includes shelter, livelihood, educational and health services in order to prevent their eventual return to the streets of Metro Manila.”	
2018	Local	Quezon City Comprehensive Socialized Housing Code of 2018 (QC Ordinance No. SP-2771, s2018: Lays out conditions where eviction or demolition might be called for, such as “[w]hen persons or entities occupy danger areas such as esteros, railroad tracks, garbage dumps, riverbanks, shorelines, waterways, public spaces such as sidewalks, roads, parks, playgrounds, transmission lines, fault lines, and areas prone to fire, liquefaction and landslides” (Article VI, Section 2.1(a)). And mandatory conditions before carrying out demolition activities, such as consultations with families to be resettled (Section 2.2.)	Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA, RA 7279) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 11
2022	Local	Oplan Sagip: Kalinga ng Ina ng Maynila (Manila Executive Order 40, Series of 2022): Police are tasked not to detain, but turn over the children to health or welfare authorities. They shall follow city ordinances (Ordinance 8547) and the manual in handling children at risk and children in conflict with the law.	Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160) 1987 Constitution, Article 15 Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination (RA 7610) Ordinance Penalizing Parents, Guardians, or Persons with Parental Authority who allow their Children to Engage in Vending,

			Begging, or Prostitution in the Streets of Manila, Providing Penalties for the Violation Thereof (City Ordinance 8170) Ordinance Establishing Protection and Discipline Hours of Children and Wards in the City of Manila from Ten o'Clock in the Evening to Four o'Clock in the Morning (City Ordinance 8547)

Annex 5. Select policies and laws covering social protection for the homeless

Year	Governance Level	Policies/Laws	Legal Basis, as indicated
2012	National	Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Homeless Street Families (MCCT-HSF, DSWD): Access to job and livelihood opportunities, e.g. cash-for-work and through Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), may be offered on the fifth month of membership.	Executive Order 15, s1998 General Appropriations Act of 2012 and 2013 Administrative Order 16, s2008 Guidelines for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).
2015	National	Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajau (COMPRE,DSWD): Livelihood Assistance, “For the community-based street families, livelihood assistance shall be provided through the SEA Program. Enrolment in vocational courses and allowances for job seekers may also be provided.”	
2017	Local	Caloocan City Shelter Plan 2017-2025: To expound on this, the work and financial plan states two programs for the homeless: rental assistance, and relocation. The former stipulates rental assistance for one year at 4000 pesos per month, and the latter stipulates grocery and livelihood assistance at 10500 pesos.	1987 Constitution, Article 13 Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160) Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (RA 7279) An Act Strengthening the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management System, Providing for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework and Institutionalizing the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, Appropriating Funds therefor and for other Purposes (RA 10121) Supreme Court Decisions G.R. Nos. 171947 – 171948
2021	National	Enhanced Support Services Intervention (ESSI) Guidelines for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Beneficiaries (DSWD MC 06, s2021): The Eco-Cultural Livelihood Assistance and Income Generating Projects (ELAIGPs) is provided to beneficiaries and include certain grants. Cash for work is also included as an intervention.	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act (RA 11310) Magna Carta of the Poor (RA 11291) Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997 (RA 8371) Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022

			Administrative Order No. 10 Series of 2018: Adopting the DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Pantawid Pamilya Indigenous Peoples Framework United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 21

Annex 6. Select policies and laws covering basic services for the homeless

Year	Governance Level	Policies/Laws	Legal Basis, as indicated
1978	National	Anti-Mendicancy Law (PD 1563): Section 8. Health Needs. The Department of Health shall provide the necessary measures in meeting the health needs of mendicants, subject to such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Department of Health may promulgate.	
2003	National	Guidelines on the Sagip Kalinga Project (DSWD Administrative Order 56, 2003): Sagip Kalinga is aimed to rescue informal dwellers through the provision of balik-probinsya program, counseling, educational assistance, medical/hospital referral, effective parenting, and paralegal training.	Executive Order 15 Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination (RA 7610) Administrative Code of 1997, Section 2 Chapter 1 Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160)
2012	National	Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Homeless Street Families (MCCT-HSF, DSWD): Certain services such as Education grant of P300 per month for each child of a beneficiary household if enrolled in daycare, preschool and elementary (P500 if the child is enrolled in high school;), and a health grant of P500 for each household are provided for homeless street families covered by the program.	Executive Order 15, s1998 General Appropriations Act of 2012 and 2013 Administrative Order 16, s2008 Guidelines for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).
2015	National	Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajau (COMPRE,DSWD): Project has five activities for street children under this category: activity centers, camping projects, educational assistance, reintegration to the family and alternative parental care arrangements, and community service projects for so-called “batang hamog”	
2022	Local	Oplan Sagip: Kalinga ng Ina ng Maynila (Manila Executive Order 40, Series of 2022): Tasks local government agencies to provide the following services to the children-at-risk and CICLs: check-ups to reached out clients, referral and treatment, medico-legal services, and reach-out operations.	Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160) 1987 Constitution, Article 15 Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination (RA 7610) Ordinance Penalizing Parents, Guardians, or Persons with Parental Authority who allow their Children to Engage in Vending,

			Begging, or Prostitution in the Streets of Manila, Providing Penalties for the Violation Thereof (City Ordinance 8170) Ordinance Establishing Protection and Discipline Hours of Children and Wards in the City of Manila from Ten o'Clock in the Evening to Four o'Clock in the Morning (City Ordinance 8547)

Annex 7. Select policies and laws covering housing services for the homeless

Year	Governance Level	Policies/Laws	Legal Basis, as indicated
2012	National	Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Homeless Street Families (MCCT-HSF, DSWD): Core shelter assistance to HSFs who decided to return to the provinces/municipalities for good.	Executive Order 15, s1998 General Appropriations Act of 2012 and 2013 Administrative Order 16, s2008 Guidelines for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).
2015	National	Comprehensive Program for Street Children, Street Families and IPs, especially Bajau (COMPRE,DSWD): Comprehensive Balik Probinsya Project, “aims to provide street families who opt to return to their respective provinces a comprehensive package of services which includes shelter, livelihood, educational and health services in order to prevent to their eventual return to the streets of Metro Manila.”	
2017	Local	Caloocan City Shelter Plan 2017-2025: Two programs for the homeless: rental assistance, and relocation. The former stipulates rental assistance for one year at 4000 pesos per month. The homeless are excluded in the in-city, lot only relocation option. One viable option is off-site relocation.	1987 Constitution, Article 13 Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160) Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (RA 7279) An Act Strengthening the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management System, Providing for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework and Institutionalizing the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, Appropriating Funds therefor and for other Purposes (RA 10121) Supreme Court Decisions G.R. Nos. 171947 – 171948
2018	Local	Quezon City Comprehensive Socialized Housing Code of 2018 (QC Ordinance No. SP-2771, s2018: Section 6.2 stipulates priority levels for beneficiaries of socialized housing programs. For on-site developments, “underprivileged residents of the project site” get first priority (Article V, section 6.2.1), while for new developments, “underprivileged ISFs relocated from danger areas and underprivileged ISFs from other project sites” (Article V, section 6.2.2).	Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA, RA 7279) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 11

		Article V, section 6.3 stipulates the requirements to be submitted to the Housing and Resettlement Division of the Housing Community Development and Resettlement Department (HCDRD) to avail of the housing programs. The following should accompany the application: 1. Application Form with names and photos of all members of the household; 2. Proof of income (payslips, etc.) with Certification from employer; 3. Proof of other sources of income; and 4. Such other requirements deemed necessary by the HCDRD	
2020	Local	Manila Local Shelter Plan 2020-2025: Homeless is defined and counted at around 1,986 households. Referring to Worksheets 1-1 to 1-7 (inventory of families), there are no homeless street families in these lists.	
2021	Local	Quezon City Comprehensive Development Plan, 2021-2025: Under Strategy 5 Provide more homes that are decent and affordable in hazard free location, either thru sale or rental mode is the provision of relocation and resettlement for ISFs. No particular mention of homeless people (although “homeless” is also used in the plan). Provision of 6 months rent subsidy to homeless families with inclusion of starter kit, hygiene kit, food packs, and livelihood packages.	Local Government Code of the Philippines (RA 7160)
2021	National	Enhanced Support Services Intervention (ESSI) Guidelines for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Beneficiaries (DSWD MC 06, s2021): The Alternative Family Home (AFH) intends “to provide house rental subsidy for the qualified Pantawid beneficiaries in order to ensure compliance with the conditions of the program”. More crucially, it is intended to “be the means for the program to provide permanent housing for homeless street families in coordination with the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) and the concerned Local Government Units (LGUs)”.	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act (RA 11310) Magna Carta of the Poor (RA 11291) Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997 (RA 8371) Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 Administrative Order No. 10 Series of 2018: Adopting the DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Pantawid Pamilya Indigenous Peoples Framework United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 21

2022	Local	Housing Community Development and Resettlement Department Citizens Charter (QC): Rental housing program is available to the underprivileged, homeless, and ISFs who cannot afford economic or low-cost housing (there is a distinction for this service in particular). Lease is renewable every three years and shall not exceed 25 years. Monthly rental fee is 800 pesos, correspondingly increasing every three years. Beneficiaries can also be entitled to a discounted rate. It requires proofs of income.	Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA, RA 7279)