Environmental and social crises are affecting populations across the globe on a massive scale, particularly in fragile, conflict and post-conflict regions. This January, students from Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Myanmar began their journey to obtain a Bachelor of Arts in Sustainable Development in the pilot launch of the degree, in partnership with Xavier University Bhubaneswar (XUB), India. Soon after, JWL launched the Humans and the Environment professional certificate course in partnership with the Newman Institute (Sweden), in Domiz (Kurdistan Region of Iraq), Bamyan (Afghanistan) and Kakuma Refugee Camp (Kenya).

In tune with the Apostolic Preference about caring for our common home, and in view of the overwhelming events the world is witnessing, these blended learning programmes will develop students’ skills that will address capacity gaps such as in natural resource management or recycling, among others (as relevant to their context). Additional environment-related academic certificate courses/concentrations will be produced in due course, certified by Newman Institute (Sweden), building on each other and enriching the degree option (credits recognised by XUB and transferable towards Sustainable Development degree).

Idleness is not our motto! All of this requires a certain amount of work. Our partner Seitwerk will be preparing learning content and all other elements related to the learning platform. In February, a team from Seitwerk travelled to India to meet with our Chennai team, and hold a series of intensive workshops with lecturers from XUB and St Joseph’s College, Bangalore (India). With the latter, we started to develop a range of professional courses in the area of graphic and web-design, creative writing and e-commerce. Bringing together these different areas of expertise is one of the ways in which we bridge the gap to reach students at the margins. Meaningful progress in mapping out the road ahead was made and the first steps for the production of 20 courses began. More soon!

Do you have content you would like to see featured in our next newsletter? Submit your stories to jwlinfo@jwl.org
During these unusual times of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been affecting so many around the world, Jesuit Worldwide Learning is working closely with its partners to implement precautionary measures for the safety and wellbeing of all of our students and staff. We continue to closely monitor the situation, following global and local public directives and guidelines, ready to reassess operations as necessary. The situation has meant that many of our learning centre facilities have been closed – that is, the building themselves – and that staff at headquarters, regional offices, and community learning centres are working remotely.

Leveraging our experience in online learning and thanks to our dedicated team, we are operating as almost as usual and will continue to do our best to sustain students’ access to our programmes, to the extent possible. Our staff and students have been resourceful in finding ways of stay in touch and continuing their studies, staying in touch and continuing their discussions via WhatsApp or private Facebook groups, and GEL teachers recording lessons.

The majority of our Diploma and degree students are able to continue their studies as usual and extensions are being granted as needed. It has been a race against time but where resources and response time allowed it, students in need were loaned mobile devices and data bundles.

Stay informed, follow guidelines for your local safety and that of others. Be kind to one another, whether near or far.

How far (or high) would you go to in order to upload your assignments?

The nearest JWL learning centre is about 20 kms away from my home. The region is mountainous and it takes about 3 hours’ walk to reach the learning centre. My name is Tamana; I’m one of the Diploma students from Daikundi, Afghanistan. I live in a remote village called Seyadara in Ashterlay District. I studied the first two courses in Bamyan and after that I moved to my home village.

I have the course content downloaded on my laptop and I study from home. When I have to post my assignments, I go to a small mountain and get connected to [the] internet using mobile data. Sometimes the internet works well and those times I watch the videos and also download some course-related materials, or take the screenshots and at home I read them and work on my assignments. Though it’s spring there is still a lot of snow and at other times it rains and is often windy. I’m happy that I can still continue with my studies despite the lockdown announced by the government.
Magerneh was just over a year away from completing his medical studies at Dilla University (Ethiopia) when, fearing for his life, he fled to Kenya. When he came across the announcement about the Humans and the Environment course on the public noticeboard, having also previously obtained a degree in crop and horticultural science and being concerned about environmental issues, he thought “Oh! This is just for me.” Two of his favourite aspects of the programme are that it is based on tangible, globally-relevant problems and applicable solutions, and involves interaction with students from different corners of the world (sharing different ideas). I now know what the problems are and how to tackle them in a systematic and sustainable way. Someone alone can bring a change by mobilising others, [and a] minority can have an influence on majority. I also understood that the degree of danger we made and we will face is more than much of our expectations, so there must be an immediate solutions.

Transferring knowledge to and mobilising members of the community will be key and is part of Magerneh’s plan. For now, he will start by organising and engaging the community around a tree-planting initiative. He hopes to complete the studies he had to abandon but in the meantime will continue to nourish his mind by gaining knowledge in the areas of environmental science, politics, economic and management, so that one day he may help the people of the African continent.

To current and future JWL student he would say: When you get a chance to learn, do it well to the maximum you can! Love your subjects. If you love them they will respond and become easy to you! [...] When you study don’t think you are studying for only yourself. Feel your poor communities, feel your poor country, feel your poor continent Africa - this is going to give you some kind of great energy!

The current pandemic has revealed the importance of distance learning and related capacity gaps of education institutions and teachers worldwide. We are therefore offering, for a limited time, a crash course in eEducation Tools to teachers in German-speaking Europe. The course was developed by Anna Mayr, e-Learning designer at our partner Seitwerk, and her fellow Masters students at the Donau-Universität-Krems (Austria). Over 150 teachers have already enrolled.

The course was developed as a project of my Master studies in eEducation at the Donau-Universität-Krems, together with two colleagues (Karin Zak and Cornelia Mauser). We developed a course for JWL students who have already completed the Learning Facilitator Professional Certificate Course. We wanted to bring them an advanced course to further improve their teaching by using digital teaching methods which would even work when you don’t have the best electricity/internet situation. Therefore we developed the complete course content for a JWL blended learning programme (including online and onsite work). Due to the pandemic we (JWL; Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and Seitwerk) decided to run the course for teachers in Germany, Switzerland and Austria who can’t currently teach because schools are closed. As their teaching circumstances are slightly different from those of faced by teachers at JWL learning centres, we had to adapt the content, produce the multimedia elements and set up the course on the JWL HeLP platform.

The course is structured according to a framework of – Goal of a Seminar Phase – Method how to reach this goal- Tools which you can use to translate this method in digital teaching – and then use cases and examples. The course is now 4 weeks long, with two units per week.

2. Week: Communication in Digital Learning & Learning Experience
3. Week: Deepen Understanding & Reflection and Learning Transfer
4. Week: Tool Analysis & Agile Use of Tools in Digital Settings

Anna Mayr, e-Learning Designer, Seitwerk GmbH

Feel your community

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JWL IN THE NEWS

Have you been keeping up with us? To find out more about our work and our students, click here!, or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Check out our latest videos on our YouTube channel.

Behold the Man

‘Behold the Man: The Temptation of Power and the Suffering of Refugees’, written by JWL Executive President Peter Balleis SJ, is now available for download in English!

Reflecting on his over 20 years’ experience of working with refugees, Father Balleis examines the political background of the so-called refugee crisis, the human motivations that contribute to war and displacement – including expectations of wealth, glory and power. Through these reflections, readers may also consider how they may keep an eye on some of these temptations within their own lives and how they can take their own first steps towards a world with more humanity, peace and justice.

Find out more!

Peter Balleis SJ
Behold the Man
The Temptation of Power and the Suffering of the Refugees
JWL World Press

International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

International Day of Sport for Development and Peace celebrated worldwide on 6 April. The pandemic has altered the ways in which many of us usually stay physically active, on our own or as part of a team.

Let team spirit endure in these difficult times. Follow local guidelines for your safety and that of others.

There are ways to stay active indoors and also mitigate some of the physical discomfort of that may occur when working from home. Check out some tips on staying active in this Q&A video from the World Health Organization.

Click here to donate!

Did you know?

If you are in the USA, you can now also donate when shopping through Amazon Smile!

Click here to get involved!

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