# ANNUAL 2021 REPORT 2021





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# **DEFINING** digital Jesuit higher education at the margins

Online higher education as normality was unthinkable before March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures forced educational institutions at all levels to shift to online teaching. It was a steep, technical and pedagogical learning curve for all institutions. Today, online classes and digital learning are a normality all over the world. Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) already set out in this direction over a decade ago, successfully piloting the offer of an online higher education programme in remote refugee camps in Africa. In 2021, JWL reached over 5,000 marginalised youth across 53 community learning centres in 19 countries.

Although online teaching and eLearning have become normality, it is not yet so for the poor and excluded. What works easily with great bandwidth and a normal student population does not work in excluded communities, with erratic and low internet bandwidth. The technological solutions developed by JWL and its IT partner adjusted to overcome such barriers and combined them with the Jesuit approach to education – the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm – which refers to the important role of the online professor and the onsite facilitators, and the learning cycle of context analysis, reflection, action and evaluation. This has allowed for successful eLearning in some of the world's most challenging contexts such as in remote villages in Afghanistan, and within the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Eighty percent of all professional and academic students completed their programme of study in 2021.Serving youth at the margins is the distinctive characteristic of Jesuit Worldwide Learning – Higher Education at the Margins and by doing so, it is taking on the mission of the Society of Jesus expressed in the two Universal Apostolic Preferences: Journeying with Youth and Walking with the Excluded. A second distinctive characteristic of JWL is the delivery of Jesuit education through blended eLearning.

I would like to thank all students, online professors, universities, field partners and Jesuit Provinces – all who work with the JWL global team and make this digital Jesuit Work of the ECE Province possible and effective, in service of the mission of the Society of Jesus.



Fr Bernhard Bürgler, SJ President of JWL, Provincial of the Central European Jesuit Province (ECE)



# **RESISTING** political challenges with student and communitybased higher education

The events that began to unfold in Afghanistan in August 2021 were dramatic for many JWL students there. We all remember the pictures from Kabul Airport, tens of thousands trying to get through the gate and onto a plane. With the help of our partner JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service), a few coordinators of the JWL partner organisation New Horizon were evacuated to Italy, where they continue with the online Bachelor's in Leadership with Creighton University. Colleagues who were unable to flee Afghanistan have also now resumed their studies. Only a week after the change of power, New Horizon student leaders spoke with the local community and new authorities, asking for permission to reopen the learning centres. They were granted this permission for young men and women. Within three months, all previous community learning centres in Bamyan, Ghor and Daikundi provinces reopened, along with two additional learning centres. By the end of 2021, over 1,000 students were enrolled in the Global English Language (GEL), professional and academic programmes. Through the Each One Teaches Someone Programme (EOTS), JWL students teach another 2,000 youth in their villages and organise food relief for 2,000 families for early 2022.

The JWL model of higher education through blended eLearning has proven resilient in challenging political situations.

As long as there is internet, any eLearning course can be offered. This makes digital higher education so flexible, for no matter where and in which context students are, they can pursue their studies. JWL's student and community-based organisation model is also important. New Horizon was formed as a student-based organisation (SBO) by JWL graduates of the Diploma in Liberal Studies (now students of the Bachelor's in Leadership). They manage the community learning centres in their villages. More female than male students are enrolled in Afghanistan, despite fear of restrictive policies in Afghanistan today.

Another crisis of which the world does not hear much about lingers in the Sinjar mountains of North Iraq. In 2017 JWL started to offer the GEL programme in Khanke Camp, where 30.000 Yezidis found refuge. Two years later, students began to enrol in JWL's professional and academic programmes. As the situation began to calm down in 2018, some students gradually returned to Sinjar. Through their studies, they gained a new perspective and courage to return and rebuild their homes, but also to open a community learning centre in Sinuni – starting with 60 English Language students and now another 100 signed up for 2022 (including for professional and academic programmes). Sinjar remains a disputed area, with a tense security situation.



Because of this, there are days when students cannot come to the centre. They stay at home but interact via WhatsApp and study in the offline version of JWL's Learning Management System app.

The military coup in Myanmar led many young people to return to their villages for security's sake, but with unstable and expensive internet. JWL responded to the situation by transferring courses on SD cards or USB sticks and making them available to students, thus enabling them to continue their studies in spite of the lingering challenging situation. The resilience of JWL's model rests on the technology of blended eLearning for low internet access areas, and even more so on being managed and driven by students themselves and their integration into the community. The challenges of the political turmoil in Afghanistan, Iraq and Myanmar have proven this.



**Fr Peter Balleis, SJ** JWL Executive President





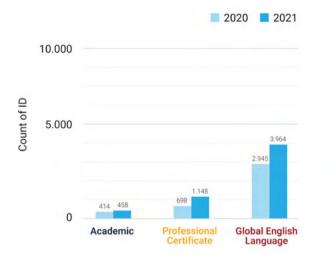
To scale access to equitable tertiary learning for youth in excluded communities through increased collaboration with universities and Jesuit provinces

### 2021 by the Numbers

Country	# of Students
Afghanistan	1.109
Central African Republic	179
Chad	25
Congo DRC	94
Guyana	17
India	604
Iraq	1.057
Jordan	167
Kenya	780
Kyrgyzstan	25
Malawi	47
Myanmar	143
Philippines	38
Rwanda	51
South Sudan	93
Sri Lanka	323
Thailand	88
Тодо	177
Zambia	7
Total	5.447

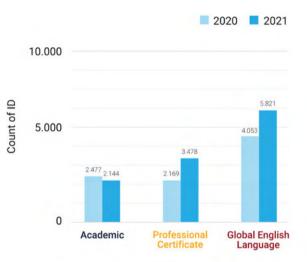


# Student Enrolment



Programme Type	2020	2021
Academic	414	458
Professional Certificate	698	1.148
Global English Language	2.945	3.964
Total	4.009	5.447

## **Course Enrolment**



Programme Type	2020	2021
Academic	2.477	2.144
Professional Certificate	2.169	3.478
Global English Language	4.053	5.821
Total	8.699	11.443

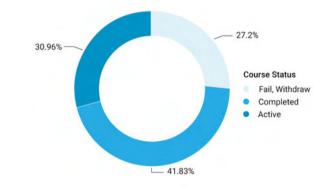
Scaling access to equitable tertiary learning is the strategic goal set for 2020 – 2025. This was achieved in 2020 and again in 2021, with increased student and course enrolment across all the programme areas (English language, professional and academic).

This increase has been most significant among professional certificate programmes, also reflecting new programme offers (Creative Writing and Web Design, eCommerce). The Youth Sports Facilitator and Learning Facilitator programmes were offered on a larger scale in refugee camps in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda in collaboration with UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency), JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service), and other field partners.

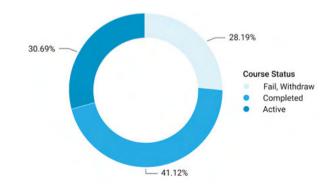
The Global English Language programme was most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures but began to bounce back in 2021, with an increase in student numbers and enrolment in levels.

The total course completion rate reaches 72% and the student retention rate is up to 73% - a more than satisfactory rate for any eLearning programme.

# **Course Completion**



## **Student Status**





# Regional partner and cluster model

Clusters of community learning centres at national and regional levels in collaboration with strategic partners, enables JWL to scale access to tertiary education for marginalised youth and communities. Strategic partners, such as Jesuit Provinces (regionally) and student-based organisations reaching out to more excluded youth, are key to the cluster approach.

Strengthening this approach in Eastern Africa and francophone West Africa was one of our focus areas in 2021. A JWL academic and operations team visited Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda, and met with the Jesuit Provincial of Eastern Africa and the team of the proposed Loyola Jesuit University for Eastern Africa, to map out a strategic collaboration to support their efforts in reaching out to marginalised communities through eLearning. In addition to the community learning centre in Rumbek, three more centres will open in South Sudan in early 2022.

On the invitation of the Jesuit Provincial of francophone West African countries, a JWL operations team visited the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Chad, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast. In Togo (Lomé) and the Central African Republic (Bangui), where JWL supports local Jesuit institutions with the Global English Language programme, professional and academic programmes are gradually being introduced. This strategic focus on West Africa will also include collaboration with Jesuit academic institutions and the possibility of offering some programmes in French. A number of these countries border the Sahel – a very volatile area facing great environmental degradation, political instability, conflicts and forced displacement.

Beyond new strategic partnerships with Jesuit Provinces and institutions, those with the student-based organisation in Afghanistan (New Horizon), and JWL students together with Nadia's Initiative in Iraq, moved the access to higher education further to the margins in politically and security-wise challenging contexts.





### **Yousuf** Learning Facilitator professional programme, Kenya

100 Teachers from 26 local schools in marginalised communities of Kalobeyei settlement and Kakuma Refugee Camp (Kenya) undertook the Learning Facilitator programme in the second half of 2021. The 6-month programme, certified by the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, was offered in collaboration with Intel Corporation through the Intel RISE Technology Initiative (IRTI) and AsyTec a local Original Equipment Manufacturer in Kenya. The aim of this programme is to facilitate the transformation from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach, integrating different forms of online and offline learning into wider blended learning designs. It incorporates mentoring and peer support mechanisms, and draws on learner-centred pedagogies. Yousuf, originally from Sudan, teaches biology and chemistry at a secondary school in Kakuma Refugee Camp. He enrolled on the Learning Facilitator professional programme as he hoped to add to his existing skills, to support him in changing lives within his community. Now a graduate, here's what he shared with us about his experience:

[...] I can describe it as an amazing experience because, one, we had a very fun time with my online classmates during discussion sessions. We were able to interact, critique each other in the discussion forum. We also had a very beautiful experience with my onsite classmates where we shared in our weekly meeting discussions. [...].

Yousuf enjoyed learning about different concepts, such as planning for learning, defining learning objectives, and measuring learning outcomes, which he has already begun to apply.

The programme has made me a better teacher (or rather facilitator), because from now I am able to identify the learning needs of students and I'm also able to use the questioning, strategies and critical thinking to ensure that my learners are able to understand the concepts taught in class. With that, I'm also able to use inclusion strategies to make sure that everyone in class, regardless of age, gender and disabilities, are able to get what I teach in class.





# Saajidha

#### Peace leader student and GEL facilitator, Sri Lanka

"The purpose of my life is to create a peaceful community," says Saajidha, a JWL Peace Leader student in Hatton, Sri Lanka. This is especially important to her given the political turmoil, discrimination, inequalities and lack of education which she observes in the country – and she is adamant that this must change. "In my opinion, I believe I can bring peace in this world. This is what I expect from this course

Saajidha lives on a tea estate in Upcountry, where the level of education is poor. There aren't enough schools or teachers in her community, and some are against school education. Without proper guidance and encouragement, many students lack interest or motivation to learn. Early marriages and pressure to work at a young age result in both young men and women missing out on an education. She has been making her way through the Global English Language programme (joining at A2 level and now at B2 level), has completed the Learning Facilitator programme, and is also a Global English Language (GEL) facilitator at the learning centre.

All of the Peace Leader course material has been engaging, but the topic that has spoken to her the most is 'Reconciliation and Forgiveness.'

Forgiveness is the most important thing in everyone's life.
It can be said that forgiveness is a part of human life.
No one can easily apologise for giving up their selfishness.
This lesson showed me the value of forgiveness.
Forgiveness is the most important thing in everyone's life.

### [...]

In some gardens students do not have English teachers. So we are going to select some gardens and teach there now. This will be an opportunity for them to improve their knowledge of English. Despite an educated community it does not seem to be practical. But JWL gave us the knowledge of how to put everything in our practical life. This path inspires me as a social worker.



### **Cedric** Global English Language (GEL) programme, Central African Republic

"I have understood that in most of countries in the world, besides their own languages one speaks English at least," says Cedric, who also realised that solid English language skills could also open doors to more professional opportunities, perhaps even at the international level.

Cedric joined the Global English Language (GEL) programme at B1+ level in Bangui, Central African Republic, and has now reached B2 level. He finds the group discussions particularly engaging, especially when debates are organised. Participants express themselves with less inhibitions, less fear about making mistakes, as their minds are more focused on winning the debate. Living in a francophone country, such opportunities to practise are especially helpful. Although a bit shy at first, he kept telling himself "keep learning and don't be afraid of mistakes." He's definitely noticed an improvement in his listening, writing, reading and comprehension skills but feels the need for more practice in order to sharpen his spoken English. In the meantime, he took part in multiple interviews in English and finally succeeded in landing a job with a large company.

"I think English weighed much in this success," he told us, adding that he was calm during the interview, and that his new job requires a lot of report-writing in English.

To current or future JWL students he'd say, "Believe in your dreams!", for people once told him he wouldn't be able to learn English and pursue his goals without leaving the country.

If I listened to them, I would not reach that level I reached now. Even if, I still make mistakes today, it is lesser than before.

### [...]

As my country has been through trouble so far, I hope that the main stakeholders will find peaceful solutions to return peace in the entire country. I also think that to avoid those kinds of situations in future, people should be better educated. With a good education, we might be able to well understand the outcomes and consequences and will lead us to make adequate decisions. Decisions that would meet the expectations from all the categories of the population.



# Christine

#### BA in Sustainable Development, Iraq

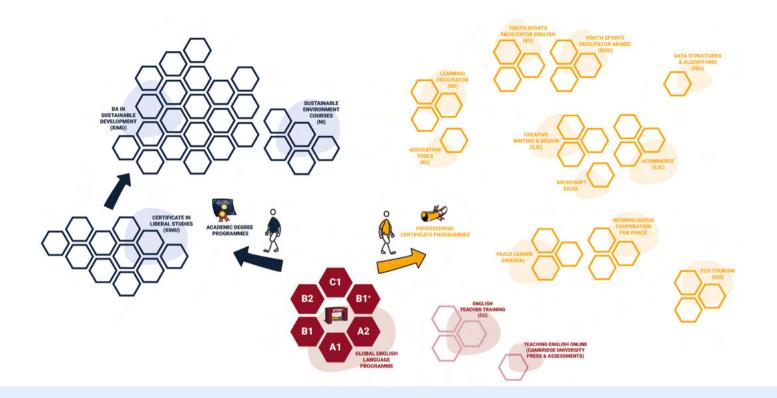
"Education is one of the edification ways of life," says Christine. She was studying dentistry when, four years ago, she and her family left Syria and went to Erbil (Iraq). Over the years, she did a few courses in the field of human resources and gained work experience, but she "couldn't find a better opportunity to continue my studies as I found in JWL

Thinking about the difficulties being faced in Syria because of conflict, as well as about the hunger, insecurity and inequalities faced the world over, it's clear to her that things need to change. Her journey with JWL began in early 2021, when she enrolled on the Certificate in Liberal Studies, with a view to progressing

onto the BA in Sustainable Development and eventually" lead the others on how important this field is [...]." Having completed this foundational year, she has now embarked on the degree programme.

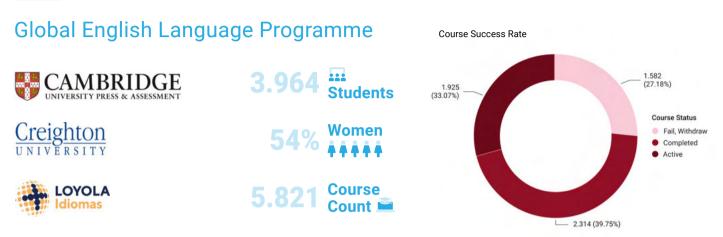
One of the things that I really want to know and study about is the reality of life that we are in connection with the past and the future, how our ancestors were suffering and how we are today, the distinction between the previous and current generation and how to develop the future generation starting with the development of ourselves, knowing the risks and fears that we face today in all The concepts of life, whether scientific, cultural, social, economic, etc., to know how to balance and preserve everything we have, how not to lose it as a result of our randomness.

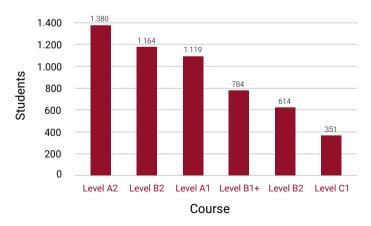
It's a little too soon to know exactly what will come after graduation but one thing is for sure – "the only orientation is to make a change."

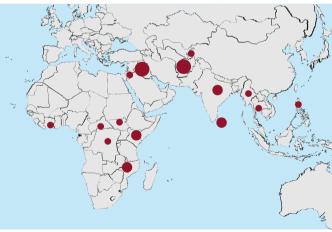




To offer global learning pathways of high-quality tertiary education and formation

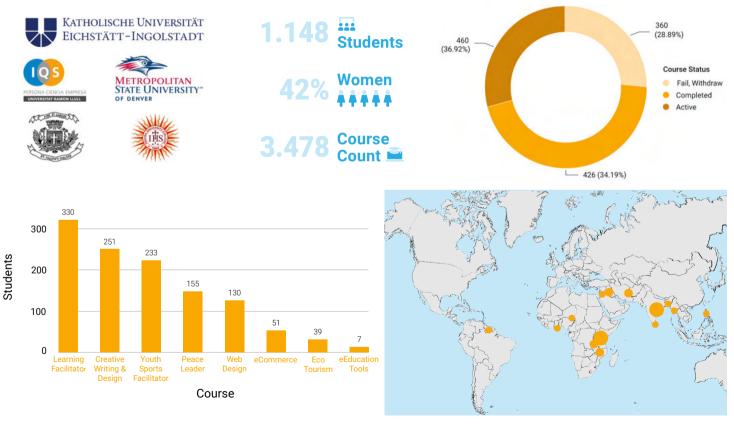


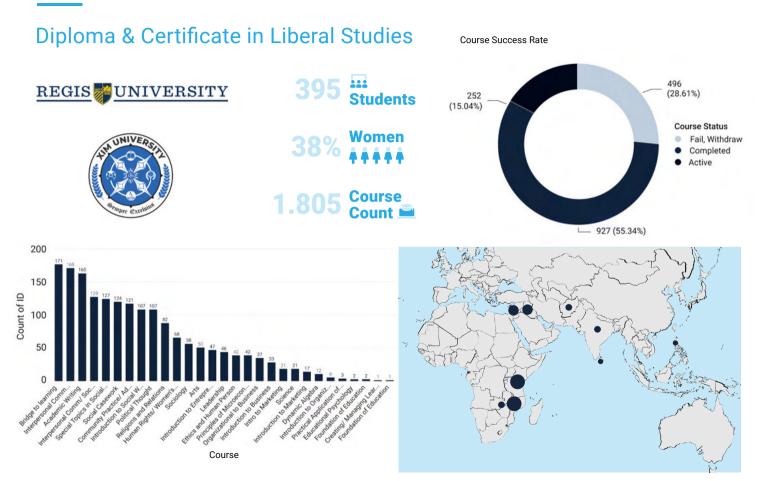


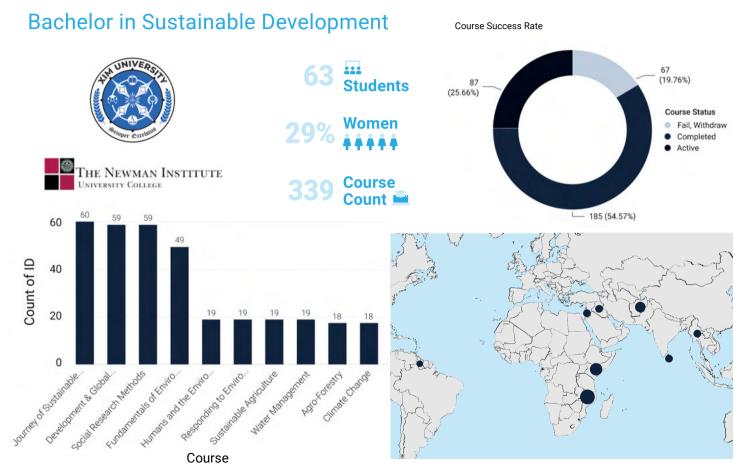


# **Professional Programmes**

Course Success Rate







JWL's stackable learning path was further strengthened and diversified with the addition of new programmes. Both existing and new partnerships with universities have been crucial in this regard.

The Global English Language (GEL) programme has greatly benefitted from the English Teacher Training offered by Creighton University (USA). In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and to support GEL facilitators in adapting to the subsequent shift to eLearning, JWL enrolled them in the Teaching English Online programme, offered by Cambridge University Press & Assessment and Future Learn.

Two professional certificate programmes were added to the learning path and were met with great interest from students: Creative Writing and Web Design, and eCommerce & Accounting, both accredited by Saint Joseph's College in Bangalore (India). Such practical programmes require particular exercises and pose certain challenges in terms of student support. This requires facilitators with more expertise.

As a new partner, the Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen – Nuernberg (Germany) engaged with JWL by providing two professors to work with JWL in building online courses on Human Rights, and on Data Structures & Algorithms (to be offered in 2022).

The Certificate in Liberal Studies, accredited by XIM University in Bhubaneswar (India) began to replace the Diploma in Liberal

Studies (accredited by Regis University, USA). The table shows both groups together and demonstrates a smooth transition from the Diploma to the Certificate in Liberal Studies.

The first students enrolled in the Bachelor of Sustainable Development in January 2021, followed by a second intake in September. It is our first degree programme, offered in close collaboration with XIM University.

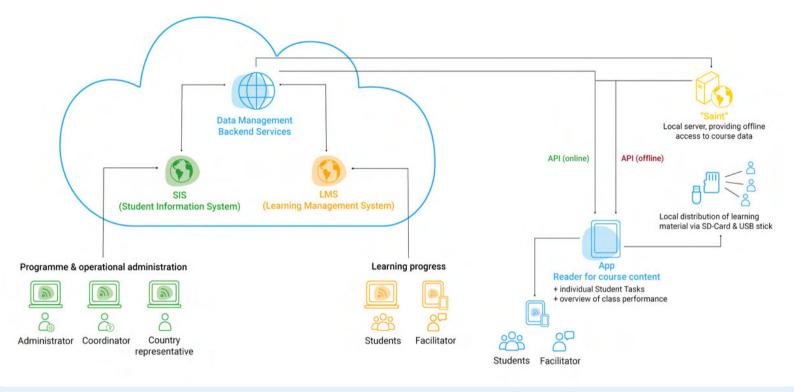
On a tour in the USA JWL leadership visited 15 Jesuit Universities and met great interest by many in collaborating in this mission. A Pre-STEM programme will be built with and accredited by Creighton University. Other collaborations initiated on this tour will unfold in 2022.













To enhance blended mobile learning by developing innovative educational and technological solutions in line with Ignatian pedagogy

# eLearning technology in low connectivity settings

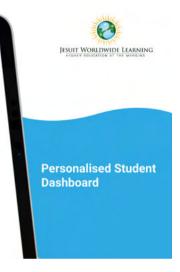
2021 saw the launch of JWL's new Global e-Learning App, a tool which students in areas with poor internet connectivity can use to participate in digital education, despite the challenging circumstances they face (including in crisis regions).

The new comprehensive offline features enhance the learning experience. Furthermore, the newly-implemented helpdesk support forms enable students to seek assistance with their queries and issues they may face. A weekly checklist for students' tasks is also now available on the App's dashboard, to help students manage their tasks and have an overview of their learning progess. Students can now directly jump into discussions with global classmates through the app. Interaction tasks for intercultural exchange with students from different countries can also be completed through the new app while using a smartphone, thus contributing to the advancement of JWL's vision of *Learning together to transform the world*.









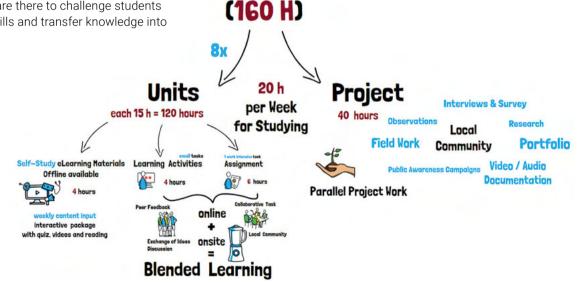
Library of Units downloadable for offline study



JWL courses follow a proven system and are all structured in the same way. Each course lasts 8 weeks and is designed in a blended learning format.

Each course has a workload of 160 hours, which translates into 20 hours per unit/week. Most students study full time and so take two courses in parallel. Structured guidance for learners has proven its effectiveness, even under the challenging circumstances faced by JWL students. Each week, 15 hours are allocated to three different areas (see chart).

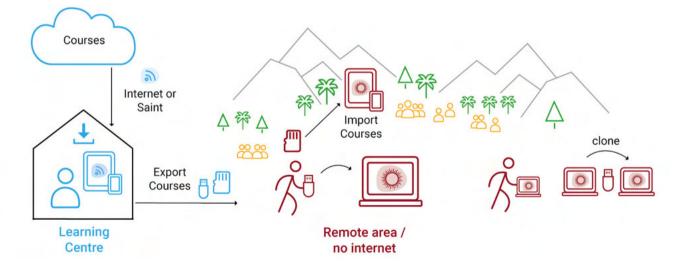
An additional 20 hours of project work which take place in parallel to the course units are there to challenge students on their self-organisation skills and transfer knowledge into practice. Learners take part in intensive discussions at their local community learning centre as well as in the global (virtual) classroom (with peers from other JWL learning centres across the world) and are supervised by an online faculty member from an international university to ensure quality of teaching. This framework provides learners with the necessary onsite accompaniment, contextualisation of learning, as well as opportunities for virtual intercultural exchanges, all of which contribute to a transformative learning experience.



JWL - Course

Over the past year, a number of our students faced great challenges due to political strife in their countries. In order to enable students (and especially women) in crisis areas to continue their studies, it is crucial for them to be able to access the learning content in small, decentralised learning groups, and without having to walk long distances to and from the learning centre. In such situations, students can be provided with an SD card which contains encrypted packages of learning content (only accessible via App). Course content is accessible by inserting the SD card in an Android device with the JWL Global e-Learning App installed (with offline studying setting enabled). Any student or facilitator who has downloaded course material at least once at the learning centre can export it to a USB stick or SD card. These SD cards or USB sticks can then be distributed to other JWL students in remote rural areas. You can import from a data carrier the courses for which you have an authorisation via the JWL app, and with a JWL ID. With the Windows app, you can also clone the entire course library to another student device via a USB stick.

This allows for the **distribution of learning content to students' mobile devices without the need for an internet connection** and enables them to pursue their studies, even in the most challenging contexts.







To carry out research on the model and the transformative impact of blended mobile learning on individuals and communities

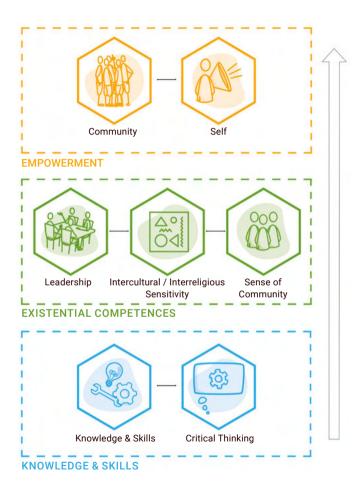
# Transformation from the margins



During 2021, JWL partnered with Prof Dr Barbara Schellhammer, Research Chair for Intercultural Social Transformation at the Munich School of Philosophy, to support two small-scale, creative research projects that would investigate local needs in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict transformation led by graduates of the Peace Leader course. The underpinning idea was to nurture transformation by supporting researchers from the margins to investigate topics of their choice, that they deemed relevant to their communities. Two projects were selected: one in Afghanistan and one in Iraq.

The Afghan group investigated how the concept of servant leadership is translated and understood in the Afghan culture, and in particular in rural villages around Herat. The group was able to interview not only community leaders but also children and other prominent figures in the villages. Their research shows how two types of leaders co-exist in rural Afghanistan, a more traditional group of leaders, and a new emerging group of leaders, e.g. female schoolteachers, with complementary traits. Despite the challenging in-country situation, the group was able to complete the research project and they are working on a journal article. The group in Iraq focused on stereotypes, and in particular on stereotypes that university students from the host community and from the Syrian refugee community have on each other. To be able to investigate such a sensitive topic, the group decided to use theatre, in order to represent the different situations identified during interviews. The use of theatre enables the unpacking of sensitive topics and the reflection of the participants on the mechanisms that make us 'othering' groups we do not belong to. The group presented their work last December during an academic workshop on Transformative Research, convened by the Center for Social and Development Studies at the Munich School of Philosophy.

The last component of this project involved a meta-study to investigate the transformative potential of such research activities led by the margins, in terms of personal and professional transformation for the researchers, as well as transformation within the community. To unpack the transformational journey undertaken by the researchers in the two countries, a monthly sharing circle and personal diaries were used in order to capture both individual and collective dynamics. The data analysis of this aspect of the project will take place over the course of 2022, and findings published by the end of the year.



Two major research projects were conducted in 2021 seeking to evaluate the depth of the impact of the Diploma in Liberal Studies. From the analysis of more than 100 graduates' stories and almost 200 graduates' surveys, these research reports demonstrated that the Diploma programme was a means for graduates to develop not only their socioeconomic status, but also their personal and respective community's empowerment. In terms of socioeconomic development, the reports revealed that over 91% of Diploma graduates report at least one job experience after graduation; 65% of graduates are currently employed; and that 79% of graduates engage in community activities after graduation (men and women equally so).

While these socioeconomic indicators demonstrate the importance of obtaining the Diploma certificate for the graduates' lives, their interviews emphasised the role of the Diploma in building knowledge, skills (including critical thinking), existential competences (leadership, interreligious and intercultural sensitivity, sense of community) and ultimately empowerment. Through this experience, it was found that graduates were better equipped to navigate life's challenges, find their path, and produced long-term changes within them, giving them the courage and self-confidence to do so with an open and empathic mind.

To find out more, check out these two reports on our research webpage.

JWL RESEARCH





#### **Knowledge and Skills**

Graduates mentioned key knowledge, soft and hard skills developed during their Diploma journey which opened up doors in terms of networking and access to academic and professional opportunities.

#### **Critical Thinking**

Among those skills, critical thinking is deemed as life-changing. It allows for the acquisition of a new mindset which is applicable in all spheres of life, promotes problem-solving, adaptability, autonomy, and boosts their self-confidence.

### Servant Leadership

Graduates elaborated on the idea that a servant leader is first and foremost a leader of oneself, and then a leader of others. They articulated the values and skills that make a servant leader and how this translated in all spheres of life.



### Intercultural and Interreligious Sensitivity

All the interviewees developed their intercultural/ interreligious sensitivity which enabled them to respect and dialogue with other cultures and religions, and embrace diversity. The result is graduates' active work to promote inclusivity in their local settings, as well as awareness of the role that this competence can play at a global level in contributing to peace.



### **Sense of Community**

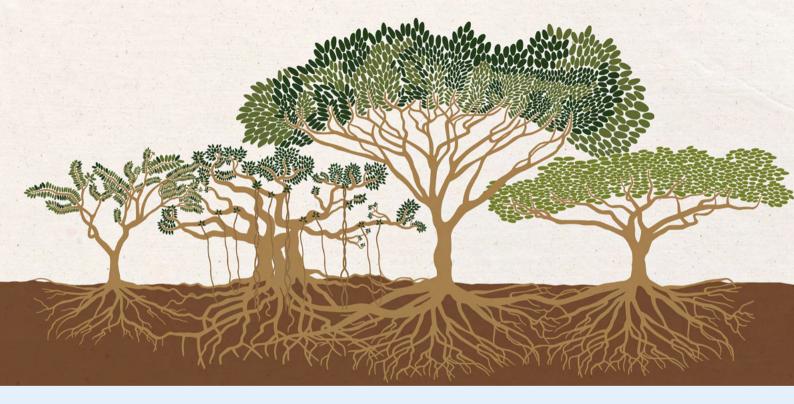
Graduates reported an enhanced sense and more inclusive understanding of community that brings with it a sense of responsibility towards every component of one's environment. They also reported being engaged in multiple spheres within their communities, highlighting servant leadership and empathy as key tools for meaningful impact and thus demonstrating the interconnectedness of the model's existential competences.

### **Community Empowerment**

Graduates reported how their community engagement, through advocacy and addressing specific social issues, transformed them into change makers and triggered a snowball effect whereby others in the community are inspired and take action themselves.

### 🖉 Self Empowerment

Thanks to the Diploma in Liberal Studies, graduates were better equipped to navigate life challenges and find their path, and produced long-term changes within them, giving them the courage and self-confidence to do so with an open and empathic mind.

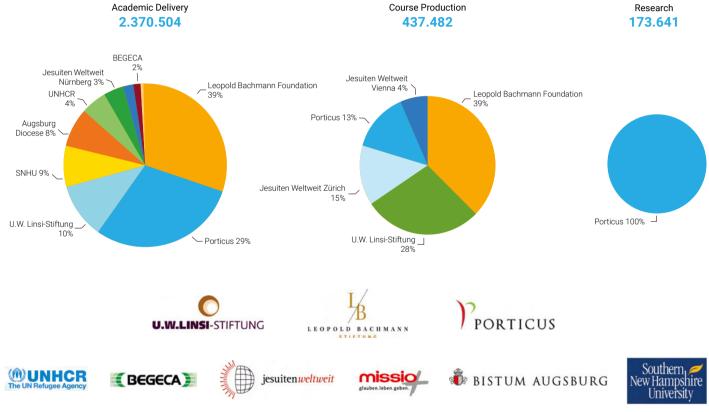




To develop a sustainable operational model and governance reflecting a global Jesuit organisation



# 2021 Contributions USD 3.193.460

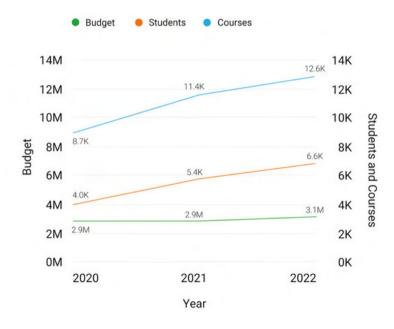


# 2021 Expenses Total USD 2.937.693





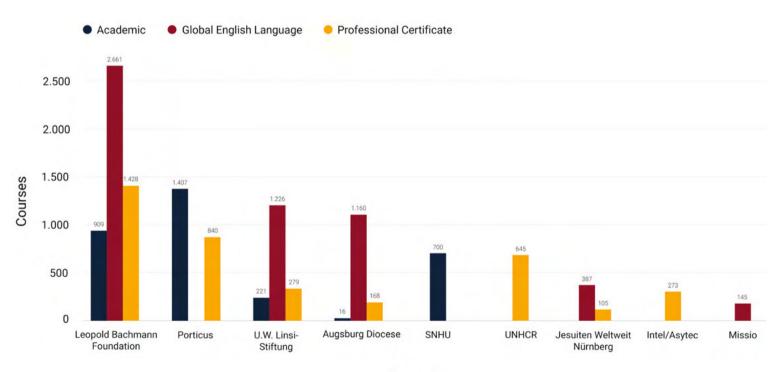
# Budget, Students & Course by Year



Student numbers increased by 36% and course enrolments by 32% in 2021 compared to 2020, without an increase in expenses. The same pattern is expected for 2022. JWL continues to shape an ever more sustainable operational model. Partnerships are an important factor in this, with Jesuit Provinces and Institutions covering local costs of the community learning centres, with the exception of Kenya, Malawi, Iraq, Jordan and Afghanistan, where JWL also supports local operational costs.

A Scholarship is a financial unit which includes all cost factors – IT, faculty, academic delivery, operational, administration – needed to make one course or one full programme accessible to one student. The Scholarship model is key to linking the respective funding partners with the number of students supported in one or various community learning centres and countries (through the Student Information System and finances). It is the instrument for fundraising because it allows the personal link of donors with their respective students.

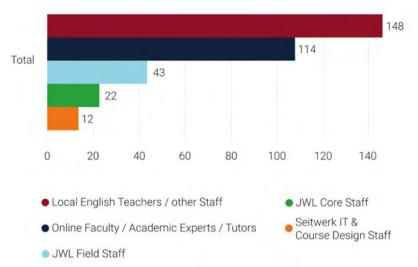
# Scholarship Model: Linking Donors to Students and Courses

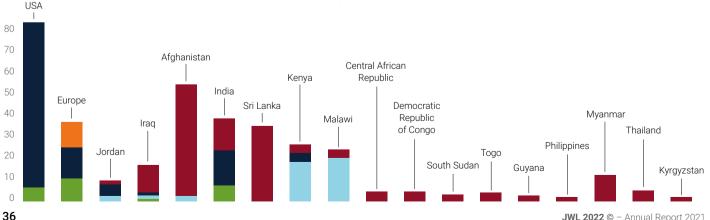


Donor

## JWL Staff

A lean staff basis of 12 IT and Instructional Designers at Seitwerk GmbH (JWL's strategic partner), and of 22 JWL Core staff in Academic Delivery, Operations and Administration together with 43 JWL Field staff, supports the 114 Online Faculty and tutors and 148 Local English Language Teachers. All together - 347 staff - make higher education accessible to 5,447 students. A ratio of 1/16 staff per students is an important indicator in developing a sustainable operational model.





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Jesuit Worldwide Learning Higher Education at the Margins

18, rue Jacques Dalphin 1227 Carouge/GE Switzerland CH-660-0056017-8

**Phone:** +41 (0)22 525 38 33 **E-mail:** jwlinfo@jwl.org

#### Jesuit Worldwide Learning Headquarters

Editorial Team: Alessandra Carminati Graphic Design: Seitwerk GmbH, Germany Photography: Jesuit Worldwide Learning

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Photo: Students at learning centre in Delhi, India