

Homelessness: Encounter Beyond Financial Aid

40,000 young people are currently homeless in Australia. This makes up one third of the overall homeless population across the country.

We, as students of the Good Samaritan Education, are called to listen deeply, love unconditionally and acknowledge that each individual has their own journey regarding homelessness. From monetary issues to situations in the domestic scene homelessness comes as a result of many issues, many that people can't control. In order to positively contribute to our society, we need to understand that a band-aid solution isn't sustainable long term.

By giving an ear to the unheard and providing a voice to the voiceless we, as GSE students, have 3 focus points to improve the homeless situation. These include: reaffirming the right of human dignity, education awareness and seeing the unseen by breaking down social stigma.

We believe that it is integral to address the person behind the societal perception and reinstate people's **human dignity** by providing the opportunity for those struggling with homelessness to feel more connected to a welcoming community. We, as GSE students, need to break the cycle of dehumanisation perpetuated by the continuous lack of respect and time given to people in a state of homelessness. We can achieve this by being a neighbour, listening with the ear of the heart and offering the simple act of conversation. Acting within a place of humility will ultimately produce beneficial outcomes for all: inviting those experiencing homelessness to be seen and see themselves as valuable members of our community.

Education is the first step towards any change. Literacy, numeracy and life skills that we have developed through the Good Samaritan Education can aid people struggling. By providing a platform to both teach and learn we can assist people with sharing their talents, hobbies and knowledge, we can all learn from each other.

To see the unseen and break down **social stigma** will allow for a more cohesive and cooperative community. Providing individualised assistance we can provide long term support and strive for permanent change. Through breaking down social stigma, the rewiring of the oppressive views on the homeless, communities will subsequently aid the ongoing need for less-temporary change. Homeless communities need more than just money and food to survive but communities that provide support.