

# MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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## GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

### MERCY GLOBAL ACTION EMERGING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP DUBLIN IMMERSION GRADUATES SECOND COHORT

From 10-17 July, MGA staff and the 18 women comprising Cohorts 1 & 2 of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship gathered at Mercy International Centre in Dublin for the final immersion and graduation of the second cohort of the fellowship program. Members of Cohort 1 were reunited after their virtual graduation in 2021, and together all were able to join in celebration in Catherine's House.

During the immersion, members of Cohort 2 presented their research projects, covering topics related to the Degradation of Earth and Displacement of Peoples, including access to tertiary education for forcibly-displaced students in Australia, food for education programs in Kenya, public branding of Church leaders in the Philippines, countering stigma around suicide, addressing mental health in humanitarian situations, looking at environmental degradation through the lens of big rivers, highlighting the leadership of women in responding to the climate crisis, examining the relationship between population growth and sustainable food systems, and entering into non-violent practice.

Other sessions helped to provide Fellows from Cohorts 1 and 2 with further tools for leadership, and planted seeds for future engagement beyond the end of the Fellowship. Margaret Endicott rsm from Australia conducted a three-day workshop on Mercy Facilitative Leadership, and Colleen Swain and Jemima Welsh presented the beginnings of a new Alumni Engagement strategy.

The immersion concluded with the graduation of Cohort 2. We were very honored that Azza Karam, Professor of Religion and Development at Vrij Universiteit Amsterdam, was the graduation speaker. She spoke on "Mercy as Faiths Working Together for the Common Good." You can read Professor Azza Karam's [full graduation remarks here](#). Congratulations to all the Fellows! See photos and quotes from the immersion below:



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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:

- ANGELA REED RSM
- CECILIE KERN
- COLLEEN SWAIN
- JEMIMA WELSH
- CATHERINE EDWARDS
- MARIETTA LATONIO

"We will continue our journey towards becoming facilitative leaders, armed with new tools, insights, and the unwavering support of our fellow MELF fellows."



"Each one of us has the capacity to be a leader, to bring our unique perspectives, talents, and experiences to the table, and to contribute meaningfully to our collective vision."

"This MELF Fellowship was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase our own topics of interest and to strengthen our commitment to global awareness and action within our Mercy World and beyond."



"We may disperse across the globe, but the bond we share as MELF fellows will endure, and together, we will create ripples of positive change in the world, just as Catherine McAuley envisioned."



# MERCY GLOBAL ACTION EMERGING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP DUBLIN IMMERSION 2023 - COHORTS 1 AND 2



"This journey has instilled in us a profound sense of purpose and ignited a flame within our hearts, urging us to step into the leaders we were always meant to be."



"We shared silence. We shared music. We shared affirmation. We shared laughter. I wouldn't have it any other way or with any other women."

"We will continue our journey towards becoming facilitative leaders, armed with new tools, insights, and the unwavering support of our fellow MELF fellows."



"We are ready; we are confident in our capacity to make a difference."





"Being in Catherine's home is rejuvenating. I am able to sense her spirit and leadership example just by being here."



"It was heartening to see how much we had grown and evolved throughout this Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship program."

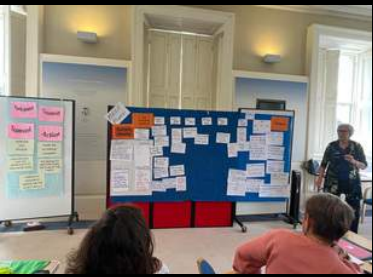
"We felt a sense of unity and empowerment, knowing that our voices were equally valued and that our ideas could ignite change in our communities and the world."

"This program has really made a great impact on my journey and continues to challenge me to live out and share with others what I have gained here."



# MERCY GLOBAL ACTION EMERGING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP DUBLIN IMMERSION 2023 - COHORTS 1 AND 2

"We feel better prepared and motivated to embrace opportunities for facilitation and make a positive impact in our communities. We look forward to implementing our action plans and continuing to grow and learn in our journey as Mercy facilitative leaders."



"These women are incredible Mercy leaders, and I was lucky and grateful to spend the rest of the day listening to each one present on her project. The presentations are a brilliant reflection of their research and their deep spirituality, innate talents, and open hearts for Earth and its people."

"We celebrated our individual growth and supported each other through moments of vulnerability. We have become more than just a group; we are a tightly-knit community, united by the shared vision of creating positive change in the world."



"We are most grateful to all those who used facilitative leadership to bring Cohort 2 together (and Cohort 1) as we collaborate and plan to extend the Mercy charism and Mercy Global Action to the far reaches of planet Earth for the common good of all."



# CATHERINE EDWARDS REFLECTS ON HER MGA INTERNSHIP



When I started my internship at Mercy Global Action at the United Nations last October, I was filled with anticipation and enthusiasm. Little did I know that my journey would not only be exciting but also transform into deep respect and admiration for the relentless dedication of the MGA team.

I was instantly welcomed into the MGA team, creating an environment of unwavering support. I was trusted with various responsibilities, such as document creation, attendance at crucial meetings, and conducting in-depth research on sustainable development and human rights. These tasks enriched my understanding of international justice and the complex mechanisms of the United Nations.

One of the most memorable experiences was the border immersion program arranged by the Mercy Justice Team in November 2022. It wasn't merely an immersion program but a revelation of the stark immigration realities of people at the US-Mexico border. This journey further opened my eyes to the pressing need for mercy and justice in our world today.

I was honoured to attend numerous meetings with NGOs, member states, and various commissions and forums. One of the highlights of my internship was being part of the organizing team for the Civil Society Forum for the Commission for Social Development.

Another moment that had a significant impact on me was when I had the opportunity to deliver an oral intervention on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy to member states at the Commission for Social Development. Initially, it was intimidating, but eventually, it turned out to be a learning experience that pushed me beyond my comfort zone.

As I look back, I'm amazed by the wealth of experiences and lessons I gathered during my tenure at MGA. It was an opportunity for me to grow both professionally and personally, and it also helped me hone my organizational skills, adaptability, and ability to work both alone and in a team. Having just graduated from university before starting, I am eternally grateful for the foundation this internship has provided for my future career.

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has been a part of my journey. Your unwavering support and guidance made this experience enlightening and rewarding. I am in awe of the reach and support of the Mercy World, and it has been an honour to be a part of the Mercy community. The immense support I have received from ISMAPNG and Meredith Evans rsm has been invaluable.

I will forever cherish the memories and experiences from the past nine months. The lessons and narratives that emerged from this experience will always stay with me as I endeavour to uphold the Mercy values wherever I go.

Finally, I would like to give special appreciation to the members of the MGA team who guided me during my internship. Angela Reed, Cecilie Kern, Colleen Swain, Jemima Walsh, Marietta Latonio, Máire Cunningham, and Siobhán Golden have all shown exceptional patience, guidance, and mentorship. I'll miss being part of the action at the United Nations and will always appreciate your support.

**Catherine Edwards**  
Outgoing Intern





# *At the United Nations* **THROUGH OUR ECOSOC LENS...**

- *Voluntary National Reviews 2023: Assessing Progress in the Mercy World on Sustainable Development Goals*

As members of Mercy Global Action, we stand united in our shared commitment to social justice, sustainable living, and care for the Earth. The recent release of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for countries in the Mercy world has provided an enlightening overview of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will examine some of the key messages, with a focus on SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).



Some areas where Mercy has been involved in

## **Progress on SDG 5 (Gender Equality)**

In Cambodia, progress has been made in areas like women's health and the availability of skilled help during childbirth, which are both positive strides toward gender equality. Yet, the persistent challenges faced by economically disadvantaged women and those with lower education levels demonstrate that much work remains to be done.

Canada reaffirms its commitment to gender equality with substantial investments in women's rights organizations, and support for women, girls, and the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Guyana, while not explicitly addressing gender equality, shows a commitment to inclusivity through its ongoing reforms, aiming to reduce poverty levels, especially among single women.

Ireland's dedication to integrating gender equality priorities into its policies reflects its commitment to ensuring equal opportunities and rights for all, backed by its international development assistance programs.



**Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

## Progress on SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)

Cambodia reports notable progress in access to basic drinking water and sanitation, a crucial achievement for public health and socioeconomic development. However, we note with concern the absence of explicit mention of clean water and sanitation issues in both Canada and Ireland's VNRs, despite the critical nature of this SDG.

Guyana, on the other hand, has embarked on ambitious projects aimed at enhancing the supply, reliability, and quality of water by expanding its infrastructure and developing partnerships at both national and international levels



## Progress on SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

Cambodia's significant strides in sustainable cities and communities signal progress towards urban sustainability, while Guyana's emphasis on sustainable urban practices, affordable housing, and land use planning presents a promising roadmap for achieving this SDG.

While Canada did not directly address SDG 11, Ireland's commitment to sustainable development manifests in its efforts to build back better post-pandemic in areas such as employment, education, health, housing, and climate action.



## Conclusion

While progress is evident across several SDGs, it is clear that more action is needed. Notably, none of the VNRs mentioned human trafficking, an issue central to Mercy Global Action's advocacy work. As Mercy Global Action, we will continue to engage with these countries and advocate for policies that further gender equality, access to clean water and sanitation, and the development of sustainable cities and communities.

These VNRs serve as crucial touchstones in our collective journey towards a more equitable, sustainable world.



*Expressions of Interest now open for new*

# Mercy Global Action Women in Justice Leadership Task Force

An exciting opportunity exists to join a newly established MGA task force on Women and Justice Leadership to commence in late September/early October 2023. The Women and Justice Leadership Task Force is directly linked to Mercy Global Action's priority themes. Mercy Global Action task forces are issue-based, time-limited and have an action-oriented focus.

Comprising approximately twelve members, including some members of the MGA team, the Women in Justice Leadership Task Force will draw upon the experiences, expertise and aspirations of its members in relation to issues of justice and leadership affecting women around the world.

**Expressions of Interest (EOI) are now open for membership of the Women and Justice Leadership MGA Task Force and will close on September 4th, 2023 at 5pm, EDT. [Sign up here](#)**

Mercy Global Action is specifically seeking members from the Mercy World who:

- Are energetic and enthusiastic about Women and Justice
- Have direct knowledge and/or experience of Women and Justice
- Are willing to develop and exchange ideas, advocate and enact change
- Have the ability to work collaboratively with a diverse team

Selection will be based on a range of perspectives, including different knowledge and experience levels, geographic locations, cultural background and other lived experiences.



# “USEFUL RESOURCES



[International Youth Day Campaign](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- **August 9th: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**
- **August 12th: International Youth Day**
- **August 19th: World Humanitarian Day**
- **September 1st: World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation**
- **September 7th: Endangered Species Day**



[What is the Season of Creation?](#)



[Caring for Our Common Home](#)

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