

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2023 | VOLUME 7 ISSUE 9



GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

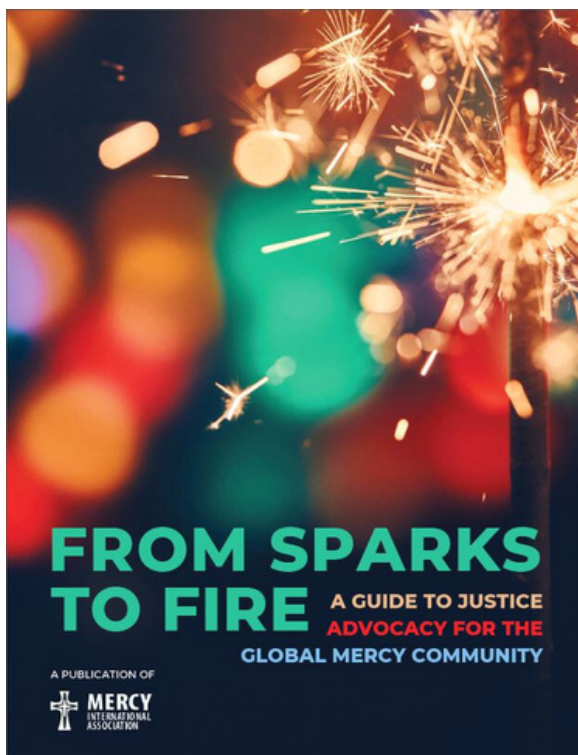
- *Launch of Mercy Advocacy Guide!*

On Mercy Day, the Mercy Global Action office launched our new publication, entitled 'From Sparks to Fire: A Guide to Justice Advocacy for the Global Mercy Community'.

This is a practical guide to advocacy and includes many case studies, tools, frameworks and evaluation resources. It's aimed at anyone interested in advocacy, whether at the local or institutional level. We purposefully kept the language inclusive and accessible.

You can download the guide by clicking the cover or downloading it [here](#) on our website.

We hope you will enjoy reading through it and sharing it with your colleagues and friends. May it spark a new sense of hope and action in our community for justice in our world! It will be available in Spanish in the coming months.



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ISSUE:

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

• *MGA celebrates 25 Years of ECOSOC status at the United Nations!*



35 years ago, in 1988, the American Mercy Federation received Department of Public Information (now Department of Global Communications) status at the UN. Ten years later, in 1998, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas gained Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC. That year, 25 years ago, in order to facilitate the presence of Mercy Sisters, Associates and partners from around the world at the global level, the UN desk of Sisters of Mercy of the Americas became Mercy International Association's UN office. During this special anniversary year, Mercy Global Action is celebrating and reflecting on the continued importance of the mission of our office, our accomplishments over the years, and our hopes for the future.



Over the next few weeks, we will be highlighting the stories and experiences of past and current Mercy Global Action staff on our

[Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages. Follow along, celebrate with us, and let us know what your hopes are for Mercy's presence and advocacy in the years to come!

“ I hope that the Mercy Global Action Office can continue its work well into the future and lead (and inspire others to be a part of) an effective and thriving global justice network centered by the Mercy charism. - Colleen Swain ”

“ When we talk about acting systemically, we need to be at the table where we can influence. The United Nations is a Global Table where we have and will continue to make a difference for all of God's people. - Dale Jarvis rsm ”

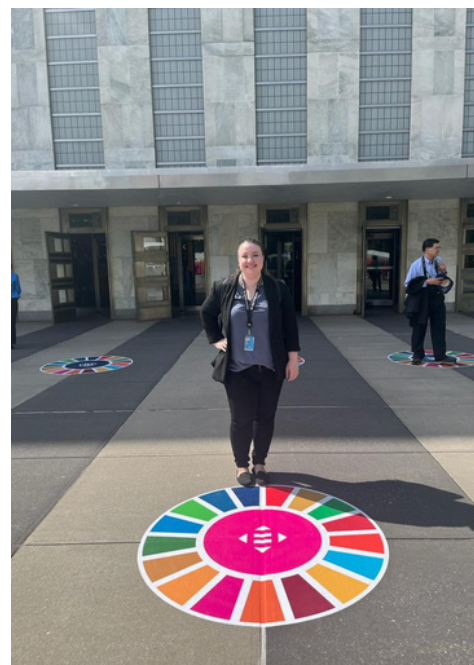
“ Mercy represents the people at the grassroots - our voice reflects human dignity, mercy and compassion that is sometimes lost in the political maneuvering of representatives. - Bridget Crisp rsm ”

• *The MGA team takes on the SDG Summit!*

UN Headquarters was abuzz for the last two weeks of September, with diplomats, Presidents, and Prime Ministers all flocking to New York for the General Assembly. But some of the most important, insightful conversations happened the weekend before, at the SDG Action Weekend. The event was a much-needed opportunity to discuss and accelerate progress on the SDGs. MGA was glad to attend to hear what is needed to correct an alarming lack of progress on the SDGs, and to connect with others hoping to do the same.



A panel on the gendered results of the international financial architecture discussed the need for a ‘gender-transformative economy.’ Tax reform was the first target, with panellists noting how the current global tax regime tends to favour multinational corporations (MNCs) at the expense of public funding in developing countries – and how those countries are forced to make up the difference via regressive taxation that hits women in poverty hardest. Debt relief was also discussed, with the note that developing countries often spend more on the interest of debt repayments than they do on healthcare or education. On a local level, panellists urged for an ‘unlocking’ of the money tied up in the majority women care economy – especially via a redistribution of household labour. We finished with a rousing speech from Amina J. Mohammed, who, fittingly as the Deputy Secretary General of the UN, called for action and for the necessity of women in leadership at all levels.



The SDG Stimulus panel had largely similar conclusions, though with the inclusion of private sector representatives. They remarked that banks are ready and willing to invest in service of SDGs, but asked for more extensive and timely feasibility studies to get finance fully onboard.

Moving from the conference room to the street, MGA then joined the March to End Fossil Fuels. Around 75,000 activists gathered to demand that President Biden end existing oil and gas projects, and cease approving new ones. Addressing the rally, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said:

“The way that we create urgency on the issue of climate is when we have people all across the world in the streets—in the streets!—showing up, demanding change, and demanding a cessation of what is killing us. We have to send the message that some of us are going to be living on this planet 30, 40, 50 years from now and we will not take no for an answer.”

Ocasio-Cortez’s words encapsulate well the spirit of collaboration and determination that must characterise all advocacy across the Mercy World. We hope that discussions of the SDG Action Weekend help direct that spirit where it is needed most.





- *MELF Cohort 3 Fellows reflect on the foundations of social justice...*



Webinar One: Foundations of Social Justice

Dr. Victoria Walsh was the first guest speaker in the Cohort 3 MELF webinars. As this was the first webinar after the Cambodia experience, the theme of Social Justice was very apt, particularly in the context of looking at reality through the eyes of those who have been made poor by oppression and injustice. Dr. Walsh took us through a variety of resources on Social Justice, all with a Mercy lens. Two of our MELF fellows reflect on the webinar below...

“ Before Victoria’s presentation, I did not put much thought into the etymology of Mercy, I simply knew how it felt. She brought to light the meaning of ‘to bring heart to misery’. I see this so vibrantly in my experience of the Mercy community as relationship and hospitality are core values for people of Mercy and justice. Victoria reiterated what I witnessed during our time in Cambodia: the foundation of justice is community and connection.

- *Andrea Haller, Cohort 3, USA*

“ What resonated most for me were the quotes around building a more connected world being the key to solving many societal issues and the importance of relationships. The presentation started with the literal translation of Misericordia meaning to bring heart to misery. Misericordia is on our buildings and forms part of our College motto. Sometimes the idea of making a difference can seem too big or that we cannot have a significant impact but the ideas of connection, relationship, knowing, contemplation, and reflection that were discussed during the webinar are all part of being able to enact this. ‘If we want a different world, then we must become a different people.’

- *Sarah Dwan, Cohort 3, New Zealand*

- *The Women in Justice Leadership Task Force has commenced!*



The Women in Justice Leadership Task Force is directly linked to Mercy Global Action’s priority themes of Degradation of the Earth and Displacement of Peoples. MGA task forces are issue-based, time-limited and have an action-oriented focus.

The goal of the Women in Justice Leadership Task Force is to raise a voice on issues relating to ‘Mercy women, justice

and leadership' ahead of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (25 November - 10 December 2023), and to provide recommendations and actions for concrete advocacy.

Comprising 18 members (our biggest task force yet!), including members of the MGA team, the 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.

We wish our Task Force members clarity and energy in their discussions and look forward to seeing the tangible outcomes that flow from their planning.



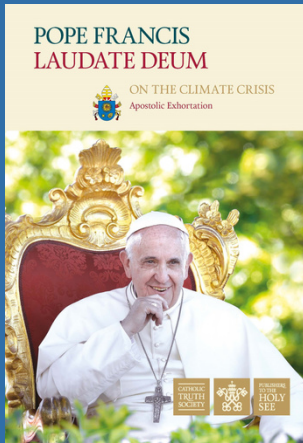
- *Sr Angela Reed rsm presents keynote at 2023 Breaking Barriers to End Human Trafficking Conference...*

Last week, Sr Angela Reed, Head of MGA, delivered a keynote speech at the '2023 Breaking Barriers to End Human Trafficking Conference' in Chicago, run by the Alliance to End Human Trafficking (founded by US Catholic Sisters). The conference was an opportunity for over 140 attendees to hear from a range of speakers, including survivors, about what is still needed in the fight to end human trafficking.

Angela's speech was focused on human trafficking in a post-Covid context. Drawing upon her past experiences of running a domestic violence safe house in Australia and working with formerly trafficked women in the Philippines, she spoke about human rights and human dignity as critical lenses for approaching the issue of human trafficking. She also highlighted the importance of centering survivors' voices and prioritising prevention strategies which address the root causes of human trafficking.



“USEFUL RESOURCES



[Pope Francis: 'Laudate Deum'](#)
[An Apostolic Exhortation](#)



[UN Women: 'Progress on the SDGs: The Gender Snapshot 2023'](#)



[Oil Change: 'Planet Wreckers: How 20 Countries' Oil & Gas Plans Risk Locking in Climate Chaos'](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- **13 October: International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction**
- **15 October: International Day of Rural Women**
- **16 October: World Food Day**
- **17 October: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**
- **24 October: United Nations Day & 25th Anniversary of MGA's ECOSOC Status**
- **24 - 30 October: Disarmament Week**
- **31 October: World Cities Day**
- **1 November: All Saints' Day**



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: [\[Link\]](#)