

"Leave no one behind"

In 2015 our political leaders promised that they, we, would "leave no one behind" on our journey towards Sustainable Development. One of the groups who, historically, come into this category are Indigenous People from all over the world. The United Nations created a space for them to come together to discuss their affairs with the **Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues**. This year the 16th Session of the Forum celebrated the **"Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration"**.

In **"The Great Silence"**, Libby Rogerson recalls some moving moments during the Forum: individual experiences, human rights defenders, the strength of Indigenous women, the plight of Indigenous youth and some glimmers of hope. It provides excellent insights.

Sarah Rudolph focused on [Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change](#). Another challenging glimpse into the reality of their lives. Take this opportunity to get to know the people of Tuvalu, in the Pacific Ocean, the Indigenous communities in Alaska, the Sami, an Arctic people and the Yanomami and Kanamary peoples of the Amazon region who suffer the most severe consequences of climate change.



Look at our wonderful team at the NGO Office New York! We are very lucky to have three persons representing us at the United Nations and sharing information and insights with you at the moment. **Libby Rogerson** ibvm, Australia, (left), **Sarah Rudolph** ibvm novice, Canada (right), **Cecilia O'Dwyer** ibvm (center)

Much of the content of this UPDATE has been prepared by Libby and Sarah.



Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and ensuring justice for all calls for a movement beyond our comfort zones and a change of negative and oppressive mindsets that blur our visions of an alternative world – a world where all can call home" writes **Teresia Wamuyu Wachira** ibvm, Kenya. Wamuyu reflects on the intersection of Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with our IBVM commitment to "bring those forced to live in poverty to the centre of our life and ministry (GC 14, 2). Wamuyu, who is a specialist in Peace Studies, is a member of the board of Pax Christi International and of the IBVM NGO Advisory Committee. Read her reflection here.

Sarah's Blog When the driving force behind our initiatives is Love, we know that life is full of meaning and significance. Sarah's blog is called [Love, The Driving Force: a Journey of Discernment](#), a spectacular blog about her life as a novice with IBVM. Go to her post on 17 April for her impressions of the first days at the United Nations. It was an immersion in every sense of the word because she arrived just as the Forum on Indigenous Affairs began and a group of students with their supervisors, also from Canada, came to do a short UN immersion experience. Read it, and then continue with the other beautiful experiences she shares with us!



The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

CSW, which held its 61st Session this year, is the UN Event with largest participation of civil society from all around the world. Almost five thousand people met at the United Nations Headquarters, and surrounding establishments for the official UN sessions and the NGO Forum. CSW creates a space where, experiences are shared, learnings and knowledge gained to gather impetus for the long road towards gender equality. This year the conversations, negotiations, conclusions and commitments focused on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. You can refresh your memory with the videos and articles we shared on Facebook, YouTube Channel and website. You will find "office-made" videos for an easy [Introduction](#) to the Commission and [Comments](#) at the end of the Commission.



Domestic Work increased in visibility and concern this year. Listen to Libby Rogerson as she comments on the challenges facing millions of women who depart their countries and homes leaving their children with relatives in order to look after other people's children in foreign lands as [domestic workers](#).



International Day of Happiness 2017. The work of the United Nations not only deals with issues; Member states also encourage engagement with the values and attitudes essential for the fulfillment of the mandate of the UN Charter to promote peace, human rights and development. Since 2013 the UN has celebrated the International Day of Happiness and each year a new level of awareness is reached regarding the role of political leaders in helping create an environment conducive to the development of their people. "Central to human existence", writes Libby Rogerson ibvm, "is happiness and without a sense of well-being societies become conflicted, divided and self-serving."

What was celebrated was the need for all people to have a sense of well-being, which is at the heart of stable and peaceful societies". Read the complete version of her very interesting reflection on the [International Day of Happiness 2017](#).

The Elephant in the Room

A recent Oxfam statistics Report states that: In 2010 – 388 individuals had half the world's wealth. In 2015 - 62 individuals held half the world's wealth. Now - 8 individuals own the wealth of half the population of the world

When questions of the economic empowerment of women, the eradication of poverty and the totality of the Sustainable Development Goals are addressed the "elephant in the room" is the dysfunction of the economic system. However, it is the context in which we find ourselves. The financialization of our economy, remarked one of the speakers at the CSW Consultation Day, is the neoliberal policy on "steroids."

"General Motors makes more money lending people money to buy cars than by making the cars. The neoliberal policy talks about deregulation but it is really about reregulation for the financial industry. What if we had an economy where human rights were the purpose?" Yes, what if human rights and the wellbeing of people were the purpose of the economy? We are reminded that our power as "consumers" is central to change. With this in mind the NGO Committee for Financing for Development, to which we belong, organized events on the [Impact of Investment as a Tool for Social Development](#) and *Financial Inclusion as a tool for the empowerment of women and the eradication of poverty.*



From our Network

10 - 19 JULY 2017

NEW YORK



**44 Countries make
voluntary National
Reports on the
SDGs**

Theme: Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a
changing world

**IBVM Network in
Bangladesh, Kenya, India, Nepal
contribute to survey on SDGs**

Grassroots Contribution to UN Process.

Preparations are underway for the meeting in July when countries will make voluntary reports on the national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goals 1,2,3,5,9,14 and 17. This meeting, called High Level Political Forum, will focus on the theme, "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The voluntary reports will instigate discussion on ways to move forward with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda. The Grassroots working group is conducting a survey in the countries presenting their voluntary reports. Information from the survey will be used to give additional voice to grassroots and will be used by NGO Representatives

to advocate. Voluntary Reports will be presented by 44 countries. Members of our network, working mainly in grassroots projects in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal and Peru, have been invited to participate in the survey. This is an important part of our direct contribution to United Nations processes.

Education, Awareness Raising: "Closing the Gap"

Australia. "It is our responsibility as members of today's generation to improve the way of life for the next generation" says Brittany Abraham, a Year 12 Aboriginal Studies student from Loreto Normanhurst school, Sydney. "As a school with students who have Aboriginal heritage, we recognise the need to raise awareness within our Loreto community while also engaging in part of a larger community initiative to continue the conversation about the health gap which exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians," says Brittany. Loreto Normanhurst students were awarded the "School's Prize" for their 15 spectacular photos in the fourth annual *Close the Gap* Student Photo Challenge, using Instagram to make their voice heard.

The Blanket Exercise, Canada. In its final report the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) attributed the current state of troubled relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada to "education institutions and what they have taught or failed to teach over many generations" In response to the Call to Action, Mary Ward Centre Toronto, a non-formal Education initiative set up by the IBVM Canadian Province, offers The Blanket Exercise to students and adults. Read more about it here <http://www.marywardcentre.ca/centre-news.html>

***The Blanket Exercise
(Canada)***



Leave No one behind



***Close the Gap
(Australia)***

SDGS IN ACTION

Mary Ward Center, Chicago

Among other reasons, we have a universal Sustainable Development Agenda, because people have been coming together to clean up public spaces and plant trees to preserve the biosphere. These practices create awareness of the ways in which we can help preserve life on land, create sustainable cities and combat climate change and now are an integrated part of the 17 SDGs.

When we come together to clean up, make spaces beautiful we contribute to enhancing “life on earth”(SDG 15), making our cities and communities sustainable (SDG 11), combatting climate change (SDG 13) and with our positive collaboration creating peaceful societies (SDG 16). **Mary Ward Centre, Chicago is doing this.**



Mary Ward Center
CLEAN & GREEN
DAY

“Creating new possibilities together”
In
Chicago



South Africa. Elana Grewling and Makoma Lekalakala, together, fought the coal fired power station that billows smoke over an impoverished township in Limpopo, South Africa. Last March they won South Africa’s first climate change lawsuit – a precedent-setting case. The court ruling against the Minister of Environmental Affairs requires the Minister, Edna Molewa, and her department to give proper consideration to the impacts of climate change before building coal-fired power stations. Increased mining and coal-fired power are part of the government’s plan in Waterberg. Each plant has its own mine which means that farmers are being pushed out by mining firms. Elana and Makoma said they knew that taking their fight to court was the right thing to do.

India. At their last JPIC Meeting, held in Delhi, Loreto Schools in India committed to improve the environment. All Loreto schools are working to improve the environment and, with it, combat climate change by planting trees and becoming carbon neutral schools by 2020. Students and teachers are working hard to achieve their goals. These photos capture a specific awareness-raising activity. They place name tags on the trees in the Loreto grounds.



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