



FROM SPARKS TO FIRE

A GUIDE TO JUSTICE
ADVOCACY FOR THE

GLOBAL MERCY COMMUNITY

A PUBLICATION OF





Reverend James M. Lawson used to share with the new interns and staff his interpretation of 1 Kings 18:20–39. In the passage, Elijah is competing with the false prophets. They each build an altar of wood and pray for divine fire to come down. The fire comes down for Elijah but not for the false prophets.

The wisdom that Jim would draw from the story was that **Elijah's success came from three elements—the fire, the prayer, and the wood.** The fire is analogous to what happens in a movement when suddenly the number of people engaged multiplies and floods of human beings break down previously impenetrable barriers. The element of prayer is always critical. But the fire could not come down if there were no wood for it to burn.

The building of the wooden altar is the slow, daily process of movement building, the endless conversations and meetings, the actions that seem to have no impact, the multiple defeats of initiatives and proposals. **No human being can control when the fire comes down, but we can and must pile up the wood."**

— AN MGA SUPPORTER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mercy Global Action would like to thank our partners in advocacy around the world – Sisters, Associates, ministries and educators – who helped bring this flagship document to life. We extend a special thanks to Sr Kathleen Rushton for her careful edits and to Julie Conway, our designer, who turned a hefty document into a beautiful, accessible resource.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Mercy Global Action would like to acknowledge the First Nations peoples and Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work around the world, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise the enduring leadership of our First Nations brothers and sisters in caring for the land, waters and sky, and the tireless ways they continue to work for change. May we continue to walk together in the plight for justice and reconciliation.

This guide offers both practical and theoretical ways in which to advocate for justice

On behalf of the Mercy Global Action office, the justice arm of Mercy International, it gives me great joy to offer this advocacy resource to the Mercy World and also others who seek to give voice to the many injustices in our world and be a sign of peace and hope. You may ask, 'Why joy?' Well, I believe that joy is a celebratory feeling. In this publication, we have much to celebrate.



ANGELA REED RSM

Head of Mercy Global Action

Firstly, I want to draw your attention to the fact that this year marks 35 years since the Sisters of Mercy gained accreditation with the United Nations Office of Global Communications (formerly the Department of Public Information). Additionally and significantly, this year marks 25 years since the Sisters of Mercy attained Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This is a sign that the Mercy World views faith and justice as inherently linked and intricately ingrained in our lives.

Secondly, this guide offers both practical and theoretical ways in which to advocate for justice, providing numerous examples of advocacy from across the Mercy world, offering much wisdom and insight and illustrating that the Gospel call to justice is actively present across the Mercy World.

Thirdly, it invites the reader to reflect on their own advocacy efforts through a series of reflective questions. This means that it is not a document that requires passive reading, but rather one that engages and stimulates thinking and action.

Finally, I celebrate that this publication is a contribution that the Mercy World makes to the often hidden impact of advocacy work. It is, of course, not the final word on advocacy, but we can continue to celebrate our contribution to making our world a better place for Earth and people.

In celebration then, I offer this publication in the hope that it may inspire others to recognise that they are indeed advocates whether working at the grassroots level to make changes at the local level or whether working on policy at the national or global level.



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What is Mercy Justice Advocacy?



Welcome to *From Sparks to Fire: A Guide to Justice Advocacy for the Global Mercy Community*. We hope this document serves you well in your efforts to campaign for practical change.

The Sisters of Mercy have long stood with the marginalised and oppressed, mobilising resources and networks to draw attention to the lived realities of global injustice. Today, this work is amplified through the collective mission of Mercy ministries, Associates, schools and outreach services.

Mercy Global Action, as the global justice arm of Mercy International Association, works with the United Nations to bring grassroots stories from the Mercy experience to the meeting rooms and policy briefs of diplomats and decision makers. This remit has given us a wide and fluid understanding of advocacy. We see a growing interest in the power of civil society to enable change, and we're regularly asked to share advice for advocating at different levels.

This Guide is a culmination of our learnings. It's aimed at professionals, students, teachers, leaders and anyone looking to engage in advocacy that's underpinned by the Mercy values of solidarity, dignity and hope. Whether you read the Guide through or dip in and out as needed, we hope it will be a faithful companion on your journey.

There is no one right way to do advocacy. This Guide is not formulaic. Instead, it walks the reader through frameworks, tools and case studies that showcase the practical wisdom of Mercy advocates around the world. What you take away for your mission and community is up to you. We welcome your feedback.

Best of luck!

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is the act of supporting, defending or speaking on behalf of a particular cause or policy issue. Tangible examples of advocacy include lobbying, raising awareness, organising community action and speaking at public forums. The goal of advocacy is to create change, usually through influencing people in power and holding them accountable for their decisions. Ideally, advocacy should elevate the voices of those directly affected by the issue, for example, those who are vulnerable or marginalised.

This Guide explores advocacy through the lens of the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach. This approach can be used for individual or collective advocacy. In other words, it can be used by individuals who wish to speak out on behalf of themselves or others, and by groups or organisations who are working together to achieve a common goal.

What does Mercy say about advocacy?

Advocacy is a prophetic activity of the Catholic Church that works for dignity and social justice. As people of faith, we accompany our sisters and brothers in the struggle for justice and peace in areas affected by violence, displacement, discrimination and environmental degradation. We live within a global ecosystem encompassing both human and non-human creation, so we stand by the principles of integral ecology and seek out solutions that uphold the rights of nature.

Our Christian tradition and Mercy charism provide us with road maps for listening and responding to the cries of Earth and those in need. Catherine McAuley opened

the House of Mercy in Dublin in support of those who were suffering and oppressed, and gave us clear signposts to guide our advocacy efforts. It was in her solidarity with those who were poor and uneducated that Catherine put her faith into action. She saw in each of those with whom she worked — no matter their standing in society — the sacredness of the divine and therefore, an inalienable dignity. Catherine purposefully used her wealth, status and connections to speak on behalf of those rendered outcast and silent, thus ensuring they were able to live with safety, security and community. This remains our challenge today.

"Mercy is first an action or more precisely a reaction to someone else's suffering, now interiorised within oneself — a reaction to a suffering that has come to penetrate one's own entrails and heart... this activity, this action is motivated only by that suffering."

— Jon Sobrino, 1994



The work of Mercy International Association: Mercy Global Action

Mercy Global Action (MGA) in New York is the international justice arm of Mercy International Association (MIA). Through Mercy Global Action, we are able to expand our advocacy capacity and re-imagine ways in which the grassroots experience can influence global policies.

Since 1998, the Sisters of Mercy have held Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN). With ECOSOC accreditation we have certain privileges to place items on the agenda of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies; we may attend meetings, where we may submit written statements and make oral presentations to governments. With Mercy contacts on the ground, Mercy Global Action is able to exchange knowledge, identify best practices, and bring key areas of concern to our justice work, including at the United Nations.

Grounded in Gospel vision, the work and ministry of MGA seeks to represent the experience of the most vulnerable. We use our platform to voice the concerns of those who are absent and/or excluded from decision-making spaces, communicating the stories, experiences, challenges and good



practices from grassroots ministries and projects. It is also our responsibility to communicate the policies made at the UN back to the local level so that our projects can be in line with international standards, and so that we can hold national governments to account for their international commitments.

We work in coalitions with other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and collaboratively with our Mercy Sisters, Partners and Associates worldwide. In our Mercy Global Action network, issue-based task forces, and Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship (MELF) program, we invite and discuss current and upcoming advocacy initiatives, seek the network's advice, share information and extend invitations for specific opportunities to engage into the future. We aim to build capacity and skills for critical thinking, analysis and advocacy, as well as encourage participants to seek out ways to engage in advocacy in their region. Our work in coalitions and our perseverance in collaborating with others to campaign for change can make a critical difference across the Mercy world.

Mercy Global Action's Theory of Change



The ways in which MGA works to create change are highlighted in its Theory of Change.

Impact: Through collective justice advocacy efforts, Mercy Global Action works to raise awareness and contribute to concrete and systemic change addressing displacement of persons and environmental degradation, furthering the dream of Mercy and compassion.

We do this through: leading and supporting Mercy justice advocacy efforts to influence attitudes, priorities and policies for this change. MGA works at international, national, and local levels, pursuing promising strategies for impact. MGA builds relationships and expands networks to amplify Mercy's influence.

We invest time in our priority justice issues, through connecting and mobilizing vibrant MGA justice advocacy networks, focusing on priority justice issues and privileging participation from the Global South; raising awareness for informed and persuasive advocacy; and building the capacity of members of the Mercy family to advocate skillfully for justice.



What is the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach?

The Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach is a framework used by the global Mercy community to guide advocacy efforts. The Approach is grounded in the values of the Sisters of Mercy, which include compassion, justice, and respect for the inherent dignity of people and Earth.

Informed by the work of prominent Catholic philosophers and theologians, Joe Holland and Peter Henriot (Holland & Henriot,

1983), the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach was developed in 2015 by Srs Angela Reed rsm and Aine O'Connor rsm. The Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach is underpinned by Mercy values and tradition, human rights, critical feminism, Catholic Social Teaching, participatory action research, reflection, and prayer. It is intended to be flexible, adaptable to different contexts, and informed by the voices and perspectives of those most affected by injustice.

"We are called to be critical thinkers, always being prepared to challenge our own bias and presuppositions, to ask the big questions, to interrogate our own motivations and to seek new knowledge."

— Angela Reed rsm

THE MERCY JUSTICE ADVOCACY APPROACH

is an informed, deconstructionist approach, underpinned by Mercy values and tradition, human rights, critical feminism, Catholic social teaching, reflection and prayer, and active participation.

What is the experience of people?

What is the context of our world?

Adapted by Aine O'Connor rsm
and Angela Reed rsm 2015



Advocacy Leading to Action

Protesting, rallying, lobbying, interventions, meetings, letter writing, suggesting alternatives/ informed advocacy

Who is With Us?

Allies, coalitions, networks

Advocacy for Whom?

Who speaks with and for the oppressed?
Who acts with and for them? On whose terms do we advocate? For whose benefit do we advocate?

Tools for Advocacy

Systems analysis, root cause analysis, human rights analysis, Mercy 5 Why's, problematisation, deconstructing the problem, reading/observation, fact finding, social analysis

Self Reflection

Who am I? Where do I stand? What is my position?

Experience

Earth, people

How was this approach created?

The Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach draws upon the following methodologies:

- A rights-based approach
- An informed deconstructionist approach
- Participatory action research
- A bottom-up approach

The rights-based approach places human and Earth rights at the centre of advocacy. It recognises that human rights are universal and indivisible and should be integrated into all aspects of development, including research, policy-making, and implementation.

An informed deconstructionist approach involves analysing a text or other form of communication to understand the underlying assumptions and power dynamics at play. It aims to challenge and subvert dominant ideologies and ensure marginalised perspectives and voices are centred in advocacy efforts.

Participatory action research involves active collaboration and partnership between researchers and community members to address social issues and promote social

change. It empowers communities by addressing issues that are important to them and involving them in all aspects of the advocacy process.

A bottom-up approach to advocacy focuses on building support and momentum for a cause at the grassroots level. It involves engaging and empowering individuals and local communities to act and advocate for their own needs and interests.

The Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach combines these methodologies to create a comprehensive social justice advocacy framework. It places human and Earth rights and marginalised perspectives at the centre of the advocacy process, involves communities in all aspects of the advocacy, and aims to build momentum and support at the grassroots level.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY

1. What is the experience for Earth and People?
2. Who am I and where do I place myself in this ever evolving world?
3. What tools do I have for advocacy?
4. With/For whom do I advocate?
5. Who is with me on this justice journey?
6. What action does this justice journey lead me to?

Breaking Down the Pyramid



What is the experience of Earth and people?

The Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach is grounded in the experiences of people and the planet. We begin our reflection here.

All around the world, in busy cities and rural areas alike, there are situations in which people and Earth are calling for justice. Poverty, gender inequality, racism, displacement, hunger, climate change, violence, the erosion of democracy, access to healthcare, and water issues are only a few of the many intersecting issues that demand action in our world today.

As Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si'*, it is evident that, ***“we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”*** (LS 139)

We believe that the voices of people with lived experience of a situation should be at the heart of our advocacy and the policy decisions that



follow. This approach is necessary to find just solutions that address the needs of all people, including those most marginalised, and the needs of the planet. By listening deeply to these experiences, ideas and expertise, and meaningfully engaging with the people and places that are most impacted, together we can influence the creation of policies and services that will best serve the needs and capacities of those we seek to serve.

Insights informed by lived experience can help highlight patterns, behaviors, challenges, and barriers among people who share similar experiences. They might also reveal changes in the context surrounding

a given justice issue over time, intersections and interdependencies with other issues, or ways to improve or modify services and programs based on lessons learned.

Meaningful engagement with affected populations means that we build in enough time and support to allow space for people with lived experience to share their experiences and expertise. In many cases, we must ensure that the engagement is person- and healing-centred, trauma and survivor informed, respectful of varied personal histories, and transformational rather than transactional. It is important to avoid the risks of exploiting and/or tokenizing lived experience by ensuring thoughtful, intentional and inclusive engagement.

Collectively, we must also consider issues of equity, and work to proactively ensure historically-excluded populations can meaningfully participate in opportunities to share their experiences. We work to ensure that individuals and communities with lived experience not only have a seat at the table but can contribute to decision-making throughout the lifecycle of a policy or program, including at the conceptualisation, implementation, and evaluation levels, to the fullest extent possible.

“The more immune you are to people’s suffering ... that’s very very dangerous for humanity.” (Weiwei, 2017)



How can the voices of those who are marginalised be translated into policies that benefit people and Earth?

CASE STUDY

INDIGENOUS WISDOM GUIDING ADVOCACY

WITH CATHERINE MURUPAENGA-IKEN



CATHERINE MURUPAENGA-IKEN

A friend of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine is an Indigenous human rights and climate justice advocate with the Pacific Indigenous Women's Network. Catherine was an OHCHR Indigenous Fellow and maintains an active interest and participation in Indigenous Peoples' issues. Since 2005, she has acted either in a mandated capacity (e.g. for Ngāti Kuri since 2008), or in a supportive capacity for different Māori constituencies/ interest groups or Māori-friendly NGOs (e.g. the Independent Constitutional Working Group, the "Aotearoa is not for sale" movement, Peace Movement Aotearoa). She has participated in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Peoples, both country visits (2005 and 2010) to New Zealand by the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, as well as Pacific regional and Māori national networks. In 2017, Catherine presented on Mercy Global Action's panel during the Commission on the Status of Women on "Defense of Land and Water: Economic Empowerment for Women". Catherine has just completed her work in the production of the 6th Edition of the "State of the World's Indigenous Peoples" (SOWIP) report.

Why do you do advocacy?

CATHERINE My Life has many kaupapa/purposes (as far as I comprehend them) which are bigger than Me/ MySelf, and those purposes compel Me. They are a big part of My identity. They include:

- Being radically obedient to Our Creators' and Atua/ Supernatural Ancestors' values, standards and wisdom:
- Standing for what is tika/just and equitable (including human rights – especially Indigenous human rights).
- Standing for pono/truth.
- Standing for aroha/understanding, compassion.

- Ensuring I (as a descendant of the Atua) do all I can, in service, to co-create with the Atua a healthy world where My children, grandchildren, and all people and Earthlings I care for can live naturally in harmony.

Why do you think advocacy is important?

CATHERINE Significantly, gains made in the field of human rights policy evolution and implementation only come through advocacy, through the work of committed defenders and activists. Especially in this Anthropocene Age of converging spiritual, climate, economic, social, cultural, political and other crises, advocacy work is needed even more now than ever.

What is important to remember when engaging in advocacy?

CATHERINE Remember (from a Māori approach to activism):

- The “why” You do what You do, grounded in an identity of Your Highest Self. This will help give You strength and keep You moving forward and taking action (persistence) should You ever feel challenged or feel grief along Your advocacy journey.
- Have a compelling ‘cause-and-effect’ Theory of Change (ToC): Understand what are the factors You must influence, the situations You must affect, the outputs You must complete that lead towards the outcomes You seek to achieve. Within that ToC, be clear about what You can and cannot influence, and spend Your predominant time/energy on the former.
- Relationships (and trust in those relationships) are everything. Ensure You build, nurture and maintain healthy relationships that support You – and equally important, know when it is time to end relationships which weaken You and/or Your mahi/efforts.
 - Identify and collaborate with those who believe as You do, whether the number in Your campaign may be relatively large or small (there will be times when it seems You are only few, and it may feel isolating or lonely; and times when You are great in number, and you may feel optimistic and empowering acting in community with such folks); and
 - Be loyal to a High Standard. People can tend to disappoint You, but High Standards are Your best friend: they provide constant and reliable stability and guidance.
- Always do Your best to communicate complaints with the values of tika, pono and aroha. There are many benefits to this

approach, but an obvious one links to Your role as an advocate: when communicating Your opinions and personal statements, only share that which You are comfortable with being seen publicly. In this day and Age, We must assume that anything communicated outside of You by any means (i) is being documented or surveilled/monitored, and (ii) can be accessed or used with/without Your free, prior and informed consent in ways that could be harmful to You (e.g. a journalist might misquote You in a way that harms Your reputation).

- Ensure You take time out when You know You need a break, or to reflect or regenerate.

Can you describe an advocacy campaign that you created, led or participated in?

CATHERINE “Te Papa: Tell the Truth about Te Tiriti o Waitangi” (led by Te Waka Hourua, Māori climate justice activists and their mainstream allies, including support from members of Extinction Rebellion Aotearoa New Zealand)

What were the goals of the movement?

CATHERINE

- The permanent exhibit ‘The Treaty of Waitangi: Signs of a Nation’ has been untruthful and a continuing act of colonialism since Te Papa Tongarewa (New Zealand’s national museum) first opened its doors in 1998. The exhibit must be changed with all due haste in order to accurately reflect Aotearoa’s history. Even with the well-spring of experts and experience brought in to guide them, it appears that the Te Tiriti o Waitangi exhibition was always intended to deceive by misrepresenting NZ history to all its visitors.
- The English ‘Treaty’ displayed prominently and equally across from Te Tiriti o Waitangi (in Te Reo Māori) implies the two documents

hold equal status and legitimacy. This is a lie, as Te Tiriti (signed between Māori chiefs and the Crown in 1840) is the only internationally-recognised document with legal authority. The current design of the exhibit also implies that the displayed Treaty (in English) is a true translation of Te Tiriti, which is another lie, as there are significant material differences between the two texts. These differences need to be made obvious, rather than being in the ‘fine print’ which many won’t read.

- As a first step, we call for the urgent removal of the illegitimate English Treaty version from its current place of prominence alongside Te Tiriti o Waitangi and for it to be replaced by an accurate English translation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

How would you describe your experience in this advocacy?

CATHERINE

- Te Waka Hourua has written to Te Papa’s Board, calling for removal of the English artefact from its place of prominence alongside Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and also staged a protest at the exhibit in solidarity with Māori resisting ongoing colonial oppression.
- We sought Official Information from Te Papa about any and all complaints about the exhibit. When Te Papa responded by omitting information We knew existed, and highly redacting other information, We laid a complaint with the Ombudsman’s Office. Our complaint is awaiting allocation to one of their Investigators.
- In 2022, TWH secured the National Iwi Chairs Forum’s unanimous support for Our campaign. Here’s an excerpt from their email response: “Your letter...received very enthusiastic support, especially from Iwi [Māori peoples] of Te Taitokerau [the North of the North island] who moved and seconded the motion “That the Forum support the call for

the errors and misinformation in the Treaty of Waitangi exhibition in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to be removed”.

- Although Te Papa has acknowledged our grievances, they have not taken any action. This is of additional concern as it will be mandatory for schools to teach Aotearoa New Zealand history from 2023, making the obligation on New Zealand’s ‘national museum’ to correct its misinformation even more urgent. Te Papa shouldn’t wait, and must act as soon as possible: our nation has already endured 183 years of deceit founded on inaccurate historical accounts (in addition to pre-Tiriti colonial history).
- TWH plans more action to be executed this year, and until Our demands are met.

How has Mercy’s approach been useful in your own advocacy?

CATHERINE Mercy’s approach is very closely aligned with Our Māori approach to activism, which is a values-based foundational bedrock for everything We do.

What were the benefits/difficulties associated? Why was it important?

CATHERINE The approach We employ optimizes prospects for maintaining campaign integrity and reputation. This is important, because a corrupted campaign can only produce corrupted outcomes. Obviously, maintaining a tika, pono, aroha approach is a constant challenge! Often, this challenge is in itself its own micro journey of Self-discovery for the activists involved, nested inside the macro journey of the broader campaign. If activists take an attitude of curiosity, fascination and learning relative to their personal and collective experiences along the way, it will help them persist and endure in their efforts towards their campaign aspirations.

Self-Reflection

As leaders of faith working towards Mercy and justice, one of our main calls to action is dismantling oppressive systems. This requires reflection and acknowledgement of our privilege, which opens our eyes to the ways in which we (often unknowingly) contribute to oppressive systems through our own work or decisions. By understanding our own role within these systems, we can more effectively discern how to undermine them to improve the lives of those who experience discrimination or marginalisation.

Sr Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun and prolific writer on faith, spirituality and issues of social justice, suggests that we have invested more in private practices of devotion and public acts of charity rather than prophetic acts of speaking out against injustice and upturning oppressive systems (Chittister, 2019). She argues that what the world needs now is a commitment to a spirituality that is prophetic as well as private — that echoes the concerns of the prophets who have gone before us.

Privilege

In an article by Mary Cunningham entitled, 'Striving for Holiness in Our Advocacy' (2018), we are challenged to be 'willing to enter into moments of discomfort and leave our own privilege'.

Can you recall a time
when you were challenged
to look at something
from a new perspective?
How open were you
to this experience?
Did it open new
doors for you?

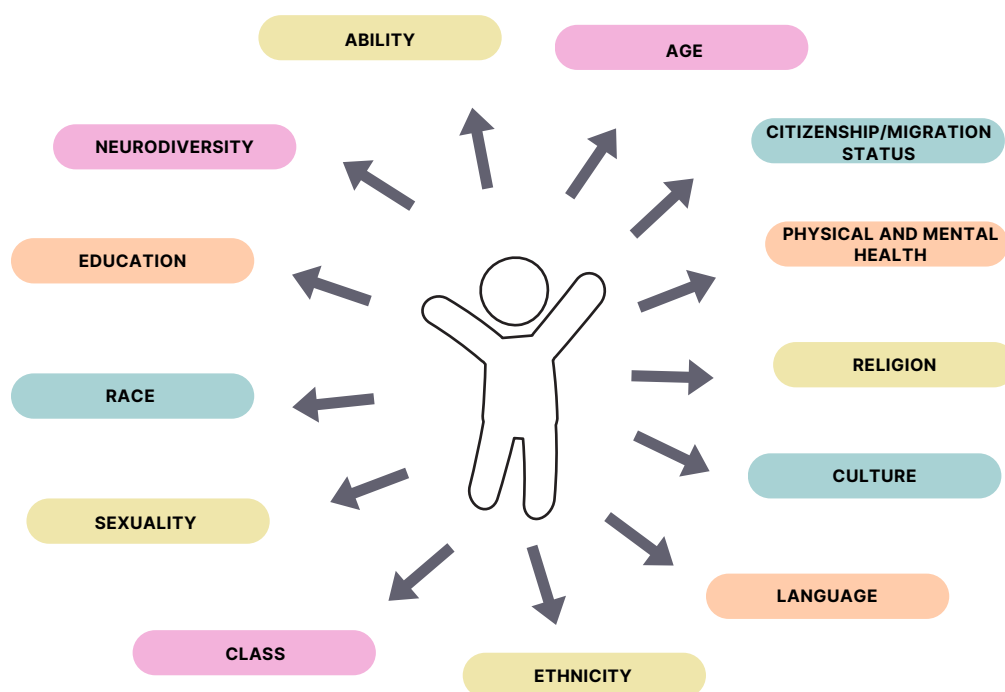


Privilege can be thought of as an unearned advantage in your life. It means you will not be treated differently or have issues with accessing your rights or opportunities due to discrimination on the basis of skin colour, race, gender, sexual orientation, or other identities that are fundamental to who you are as a person. Privilege gives us the freedom to walk through life without having to worry that we will face undeserved barriers or prejudice.

Factors that can influence our social privilege include: the colour of our skin, our nationality, our sexuality or religion, our level of financial security, and our educational background. When we use our privilege to exert power over others, this leads to oppression.

Take time to reflect

Who am I and where do I place myself in this ever evolving world?



Draw your attention to the column that has groups with systemic advantage and the column with groups with systemic barriers.

What are one or more ways in which you have had unearned advantage in your life (also known as privilege)?

What are one or more ways in which you've had disadvantage in your life, i.e. due to factors outside your control (also known as areas of oppression)?

How Oppression Works

Privilege + Power = Oppression

FORM OF OPPRESSION

Racism
Sexism
Hetero-sexism
Transphobia
Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia
Ableism
Classism
Ageism
Xenophobia

GROUPS WITH SYSTEMIC ADVANTAGE

People of white
Men
Heterosexuals
Christians
Physically, developmentally, psychologically able
Upper class, owning class, middle class
Young and middle aged adults
Citizens

GROUPS WITH SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

People of color, multiracial
Women, women-identified
LGBTQ, gender non-conforming
Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Atheists
People living with physical, developmental, and psychological disabilities/difficulties
Lower middle class, working class, poor
Young people, elderly people
Immigrants, residents and foreigners

"While we keep our heads down, our mouths closed, our public reputations unblotted, thanks to the silence we keep in the face of great public issues of the day, the pillars of society erode in front of us."

— Joan Chittister



The call to be co-conspirators

Lawyer and human and civil rights activist, Bryan Stevenson, says that our power to change oppressive systems lies in our commitment to be in close proximity with those who are most marginalised and oppressed (Stevenson, 2020). The challenge then is to notice how close we are able to get to those who are suffering most in our world. If we are not encountering these people every day in our lives then we need to ensure that we are attuned as closely as we can be to their experiences and concerns. We can ask ourselves: Who will be our informants? What will we read? Who will we listen to?

Creating powerful and inclusive social and environmental justice advocacy requires actors across multiple sectors who are willing to roll up their sleeves and act. We must come together and conspire in the creation of a more just society. Passive allyship is often characterised by rhetoric not being

matched with action or accountability. Being a co-conspirator means that one chooses to take action against racism and injustice regardless of the consequences; taking what you have learned and committing to listening and learning, instead of leading. To be a co-conspirator is about commitment, trust, and love for the cause. It is about sacrificing your privilege in the battle against racism (see Tylia Barnes' MELF Research in the Tools for Self Reflection).

If we do not dig deep to understand oppressive systems as the underlying causes of human rights issues, we will fail to challenge the dominant and simplistic representations of people and issues that are often shaped by those with power and privilege. To be authentic in justice work, we must be prepared to be reflective, to challenge our own assumptions and biases, to stand in solidarity with those who are poor or oppressed, and be open to seeing things in a new way.

Tools for Self Reflection

LISTEN TO

Tylia Barnes'
MELF Research "Are
you Complicit or a
Coconspirator?" (2021)

EXPLORE

The Racial Equity
Tools Glossary
[https://www.racial-
equitytools.org/glossary](https://www.racial-equitytools.org/glossary)

LEARN ABOUT

Oppression and Power:
Introduction to
Community Psychology
[https://press.rebus.
community/introduction-
tocommunitypsy-
chology/chapter/
oppression-and-power](https://press.rebus.community/introduction-tocommunitypsychology/chapter/oppression-and-power)
(Palmer et al., 2019)

QUESTIONS

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION TO ACCOMPANY THE ADDITIONAL TOOLS

1. What is Privilege?

Take a moment to write in your journal, where you think you would be in that line. What questions would you have stepped forward for? What questions would you have stepped backwards for?

In oppressed systems, resources and opportunities are not distributed equally and those from historically

oppressed groups are starting much further behind the line and have many obstacles on their way to the front. This is why as Mercy leaders we are involved in the work of equity.

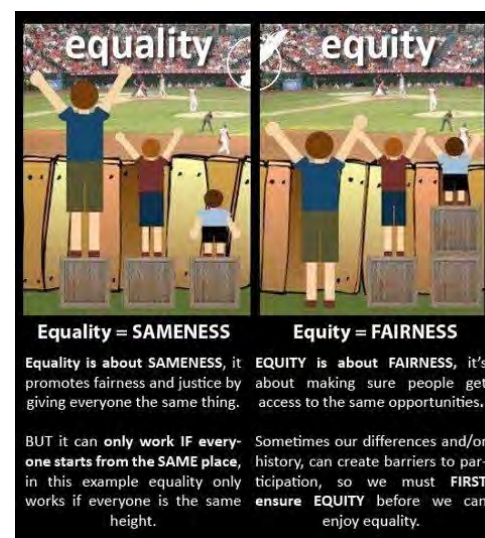


youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ (As/Is, 2015)

2. What do you think this image is trying to portray?

While equality means sameness, equity is fairness and fairness is synonymous with justice.

In order to achieve justice, we need to provide more resources and opportunities to those who have historically been excluded, so that they can be pulled forward and start at the same place. If you think about the video on privilege we just saw, what resources would be needed to bridge the gap between those in front and those in the back?



[http://www.sollis.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/
equity-vs-equality.jpg](http://www.sollis.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/equity-vs-equality.jpg) (Sollis, 2016)

Tools for Advocating Justice Issues



Catherine McAuley did not view poverty as a fate, but rather, a condition brought about by oppressive and unjust systems. To do justice work means we have to dig deep to understand these systems.

What's the problem?

What does the Church say about this problem/issue?

Why does this problem exist and continue to impact our community? What can be done about it?

Understanding how our assumptions, beliefs and values influence the way we approach justice issues.

In her book, *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* (2009), Australian academic and political analyst Carol Bacchi asks us to think about how we frame certain problems or justice issues. This means taking a close look at how problems or issues are talked about and perceived in society, politics, and culture. It involves questioning the ideas and values that shape our understanding of these problems and examining how power and social structures play a role. The goal of problematisation is to expose hidden biases, limitations, and contradictions in the way problems are talked about and to promote new ways of thinking and acting that challenge the status quo and promote fairness and equality. By doing this, we come to see problems and justice issues within a larger context and can more appropriately and sustainably work to address them.

In other words, how are we positioned to talk or think about a particular issue? What do we assume are its main drivers or root causes? Does the way the issue is presented unduly benefit or harm certain members of the community? What do we take for granted?

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is a comprehensive framework for addressing social, economic, and political issues in a way that reflects the values and principles of the Catholic Church. CST emphasises the inherent dignity of the human person and calls for a preferential option for the poor. Another important principle of Catholic Social Teaching is solidarity, which calls us to work together to promote the common good. CST promotes the rights to food, housing, education, healthcare and decent work. We are called to inform ourselves about current issues, engage in serious conversations with neighbours, and learn to listen empathetically to different perspectives.

Sisters of Mercy Social Analysis Guide

Before embarking on any concrete advocacy, it is important for us to build a deep and wide understanding of the issue we're seeking to address. We can only hope to make a difference if we know the underlying trigger points that cause and perpetuate the issue, and the levers we can pull to get people to take action. The more targeted we are in our advocacy efforts, the easier it is to bring others along with us and to pinpoint what we want to see changed.

Further reading

- <https://focusequip.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Catholic-Social-Teaching.pdf>
- <https://www.caritas.org.au/learn/cst-toolkit/>
- <https://mercyedu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Catholic-Identity-Document.pdf>
- <https://networkadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/NETWORKCSJreflectionguide4.pdf>

Questions to help guide your early advocacy efforts

The following questions work to increase your knowledge of the problem and the context in which you'll be working. Take some time to research and reflect on your answers.

1 Why is this issue important to me? Why is it a priority?

2 Why should others — and particularly policymakers — care?

3 What are the various intersecting justice concerns at play within this issue?

4 What are the facts?

In a world where information and misinformation can be shared so readily, it is critical that our advocacy efforts are built on facts and informed perspectives. Gathering accurate and reliable information about a specific issue or situation gives our arguments credibility and objectivity. When our recommendations are grounded in empirical evidence and stories from those with lived experience, we are more likely to get through to decision-makers and establish trust — the foundation of sustainable change. Look for facts from reliable sources such as journal articles, interviews and independent experts. Be discerning!

5 Why does this issue exist? What are the root causes?

Understanding the root causes of an issue can help us identify what needs to change to prevent the issue from (re) occurring. To identify the root cause(s) of a problem, we can analyse data, find historical examples, consider power dynamics and relationship patterns and talk to those with lived experience. We can look to laws or policies that are inadequate, biased or not enforced, cultural norms that might perpetuate unconscious

patterns of behaviour or repetitive abuse, and structural barriers such as a lack of resources, services or infrastructure that ultimately hinder progress towards change.

6 Which human rights are impacted or violated as a result of this issue?

Human rights are set out in a number of international legal frameworks and standards, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We can look to these documents to understand what is encompassed within different rights regimes and which countries have ratified human rights within their own constitutions or legal jurisdictions. Most countries have laws, policies and practices in place to uphold and protect human rights. Knowing which rights are considered 'inalienable' will give our advocacy efforts credibility and force.

7 What are the systems in place that contribute to or perpetuate the problem?

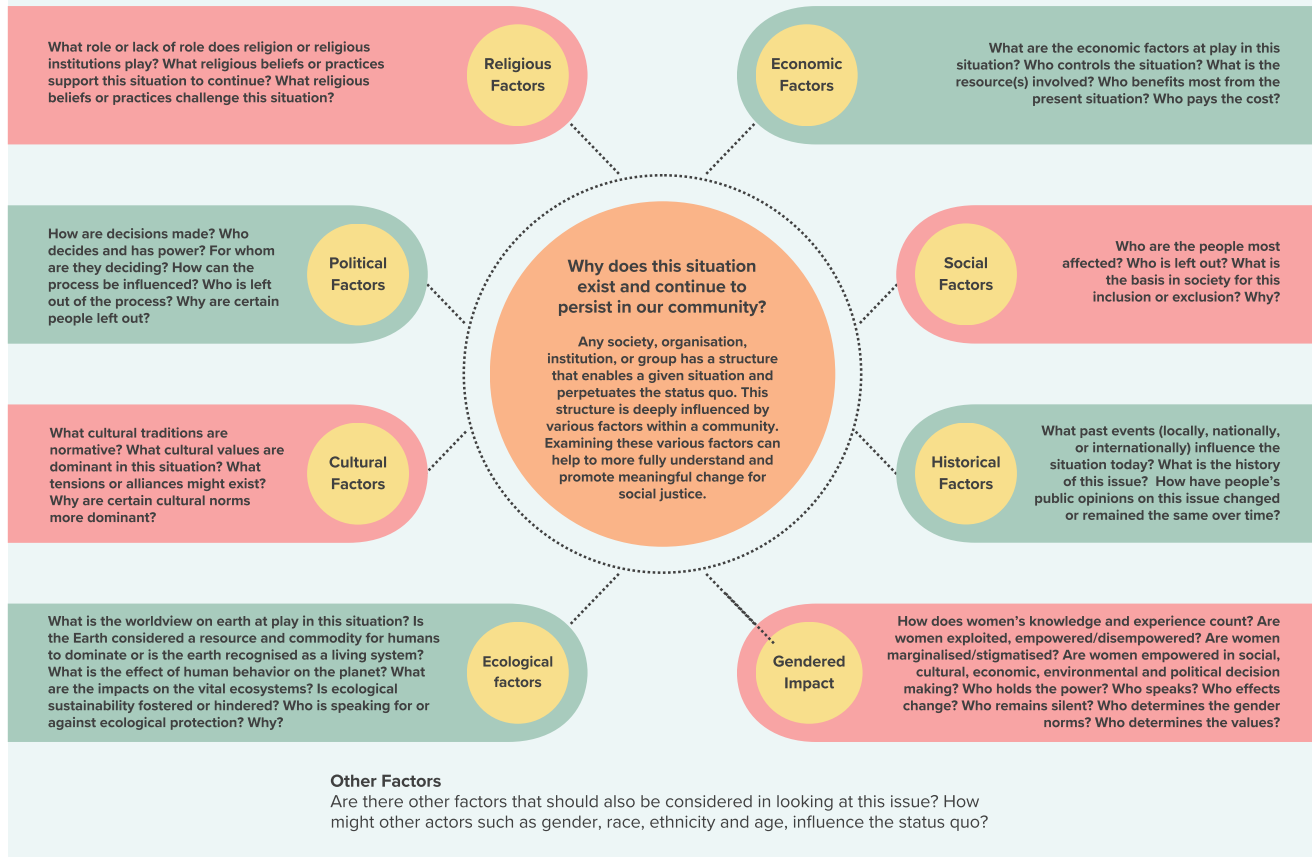
As an advocate, it is important to understand how complex systems work and how they impact the communities we serve. Systems analysis means taking a systematic approach to examining a complex situation to help us better understand its various components and how they interact with each other. What sort of system does our justice issue sit in? What are the forces and power dynamics at play that influence the trajectory of this issue?

8 Can the problem be deconstructed into smaller, more manageable parts?

Deconstructing a complex problem involves breaking it down into smaller, more manageable parts to better understand how it works and how it can be solved. This requires us to look beyond symptoms and surface-level challenges to craft more effective and efficient response

Social Analysis

A tool for examining social realities in our communities



strategies. Some useful tools include mind-mapping, brainstorming and laying out the problem visually to understand how all the components fit together.

9 When is the best time to advocate on this issue?

When an issue is politically hot — when there is a lot of urgency and political will to find solutions to a given public policy issue, it is more likely that our advocacy will find traction and support. In thinking about timing, consider the scale and severity of your issue, the current political or economic landscape (e.g. elections, public protests), whether there is any new, emerging or underreported information coming to light, and opportunities for impact, such as anniversaries of key events, new government

administrations taking office, UN elections and treaty/statement reviews.

10 What exactly is our ask?

Effective advocacy relies upon consistent messaging and a clear 'ask' — i.e. we want this to change or this to happen. Our ask should be grounded in the experiences and needs of people and planet at the grassroots level. When developing an 'ask', consider short-term goals (specific outcomes that can represent progress towards change) and long-term impact (your vision for the future, what you ultimately hope to achieve). Breaking down your ask into short- and long-term goals helps to catalyse incremental change and build momentum towards an overall shift in the status quo.

Advocacy for Whom





Who speaks with and for the oppressed? Who acts with and for them? On whose terms do we advocate? For whose benefit do we advocate?

Working for advocacy can sometimes seem like an endless task with no obvious outcomes. We wonder who is listening, who cares, why we bother, but the call is to remain faithful to those experiencing pain, suffering, marginalisation and injustice. In a recent apostolic exhortation from Pope Francis, *Rejoice and Be Glad* (2018), it states..

“They do not desert others in bad times; they accompany them in their anxiety and distress, even though doing so may not bring immediate satisfaction” (#112 *Rejoice and Be Glad*).

Very often we do not see immediate results from our work, but advocacy relies on hope — believing that our work will lead to a future of hope and better outcomes for those in our world who are rendered poor. Despite what sometimes appears to be all grim we need to cultivate a sense of inner joy and positivity in moving forward.

Advocating for the human rights of everyone is in our collective self interest because our freedoms are tied together. None of us are free until we are all free. This sentiment was captured in the following statement by Lilla Watson, a visual artist, academic, and Aboriginal elder and activist from Australia:

“If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound together with mine, let us walk together.”
(Aboriginal Activists Group, 1970s)

CASE STUDY

MCAULEY COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR WOMEN

WITH CAROL VALE



CAROL VALE

McAuley Community Services for Women is an organisation based in Victoria, Australia that provides a range of services to women and children who have experienced domestic violence, homelessness, and other forms of disadvantage. The organisation was established in its present form in 2008, and reflects the vision of its founding Sisters of Mercy, who recognised the need for safe and secure accommodation and support services for women who were homeless or escaping domestic violence. Today, McAuley Community Services has expanded its services to include crisis accommodation, transitional housing, outreach support, and legal and financial advice.

Carol Vale is Head of Strategic Projects at McAuley Community Services. Carol has worked in the homelessness sector for 25 years and has vast experience in project management, direct service delivery, networking and advocacy. She has represented the homeless sector on Boards and reference groups, including ten years on the Council of Catholic Social Services Victoria.

Please can you tell us about the McAuley Community Services for Women and how you came to be a pivotal player in this movement?

CAROL I had experience running an organisation with similar programs and had volunteered in the sector before joining McAuley Community Services for Women. The organisation focuses on providing accommodation and support to women and children escaping family violence and has an integrated program that includes a learning program and partnerships with health services and legal programs. There are purpose-built facilities for the homeless

and other programs that teach life skills. The organisation has 70+ staff and partners with other organisations to provide services.

How would you describe your experience?

CAROL The values of the McAuley organisation align well with my own personal values. The organisation has a particular focus on hospitality, which means that we work to ensure that anyone who connects with us or visits our centre is made to feel welcome and comfortable.

“

The organisation has a particular focus on hospitality, which means that we work to ensure that anyone who connects with us or visits our centre is made to feel welcome and comfortable.”

CAROL, MCAULEY COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR WOMEN

Why do you do advocacy? Why do you think advocacy is important? How is it Mercy?

CAROL The advocacy work of our organisation is based on the feedback and needs expressed by women and children who use our services. We have a particular focus on children. We highlight the challenges in getting information and feedback from women in the family violence space and acknowledge the importance of our marketing team in meeting with women individually to get a better understanding of their needs. We are constantly looking for gaps in our services and making changes based on feedback from our staff and clients. For example, we are addressing the issue of women not being able to bring their children with them to court. We aim to trial new programs with seeding funding and advocate for government funding to continue our work and amplify the voices of women and children.

What is important to remember when engaging in advocacy and what should be avoided?

CAROL The only thing to avoid is the tendency to talk on behalf of people when we do not have the right background information or full picture of their experiences.

One of the key aspects of the Mercy Advocacy Approach is advocacy for whom? With the guiding question of who speaks with and for the oppressed? Could you tell us about your experience with advocacy for those who have been oppressed? What were the challenges with speaking with and for the oppressed and ensuring that people were able to speak for themselves? Why was that important?

CAROL One challenge of advocacy work is the importance of balancing the need to tell personal stories and experiences with the need to ask for funding. Additionally, when advocating to the government it is important to be respectful but also firm in our requests. It is also crucial for us to set realistic targets for our programs. We must be courageous enough to say no to programs that are not feasible or do not meet the needs of women and children. It is also important to partner with other organisations for strength in numbers, especially for advocacy efforts like our ‘Safe at Home’ program, which aims to keep women in their homes and remove abusive partners. I believe it’s crucial to seek support from those who know the issue best before approaching the government for funding and support.

REIMAGINING CHURCH STRUCTURES

WITH SR ELIZABETH YOUNG RSM



SR ELIZABETH YOUNG RSM

Sr Elizabeth Young rsm, has spent her life working with people on the margins, including in prisons and detention centres. This work has led her to develop a vision for the Catholic Church in Australia to explore the possibility of reinstating women as deacons. She hopes that this conversation will be led by the Holy Spirit and involve everyone, including the institutional Church, people in the pews, and those doing diaconal ministries. Elizabeth is careful to distinguish the role of the diaconate from that of priesthood and emphasises the importance of serving people in liturgy and sacrament, especially those on the margins. Elizabeth has worked in a wide variety of ministries and roles, including as a chaplain in prisons and detention centres, a pastoral associate in a parish serving people from housing trust flats and newly arrived people, and a chaplain and pastoral worker in a Catholic secondary college.

Please can you tell us about your experience with Advocacy? What have been your goals of your movement?

ELIZABETH I guess I started in advocacy by wanting to advocate for something rather than against something. When I finished school, I developed an international day of peace, harmony and environmental care, but I was working mostly on my own. Through that experience, I became more involved with groups and communities, building relationships. Coming together, we organised interfaith events and I promoted the Charter of Compassion. But I also started learning that there is a time to

advocate against things, such as the Iraq War and, later, the immigration detention of children. After being an attendee at a number of rallies and demonstrations, and then working with people in immigration detention, I felt called by God to take a more active role with the Love Finds a Way movement. We sat in a politician's office, praying, until we were arrested for trespass, on the issue of children in detention. A couple of years ago, I was contacted by a man who had been in detention for more than 11 years, and was desperate. After consulting with his lawyer, other supporters and my Mercy leaders, I worked on a campaign to free him from detention. This

was a process of contacting as many people and organisations as possible, and keeping communication with all the parties involved. It was finally a successful campaign, with over 25,000 signatures on the petition. While there are always cases needing definite and strong attention, I know that it is still meaningful and effective to advocate for change for the better.

Why do you do advocacy? Why do you think advocacy is important? How is it Mercy?

ELIZABETH When I joined the Sisters of Mercy, I was impressed that they didn't just have a theological compassion or idealistic understanding of mercy. They had got to know and care about people who were suffering and it affected their hearts. It has become for us 'mercy in action', that is, caring enough about people to want to change their situations for the better. It is caring when powers that be withhold compassion or actively prevent compassion being shown.

What is important to remember when engaging in advocacy and what should be avoided?

ELIZABETH For me, I think it is important to come from a place of sorrow, care and hope, rather than anger. I want to keep a desire for goodwill for all parties, and to believe in the potential of people to change for the better, and for hearts to be touched. I would like to avoid demonising the perpetrators of harm and evil,

as we all have these tendencies within us, and only God can judge. Mercy is for all, and I aim to promote messages that are about win-win rather than win-lose.

One of the key aspects of the Mercy Advocacy Approach is advocacy for whom? With the guiding question of who speaks with and for the oppressed? Could you tell us about your experience with advocacy for those who have been oppressed? What were the challenges with speaking with and for the oppressed and ensuring that people were able to speak for themselves? Why was that important?

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It has become for us 'mercy in action', that is, caring enough about people to want to change their situations for the better.”

SR ELIZABETH YOUNG RSM

ELIZABETH As much as possible, we want people to tell their own stories and speak for themselves when they are oppressed. It is much more powerful when the powers that be have to confront real people that are affected by their actions. However, sometimes it can have repercussions for the people themselves or their families if they do so openly. When I campaigned for the

man in detention, he was not able to share his name or anything that would identify him because his family were still in the place of his persecution. However, when the campaign had concluded, we were able to share some of his words and a photo of thanks that did not show his face. We had to have ongoing conversations with himself and his lawyer as to what he was comfortable to share, and how the information was to be used. Good communication is always very important.

Who is with us?



Allies.
Coalitions.
Networks.

At the heart of Justice work is the recognition that we do not work alone but join with the many others who yearn for Earth and people to flourish (*Hope in a Time of Pandemic*, Mercy Global Action, 2020).

Building strong partnerships is vital to successful advocacy. When we work in coalition with others who share our goals and bring complimentary skills to the table, we're able to strengthen our networks and amplify our voices in new arenas.

As with any collaboration, success requires us to create space for diversity of views and approaches. There is often great value in the deliberation process: in communicating respectfully, problem-solving, finding common ground and establishing mutually beneficial parameters of engagement. As long as the overarching goals of a campaign remain consistent, it is possible for advocates to adopt different methods of working and to target different audiences. Keep in mind that it is important for a campaign to have a united voice that is well-defined and easily understood by relevant decision-makers.

The strongest allies are usually those who have a vested interest in the focus issue, and who can bring new capabilities, tools and connections to a campaign. For example, it might be helpful to seek out partnerships with trade unions, human rights mandate holders, UN agencies, media, private sector actors, academia, local authorities, NGOs and/or governments. Each of these actors will lend varying credibility to your advocacy depending on the context and justice issue at stake. Find reliable and trustworthy allies who share your goals and who can help you hit targets in ways that you couldn't do alone.

There are times when it will feel harder to work with others ('too many cooks in the kitchen can spoil the broth'), however,

justice challenges us to be in constant dialogue and to prioritise the needs of those for whom we advocate. We need to keep in mind that long-term change requires many helping hands, and working together towards a common purpose can be a source of great joy.

"Without the great work of our partner organisations, the uphill battle towards economic and social justice would be a lot more challenging. When we recognise the value of community, we are all able to combine our unique strengths to work toward a common goal." (Cunningham 2018)

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Who is trusted by those whom I'm seeking to influence?
2. What are the gaps in our skill-base? Who has the skills that we're missing?
3. What help do I need?
4. Who can leverage our message and extend our reach to new audiences?
5. Who has a vested interest in this justice issue and wants to see change?
6. What are our possible points of difference or sources of tension? What can we do to mitigate these and/or find common ground?
7. What can we achieve together?

WORKING IN COLLABORATION FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

WITH SR DENISE COGHLAN RSM



SR DENISE COGHLAN RSM

Sr Denise Coghlan rsm is an Australian Sister of Mercy living in Siem Reap, Cambodia. As Director of Cambodia's Jesuit Refugee Service, Denise runs the Metta Karuna Reflection Centre, where she works with members of the community to protect and empower refugees and those rendered disabled through war. In the early 1990s, Denise played a key role in the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, leading large-scale advocacy efforts involving a coordinated network of non-governmental organisations and individuals. In 1997, these efforts led to the Mine Ban Treaty, which was signed by more than 100 countries. In that same year, Denise and her fellow advocates won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Can you tell us about the formation of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and how you came to be involved?

DENISE I think if advocacy is to be credible, it needs to come out of experience and passion.

When I came to Cambodia in the 1980s and started working in refugee camps, I met so many people whose arms and legs had been blown off by landmines. Those of us working in the camps used to say 'we should ban these dreadful weapons', but we didn't coordinate or co-operate or do anything except mumble among ourselves.

In 1990, I moved to Siem Reap as a Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service. As part of our mission here, we decided to open a vocational training centre for people with disabilities —

many of whom had been wounded by landmines and war. One day, we were visited by a very sparky American called Jody Williams, who asked us whether the network of non-governmental organisations based in Cambodia would get behind a campaign to ban landmines. The JRS group considered this proposition and asked me to focus the initiative and make it go ahead. There was a general understanding that this was something we needed to get behind because landmines and war are among the major causes of displacement — so the issue was of paramount importance to our mission to protect refugees.

At the beginning, we decided we'd look at four things that we could do to contribute to the campaign which others might not be able to do.

The first thing we could do was become part of the international campaign rather than form a campaign of our own (i.e. in-country). We didn't want to recreate the wheel. The second thing was to use our network of Jesuit universities and academics to offer ethical reflections that could underpin our advocacy. The third was to make sure that the voices of people who were injured were heard at all levels of decision-making. And the fourth was to ensure that our efforts were genuinely working to help those who were most affected. This campaign wasn't just about advocating for their rights; it was also about meeting their needs and standing with them. So that was the JRS angle.

How did the Campaign progress? Can you tell us what your advocacy looked like?

DENISE We realised very quickly that you can't advocate for everything all at once. You have to set clear goals and a clear vision. Our vision was: 'we want a world free of landmines', and we had three pillars of activity under that.

The first pillar was about getting all countries to ban their use, production, stockpiling and sale of landmines. The second pillar was about clearing the existing mines in the ground so they could no longer wound civilians or ruin valuable farming land. The third pillar was about focusing on those most affected: making the people and communities who were injured and vulnerable the centre of our concern. All of our advocacy efforts had to work in their favour and assist them in some constructive way.

The Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines became very famous because it was the first campaign in the world that had survivors (of landmine explosions) go to the United Nations and speak their own truth and their own message of advocacy. This was in 1995 in Vienna at the Conference on Disarmament. The three speakers were Tun Channareth,

Song Kosal and So-King (who assisted with translation).

A significant part of our campaign was that we brought together in advocacy a wide range of stakeholders, including people who cleared mines, people who were interacting with government policy, people who were assisting those who'd been injured, religious leaders and monks, doctors, soldiers, politicians, lawyers, and journalists. We brought them all into the fold to address the issue. There was no 'controlling' of the campaign; it was led in the sense of 'a thousand flowers bloom'. We believed that if one organisation or individual got the idea, others would also come on board. It was an extremely collaborative campaign.

Early in our advocacy, a number of landmine survivors wrote a letter saying: 'Before, we were four soldiers who laid the landmines that possibly blew off the arms and legs and eyes of one another. Now, we're working together in the centre of the dove to build wheelchairs and new lives for people. So we ask the world to stop making mines, to stop laying mines and to help the individuals wounded and the communities who are affected by mines'. We posted this letter around the Buddhist wats in Cambodia as well as Christian churches, and we gathered many, many signatures in support. Our friend at JRS International, Anthea Webb, then sent this letter around the world. By the time we came to the United Nations in Geneva in 1995/6, we were able to present boxes of two million signatures to the Chairman of the Mine Ban Treaty.

This was a powerful statement. But even more powerful were the number of survivors who came to speak their stories. I still remember one Bulgarian ambassador crying as he came out of a session and said, 'I've got a little boy who is the same age as one of the survivors

from your group. I think if anybody blew off his leg, I'd go crazy'. So it was the visible effect of what these weapons do to civilian people that really affected him. And it's highlighting this human side that makes the most profound impact in advocacy.

How did you work with others to achieve the goals of your advocacy campaign?

DENISE The most powerful tools in any advocacy campaign are the voices of those affected and the use of social media. Journalists were absolutely critical to our campaign because they helped to spread the message in a way that revealed the truth on the ground. Many people criticise the media but I've got the greatest respect for journalists who tell stories properly. Nevertheless, we can't underestimate the power of social media — which can reach far more people than any investigative journalism. It's true that social media is now transforming any sort of advocacy campaign, so young people need to be really adept at using these platforms for good. Advocacy through the media is about getting to the heart of an issue and uplifting voices on the ground.

When we achieved the Ottawa/Mine Ban Treaty in 1997, a journalist came to interview our group. The next day, the front page of the Ottawa major newspaper read, 'The dawn of a new era of loving kindness'. This had been a key message of the speech delivered by Tun Channareth the day before. So the journalists really understood our message and did what they could to help spread it. They knew that ridding the world of landmines was really a humanitarian challenge as much as a disarmament challenge. In other words, they could see that it wasn't just a theoretical arms disposal but a way of doing something to address the great pain and suffering experienced by many vulnerable people.

I think that if you have what we in JRS call 'accompanying, serving and advocating' integrated together, this gives credibility to any message you offer to the United Nations or to the governments and state parties of the world.

The other thing to bear in mind with advocacy is that nothing is going to happen all at once. It takes persistence and hard work, and you gain ground with the support of well known individuals. For example, Princess Diana was instrumental in publicising our issue, and this definitely helped us to get 122 countries to sign the Mine Ban Treaty. But it was the extraordinary efforts of civil society and government working together that really brought the Treaty to fruition.

Civil society and government don't always have to be antagonistic towards one another. If we can build avenues of cooperation and find ways in which we can work together, I think it's usually more effective, unless of course the government is so corrupt that it's impossible to cooperate with them.

At the end of the day, the normal thing is cooperation & collaboration. We need to find ways of meeting on middle ground so we can proceed in unison. Working with others is important for advocacy and is usually more effective than pursuing strident actions as an individual — which I'm sometimes tempted to do!

What doesn't work in advocacy, or is ineffective?

DENISE When people on the ground, who are tangibly affected by an issue — whether it's human trafficking or displacement or something else — hear armchair statements from advocates in posh offices around the world, they understandably become a bit cynical: like, 'what do you really know about it?'.

So, I think the best thing to do if people want to be good advocates is to make themselves very well-informed from the point of view of the grassroots people, in addition to the research papers and the policy statements.

Some people think that intellectual advocacy is superior to any of the work that's being done on the ground to assist people directly. To me, that's a false dichotomy. They're not separate approaches. You need both. And you need to work in partnership to get things done.

What are the tangible benefits and challenges of collaboration in advocacy?

DENISE Collaborating with governments slows things down considerably, but it's important. And in government and disarmament, you tend to have two competing sides: the defence force and military on one side, and the foreign affairs departments on the other. That's critical to remember. The foreign affairs people are normally on the side of humanitarianism and want to collaborate with other countries. The defence departments are absolutely terrified of losing any weapons. So one of the tactics that we found helpful was to ensure that we had a number of sympathetic soldiers and military experts talking to the defence forces on our behalf. This approach was particularly powerful in Australia.

Ultimately, we had to persuade the defence forces that the humanitarian effects of the weapon outweighed its military usefulness. And we had the Jesuits provide a series of ethics papers to back up our claims. We also had media agencies helping us by making documentaries to boost public awareness throughout Cambodia and in different parts of the world.

It all culminated in 1996. We were feeling so disappointed that the Treaty wasn't going anywhere at the UN. In October, we were invited to a meeting with Lloyd Axworthy, then Foreign Minister of Canada, who told us that if we could get 22 countries to come to Ottawa in September the following year (1997), then he would personally push for a Treaty to be ratified outside of the UN. So we went away and got 122 countries to come! Then, of course, everyone was rushing to join up. We did, in fact, need the UN system to turn the Treaty into international law, but it just showed us that we didn't need to be constrained by UN bureaucracy to rally support or get things done. It was a very brave move by Canada to go outside the normal, conventional route to really move things forward.

So, if you have like-minded governments on board, who have courage and vision, they become super collaborators.

What does advocacy have to do with Mercy?

DENISE I think the grace of Mercy — the charisma of Mercy — impels us to meet the person in need. But it also impels us to look behind the causes of why that person is in need and the structures that result in people's suffering. As I've mentioned, this work isn't superior to grassroots advocacy; they're complimentary paths and both necessary to ensure we uphold the rights and meet the needs of people desperate for change.

As Pope Francis says, 'As brothers and sisters of one another, I think we're really, really called to make a difference'.

CASE STUDY

WOMEN@THEWELL

WITH SR LYNDA DEARLOVE RSM AND JO THOMPSON



SR LYNDA DEARLOVE RSM AND JO THOMPSON

Women@thewell was incorporated in 2006 and is based in inner-city London. The organisation was developed by the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy (IOLM) to provide a uniquely holistic and multifaceted range of services to vulnerable women who are caught in cycles of abuse and social exclusion.

In founding women@thewell, Sr Lynda Dearlove rsm drew on her ten years of experience in working with women in the east-end of London who were involved in street-based prostitution and were affected by homelessness, drugs, alcohol, violence, and physical and mental health. Her colleague, Jo Thompson, is Head of Advocacy and Relationships. Together, Lynda and Jo work with a committed team to help create a society in which all women are empowered to achieve their full potential free from discrimination, abuse and neglect.

Please can you tell us about women@thewell and how you came to be working in this field of advocacy? What are the goals of women@thewell? How would you describe your experience to date?

Women@thewell was founded through a process of recognising the needs of vulnerable women who were involved in prostitution while working in a Mercy organisation that dealt with homelessness issues. We observed that women coming into the Mercy organisation were also engaged in prostitution and we felt called to develop a separate organisation specifically designed to work with these

women. The organisation was founded on the roots of Mercy, which involves serving those in vulnerable situations; it is, however, designed to grow beyond its Mercy origins to have as wide a reach as possible. We purchased a building to provide a safe and supportive space for women who are involved in prostitution and related issues.

Why do you do advocacy? Why do you think advocacy is important? How is it Mercy?

I feel it's important to speak out at every level: institutionally, at the UN and the EU, as well as to national parliaments and local councils. On

an issue this big, unless we campaign at every level, our message will inevitably fall through the cracks of the system.

Catherine McAuley was perpetually shining light on what was happening for women on the streets and inviting the powers that be into the conversation. Similarly, if we just had frontline services without advocacy, women would be continually trapped in a cycle. So you need a two-pronged approach: execution of services and policy change.

Ultimately, if we're not speaking truth to power, we're part of the problem.

What is important to remember when engaging in advocacy and what should be avoided?

When engaging in advocacy, it's important to maintain a long-term view and to build relationships with people with whom you may not always agree. Advocacy is about enabling change — usually political change — and sometimes this requires us to form and retain good relationships with people who challenge us. I might have to sit next to someone with whom I totally disagree, but if there's a hope of creating change by talking with them, then I have to enable that bridge between us.

At women@thewell, we believe in the importance of combining the power of women's voices and experiences with those in positions of authority to effect change. Policy change is essential. And our campaigning is magnified by having the Church on board. We give confidence to church leaders to speak out on this issue by providing them with the voices and first-hand experiences of women. And we are continually writing letters to bishops, parliamentarians, and other influential individuals or groups.

One of the key aspects of the Mercy Advocacy Approach is partnerships/collaboration (i.e. 'who is with us?'). Can you tell us how you have partnered/collaborated with others to achieve outcomes for women who have faced, or are facing the risk of, sexual exploitation? What were the benefits / difficulties associated with collaboration? Why was collaboration important?

Partnerships and collaboration are key aspects of the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach, and we know that collaboration is important for achieving outcomes for women who have faced, or are at risk of facing, sexual exploitation.

Women@thewell has collaborated with others to infiltrate networks and organisations to understand what is going on and how to influence change. However, we are really selective about who we partner with and will not take money that would control our decisions or partner with anyone who contravenes Catholic Social Teaching. We are a Catholic organisation with a feminist agenda that is rooted in a human rights perspective. We try to balance our approach with compassion and understanding and strive to find the way forward in those 'grey' areas. We constantly look for the points of influence and ensure we keep chipping away where we can. Being involved in spaces of decision making means that even if we can't get people to change their minds immediately, we at least know what's going on and how people are talking. We find out where the barriers are and how we can circumvent them from different angles. We identify partners who can make a difference where we can't.

At the end of the day, everything we do is to promote and protect the interests of vulnerable women trapped in a cycle. It's why we exist.

Advocacy in Action





Tailoring Your Message

Whether our work aims to raise awareness of a situation of injustice, or to present policy recommendations to decision makers, it is important to tailor our messaging and strategies for advocacy accordingly.

Here are some key questions to consider:

- 1** What are your audience's interests?
- 2** What arguments or methods of communication will be the most persuasive?
- 3** What objections are they likely to raise, and how might you respond?
- 4** What are the costs to them (of executing your advocacy goals)?
- 5** Who is the most effective messenger? In certain circumstances, we might not be the most influential. Consider which allies might be able to help:
 - Press: What does your audience read or watch?
 - Public: What constituencies/groups of voters might have particular sway?
 - Peers: What other governments/businesses are leading by example?
 - Policy Community: What experts from academia, international organisations or think tanks are working in this area?
 - Partners: What other stakeholders (E.g. trade unions, business leaders, military) have influence in this area?
- 6** What more do you need to know about them?

By reflecting on these questions, you can craft messages that address the concerns and interests of your audience, and choose effective advocacy strategies to advance the change you are seeking.

Strategies for Advocacy



What are some of the actions that

Mercy Justice Advocacy involves?

In preparing advocacy efforts, it is important to consider a range of tools and approaches when communicating with stakeholders and policy makers. We are encouraged to listen deeply to the experiences of people and the planet in crafting our strategies, and consider thoughtfully our target audience and their interests, as well as our own capacities and resources and the collective wisdom we can rally around the table.

In order to be most effective, advocacy strategies should convey a clear message, and be tailored to the specific issue and the target audience.

Some common advocacy strategies that can be used include:

LOBBYING

Lobbying involves meeting with elected officials and government staff to influence legislation and public policy. Individuals, organisations, or coalitions can do lobbying. This can be done through in-person meetings, phone calls, emails, and written testimony. It is important to have a clear message and to be able to present evidence and data to support your position.

Pat Murphy rsm and JoAnn Persch rsm from Chicago, United States have been engaged in immigration advocacy and direct service to migrants and their families for decades. Over the years, they have met with government officials, politicians, and other decision-makers to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform in the United States, and for more compassionate policies for migrants, asylum seekers and their families. In 2008, they helped to spearhead an intense lobbying drive to pass historic legislation that allows all immigrant detainees held in Illinois jails the same access to clergy as those imprisoned for other crimes. As a result, Sisters Pat and JoAnn and other professional and lay ministers can now serve the pastoral needs of undocumented immigrants who would otherwise be trapped in immigration detention and forgotten by everyone but their families. The meetings Sisters Pat and Joann conducted with state policymakers to advocate for this change effectively changed Illinois State Law.

GRASSROOTS ORGANISING

Grassroots organising involves building a support base among community members and working together to achieve a common goal. Grassroots organising involves building a base of support for a particular cause or policy by engaging with individuals and communities at the local level. Grassroots organising can take many forms, such as rallies, petitions, door-to-door canvassing, community meetings, and other forms of public engagement. It can also be beneficial to build relationships with community leaders.

At Holy Cross High School of Kolumbugan, Philippines, Cherry Lou Porbecto describes the “Environmental Advocacy Campaign” that has mobilised the school and local communities to protect the environment. Cherry Lou shares, “Let us not shut our eyes, our ears and mouth to what is really happening around us. The use of plastics has damaged the climate and Earth, especially the nearby coastal areas. Our project will lessen the waste in our community and maintain the cleanliness of our surroundings.” She describes how she has educated herself and others to participate in this project, “I joined seminars, meetings and community works towards the environment like tree planting, clean up drive and educational awareness campaign.” Cherry Lou applied these learnings in partnership with her community. “We launched several programs like ‘Basura Mo, Ibulsa Mo’ using ‘Eco’ bottles as our trash cans. Some students stayed after school or returned to school on the weekends to separate out biodegradable from non-biodegradable waste. They used the plastic to make bags, throw pillows and ecobricks — (1.5-liter plastic bottles stuffed with other plastics until they weigh about 600 grams); the ecobricks were then placed around school gardens to prevent soil

erosion. Students are now making ecobricks for a 'waiting shed,' a place where they can sit before classes or use as a room for group study." The community's advocacy connects with "our role as stewards of God's creation. To help serve the community and draw awareness to people and help the environment. I want to organise and gather people for a common cause and objectives and educate people well and mobilise them to achieve a common goal." This project emphasises the importance of youth engagement and action in community organising and local advocacy.

MEDIA ADVOCACY

Using media advocacy involves using traditional media (print, TV, radio) to raise awareness about an issue and influence public opinion. This can include writing op-eds and letters to the editor, giving interviews, and issuing press releases. It is important to have a clear message and to be able to present evidence and data to support your position.

In 1976, Sister Mary Scullion rsm began her work as an advocate for people experiencing homelessness, driven by a personal conviction that "none of us are home until all of us are home." Sr. Mary co-founded Project H.O.M.E., a nationally recognised organisation that provides supportive housing, employment, education and health care to enable chronically homeless and low-income persons to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty in Philadelphia. Sr. Mary is a powerful voice on political issues affecting people experiencing homelessness and mental illness. Her organisation works with a variety of coalitions on city, state, and national levels to impact public policies, educate elected officials, maximise resources for housing and services, and advocate for human and civil rights for persons who are poor, homeless, and/or disabled. Her advocacy efforts, including through press conferences, articles and appearances on TV and public radio, has resulted in the federal acknowledgement of the right of homeless persons to vote, as well as a landmark federal court decision that affects the fair housing rights of persons

with disabilities. Sr. Mary was named as one of Time Magazine's Top 100 Most Influential People in 2009 for her work, and she participated in the National Prayer Breakfast in 2015, invited by US President Barack Obama.

ONLINE ADVOCACY

Similar to traditional media advocacy, online advocacy uses online platforms such as social media, websites, and email campaigns to reach a large audience and mobilise support for your cause. It is important to



have a clear message, and use engaging and compelling content. Email and social media platforms are powerful tools for advocacy, as they allow advocates to reach large audiences quickly and easily, to keep supporters informed, to raise money for a cause, and/or to ask them to take other actions.

Mercy Global Action has used social media and other online tools to raise awareness of justice issues, to mobilise members of the Mercy world to take action, and to send our advocacy messages directly to policymakers who can make a difference. In 2015, during the negotiation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the NGO Mining Working Group, convened by Áine O'Connor rsm, wrote a joint advocacy letter with the Blue Planet Project of the Council of Canadians, expressing the need for the human right to water and sanitation to be explicitly named in the Political Declaration of the 2030 Agenda.

This letter was shared widely online through social media and email campaigns, and was eventually signed onto by 621 organisations in over 90 countries, sending a strong and convincing message to Member States that there was widespread support for this language. The letter was sent to all UN Ambassadors and Missions, relevant UN Agencies, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation in order to influence the draft Declaration. When the Zero Draft of that Political Declaration was released in May 2015, the human right to water and sanitation was not included in the text. This led to a further campaign asking for its inclusion, urging people and organisations around the world to lobby their governments at national and global levels, including through targeted use of Twitter to send specific language proposals to negotiators inside the UN.

Finally, in August 2015, when UN Member States agreed on the final text that would be adopted, Mercy Global Action and the NGO Mining Working Group celebrated the pledge made by Member States to “A world where we reaffirm our commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation” in paragraph 7 of the Political Declaration. This recognition of the human right to water and sanitation in the 2030 Agenda was the result of unrelenting efforts by civil society groups around the world, who were able to harness the power of social media to amplify our common messages, and send them directly to government representatives who could champion the changes we sought to achieve.

LITIGATION

Litigation involves using the legal system to achieve your goals. This can include filing lawsuits, joining amicus briefs, and working with lawyers to develop legal strategies.

In 2015, Ioane Teitiota’s asylum application in New Zealand was denied, and he was deported with his wife and children to his home country of Kiribati. In 2016, he filed a complaint to the UN Human Rights Commission, arguing that by deporting him, New Zealand had violated his right to life. Mr. Teitiota argued that the rise in sea level and other effects of climate change had rendered Kiribati uninhabitable for all its residents. Violent land disputes occurred because habitable land was becoming increasingly scarce. Environmental degradation made subsistence farming difficult, and the fresh-water supply was contaminated by salt water.

In 2020, the HRC ruled that governments must take into account the human rights violations caused by the climate crisis when considering deportation of asylum seekers. They stated

that countries may not deport individuals who face climate change-induced conditions that violate the right to life. Though the Committee determined that in Mr. Teitiota's specific case, New Zealand's courts did not violate his right to life at the time of the facts, the ruling sets forth new standards that could facilitate the success of future climate change-related asylum claims. The ruling marks the first decision by a UN human rights treaty body on a complaint by an individual seeking asylum protection from the effects of climate change.

PETITIONS

Petitions are a simple and effective tool for advocacy, as they allow individuals to demonstrate support for a particular cause or policy by signing their names to a document.

The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea have worked to support the Voice to Parliament referendum in Australia in 2023. This vote will give all Australians the chance to come together and consider a change to the constitution that will honour and celebrate the rights, history, and ongoing relationship of Indigenous Australians with the land. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have asked that the form of recognition come through a Voice to Parliament, which will give advice on laws and policies through a consultative policy making process that delivers meaningful structural change.

LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGNS

Letter-writing campaigns involve writing letters to government officials, policymakers, and other stakeholders to express support for or opposition to a particular cause or policy. This can be done individually or as part of a

coordinated campaign. Letter-writing is most effective if each letter shows that the person writing it really cares about the issue.

In Australia, the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) conducts an annual campaign to encourage consumers to make ethical purchases of Easter chocolate. Despite commitments by large chocolate companies, children in the cocoa industry are still working in hazardous situations, and the use of pesticides and deforestation are contributing to environmental degradation. By organising and creating templates for letter writing campaigns, ACRATH and its partners put pressure on CEOs of supermarkets, urging them to purchase and sell products with certification that ensures child slavery has not been used to produce the cocoa.

PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Protests and demonstrations are a form of direct action that can draw attention to a particular cause or policy. These can be marches, sit-ins, and other forms of peaceful protest.

FridaysForFuture is a youth-led and -organised movement that began in August 2018, after 15-year-old Greta Thunberg and other young activists sat in front of the Swedish parliament every school day for three weeks, to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. They created the hashtag #FridaysForFuture, and encouraged other young people all over the world to join them. This marked the beginning of the global school strike for climate.

Their call for action sparked an international awakening, with students and activists uniting around the globe to protest outside their local parliaments and city halls. Along



with other groups across the world, Fridays for Future is part of a hopeful new wave of change, inspiring millions of people to take action on the climate crisis.

In 2021, tens of thousands of people across Australia participated in the March 4 Justice, protesting widespread sexual abuse and harassment of women in the country. Survivors and their allies, including Mercy students and staff at All Hallows' School in Brisbane, joined the movement, calling for gender equality and justice for victims of sexual assault, through a series of protests. Student leaders addressed a rally: "At All Hallows' we have been given the privilege of participating in a mission of Mercy that motivates and encourages us to speak against oppressive structures and systems. Our School theme inspires us to "Lead for Justice" and "Act with Mercy" and today we have the opportunity to put this into action. We add our voices to the chorus of women across Australia who are marching today,

seeking equality, justice, respect, and fairness in society. We are honoured to stand alongside, and speak up with the multitude of strong, powerful, diverse people, who share an ambition of creating a world where we all feel safe, empowered and liberated. So today we march, some of us survivors, all of us united, taking action against the horrific injustices we face as women. From a local to an international level, we must all work together to ensure that every single student is educated about consent, assault and respect in a comprehensive

and inclusive manner. It is imperative that all people can leave school knowing their rights and having the fundamental understanding that sexual assault is more than just a crime, it has devastating and long-lasting effects on the survivor. Today, we join the legion of women who have fought before us in the hope of long-lasting change, so that those who come after us don't need to fight. We deserve better." (All Hallows' School, 2021).

RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

Research and data analysis are important tools for advocacy as they allow advocates to understand and communicate the facts and figures related to their cause or policy. This can be used to create fact sheets, reports, and other written content to share with decision-makers and the public.

One of the key components of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship is a research project in which each Fellow investigates a justice issue that they are passionate about, and presents their findings to the Mercy world. The research that Fellows have conducted on homelessness, migration, systemic racism, impact investing, women's empowerment, mental health and the environment, and other topics has shown in different ways the needs or problems that must be addressed in the world today, as well as methods or solutions for addressing them. By collecting the testimony or stories of those affected, conducting analysis, and presenting their research in a compelling manner, Fellows have the ability to reframe justice issues to showcase new or marginalised perspectives and solutions, and to influence the formal and informal policies established by policymakers and others in power.



ADVOCACY TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Advocacy training and education are important because they help individuals and organisations develop the necessary skills and knowledge to communicate their messages and achieve their goals effectively. Through education, advocates can learn about the history, context, and complexities of the issues they are addressing and the laws and regulations that govern them.

Additionally, education can help advocates develop a deep understanding of the perspectives and needs of the communities they are working to serve. Training and education can be used to develop effective and nuanced policy solutions and build support and momentum for change. Training and education also help build understanding and support for the work of advocates and organisations working to address the issue. Additionally, it can help mobilise individuals and groups to take action through volunteering, participating in advocacy campaigns, or voting.

Young Mercy Links SA, a community volunteer group supported by the Sisters of Mercy, have hosted training and education sessions for their members on different topics, from Indigenous rights to information sessions on landmines. Following the landmine information session, the group was better prepared to continue their advocacy efforts with those impacted by landmines in Cambodia.

MERCY

Using Money to Do Mercy

Thinking about money can be seen as inappropriate or antithetical to the goals of advocacy. We can feel that money gets in the way of focusing on our purpose and responding to those in need.

There is, however, truth in the saying: ‘No money, no mission’. Having capital at our disposal gives us access to privileged platforms and decision-making spaces in which we can spread messages and amplify the voices of those in need. It can also allow us to employ professional expertise to strengthen the tone and clarity of advocacy campaigns.

Money is essentially an energy that can be directed to flow towards those activities that most benefit our mission. It gives us a constructive way to enact change within existing market dynamics. It is integral – not separate – to the Mercy mission because it is arguably the most tangible form of social advocacy (Welsh, 2021).

Fundraising is a way of inviting people to join us on our journey of advocacy. When we ask for money towards a campaign, we give donors an opportunity to dig more deeply into the issue at hand and become more intimately involved with efforts to create change.



This is also a form of community building, as donors spread the word throughout their networks and encourage others to come on board.

Crowdfunding is a powerful form of fundraising that works by raising (usually smaller) amounts of money from a large group of people (i.e. a ‘crowd’) via digital platforms. Many grassroots advocates use crowdfunding to drum up early support and resources. Matthew Wade, Honorary Lecturer

at Australian National University, explains that crowdfunding simultaneously serves as ‘direct advocacy for marginalised people and wider activism to address underlying injustice’. He says, “Crowdfunding is a popular tool of recognition and redistribution, promising new ways to govern ourselves and determine what values we hold” (Wade, 2019).

In 2019, a campaign called ‘FreeHer’ launched on Australian crowdfunding platform GoFundMe to raise funds for Indigenous women in Western Australia who were imprisoned for their inability to pay fines. The campaign came after a young Indigenous woman, Ms Dhu, died in custody after being held for unpaid fines. The campaign was so successful in its advocacy that the Western Australian government repealed the laws around fines and incarceration (Wade, 2019).

Another prominent example is from 2015, when Brandon Stanton, photographer and author of the popular blog, Humans of New York, used a crowdfunding platform called Indiegogo to raise US\$2.1 million from over 75,000 donors for the Bonded Labour Liberation Front — an organisation that works to release people held in bonded slavery in Pakistan (The Human of New York, 2015).

These crowdfunding platforms offer a chance for donors to become advocates, using social media to transmit messages quickly across broad networks. They are powerful tools for amplifying marginalised voices and generating mass support for focused causes. In such cases, money is important, but it remains a gateway to involvement — a way to gain access to issues that tug at our hearts and compel us to take action.

EXAMPLES OF CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS FOR ADVOCACY

GoFundMe

gofundme.com/en-au

PledgeMe

pledgeme.co.nz

Indiegogo

indiegogo.com

Pozible

pozible.com

Mightycause

mightycause.com

Chuffed

chuffed.org

Mycause

mycause.com.au

Classy

classy.org

Ways Forward



Our good intentions do not always bring about change in the way we expect. The dynamism of our world means that we need to be flexible in our approach to advocacy. Often we will need to review and adapt our work to better navigate problems or onboard new information. The framework and suggestions below are not prescriptive but can help you embed reflection into your campaign for social and environmental justice.

Understanding the purpose of monitoring and evaluation

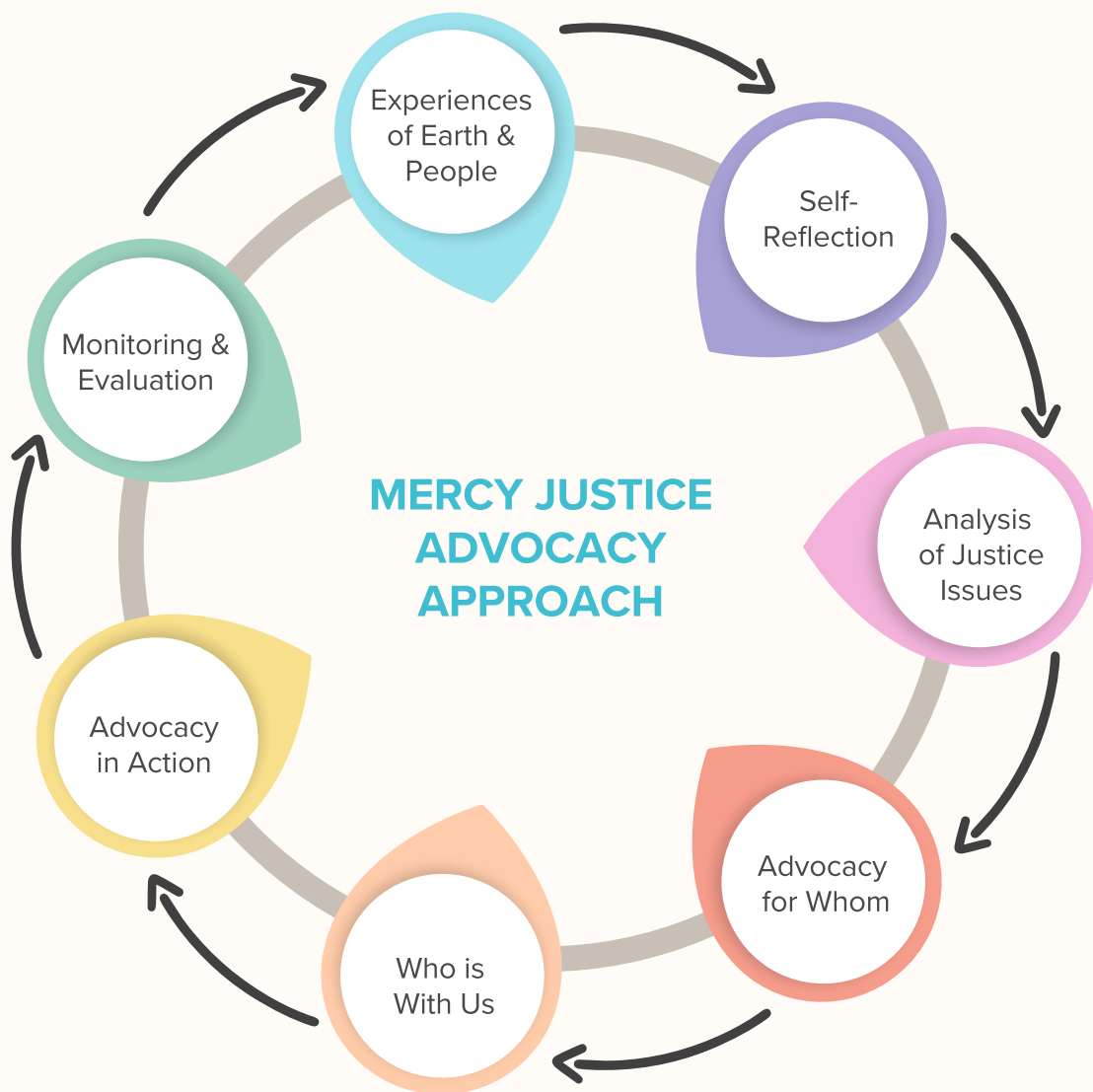
Meaningful advocacy isn't linear; it is an iterative cycle of learning, experimenting and reviewing. We use the opportunity of reflection to better understand what's going well and where we need to expand our learning to improve our processes.

Monitoring our advocacy efforts and evaluating their effectiveness and impact is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it keeps us accountable to our stakeholders, particularly those we represent, and to any potential donors who support us. The more we monitor our activities and update our community on our progress, the more opportunities we create for genuine feedback and collaboration, which can help push us closer towards our goals. Particularly if we are advocating on behalf of someone else, it is critical that we seek reassurance that we are, in fact, campaigning for the right things — that what we are seeking to change is directly informed

by those who will experience the change, and that our narratives reflect correctly their needs and perspectives.

Monitoring and evaluation is also important for sustaining change. It may be easier to advocate for short-term goals that ease the severity of an urgent situation, but for life to be improved in any lasting capacity for those most in need, advocacy has to take into account those shifts that will allow change to be sustainable. This usually means aiming for policy or legislative change, which can be a long and unwieldy process. Reviewing our roadmap and activities helps us to stay on track and decipher which indicators of progress are worth pursuing with greater energy. It takes clarity and conviction to persuade others to join our cause, so the more we learn, the closer we will get to the 'tipping point' of lasting change.

It is up to you to decide when and how to review your advocacy work. You may like to do this every three to six months. Ideally the process shouldn't be exhaustive, but it should be useful and directly inform your everyday operations.



Theories of Change

Monitoring and evaluation is greatly improved with advance planning. Having a clear vision and appropriate milestones helps to break down an otherwise complex advocacy process.

A theory of change is a simple roadmap that outlines the overarching vision of your advocacy work, your goals and the basic steps needed to achieve these goals. It should tell people why your work matters and how the activities you undertake can logically lead to a series of anticipated outcomes.

You may find it helpful to start your monitoring and evaluation journey using the example outline of a Theory of Change on the next page.

While it is always a good idea to craft a theory of change at the outset of your advocacy journey, it is never too late to work with your team in putting one together. A Theory of Change is iterative and should be revisited often. It can be used as the basis for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and the questions for reflection shown — while not exhaustive — are useful guides for this process.

Be sure to consider whose voices are involved in the process of crafting and reviewing your theory of change. As far as possible, we recommend that you involve the diverse voices of those who will be most impacted by the change you seek to bring about. This helps to create legitimacy and transparency.

Problem we are seeking to address & our overarching vision for change

Different elements of the problem / root causes	Resources we already have at our disposal	Resources we need to find to address the root causes	Key contacts / partners	Activities we need to undertake
What are the different aspects/ causes of this problem that we can breakdown into individual issues/points of concern?	What funds / materials / contacts / knowledge/ expertise do we already have that can be put to use?	What funds/materials/contacts/ knowledge/ expertise do we need to go out and find?	Who is with us? Who can help us?	What are the step-by-step tasks that need to be undertaken as part of our advocacy?
Questions for reflection in each of these sections				
How do we know these are the root causes of the problem? Are there any aspects/ contributors to this problem that we've overlooked? Who is this a problem for? What do these people say they most need?	Are these resources sufficient? Are they genuinely helpful or will they over-complicate our advocacy? Where do these resources come from? Do they come from a trusted source?	What are the gaps in our toolkit? Where can we look for additional knowledge/expertise/ support? Who is close to the problem (or to our ideal solution)?	Who cares about this issue? Who has a vested interest in the outcome? Which perspectives are we valuing? Whose voices are missing?	Have these activities helped bring us closer to our milestones/anticipated outputs and outcomes? Do our actions reflect our values and beliefs? Are there any obstacles to performing these activities successfully? Do these activities uphold the dignity of everyone involved? Do we need to adjust our approach to have different outputs?

Immediate outputs	Short-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes	Anticipated impact
What can we realistically measure and track as a direct result of our activities? What is externally verifiable?	What outcomes are we hoping to achieve with these outputs within the next 6-12 months?	What outcomes are we hoping to achieve with these outputs/short-term outcomes within the next 12-36 months?	What overall changes are we hoping to see as a result of these outcomes? Which changes can we reasonably say we contributed to?
What data are we prioritising? What biases or perspectives do we need to acknowledge when measuring outputs? What is the best way to record/keep track of these outputs? Do these outputs lead logically to our anticipated short-term outcomes? Do we need to adjust our approach to have different outcomes?	Have we achieved what we set out to achieve? Are we responsible for these outcomes? What other factors or partners may have contributed to these outcomes? Do these short-term outcomes lead logically to our anticipated long-term outcomes? Are there any unforeseen consequences? What can we learn from these consequences?	Have we achieved what we set out to achieve? Are there any unforeseen consequences? What can we learn from these consequences? Are these outcomes sustainable? What impact can we foresee as a result? Has there been a shift in thinking? Have we challenged the dominant narrative?	Is this impact systemic? Is it sustainable? Does this impact result in tangible, desirable changes for those who are most in need? Who have we consulted to confirm this? How far can we reasonably say we contributed to this impact? Who else is responsible or should be credited? Is this impact evidence of norm changes? What are the long-term environmental/contextual factors that make up this impact? What does it depend on?



Navigating the Challenges of Advocacy

Keep in mind the following when planning your review process:

1 ADVOCACY IS COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE

Advocacy is about norm change and depends on relationships. It can be very difficult to ascertain whether your advocacy is working — it often takes a long time to shift people's beliefs and behaviours, especially in a way that is sustainable. That's why it is important to set milestones or indicators of progress that you can foreseeably achieve and that will logically suggest you're on the right path. Celebrate the small wins and be flexible in adapting to unforeseen circumstances.

2 CONTRIBUTION, NOT ATTRIBUTION!

It isn't possible to accredit long-term impact to your own activities. Change takes a village! There will always be a multitude of actors and contextual factors that influence systemic change. Fortunately, this also means that you can't be held wholly responsible when things do not go as planned. Save the Children have created a useful framework for understanding contribution — they highlight the importance of distinguishing between spheres of control vs. influence vs. concern. See [this report](#) by Save the Children for more information. Where appropriate, take time to acknowledge others who you can see have also contributed to meaningful outcomes.

3 BE CLEAR IN DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SHORT- AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Short-term goals are more accessible and result logically from the outputs of your activities, usually within 6-12 months. Do not underestimate the importance of these goals: they can be indicative of tangible, positive change for those most in need, plus they ideally lead to more entrenched and sustainable long-term outcomes.

Some examples of short-term goals include:

- Raised awareness and knowledge of a justice issue
- New partnerships and networks
- Coverage in the media
- Changed public rhetoric
- Community mobilisation, e.g. protests, letters, social media action
- Altered patterns of behaviour or new opportunities
- Increased levels of trust from decision-makers

Long-term outcomes usually occur within 12-36 months of your advocacy activities. They follow logically from your short-term outcomes and ideally lead to systemic change. Long-term outcomes could include policy or legislation change, new budgetary commitments, and implementation or revoking of leadership decisions.

4 THERE ARE USUALLY MULTIPLE WAYS TO ACHIEVE YOUR ADVOCACY GOALS

Never underestimate the power of the grassroots in influencing politicians or decision-makers. The pressure applied from ‘bottom up’ approaches usually sees change last far longer than when it comes from top-down implementation. If at first you do not succeed, review, adapt and try again.

5 SEEK OUT TRUSTED ADVICE AND INTEL FROM SYMPATHETIC ‘GATEKEEPERS’

Sometimes there will be people close to the decision-making process who are sympathetic to your cause. If you can identify these individuals early, and make your interactions with them as easy as possible, you may be able to gain valuable access to important data or understand which ‘levers’ to pull to convince other decision-makers to take your case seriously. These people may also offer valuable feedback on whether your approach is working or ways that you could adapt your campaign to better appeal to those in power.

6 CONSULT A WIDE RANGE OF QUALITY SOURCES WHEN COLLECTING DATA

A broad mixture of qualitative and quantitative data points will help you to understand the progress of your campaign and keep track of outputs and outcomes. Qualitative data helps to round out and humanise otherwise dry statistics. Also consider the depth and breadth of this data. While change might seem slow, you could be heartened to discover the extent of your impact on particular individuals.

CASE STUDY

WORKING WITHIN COMPLEX INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS TO CHANGE STAFF POLICIES

WITH DR CHRISTINE CERVENAK



DR CHRIS CERVENAK

Dr Chris Cervenak has over 30 years of experience in human rights and international law, focusing on advocacy, strategic consulting, teaching and research. Chris served in the Office of the Legal Advisor of the U.S. Department of State, as Legal Officer for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's West Bank Operations, and with the UN's peace operation in El Salvador. She has worked extensively in strategic planning and conflict resolution, consulting to such clients as The Asia Foundation, Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation, USAID and Mercy International Association's Global Action office. For six years, she was the Associate Director at the University of Notre Dame's Center for Civil and Human Rights, where her teaching and research focused on issues of human rights and human trafficking. In 2001, she was honored by Notre Dame with the Rev. John J. Cavanaugh, CSC, Award for public service.

Can you tell us about an advocacy campaign in which you've been involved?

CHRIS One direct advocacy experience dates back almost ten years, when I was a leader of a small unit at the University of Notre Dame — The Center for Civil and Human Rights. There were four women at this unit, including me. In conversations about our maternal leave benefits under then-current university policy, we realised each of us had a completely different package of entitlements. Each package depended on our staff status (full-time/part-time; exempt/non-exempt; time in the position), from no salary replacement benefits if we were to have/adopt a child, to the maximum benefits. Even the maximum benefits were sub-par, providing new mothers with salary replacement that their vacation/sick/personal time had to be used to cover. After that, maternity leave was uncompensated (this follows the

minimal requirements of US Federal law, under the Family & Medical Leave Act).

We were astounded. It was a great exercise in seeing how a policy had wildly different impact according to each individual's employment status, within the same small team. We agreed to share this insight widely and aim for change. I took the lead with this team of staff to produce a White Paper ("Maternity Leave Policies for Staff at the University of Notre Dame") for circulation, which summarized the situation, analyzed its repercussions, requesting that the University revisit and amend its parental leave policy. I should note that I was an interesting person to lead this initiative, but in a good way because I could be objective: I was done having children, and so wouldn't be impacted by a change in parental leave policy. I think this allowed me to have no worries about being perceived as self-dealing.

By way of background, I was sensitized to differences in maternity leave policies from my time living in Chile. There, I saw what a generous maternity leave policy looked like. Early on in my tenure at Notre Dame, I raised questions about why Notre Dame didn't provide better maternity leave (along the lines of Chile) to its female employees with a high-level university official over a casual dinner. In response, he asked, "Well how do we pay for it? Should we reduce the child's access to funding support for college [a benefit Notre Dame provides to children of employees]?" I could see he saw it as a zero-sum game.

In sum, the situation was **boiled down to the following**: "Under these policies, it is likely that even those new mother-staff members with no pregnancy/childbirth related complications and healthy infants would take some part of the FMLA-protected 12-week leave without pay. For the most vulnerable of the new mothers employed by Notre Dame—whether heads of families, non-exempt and hourly workers, part-time, and/or with little accrued leave—having a baby may translate into a crushing loss of wages, even losing their job security if FMLA ineligible, at a time of increased financial demands. These same vulnerable mothers are at even greater risk when more time off is needed due to complications arising during pregnancy (requiring early leave), during and after delivery (extending typical recovery time), and with their newborns' health. Some otherwise FMLA-eligible mothers may not enjoy even the twelve-week period of job protection, if they had another FMLA-covered event in the previous twelve months.

"Notre Dame's maternity leave policy for its staff may meet basic federal and state legal requirements, but raises questions about how the University should treat these new mothers and their infants."

The White Paper attempted to make a persuasive case for **why the university should revisit this policy**:

"Whether the University should implement a more generous, family-supportive approach for pregnant/new-mother staff members is a question at the heart of its Catholic identity. In this paper, the authors attempt to describe: how the FMLA and Notre Dame's salary replacement policies operate in practice; the challenges of unpaid maternity leave for Notre Dame's new mother-staff members due to childbirth, especially for the most financially-vulnerable families; thumbnail summaries of other universities' apparently more generous paid parental leave policies; and highlights of human rights and Catholic Social Teaching values at stake—and possibly undermined—by Notre Dame's current parental leave policies."

We also advocated for **revisiting adjacent situations** affecting other personnel at the University:

"The fundamental importance of Catholic values to our mission should prompt additional discussions to ensure that other members of the larger Notre Dame family—fathers, adoptive parents, new foster parents, whether staff, graduate students or faculty—also are supported as they build their own families."

We started a low-key **awareness and persuasion campaign for change**. The **White Paper effectively laid out information that should guide future thinking** about maternity and other family leave policies, including expert medical sources on the issues around healthy babies, mothers, breastfeeding and returning to work. We also provided relevant aspects of Catholic Social Teaching and "benchmarking" (the superior policies of universities Notre Dame aspires to learn from (competitors/highly respected institutions). Helpfully, we drew heavily on Human Rights Watch's 2011 report, "Failing its Families: Lack of Paid Leave and Work-Family Supports on the US," succinctly describes the problem with

employers using FMLA standards to determine parental leave benefits. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/02/23/failing-its-families-0>

The HRW report provides perspective on how FMLA is an abysmal framework for supporting families, especially mothers and children.

The Draft White Paper was circulated for comments and amendments, especially with influential university leaders, faculty, and staff (especially Human Resources personnel). We worked over many months to pull together a final version that reflected input from this process. Essentially, we'd **built a community of people who agreed something had to be done, and kept sharing the White Paper with ever-wider circles, and talking about the issue.** I met with dozens of people in person to talk over the analysis and the path ahead. This approach was tailored to the audiences – university leaders used to reading and discussing sober analysis while quite adverse to more public advocacy tactics.

In this process, **a leader at Human Resources became an ally**, and together we met with my small team of female staff. This was a game changer — we had real traction and a chance at institutional change.

As she spent months looking at alternative maternal/parental leave policies, she would consult with us about how possible changes would sit with us and address the issues we'd raised. As an insider with influence, she was able to chart a much-improved path forward. She shepherded the new system for family leave through the highest-level decision-making process, for **a successful outcome that allows for a respectable level of salary replacement** for maternity/parental leave for most staff members.

This entire process took about two years, of continually looking for opportunities to get more of our community behind the idea that this policy was unsatisfactory, to be patient and helpful when those with authority sought more information about a path forward, to keep the conversation going and the pressure on.

How do you discern between real indicators of progress in advocacy, and mere outputs or superficial results?

CHRIS During these two years, we looked for progress in small ways. More people asking for the White Paper, asking to have a conversation about it. When the Human Resources leader wanted to sit down and discuss the White Paper and paths forward, we knew we had real traction. It was basically a **quiet diplomacy** initiative. The official change of University personnel policy was what we sought, and when it was announced, we rejoiced. For many societal reasons, it is hard to imagine this policy ever being undercut or rescinded.

What do you think are some of the major challenges associated with measuring impact in advocacy? Do you have any guidelines for how to navigate these challenges?

CHRIS This experience reinforces for me the idea that in advocacy, measuring impact is something that needs to be very flexible. Patience with ourselves as advocates is important (and willingness to change course, add new insights, be nimble). Funders' patience with advocates they support is most helpful—even to tolerate setbacks—as the long view is best.

Sometimes, you don't know things are changing in the right direction until you get the final word (in this case, University approval of a new parental leave system). There had been movement behind the scenes that needed to be led by insiders, in their own way, and it worked. Sometimes, you don't know the impact you've had until the fundamental advocacy goal is realized.

And sometimes, the impact is only measured much later. I've had women at Notre Dame express to me, after they've had a child/adopted a child, that this policy change made all the difference in their experience of parenthood and employment. These stories make the impact real, and could only have been imagined as we advocated for change and then saw the change made official.

CASE STUDY

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ILLEGAL DEFORESTATION

WITH MARIANNE COMFORT



MARIANNE COMFORT

Marianne Comfort works for the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas as Justice Coordinator for Earth, Anti-Racism and Women. She is a steering committee member of both the Global Catholic Climate Movement and the U.S.-based Catholic Climate Covenant. Marianne is also the facilitator of the Inter-religious Working Group on Extractive Industries, which aims to walk in solidarity with people around the world who are impacted by mining, deforestation and megadams.

Can you tell us about your role with Sisters of Mercy of the Americas and your experience with justice advocacy? Which areas of justice are you most passionate about?

MARIANNE My role with the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas over the past six years has been as Justice Coordinator for Earth, Anti-Racism and Women. I'm most excited about advocacy that connects all of these issues, which we especially see with our work around the harms of extractive industries since it's so clear that mining, oil and gas drilling, massive hydro-electric dams and other so-called development projects most often affect the health, safety, livelihoods and culture of ethnic and racial minorities and women and girls. This work currently is expressed in support for the FOREST Act, which would bar imports into the U.S. of goods sourced through illegal deforestation, and for reforming our country's 150-year-old mining laws to require royalties

paid for extraction of minerals on public lands, robust consultation with local communities, and clean-up after operations. In these cases, most of the people in harm's way are Indigenous communities devoted to the land and the spiritual practices tied to that land.

How do you know when your advocacy efforts have been successful?

MARIANNE The ultimate measure of advocacy success, of course, is having desired legislation passed. But this is usually a very long process, and we may see that success only after years of organising and advocating, if at all. So progress in advocacy is measured more around numbers of people mobilised, the size of a coalition built and the diversity of its members, as well as the responses we're getting to our advocacy from policy makers. Some questions that might guide us: Are more people aware of this issue and expressing concern? Is the issue

coming up more in the media and being prioritised by some policy makers? Are we building an ever-growing coalition of people engaging on the issue from various geographic areas and demographics? In meetings with policy makers and their staff, do they seem engaged in this issue? Are our meetings with them seeming to make a difference in their thinking?

As an example, I see the FOREST Act campaign highly effective according to these measures. About a year ago, our talking up of the bill interested the U.S. Catholic bishops enough to publicly support the bill and advocate for its passage. Then in the past few months, the Encounter for our Common Home campaign, which has been organizing groups of Catholics to advocate for climate action, adopted the bill as one of their priorities, and we have had a half-dozen meetings with staff of U.S. senators. We have in this way educated more and more people about issues around deforestation and clearly had an influence on some senators who are now considering some level of support for the bill. Even if the bill doesn't get enacted into law this Congress, we have increased public awareness, inspired more Catholics to see fighting deforestation as a response to the call in *Laudato Si* to hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, and nudged some policy makers toward considering legislation around this issue. This then sets us up for a better foundation for advocacy in the next Congress, and to move the needle even further toward our goals.

What is commonly forgotten in advocacy?

MARIANNE The importance of nurturing relationships is often forgotten when thinking about advocacy. We get caught up in issuing policy statements and letters of support, emailing large numbers of people to urge them to take action, and scripting talking points for meetings with policy makers. But it's the one-on-one and small-group conversations that bring more people into a coalition or encourage them to

meet with legislators, maybe for the first time. It's the personal encounters with staff to policy makers or policy makers themselves that move minds and hearts. I'm thinking of a sister of another religious order who showed up at a U.S. senator's parish and handed him the Encounter campaign's backgrounder on the FOREST Act; two days later, we were meeting with a member of that senator's staff, who told us the senator handed him that document first thing that morning and told him to look into it.

Can you think of a time when you've changed your advocacy approach based on learnings or reflection?

MARIANNE When I first started advocating in Washington, D.C., I was really stiff in meetings with policy makers' staff, sticking to the script our group had developed and shy about asking questions. Meetings seemed formal and very formulaic, and we often left totally unclear as to whether we had made any difference at all. I've grown into being more comfortable with just having conversations with the staff, bringing in stories, sharing how the issue connects to my faith and social justice values, all depending on how the people we are meeting with are responding, what seems to most interest them and guesses about what might move them out of their own sit-and-take-notes stance to engaging with us as individuals sharing similar concerns for family and community, even if we differ on policies. I often think of a partner organisation whose staff sometimes talk about finding themselves offering pastoral care to congressional staff dealing with disappointments and even trauma, like the insurrection of Jan. 6, 2021. Those advocates had established such deep relationships in those offices that staff felt comfortable being vulnerable and relating as human to human. In the end, that's how we embody the Mercy charism, and being effective at that is another win.

Conclusion

PANEL 1: NARRATIVES AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ON DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

How to build and nurture a balanced,
fair and informative public discourse,
including with respect to climate change?



Advocacy and Mercy go hand in hand. To advocate for someone is to shoulder their burden as your own — to struggle for justice in unison. Mercy is the practical outpouring of compassion that springs from our shared dignity. Both rely on solidarity: the recognition of our interconnectedness and our common right to a life that is free from fear and violence.

As evident through this report, to advocate with a Mercy lens means standing in the trenches with those who are marginalised and oppressed. It is being prepared to face the realities of life for those whom society has excluded. It is also about choosing to act. Choosing to do something that brings attention to these realities and pushes for change. Whether this change is incremental or transformational, it is all heading in the right direction.

We hope you feel encouraged to keep pursuing issues of justice that spark your passion and sense of solidarity with others. That is the call of Mercy. It is a call that challenges us to be critical thinkers, examine our bias, ask the big questions, interrogate our motivations, seek out new knowledge and harness our gifts in the service of others. And the first step is hope.

We wish you well on your journey of advocacy.

Mercy Global Action Advocacy Toolkit - Activity Page

Using the Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach, Catholic Social Teaching, and the Sustainable Development Goals as tools, we will examine the intersections between different justice issues of significance to the Mercy world, and design a policy recommendation and advocacy campaign related to an issue of your choice.

Identifying the Issues

Choose a justice issue, perhaps one that connects closely with your work or a situation you care deeply about. **Which issue did you choose?**

Which issue did you choose?



Take time to reflect and investigate: **Why is your chosen issue important to the achievement of the entire 2030 Agenda?**

Why is your issue important to the achievement of the SDGs and vice versa?

Consider the ways in which your chosen issue impacts people and the planet. **Who are the people most impacted? Which ecosystems are most impacted? What do they have to say about this issue?**

Who are the people/environments most impacted? What do they have to say about the issue?

Defining your Goals

Define your policy recommendations by setting goals. Good goals are the key to great recommendations. To make sure your goals are clear and reachable, each one should be:

- **Specific** (simple, sensible, significant). Answer the six “W”s: “Who,” “What,” “Where,” “When,” “Which,” “Why”
- **Measurable** (meaningful, motivating). Identifying concrete criteria to measure progress helps you stay on track
- **Achievable** (agreed, attainable). Visualise yourself achieving your goals. As you grow and develop, your goals become more attainable.
- **Relevant** (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based). You must be both able and willing to work towards your goals. Your goal is probably realistic if you really believe it can be accomplished.
- **Time bound** (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive). If you can see or feel the end product, it becomes more measurable and easier to attain.

What specific goals do you want to achieve?

What specific goals do you want to achieve?

Pick one of these goals, and come up with an effective action plan to make your goal materialise.

Identifying Your Targets and Partners

Who can make a difference on this issue?

- Consider engaging with government policymakers and decision-making processes locally, nationally, regionally or internationally
- Consider engaging with other decision makers (businesses, churches, media) and encouraging leadership to improve and integrate CSR (corporate social responsibility) into their business model.

Who can make a difference on this issue?

What are your target's strategic interests?

- Be aware of how policies are made: remember that government policy actors are interested in making decisions that are practical, cost-effective and socially acceptable.

What are your target's strategic interests?

How can you influence policymakers and others in your community to take action on your issue?

How can you influence policymakers and others in your community to take action on your issue?

Who are your partners and allies and how can they get involved?

Who are your partners and allies and how can they get involved?

Crafting your Advocacy Pitch

Now we bring the pieces together: Your "advocacy pitch" should include:

- **Experiences of reality on the ground:** draw from both positive & negative aspects of testimonies, and from your own experiences monitoring/reporting on the effects of policies in the places you work.
- **Good practices** you have employed (or encountered) in response to these challenges.
- **Recommendations** to government or other actors (business/private sector leaders, local authorities, healthcare providers, educational institutions, faith leaders/communities...)

Key Words for Recommendations

The aim of the policy recommendations element is to provide a detailed and convincing proposal of how the failings of the current policy approach need to change. As such this is achieved by including:

Specifically, we recommend that [your target policy/decision-maker]:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| • [Identify ...] | • [Commit to ...] | • [Fulfill ...] |
| • [Articulate ...] | • [Initiate ...] | • [Integrate ...] |
| • [Support ...] | • [Undertake ...] | • [Complete ...] |

Example - Concerns/Recommendations Approach:

Because of the urgency of the issue, I/we offer the following three [concerns, recommendations] for consideration:

1. *The root causes of [...] and intersections between [...] and other justice issues have deeply shaped the current situation.*
2. *Current efforts and shortcomings.*
3. *What avenues are open to [alleviate, address, improve, lessen, etc.] the [...]?*

First, root causes and intersections:

The effects of root causes have shaped the future of [...] through [...]

Second, current efforts:

Current efforts are addressing [...]. Yet these efforts fall short because [...].

Third, the Path Forward [or] Recommendations:

Moving forward, we recommend the following [...]

Craft your advocacy pitch here.

Taking Action

How will you communicate your policy recommendation?

Consider the steps that need to be taken in order for you to achieve your project goals. Possible activities might include:

- Meetings
- Letters
- Demonstrations
- Poster campaigns
- Research & Reports
- Press conferences
- Videos
- Social media campaigns
- Targeted op-eds
- Litigation
- High-level events
- Statements
- Draft legislation
- Briefings
- Radio shows
- Podcasts
- Conferences
- Phone calls

Activity Proposed to Achieve your Goal	How will you do this?	What help will you need?
Activity proposed to achieve your goal.	How will you do this?	What help will you need?
Activity proposed to achieve your goal.	How will you do this?	What help will you need?
Activity proposed to achieve your goal.	How will you do this?	What help will you need?

Any advocacy campaign can be a lot of work, so it is important to stop and re-examine your goals as you carry out your activities.

Are your activities advancing you towards your long-term goals? Do you need new/different resources/partnerships? Do you need to change tactics?

We hope you will be inspired to use these tools to create an advocacy campaign in your communities, countries, and beyond! If you do, we would love to hear about it!

Further Information/Tools/Reading

**INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS (ISHR) TOOLS
FOR ADVOCATING AT THE UN**
<https://academy.ishr.ch/learn>

**ENGAGEMENT WITH
HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS**
[https://academy.ishr.ch/
un_bodies_comparison_table](https://academy.ishr.ch/un_bodies_comparison_table)

**UN ANTI-RACISM COALITION
ON UNCONSCIOUS BIAS**
[https://unarc.org/docs/toolbox/
unconscious-bias](https://unarc.org/docs/toolbox/unconscious-bias)

**INFLUENCING FOR IMPACT GUIDE:
HOW TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE
INFLUENCING STRATEGIES**
[https://oxfamilibrary.open-
repository.com/bitstream/
handle/10546/621048/gd-influenc-
ing-for-impact-guide-150920-en.
pdf;jsessionid=A32BBDFE37D-
6891DEA41A1FDF363FDDDD?se-
quence=1](https://oxfamilibrary.open-repository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621048/gd-influencing-for-impact-guide-150920-en.pdf;jsessionid=A32BBDFE37D-6891DEA41A1FDF363FDDDD?sequence=1)

**WATER AND SANITATION:
A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO SDG 6**
[https://miningwg.files.wordpress.
com/2017/03/water-guide-final-pdf.pdf](https://miningwg.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/water-guide-final-pdf.pdf)

**BREAKING BOUNDARIES: A MERCY
RESPONSE TO PEOPLE ON THE MOVE**
[https://www.mercyworld.
org/f/45074/x/27c7ba22a5/breaking-
boundaries-a-mercy-response-to-peo-
ple-on-the-move.pdf](https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x/27c7ba22a5/breaking-boundaries-a-mercy-response-to-people-on-the-move.pdf)



**HOPE IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC:
RESPONDING TO COVID 19 THROUGH
A MERCY LENS**

<https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x-2c878423b0/f-covid-guide-web.pdf>

**MERCY GLOBAL ACTION EMERGING
LEADERS (MELF) PROGRAM**

<https://www.mercyworld.org/global-action/mercy-global-action-emerging-leaders-fellowship>

MELF RESEARCH

<https://www.mercyworld.org/newsroom/invitation-to-mercy-global-action-emerging-leaders-fellows-research-presentations>

MELF Group 2 Research coming to the MercyWorld website soon!

**INHERENT DIGNITY:
AN ADVOCACY GUIDEBOOK**

<https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x/48311c4347/trafficking-guide-web.pdf>

**NETWORK LOBBY FOR CATHOLIC
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

<https://networklobby.org>

**NETWORK LOBBY FOR CATHOLIC
SOCIAL JUSTICE REFLECTION GUIDE**

<https://networkadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/NETWORKCSJreflectionguide4.pdf>

**MONEY AS MERCY:
A GUIDE FOR THE GLOBAL
MERCY COMMUNITY
ON PARTICIPATING
MEANINGFULLY IN THE
IMPACT ECONOMY**

<https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x-501bf40fb9/money-as-mercy-research-project2-jemima-welsh.pdf>

**SISTERS OF MERCY
SOCIAL ANALYSIS GUIDE**

<https://www.sistersofmercy.org/homepage-awakening-new-consciousness-extractivism/session-four-deep-reflecting-social-analysis/overview-social-analysis/>

**FULFILLING THE PROMISES:
A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR
UN ADVOCACY TO PROMOTE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy_report_web.pdf

RIGHTS-BASED LITMUS TEST

<https://miningwg.com/rights-based-litmus-test/>

**ADVOCATING TOGETHER FOR
THE SDGS - HOW CIVIL SOCIETY
AND BUSINESS ARE JOINING
VOICES TO CHANGE POLICY,
ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES**

https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/mrcbg/files/Advocacy_Collaboration_SDGs.pdf

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