



# MERCY GLOBAL ACTION EMERGING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP (MELF)

MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

EXTENDING MERCY WOMEN'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE  
2019

The Inaugural Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship provides a transformational experience for women who are passionate about advancing Mercy and Justice. This international leadership program is fully funded, and unique in the ways in which it provides an opportunity for fellows to establish strong links and networking across the Mercy World through international encounters, webinars and modules, mentorship and more. The fellowship program has been designed to stimulate creative and critical thinking, promote collaborative leadership and personal reflection leading to a compassionate and communal response to current concerns of our world.

## BACKGROUND TO THE FELLOWSHIP

Mercy Global Action is the justice arm of Mercy International Association, an association founded by the Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters of Mercy are an international faith-based organization founded in Dublin, Ireland in 1831, with members in 47 countries and territories worldwide, and committed to serving those who suffer from poverty and other forms of disadvantage, especially women and children, empowering them to live full and dignified lives within diverse social and cultural contexts.

At the heart of our Mercy charism is the education, empowerment, and encouragement of women. The contribution of younger women to the Mercy Global Action Office is both a gift and an opportunity, providing mutual benefits to the women and also to the advancement of our work at Mercy Global Action. Women's positive responses to immersion in the Mercy Global Action office ministry and their valuable contribution to the ongoing mission of the office are the impetus for developing a fuller and more formal leadership program in which women can have the opportunity to share their knowledge and further develop their understandings of Global Justice. The Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship seeks to build upon the capacities of women and provide effective tools to be agents of change in their own communities and in the greater society. This involves critical thinking and ethical discernment, looking at the world through a Mercy lens, and challenging oppressive systems in order to advance justice.



*'From the local to the global level, women's leadership and political participation are restricted. Women are underrepresented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected offices, the civil service, the private sector or academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance'.*

The above quotation taken from UN Women indicates the need to promote and build upon women's leadership potential and influence in both the global and local arena. In this time of global turbulence, it is imperative that women have access to global political forums in order that their voice be heard and so that they can make meaningful contributions to Global Justice.

At the heart of this project is the aim to provide opportunities for women who have the potential to develop and contribute to Mercy Leadership and in turn, extend their sphere of influence. This builds on and ensures that Mercy Global Leadership endures within our Mercy Institutions and beyond. Our foundress, Catherine McAuley had a deep trust and desire to develop women's skills and capabilities so that they could carry on the work of Mercy. While we seek to develop leadership within the community of the Sisters of Mercy, this program also seeks to provide leadership opportunities for women inspired by the charisma of Mercy. These women may possibly lead our Mercy Institutions into the future and will need to have global vision and acute analytical skills as well as a Mercy heart.