

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

THEMATIC AREAS

INSIDE THE UN: THROUGH OUR ECOSOC EYES

USEFUL RESOURCES

UPCOMING EVENTS

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GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

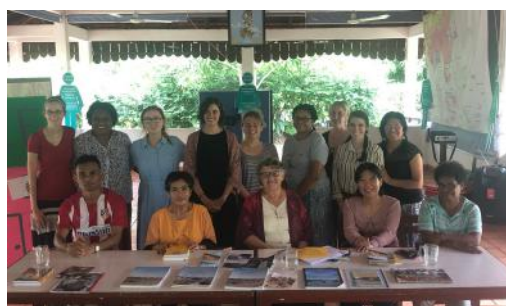
Inaugural Group of Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders to Graduate



The final immersion segment of the inaugural group of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship is due to begin on 12 February until 20 February, 2021.

Due to the coronavirus, the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship has met unprecedented and unexpected obstacles in its inaugural year. The first Fellowship group was due to graduate in Ireland this past July 2020. It has since then, been postponed until February 2021 and will be hosted virtually on the Zoom platform. Although this decision was very disappointing to us all, we have used this opportunity to think creatively how to move forward.

During the final virtual immersion, Fellows will be presenting their research, taking a tour of Catherine's House, participating in leadership workshops, fireside chats, art processing and more.



- *Invitation to Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellows Research Presentations*

'Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellows (Group One 2019-2021) have prepared extensive research presentations on various Mercy justice issues. These research presentations will be conducted via Zoom on Tuesday the 16th and Wednesday the 17th of February, 2021.



The program, including a schedule of the research presentations, names of the presenting Fellows and a research project description can be downloaded [here](#).

We invite you to attend any/all of these events. Local times for each presentation are linked to [the program](#).

Leading up to the final immersion, Mercy Global Action will be highlighting the research projects of the Fellows and sharing their insights and reflections of their participation in the program. Join us on Twitter at [@MIAGlobalAction](#)

- *Mercy Global Action Co-Sponsored a Side Event during CSocD59*

The 59th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD59) took place from 8 to 17 February 2021. This year's theme was 'Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all'.

Mercy Global Action have Co-Sponsored an event along side UNANIMA Interntaional, entitled '*Migration, Displacement & their Cross-cutting Issues In the Context of Digital Technology & Just Transitions Event Information*'. The event took place on Monday, February 9th, 2021 from 8.30-10.00AM EST (US & Canada). Cecilie Kern, MGA Research and Advocacy Associate, moderated the event.

The poster features a small globe with colorful flags on top, set against a sandy background. Below this is a blue banner with 'CSOCD59' in white. The main title is 'MIGRATION, DISPLACEMENT & THEIR CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & JUST TRANSITIONS'. It lists the Moderator as Cecilie Kern (Mercy International Association) and several Speakers: Ify Ofong, Monica Duhem, Chioma Agwuegbo, Preeti Gadhoke, and Inkeri von Hase & Michael Stewart-Evan. It provides the time (8:30-9:45AM NYC TIME), the date (FEB • 09 • 2021), and a registration link. At the bottom are logos for UNANIMA, Mercy International Association, and other partners.

- *Further resources on Migration*

The thumbnail has a light blue background. The title 'Building Bridges for Migration Advocacy' is in large, bold, dark blue letters. Below the title are four icons: a person walking, a bridge, a smartphone, and a globe. A play button icon is in the center. At the bottom, it says 'Cecilie Kern' and 'Mercy International Association - Global Action | NGO Committee on Migration'.

Cecilie Kern was invited to speak at an event on International Migrants Day organised by the Society of the Sacred Heart at the UN. Click [here](#) to watch Cecilie's presentation on advocacy for migrants' rights that bridges between grassroots experiences & UN policymaking.



THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS



- *Cecilie Kern, MGA Research and Advocacy Associate Advocates at the Global Forum on Migration*

This January, Cecilie Kern represented Mercy International Association and the NGO Committee on Migration at the 13th Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD), hosted virtually by the United Arab Emirates. The GFMD is an annual, state-led, informal and non-binding process, which helps shape the global debate on migration and development. Since 2007, it has provided a flexible, multi-stakeholder space where national governments, civil society, the private sector, local and regional governments, and other stakeholders, including youth and UN agencies, can come together in a spirit of trust and mutual exchange to discuss the multi-dimensional aspects, opportunities and challenges related to migration and development. The 13th Summit brought over 2000 participants around the world to discuss the future of human mobility and how to build innovative partnerships for sustainable development.



The Youth Forum, which took place from 4-6 January, and the Civil Society Preparatory Meetings, which took place on 7, 11, 12 and 15 January, provided a space for youth and civil society delegates to collectively develop a set of recommendations on this year's key thematic areas, and to prepare to carry these outcomes and recommendations as advocacy messages through the entire GFMD Summit, to share with governments and other stakeholders. Though there are always challenges to developing joint recommendations that reflect the full range of civil society priorities and concerns, there is a significant value in ensuring a consistent voice for civil society. Following these days of intensive online debate and discussion, civil society representatives adopted four joint advocacy priorities for the GFMD Summit, with strong links across thematic areas:



- Ensuring social protection for migrants regardless of their status;
- Expanding migrants' regularization and legal migration pathways;
- Fighting xenophobia and discrimination; and
- Promoting safe access to services and to the judicial system.

Read more: [Civil Society Representatives Pick Advocacy Priorities for the GFMD Summit.](#)

The 13th GFMD Summit itself took place from 18-26 January. The Summit Roundtables were organised around the six 2020 themes selected by the United Arab Emirates Chairmanship:

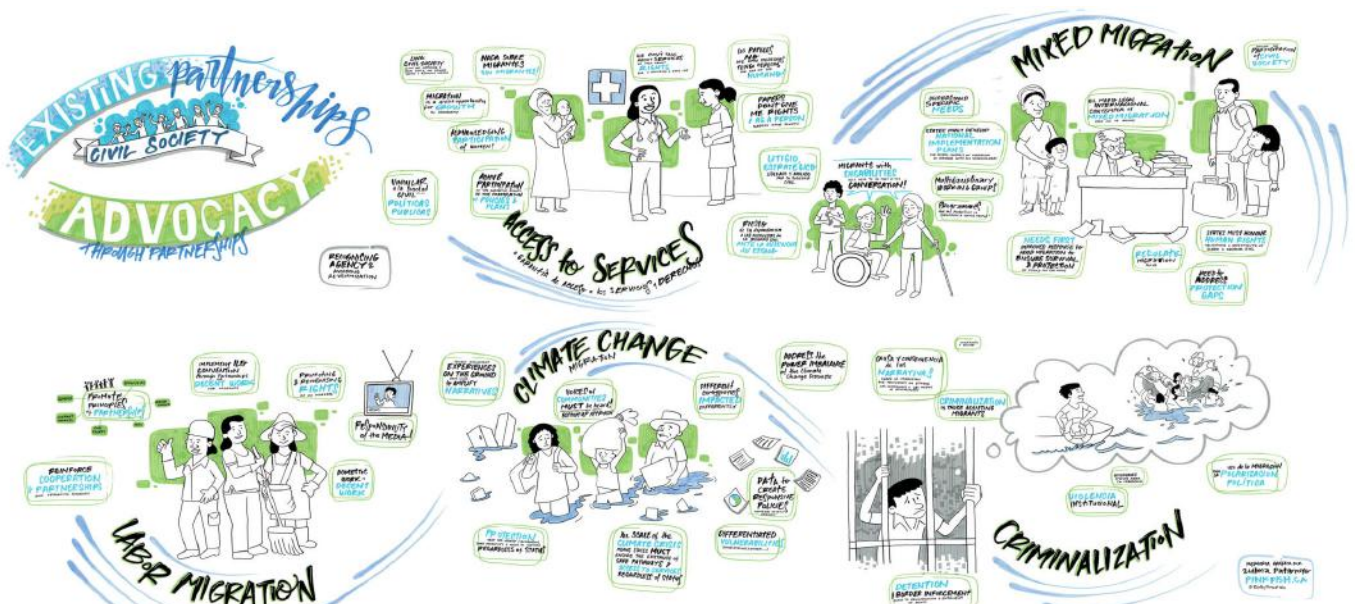
1. The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of a Changing Employment Landscape;
2. Skilling Migrants for Employment;
3. Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants;
4. Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection;
5. Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration; and
6. Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Goals.

Because of the inclusive format, civil society messages came across strongly in the official sessions of the GFMD, as well as the side events. Governments picked up some of these points, especially those about access to social protection and regularization. The human rights of migrants, including those in irregular status, have long been confirmed by international standards and guidelines. Discussions centered on how to close the gap between international standards and national and regional practice, and to recognize and defend the humanity of all people, regardless of their nationality or migratory status.

After the official GFMD Summit had ended, governments and other stakeholders participated in a Dialogue on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) / the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), in accordance with paragraph 47 of the GCM. This dialogue, co-organized by the GFMD Chair and the UN Network on Migration, served as a platform to 1) inform about the state of play of the GCM process and sharing good and innovative practices, policies and cooperation mechanisms towards the review of the GCM; 2) offer a platform to discuss how all stakeholders contribute to GCM implementation; 3) to discuss emerging challenges in 2021 and how the GFMD and the UN Network on Migration can contribute to the first International Migration Review Forum in 2022.

As the Mercy Global Action office prepares to initiate a Migration Task Force in 2021, it is important to remain engaged in these conversations. The Migration Task Force will aim to collect stories, research and good practices from around the Mercy World and conduct analysis related to addressing protection gaps for people on the move, and on issues that did not receive so much attention at this GFMD, like climate and environmental displacement. The work of the task force will help to improve capacity building on this priority issue and to inform advocacy that will be used for the International Migration Review Forum to review the GCM in 2022, as well as future meetings of the GFMD and the High-Level Political Forum. Mercy Global Action is looking forward to engaging with Sisters, and Partners in ministry from Mercy Congregations and Institutes around the world in this important work.

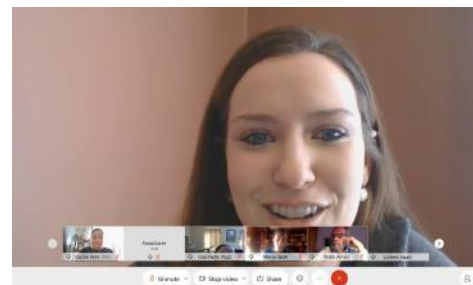
To read the full article and learn more about the GFMD click [here](#).





THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH



MGA Welcomes Collaboration with Newly Appointed Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation

Mr. Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, was appointed the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation on November 1st, 2020.

In December, Mr. Pedro Arrojo-Agudo hosted a public consultation online to begin an open dialogue with civil society partners and discuss his mandate. In his consultation, Mr. Arrojo-Agudo highlighted the activities and priorities of the first three years of the mandate. He plans to spotlight the triple global crisis: climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and democratic governance; all of which pose important challenges to the implementation of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. The Special Rapporteur hopes for his second report to be on the human rights to water and sanitation for indigenous people.

As Special Rapporteur, Mr Pedro Arrojo Agudo will focus on the following issues to promote the human rights to water and sanitation:

- Women defenders of the human rights to water and sanitation. Women are active promoters of water, not just victims. In his consultation, Mr. Arrojo-Agudo emphasized how it is essential to develop the gender vision developed by UN Women on water and sanitation projects and programmes.
- Human rights to water and sanitation of indigenous peoplesWater-related conflicts and safety of human rights defenders
- Rural sanitation
- Strengthening links between Human Rights Council mechanisms, social movements and municipalities
- Commodification of water and privatization of services and making the links to food sustainability

As discussed in his consultation, the Special Rapporteur aims to appeal for global solidarity. The pandemic is leaving a lot of pain but is also providing lessons to learn, uncovering the vulnerabilities of humans and the systems we have created. There is a broad consensus that we need to strengthen our public health systems where water and sanitation are vital needs to guarantee health for all.

Mr Arrojo-Agudo articulated his admiration for the work of faith-based organizations and the ethical commitment of Pope Francis. The Special Rapporteur aims to promote and activate a permanent dialogue with the existing civil society networks on the various fronts of work and struggles, as well as with local governments and organizations that work specifically to strengthen the capacities of the local governments.

Click [here](#) to read more ways to engage with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation

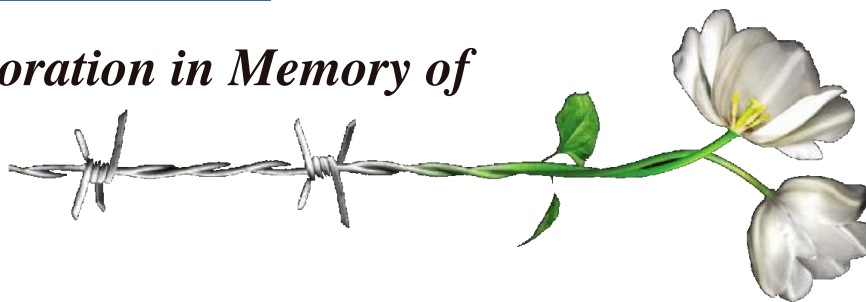


AT THE UNITED NATIONS THROUGH OUR ECOSOC EYES...

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

By Tylia Barnes (MELF 2019-2021)

Remembrance is a Teacher.



Eight decades ago, our world experience one of the most horrific times in history, with the Holocaust. Over four million Jewish people were killed during this time. However, on January 27, 2021 the world remembers and honors the lives of those who are no longer with us and those who survived.

Many years ago, in 1985, I was a 7th grader at Garrison Junior High School in Baltimore, Maryland. I walked the halls with friends to World History class. Upon entering the room, I noticed a short aging woman standing next to my history teacher wearing a bright smile. I did not know who she was but quickly learned that she was once a student at Garrison Junior High many years ago. Our class was in the middle of the World War II unit and had been learning about the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Once students settled, the woman began speaking with a thick European accent unfamiliar to me. She introduced herself as Tekla (unfortunately I do not remember her last name) and told us that she studied history in the same classroom. Tekla also asked if we wondered why she was teaching class today. While surveying the class, she pulled up her sleeve showing us a tattoo on her forearm stating, "I am a Holocaust survivor and want to share my experience with you". She had our full attention. Our guest shared explicit stories that included being forcefully removed from her home, taking trains to camp, being forever separated from family and how she would never forget the smell of death. Tekla was living history and brought our classroom lessons full circle through her lens of experience.

Tekla also shared truths from camp that sustained her until liberation. Though often hungry, tired, and emotionally depleted she conveyed a reality that was not noted in the history books. She began to tell us about the richness of making the best of their circumstances. Bonds were formed between people from different countries. Together they shared knowledge, spiritual and practical gifts with one another in hopes of motivating desires to keep pressing ahead. I will never forget her saying, "The Nazi's took everything from us, but they could not take away our virtue".

That was one of the most influential moments of my life because it helped me to see hope in the face of opposition. I have lost track of Tekla over the years but never forgot her name nor have I forgotten her personal declaration. She wore an armor of resilience, grace, and belief in the power of the human spirit.

As we pay tribute on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, join me in lighting a candle for Tekla, survivors and the millions who were persecuted as we honor their lives, legacy and virtue.



International Day of Education - Formal Education transforms human life in Papua New Guinea

By Theresia Tina rsm (MELF 2019 - 2021)



In the past in Papua New Guinea (PNG) formal education was not recognised as vital as it is today. When formal education was first introduced in the 1960s and 1970s in PNG only the boys were allowed to go to school. Girls were to stay at home with their mothers.

Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed in 1948, states that it is everyone's right to be educated, it must be at no financial cost and it is compulsory in the early years. However, in PNG people were not clear about the rights of every child to be educated and to be given equal respect. It is only when the giftedness of each person is valued equally and their dignity is respected, then they are able to contribute to the common good and feel included in society.

For example, when the first Sisters of Mercy came to PNG from Australia in 1956 to the highlands and in 1957 to the coast, they had to really stand their ground in order to take the girls as well as boys into the schools which they established. Very slowly, people began to recognise the importance of formal education and girls were educated equally. Achieving this change was not without its challenge.

Due to the rugged geography of our country, 75% of the population live in the villages and most of the people are still not formally educated. Children cannot go to school due to the geography of the place and the inability of many families to afford funds to pay the school fees to send their children to attend school. In most villages children have to walk hours climbing mountains and cross rivers to attend school.

Most of the remote schools miss out on the resources supplied by the Education Department. Many families struggle to afford food and shelter for the night, let alone being able to afford to send their children to school. For those of us who are formally educated and who have the privilege of a good profession, we feel more included when we can contribute to the economy and the wellbeing of our country of PNG. of our We come to realise that we are able to share our gifts with everyone.

In recent times COVID-19 has impacted formal education in many parts of the world. Many children and students have been badly affected and their studies have been disturbed as well as their mental health and self-esteem. In developing countries like PNG students have been emotionally and mentally affected. As a result some of them have turned to drugs and other forms of crime, while others are in danger of forms of exploitation such as child labour, child trafficking and becoming street vendors. In the towns in PNG (prior even to COVID-19) young children who do not attend school and who loiter around the markets become known as 'taxi boys', carrying the heavy produce on their backs for a small amount of money.

Therefore, formal education is a lifetime process. It has the power to transform the life of every person. It empowers, and fosters the development of creative, informed and resilient global citizens. In PNG formal education is a gift which opens up a world of choices and possibilities.

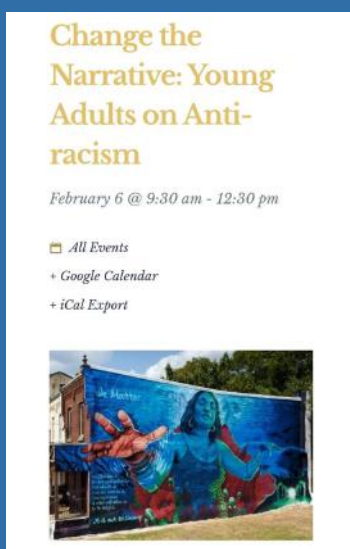


“USEFUL RESOURCES

[Institute of Global Homelessness -
The Better Data Project](#)



[Craneleith Spiritual Centre -
Change the narrative:
Young adults on Anti-racism](#)



[His Holiness the Dalai Lama In
Conversation with Greta Thunberg
& Leading Scientists -
Climate Feedback Loops](#)



[#Water2Me campaign -](#)
Share your thoughts and experiences on
what water means to you across social
media



UPCOMING EVENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 24 January - International Day of Education
- 27 January - International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
- 4 February - International Day of Human Fraternity
- 6 February - International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation
- 8-17 February - The 59th Session of the Commission for Social Development
- 10 February - World Pulses Day
- 11 February - International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- 12-21 February - Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship Group 1 Final Immersion
- 13 February - World Radio Day
- 20 February - World Day of Social Justice
- 21 February - International Mother Language Day

Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative weekly e-newsletter (MercyNews).

Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: www.mercyworld.org

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