Homelessness in Uganda.

Definition:

Refers to a condition of lacking permanent, safe and adequate housing or shelter.

Background:

The population of children in Uganda is one of the largest in the world. Out of 37 million people, 56% of Ugandans are under 18 and more than 52% are under 15. Unfortunately, a recent report by the [Human Rights Watch](https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/07/17/where-do-you-want-us-go/abuses-against-street-children-uganda#_ftn58) revealed that the majority of the children in Uganda lack human rights. Advocacy groups, including the Human Rights Watch, find Ugandan children are facing homelessness and violence.

As of 2019, there were an estimated [15,000 orphaned and homeless children](https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/kampala-uganda-homeless-children-law-begging/) aged between 7 and 17 in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. Homelessness in Uganda is largely caused by the conflict in northern Uganda from 1987 to 2006. Other factors, such as domestic abuse and neglect are also responsible for the high numbers of homeless children in Uganda.

Factors causing homelessness:

Stagnant wages

While the cost-of-living increases, wages haven’t. In the United States, the minimum wage has gone up around 350% since 1970. The Consumer Price Index has increased by over 480%. This makes it challenging to cover everyday living expenses, let alone save money for homeownership down the line or emergencies. Without the ability to save money, an unexpected expense can devour a person’s income. Around the world, low wages keep people [trapped in poverty](https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/essays-about-poverty/) and more vulnerable to homelessness.

Unemployment

While low wages contribute to homelessness, unemployment is also a significant factor. Reasons for unemployment vary and some countries have higher rates than others. Once a person is unemployed for a time, they can easily slip into homelessness. Research shows that most unhoused people want to work but face obstacles, such as not having a permanent address.

Lack of affordable housing

High housing costs are a global issue. A [global survey](https://www.lincolninst.edu/sites/default/files/pubfiles/kallergis_wp18ak1.pdf) from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy showed that out of 200 polled cities, 90% were considered unaffordable. This was based on average house prices being more than three times the median income. Without affordable housing, people find themselves with fewer options. It becomes harder to find housing near a place of work or in a safe area.

Lack of affordable healthcare

Healthcare is very expensive, but many people are uninsured or underinsured. This means spending large amounts of money on [healthcare](https://www.humanrightscareers.com/global-health-courses/) while struggling to pay for rent, food, and utilities. It can also mean neglecting routine check-ups and procedures, leading to higher medical costs down the road. One serious injury or accident could push an individual or family into homelessness.

Poverty

On a global scale, poverty is one of the most significant root causes of homelessness. Stagnant wages, unemployment, and high housing and healthcare costs all play into poverty. Being unable to afford essentials like housing, food, education, and more greatly increases a person’s or family’s risk. To address homelessness effectively, governments and organizations need to [address poverty](https://www.humanrightscareers.com/magazine/courses-poverty-economic-injustice/).

Lack of mental health and addiction treatment services

The two-way connection between mental health, addiction, and homelessness is clear. In the US, around 30% of “chronically homeless” people have mental health conditions. In 2017, the [National Coalition for the Homeless](https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/homelessness/) found that 38% of homeless people depend on alcohol. 26% depend on other substances. Having a mental illness or addiction makes a person more vulnerable to homelessness and makes it more difficult to find permanent housing. A lack of stable housing also exacerbates mental health and addiction issues. Without treatment services, it’s very difficult for someone to break the cycle.

Racial inequality

In the United States, racial minorities experience homelessness at a higher rate than the white population. According to research from the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the [US Department of Housing and Urban Development](https://www.huduser.gov/Publications/pdf/unequal_full.pdf), black Americans are 3 times more likely to lose housing. Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are also minorities disproportionately affected. The reasons why are based in racial inequalities such as racial discrimination in housing and incarceration.

Domestic violence

Women and children are especially vulnerable to violence-triggered homelessness. To escape domestic violence, people will flee their homes without a plan. If they don’t have a place to stay, they can end up living in cars, shelters, or the street. Even for those who stay, the toll that [domestic violence](https://www.humanrightscareers.com/magazine/gender-based-violence-courses/) takes makes them more vulnerable to homelessness in the future. This is because trauma often leads to mental health issues and substance abuse.

Family conflict

Closely related to domestic violence, family conflict can also lead to homelessness. This is especially true for the [LGBTQ+](https://www.humanrightscareers.com/diversity-and-inclusion-courses/) community. Coming out is risky. Families can kick out the individual or make the home environment dangerous. According to the [True Colours Fund](https://lesley.edu/article/the-cost-of-coming-out-lgbt-youth-homelessness), 1.6 million young LGBTQ+ people end up homeless each year. This population is also at an increased risk for homelessness at a younger age.

Systemic failures

While homelessness can occur because of an individual’s or family’s circumstances, we cannot ignore the [systemic failures](https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/10-facts-about-homelessness/). Homelessness occurs when society fails to identify and support people at risk of becoming unhoused. Failures in areas like correctional services, healthcare services, and child welfare are very common. A society’s failure to address racial inequalities, increase wages, and provide affordable housing also contribute to homelessness rates.

How to mitigate homelessness:

* Coordinated approach to home crisis response
* Create employment opportunities
* Affordable and accessible healthcare
* Provision of supportive, affordable and accessible housing
* Ease access to social security programs
* Fight poverty

Effects of Homelessness

1. Lack of social security
2. Lack of health insurance
3. Social isolation
4. Mental conditions
5. Health issues
6. Malnutrition
7. Lower life expectancy
8. Unemployment
9. Drug use
10. Loss of self-esteem
11. Economic effects

**Reference:**

Link for more info: https://environmental-conscience.com/homelessness-causes-effects-solutions/