



Newsletter

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Domiz refugee camp, Iraq: Peace Leader students discuss ways of nurturing safety and trust

Ready, steady...peace!

JWL commits to a global learning environment to understand how knowledge benefits communities around the world. From this commitment it became clear that women and men studying together in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious learning community were recognized as an asset by the local community.

This recognition was evident within the first year of the JWL programme when students were invited by community leaders to help solve problems and conflicts occurring within, and between groups. For example, one student spoke of an elder asking for his help: "You study with those people so you understand them." The student helped the community understand that cultural differences may create misunderstanding that leads to conflict.

This sharing by our students led to the creation of short non-credit courses in the areas of Conflict and Reconciliation, Conflict and Inter-Religious Dialogue, and Conflict Management. From the outcomes of the short courses, it became clear that content in conflict resolution alone was not adequate. Faculty and graduates of the courses recognized that a focus on leadership was missing, and leadership content was essential for effective conflict management and prevention.

To address this need, the six month Professional Certificate course in Peace Leader was developed in a blended learning model. Blended learning combines on-site small group seminars, supported by on-site facilitators, with a vibrant online classroom inclusive of students from all locations and supported by course faculty. The framework of Ignatian Pedagogy ensures the quality of Jesuit higher education as the foundation of the programme.

This six-month professional certificate is awarded by Hekima College, Nairobi, and it integrates the best practices and knowledge of Peace Studies and Servant Leadership. The first offering is a pilot with students from Afghanistan and Northern Iraq and continues through the end of February 2019.

The Peace Leader Certificate is made possible by the generosity of the Fidel Goetz Foundation, led by Chantal Goetz, CEO. For more information on the Peace Leader course, please contact Dr. Mary McFarland (mary.mcfarland@jwl.org).

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Hakima, Afghanistan

Hakima, from Afghanistan, was not only looking for higher education opportunities – she was seeking to find “the person hidden within” her and this prompted her to choose the JWL Diploma programme. “Business is a way of becoming self-reliant, getting in touch with the outside world, creating more job opportunities,” she says, explaining her choice of concentration. “I chose Business to be part of a change in my own and others’ lives.”

When asked about the most important thing she has learned thus far, Hakima mentioned becoming aware of herself as a social being, along with a growing realisation of social responsibilities, and the need to “step up to do something useful to bring a change in the life of those who are suffering.” One of her aspirations is to start a business wherein illiterate women would be provided with basic education and trained as a team to develop a variety of products.

As part of furthering her education and working towards making her vision a reality, Hakima will soon be starting a BSc in Leadership. A degree would also be a minimum requirement for Hakima to fulfil another personal goal – to enter government, in order to “find the best way to be part of social change.” At the same time, she will be participating in the establishment and coordination of a new JWL community learning centre (CLC). As though that weren’t enough, Hakima will also be teaching English at the CLC. Her motivation for all of this? She wants to transfer what she has learned thus far to youths that do not have access to quality education. “It is important for me because I can play my role as a person who is always looking to make a change and contribute hope.”



Keeping hope and setting plans in motion

"Today we have learned to become professional communication social change agents. We can change the world," said Grace as she delivered her Valedictorian speech at the JWL Diploma programme graduation in Kakuma (Kenya), earlier this summer.

Grace, from Rwanda, has been living in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp for over a decade. She worked as a case worker for World Lutheran Federation's Child Protection Unit for some time. Having noticed the change that JWL alumni were bringing about in the community, she decided to apply for the Diploma programme and opted for the Social Work concentration (having always wanted to enact social change). Her studies with JWL have further developed her desire to serve the youth and other members of her community. Feeling equipped with the necessary project management skills, courage and confidence, Grace is ready to implement her plans and also approach leaders to gather their support on advancing women's rights, among others.

While pursuing a BA in Educational studies with Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (University of York) and working for the University of Geneva's InZone project, Grace aims to establish a pilot initiative that would provide women and girls with basic computer and English language skills, facilitated through mobile devices. A few months ago, she began to identify women and girls that did not have access to education (for varying reasons) and asked them for their thoughts about ways in which they could be supported in order for this to change. The English language courses will hopefully allow the community's women and girls to "do the communication around this digital world." Spreading the word about the impact her JWL studies have had on her, Grace is quite sure that with basic IT skills, some may join the JWL programme. Indeed, she remembers how she had double the work to do during her studies, teaching herself how to use a computer whilst diligently completing her assignments.

The past is haunting and it is equally difficult for her to speak about the future, as there is still much uncertainty and fear about what it may hold. Nonetheless, Grace admirably puts on a brave face and hopes "for a change in all this one day." Her message to current and future JWL students? "If there was one thing I could say [...] then I would tell them that hard work pays no matter how long it may take," and that she would, "also encourage them to strive and make a change in someone's life, for the impact will be remembered forever."

When knowledge is all you can give but it is enough

Boniface's reasons for applying for the Diploma programme were numerous, including a desire to further his education and improve his communication and leadership skills. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo and living in Malawi's Dzaleka refugee camp since 2012, he had noticed various needs within his community and surrounding area. This summer, Boniface graduated from the Diploma programme.

There were times when hope faltered, such as when a fellow student was found to be a victim of drowning, or when rumours had circulated that the camp would be moved to another location. Nonetheless, Boniface succeeded. Although once "living a lonely life and caring about myself only," this transformative experience has left Boniface feeling as though he not only has solid leadership skills but also the knowledge and drive to identify the needs of his community and begin to address them.

At a tree-planting organised around the graduation ceremony to symbolise giving back to the community, he said:

"We will all put our efforts in order to be the voice for voiceless, eyes for the blind, ears for the deaf, ability for disabled people and light to where there is darkness. Together we move forward without leaving anyone behind in our community. We will also work day and night to provide security for the insecure and victimised people."

Many youths and children in the camp lack access to education. Having completed the Education concentration as part of the Diploma, Boniface hopes to respond to this need and to teach various skills including English language skills (many in the camp are francophone) to children and youths who are out of school. Believing that "an educator is also an entertainer" he founded the [Dzaleka Youth Congress](#) which organises a wide range of community activities such as conflict resolution trainings, cooking classes, hairdressing classes, and a 'Judo for peace' project. The aim of such activities within the community is not only to transfer knowledge, but also to "keep all the youths busy and forgetting about the risky behaviours that may cause them problems in the future." One day, the Dzaleka Youth Congress hopes to be able to offer computer classes to children.

"Due to the suffering I faced in my life," says Boniface, "I saw that it's also good to help others even though I do not have anything to give them - but knowledge is enough."





From JWL student to JWL CLC Coordinator

Peter Aung chose to study on the Diploma programme and chose the Education concentration as he felt that this would benefit him and his pupils (Peter is a teacher and general administrator at St Aloysius Gonzaga English Language Institute, Taunggyi, Myanmar). Some of the most memorable moments were group assignments with classmates near and far (through the virtual classroom). A JWL Diploma alumnus, who graduated in May 2018, he is now also the Coordinator of JWL's CLC in Taunggyi.

Peter's motivation for becoming a CLC coordinator stemmed from his desire to provide youths with great

educational opportunities. Since taking on this role, he has been supporting current students through their studies (especially if they encounter difficulties) and keeping them informed of any developments. Being able to share his knowledge and experience with students and members of his community has been one of his dreams. Having a "peaceful community, to be a reliable, trustworthy and helpful leader for my respective society are my interests in life." To current and future students he would say, "the root of education is rather bitter, but the fruit is sweet."



Going to the margins Magdalena Nauderer

Magdalena recently completed her JWL internship in Iraq, after over seven months. Based in Dohuk, she worked alongside JWL's local partner Christian Aid Program Nohadra Iraq (CAPNI). The main purpose of her assignment was to conduct research on the impact of JWL's programmes in the country. As part of this, Magdalena spent a lot of time with our students and CLC coordinators to learn more about their situation, as well as their experiences and about the problems they faced. "It was very interesting and amazing how welcoming all of our students and staff were," she notes.

JWL currently has five CLCs in Iraq, namely in Erbil, Dohuk, Domiz (Syrian refugees), Khanke (internally displaced Yezidis) and Al Qosh (a Christian village on Niniveh plains). All of them are within the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan in North Iraq. Kurdistan consists of the four north-eastern provinces of Iraq and is home to many minorities. "It was great so see that a peaceful coexistence of different religious and ethnic groups is possible."

In addition to her work for JWL, Magdalena was involved in CAPNI's Community Development

sector which works on the CLCs as well as on livelihood projects. "It was interesting to see how a local NGO works and I am grateful that I could meet so many Christian families and other beneficiaries during the regular field visits who helped me to get a broad impression about the situation of the (Christian) minorities in Iraq, especially in Kurdistan."

The experience was a great one, being able to work together with many different people from different religious and cultural backgrounds, all of them welcoming her "in the same kind, open and heart-warming way." During her first month in Iraq Magdalena stayed with a Christian IDP family from Mosul. They shared stories with her about their lives and helped her to understand the situation of Christian IDPs within the Kurdistan region. Her friends in Dohuk (where she then lived and spent most of her time) introduced her to the city, showing her "the rich cultural heritage you can find all over Kurdistan as well as the amazing nature – its canyons, mountains, deserts and forests," and sharing many local holidays and celebrations.

During this time, members of her family were

able to visit, including Magdalena's 78 year-old grandmother. "They were impressed to see that Kurdistan (which is of course part of Iraq) is almost the opposite of the Iraq you can see in the media in Germany." As her grandmother is the Head of her local Catholic women's association (back in Germany), she introduced her to the Head of the Baghdad's Women's Association. "They were all surprised that they have the same struggles and problems in Dachau (my hometown, next to Munich) and in Baghdad."

Although her internship has come to an end, Magdalena will continue to work with us part-time while she continues with her Masters' degree.

Are you interested in volunteering?

Please contact us at jwlinfo@jwl.org



JWL IN THE NEWS

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Help us build a new centre in the Central African Republic!



The conflict-affected Central African Republic (CAR) currently ranks last in the Human Development Index (HDI), has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world, and an adult illiteracy rate of around 63%.

JWL is working with the Jesuits in CAR to launch the Global English Language (GEL) programme for 200-300 students in Bangui, in January

2019, to be followed by academic programmes and professional courses in the coming years.

Students need a place to meet, study and connect with classmates, tutors and faculty members both on and offline! At a press conference (pictured left) in Bangui last August, the plan to launch the JWL programme was announced. In the background is the building that will serve as a community learning centre, currently under construction.

Help us reach the USD 10,000 we need to complete construction of this building! So far, we have received USD 3,150.

We still need USD 6,850 more to reach our goal! Click [here](#) to become a donor. Every contribution, no matter its size, is valuable and will ultimately serve our students, their communities, and our world.



JWL recently joined UNHCR's #WithRefugees Coalition. We stand with refugees. Do you? Join us and show your support for persons forced to flee. Click [here](#) to find out more and sign the petition.



On 21 September 2018, the world celebrated International Day of Peace.

Speaking at the Peace Bell Ceremony, on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, [the UN Secretary-General's message spoke](#) of not giving up the quest for peace.

JWL believes in the potential of students to harness the skills and qualities they have developed, share these with their communities and work together towards building a more peaceful, equitable and humane world.

The JWL Peace Leader professional certificate is one of our latest efforts to equip those who are willing with the notions and skills required to manage conflict, nurturing peace.

We will not give up on peace.

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