

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

Angela and Mayet's Philippine Immersion in Mercy

It was an honor and a privilege to visit the Philippines this past January and to be immersed in the works of Mercy Sisters, Associates and partners in ministry, both in Tacloban and Mindanao. Accompanying me on this visit was Marietta “Mayet” Latonio who is working with Mercy Global Action remotely from the Philippines. The Sisters of Mercy in the Philippines are working in multiple ministries including healthcare, education and welfare.

In Tacloban, the Sisters of Mercy are working hard to provide a comprehensive education to many students, from, preparatory right through to tertiary. There is also subsidized education for children rendered vulnerable due to the typhoon that struck Tacloban in 2013. Misericordia Children Center Inc caters to the needs of street children on both a practical and emotional level. Although this ministry has not had a clear source of funds it continues to survive and provide the children with the services they need including shelter for those who do not have it. The Sisters continue to seek funds to support this vital ministry.

The Mother of Mercy Hospital, Tacloban, is another ministry of the Sisters, providing exceptional healthcare and comprehensive training to those pursuing a career in the health sector.



Mercy Center for Alternative
Recreation of Earth Sibarcoc,
Jimenez.

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In Mindanao, Mercy is at present providing education, hospital administration and care and many other ministries, including an interesting and relatively new ministry that focuses on ecological education and development called Mercy Care. Located in Ozamis, this innovative space serves as a training venue for ecological practices.

Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to visit all of the ministries that the Sisters of Mercy in the Philippines are involved in; however, those that I witnessed have clearly touched people’s lives and brought forth hope and light to those seeking a better life.

The experience of witnessing the grassroots issues apparent in the Phillipines enables us in the Mercy Global Action Office to have a more nuanced approach in our advocacy work and to promote the many and varied ways in which the Sisters of Mercy are making a difference in our world.

Special thanks to Sr Marianne Ladera from Tacloban and Srs Helen Liboon and Virgincita Alegado who provided generous and warm hospitality.



School of Saint John the Baptist of Jimenez, Misamis Occidental, Inc.



Plant a tree activity together with some children from the Misericordia and Sister of Mercy-Tacloban.



Holy Infant College, Tacloban.

Meet our new MELF Program Coordinator Mayet!

Hi everyone. I am Marietta Latonio from the Philippines. I am currently working remotely for the Mercy Global Action Office in New York as the Program Coordinator of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship (MELF) Program. I have been a mentor and facilitator of the MELF program since its inception in 2019. I have also contributed to the Mercy Global Action Office since 2016 through my involvement with the Commission on the Status of Women and the “I Have a Voice’ project.

I retired from Philippine government service early and joined non-government organizations. My work surrounds women and child welfare. My Ikigai is social work which gives me the energy to pursue life’s journey with so much gratitude. In doing my work, I am guided with compassion and respect to whosoever I meet on the way.

As the program coordinator of MELF, I am mainly responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the program. I work in collaboration with other MGA staff and report directly to the MGA Head-Sr. Angela Reed.



Mayet visiting Angkor Wat during the first MELF immersion in 2019.



THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS



New UN Report on Trafficking in Persons: The effect of crises on trends, vulnerabilities and accountability

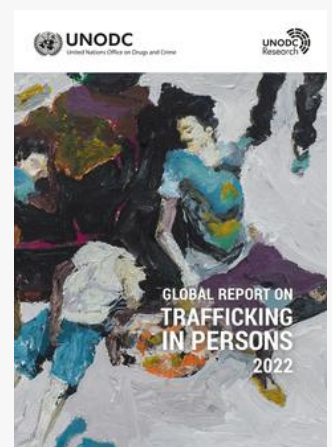
In January, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime released their seventh **Global Report on Trafficking in Persons**. The report covers 141 countries and provides an overview of patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at global, regional and national levels, based on trafficking cases detected between 2017 and 2021. The findings are further informed by an analysis of 800 court case summaries.

According to the report, fewer victims of trafficking in persons are being identified even as the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises are increasing vulnerabilities to exploitation. Fewer cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation were detected during the pandemic as public spaces were closed and related restrictions may have pushed this form of trafficking into more concealed and less safe locations, making it harder to identify victims. The pandemic, in addition to reducing opportunities for traffickers to operate, may have weakened law enforcement capacities to detect victims.

The report also examined climate change as a stress multiplier. For example, climate-related crop loss is increasingly leading to economic vulnerability to trafficking, and weather-induced disasters are causing internal and international displacement.

As Mercy engages in the UN climate change process and other policy spaces related to climate adaptation, we must demand that governments invest in resilience of livelihoods and opportunities for communities, and ensure that those affected by climate change, particularly those in vulnerable situations, have access to effective remedies and means of adaptation in order to live in dignity. Governments must also include anti-trafficking measures in emergency humanitarian assistance for climate-induced migrants. Court cases show that female victims of trafficking are subject to physical or extreme violence at hands of traffickers at a rate three times higher than males, and children are subjected almost twice as often as adults. At the same time, women investigated for trafficking in persons are also significantly more likely to be convicted than men.

The 2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons contains recommendations to policy makers to help create effective responses. MIA's publication 'Inherent Dignity: An advocacy guidebook to preventing trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and realizing the human rights of women and girls throughout their lives' is a resource which can assist advocates and local actors to incorporate a robust human rights approach into their work, as they collaborate with other NGOs, governments, groups, and individuals to prevent trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It encourages more collaborative efforts on this vital subject, with the ultimate goals of empowering rights-holders, shaping policy, and ensuring accountability.



Read the 2022 UNODC
Global Report on
Trafficking in Persons [here](#)



THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

- *MGA Advocacy Workshop on Water, 1st March 2023 - Ahead of the UN Water Conference*

Mercy Global Action is offering the first of three virtual advocacy workshops on March 1st.

Date & Time:

- **Session One** - March 1st, 4:00pm NY/9:00pm IRE/8am AEDT (2nd March)
- **Session Two** - March 2nd, 6:00am NY/11:00am IRE/10:00pm AEDT
- **It is expected that participants will attend **both** morning and evening sessions as it is formative in the advocacy workshop process.*

Location: This workshop will be facilitated via Zoom video conferencing. A link to the Zoom meeting will be sent via email to all participants.

Objectives include:

1. Build capacity and skills for critical thinking, analysis and advocacy. Equip participants with the tools and strategies to advocate in the area of water.
2. Learn about Mercy Global Action's strategy for advocacy and how to participate in advocacy on our key justice priorities
3. Introduce opportunities to engage in the UN 2023 Water Conference:
 - a. Vision Statement for the UN Water Conference
 - b. About the UN Water Conference
 - c. Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
 - d. Water & Sanitation: A People's Guide to SDG 6 - A rights-based approach to implementation
4. Identify allies/networks in relation to water justice
5. Create policy recommendations on water based on its intersections with the Sustainable Development Goals
6. Encourage participants to seek out ways to engage in advocacy in their region
7. Instill curiosity and explore the theological dimension of climate change and water
 - a. How do we engage the theological dimension in our advocacy?

To RSVP for this event, please complete the Google Form found [here](#). Questions can be directed to the Mercy Global Action team at colleenswain@mercyinternational.ie



THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

THEMES

1. Health
2. Development
3. Climate, Resilience, & Environment
4. Cooperation
5. Water Action Decade

- *Our 2023 Water Justice Task Force has begun!*

The UN 2023 Water Conference aims to provide a platform for discussion and action on the global water crisis. The conference is an opportunity to be a turning point in the effort to find sustainable solutions to the water crisis and to ensure that water is managed in a way that benefits everyone, now and in the future.

The conference will focus on five themes: **Water for Health, Water for Sustainable Development, Water for Cooperation, Water Action Decade** and **Water for Climate, Resilience, and Environment**. The conference will also provide a space to share best practices and innovative solutions and develop new partnerships and collaborations.

To prepare for the conference, the MGA 2023 Water Justice Task Force has just begun. This new task force aims to raise a voice about water and provide direction and leadership to the Mercy World on justice issues related to water and recommendations moving forward.

Read more about the upcoming conference [here](#).

- *Welcome to Máire*



Hello, my name is Maire Cunningham and I am really delighted to join MGA for a three month fellowship while on sabbatical from my role as a partner with Beauchamps LLP, a law firm based in Dublin Ireland.

I am originally from the west of Ireland, and have a long connection with the Mercy Sisters. My late aunt, Sr. Mary Hynes (Mercy Convent Roscommon), was very close to our family growing up and a role model for all of us. I was educated by Mercy Sisters and have wonderful memories of my years in “the Mercy” in the town of Tuam. Moving to college, I studied education and geography, and was first drawn to development studies. I then taught for four years including a period in the Mercy school in Elphin, also in the west of Ireland.

Being interested in legislation and advocacy, I studied law at night and qualified as a solicitor. At this stage, I have more than 25 years’ experience in advising governmental entities and not for profit organisations as well as private companies on all issues including corporate governance. Building on my client work and keen interest in social issues, I am Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at our law firm and also lead on environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters.

Over the years, I have volunteered with a number of charitable organizations and am now also actively involved in supporting and advocating for a group of young Afghan women refugees in Ireland. After all this time it feels very special to come full-circle on my Mercy connections and I would like to thank Angela Reed for facilitating the opportunity to work with MGA. I really appreciate the warm welcome I received from everyone here in New York, and I am looking forward to getting up to speed so I can contribute to the admirable work of MGA during my time here.



At the United Nations THROUGH OUR ECOSOC EYES...



- *The 61st Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development*

The 61st Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD61) is taking place from 6 to 15 February 2023. The Session's priority theme is "*Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*".

During the 61st Session, Member States, UN agencies, and civil society organizations will discuss the progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The outcome of the Commission will hopefully provide valuable insights and recommendations for strengthening social protection systems and access to social services, and promoting a more just and equitable society for all.

In preparation for the Commission, Mercy Global Action submitted a written statement on the priority theme as well as an oral statement on the emerging issue "*Addressing the social impacts of multifaceted crises to accelerate recovery from the lingering effects of the pandemic through the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*".

This year we are calling on governments to redesign policies that address the root causes of inequalities and vulnerabilities aligned with the 2030 Agenda to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all.

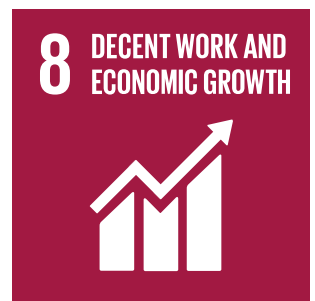
The Mercy Global Action team has also been part of the NGO Committee for Social Development, with Angela Reed rsm as a member on the Executive Committee. The group is dedicated to promoting People-Centred Development through the United Nations.

We have been helping organize the Civil Society Forum in conjunction with the UN Commission for Social Development, and we also have helped with the NGO CSocD Declaration. If you would like to support us, we would appreciate it if you could sign the Declaration.



[CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE DECLARATION](#)

[READ THE DECLARATION IN FULL HERE](#)





MELF LEADERSHIP GENERATING PROJECT

- *Launching the MELF Theory of Change*

The Leadership Generating Project team (Colleen & Jemima) is very excited to be launching the MELF Impact Report over the coming weeks. This report is a culmination of hundreds of considered and heartfelt reflections shared by MELF Fellows and members of Mercy World in a series of workshops held by MGA last year.

As a precursor to the launch, we'd like to share with you a simplified version of the MELF Theory of Change as featured in the report (which can be found on the following page). A Theory of Change is a diagrammatic representation of the expected outcomes of an organisation: it shows people how you intend to achieve your mission.

We tend to think of a Theory of Change (which is also called a Program Logic) like a narrative: you start with a problem, identify the resources you need to craft a solution to that problem, explain your activities, and show what deliverables and outcomes you expect to achieve as a result of this work. Someone looking at a Theory of Change should be able to see clearly the series of steps by which you intend to create long-term change. As you can imagine, a Theory of Change is particularly important when talking with program supporters and sponsors.

MELF aims to support emerging women leaders of faith to confidently and effectively tackle issues of global (in) justice with Mercy and compassion.

The MELF Theory of Change shows the program's three areas of capacity building: empowering the 'self', strengthening 'community' and thinking of the 'global'. As expected, these are intertwined and mutually dependent. We believe each area of focus is equally important and contributes to the overall health, capability and confidence of the emerging Mercy leader. Our world desperately needs to elevate the voices of diverse women leaders who draw on their individual experiences and wisdom to build strong communities and respond effectively to global injustice. Mercy is ready!

Please look out for the Impact Report as it is released: we can't wait to share it with you.

Our world needs confident, capable women leaders who effectively tackle issues of global (in)justice with Mercy and compassion.

MELF supports women on their journey of leadership by nurturing:

A deep understanding of, and belief in, the **SELF**

... A strong connection to, and active participation in, supportive Mercy **COMMUNITIES**

... Knowledge, pathways and networks to take action for **GLOBAL JUSTICE**

How does MELF do this?



3 international immersions



Journeying as diverse group



Meeting people with lived experience



Engagement with UN forums



Learning Mercy story & charisma



Self-reflection & critical analysis



Webinars & classroom



Research project



Mentoring

What are the outcomes?

- Greater self-awareness
- A belief in one's own self-worth and capacity for leadership
- Deep connection to spirituality
- Questioning mindset & strong critical thinking skills

- Deep respect for the Mercy spirit as modeled by Catherine McAuley
- Enduring relationships with other women leaders
- Foundations of support from global Mercy community

- Active engagement in social justice advocacy, particularly for the empowerment of women
- Strong, collaborative Mercy networks working for peace and justice

What is the impact that flows from these outcomes?



Inner transformation:
Emerging leader is deeply connected to their own dignity



Community transformation:
Emerging leaders foster hope and action



Transformation of our world:
Women of Mercy work together to protect people and planet

And what do we hope to see in the long-term?

A world enriched by confident, compassionate women of faith who work within strong Mercy communities to uphold the dignity of people and planet.



REFLECTIONS BY MELF PARTICIPANTS



• Reflection by Sarah Brown

"What to expect with a once in a lifetime fellowship opportunity like the all-women Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship? The unexpected. Unexpected joys, challenges, experiences, connections, blessings, and learning. Looking back at the first half of my fellowship year, I feel supported, transformed, and energized by the journey and process so far. Looking forward, I am excited about what the fellowship will open up for, within and among us as we finish the year.



When I accepted the fellowship, I would never have anticipated that a pandemic would cause a two-year delay to our Cambodia immersion or what it would bring. Those days at the other end of the world from my home held fertile seeds of growth in beauty, joy, blessing and challenge. The Metta Karuna Centre community's example of loving kindness in action; educational components on program themes of Degradation of the Earth and Displacement of Persons, the history of Cambodia, and the centre's work; personal stories from centre staff and guest speakers; cohort bonding activities; cultural immersion excursions and experiences; and spaciousness for individual and communal reflection and spirituality all established an environment for personal and cohort development.

Every day, I was challenged by discovering assumptions I didn't know I had about myself, spirituality, cultures, and more. This further opened my awareness to possible harm when assumptions become thoughts, judgments, feelings, and actions that lack mindfulness, vibrant love, and unconditional acceptance. Life can breathe through our innermost soul places and find what we have lost of ourselves, and light the way for what we will become. The immersion experience called forth many things in me – courage, determination, vulnerability, openness, compassion, connected spirituality, a deep well of acceptance, and a leadership that fits me. The holistic experience continues to open my heart and mind to the vastness and interconnectedness of the Earth and its living beings.

The fellowship experience has built on that foundation.

In these first six months, the MELF program has connected me with the fellows, program leaders, a global perspective with a Mercy lens, incredible resources, myself, and most recently with my mentor. Immense care was given to match me individually and uniquely to a mentor who would best support me in my fellowship journey. She has been instrumental in helping me to trust the process, give space for the Spirit to lead, and to consider how and why I have come to this fellowship and what I can and will bring to it because of who I am. The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas ask who they want to be for the suffering world, and this fellowship program is asking me who I am and what I will bring to it for my corner of the world."

REFLECTIONS BY MELF PARTICIPANTS



- *Reflection by Magdelene Masau*

"What did we go to Cambodia to do?"

Was it to tuck our feet away from each other and The Supreme? To visit the world's biggest first-century temple and the chanting Buddhist monks robed in orange? Or the effects of 1975 and the deadly landmines? Or the diminishing natural forests and the negative influence of external forces on the Asian country? Did we go to see the women-driven canoes through the magnificent Mangrove forests? Or was it the floating villages of the landless?

Yes, these and God (Enlightenment) at work and the limbless Jesus figure on the cross. And to witness the resilience of a people who continue to beat all odds to hope even when struck by landmines that have maimed them. We witnessed the unrelenting loyalty of Mercy working in collaboration with the Jesuits, the Cambodian community and others to curb the impact of war by welcoming the stranger and sharing life with refugees. We saw what happens when 'God mixes with humanity. Faith helps us commune! Mercy challenges us and goes ahead of us to 'crack our hearts and eyes open' as female leaders beyond our comfort zones. 'May we not sleep' Rumi



We had a rare first-hand leadership influence by one powerful 'Mercy Emerged Leader' and Metta Karuna Matriarch – Sr. Denise Coughlan Rsm.

MELF has offered us the chance to connect with each other online and physically. The group comprises of women leaders from different parts of the world. MELF gives the opportunity to allow some stretch in our beliefs and values as products of our cultures, know we are always impacting, and know we can choose and be intentional leaders. This diversity offers us the organic and informal learning to feel our own power in relation to other women above us, below us and those who are the same as us. We feel our values and judgments and are constantly stretched. We come from various cultural contexts in which we have been socialized. As we interact, we are becoming aware that agreements don't necessarily mean we are friends, nor do they mean any of us is an enemy. Tolerating ourselves and each other, especially when we hold different perspectives, has expanded how we are as leaders.



• *Reflection by Magdelene Masau continued*

The leadership modeled to us by the MELF team is empowering. It has helped us stretch our boundaries and learn about New Mercy Global engagements experientially.



We are called and encouraged to network and be in solidarity with humanity and the Earth. Our emergence as women leaders is ongoing and invites us to be willing to learn and engage anew with our constantly changing world in order to discern who the 'poor' of our time are. The Mercy call encompasses all who are for us and in our ministries.

Attending the COP27 in Egypt I realized that earth issues are Mercy issues too. The misuse and abuse of the Earth need to concern us as Mercy Emerging leaders. We are called to rethink how we could be participating in the degradation of the Earth and look for creative ways to bring relief and create awareness. Our omission or commission always has an impact on populations or the Earth.

Since Covid 19, Webinars have increased and helped our learning variation. The program has helped us access women with a wealth of experiences and wisdom across borders. We have been honored by women of all ages, and for this, we are grateful.

The materials and resources offered have taken into consideration our various ways of learning, whether visually, audio, experientially and practically. The adult in mode invites us to be creative in expanding our knowing."

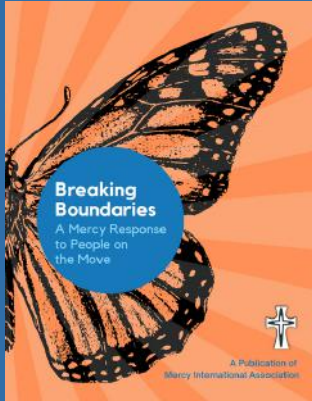


*A swirl of beauty – earth, water, and sky -
Breathing through me
Carrying connection
Willing mystic life.
Healing abounds, though
Not in comfort.
In the swirl
In acceptance
In life.*

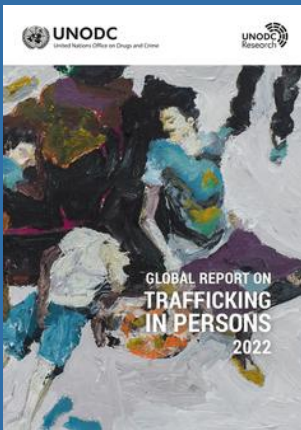


Poem by Sarah Brown
Reflecting on her experience with the MELF program

“USEFUL RESOURCES



Read our Breaking Boundaries publication [here!](#)



Read the 2022 UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons [here](#)



Read and sign our NGOCSocD Declaration [here!](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- 6 to 15 February Commission for Social Development
- 20 February World Social Justice Day
- 1st and 2nd March MGA Advocacy Workshop on Water
- 2 March Ash Wednesday
- 8 March International Women's Day
- 6 to 17 March Commission on the Status of Women
- 17 March St. Patrick's Day
- 22 March World Water Day



The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) March 6 to 17

Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative fortnightly e-newsletter (MercyNews). Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities:

www.mercyworld.org

Subscribe to our e-newsletter to learn about our vision in action and the ministries carried out by our member congregations: www.mercyworld.org/subscribe