



# Mercy International Association

Objectives & Programmatic Assessment

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# Mercy International Association

Mercy International Association is a faith oriented organisation of Sisters of Mercy and their Partners in Mercy, serving in 44 countries worldwide and committed to those who suffer from poverty and other forms of disadvantage, especially women and children.

One of the two principal objects of Mercy International Association (MIA) is *'to stimulate and inspire Sisters of Mercy, their associates and colleagues in ministry, to continue the work of Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy in ways which are creative and appropriate to the needs of the world for the time being.'* Fundamental to this objective is on-going formation in the heritage of Catherine McAuley and the core values of Mercy. Consequently MIA offers programmes and pilgrimage experiences that promote such formation. In addition to the programmes and pilgrimages, the heritage and spirituality resources and conference facilities of Mercy International Centre contribute enormously to realising this objective.

The second objective of Mercy International Association is outreach to the poor. MIA's network structure that connects it to the 44 countries in which Mercy ministers and its DPI and EcoSoc status at the UN affords us a unique capacity for linking the local and the global. This in turn allows us to address root causes of many of the issues that present themselves in the various locations. MIA focussed mainly on issues of root causes of poverty such as climate change and environmental degradation, sustainable development and combating human trafficking. While each of these elements is separate, they are related. The undeniable link between unsustainable development, environmental disasters - regularly occasioned by climate change - exploitive practices in regard to natural resources and the phenomena of modern slavery is poverty. Poverty has many faces, including displaced people, disconnected families, and migrants risking life and limb to escape intolerable living conditions, all of which make people more vulnerable to trafficking.

In service of these two main objectives our communication system builds interconnectedness, provides information, education and inspiration and links us with audiences outside the Mercy network.

All of this is made possible primarily through the support of the Mercy Congregations around the world, who continue 'through Mercy International Association to use their resources to respond to issues of global poverty', and who believe that 'we can do better together than any of us can do apart'. However, as the resources of the Mercy Congregations decline, MIA relies more and more on the generosity of its donors to encourage and nurture the flourishing of the Mercy charism and to work for a more just and compassionate world.

The words of Catherine McAuley continue to inspire us *'We ought to have great confidence in God in the discharge of all these offices of Mercy, spiritual and corporal, which constitute the business of our lives'*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Mary Reynolds." The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

**Mary Reynolds, RSM,  
Executive Director**

# Our Vision

**GOD'S GRACIOUS and COMPASSIONATE MERCY is the WELLSPRING, the SOURCE of NEVER FAILING SUPPLY, for all THOSE WHO CHERISH and SEEK to LIVE OUT THIS GIFT of MERCY.**



**CATHERINE MCAULEY, FOUNDRRESS of the SISTERS of MERCY, USED HER INHERITANCE in SERVICE of the NEEDS of HER TIME. TODAY, SISTERS of MERCY. THROUGH MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION, USE THEIR RESOURCES to RESPOND to ISSUES of GLOBAL POVERTY DEMONSTRATED in the MASSIVE DISPLACEMENT of PERSONS WORLDWIDE.**



**The HOUSE BUILT by CATHERINE to CONNECT THOSE WHO WERE RICH with THOSE WHO WERE POOR FORMS PART of MERCY INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, a PLACE of RICH HERITAGE and HOSPITALITY.**



**To INTEGRATE the ACTIVITIES of MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION and in SERVICE of the MISSION of MERCY TODAY, MERCY INTERNATIONAL CENTRE is EXPANDED to OFFER a DIVERSITY of PROGRAMMES, ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH EFFORTS, and APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION and CONFERENCE FACILITIES.**

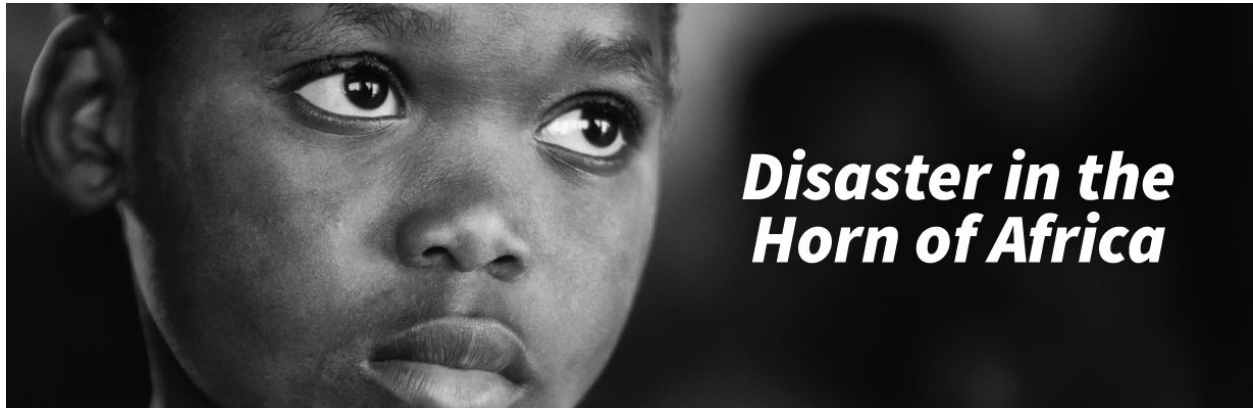


**This VISION KEEPS ALIVE the FOUNDING SPIRIT of CATHERINE AMONG PEOPLES of the WORLD MOST in NEED of GOD'S COMPASSION and MERCY.**

# Global Action Program-Addressing Root Causes of Poverty

## Goal

To continue the work of Catherine McAuley who sought not only to meet the needs of poor people but who also addressed its systemic causes.



## Why MIA is focusing on addressing root causes of Poverty?

The reasons for this are threefold:

- Poverty is the state for the majority of the world's people and nations. 1 billion children live in poverty (1 in 2 children in the world). 640 million live without adequate shelter, 400 million have no access to safe water, and 270 million have no access to health services. **22,000 children die each day due to poverty.** Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names. **About 72 million children of primary school age in the developing world are not in school; 57 per cent of them are girls.**
- Sisters of Mercy and Partners in ministry are involved in the service of the poor in various ways, education, health care, social services and ministries that further social, political, economic and spiritual wellbeing in 44 countries of the world. MIA networks various initiatives to strengthen the global impact of this work.
- Focus area 1 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is poverty eradication in all its forms, which includes alleviating poverty, ensuring healthy lives, advancing equitable education with particular emphasis on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and promoting inclusive and peaceful societies with access to justice for all. MIA is actively involved in influencing this agenda.

## Examples of Work:

- Networking with concerned citizens to discuss Climate Change with local Governments and working as an active member of Global Catholic Climate Movement.
- Campaigning for further study of the environmental, economic and health and safety impacts of intensive unconventional gas development, lobbying for tighter regulation of unconventional gas development and opposing elements of the industry that affects water quality or climate protection.
- Engaging global campaign of Activism Against Gender Violence
- Reaching out with crisis and livelihood aid to humanitarian crisis, e.g. Typhoon in Philippines.
- Advocating on behalf of displaced people, particularly migrants fleeing Africa and Middle East.

# Global Action Program-Human Trafficking

## Goal

The Identification and elimination of factors that provide a means to pursue the trafficking of people.



## Why is MIA focusing on Human Trafficking?

The reasons for this are threefold:

- Trafficking is a major issue confronting mainly women and most severely affects women and the poor and vulnerable, including children.
- Sisters of Mercy and our Partners in Ministry are already doing substantial work to combat trafficking and MIA networks various initiatives to strengthen the global impact of this work.
- The European Union and the United Nations are focusing on Trafficking as a priority issue and MIA engages in advocacy to influence policy at these levels.

## Examples of Work:

- **Prevention:** Education, research and awareness raising, in particular targeted awareness raising initiatives aimed at the hospitality and transport sectors, young people and persons involved in Mercy ministries.
- **Protection:** Lobbying of national and international governments and co-operation with other agencies to protect trafficked people, especially vulnerable migrants and child victims including child victims of natural disasters (e.g. Haiti, Philippines)
- **Prosecution:** Work to influence change in legal systems so that traffickers and procurers of the services of trafficked people are criminalized rather than the trafficked victims.



# Global Action Program-Sustainable Development of the Environment

## Goal

The advancement of initiatives to support sustainable development of the environment and poverty eradication with a particular focus on extractives, water, and nature.



## Why is MIA focusing on Cosmology and Eco Justice?

The reasons for this are threefold:

- Environmental degradation is the major issue facing the planet this century and most severely affects the poor, especially women and children – who are most at risk when ecosystems are degraded, as they suffer disproportionately from the health risks caused by inadequate or dirty water and polluted air, and bear the burden of collecting the resources for their daily use, such as water and fuel-wood.
- Sisters of Mercy are already doing substantial work to combat environmental degradation and MIA networks various initiatives to strengthen the global impact of this work.
- The United Nations and international bodies are focusing on Environment as a priority issue and MIA influences at this level.





## Examples of Work:

- Education & awareness raising through education packs and presentations.
- Pursuing initiatives in several lesser developed countries to support protection of the environment and dissemination of best practise with a view to improving lives.
- Advocacy, especially on behalf of those living in lesser developed countries and in communities at risk from exploitative practices.
- Promotion of sustainable development enterprise.
- Youth Leadership training by providing workshops at the Mercy Young Leaders Conference.
- Collaboration/networking with other agencies.

# United Nations Initiative to Advocate for Global Action Programs

## Goal

To bring the spirit of Catherine McAuley to the one forum in the world where all nations have the potential to meet as equals.



## Why MIA is involved at the UN?

- MIA at the UN is the mechanism by which all those associated with the Sisters of Mercy may interact with the UN system.
- It provides a forum to advocate on behalf of poor people and work with other major international bodies. In line with what Catherine McAuley did in her day, MIA at the UN raises awareness of critical issues and works collaboratively to challenge all to make a real difference.
- Because of its Eco Soc status, MIA at the UN is involved in a political process consisting of actions designed to transform popular interests into rights; a process aimed at influencing decisions regarding policies and laws at national and international levels. Action is taken to draw attention to an issue and to direct policy-makers to a solution.

## Examples of Work:

- Lobbying to ensure that the right to water and sanitation is included in the post 2015 Development Agenda.
- Advocating on behalf of Peruvian people unjustly treated by a mining company
- Supporting the Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.
- Supporting civil society groups that are focussed on migration in the agenda to emphasize the need to address the root causes of migration in the Post 2015 Development Agenda.
- Education work on global poverty and UN advocacy of diverse groups including young people and interns at the MIA UN office.

# Providing Extensive Leadership Training to both Young People and to Mercy Ministers / Workers

## Goal

To provide formation in the Mercy ethos, so that lay partners in ministry and the next generation will be effective carriers of mercy into the future.



## Why MIA is focusing on addressing Leadership Training?

- The Mercy Global family consists of 7000+ Sisters, almost 5000 Associates and between a quarter and half million Partners in Ministry. Partners in Ministry are the main promoters and providers of Mercy Ministry. To be effective in this role, there is need for formation. A Leadership Training program conducted at Mercy International Centre is a major contribution to this in developing awareness of Mercy charism and the Mercy story and in promoting global interconnectedness.
- The Young Mercy Leaders programme provides secondary school and college students from across the globe with the opportunity to come to Mercy International Centre to experience together the riches of the Mercy story before returning to daily life better equipped to be leaders in their schools, colleges and world.

## Examples of Work:

- Inputs on Catherine McAuley and the development of Mercy around the world in response to need.
- Workshops on Leadership skills in the tradition of Mercy.
- Exploration of Mercy values in order to form individuals in Catherine McAuley's philosophy, as they execute professional roles they hold in education, health care, and social outreach.
- Experiences in Mercy spirituality.
- Highlighting of major focus of global Mercy – anti-trafficking, sustainable development, eradication of root causes of poverty.
- Development of Mercy global interconnectedness in the service of mission.



# Hosting and Leading Pilgrimages at Mercy International Centre

## Goal

To nourish Mercy spirituality and mission in people's lives.



## Why does MIA offer Pilgrimage experience?

- More and more people are searching out a relevant spirituality that will give meaning to and sustain their lives. Part of this phenomenon is the popularity of pilgrimage - journey or search of spiritual significance and an exploration of how a particular tradition, vision or philosophy can enrich and give meaning to their lives.
- MIA, through Mercy International Centre- the place where it all began and which is the public flagship of Mercy's global mission- wants to offer hospitality to the members of the congregation, friends and visitors from around the world and to provide opportunities for all associated with Mercy and all who seek to learn and understand Mercy's heritage and mission in the world.
- One of the main reasons behind any pilgrimage is to visit the grave and see a relic of the founding saint of the sacred site. Catherine has been officially recognized by the Church as being on the first step to sainthood. She was declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II, on April 9th 1990. Catherine's grave is an integral part of the Mercy International Centre and amongst the memorabilia associated with Catherine are several items that have first, second and third class relic attributes.

## Examples of Work:

- The pilgrimages offer the opportunity of time for reflection and for connection with Catherine, the woman of Mercy who continues to inspire and journey with pilgrims toward God.
- The Mercy story is told in the historical context of the times and challenges facing Ireland and Catherine's experiences in confronting the challenges.
- Participants walk and pray in places associated with Catherine McCauley, including George's Hill, where she prepared to be a Sister, and Coolock House, where she lived with and cared for the Callaghan's – her adopted family for 25 years.
- The riches of Catherine's letters, instructions and memorabilia are made available to pilgrims so that they can draw inspiration from them and be strengthened to renew efforts to respond to the injustices and inequities and exclusion still so evident in the world today.



# Providing Worldwide Communications to Connect Mercy Ministries around the World

## Goal

To enable members of the Mercy Global Family to develop a strong global and interconnected identity.



## Why does MIA provide a Communications network?

- To ensure that Mercy people can be globally interconnected for the sake of mission and can connect the rich and the poor for the life of the world.
- To create a centralised meeting place and a shared resource for members of the Mercy network, providing information, education, connection, nourishment, inspiration and ongoing opportunities for engagement and interaction.
- To connect with audiences outside the Mercy network whose interests are aligned with the vision and mission of MIA and to provide access for these diverse audiences to the rich media resources and the opportunity to participate in the public online activities of MIA.

## Examples of Work:

- Providing and keeping updated a very comprehensive website [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org)
- Producing 47 editions of a weekly e-News annually.
- Providing live streaming of significant events which enables Mercy people around the world to meet online and be together in ways not possible previously, but to do so with a heightened appreciation and sense of unity.
- In order to facilitate a greater participation in Programmes offered at Mercy International Centre, some programmes or sections of programmes are uploaded on-line.



# Preserving the Heritage Site - Mercy International Centre

## Goal

To preserve, conserve and protect the MIC building, and its artefacts which are of Mercy, historical and inspirational significance and which afford opportunity for ongoing Mercy mission.



## Why does MIA wish to preserve the heritage site of MIC?

- The house was built by Catherine McAuley and it preserves the historic, architectural, and aesthetic character and heritage of the founding community of Mercy and helps to provide a sense of place and continuity. It provides opportunity for the celebration of community history and continuing mercy response to need.
- In October 2013 Mercy International Centre was one of 100 buildings invited to participate in the Irish Architecture Foundation's Open House Dublin. This attracted over 150 visitors to the Centre. The house is also included in the Heritage Week tours, held annually in August.
- It is the iconic centre of Mercy International, public flagship of its global mission, place of welcome and hospitality, home to the great heritage of Catherine, centre for the development of mercy theological reflection and spirituality and place of renewal and nourishment of Mercy charism and ethos.
- It represents considerable past investment of physical, spiritual, natural and intellectual resources. It makes good sense to make the most of the resource it provides, rather than allow it to deteriorate with consequent cultural, social, religious and economic costs.

## Examples of Work:

- Upgrade of International room to enhance the telling of the Mercy story and to provide state of the art facilities for programmes and conferences.
- Redecoration of guest and dining facilities to enhance the welcome and hospitality capacity of the building.
- Integration of administrative spaces to ensure best service of all who avail of the facilities, programmes and outreaches of MIA.



# Curating Heritage and Research Resources

## Goal

To ensure that the Mercy story is protected preserved and used in such a way that it is an inspiration for contemporary and future Mercy mission.



## Why does MIA curate its Heritage and Research resources?

- Mercy International Centre holds a precious collection of artefacts associated with Catherine McAuley. These include a large collection of her letters, many items of personal memorabilia, and a number of gifts received by her from supportive friends and benefactors as well as furniture and other goods which she brought with her to Baggot Street in 1827. A number of very special items are on permanent loan to the Mercy International Centre, including Catherine's Profession Ring and her cincture.
- Mercy International Centre also holds a collection of the illuminated art and calligraphy work of Sr. Clare Augustine, contemporary of Catherine McAuley as well as the drawings of Sr. Clare Agnew, who produced vivid depictions of the early works of Mercy.
- Mercy International Association has developed a Library with three main sections: 1) Biographies of Catherine McAuley and some of the early founding sisters; 2) A selection of spiritual books from mid C19; 3) collection of books, written by or about Sisters of Mercy and Mercy Ministries.

- Mercy International Centre holds the International Register that contains the name and some information about every Mercy sister from Catherine McAuley to the present day. The Register holds over 55,000 names.
- Mercy International Centre has compiled an Inventory of Primary Source Material. This computerized inventory aims at assembling all Primary Source Materials in Mercy Archives worldwide.

## **Examples of Work:**

- Conservationist work for this valuable Mercy International Archive as well as the work of identifying, labelling and filing it is carried on by a professional archivist who is engaged by MIA on a part-time basis.
- A catalogue of the MIA library collection has been compiled and regular maintenance of the book stock is carried out.
- Digitization of much of the resources is in progress.
- Heritage tours are conducted regularly.

## Notes:

