



# Newsletter

CONGRATULATIONS!



First JWL Diploma graduates in Erbil, northern Iraq, ready to shine



English Language Teacher Training Graduates in Bamyán, Afghanistan



Diploma graduates celebrate in Bamyán (above left) and Herat (above right)

## Celebrations abound as graduates in Iraq and Afghanistan mark their achievement

March was a month of celebration for JWL and its recent graduates, including the very first Diploma in Liberal Studies graduates from Erbil!

Ceremonies also took place in Bamyán and Herat, Afghanistan, to mark the achievement of graduates of the Diploma (accredited by Regis University, USA) and English Language Teacher Training (certified by Creighton University, USA).

Congratulations, dear graduates! We know that you will continue to work towards achieving JWL's vision, alongside members of your community, sharing your knowledge and contributing to a more equitable and peaceful world.

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## A note in an orchestra

Mohamed chose to join the Diploma programme in Kakuma Refugee Camp (Kenya) because there was no other avenue for higher education but has since noted its quality, relevance and impact. Reading Frankl Viktor's *Man's Search for Meaning* had a profound effect, helping him to "grow and make sense of the suffering" he witnesses on a daily basis, while the ethics course compelled him to look deep within himself, revisit his values, and "redefine what it means to be human." In time, he would like to conduct research and further extend the reach of academia to those on the margins, putting his education to use as an ambassador for refugee rights, a global leader and to lift others, rather than for personal gain. Indeed, Mohamed participated in this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, representing those whose voice and interests are often left unheard.

*"The current system/model of governance and development is not working. Especially in regards to the refugee and migration issues. There are so many of us being left behind. I was not asking for handouts or sympathy for refugees and other vulnerable groups, but simply to level the playing field and equal access to opportunity for everyone, whether you are living in a tent in a refugee camp or in a city. My suggestion was that refugee camps are neither ethical nor sustainable. Having people line up with sacks and beg for food is not right. We need to preserve dignity and see refugees as assets worth investing in, rather than as a burden to the global community. And that starts with the language we use to describe refugees in the media."*

The persons he met with were sensitive to the plight of refugees as best they could, although it was difficult for someone to truly understand the challenges of refugee life without having experienced camp life themselves.

Self-actualization is what Mohamed hopes for, for himself, his community, and the world. "God did not create us to languish and waste away in refugee camps, poor and miserable," he told us, adding that "it is a collective failure of imagination and policy that we have refugees in camps for more than 28 years." He dreams of a world without refugee camps, and one with access to opportunities.

To current and future JWL students he would say that "we are students of hardship and circumstance," that education is a mighty, transformative tool but that it needs to be harnessed towards "a greater cause." "We must aspire to do more. To be more. We must see ourselves as part of a whole - a note in an orchestra, a heartbeat within an ever complex organism. And ask yourself: How are you using the little that you know to make a difference in the community you live in? How are you serving others? Think different. Be bold. And believe."

## Learning for impact

*"I am Desire Patience Iraguha. I was born [...] in Rwanda. I am the remaining one in my family. I am somehow very quiet. I am a person who believes that everything is possible when you work hard."*

Desire graduated from the Diploma programme in summer 2018, with a concentration in Social Work but also having taken a few courses from the Business and Education concentrations, as he wished to acquire skills in different fields. This was just the start of his academic journey.

Since then, he has completed an Associate's degree and begun working his way through to a full Bachelor's degree through Southern New Hampshire University. An internship is mandatory in order to move on to the full Bachelor. Desire has been working for Kibebe, an organisation which sells handicrafts created in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, conducting financial analysis, quality checking, managing stock, and being involved in production forecasting.

"My thinking capacity has increased and now I am in a position of making a positive impact on my community by applying what I have studied, including managing small and big businesses and even developing ideas in order to create a new business," he told us. His journey through the JWL learning path has led him to realise that he is not only studying to gain a certain set of skills but also to put them to good use within his community, as well as imparting these to individuals who may do the same. As a Programme Advisor for JWL, Desire supports current Diploma students as they face the challenges of the programme.

Seeking to learn more about how public and non-governmental organisations work and finding ways "to join hands" with community members in addressing poverty and finding innovative employment solutions, Public Administration was the specialisation that spoke to him for the Bachelor degree. Once this objective has been reached, Desire's eyes are set on a doctorate and then becoming a lecturer in Business at a university.

Desire has a vision for himself and his community – a vision whereby everyone in the community has access to education "which will lead us to be in a position of finding the solutions to our problems."



## Training of trainers

Many of our students find themselves in contexts with a significant need for more teachers/trainers, in order to reach members of the community in greater numbers and over greater distances. Indeed, both students and graduates have shown initiative by sharing the knowledge they acquired, some of them even travelling to truly remote areas of their country to do so.

In response to the overwhelming need and desire for learning and education at all ages in so many places and in order to support capacity-building of those who wish to carry this through, JWL recently launched the Learning Facilitator professional certificate course in Afghanistan, Kenya and Malawi. Learning technologies extend the reach of education and this applied six-month course integrates best practices of online and on-site facilitation.



*Learning Facilitator students in Bamyan, Afghanistan*

The programme concludes with a final project in which learners apply educational principles and practices to address a collective concern within a local community. We are certain that our learners will 'pay it forward', creating a ripple effect of individuals embodying JWL's motto of learning together to transform the world, for the better.



## Going to the margins Pascal Meyer SJ

I've been a Jesuit for five and a half years. Every step of my formation has brought me to parts of the world that were unknown to me. Travel is also part of my regency with JWL as Global Student Services and Alumni Manger and in January I left for a mission into 'wild Kurdistan' (with reference to Karl May's book).

JWL has been operating in five different locations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq since 2017: the Chaldean city of Alqosh, the conservative Muslim city of Dohuk, the Syrian refugee camp of Domiz, the vibrant Kurdish capital of Erbil, and in the Yazidi camp of Khanke. Each of these has its own challenges and the cold, humid winters and regular power cuts are only two of them. Most of the time my days involved a simple breakfast followed by a drive to one of our learning centres, where I could meet our students, get to know them a little and conduct numerous interviews.

I met inquisitive, hopeful people, learning more about their lives, daily challenges and hopes for the future. I could feel their gratitude towards the engagement of the Jesuits in the camps, frequently hearing them say things like "the Jesuits were the first ones to offer me access to a university," or "war destroyed my country and my future but through your project I gained back a future prospect."

My own limitations as a young Jesuit also surfaced. We can listen but cannot undo the suffering and injustice experienced by these people, even with the best Ignatian approach. For many, the suffering

and the feeling of being homeless is an untreated issue in their soul. This causes tensions and aggression within the camp structure.

However, providing access to higher education grants the fundamentals for many for a new outlook on life. Most of them dream of a better and especially peaceful future in the region, while others seek to someday leave the camp and travel the globe. Our students and alumni emphasise how our education programme changed their outlook on the world. One aspect of my mission was to record some of their stories on video. The world shall hear the voices of our students – the world has to hear about their lives.

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## JWL IN THE NEWS

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Students in Dzaleka (Malawi) kick-start the day with a jog and then some aerobics

*"I will make sure to engage more youths especially my fellow girls in the community to join this kind of sport activity as one way to reduce stress [...] and create a safe space for them."*

- Domina, Youth Sports Facilitator student, Dzaleka

**Gleeful students in Kakuma and Dzaleka actively celebrated the potential of sport to contribute to achieving sustainable development and peace.**

*"Sports can create unity, love and peace in society or the community. That is why we can say peace and sport are like two faces of the same coin."*

- Nageso, Youth Sports Facilitator student, Kakuma



Winners of the girls' volleyball tournament in Kakuma



### International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 2019

International Day of Sport for Development and Peace is celebrated on 6 April. At an event in New York ahead of the Day, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, stated that:

["Sport can help promote tolerance and respect, contribute to the empowerment of women and young people, and advance health, education and social inclusion."](#)

In Fall 2018, in partnership with UNHCR, JWL launched the Youth Sports Facilitator professional certificate course. Students learn to design, implement and sustain a sports programme within their communities, with the aim of achieving greater engagement, social inclusion, and addressing local issues in the special way that sports can.

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