



Jesuit Worldwide Learning  
Higher Education at the Margins

## Research Report

#10 / September 2023

# The Transformative Impact of JWL Professional Programmes

**A closer look at Youth Sports Facilitator, Peace Leader, and Learning Facilitator**

This report investigates the paths taken by graduates of three Professional programmes offered by Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL): the Peace Leader programme, the Learning Facilitator programme, and the Youth Sport Facilitator programme. It looks at their careers, their further efforts in pursuing higher education programmes, and the ways in which they engage with their local communities. The results are based on a questionnaire distributed online to 989 graduates in 15 countries in September 2021, to which 198 graduates (19%) responded.

This report answers some of the most frequently asked questions: What happens to graduates after they complete the programme? What is the impact of this degree on their lives and on their communities, in terms of further educational opportunities, career choices and engagement with their local communities? By doing so, it also contributes to a broader field of study, proving the empowering force of higher education in transforming individuals and communities and consequently in building resilient and peaceful communities.

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## 1. Introduction

This report unpacks the journey of graduates of three Professional programmes: Youth Sport Facilitator, Learning Facilitator, and Peace Leader, in terms of their career achievements, educational choices and engagement in their local communities. By doing so, this report demonstrates the transformative impact of higher education at the margins, both in terms of personal growth and fulfilment and in terms of social and community development.

The Professional programmes are 6-month programmes delivered in a blended learning format which promotes companionship and guidance, two key pillars of Ignatian Pedagogy, through community learning centres, where students are accompanied by a local facilitator and work in groups. At the same time, they are also integrated at a global level, with international online faculty teaching the courses and promoting discussion and reflection in the so-called 'global classroom'. This model promotes critical thinking, social awareness and a positive view of self and others (Jigsaw, 2016)<sup>1</sup>. Within Ignatian Pedagogy, the process of teaching and learning follows a continuous learning circle, with five distinct stages (Context, Experience, Reflection, Action, and Evaluation) and these steps are embedded in each unit of the programmes, with the intent to promote critical thinking and leadership skills and to achieve the ultimate goal of Ignatian Pedagogy, as stated by Fr Pedro

Arrupe SJ – “forming men and women for others.”

The professional programme track was launched in March 2019, with the Peace Leader programme – a 24-week, blended learning course on peace and leadership studies – accredited by the Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations, Hekima University College (Kenya). A few weeks later, in April 2019, the Youth Sports Facilitator, in partnership with the Metropolitan State University, Denver, (USA) and UNHCR, and accredited by the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Germany), was delivered in the same blended format, training youth both in English and Arabic about sports for protection and social work. In September 2019, the Learning Facilitator programme (accredited by the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany), was offered for the first time in the same blended learning cycle to train teachers on pedagogy and student-centred and inclusive methodologies.

In winter 2022, the JWL research team designed a questionnaire to be distributed online to 989 graduates in 14 countries (see table 1), considering September 2021 as last intake, to be able to trace impact. The questionnaire was divided in the following sections: (i) Demographics; (ii) Educational Choices; (iii) Career Path; (iv) Community Engagement; (v) Final Reflections.

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<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson, P. (2016). Higher education for refugees in low-resource environments: Ignatian Pedagogy Briefing. Jigsaw Consult, United Kingdom.



| <i>Countries</i>   | <i>LF</i> | <i>PL</i> | <i>YSF</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| <i>Afghanistan</i> | 110       | 33        | 5          | 148          |
| <i>Chad</i>        |           |           | 23         | 23           |
| <i>Guyana</i>      | 15        |           |            | 15           |
| <i>India</i>       | 15        | 19        |            | 34           |
| <i>Iraq</i>        | 32        | 63        |            | 95           |
| <i>Jordan</i>      | 5         | 1         |            | 6            |
| <i>Kenya</i>       | 102       | 13        | 227        | 342          |
| <i>Malawi</i>      | 21        | 19        | 39         | 79           |
| <i>Myanmar</i>     | 23        | 22        |            | 45           |
| <i>Philippines</i> | 9         | 5         |            | 14           |
| <i>Rwanda</i>      |           |           | 43         | 43           |
| <i>Sri Lanka</i>   | 31        | 25        |            | 56           |
| <i>Togo</i>        | 2         |           |            | 2            |
| <i>Uganda</i>      |           |           | 87         | 87           |
| <i>Grand Total</i> | 365       | 200       | 424        | 989          |

Table 1: Graduates per programme by country (September 2021)

A total of 198 graduates (19%) across cohorts participated in the survey and this is reflected in the results. Some graduates had years to develop their paths after graduation, while others graduated just a couple of months before participating in the survey.

This report answers one of the most frequently asked questions: What happens to graduates after they complete the

programme? What is the impact of this degree on their lives and on their communities, in terms of further educational opportunities, career choices and engagement with their local communities? By doing so, it also contributes to a broader field of study, proving the empowering force of higher education in transforming individuals and communities and consequently in building resilient and peaceful communities.

| <b>Programme</b> | <b>Graduates</b> | <b>Respondents<sup>2</sup></b> |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>YSF</b>       | 424              | 78                             |
| <b>LF</b>        | 365              | 72                             |
| <b>PL</b>        | 200              | 48                             |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>989</b>       | <b>198</b>                     |

Table 2: Respondents per programme

<sup>2</sup> Some respondents graduated from more than one Professional Programme



## Key points

- 80% of respondents stated that the Professional programme they graduated from was extremely or very important for their career path.
- 94% of graduates who embarked in another higher education journey claimed that the Professional programme they completed was extremely or very important in their decision to continue to study.
- 92% of respondents believe that the Professional programmes were extremely or very important for them to engage in community activities.



## 2. Respondent Demographics

In terms of geographical distribution, respondents came from 13 countries. Most of the respondents studied in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya (63), the largest learning centre in terms of students and programmes offered, as well as one of the oldest (one of the first two centres to open in 2010). Afghanistan came in second with 19 respondents, followed by Rwanda (16) and Chad (14) – two locations exclusively offering the Youth Sports Facilitator programme – and Iraq (11).

| Country     | Respondents |
|-------------|-------------|
| Afghanistan | 19          |
| Chad        | 14          |
| Guyana      | 4           |
| India       | 5           |
| Iraq        | 11          |
| Kenya       | 63          |

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Malawi       | 7          |
| Myanmar      | 7          |
| Philippines  | 4          |
| Rwanda       | 16         |
| Sri Lanka    | 6          |
| Togo         | 1          |
| Uganda       | 7          |
| Other        | 1          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>166</b> |

Table 3: Respondents by country

70% of the graduates are male and 30% are female. Looking at the gender breakdown by programme, Youth Sports Facilitator is the one with the least gender equality. This is not surprising given that the programme was offered mainly in refugee camp settings in sub-Saharan Africa, where access to higher education and sports for female students can be particularly challenging.

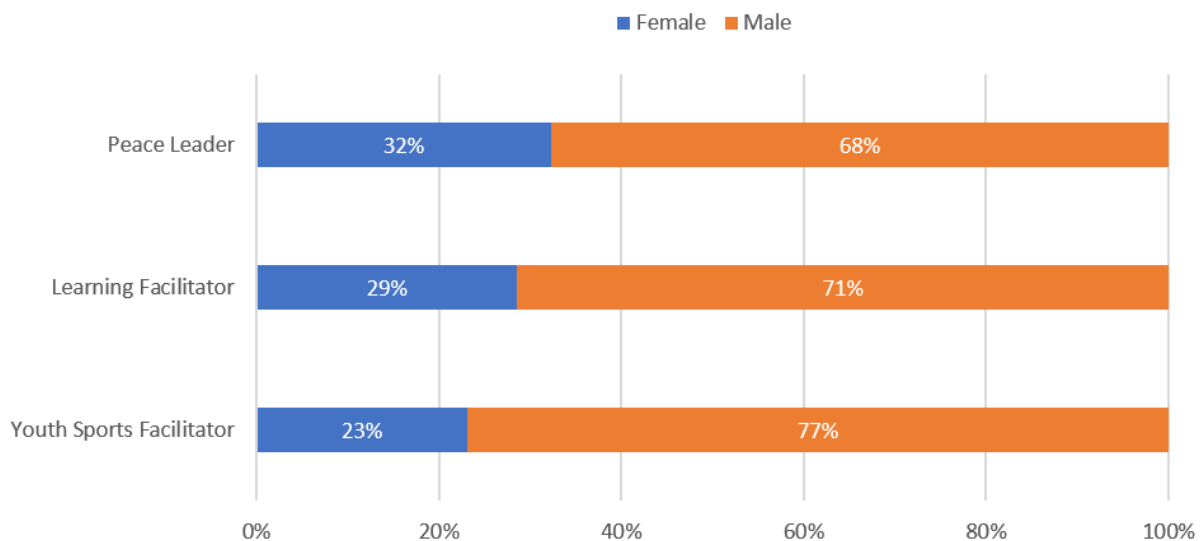


Figure 1: Distribution of gender by programme



This shows a promising pathway and is in line with JWL’s vision of building foundations in the English language to enable young people to then access post-secondary education opportunities. It is also worth mentioning that 26% of the sample graduated from the Diploma in Liberal Studies before joining the given professional programme, demonstrating an eagerness to pursue further education opportunities.

63% of our sample experienced some form of forced migration, of which 55% are refugees, 6% IDPs and 2% returnees. 26% declared to be part of the local community (i.e., host community in refugee settings or an indigenous community). 10% of the sample responded ‘other’ and this includes graduates who are refugees born in a refugee camp, people who are now residents or citizens of their host country, or respondents who wanted to specify what local community they belong to.

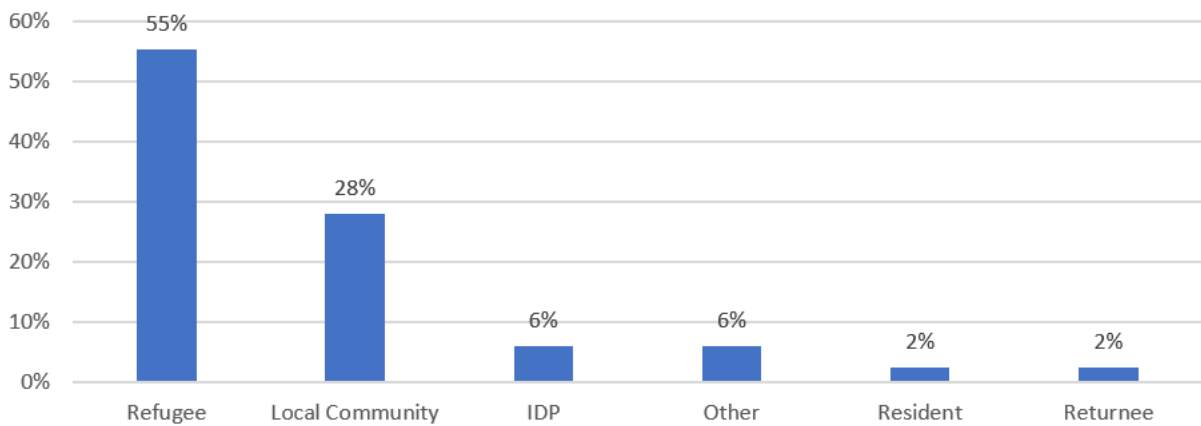


Figure 2: Respondents by status

Most graduates live in households composed of 5 to 9 people (58%) or to 1 to 4 people (30%) and a total of 12% live in households with 10 or more people. 82% of graduates support their household financially with no significant differences among the three programmes. 68% of graduates who took part in the survey are

the sole breadwinners of their household. There is a stark difference between the Youth Sports Facilitator and the other two programmes, with 82% of graduates being the sole household breadwinners, compared to 64% for Learning Facilitator and 59% for Peace Leader.

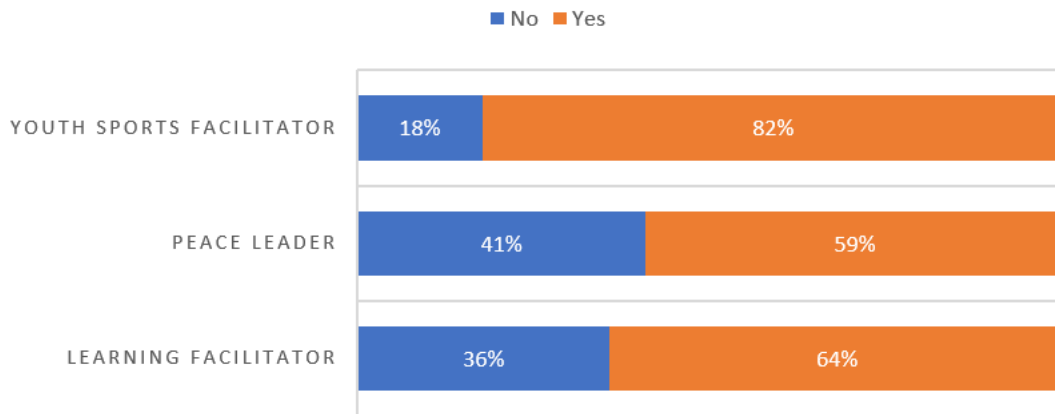


Figure 3: Sole household income generators by programme

When looking at the motivations for enrolling in the professional programme, the following patterns and common themes can be highlighted:

- *Passion for teaching and education:* Many respondents expressed a genuine interest in becoming teachers or learning facilitators to help their communities and improve the quality of education.
  - *Desire to make a positive impact:* Participants mentioned their motivation to contribute to their communities, reduce conflicts, promote peace, empower youth, and create a better future through education and sports.
  - *Personal and professional development:* Several individuals sought to improve their skills, gain knowledge, and enhance their teaching or facilitation abilities. They wanted to upgrade their qualifications, expand their understanding of specific subjects, and become more competent in their respective fields.
  - *Access to free opportunities:* The availability of free professional programmes was mentioned as a significant motivating factor, particularly for those who couldn't afford higher education.
- Participants recognised the marketability of the courses and the potential for better job prospects.
  - *Interest in sports:* Some individuals were motivated by their love for sports and the desire to use it as a tool for socialisation, community development, conflict resolution, and promoting positive values.
  - *Personal experiences and challenges:* Some participants mentioned their personal experiences, such as living through wars, conflicts, or difficult family situations. They saw the professional programmes as a means to find inner peace, address community issues, or help others facing similar challenges.
  - *Career advancement:* Several individuals expressed their aspirations to advance their careers, either as teachers, facilitators, or sports professionals. They saw the professional programmes as steppingstones to further educational opportunities or job promotions.
  - *Community involvement:* Many participants emphasised their desire to give back to their





communities, share knowledge and skills, and empower others through education and sports.

- *Access to online learning:* The convenience of online learning, the ability to study from home, and the opportunity to access course materials without the need for physical attendance were mentioned as motivating factors.

These patterns highlight the diverse motivations and goals of individuals pursuing the professional programmes, with a common thread of seeking personal and community growth, contributing to positive change, and acquiring new knowledge and skills.



### 3. Graduates' Career Paths

First of all, we aimed to identify graduates' career paths after completion of one of the three Professional programmes. Overall, 80% of the sample considers the

professional programme they graduated from as very or extremely important in finding a job or improving their work conditions, 13% considers it moderately important, and only 7% considers it slightly important or not important at all, with no significant differences among the programmes.

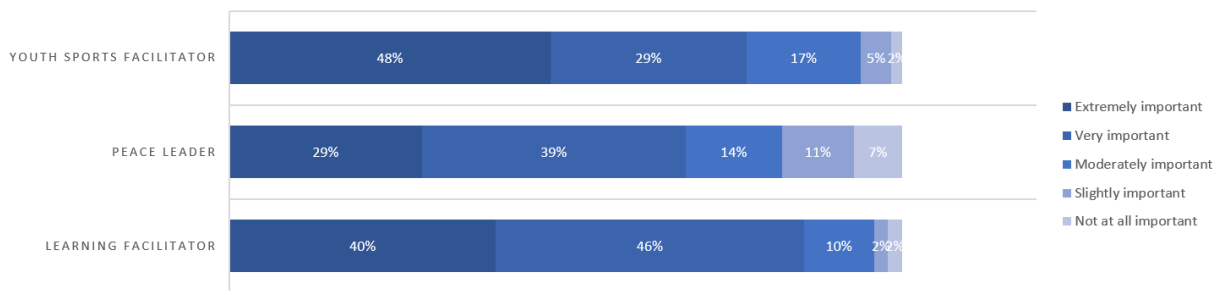


Figure 4: Importance of the professional programmes to find a job or improving working conditions

When asked to what extent the professional programme contributed to their household's financial situation, 40% of graduates declared it had a moderate to great impact. Looking at the three programmes separately, the Learning Facilitator appears to be the programme with the most financial impact on the graduates' lives, with 62% of the sample reporting a moderate to great impact, followed by Youth Sport Facilitator (58%) and Peace Leader (48%).

Based on the responses provided, the following patterns can be observed, in terms of how the professional programmes impacted graduates' financial situation/independence:

- *Job opportunities:* Many individuals mentioned that completing the programme helped them find a job or improve their current job

situation (often leading to an increase in income).

- *Community engagement:* Several respondents mentioned that the programme enabled them to engage in community activities or volunteer work. While this may not have had a direct impact on their financial independence, it provided them with valuable experience and skills.
- *Entrepreneurship:* Some individuals mentioned using the knowledge and skills gained from the programme to start their own business or generate additional income. This allowed them to have more control over their financial situation.
- *Affording basic needs:* A common theme was the ability to afford better food or basic needs for themselves and their families. While the impact varied, some



respondents noted that the programme provided them with enough financial stability to improve their daily lives.

- *Professional development:* Many respondents highlighted that the programme enhanced their knowledge and skills in their respective fields. This often led to career advancement or the ability to perform their job more effectively, impacting their financial situation.

64% of respondents reported that they currently have a job, with a striking 79% of

women and 57% of men employed at the time of the survey. Learning Facilitator graduates and Peace Leader programmes have very high rate of currently employed graduates, at 74% and 75% respectively, while the percentage decreases to 52% for graduates of the Youth Sports Facilitator programme. This is partially due to the fact that the Youth Sports Facilitator programme focuses on community-building through sports and was exclusively offered to refugees, often in camps settings, which are often characterised by few employment opportunities and harsh living conditions.

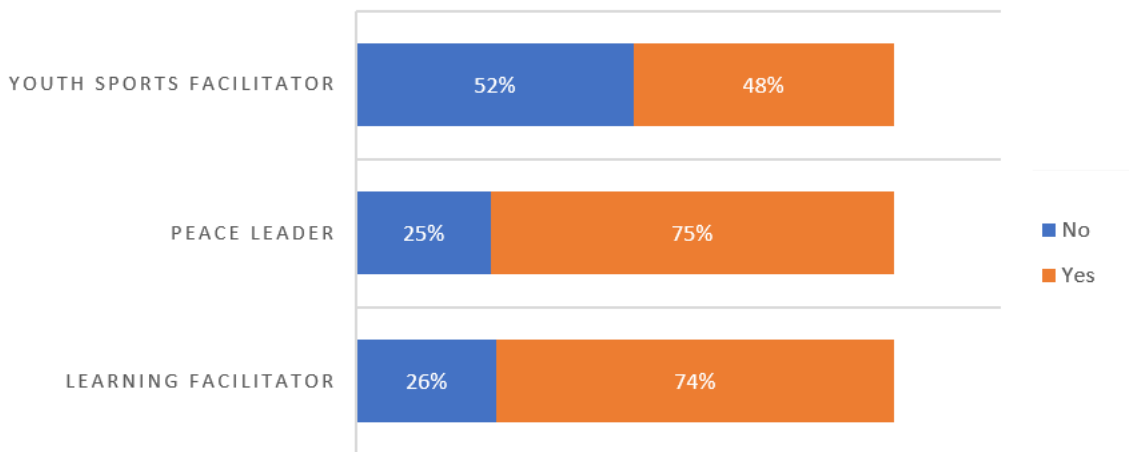


Figure 5: Graduates currently employed by programme

More than half of the sample across programmes reported only one job experience: 66% of Learning Facilitator graduates reported only one job

experience, followed by 58% of Youth Sport Facilitator graduates and 52% of Peace Leader graduates.

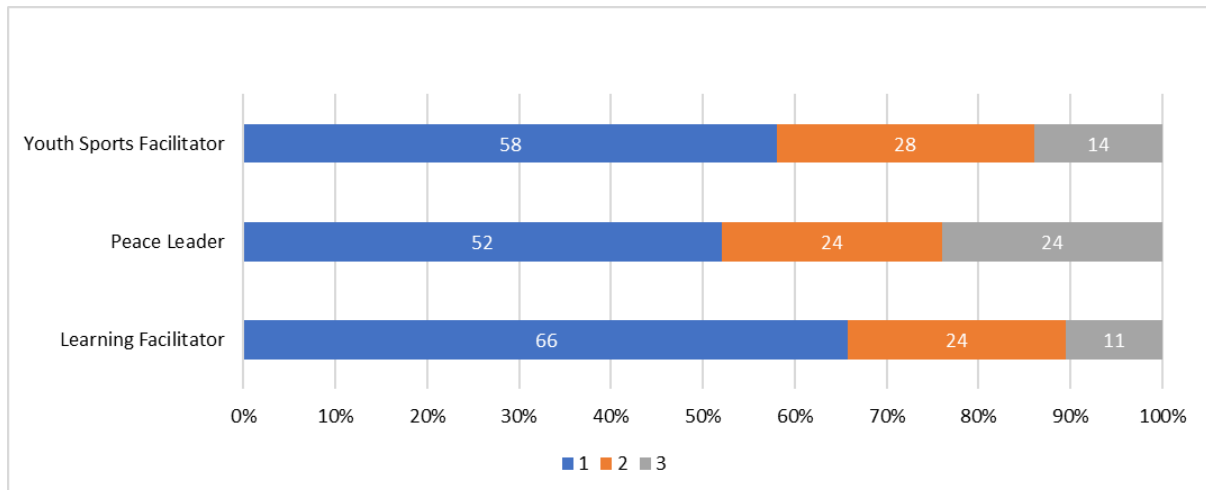


Figure 6: Number of reported employments by programme

The most common type of organisation for which graduates work is non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (49%), while 14% mentioned an international organisation, 11% private companies, 11% government and 3% stated they were self-employed.

In terms of employment sector, the vast majority works in the field of education (73%), 9% in social work, 3% in health, 2% in public administration sector, 1% in research, logistics, and media and communication. 10% of the sample mentioned other sectors of employment, such as finance.

Among the 36% who are reported being unemployed, the following reasons were identified:

- *Political and Social Factors:* Some individuals left their jobs due to adverse political situations or living conditions in their home countries, such as civil unrest, limited opportunities for certain groups (e.g., girls not being allowed to study).
- *Health Issues:* Some respondents faced health-related challenges

that led to taking time off work, and in some cases, they lost their jobs due to being replaced during their absence.

- *Education and Skill Level:* Though Professional programmes are tertiary and accredited programmes; the lack of higher education degrees seems to be a barrier to finding suitable jobs in some cases. Employers may require higher qualifications than what some individuals currently possess.
- *Refugee Status:* Being a refugee poses significant challenges in finding employment, particularly in host countries where job opportunities may be limited or restricted to certain educational qualifications.
- *Nepotism and Corruption:* Several responses mention issues with nepotism and corruption in the job market.
- *Age:* Both young people and older individuals faced difficulties in finding employment, with age being a factor for some respondents. The perception of



older age impacting employability is mentioned.

- *Limited Job Opportunities:* In some regions or contexts, respondents highlighted the scarcity of job opportunities as a significant obstacle to employment.
- *Skills Mismatch:* Some respondents feel that their skills do not align with the available job opportunities, leading to challenges in securing suitable employment.
- *NGO and Voluntary Work:* Some individuals mentioned working as volunteers or seeking jobs within NGOs, but that they face challenges in obtaining paid employment opportunities.
- *Relocation and Status Changes:* Some respondents faced

unemployment or job loss due to relocation or resettlement to a new place, changing their status, or issues related to their refugee status.

- *Lack of Support or Resources:* Some respondents mention a lack of support or funding for personal projects or businesses that could lead to income generation.
- *Population Growth and Workforce Fluctuation:* In some cases, population growth and changes in the labour market are cited as reasons for the lack of job opportunities.

These patterns highlight the complex and diverse factors that contribute to unemployment in different regions and contexts.

## Key points

- 70% of graduates reported at least one job experience after graduation.
- 64% of respondents are currently employed, with a striking 79% of women being currently employed.
- The most common sector of employment is education (73%), and almost half of the graduates (49%) are employed by NGOs.



## 4. Pursuing Education

54% of the sample enrolled in a new programme after graduating from one of the three professional programmes, with some differences across programme and gender. While 69% of graduates in the Peace Leader Programme enrolled in a

new higher education programme, 55% of Learning Facilitator graduates and only 50% of Youth Sports Facilitator graduates did the same. In terms of gender, more women (63%) than men (50%) decided to pursue further education after the completion of a Professional programme.

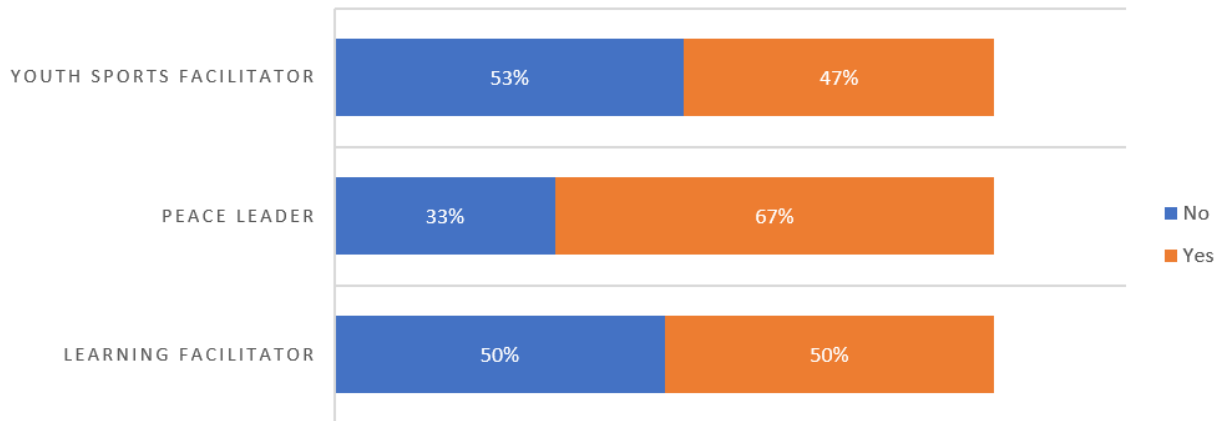


Figure 7: Graduates pursuing further educational opportunities after graduation by programme

94% of graduates who embarked in another higher education journey claimed that the Professional programme they attended was extremely or very important in their decision to do so.

100% of Youth Sports Facilitator respondents, 95% of Learning Facilitator respondents and 79% of the Peace Leader respondents claimed the programme was extremely or very important in their decision to pursue further studies.

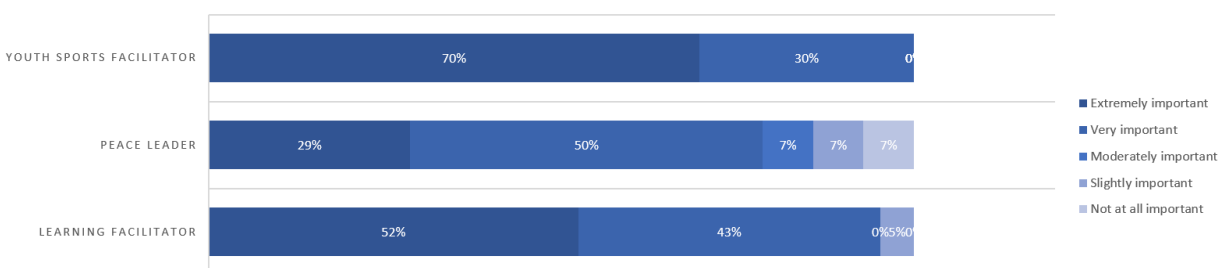


Figure 8: Relevance of the programme for pursuing further education by programme

Professional programmes are a gateway to accessing higher education. Many respondents mentioned pursuing other programmes offered by JWL, such as the

Certificate in Liberal Studies and the Bachelor in Sustainable Development accredited by XIM University Bhubaneswar (23 respondents), while 17 respondents



mentioned enrolling in other Professional programmes offered by JWL, such as eCommerce, Creative Writing and Design, in addition to those mentioned in this report. 7 respondents mentioned pursuing higher education programmes that are offered by JWL in collaboration with Creighton University (6 the Teacher Training Programme, and 1 the pre-STEM programme). Finally, 3 mentioned the Bachelor's in Business Administration offered by Southern New Hampshire University. Graduates also mentioned programmes offered by local universities, such as the African Leadership University, Kenyatta University, Kyambogo University, Makerere University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, the Turkana Institute of health and psychology, the University of Kerala, and the University of Rwanda, demonstrating how the professional programmes give young people the confidence to pursue further education opportunities.

When exploring reasons not to pursue further education opportunities, the following themes emerged:

- *Financial constraints*: A significant number of participants cited financial issues as a reason for not being able to continue their studies. They mentioned a lack of scholarships or the inability to afford tuition fees as barriers to further education.
- *Access and opportunities*: Some participants mentioned difficulties in accessing educational opportunities due to their geographical location, political instability, or lack of available programmes in their field of interest. They expressed a willingness to continue studying if given the chance.
- *Commitments and responsibilities*: A few participants stated that family responsibilities or work commitments prevented them from pursuing further studies. They expressed a desire to continue their education in the future, when their circumstances allow it.

## Key points

- More than half of graduates across programmes (54%) decided to pursue further education opportunities.
- More women (63%) than men (50%) decided to pursue further studies after the completion of one of the programmes.
- Many graduates enrol in other programmes offered by JWL, such as the Certificate in Liberal Studies and the Bachelor in Sustainable Development, as well as other Professional programmes.



## 5. Community Engagement

The vast majority (92%) of graduates have been involved in community engagement activities after graduation, with small variations by programme: 96% for Youth

Sport Facilitator, 90% for Learning Facilitator and 85% for Peace Leader. When looking at this data from a gender perspective, 97% of women and 91% of male graduates engaged in community activities.

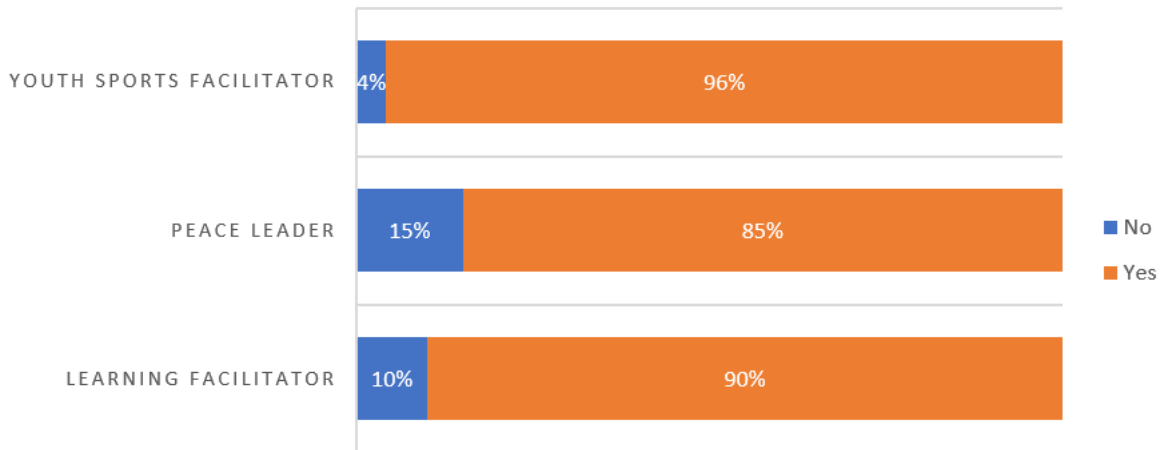


Figure 9: Graduates engaging in community activities by programme

Of the 393 community engagement activities reported by graduates, the vast majority are in the field of training and education (194) and culture and sport (87), followed by social work (32) and gender and equality initiatives (28). Water,

sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) follows with 16 mentions, along with health (9), religion (5) and public administration (4), and media and communication (1).

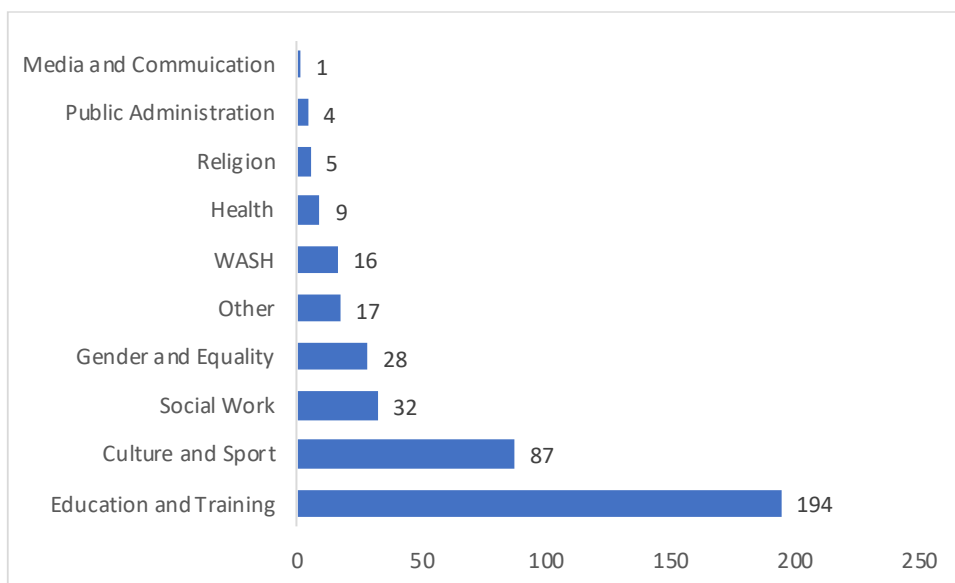


Figure 10: Fields of community engagement





It is interesting to mention that graduates identify themselves as the initiators of 38% of all these initiatives, revealing not only the community engagement but also the extent of their role as leaders in contributing to the well-being of their communities. Furthermore, 44% of these activities are reported as being initiated from JWL's various community initiatives. This reflects characteristics of the Ignatian Pedagogy followed by JWL, as many community learning centres offer opportunities for engagement (i.e., extra-curricular volunteer teaching opportunities in Afghanistan as community service).

As per the reasons given by the respondents for not engaging in community activities, the following were identified:

- *Lack of time due to a full-time job:* One person mentioned being a principal and not having time for other activities.
- *Pandemic and political crisis:* Some individuals stated that circumstances such as the pandemic and political crisis limited the availability of activities to engage in.
- *Recent unemployment:* One person mentioned quitting their job.
- *Studies:* Some individuals mentioned being occupied with their studies as an obstacle to participating in other activities.
- *Language barrier:* One individual mentioned a language barrier as a reason for not engaging in community activities.

## Key points

- The vast majority (92%) of graduates have been involved in community engagement activities since graduating.
- Education and training and culture and sport are the most frequently mentioned areas of community engagement.
- 38% of the community engagement activities are initiated by graduates themselves.



## 6. Final Reflections

The last section of the questionnaire asked graduates to reflect on how the programmes impacted their lives and that of their community.

Based on the responses provided, several patterns and common themes emerge regarding the impact of the professional programmes on graduates' lives:

- *Personal Growth and Self-awareness:* Many respondents mentioned how the programmes helped their personal development, as well as self-awareness and a better understanding of others.
- *Improved Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills:* Participants reported that the programmes enhanced their communication skills, allowing them to interact more effectively with others. They also mentioned gaining useful conflict resolution skills.
- *Career and Professional Development:* Several respondents highlighted how the programmes positively impacted their professional lives. They mention increased job opportunities, promotions, and improved teaching methods or facilitation skills.
- *Cultural Understanding and Respect:* Participants mentioned that programmes exposed them to different cultures and helped them develop a deeper respect for cultural diversity.
- *Community Engagement and Leadership:* Many individuals reported that programmes empowered them to take on leadership roles within their communities, initiating community projects, facilitating workshops, and helping others in various capacities.
- *Positive Impact on Teaching and Education:* Several respondents mentioned how the programmes influenced their teaching styles and methodologies, leading to improved educational experiences for their learners.
- *Social and Emotional Skills:* Some individuals mentioned that the programmes helped them develop social and emotional skills, enabling them to handle relationships and emotions more effectively.
- *Increased Confidence:* Participants reported increased confidence in public speaking and dealing with various challenges they encounter in their personal and professional lives.
- *Empowerment and Inspiration:* Many respondents expressed feeling empowered and inspired by the programmes, leading them to set new goals and pursue their passions.
- *Career Advancement and Financial Benefits:* Some individuals attributed career advancements and financial improvements to the skills and knowledge gained from the programmes.
- *Promotion of Inclusivity:* Several individuals mentioned how the programmes promoted inclusivity and inclusiveness in their communities, such as through work with people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.



- *Transformative Learning Experiences:* Respondents expressed that the programmes provided transformative learning experiences which shaped their perspectives and approaches to various aspects of life.

These patterns demonstrate the significant positive impact of the professional programmes on individuals' personal and professional development, and community engagement. The programmes equipped participants with valuable skills and knowledge which they applied to various aspects of their lives, contributing to positive changes in their lives and ultimately in their communities.

Finally, several patterns and common themes emerged regarding the impact of the professional programmes on graduates' communities, some of them intertwined with personal empowerment:

- *Improved Teaching and Leadership Skills:* Many respondents mentioned that the programmes helped them become better teachers and improved their leadership skills, especially in areas related to peace leadership and facilitation.
- *Community Impact:* Participants reported that the programmes had a positive impact on their communities. They mentioned initiating community projects, promoting peace and harmony, and mentoring and supporting others in their communities.
- *Inspiring Others:* Several individuals mentioned that they inspired others in their communities to pursue education, sports, and

personal development, by sharing their knowledge and skills.

- *Promoting Inclusivity and Gender Equality:* Some respondents highlighted that the programmes helped create inclusive environments and promote gender equality in their communities, particularly through sports activities.
- *Enhanced Educational Experiences:* Some respondents mentioned that the programmes led to improved educational experiences for learners in their communities.
- *Creating Opportunities for Youth:* Several participants mentioned creating opportunities for youth by providing quality education and engaging them in sports activities.
- *Building Bridges and Resolving Conflicts:* Some individuals mentioned that the programmes helped them build bridges and resolve conflicts among community members through non-violent communication and understanding.
- *Mentoring and Supporting Others:* Respondents mentioned mentoring and supporting others, including youth, students, and teachers in their learning journeys and personal development.
- *Promoting Positive Behaviours and Values:* Participants mentioned promoting positive behaviours within their communities, such as respecting elders and valuing diversity.
- *Advocating for Education and Sports:* Several individuals mentioned advocating for education and sports as essential tools for personal growth and community development.



Overall, the responses highlight how the professional programmes have had a significant positive impact on individuals' lives, enabling them to make meaningful

contributions to their communities and promote positive change.



## 7. Authors

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If you want to cite this report:  
Rega, I. and Honen-Delmar, M. (2023). *The Transformative Impact of JWL Professional Programme: a closer look to three programmes: Youth Sports Facilitator, Peace Leader, and Youth Sport Facilitator*. Research Report #10. Jesuit Worldwide Learning