

Reflection by Past and Current Fellows

"I don't think I would have labeled myself as a leader until I embarked on this trip. Through the support of the other fellows, some our our leadership and reflection work...helped me frame my personal thinking and reflection in that way. It also helped me focus on aspects of my own growth and leadership I am seeking to change or address as I embark on the rest of this year. I feel bolstered by the community of women we have created and by my new connection to the work Mercy Global Action"



"We are still at the beginning of our journey, but the first couple of months of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship have been challenging and compelling. We have been confronted with difficult realities - poverty, trafficking, statelessness, oppression and environmental degradation - and while I have struggled at times to confront or 'be present' with these realities, I know that my struggle in merely being confronted with them is nothing compared to the struggle of those who experience these realities everyday. I knew this Fellowship wasn't going to be easy, but I already feel like it's going to be one of the greatest learning curves of my life. And we know that genuine leadership always has to begin with learning and discomfort..."

"For me, the greatest strength of our Fellowship lies in our group. We have an incredible group of women who come from many walks of life and bring their own experiences, wisdom and sense of humour... Together, in Cambodia, or on our webinars and weekly discussions, we often find ourselves saying 'I never thought of it that way', or 'What can be done about this?' It's rare to have the opportunity to work so closely with a group of people who are so like-minded in their hope for justice..."



REFLECTION ON FELLOWSHIP



"It is now about two months into the fellowship program but it feels like we have walked on this journey for much longer. The Fellowship has linked us together, women of mercy, from many miles across the world. We come from the countries of United States, Peru, Australia, Ireland, and Papua New Guinea. It has enabled and engaged us to link social justice issues which are affecting the earth community, beginning with the various countries from which we all have come. Our passion for justice for all individuals has united us to journey together on this fellowship. So far, it has been a great experience of uniting us as one in the name of mercy and justice within self, family, community and society.

We are all aware that there are many people on this planet who care about others and our earth, but painfully, there are also those who care only about themselves but not about others or our common home. For some people there is no realisation of a growing change in human behaviour or the environment around them. However, those that are connected by the touch of a web of justice are united because their hearts are disturbed by the displacement of people and the displacement of the resources of our earth.

The fellowship is like a spider web that connects us - the fellows - in a web with our leadership team and our mentors; while we the fellows then connect with other Mercy people building on the web by making more connections...

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By reading and reflecting on the monthly resources and the webinars, we deepen our connections, as well as connecting with others in the world when we are sharing and reflecting with them. It is an invisible, yet tangible and alive connection. Each of us has gone beyond our doors for the sake of the displacement of our earth and the displacement of people. So often this happens due to a self-centered hunger for power, wealth, and greed. The monthly resources affirms, strengthens, supports, and motivate us, as well as giving us insights about the effects of change in the world and how these affect our whole earth, all human beings, and all life forms. All of this encourages and gives us hope for a more just world.

The other fellows, our leaders, and the different panelists on the webinars, as well as most of our other resources, all reveal that women have a lot of power to influence and to lead. It is women who care about others in practical ways such as caring for the whole household. We join with other justice women in the world crying and longing for a just world that allow each individual to be respected and enable them to live life to the fullest. It is a challenge for us when we don't always see immediate effects of change in community and society. It is easy to feel disempowered when whole systems are imbalanced and corrupt in some countries. It is always the ordinary person and family who are most effected at the grassroots level.

For example, in my own country of Papua New Guinea, people are dying from curable diseases due to lack of proper medical facilities, or not enough specialised doctors. Poor roads full of potholes mean many do not have access to good health care and local hospitals or aid clinics. It is those who are vulnerable and marginalized who cannot afford to go somewhere else for the better health treatment. And so mortality rates are high.

It is my hope that one day the cry of the 'displaced persons' and 'the earth' will be heard by the people in power so that there is peace and justice in the world."

REFLECTION BY

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