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FORMATION PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN JESUIT IDENTITY AND MISSION

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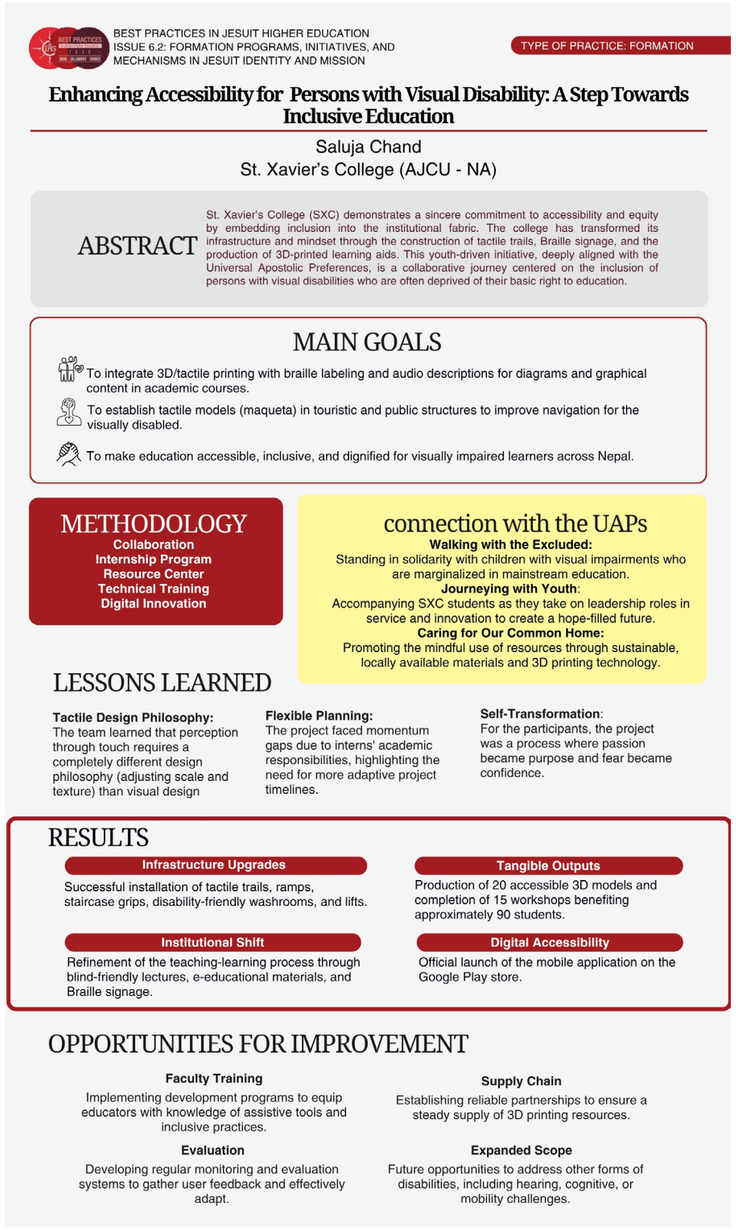

BEST PRACTICES IN JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION
ISSUE 6.2: FORMATION PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN JESUIT IDENTITY AND MISSION

TYPE OF PRACTICE: FORMATION

Enhancing Accessibility for Persons with Visual Disability: A Step Towards Inclusive Education

Saluja Chand
St. Xavier's College (AJCU - NA)

ABSTRACT

St. Xavier's College (SXC) demonstrates a sincere commitment to accessibility and equity by embedding inclusion into the institutional fabric. The college has transformed its infrastructure and mindset through the construction of tactile trails, Braille signage, and the production of 3D-printed learning aids. This youth-driven initiative, deeply aligned with the Universal Apostolic Preferences, is a collaborative journey centered on the inclusion of persons with visual disabilities who are often deprived of their basic right to education.

MAIN GOALS

To integrate 3D/tactile printing with braille labeling and audio descriptions for diagrams and graphical content in academic courses.

To establish tactile models (maqueta) in touristic and public structures to improve navigation for the visually disabled.

To make education accessible, inclusive, and dignified for visually impaired learners across Nepal.

METHODOLOGY

Collaboration
Internship Program
Resource Center
Technical Training
Digital Innovation

connection with the UAPs

Walking with the Excluded:
Standing in solidarity with children with visual impairments who are marginalized in mainstream education.
Journeying with Youth:
Accompanying SXC students as they take on leadership roles in service and innovation to create a hope-filled future.
Caring for Our Common Home:
Promoting the mindful use of resources through sustainable, locally available materials and 3D printing technology.

LESSONS LEARNED

Tactile Design Philosophy:
The team learned that perception through touch requires a completely different design philosophy (adjusting scale and texture) than visual design

Flexible Planning:
The project faced momentum gaps due to interns' academic responsibilities, highlighting the need for more adaptive project timelines.

Self-Transformation:
For the participants, the project was a process where passion became purpose and fear became confidence.

RESULTS

Infrastructure Upgrades
Successful installation of tactile trails, ramps, staircase grips, disability-friendly washrooms, and lifts.

Tangible Outputs
Production of 20 accessible 3D models and completion of 15 workshops benefiting approximately 90 students.

Institutional Shift
Refinement of the teaching-learning process through blind-friendly lectures, e-educational materials, and Braille signage.

Digital Accessibility
Official launch of the mobile application on the Google Play store.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Faculty Training
Implementing development programs to equip educators with knowledge of assistive tools and inclusive practices.

Supply Chain
Establishing reliable partnerships to ensure a steady supply of 3D printing resources.

Evaluation
Developing regular monitoring and evaluation systems to gather user feedback and effectively adapt.

Expanded Scope
Future opportunities to address other forms of disabilities, including hearing, cognitive, or mobility challenges.

Enhancing Accessibility for the Persons with Visual Disability: A Step Towards Inclusive Education

UNKOWN

SALUJA CHAND
ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

St. Xavier's College (SXC), Maitighar, Kathmandu is not only known for academic excellence and a forward-thinking administration but also for its sincere commitment to accessibility and equity. Here, inclusion is not an afterthought. It is embedded in the very fabric of the institution. From constructing tactile trails in the premises, ramp at the building entrances, installing Braille signage and QR-coded audio guides to producing 3D-printed learning aids and establishing a Resource Center for Accessible Facilities, from welcoming the visually disabled students with open arms to encouraging staff and students to participate in the noble cause of inclusive education, the college has transformed its infrastructure and mindset alike. And what makes this transformation even more impactful is that it was done with active input from students who once faced exclusion but now help drive inclusion. Deeply aligned with the Universal Apostolic Preferences, this initiative towards inclusive and accessible education has been a collaborative journey with the youth centered on the inclusion of the persons with visual disability, who even in today's context are deprived of their basic right to education. Standing firm on its commitment, SXC will continue to work proactively to ensure inclusive education to persons with other forms of disabilities.

1. Description

"I had a bitter experience when I was trying to get enrolled in college for my undergraduate level. Many institutions would simply deny me admission, labeling my disability and citing their unfriendly infrastructures even though I had decent grades. But St. Xavier's College, Maitighar, welcomed me not just with open arms, but with an open mind and heart. Being in SXC, I did not only excel in my academics but also gained comprehensive growth that an individual requires beyond classroom learning- Abhishek Shahi, a visually disabled alumnus of batch 2015."
These words reflect more than a personal memory, they reflect a turning point in the life of an individual who had been denied his right to education. In a society where inclusive education remains a distant dream for many, SXC has been striving to translate that dream into action.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ensures their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community [1]. However, inclusive education requires the right strategies and support from the school/college administration alongside dialogue with the very students sought to empower. With the courage to question the status quo, willingness to adapt and lead with empathy, SXC took a leap towards inclusive and accessible education when two visually impaired students Abhishek Shahi and Sanjiya Shrestha joined the college in 2015 for their undergraduate studies. Their constant feedback resulted in several tangible and intangible changes in the institution. Following their graduation, they returned to their alma mater to jointly fulfill a mission to create an accessible, beautiful and inclusive world through Chain For Change (CFC) [2], an NGO under their leadership and its initiative, Project Wings to Dreams.

2. Type of Experience

Project Wings to Dreams is an initiation by Chain For Change in collaboration with Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV), Spain, Expedición Solidaria and SXC to overcome the graphical challenges faced by persons with visual disabilities in their academic and daily lives with the use of 3D and tactile technology. Through the collaboration, a Resource Centre for Accessible Facilities was established and inaugurated at SXC on March 17, 2023.

3. Context

In Nepal, access to inclusive education remains a significant challenge, especially for children with visual impairments and other disabilities. Although national education policies advocate for education for all [3], in practice, many students with special needs face limited access to appropriate learning materials, trained educators, and supportive classroom environments. Visual learning dominates mainstream classrooms, often excluding children who cannot engage effectively through sight. As a result, these students struggle to keep up academically and socially, which might lead to high dropout rates and limited future opportunities.

Amid these challenges, Project Wings to Dreams was launched as a collaborative effort between CFC, St. Xavier's College, Maitighar, Expedición Solidaria, and the Universitat Politècnica de València. The project arose from a shared vision: to make education accessible, inclusive, and dignified for visually impaired learners across Nepal. Using 3D printing technology and student-driven innovation, the initiative creates tactile educational models, facilitates awareness workshops, and distributes assistive devices—all tailored to the needs of students with low vision.

4. Objectives and Methodology

The story of Project Wings to Dreams is a testament to the power of youth-driven change, community, and purpose. It begins with a vision: to make the world more accessible for the visually impaired—through innovation, collaboration, and heartfelt service.

The specific objectives of this collaboration are to integrate 3D/tactile printing with braille labeling, audio description, and other accessible mediums for all possible diagrams and graphical content in academic courses for persons with visual disabilities and to establish 'maqueta' in all possible touristic and public structures along with accessible descriptions so that understanding and navigation of such places for persons with visual disabilities become accessible.

The first major milestone unfolded on March 7, 2023. In collaboration with Expedición Solidaria, CFC distributed assistive devices and reading aids to 54 children and teachers with low vision at Laboratory Secondary School. The effort wasn't just about providing tools—it was about empathy. The resource person not only educated participants about low vision but also

inspired the young Xavierian volunteers to go beyond textbooks and truly walk with the excluded. This was the spark that ignited a deeper purpose among the students.

In 2024, 21 students from diverse academic backgrounds at SXC joined the project as interns. Their selection followed a rigorous application and interview process, ensuring a passionate and skilled cohort. These students dove into every part of the project—conducting workshops in various schools, assisting in training, and contributing to the creation of tactile 3D models for the visually impaired.

To enhance their technical capacity, SXC welcomed four students from UPV, Spain who trained the interns in 3D designing and printing, fueling a cross-cultural exchange that mirrored the project's global spirit. The resource center at SXC, equipped with resin- and filament-based 3D printers, became a hub of purpose and innovation.

5. Connection to the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs)

Project Wings to Dreams deeply aligns with the Jesuit Apostolic Values (4), especially through its emphasis on service, justice, inclusion, and the holistic development of both individuals and communities.

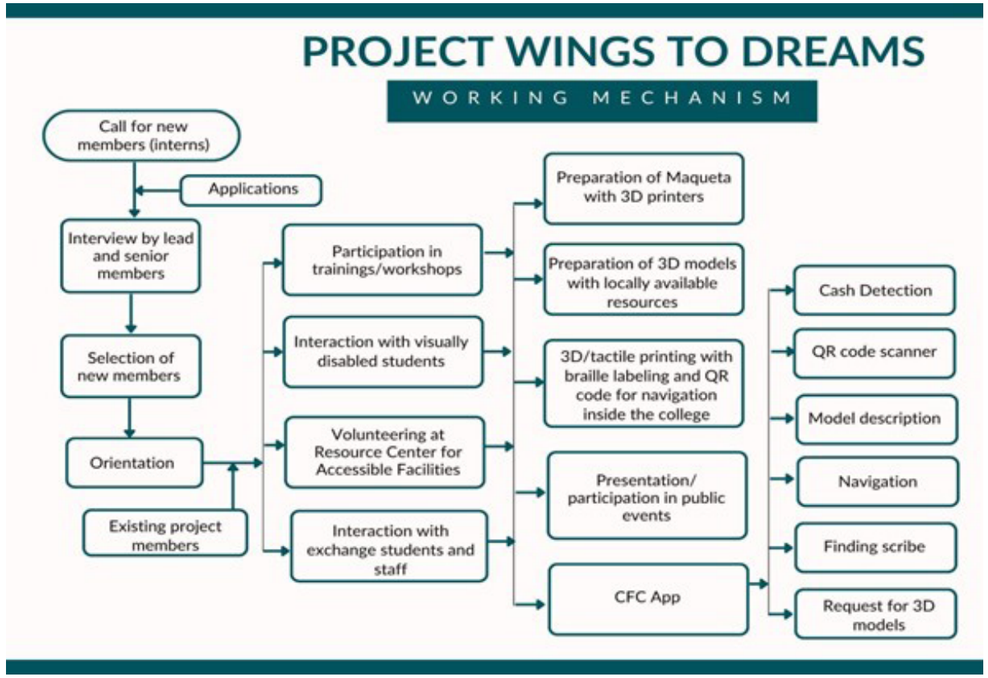

Figure: Flowchart depicting the working mechanism of Project Wings to Dreams

1. Walking with the Excluded

The project directly supports children with visual impairments, a group often marginalized in mainstream education systems. By creating tactile learning aids and accessible tools, the project stands in solidarity with those who are excluded from equal opportunities. This reflects the Jesuit call to "walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated."

The project responds to systemic inequities in education and access by creating a more just and inclusive learning environment. It bridges gaps not only in access but also in awareness, bringing together communities, students, and international partners to advocate for dignity and equality for all.

2. Journeying with Youth

At the heart of the initiative are students from SXC —young people who have taken on leadership roles in service, innovation, and advocacy. The project nurtures their growth, compassion, and commitment to justice, aligning with the Jesuit value of accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.

3. Caring for Our Common Home

Through the use of sustainable, locally available materials and technology like 3D printing, the project promotes mindful use of resources. It encourages innovation rooted in sustainability, echoing the Jesuit mission to care for creation.

6. Results

The insights and feedback from the students led to meaningful changes in the college infrastructure focused on improved navigation and mobility including tactile trails in the premises, ramp/slope in the buildings, grips in the staircase, disability-friendly washrooms in the new building and provision of lifts for disabled students. It also fostered disable-friendly behaviors among faculty and staff, refinement in teaching-learning process through blind-friendly lectures, e-educational materials and assignments, extensive support in research and course, accessible arrangement in classroom with proper lighting, front seat arrangement, provision of using assistive devices.

Through the collaboration, a Resource Center for Accessible Facilities has been established,

Braille signage and QR-coded audio guides have been installed, 3D-printed learning aids have been prepared for the primary and secondary level students with visual disabilities. The dedicated cohort has developed and designed around 20 accessible 3D models and conducted 15 workshops in Laboratory Secondary School, Kirtipur and Namuna Machindra School, Lagankhel based on their academic curriculum and benefited approximately 90 students with visual disabilities. In addition to these workshops, cohorts have been sharing the Project at national and international platforms, building a stronger network and visibility.

The organization has officially launched its Chain For Change mobile application on 8th December, 2023 in Google Play store. The app has been developed by IT and Creative Specialist of CFC Joon Shakya (BSc CSIT Student at SXC) that aligns with both the goals of Project Wings to Dreams.

From the student's cohort and the co-founder of Chain for Change: Project Wings to Dreams

"As the project lead of "Wings to Dreams" by Chain for Change, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with St. Xavier's College. This experience has not only allowed me to contribute to meaningful change for visually impaired students, but also to learn invaluable lessons about accessibility in web and app development. Hearing positive feedback from users, knowing our app truly helps them in their academic journey, fills me with immense pride and satisfaction. It's an honor to be part of such a transformative initiative.- Joon Shakya, BSc CSIT student and Project Lead.

As someone who always loved social work, this opportunity was just more than a collaboration, it was a space where I could channel both my academic knowledge and creative energy. Being among the individuals who work closely with visual disability opened a new window of vision, gratitude and appreciation. I started to unveil the rich complexities of life and how privileged I am to experience it with all my senses. CFC had this unique sense of belonging, not to a group of people but to the cause. Learning Braille, bonding with students and becoming a familiar voice among them were some of the heartwarming and cherished experiences of this journey. The joy of seeing my name written in Braille for the first time, the sweetness of the nicknames they gave us, and the laughter and giggles while exploring 3D models together. Each model, each interaction and each classroom moment were a small step toward making education more inclusive and joyful. Right from the first time use of the locally available materials and the 3D printing equipment in our college and braille classes, helping in making different models and even in fixing signboards, every moment spent with CFC has been a blend of creativity, learning, and meaningful impact. Looking back, I see a process of self-transformation, one in which passion became purpose, fear became confident, and dreams became reality. CFC not only shaped my abilities; it shaped me too. For which, I will always remain grateful.- Khushi Subedi, BSc Microbiology student and project intern."

For someone with visual disabilities in Nepal, finding a fully accessible college is too good to be true. I was fortunate to have an institution and leadership who empathize and embrace learning. Upon which, our feedback was implemented with higher priority and accepted us as one of the factors who can contribute back to the roots. This is why I chose my college to jointly fulfill a mission to create an accessible, beautiful and inclusive world through Chain For Change and Project Wings to Dreams. We are gradually ticking all the boxes and one day we will surely be successful to make St. Xavier's College and the world are accessible and inclusive for everyone. -Abhishek Shahi, a visually disabled alumnus of batch 2015 and founder of Chain for Change: Project Wings to Dreams."

7. Lesson Learnt/Challenges

One of the key lessons learned during the course of this project was the importance of understanding the unique ways in which persons with visual disabilities perceive the world.

Initially, the team approached the design of 3D models with a general sense of accessibility, but real-world interactions with visually impaired students quickly revealed that perception through touch demands a completely different design philosophy. Many of the early models had to be redesigned or modified to be more intuitive to navigate by touch—this included adjusting scale, texture, and tactile features, as well as incorporating Braille labels or raised symbols for better orientation and comprehension. Another ongoing challenge was the interruption of project momentum due to academic responsibilities, especially during the board examination periods and times of heightened extracurricular commitments. Since most of the interns were students themselves, balancing ri-

gorous academic schedules with the demands of model creation, workshops, and community engagement often caused delays or gaps in project continuity. These challenges underscored the need for flexible planning, deeper user feedback integration, and a more adaptive project timeline to ensure sustained impact while respecting the academic pressures on student volunteers.

8. Opportunities for Improvement

As the project evolves, several opportunities can strengthen its impact and sustainability. One key area is faculty development training focused on inclusive education. Equipping educators with knowledge of assistive tools and inclusive teaching practices will create a more supportive environment for both project interns and beneficiaries.

Ensuring a steady supply of materials, such as 3D printing resources and assistive tools, is essential to avoid disruptions. Establishing reliable procurement channels or partnerships could help maintain consistency in project activities.

Implementing regular monitoring and evaluation will allow the team to assess progress, gather user feedback, and adapt effectively. This reflective approach will ensure continued relevance and improvement.

There is also room to increase student engagement, to foster innovation and collaborative problem-solving.

Finally, expanding the project's scope to address other forms of disabilities, like hearing, cognitive, or mobility challenges, would help build a more inclusive and accessible future for all.

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From Classroom to Capitol Hill: Integrating Jesuit Values through Jesuit Refugee Service/USA Advocacy Day

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ABSTRACT

This article presents Jesuit Refugee Service/USA (JRS) Advocacy Day as a best practice for promoting Ignatian identity through experiential learning, civic engagement, and professional formation. Since 2015, Advocacy Day has brought together students, educators, and parishioners from Jesuit institutions across the United States to advocate for refugee rights on Capitol Hill. The initiative exemplifies citizen-centered advocacy (Eguizábal, 2008) rooted in Catholic Social Thought and the Universal Apostolic Preferences, particularly the call to walk with the excluded and accompany youth in the creation of a hope-filled future (Sosa, 2019).

Guiding this best practice is an Advocacy Day facilitator's guide that draws on the Ledesma-

Kolvenbach Paradigm to equip students with practical advocacy skills, fostering a commitment to justice, cultivating empathy, and grounding action in faith (Núñez & Lozano, 2024). Reflections from students and educators demonstrate the transformative impact of this initiative on civic confidence, leadership development, and solidarity with marginalized communities. Through curricular, co-curricular, and in-person modalities that align advocacy with Ignatian pedagogy and mission, Advocacy Day offers a replicable model for forming compassionate, informed, and engaged global citizens. This case study contributes to the broader conversation on sustaining Jesuit identity through action-oriented formation experiences.

"Know where you stand, and stand there." - Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J.[1]

1. Introduction

The Jesuit Refugee Service defends the rights of forcibly displaced persons through public, political, and community advocacy at a global level. In the United States, this mission manifests through engagement with policymakers to adopt compassionate, welcoming, and just decisions that often have global consequences. For ten years, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA (JRS)[2] has organized an annual Advocacy Day to lobby Congress on key issues affecting refugees. This initiative unites students, educators, and parishioners to advocate for humanitarian aid, just immigration policies, and the protection of vulnerable populations. In 2025, over 300 people from nine Jesuit universities and additional Jesuit institutions across 35 states and Washington, D.C. met with 97 Congressional offices.

Advocacy Day is a living example of citizen-centered advocacy, defined as:

"an organized political process that involves the coordinated efforts of people to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion. It strengthens citizens' capacity as decision makers and builds more accountable and equitable institutions of power". (Eguizábal, 2008, p. 2)

1 For more on Father Berrigan, S.J., see "A Man of Peace: Recalling the life and legacy of Daniel Berrigan" in America Magazine: The Jesuit Review, April 30, 2016, https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2016/04/30/man-peace-daniel-berrigan-life-legacy-222044.

2 Jesuit Refugee Service/USA is one regional component of a global organization, Jesuit Refugee Service. For the sake of brevity, we will use the acronym JRS to refer to Jesuit Refugee Service/USA. For more on Jesuit Refugee Service/USA, visit https://www.jrsusa.org/.

This collaboration empowers participants to engage with governance structures, use their knowledge and skills to influence public policy, and create a more just and humane world.

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm—context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation—structures the article's exploration of this dynamic and engaging initiative. Context invites an understanding of the Jesuit roots of this concrete example of a faith that does justice (Kolvenbach, 2008). Experience describes how this high impact practice is brought to fruition through a newly developed facilitator's guide that has made the practice more accessible to multiple institutions. Reflection offers responses from students and parishioners who have shared this transformative experience. Evaluation presents lessons learned and opportunities for improvement. We conclude with some thoughts on Advocacy Day as a replicable model for Jesuit institutions that seek to develop compassionate, informed, and engaged citizens in a variety of political contexts and structures around the world— citizens who know where they stand, are equipped with the tools to stay there, and are inspiring manifestations of Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J.'s wisdom.

2. Context: Why Advocacy Day?

Jesuit education has long emphasized the formation of socially conscious, compassionate individuals committed to the common good. As Adolfo Nicolás, S.J. noted, "Jesuit universities cannot be content with merely criticizing and diagnosing the great problems of humanity; rather they must engage various fields of knowledge in dialogue to find and propose alternatives" (Rodríguez, 2024, para 10)[3]. Historian John W. O'Malley, S.J. (2015) also contextualizes the importance of "active engagement" and the development of students as "responsible participants in the community … concerned for the common good and ready to make sacrifices for it" (p. 13).

Built on this foundation, initiatives such as Advocacy Day bridge the four key dimensions of the Ledesma-Kolvenbach Paradigm—practical (utilitas), social (iustitia), humanistic (humanitas), and transcendent (fides)—encouraging students to live out these principles through actions that promote justice and equality (Núñez & Lozano, 2024). Practically, Advocacy Day equips participants with actionable strategies for advocacy. Socially, the experience fosters commitment to equity.

3 Authors translation

Humanistically, it promotes understanding and empathy, cultivating a deeper sense of shared humanity. Transcendentally, Advocacy Day integrates reflective practices and spiritual dimensions, encouraging participants to connect advocacy to their faith and moral values. Together, these dimensions ensure a holistic approach to advocacy for refugees and forcibly displaced peoples that aligns with Jesuit educational values. Grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, these values also resonate with humanist scholars, regardless of religious belief (Aguado & Martínez, 2012).

At the same time, Advocacy Day is grounded in the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), which have guided the global Jesuit mission since 2019 and foster a common language and collaborative spirit among Jesuits and lay partners. As Fr. General Arturo Sosa, S.J. (2019), emphasized, its successful implementation depends on deepened collaboration across ministries and apostolic sectors, a principle that Advocacy Day brings to life through its emphasis on networking as well as its cultivation of a culture of inclusivity and shared purpose. The resultant collective action reflects the Ignatian commitment to addressing complex social challenges through solidarity and mutual support. It also mirrors the UAP call to walk with the excluded, as participants engage directly with policymakers to advocate for those whose dignity has been violated. Moreover, the event contributes to the UAP of accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled future. Through education, encounter, and advocacy, participants are invited into a transformative process rooted in Catholic Social Thought. They are informed on global injustices and are empowered to act, becoming advocates who have new hope and understand their responsibility to the global community.

Advocacy Day counters the globalization of indifference by fostering awareness, empathy, and action (Francis, 2013). Participants deepen their understanding of global issues, cultivate leadership, and foster a sense of ethical responsibility. The process of converting knowledge to action ensures that Jesuit education remains relevant and transformative, preparing students to be agents of change, committed to building a more just and hope-filled world.

3. Experience: What is Advocacy Day?

With this context, we can build understanding of the fundamental elements of Advocacy Day. Each spring, advocates gather in person and virtually for a day of engagement with their Congressional representatives to discuss three issues and propose related action steps (e.g., legislation, letters of support, etc.) to address the needs of refugees and forcibly displaced persons around the world.

Educators at Jesuit institutions recruit and steward participation while JRS guides the preparation process. In the weeks leading up to Advocacy Day, JRS provides Congressional biographies, talking points, and supporting materials, and trains participants to present legislative priorities to elected officials, helping craft persuasive messages that center human stories. Under the careful supervision of faculty and staff at each institution, participants deepen their understanding of the topics so they can confidently engage in discussions with Congressional representatives. Providing students with the knowledge, skill, and guidance to advocate at the federal level is a signature practice of Advocacy Day, one that invites active and engaged advocacy on real world issues. Doing so alongside hundreds of peers from across the country creates a groundswell of grassroots support—subsidiarity—and makes a strong national statement.

Originally designed for in-person participation, Advocacy Day pivoted online during the COVID-19 pandemic, which set the stage for an expansion of the initiative to Jesuit institutions across the U.S. In 2024, a group of educators collaborated with JRS to co-create a facilitator's guide[4] to support this development, enabling Jesuit institutions across the country—high schools, colleges and universities, and parishes—to participate. The guide offers plans for integration into curricular or co-curricular modalities, whether in-person or remote.

4. Reflection: What are the outcomes for Advocacy Day participants?

Grounded in Jesuit values and pedagogy and designed for flexible, turn-key implementation through a robust facilitator's guide, Advocacy Day transforms participants' understanding of citizen-centered advocacy (Eguizábal, 2008) and empowers them to speak truth to power as a means of taking responsible action on the issues of the day. The reflections presented below are organized by the modality of participation, curricular, co-curricular, and in person.

4 The facilitator's guide, which has been downloaded 230 times, is available at this link: https://www.jrsusa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/12/JRSUSA-Advocacy-Day-Facilitator-Guide_FINAL.pdf.

Curricular Integration: Centering the Margins

Using a curricular approach, faculty include advocacy modules in their syllabi that dedicate classroom time to guiding students through research on their representatives' positions in relation to issues identified by JRS. Students then conduct mock meetings to visualize the process and increase their confidence. Reflections after the meetings focus on critically understanding the Congressional perspectives and interrogating the systems and structures in which elected officials operate. This participant reflection demonstrates the efficacy:

"[Advocacy Day] pushed me beyond my limits in the best way possible. If you told me I would end up speaking to a congressman…I would not believe it for a second. The professor wanted us to excel, and I believe we all did that. "(Student participant, 2024)

One faculty member noted that Advocacy Day invited her to see students' strengths in a different light. Students who rarely spoke in class shone in the advocacy space, sharing valuable information with representatives in strong, persuasive language while highlighting their own personal connections to immigration. Another faculty member noted an increased civic confidence and a heightened sense of political agency in her students, including first generation students. Students felt empowered to engage directly with Congressional representatives on issues they cared about and can now imagine future civic engagement efforts to center the margins. One student reflected:

Through Advocacy Day, I feel like I gained confidence, articulation, and power when it comes to the views I believe in. I left feeling motivated to continue contacting my representatives, searching for opportunities to interact with them, and expressing my beliefs to the people who have power to act on them. (Student participant, 2025)

In many cases, community members from within and outside of the university joined students in Congressional meetings, creating valuable cross-generational dialogue that allowed students and community members alike to hear diverse perspectives on an issue.

Co-curricular Integration: Locating Power Through Advocacy

Some Jesuit institutions integrate Advocacy Day as a co-curricular experience by inviting students who are particularly passionate about the issues and interested in honing their advocacy and civic engagement skills. For example, at one university participants were drawn from students already engaged in tutoring in local schools or through an alternative spring break experience with a refugee resettlement program, enabling them to draw upon real-life encounters with refugees and migrants. These students offered a unique perspective from their experience of encounter and, when coupled with having their voices and views heard at the highest levels of government, provided them with an important sense of agency (Sokol, 2015).

The Advocacy Day approach is effective in helping students locate their power through advocacy, especially important in a time when they may feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenges faced by the U.S. and our global community. One student shared, "it was great to hear from people who are trying to make a difference. I appreciated the reflection afterwards because it made me feel more empowered to use my voice" (Student participant, 2025). Co-curricular models offer students a high impact leadership activity that complements curricular learning. At one institution, a co-curricular initiative, Policy Pods, invites student engagement in a range of state-level advocacy efforts, including immigration and refugee policy. Advocacy Day amplifies students' capacity at the federal level. By using JRS resources and facilitator's guide, staff can seamlessly integrate this activity into co-curricular programs. One staff member offered this reflection, "Knowing the training provided by JRS, the materials provided, and through experience, I am able to better support a program I run!" (Staff member, 2025).

In Person Advocacy: Empowered for Lasting Impact

Advocacy on Capitol Hill itself is a unique place-based experience. One faculty member who accompanied students to Washington, D.C. emphasized the benefits: research suggests that personalized direct contact from constituents is the most effective approach for influencing policymakers (DiMuzio, 2017) while offering students the opportunity to make a human connection with Congressional representatives or staff.

In-person advocacy efforts also require students to be well-versed on the issues and helps them to hone team building skills and camaraderie. For first-time participants, meeting with a Congressional office can be

intimidating but after completing the visits, students are excited and feel empowered to continue advocating at federal, state, and local levels. One student shared, “Advocacy Day left me feeling energized, empowered, and eager to be a voice for change” (Student participant, 2025). Another stated “I feel empowered to get more involved in civic life and use the skills I learned on this trip to make a lasting impact” (Student participant, 2025).

5. Action: What can we do with this Advocacy Day experience?

Advocacy with Congressional officials is considered a high-impact educational practice (Kuh, 2008). Students and educators experience firsthand how to bridge the knowing–doing gap (Banki, et al., 2013), which is critical to student growth and provides hands-on experience in democratic and civic skills and can be important in developing a student’s sense of agency (Lenoir & Van Metre, 2024). In this section, we offer ways that Advocacy Day equips students and educators for action as global citizens.

Empowering Students as Agents of Change

Students surveyed across six Jesuit universities in Spring 2025 unanimously reported that participation in Advocacy Day empowered them to become agents of social change. They learned the importance of their voice, particularly in advocating for those on the margins. One student commented on the power to effect change, “...getting the chance to talk with people who have a hand in shaping political action showed me that being my normal, everyday self IS important. My voice does matter” (Student participant, 2025).

Students also learned the utility of becoming well-informed on political issues and practicing advocacy for social change. As one student noted, “It reminded me how easy it is to participate in change when it often can feel so overwhelming” (Student participant, 2025). Students can participate in Advocacy Day over multiple years, allowing them to evaluate their personal growth over time.

Real-World Learning and Skill Development

Students emerge from the experience with a deeper understanding of government and the role civically-minded citizens play. Advocacy Day hones practical research and public speaking skills and, in the true spirit of Eloquentia Perfecta, puts these skills to use for the common good. For many students, it is their first interaction with a Congressional official, which can transform how they view their role in society: their voices and opinions matter on a national and global scale, which can become a habit of mind as they enter career fields and adulthood.

Building Community and Fostering Mentorship

Advocacy Day builds community. Like immersions, engagement outside the classroom offers students and educators a shared experience in a unique atmosphere that allows for personal interaction, a deeper understanding of common concerns, and a greater opportunity for growth through sustained mentorship. Working toward a common goal alongside advocates from JRS and Jesuit institutions across the country, students see that collaboration makes real change possible and that solidarity within and beyond campuses can multiply the impact on communities within the U.S. and beyond.

Countering Indifference and Inspiring Hope

As Jesuit educators, it is important to instill a sense of hope through action. Advocacy Day provides students with a real-life example of how to use their voices for change and become civically engaged citizens in a democratic society. A first generation student notes the transformative nature of Advocacy Day, “As a refugee myself, I never imagined advocating for refugee rights with elected officials in my adopted country” (Student participant, 2024). Advocacy counters apathy and creates hope.

Advocacy Day provides campuses and parishes an actionable means of living into the Jesuit tradition, creating a safe environment to speak truth to power in the face of indifference. JRS models and promotes responsible action, inviting campuses to live up to their Ignatian values. Advocacy Day uniquely supports Jesuit institutions doing the work of justice in a challenging climate for just and humane immigration policy.

6. Evaluation: How might we enhance Advocacy Day?

As we can see, Advocacy Day is an important nexus between experiential learning and Ignatian pedagogical practices. Inviting students to engage directly with Congressional officials can be a daunting task for both students and the faculty-staff mentors who curate this rich learning experience. As such, it requires high levels of organization and engagement since the experience happens outside the confines of the classroom, yet such engagement is

foundational to the development of global citizens capable of taking responsible action in the face of complex challenges.

The facilitator's guide can continue to chart a course of accessibility. Each year, educators can come together under the leadership of JRS to evaluate the experience. Creative pedagogical approaches, resources, and co-curricular activities can be added to expand the guide's utility and serve as a living document that reflects the current political moment.

The guide offers new participants clarity on options for introducing Advocacy Day at their institutions. Advocacy Day itself can be expanded to a wider range of institutions, such as Jesuit high schools, colleges and universities, and parishes across the U.S. thereby scaling up to include Catholic and Ignatian institutions that are grounded in the values reflected in Catholic Social Thought. Globally, the concept of Advocacy Day is one that could be modified to suit other governance structures such as parliaments. Democratic forms of governance are built on the concept of citizen participation and all democracies experience policy and practice challenges concerning refugees and forced displacement. At all levels, outreach efforts can bring this high impact practice to more people.

More formal efforts to evaluate the Advocacy Day initiative could be pursued through grant solicitations. Funding to support the formation of a student, educator, and parishioner advisory board would be a concrete step toward enhancement of all aspects of the experience. Implementing additional opportunities for follow-up and community engagement beyond the single day of advocacy would create possibilities for more enduring outcomes in support of refugees and forcibly displaced people.

7. Conclusion

Father Berrigan, S.J. calls us to "Know where you stand, and stand there" (Editors, 2016). Advocacy Day, a best practice for promoting Ignatian identity through experiential learning, civic engagement, and professional formation, invites us to respond to his call to action in the context of refugee policy. In this article, we have explored this dynamic and engaging initiative as we seek to expand awareness of its utility and impact. In a world poisoned by the globalization of indifference (Francis, 2013), Advocacy Day is an antidote. It is a model that is flexible, adaptable, and replicable for the political contexts and governance structures the world over. This moment in history calls us to responsible action and advocacy on behalf of our refugee brothers and sisters. Will you join us?

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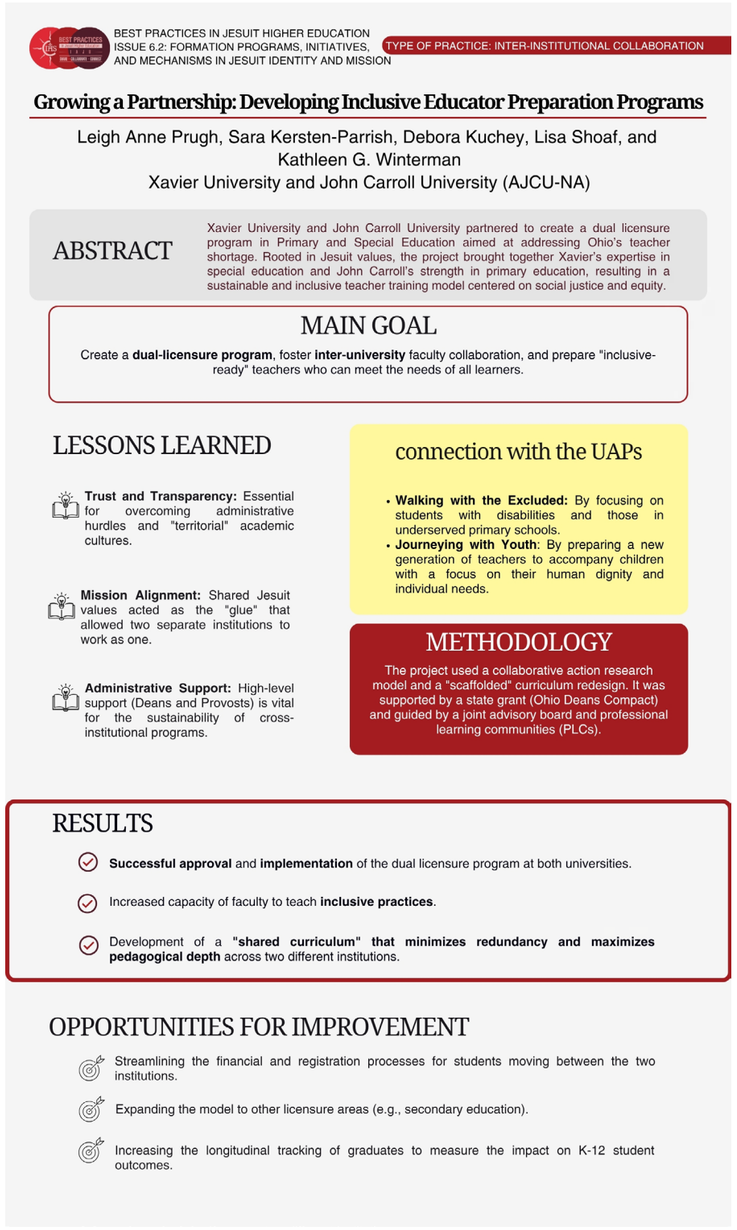

BEST PRACTICES IN JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION
ISSUE 6.2: FORMATION PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN JESUIT IDENTITY AND MISSION

TYPE OF PRACTICE: INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

Growing a Partnership: Developing Inclusive Educator Preparation Programs

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ABSTRACT

Xavier University and John Carroll University partnered to create a dual licensure program in Primary and Special Education aimed at addressing Ohio's teacher shortage. Rooted in Jesuit values, the project brought together Xavier's expertise in special education and John Carroll's strength in primary education, resulting in a sustainable and inclusive teacher training model centered on social justice and equity.

MAIN GOAL

Create a **dual-licensure program**, foster **inter-university** faculty collaboration, and prepare "inclusive-ready" teachers who can meet the needs of all learners.

LESSONS LEARNED

Trust and Transparency: Essential for overcoming administrative hurdles and "territorial" academic cultures.

Mission Alignment: Shared Jesuit values acted as the "glue" that allowed two separate institutions to work as one.

Administrative Support: High-level support (Deans and Provosts) is vital for the sustainability of cross-institutional programs.

connection with the UAPs

- **Walking with the Excluded:** By focusing on students with disabilities and those in underserved primary schools.
- **Journeying with Youth**: By preparing a new generation of teachers to accompany children with a focus on their human dignity and individual needs.

METHODOLOGY

The project used a collaborative action research model and a "scaffolded" curriculum redesign. It was supported by a state grant (Ohio Deans Compact) and guided by a joint advisory board and professional learning communities (PLCs).

RESULTS

Successful approval and **implementation** of the dual licensure program at both universities.

Increased capacity of faculty to teach **inclusive practices**.

Development of a **"shared curriculum" that minimizes redundancy and maximizes pedagogical depth** across two different institutions.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Streamlining the financial and registration processes for students moving between the two institutions.

Expanding the model to other licensure areas (e.g., secondary education).

Increasing the longitudinal tracking of graduates to measure the impact on K-12 student outcomes.

Growing a Partnership: Developing Inclusive Educator Preparation Programs

FORMATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a collaborative initiative between Xavier University and John Carroll University to develop an innovative dual licensure program in Primary Education and Special Education. Critical teacher shortages now impacts Ohio, this cross-institutional partnership leverages each university's strengths: Xavier's expertise in Special Education and John Carroll's foundation in Primary Education. The partnership is rooted in the principles of Ignatian spirituality, promoting social justice by responding to the pressing need for inclusive, equity-focused teacher preparation programs. Through coordinated curriculum redesign, joint field placements, and administrative alignment, the institutions developed a sustainable model for inclusive educator preparation. A structured advisory board, grant support, and collaborative action research shaped program development, emphasizing culturally responsive teaching, Universal Design for Learning, and trauma-informed practices. The paper highlights the logistical and institutional challenges of inter-university collaboration, such as tuition agreements and course registration systems, while outlining strategies for successful navigation. The program, set to launch in 2025, provides a replicable model for other institutions seeking to expand dual licensure opportunities and address teacher shortages. Ultimately, the partnership demonstrates how universities can collaborate to transform educator preparation and foster inclusive education at scale.

Growing a Partnership: Developing Inclusive Educator Preparation Programs

In response to the growing demand for educators who are equipped to meet the needs of all learners, Xavier University and John Carroll University collaborated to develop a dual licensure program in Primary Education (P-5) and Intervention Specialist (P-5). This innovative partnership addresses two of the most critical teacher shortage areas in Ohio,Primary P-5 and Special Education,while expanding the capacity of Ohio's higher education institutions to prepare inclusive, equity-focused educators. As Jesuit Universities, both universities share a common mission of exercising a faith in action for justice rooted in the worldview of Ignatian spirituality. his initiative provides a sustainable and replicable model for cross-institutional collaboration. By combining the strengths of each university,Xavier's robust Special Education offerings and John Carroll's well-established Primary Education program,this dual licensure pathway aims to produce graduates who are prepared to deliver high-quality, inclusive instruction to all students, including those with disabilities and those from culturally diverse backgrounds. The program is not only timely, but also transformative in its potential to foster systemic change in inclusive primary education.

Rationale for Forming a Partnership

Both universities are founded in Ignatian spirit and grounded in a liberal arts tradition. As Jesuit Universities our programs are founded in liberal arts with a mission of understanding Jesuit history and the importance of Ignatian spirituality. Our missions challenge all members of the universities to educate our students academically, morally and spiritually. We are driven by our mission to educate the whole person, promoting a common good and a life of service to others. Our shared mission empowered the working relationship between the two universities to build a collaborative program that aligns to our values and beliefs and are rooted in the gifts of the Ignatian spirit.

The Gifts of the Ignatian Spirit have guided our work throughout the entire process. As Jesuit Catholic University faculty members, we began to reflect on the possibility of extending the new program that we were beginning at Xavier and offer John Carroll the opportunity to offer the same program. John Carroll did not have a special education department which prevented them from pursuing a dual licensure program. Xavier has the ability to allow virtual students to join in-person classrooms through the use of Teams Classroom Kits. After reflection from members at both universities, discussions began. By combining the academic offerings of Xavier University to the academic offerings of John Carroll University, reflections led to discussions which led to discernment, another gift of the Ignatian spirit. Discerning the interests of the Pre-service teachers and the needs of K-5 students and classrooms throughout Ohio, the team pursued funding to develop this partnership that would lead to a new dual licensure opportunity at both universities. This discernment supports the mission of promoting a common good and pursuing a life of service to others by developing P-5 inclusive Ignatian educators.

This journey far exceeded our expectations in the area of solidarity and kinship. In reaching beyond each of our university campuses to the opposite ends of the state, we have learned from our companions and built a spirit of community. Not only as a group of five faculty members, but also as each university reached out to K-5 school districts, superintendents, pre-service teachers and teachers, to develop an advisory board that would offer each of their expertise and guidance as we sought to develop a program that met the needs of the bigger community of Primary Education and Primary Intervention Specialist. As we begin to welcome students into the program in the Fall of 2025, we are excited to continue to witness the growth of solidarity and kinship between the students at both universities and the teachers within their field placements. The ever growing need for Primary Educators and Primary Intervention Specialists in Ohio and our country as a whole, was the driving force behind developing such a partnership as well as the development of Ohio grants to develop dual licensure programs. Children, and especially children with special needs, suffer greater injustices if they do not have access to full-time, properly licensed teachers who are best prepared to meet the needs of the vulnerable child. Through this gift of service, rooted in justice and love, Xavier and John Carroll Universities have come together and worked to assure that opportunities will permit pre-service teachers to pursue dual licensure pathways. This pursuit will occur in universities that share these gifts and desire to make the world a better place.

Significance of the Partnership

The development of a P-5 Intervention Specialist and a Primary Education P-5 program

leading to dual licensure for Xavier University and John Carroll University addresses the need to increase the capacity of Ohio institutions of higher education across the state. The project seeks to improve the effectiveness of our graduates to meet the instructional needs of all students including those identified with disabilities, as well as students who are members of racially, culturally, and ethically minoritized groups. According to the Ohio Shortage Survey data, the top four vacancy areas are Primary P-5, Intervention Specialist Mild to Moderate, Primary P-5 Intervention Specialist, and Intervention Specialist Moderate/Intensive Needs. Dually licensed P-5 teachers have the potential to impact two of the greatest areas of teacher shortage in the state of Ohio. The increase in programming across two Ohio Jesuit institutions has far reaching implications for the children who will benefit from teachers prepared to meet the needs of all learners through this partnership. This partnership is unique in that it allows a university without a special education department to offer a dual license through the integration with Xavier University's Special Education courses. John Carroll University and Xavier University are both Jesuit Institutions who are committed to educating the whole person, promoting the common good and serving others. This unique partnership reflects this commitment.

Recognizing the known academic, behavior and social benefits of an early inclusive education, this proposal addresses the need for a systemic change (Pappar, Bai, Gonzalex, Love & McCabe, 2018; Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010). The proposed dual licensure program will restructure the existing teacher preparation programs in P-5 Elementary Education at both John Carroll and Xavier Universities and P-5 Special Education at Xavier University. The goal of this new program will prepare Ohio's educators to teach in a variety of roles on educational teams maximizing opportunities for children (Chatzigeorgiadou. Barouta, 2022; Zascavage & Keefe, 2004). To improve the educational opportunities for both the student with special needs, marginalized students, and the typically developing child, educators must be aware of the principles of Universal Design for Learning, culturally responsive teaching, and trauma informed educational practices (CAST.org, 2023; Gorski, 2019).

The intent of this program is to capitalize on the existing strong structures of the P-5 Primary Education Programs at both Xavier University and John Carroll University and blend with the P-5 Intervention Specialist Program to prepare dual licensed educators at both institutions. This program will be a unique model that supports two Jesuit Catholic universities. Xavier University is meeting the need at John Carroll University by providing the special education license which JCU is not able to currently provide for their candidates. At Xavier University, this is the optimal time to blend the P-5 Primary Program and the P-5 Intervention Specialist Program. This is in part due to the restructuring that is taking place within the School of Education at Xavier University. Independently each program had to adjust the curriculum due to the State of Ohio changing licensure bands from P-3 to P-5 in both special education and primary education. Now that these adaptations have been made, all programs in the School of Education are working towards common inclusive courses for all education majors.

Structuring the Work for the Partnership

As with any large scale project, the team had to address and come to an agreement on the fiscal impact for the universities. Therefore, a logic model was developed to support and guide the team members of both institutions and to aid in the structure of the work. One of the biggest challenges in preparation for writing the grant was the issue of creating a tuition rate that met the needs for both universities. The sending institution had to agree to pay tuition funds to the providing institution. In the spirit of the Jesuit values of magis and cura personalis, the receiving institution provided a significant tuition rate exemption which was agreed to by both institutions. Both universities recognized the greater good being served through the partnership. Once the tuition rate was agreed upon, the grant writing began in earnest. Letters of support from the administration including the Provosts and Deans from the partners were also an integral part of the application process. In addition, the grant application process sparked significant conversations regarding how to integrate the need to add additional courses in Special Education into both programs while adhering to the programmatic limitations of 126 credit hours required by the state program requirements. In conclusion, the process began with support from administration, tuition rate agreement, and the understanding of the requirements needed to create inclusive dual programs at both institutions.

The team began with a discussion around and formation of the Inclusive Licensure Advisory

board. While an advisory board was an essential component of the grant process, the inclusion of stakeholders in the process was extremely beneficial. Each institution included district partners who supported the work and were interested in providing teacher candidates with high quality inclusive field placements. The board also consisted of faculty and staff from both institutions. The advisory board agreed to a two year commitment and all members were integral in the development of the finalized programs. The board met quarterly throughout the grant cycle to advise the team on program development and receive updates on the progress of program development.

The first year of the work included significant program and curriculum work to embed the educator preparation standards in the courses and syllabi. Simultaneously, the literacy courses were also undergoing significant revision to align with updated state requirements. The second year of implementation included the creation of an MOU that spelled out all aspects of the partnership. Some of the highlights of the MOU included the program, academic control, faculty, students and partner responsibilities. In addition, a Project Manager became an integral part of the team in year two. The Project Manager coordinated all of the Information Technology (IT) aspects of implementation. For example, how the transcripts would be shared among the universities, the billing process, as well as application and enrollment management. These are the finite and minute details that are embedded in creating a seamless partnership and student experience.

As previously mentioned, planned field experiences are a foundational component of all educator preparation programs. The team included site visits in the grant to coordinate these field experiences to support the students completing the program. The site visit took place at the end of year one of the grant. The sending institution planned an outstanding site visit which allowed the providing institutions with the opportunity to visit the school sites that would provide the inclusive field experiences for the students. Representatives from each of these sites were also members of the advisory board. The in person site visit allowed a deeper understanding of the experiences that the district partners would be providing in order to meet the licensure requirements for the teacher candidates. The site visits also allowed the relationship to develop with the programs and the ability to communicate as needed regarding student development in the future.

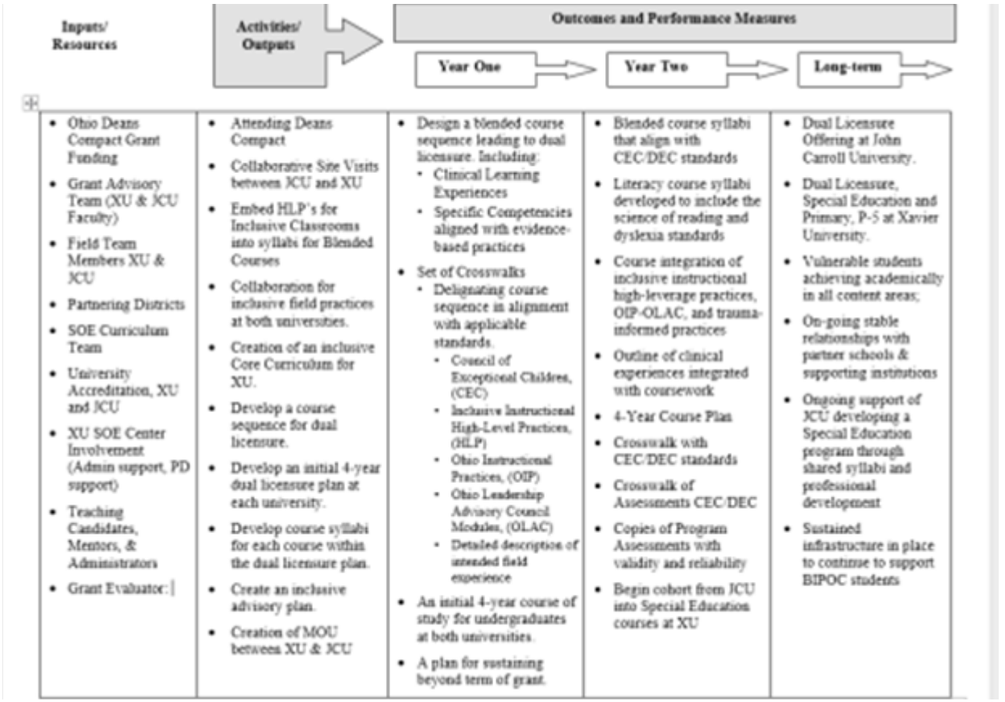

Figure 1
Timeline for Program Development and Implementation Logic Model

Bridging Research and Practice

With the current educational climate, universities facing the demographic cliff with fewer college-aged students available to attend higher education and the dramatic shift into work ready careers, has changed the enrollment outlook. According to the Center for American Progress (Partelow, 2019), there has been a 50% decline in teacher education enrollments in Ohio. In addition, nationally, there are 567,000 fewer teachers than before the pandemic. In Ohio, there are 17,000 fewer individuals employed in public schools compared to 2019. (Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, 2025). As a field of Education, the enrollment of students in teacher preparation programs has decreased by fifty percent in the past ten years as the enrollment of students continues to increase and this increased population continues to become more diverse (http://neatoday.org/2016/03/15/future-teachers-at-all-time-low/). Enrollment of

teacher candidates is becoming a national concern (Holcomb-McCoy, 2023). “Between 2008 and 2016, the number of new educators completing preparation programs fell by 23% according to AACTE (Time Magazine, 2018,) http://time.com/longform/teaching-in-america/).” As the headlines in the fall continue to state, September is coming to a close and schools are still looking for teachers. (Cantu, 2022). This crisis can no longer be ignored.

As a means to address this issue, universities are beginning to reexamine their practices to explore new opportunities to create collaborative partnerships to help mitigate the teacher shortages. Bridging the gap of teacher shortage through university partnerships is a vital approach to meeting this community need as resources allocated to higher education continue to diminish. Universities can share their collective expertise while reducing their cost by sharing faculty and students to meet these community needs. Through a collaborative action research project that engaged educators, schools, and two universities, teams began to address specific barriers to inclusive P-5 teacher preparation where teacher candidates from two universities would graduate with two teaching licenses (P-5 Elementary and P-5 Intervention Specialist license) with direct fieldwork from partnering community schools. Educator preparation courses that build teacher capacity for inclusive practices, such as implementing assistive technologies and adapting curricula to diverse learning needs are correlated with direct application in the field. This effort has been grant supported which has encouraged community engagement initiatives that involve local organizations in co-creating solutions for education.

Monitoring Results

The partnership will launch in the fall 2025 semester. Formative assessment will include: evidence of the meetings including minutes from the Incentive Grant Team, site visit agenda and summary of visit goals and deliverables, community of practice presentations, description of field placement sites from John Carroll University and Xavier University, Field and Student Teaching Handbooks that reflect inclusive placements and activities, training for University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers that support the inclusive/blended program.

Summative assessments will include the enrollment data from both institutions, the new four-year academic plans and advising materials for the blended/inclusive programs, and finalized syllabi that include assignments and experiences for candidates pursuing a P-5 dual license in Special Education and General Education. Through the implementation of the P-5 Alignment tool, the team will develop the restructured and redesigned course sequences, the syllabi for the courses will outline the clinical field experiences and specific competencies aligned with High Leverage Practices and evidence-based practices. The dual alignment tool will allow the team to ensure the CEC/DEC standards are met as well as the use of the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) framework and Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) modules. The incentive grant team, in coordination with the external grant evaluator, completed the annual end of year 1 and end of year 2 performance reports that included all evaluation findings and information.

The opportunity for replication is significant between the funding recipients and the larger IHE community. The partners have agreed to share syllabi with one another to strengthen both programs. John Carroll University will be able to transition to their own Special Education Program in the future. With the support from Xavier University, this program will lay the foundation for the creation of a similar program at John Carroll University once they are able to hire a Special Education faculty member. However, Xavier will support candidates for dual licensure from John Carroll University until they are able to provide the courses themselves.

Reflection of Growth from the Partnership

The framework of this pilot partnership emphasizes shared leadership, reciprocal learning, and accountability to ensure that all stakeholders contribute to and benefit from the partnership. Inclusive Ignatian education is a cornerstone of equitable learning, viewingevery student and teacher candidate as a child of God,regardless of ability, background, or circumstance,has access to meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities. In the spirit of Ignatian discernment and our shared commitment to the magis, we move forward trusting that this partnership will continue to form educators who not only teach with excellence, but serve with justice, compassion, and deep care for the whole person.

As explained earlier, by structuring the work, university partnerships can address systemic barriers to inclusion in PK-20 settings through co-designed curricula, shared resources, and

professional development. A strong investment was made into the field placements. Both Xavier University and John Carroll University recognized that distance learning required strong application in the classroom. Xavier University visited John Carroll's field placement sites to observe the inclusive classrooms in advance of launching the program. The investment of time and presence guided further connections after their visit. For example, the Principal Investigator met with one of the field site representatives for lunch during a campus recruiting event which was an Education Fair for educators. The HR representative attended the PI's Foundations of Special Education class and supported students who were practicing writing IEP annual goals and objectives. The district partner was also able to share a video with students about their site that would recruit families and educators for their school. The rich connections made through the partnership advanced student experience in the classroom and field.

Logistical challenges developed during the process such as how to code the courses for registration, how and when to coordinate tuition reimbursement during the semester, and how to manage licensure approval. University representatives from the partnership soon realized that strong follow through was necessary to manage these challenges. This led to Zoom calls with Registrars, Bursars, and Admissions offices as well as emails with legal counsel for each institution to work through the MOU. Through ongoing distance communication and meetings, the issues were addressed and the program is ready to launch. These processes are necessary and took more time than expected. Both universities would advise generous scheduling for these logistics, building in time to work through negotiations and details.

Conclusion

Inclusive education requires more than a commitment to equity; inclusivity demands attention to the details of how that commitment is enacted. University partnerships have the potential to transform inclusive education practices by combining academic expertise, practitioner insights, and community resources. This article provides a comprehensive look at the mechanisms that made these collaborations successful, offering readers the knowledge and tools to foster partnerships that prioritize inclusivity and drive meaningful change.

Grounded in our shared Ignatian mission, this partnership stands as a witness to what can be accomplished when companions in the journey unite their gifts in service of the common good.

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Integration through Inquiry: Preserving Ignatian Priorities in the Contemporary University Environment

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

The integration of knowledge has been a defining feature of Jesuit education since St. Ignatius first outlined his vision for the universities of the Society, but the structures of the contemporary university often militate against the realization of this end. At Marquette University, in Milwaukee, WI, USA, we sought to tackle these challenges by empowering faculty to reenvision courses that served as part of the Marquette Core Curriculum (MCC), the university's sequenced undergraduate general education program, to promote integration across disciplines. With the support of an external grant, we launched interdisciplinary teams that developed "guiding questions" for each of the five thematic pathways included in the MCC, creating a common language and shared orientation to inquiry for faculty designing discipline-specific courses that also fulfilled MCC requirements. We found that inquiry allowed faculty to hold the dual objectives of communicating content expertise while promoting the broad-based learning and integrative objectives found in the MCC. This model provides lessons for other universities seeking to preserve the integrative instincts of Jesuit education in a contemporary context more frequently defined by the fragmentation of disciplinary specialization.

1. Description

Long before John Paul II (1990) defined the "integration of knowledge" (no. 16) as a hallmark of Catholic universities, Jesuit higher education had already prioritized an ordered approach to the unity of truth across the multiple fields of study found on campus. As the Jesuit theologian Michael Buckley (2007) explained, in Ignatius's original vision for the "universities of the Society" found in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, theology provided "an integrating, an architectonic, wisdom" (p. 73) capable of "bring[ing] order into the vast assemblage of human sciences and disciplines, subject matters and activities" (p. 72). To be a Jesuit university is thus to preserve this vision for the unity of the university, both insisting and demonstrating that the point of higher education is not the mere accumulation of information but the synthesis of learning to create a coherent whole that reveals the meaning and purpose of seeking knowledge and truth in the first place.

As inspiring as this vision may be, Jesuit universities face considerable challenges in embodying it in the twenty-first century. The structure of the contemporary university, particularly (though not exclusively) in the U.S. context, is increasingly defined by a level of specialization and fragmentation that minimizes interaction across disciplines, forestalling possibilities for integration. At Marquette university, we decided to tackle this challenge directly, using one of the few features that unites all disciplines: inquiry. Through the support of a grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, an interdisciplinary team worked over two years to incorporate "guiding questions" into the Marquette Core Curriculum (MCC), the university's sequenced undergraduate general education program. The questions created common points of contact across required classes in the humanities, social sciences, and natural science and math that were ostensibly linked by common themes but often only at a superficial level. The grant project developed a novel means of connecting these courses, using the spirit of inquiry that is a vital feature of liberal arts education to create a structural foundation for the type of integration that Jesuit higher education prioritizes. Significantly, we believe this project has the potential to translate effectively on other campuses, offering a pathway for reclaiming the orientation to integration that inspired the first Jesuit universities, but which is difficult to sustain in the current context, through programmatic support that empowers faculty to be the champions of integration across disciplines.

2. Type of Experience

The work of our guiding questions project is a programmatic initiative, targeting the one academic program—our core curriculum—that is required of every undergraduate student at Marquette. For reasons described in the next two sections, our intervention focused on increasing faculty awareness of and engagement with the MCC, so that they could better position their course to support student learning in the core curriculum. To understand the nature and goals of this project, however, requires first appreciating the structure of the MCC.

Large enough to function as the equivalent of another major, if it were a stand-alone program, the MCC is a 30-credit (10-course) general education requirement that serves as "the center of every Marquette University student's educational experience" ("About," 2025) and functions as the academic heart of the university's Jesuit mission and identity. In this sense, the MCC is not unique insofar as Jesuit institutions, again especially in the United States, have general education requirements or core curricula that are explicitly designed to provide the broad-based introduction to liberal learning that sets the universities of the Society apart from their secular peers. Many of these programs also have an integrative function, inviting students to put the specialized studies from their major field into a broader context that invites deeper reflection on the meaning and purpose of their educational experience.

While thus not unique, the MCC is nevertheless distinctive in its decision to double down on these instincts with a structure that both foregrounds the traditional disciplines found in the universities of the Society and sequences students' engagement with these disciplines in a manner that points toward the integration of knowledge. As figure 1 shows, the MCC has a tiered structure that begins with introductory courses in philosophy, rhetoric, and theology to establish a foundation for liberal learning capable of orienting a student's progress not only through the core curriculum but also their entire time at Marquette. Additional courses in this tier invite students to grapple with the complex nature of large-scale social problems (an "Engaging Social Systems and Values" requirement) and to explore the value of multidisciplinary learning (a team-taught "Methods of Inquiry" course).

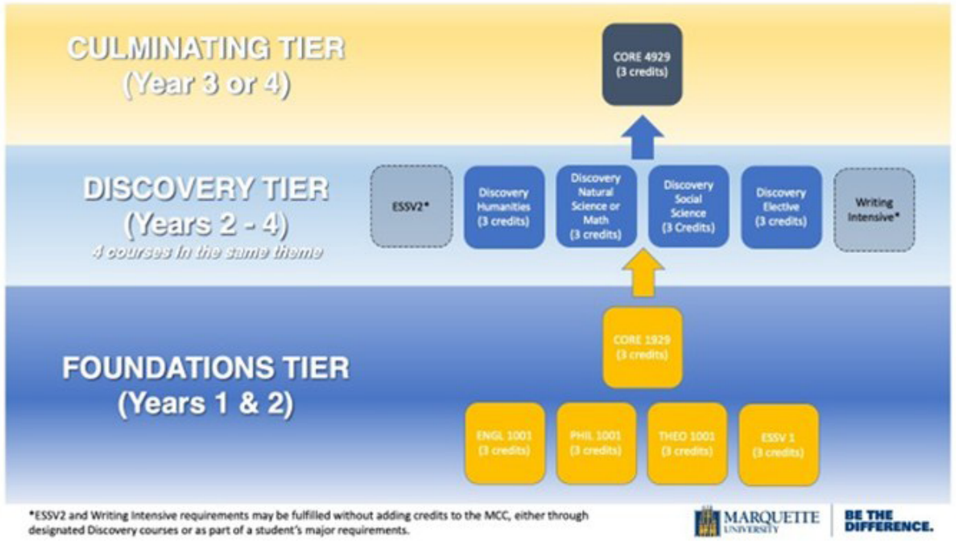

Figure 1 – Structure of the Marquette Core Curriculum

At the center of a student's progression through the MCC is the "Discovery Tier," composed of four courses united under one of five thematic pathways: Basic Needs and Justice; Individuals and Communities; Cognition, Memory, and Intelligence; Crossing Boundaries; and Expanding Our Horizons. The courses in the Discovery Tier fulfill the breadth requirements typically found in general education curricula, ensuring that all students have at least some engagement with a wide range of disciplines regardless of their major field of study. The themes, meanwhile, provide an opportunity to craft connections across these disciplines, pointing toward a horizontal form of integration between different disciplines.

The final element of the MCC, a culminating course taught by either a philosopher or a theologian, reflects on the Jesuits' twofold prioritization of the "service of faith and promotion of justice" (General Congregation, 1975, 4 no. 2). Leaning into the spirit of these traditional architectonic disciplines (Buckley noted that philosophy was the unifying discipline in John Henry Newman's Idea of University and theology was, of course, the unifying discipline for the universities of the Society), this course offers a form of vertical integration, connecting each undergraduate's various educational experiences in precisely the manner Ignatius originally envisioned for theology, "as the apex of a cone draws the lines of a cone [together]" (Buckley, 2007, p. 69). Our grant project was designed to help our institution realize the potential for integration that had been built into this undergraduate core curriculum at the theoretical level but which was all too often missing in practice.

3. Context

When the MCC launched in 2017, Marquette had high hopes for the prospects of a genuine core curriculum that would allow students to build connections across their required courses and, ideally, establish links with their major field(s) of study. The goal was to connect students' preprofessional training with the values-based education that inspires our mission and communicates our Jesuit identity. The Discovery Tier was especially critical to these hopes, as it became the most natural place for connecting the broad-based, liberal learning of the MCC with the more specialized training found in students' major programs. Indeed, most majors have at least one course in the Discovery Tier for precisely this purpose. By creating a clear point of contact for courses in different disciplines, the thematic pathways were supposed to serve as the means to the end of greater integration.

In practice, we quickly discovered that the integrative potential built into the design of the Discovery Tier's pathways remained largely untapped due to structural pressures. As is common at contemporary universities, most course planning and scheduling runs through departments at Marquette, so faculty continued to view course design primarily as a disciplinary responsibility. Notably, this problem is not unknown on other campuses. Many universities rely on thematic pathways to link courses and those that do have found that the inertia of departmental structures similarly limits the integrative potential of this tool.

Given these challenges, we recognized the need for a common language that would allow faculty from different disciplines to articulate how they genuinely study the same concept as other classes in their theme even when they pursue that study from their particular disciplinary perspectives. To provide this support, we secured an external grant for an inquiry-based approach that could help faculty from all disciplines design their courses in ways that could contribute to the aims of liberal education.

4. Objectives and Methodology

The long-term objective of our grant project was to create a new curricular infrastructure to empower faculty to design courses firmly rooted in their disciplines in a way that nonetheless served the integrative ends of our core curriculum. To pursue this goal, we established the more proximate objective of creating a list of two to three "guiding questions" for each of the MCC's five Discovery themes. These questions established inquiry as a common project for Discovery courses, creating a foundation for integration by allowing faculty from any discipline to demonstrate how their course could contribute to a student's efforts to develop a comprehensive answer to at least one of the questions in their theme.

The grant supported the work of five interdisciplinary teams led by faculty in the liberal arts—one for each Discovery theme—which worked collaboratively to develop a proposed list of guiding questions for their theme. The lists were shared with faculty and students through a series of focus groups and surveys, generating the necessary feedback to refine the questions and produce the final list of questions for each theme. Course design workshops in subsequent semesters presented faculty with opportunities to explore new ways of incorporating the themes into their new or existing Discovery Tier courses and also facilitated an interdisciplinary conversation about the role of inquiry in the classroom at a Jesuit university.

The project's reliance on inquiry as the main tool for integration emerged from pedagogical research identifying questioning as the key to deep learning, which transcends knowledge acquisition to promote "constructing new knowledge and understanding." (Spronken-Smith et al., 2011, p. 15). Significantly, this research has shown that questions are especially well suited to the task of interdisciplinary integration because asking questions and using disciplinary tools to develop answers to them is "applicable and relevant across all disciplines" (Blessinger and Carfora, 2015, p. 13). Our project pushed this commonality further, moving from inquiry as a familiar method across disciplines to inquiry as a tool for integration with the expectation that different disciplines could contribute their distinctive approach to a student's pursuit of a nuanced answer to a genuinely shared question.

While we believe this broad applicability across disciplines makes our experience with inquiry transferrable to other campus, a second benefit of this approach may be even more attractive. Because "the teacher's role is one of facilitator" in inquiry-based learning, this pedagogical strategy also involves "a move toward student-directed learning" (Spronken-Smith et al., 2011, p. 15), particularly in the more open-ended version of "guided inquiry" prioritized in our project (which introduces questions but does not prescribe one strict path for students to follow when answering those questions).[1] This makes inquiry an ideal tool for integrative learning in situations where multiple students may not share the exact same pathway through a program of study. As many Jesuit universities rely on core curricula or general education requirements to carry the bulk of their integrative aims, these student-centered benefits of inquiry are particularly important. Because students often have multiple ways to fulfill these requirements, no two students can be guaranteed to complete the core curriculum with the same set of courses in the same sequence. Inquiry, particularly when structured around shared questions but not predetermined answers, responds to this challenge, creating a structure for integration that works within the structural confines of the contemporary university.

1 For the differences between "guided inquiry" and other forms, such as "open" and "structured," see Marschall and French (2018), pp. 8–12.

5. Results Obtained

After three semesters of work, we had five final lists of guiding questions to disseminate across campus and active engagement from nearly 100 faculty who expressed interest in incorporating the new questions into their courses. Feedback from these faculty highlighted the value of the questions for reframing their course design strategies to emphasize integration and support student learning at the program level without sacrificing disciplinary content and expertise.

One faculty member, for instance, explained, "I like that the guiding questions give me a framework and constant throughline that I can return to throughout the course." Participants at another focus group stressed the positive impact of incorporating one or more of the new questions directly into assignments in their classes to ensure students were reflecting on the questions explicitly and with a degree of accountability. Demonstrating the ways inquiry can unite both curricular goals and class learning objectives, one colleague shared the instructions for an assignment crafted around questions from the Basic Needs and Justice theme for a business class on human resources that asked students to explore the reasons employers might opt to support activism for

justice as "a necessary component of talent strategy." In a separate theme, another participant offered a vision for using the questions as the basis for an Ignatian conversation, modeled on the techniques for communal discernment developed by the Jesuits of Canada (2020). Generally, as one theme leader summarized the input from multiple focus groups, "Faculty reported that it is now easier to make explicit connections between course content and the theme." We found that our guiding questions gave faculty the permission and tools to think about course design in a new manner that served the integrative aims of our entire undergraduate educational experience, not just the goals of their disciplines in isolation.

6. Lessons Learned

The most important lesson we learned from our project was the need to prioritize time and space for interdisciplinary conversations among faculty if integration is to succeed. Our faculty focus groups and course design workshops allowed colleagues across campus to arrive at a newfound appreciation for the common cause they share through their commitment to our undergraduate core curriculum and especially to the themes in the Discovery Tier. Faculty routinely expressed surprise at how much their colleagues in disparate disciplines were already asking students to consider similar concerns from distinct yet complementary angles—two colleagues in different colleges even found that they were using excerpts from the same book! Simply getting faculty in the same room to share their teaching strategies opened doors to new collaborations and invited new friendships that helped the faculty see the links across their disciplines so that they could become leaders modeling integrative learning for our students.

Happily, we found that inquiry is an excellent starting point for these connections and conversations. The guiding questions for each theme were carefully designed to be broad enough to transcend disciplinary boundaries, so faculty across campus found ways to make meaningful contributions to the examination of these questions without shedding their disciplinary expertise. At the same time, the questions offered a common language that allowed faculty from different fields of study to hear these insights in ways that translated to their own disciplines, opening a dialogue rather than a set of parallel presentations. Inquiry can thus be a vital tool for promoting faculty collaboration, creating a shared sense of ownership for a program, such as the core curriculum, that does not neatly fit within the normal departmental structures of the university. By extension, inquiry can counteract the fragmenting tendency of these structures and orient course design back toward the integrative aims that inspired Jesuit education.

7. Opportunities for Improvement

Given the value of faculty conversations about pedagogical priorities and the practicalities of course design for integration, one key area where we still see opportunities for improvement is in the outreach that invites faculty participation. When we initially launched the project, we sent messages to every faculty member teaching a course in the MCC's Discovery Tier inviting them to the sessions that corresponded with their theme. This strategy had the benefit of breadth but relied too much on faculty finding ways to attend one of the focus groups or workshops on their own initiative. When the routine pressures of the semester coupled with the unanticipated anxieties of upheavals in the landscape of higher education (ranging from the budgetary pressures of the long-term impact of COVID to policy shifts threatening the essence of education), it became clear that it was often too overwhelming for faculty to carve out the time to participate in these curricular projects even though they might want to do so.[2]

In response, more targeted, strategic interventions that capitalize on faculty members' existing routines offer an avenue to expand participation in the conversations we found so rewarding from our grant project. For example, running a mini workshop during thirty minutes in a regularly scheduled faculty meeting may not have given us quite as much time to discuss the impact of inquiry on course design as we would had in the full sessions, but we would more than offset any lost time with the wider range of partners this existing meeting would introduce to the conversation. These kinds of strategic decisions are crucial, for the work of integration must truly be embraced as a shared task across the university if this Ignatian priority is to translate into the distinct context of higher education today. If our experience is any indication, faculty are hungry for the opportunity to support this work, and inquiry is an ideal tool to empower this process provided we can bring it to our colleagues rather than asking them to come to us. Given the importance of cura personalis in the Jesuit tradition, this is a fitting lesson that will keep one Ignatian priority—integration through

2 On the lingering impact of COVID on higher education, see Adler (2021).

inquiry—in contact with the entirety of the tradition it seeks to preserve (Peters, 2022).

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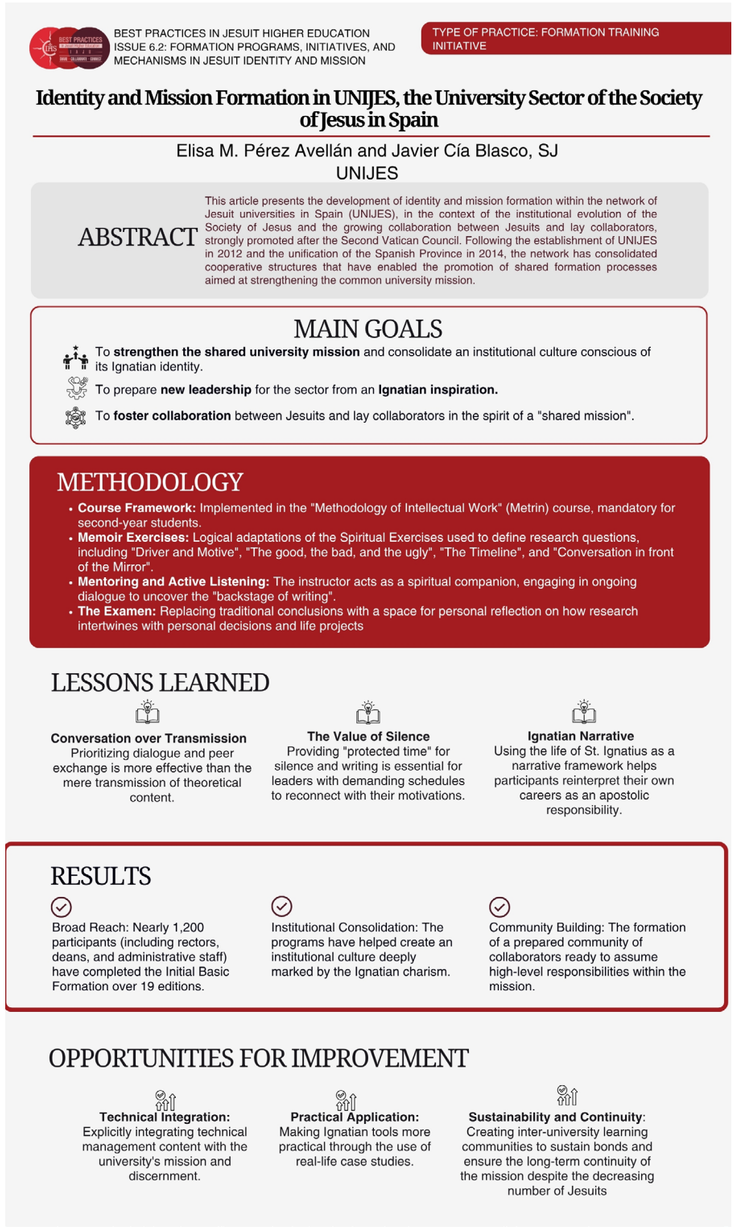

La formación en identidad y misión en UNIJES, el sector universitario de la Compañía de

FORMATION TRAINING INITIATIVE

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RESUMEN

Este artículo expone el desarrollo de la formación en identidad y misión en la red de universidades jesuitas de España (UNIJES), en el marco de la evolución institucional de la Compañía de Jesús y de la creciente colaboración entre jesuitas y laicos, fuertemente impulsada tras el Concilio Vaticano II. A partir de la creación de UNIJES en 2012 y la unificación de la Provincia de España en 2014, la red ha consolidado estructuras de cooperación que han permitido impulsar procesos formativos comunes orientados a fortalecer la misión universitaria compartida.

El artículo describe especialmente dos iniciativas formativas: la Formación Inicial Básica, dirigida a trabajadores de las universidades de la red, y el Programa de Formación de Directivos UNIJES. Ambos programas combinan aportaciones teóricas, reflexión personal, diálogo en grupo y experiencias en lugares ignacianos significativos. El marco conceptual de estas formaciones se apoya principalmente en el paradigma universitario Ledesma-Kolvenbach, que sintetiza los fines de la educación universitaria jesuita en cuatro dimensiones interrelacionadas: utilitas, iustitia, humanitas y fides. A lo largo del tiempo se ha observado cómo estas iniciativas han contribuido a consolidar una cultura

institucional más consciente de la identidad ignaciana y a fortalecer la colaboración apostólica entre jesuitas y laicos.
Finalmente, se señalan algunos desafíos futuros, como la integración de herramientas prácticas de discernimiento, el fortalecimiento de comunidades de aprendizaje interuniversitarias y la sostenibilidad de la misión de las universidades de la Compañía.

Through interdisciplinary methods spanning education, social work, culture, and communication, the project redefines formation as an active process rooted in engagement, reflection, and community involvement. With the support of project partners, young participants co-developed and led inclusive activities in heritage settings, transforming cultural spaces into platforms for learning, empowerment, and shared belonging.

ISA CULTURE exemplifies how universities can foster social responsibility while strengthening academic excellence. The project operates within a framework that aligns with values consistent with Jesuit educational principles, particularly reflecting the Universal Apostolic Preferences in its engagement with youth and outreach to marginalised groups.

The outcomes include increased employability, deeper social inclusion, and institutional innovation. By presenting the project's objectives, methodology, and impact, the article contributes to the broader reflection on how higher education can respond to contemporary challenges through collaborative, inclusive, and transformative practices.

Abstract:

This article presents the development of identity and mission formation within the network of Jesuit universities in Spain (UNIJES), in the context of the institutional evolution of the Society of Jesus and the growing collaboration between Jesuits and lay collaborators, strongly promoted after the Second Vatican Council. Following the establishment of UNIJES in 2012 and the unification of the Spanish Province in 2014, the network has consolidated cooperative structures that have enabled the promotion of shared formation processes aimed at strengthening the common university mission.

The article particularly describes two training initiatives: the Initial Basic Formation, aimed at staff members of the universities within the network, and the UNIJES Leadership Formation Program. Both programs combine theoretical contributions, personal reflection, group dialogue, and formative experiences in significant Ignatian locations. The conceptual framework of these initiatives is primarily based on the Ledesma–Kolvenbach university paradigm, which synthesizes the aims of Jesuit higher education into four interrelated dimensions: utilitas, iustitia, humanitas, and fides. Over time, these initiatives have contributed to consolidating an institutional culture that is more conscious of Ignatian identity and to strengthening apostolic collaboration between Jesuits and lay collaborators.

Finally, the article identifies several future challenges, including the integration of practical tools for discernment, the strengthening of inter-university learning communities, and the sustainability of the mission of Jesuit universities.

Contexto

A partir de 1970, con la creación por el P. Arrupe de la figura de coordinación del provincial de España, las provincias de la Compañía de Jesús en este territorio comenzaron a desarrollar y consolidar redes destinadas a articular su presencia universitaria. Este proceso culminó en 2014 con la unificación de las distintas provincias en la actual Provincia de España. Asimismo, dos años antes, en 2012, se constituyó UNIJES (Universidades Jesuitas) como red de los centros universitarios vinculados a la Compañía de Jesús en España, preservando cada uno de ellos su autonomía.

La unificación provincial otorgó a UNIJES una fuerza singular en comparación con otras redes universitarias de la Compañía, en la medida en que actúa simultáneamente como instrumento de coordinación y como cauce a través del cual el Provincial de España ejerce el gobierno de estas obras. Esta configuración ha hecho posible el que se den avances más ambiciosos en los procesos de colaboración e integración entre las instituciones.

Dentro de este proceso de trabajo en red y vinculación creciente se sitúa la iniciativa de crear una formación común en identidad y misión para jesuitas y trabajadores laicos del conjunto de la red. Es oportuno recordar que, desde el contexto eclesial, la colaboración entre jesuitas y laicos tomó especial impulso tras el Concilio Vaticano II (1962-1965). En esta línea, en la Congregación General 31, en el decreto 28, sobre el «Apostolado de la educación», se recordó la importancia de esta cooperación, la cual se presentaba como necesaria en aras de una mejora apostólica. Igualmente, en el documento Características de la Educación de la Compañía de Jesús (1986), se resaltó que la colaboración entre laicos y jesuitas se configura como un objetivo de los centros educativos de la Compañía, en tanto comunidad educativa

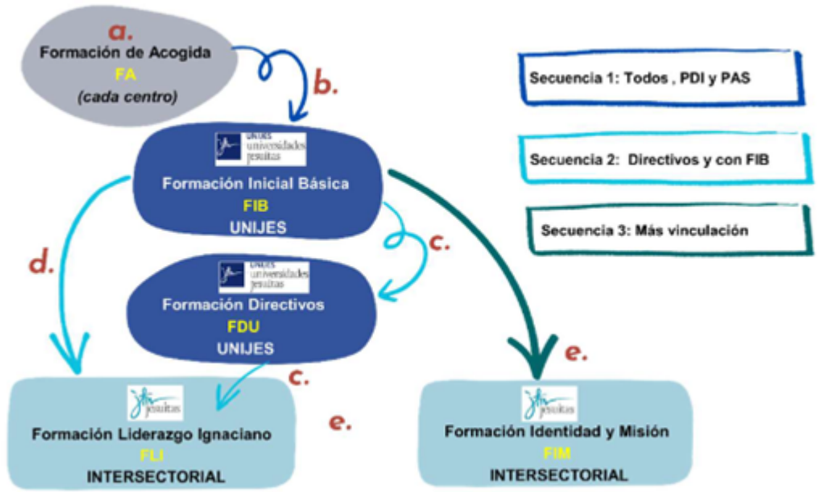
llamada a compartir la propuesta pedagógica ignaciana. Finalmente, el cambio más sustantivo al respecto se produjo en la Congregación General 34 (1995), por medio del decreto 13. En éste se reforzó la cultura de cooperación, en clave de misión compartida, que no sólo se inscribía a los laicos católicos, sino también a otros agentes colaboradores que fueran incluso de otras religiones. El punto de partida era la conciencia de que la colaboración en la mejora social es una tarea de todos. Además, se resaltó el que los jesuitas no son sólo hombres para los demás, sino con los demás. Conforme a ello, se disponía que, en las obras de la Compañía, los laicos se formaran en la tradición y espiritualidad ignaciana, así como también se les abría la posibilidad de acceder a cargos de responsabilidad en sus instituciones y en el propio gobierno de la Compañía.

En consonancia con este marco, en 1999, se organizó una primera edición de una formación conjunta en identidad y misión, bajo el título “Participar en la misión” para los centros universitarios de la red de UNIJES. Este curso recogía contenidos sobre la vida de San Ignacio de Loyola, la misión universitaria de la Compañía de Jesús y las tareas propia de la misión universitaria. Una figura clave en la puesta en marcha de este itinerario formativo fue el jesuita Melecio Agúndez (1928-2020).

A partir de 2008, se inició una segunda fase del curso, concebida como continuidad y complemento de éste. En esta ocasión, la formación se apoyó en el magisterio del prepósito general Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, sobre la pedagogía ignaciana universitaria. En 2007, Kolvenbach, dirigiéndose a los miembros del consejo directivo de la Universidad de Georgetown, reunidos en Roma, expuso, a partir de un texto de Diego de Ledesma SJ (1524-1575), quien fue prefecto de estudios del Colegio Romano y colaboró en los trabajos de preparación de la Ratio studiorum, que la educación jesuita debía atender a la utilitas, iustitia, humanitas y fides (Kolvenbach, 2007/2008). Estos cuatro términos, junto con las reflexiones que el padre general a lo largo de su mandato había ido haciendo acerca de los fines de las universidades de la Compañía, fueron utilizados por Melecio Agúndez, para conceptualizar el denominado, inicialmente, «modelo Ledesma-Kolvenbach» y que, posteriormente, se consolidó bajo el nombre de «paradigma universitario Ledesma-Kolvenbach» (Agúndez, 2008). Éste busca sintetizar y sistematizar, bajo un modelo cuatridimensional de carácter abierto y sistémico, los fines educativos de las universidades jesuitas, que mantienen entre sí una relación de interdependencia. Progresivamente, este modelo se ha ido estableciendo como un marco que permite orientar la misión universitaria de la Compañía de Jesús (Camacho Laraña, 2016; Lemke Duque e Igelmo Zaldívar, 2021; López Viguria, 2015). En esta línea, Arturo Sosa SJ, propósito general desde 2016, ha continuado haciendo referencia explícita a este paradigma en algunas de sus alocuciones, presentándolo como: «las características que han siempre distinguido la labor universitaria de la Compañía de Jesús a lo largo de los siglos» (Sosa Abascal, 2018). En definitiva, el denominado «paradigma universitario Ledesma-Kolvenbach» puede ser considerado desde una perspectiva histórico-crítica como un modelo meta-competencial que sintetizas los fines de la educación universitaria jesuita (Pérez Avellán, 2025).

En clave de misión compartida y desde este bagaje teórico, histórico y pedagógico, UNIJES, conforme se refleja en la siguiente ilustración, ha articulado dos módulos anuales bajo el nombre de Formación Inicial Básica, que junto con los cursos iniciales de acogida de los nuevos trabajadores, organizados por las propias instituciones, configuran uno de los entornos

formativos en identidad y misión, para laicos y jesuitas, más amplios de la Provincia de España. A partir de 2019, un último paso que se ha dado es la oferta de un curso, de carácter anual, para Directivos UNIJES, cuyo principal objetivo es ir preparando nuevos liderazgos para el Sector, desde una inspiración ignaciana.



Formación Inicial Básica UNIJES

Esta formación, estructurada en dos módulos, tiene como objetivo principal ofrecer una aproximación a Ignacio de Loyola, a la Compañía de Jesús y a la propuesta pedagógica ignaciana para las universidades, a través de la reflexión personal y grupal. El curso se desarrolla en dos módulos de cinco días cada uno, celebrados en lugares ignacianos con especial significado, Loyola y Salamanca, respectivamente.

A lo largo del primer módulo, que suele tener lugar en el mes de junio, se propone un itinerario formativo cuidadosamente estructurado que combina contenidos, experiencias compartidas y, de manera muy significativa, amplios espacios para la reflexión personal. Siguiendo el Paradigma Pedagógico Ignaciano (1993) no se trata sólo de un acercamiento cognoscitivo a la realidad de la que se trata, sino que se busca propiciar la experiencia personal, en aras de que cada participante pueda situarse y releer su trayectoria laboral en clave vocacional y de manera sapiencial.

Desde el inicio, se invita a situarse interiormente mediante preguntas que apelan a la propia disposición, expectativas y recorrido vital. Estas propuestas de trabajo personal no quedan aisladas, sino que se integran en un diálogo continuo con otros participantes, especialmente a través de grupos interuniversitarios, favoreciendo una reflexión compartida que respeta los tiempos y procesos individuales. El marco institucional se presenta de forma clara, permitiendo comprender la identidad y misión de UNIJES, sin perder de vista que el verdadero foco está en cómo cada persona se sitúa dentro de ese proyecto común.

Durante el encuentro, las ponencias y mesas redondas se plantean siempre como provocaciones para la reflexión, no como discursos cerrados. Tras cada aportación, se reserva tiempo para el silencio personal, el trabajo individual y el intercambio en grupo, así como para el diálogo abierto con ponentes y participantes. Este ritmo intencionado evita la saturación de contenidos y permite que cada persona pueda identificar resonancias, preguntas y mociones interiores.

La inspiración ignaciana atraviesa todo el proceso, no solo en el contenido, sino también desde la metodología: proporcionando una alternancia entre acción y contemplación, atención a la experiencia personal y práctica constante de la relectura de la propia historia vital. La figura de Ignacio de Loyola se presenta como referencia vital y pedagógica, subrayando una manera de situarse en la realidad que integra profundidad interior, compromiso y vida compartida. Las experiencias simbólicas y comunitarias refuerzan este enfoque, ofreciendo contextos que favorecen la interiorización, el silencio y la toma de conciencia.

El cierre del itinerario se realiza desde una relectura global, centrada en identificar aprendizajes, deseos y movimientos interiores. Esta evaluación final no se limita a valorar el desarrollo de las jornadas, sino que invita a proyectar lo vivido hacia el futuro. En conjunto, las jornadas destacan por crear un clima que prioriza la reflexión personal acompañada, favoreciendo una experiencia significativa, integradora y coherente con la tradición ignaciana.

En cuanto al segundo módulo, que se celebra en Salamanca en el mes de enero, el foco de la formación se sitúa en el «paradigma universitario Ledesma-Kolvenbach». El objetivo no es solo conocer conceptualmente este marco pe-

dagógico, sino favorecer que los participantes lo integren en su manera habitual de pensar, decidir y actuar dentro de la universidad.

Se parte de la experiencia previa de los asistentes y de sus expectativas ante el encuentro, situando desde el inicio a la persona como sujeto activo del proceso. Este punto de partida facilita una apropiación progresiva del modelo, que se presenta de manera panorámica para ofrecer una visión de conjunto antes de profundizar en cada una de sus dimensiones. La metodología, como en el primer módulo, combina aportaciones teóricas con espacios sistemáticos de trabajo personal, diálogo en grupo y relectura, asegurando que los contenidos no queden en un plano abstracto.

Un rasgo distintivo del planteamiento es la insistencia en no cerrar las reflexiones en conclusiones teóricas, sino en abrir preguntas operativas: cómo se encarnan estas meta-competencias en el día a día universitario, qué prácticas las favorecen y qué resistencias o límites pueden aparecer. El trabajo entre iguales y los espacios de diálogo con los ponentes ayudan a contrastar intuiciones, compartir buenas prácticas y reconocer dificultades comunes.

El proceso se cierra con una mirada proyectiva, centrada en cómo dar continuidad a lo aprendido en los propios centros y equipos. La experiencia compartida, vivida también en el contexto académico y cultural de Salamanca, deja como fruto principal una mayor conciencia del paradigma Ledesma–Kolvenbach y el desafío explícito de traducirlo en prácticas concretas, sostenidas y evaluables en el tiempo.

Formación Directivos UNIJES

Este programa surge de una convicción compartida: el liderazgo en las universidades jesuitas no puede reducirse a la adquisición de habilidades técnicas o directivas. Exige integrar el saber profesional con una comprensión profunda de la misión apostólica común. En este sentido, se orienta a formar en liderazgo y gestión a quienes desempeñan funciones directivas, reforzando especialmente los aspectos vinculados al modo ignaciano de proceder y a una visión amplia y compartida de la misión universitaria.

La estructura del programa se articula en torno a tres módulos residenciales, distribuidos a lo largo del curso académico y desarrollados en lugares ignacianos de especial significado: Loyola, Manresa y Salamanca. Estos espacios no son meros escenarios logísticos, sino que aportan una fuerte carga simbólica y pedagógica. Remiten al itinerario vital de Ignacio de Loyola, desde la conversión personal hasta el ejercicio de un liderazgo complejo y universal, ofreciendo un marco narrativo que invita a los participantes a releer su propia trayectoria vocacional y profesional.

Cada módulo se organiza en torno a tres grandes dimensiones del liderazgo universitario: la persona, la organización y el entorno. Este recorrido progresivo permite comenzar por la reflexión personal (motivaciones, estilo de liderazgo, fortalezas y límites), para avanzar hacia las cuestiones institucionales y de gobernanza, y finalmente situar la acción universitaria en su contexto social, cultural y eclesial. De este modo, el proceso formativo favorece una mirada integral y coherente del ejercicio directivo.

Uno de los rasgos más característicos de la Formación de Directivos UNIJES, es su enfoque pedagógico, que prioriza la conversación frente a la transmisión de contenidos, como también ocurre con la Formación Inicial Básica, anteriormente expuesta. Las ponencias magistrales tienen un papel acotado y están siempre al servicio de la reflexión. El núcleo del programa lo constituyen el trabajo personal, el diálogo en pequeños grupos y las puestas en común, creando un clima que favorece la escucha, el contraste de experiencias y el discernimiento compartido.

Se cuidan de manera especial los tiempos de silencio y reflexión personal. Estos espacios, protegidos y deliberadamente previstos, permiten detenerse, escribir, releer la propia experiencia y reconectar con las motivaciones más profundas. Las evaluaciones de los participantes subrayan reiteradamente el valor de poder disponer de este tiempo para uno mismo en medio de agendas directivas habitualmente muy exigentes.

Del mismo modo, el intercambio entre iguales resulta clave. Directivos de los distintos centros universitarios de la red de UNIJES descubren que comparten retos, preguntas y horizontes. Desde ahí, la conversación deja de ser estratégica para convertirse en verdaderamente apostólica, reforzando la conciencia de misión compartida y el compromiso con un liderazgo al servicio del bien común.

Evaluación y oportunidades de mejora

A lo largo de los últimos veinticinco años, la

formación en identidad y misión en las instituciones universitarias de la Compañía de Jesús en España ha representado un aprendizaje profundo y estratégico para todo el sector y la Provincia. Esta experiencia ha generado una mayor conciencia, realista y ambiciosa, sobre cómo avanzar en la colaboración en la misión, fomentando una sensibilidad compartida entre jesuitas y laicos que permite trabajar de manera fluida y coordinada. Paralelamente, a partir de evaluaciones de carácter longitudinal podemos afirmar que se ha ido consolidando una cultura institucional más marcada por el carisma ignaciano, y se han creado comunidades de colaboradores preparados para asumir responsabilidades en la misión.

El programa de Formación Básica Inicial, con sus 19 ediciones, ha sido uno de los pilares de este proceso. Cerca de 1.200 participantes —rectores, decanos, profesores, investigadores y personal de administración y servicios, y recientemente también de Portugal— han pasado por dos módulos de cinco días, experimentando un clima de encuentro que combina la reflexión personal con el diálogo en grupo. Las evaluaciones destacan la oportunidad de compartir experiencias con colegas de distintas universidades y disponer de tiempo protegido para la reflexión, elemento esencial para interiorizar los aprendizajes y profundizar en la espiritualidad ignaciana y en la comprensión de la misión de las universidades jesuitas. Además, actividades como mesas redondas y puestas en común permiten que los participantes compartan dudas, inquietudes y testimonios, dinamizando la formación y consolidando la sensación de pertenencia a una misión compartida.

En cuanto a la Formación de Directivos UNIJES, entre las lecciones clave del programa, se destaca la eficacia del marco tridimensional (persona, organización y entorno), que permite un liderazgo equilibrado, integrando autoconocimiento, gobernanza y compromiso social. El crecimiento personal requiere tiempo intencional, y los espacios para silencio, escritura y discernimiento son centrales. Igualmente, se ha constatado, a través de las evaluaciones, como la conversación entre iguales transforma el aprendizaje, especialmente en temas como gobernanza y estrategia. Igualmente, los participantes exponen que la narrativa ignaciana, basada en el itinerario de Ignacio de Loyola, les inspira a interpretar la propia trayectoria profesional como vocación y responsabilidad apostólica.

No obstante, persisten desafíos: integrar de manera explícita contenidos técnicos con misión y discernimiento, hacer más prácticos ciertos instrumentos ignacianos mediante casos reales, formalizar intercambios reflexivos entre participantes y garantizar la continuidad formativa a través de comunidades de aprendizaje que sostengan los vínculos interuniversitarios y refuercen la misión compartida.

El contexto actual, marcado por la disminución numérica de jesuitas, añade un desafío adicional. Sin una presencia mínima del cuerpo religioso carismático, mantener toda una estructura apostólica resulta difícil. Sin embargo, la inversión sostenida de recursos humanos y económicos y los frutos históricos de la formación muestran un camino esperanzado y creativo: es posible, no sin esfuerzos, desarrollar un sector apostólico sinodal, donde todos, jesuitas y laicos, se pongan, como compañeros en la misión, al servicio de la misión de la Iglesia. Y es que el presente y futuro de las instituciones universitarias jesuitas dependen, en buena medida, «de lograr la colaboración en la misión entre los relativamente pocos jesuitas presentes en ellas y la numerosa cantidad de personas que las hacen posibles» (De Statu Societatis Iesu, 2023, p. 112). Además, al igual que en el itinerario de Ignacio, la transformación personal de los líderes universitarios de hoy puede generar una creatividad organizativa y un impacto duradero, configurando de manera significativa el futuro de la universidad jesuita en España, teniendo presente la responsabilidad de que «la educación universitaria es una de las más importantes contribuciones de la Compañía de Jesús a la presencia evangelizadora de la Iglesia en el mundo contemporáneo» (De Statu Societatis Iesu, 2023, p. 109).

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BEST PRACTICES IN JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION
ISSUE 6.2: FORMATION PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN JESUIT IDENTITY AND MISSION

TYPE OF PRACTICE: FORMATION

Intercultural Practices in the Jesuit University System of Mexico

Manuel Antonio Espinosa Sánchez
Jesuit University System (SUJ) of Mexico (including ITESO, Ibero Puebla, and Ibero Tijuana)

ABSTRACT

Mexico is a complex territory where diverse cultures, ethnicities, and ways of life coexist, often in conflict. Adopting a decolonial perspective, this work summarizes a systematic review of practices within the Jesuit University System (SUJ) in Mexico. It categorizes these efforts into three primary areas: teaching, research, and outreach (linkage), offering a comprehensive overview of how these universities approach interculturality within their specific sociocultural contexts.

MAIN GOALS

Establish a Collaborative Network
Create an institutional network of teachers to animate and consolidate intercultural processes across all SUJ universities.

Promote Horizontal Relationships
Foster university environments defined by anti-racism, empathy, and respect, where diversity is seen as a source of mutual enrichment.

Integral Formation
Train students to be "conscious, competent, compassionate, and committed" professionals who respond to the most pressing needs of marginalized social subjects.

Deconstruct "Dialects":
Challenge the colonial habit of labeling indigenous languages as "dialects" to discriminate against them, promoting their recognition as original linguistic configurations

INTIATIVES

ITESO (Teaching)
The Indigenous Intercultural Community Processes project, where students spend up to 16 weeks living and collaborating in indigenous territories in Jalisco, Durango, or Nayarit.

Ibero Puebla (Outreach/Linkage)
The Pedro Arrupe, SJ Intercultural Program of University Life (PIVU), which provides 100% scholarships (including tuition, degree fees, and daily meals) to students from indigenous or Afro-descendant communities.

Ibero Tijuana (Research)
The Frontier Human Interaction Laboratory, an action-research project that analyzes the psychological and social impacts of migration on families and children in the border region.

RESULTS

Qualitative Transformation
The most significant result is qualitative—forming graduates who are deeply committed to social justice and linked to those living in "frontier" conditions.

Conceptual Shift
Participants report a shift in perception, moving from seeing diversity as a set of "differences" to viewing it as a plane of equality and enriched learning.

Institutional Openness
The research, involving 87 interviews across 8 universities, revealed a high level of openness among faculty to systematically integrate interculturality into their institutional fabric.

Ongoing Challenge
The primary challenge identified is reducing "our own ignorance" and ensuring that institutional practices catch up to the universities' high conceptual aspirations.

Prácticas de interculturalidad en el Sistema Universitario Jesuita de México[1]

EVALUATION INITIATIVE

MANUEL ANTONIO ESPINOSA SÁNCHEZ
ITESO

RESUMEN

México es un territorio que integra a diversas culturas, etnias y modos de vida que coexisten, que interactúan o que están en conflicto. Este trabajo hace una breve recuperación de este contexto sociocultural y se posiciona desde una mirada decolonial al respecto. En un segundo momento, se hace una síntesis de un trabajo de sistematización sobre nociones y prácticas universitarias entorno a la interculturalidad en el Sistema Universitario Jesuita, y se destacan tres tipos de prácticas: docencia, investigación y vinculación. Finalmente, se hace una recuperación de cada práctica y se ofrece una mirada comprehensiva de los resultados preliminares de dicho ejercicio.

ABSTRACT

Mexico is a territory that integrates diverse cultures, ethnicities, and ways of life that coexist, interact, or are in conflict. This paper briefly reviews this sociocultural context and positions itself from a decolonial perspective. Secondly, it summarizes a systematic review of university notions and practices surrounding interculturality in the Jesuit University System, highlighting three types of practices: teaching, research, and outreach. Finally, each practice is reviewed and a comprehensive overview of the preliminary results of this exercise is offered.

1. Este trabajo es un producto de la investigación denominada: “Percepciones y prácticas interculturales en el SUJ: Experiencias para la construcción de una agenda universitaria pluricultural, financiada por el Iteso, Universidad Jesuita en Guadalajara”.

1. La interculturalidad, la pluriculturalidad y la multiculturalidad

Asistimos a un resquebrajamiento de los conceptos y al desfondamiento de los significados y, como todo buen ejercicio en el contexto de la posverdad -o del gatopardismo, como se decía en los ochenta-, es necesario clarificar desde dónde se expone y analiza la cuestión intercultural en el Sistema Universitario Jesuita (SUJ) de México.

Para este fin, un recurso valioso es el trabajo de Chaires (2021) en el que de manera muy sucinta recupera las tres categorías básicas que dan título a este encabezado (Tabla 1).

Categoría	Definición	Autores
Cultura	"todo complejo que incluye el conocimiento, las creencias, el arte, la moral, el derecho, las costumbres y cualesquiera otros hábitos y capacidades adquiridas por el hombre en cuanto miembro de la sociedad".	Tylor (1975:29)
Cultura Social	"Una cultura que proporciona a sus miembros unas formas de vida significativas a través de todo el abanico de actividades humanas, incluyendo la vida social, educativa, religiosa, recreativa y económica". Lo que incluye, según Chaires (2021), territorio, lengua, arte, gestos, etc., siguiendo a Taylor (2009).	Kymlicka (1996:112)
Pluriculturalidad	Diversas culturas que conviven en un mismo territorio, es decir, la presencia simultánea de dos o más tendencias ideológicas y grupos sociales que interactúan en una unidad estatal.	Bernabé (2012)
Multiculturalidad	Presencia de diferentes culturas en un mismo territorio, que se limitan a coexistir, pero no a convivir. Se caracteriza por que las diferentes culturas no interactúan necesariamente, sino que prevalece un escenario de segregación y de negación de la convivencia.	Bernabé (2012)
Interculturalidad	Es una categoría que supone "entre culturas", que lleva al entendimiento "entre" las diferentes culturas que habitan un mismo territorio. Se entiende como un modelo de diversidad cultural en donde los factores esenciales serán la práctica de integración, así como el rechazo a toda discriminación y la promoción de una cultura pública.	Bernabé (2012) Wences (2015)

Tabla 1. Recuperación de conceptos de cultura, pluriculturalidad, multiculturalidad e interculturalidad. Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en Chaires (2021:106-107).

Según Del Val (2004), la identidad nacional en México durante el siglo pasado habría de hacer referencia a tres hitos que tendrían la finalidad de invisibilizar la diversidad cultural: la civilización azteca, la Virgen de Guadalupe y el Partido Revolucionario Institucional.

Siguiendo esas ideas:

> En México se congregan las diferentes expresiones culturales, es decir, se pueden apreciar manifestaciones de pluriculturalidad como multiculturalidad e interculturalidad. Llama la atención que la relación con las comunidades indígenas es de coexistencia y no de convivencia (…) En México existe una identidad nacional occidental por encima de las identidades culturales locales también occidentales, la cual se caracteriza por el idioma, la religión, la raza mestiza y una estructura jurídico-institucional (Chaires, 2021:107).

Crece el consenso entre la comunidad académica en México que, el contexto societal en este país no es sino una amalgama de densidades, texturas y dimensiones culturales que articulan a su vez distintas esferas de la vida cotidiana que antes se denominaban cuestiones económicas, políticas o ecológicas, para conformar subconjuntos socioterritoriales de complejidad barroca contemporánea en constante reinvención y puja en la que a veces sólo coexisten, otras interactúan, empero que la mayoría de las veces y de distintas formas se encuentran en disputa:

> Insistir en lo catastrófico, desastroso sin compensación, de lo que aconteció entonces allí: la destrucción de la civilización prehispánica y sus culturas, seguida de la eliminación de las nueve décimas partes de la población que vivía dentro de ella. Recordar que, en paralelo a su huella destructiva, este siglo conoce también, promovida desde el discurso cristiano y protegida por la Corona, la puesta en práctica de ciertas utopías renacentistas que intentan construir sociedades híbridas o sincréticas y convertir así el sangriento "encuentro de los dos mundos" en una oportunidad de salvación recíproca de un mundo por el otro. Considerar, en fin, que el siglo XVI americano, tan determinante en el proceso modernizador de la civilización europea, dio ya a ésta la experiencia temprana de que la occidentalización del mundo no puede pasar por la destrucción de lo no occidental y la limpieza del territorio de expansión; que el trato en interioridad con el "otro", aunque "peligroso" para la propia "identidad", es sin embargo indispensable (Echeverría, 2000:61-62).

Este es, pues, el contexto en el que en México se aborda la interculturalidad. Esto es, desde las condiciones de periferia (Prebisch, 1949), de subalternidad (Chakravorty, 2003), de despojo

(Harvey, 2005), de subsunción y de explotación multidimensional: económica (Bartra, 2009), cultural (Bonfil, 1990), ecológica (Martínez-Alier, 2021), política (Sartori, 2001), educativa (Urrutia-Delatorre et. al, 2022), etc. de los sujetos y colectividades en condiciones de desigualdad social.

Dicho de otra forma, el contexto mexicano en el que se analizan las nociones y prácticas de interculturalidad en las universidades del SUJ es uno de gran exigencia porque las diversas identidades y sus manifestaciones se encuentran atravesadas por disputas coloniales de dominación -y hasta de exterminio- étnica de blancos sobre mestizos, de mestizos sobre originarios, de originarios hacia minorías; de despojo de territorios ancestrales para megaproyectos occidentales capitalistas y de explotación de los saberes tradicionales y su folklorización para fines turísticos; en definitiva, de invisibilizar la pluralidad étnica y la diversidad cultural mediante el extractivismo académico y corporativo que se continúa ejerciendo desde las agencias multilaterales y desde las universidades, en esta coyuntura se inscribe este trabajo de campo y los resultados que se muestran a continuación en el que genuinamente, docentes y autoridades, apuestan por qué:

> (…) la percepción que la comunidad tenía sobre la escuela como la portadora de conocimientos, y a los docentes como el medio para adquirirlos, cambió de forma gradual, pues la institución dejó de ser un lugar hermético y pasó a ser un espacio de la comunidad, ese espacio donde se aprende a través de la convivencia y vivencia de los pobladores (González, 2022:158).

Con estas precisiones, en el siguiente apartado, se describe cómo se construyó el análisis de la interculturalidad en el SUJ[2] y los principales énfasis metodológicos.

2. El SUJ en México: un acercamiento metodológico

De ninguna manera este ejercicio analítico tiene pretensiones conclusivas sino más bien es un acercamiento exploratorio en un periodo de trabajo que inició en agosto de 2023 y que habrá de concluir para agosto de 2025, de manera que acá se consignan las reflexiones de quien es autor y aún estando en marcha el trabajo en cuestión.

Sin embargo, sí pretende poner sobre la palestra lo que más resalta en torno a las prácticas de interculturalidad en las diversas universidades,

misma que, como se verá, está directamente relacionada con su contexto socioterritorial.

Metodológicamente, esta investigación sobre percepciones y prácticas de interculturalidad tiene como puerto de llegada la conformación de una red institucional de docentes que anime los procesos de cambio y consolidación de la interculturalidad en las universidades del SUJ, por lo que se entiende como una investigación-acción participativa (Lewin, 1946).

Habiéndose identificado a ocho informantes clave del tema de la interculturalidad en cada universidad, se procedió a realizar un sondeo con cada informante para identificar a profesores y programas que estén realizando prácticas o aportes de interculturalidad en materia de docencia, investigación o vinculación.

En un segundo momento, se agendaron encuentros presenciales en cada universidad para entrevistar y conocer las percepciones de las y los participantes en tales iniciativas de interculturalidad y para conocer lo más posible en qué consisten sus prácticas, sus iniciativas, sus programas o sus líneas de acción (Tabla 2).

Universidad	Informante clave	Fecha de visita	Número de entrevistas	Entrevistadores
Iteso Universidad Jesuita en Guadalajara (ITESO)	Irene Alvarado Saravia	Durante junio y julio de 2024	18	Irene Alvarado Saravia y Claudia Bucio Feregrino
Universidad Iberoamericana en Tijuana (Ibero Tijuana)	Rosario León Medina	13 al 15 de mayo de 2024	4	Manuel A. Espinosa S.
Universidad Iberoamericana en Torreón (Ibero Torreón)	Eiko Gavaldón Oseki	18 y 19 de abril de 2024	15	Yasmani Santana y Danielle Strickland
Universidad Iberoamericana en Ciudad de México (Ibero CD MX)	Stefano Claudio Sartollero	11 y 12 de junio de 2024	6	Yasmani Santana y Danielle Strickland
Universidad Iberoamericana en Puebla (Ibero Puebla)	Dafne Reyes Jurado	2 al 4 de mayo de 2024	16	Manuel A. Espinosa S. y Danielle Strickland

1. Este trabajo es un producto de la investigación denominada: “Percepciones y prácticas interculturales en el SUJ: Experiencias para la construcción de una agenda universitaria pluricultural, financiada por el Iteso, Universidad Jesuita en Guadalajara”.

Universidad	Informante clave	Fecha de visita	Número de entrevistas	Entrevistadores
Universidad Iberoamericana en León (Ibero León)	Lorena Jiménez Quiñones	27 y 28 de mayo de 2024	8	Yasmani Santana y Pilar Rodríguez
Tecnológico Universitario del Valle de Chalco (TUVCH)	María del Mar Tejeda	12 marzo de 2024	6	Yasmani Santana
Instituto Superior Intercultural Ayuuk (ISIA)	Edilberto Cardoso Vásquez	13 al 16 de mayo de 2024	14	Ximena de la Mora y Danielle Strickland

Tabla 2. Trabajo de campo y entrevistas en el SUJ. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Durante las visitas de campo, el común denominador en las 87 entrevistas formales semiestructuradas fue la gran apertura de parte de las y los docentes y universitarios que reconocieron la relevancia del planteamiento y la necesidad de hacerlo de manera sistemática en todo el SUJ para que sea posible la construcción de procesos comprehensivos pero adecuados a la institucionalidad de cada universidad y su contexto.

En este sentido, las universidades más cercanas a formulaciones explícitas de prácticas y percepciones reflexivas sobre la interculturalidad crítica en sus contextos institucionales y sociales fueron el ITESO, la Ibero CD Mx, la Ibero León, la Ibero Puebla, el TUVCH y el ISIA. Las Ibero Torreón y Tijuana, sin embargo, identificaron que sus contextos socioterritoriales les han urgido al abordaje de las interacciones de identidades colectivas y de las construcciones de sentido desde la perspectiva del fenómeno de la migración, como se verá a continuación.

3. Percepciones y prácticas interculturales

Como ya se mencionó anteriormente, además de la visita a las universidades y entrevistas que se realizaron a las personas involucradas en el tema, también fueron invitadas a un encuentro de discusión de resultados los días 4 y 5 de noviembre de 2024 en Iteso, Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara para discutir, reformular y, en su caso, validar los hallazgos que a continuación se presentan, teniendo la participación de siete delegados de las ocho universidades que integran el SUJ.

En general, se identifican que las nociones dominantes sobre interculturalidad en las universidades tienen en común: 1) la interculturalidad es un reconocimiento de la gran diversidad de modos de pensar, de entender y vivir la vida; 2) este concepto implica horizontalidad, antirracismo, empatía, respeto, entre los universitarios y sus contextos; 3) esta noción implica un proceso continuo de construcción colectiva que podrá irse modificando en el tiempo; 4) supone una convivencia y diálogo para el enriquecimiento de las culturas de los participantes; 5) en las universidades el concepto se relaciona cotidianamente con las comunidades indígenas y con los grupos universitarios extranjeros; y 6) un abordaje de la interculturalidad universitaria requiere un trabajo de conocimiento y diálogo de la identidad individual, institucional y social.

De manera muy particular, cada universidad ha encontrado distintas maneras de concretizar lo anterior y existe una amplia gama de prácticas que versan sobre la interculturalidad dentro (Figura 1) y fuera (Figura 2) del campus.

Figura 1. Prácticas curriculares interculturales en el SUJ. Fuente: Documento interno hallazgos preliminares trabajo de campo SUJ.

Figura 2. Prácticas extracurriculares interculturales en el SUJ. Fuente: Documento interno hallazgos preliminares trabajo de campo SUJ.

Específicamente, a continuación, se destacan las siguientes prácticas de 3 universidades que resultan peculiares en todo el SUJ, explícitas en lo que a interculturalidad refiere y diseñadas institucionalmente para construir interculturalidad y que vienen al caso para el tema de esta sistematización (Tabla 3). Se omiten, por fin de mantener reducido el texto, prácticas del ISIA, del TUVCH y de las Ibero CDMX, Torreón y León, dado que la interculturalidad se encuentra transversalizada en todas las universidades y porque se ha circunscrito este trabajo a identificar tres tipos de prácticas: docencia, investiga-

ción y vinculación, que son las tareas sustantivas de las universidades jesuitas en México.

Tabla 3. Prácticas de interculturalidad relevantes en 3 universidades del SUJ. Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en reportes de trabajo de campo.

Universidad del SUJ	Descripción	Tipo	Contexto	Objetivos y Método	Resultados
ITESO	Proyecto de Aplicación Profesional denominado Procesos Comunitarios Indígenas Interculturales que trabaja en 3 territorios en Jalisco, Durango y Nayarit.	Docencia	Las comunidades originarias de estos estados pueden recibir por una estancia de todo el semestre (16 semanas) o menos a estudiantes que colaboren en los procesos comunitarios que se han planteado cada autoridad tradicional.	Es una materia de 16 créditos que articula Servicio social, Prácticas profesionales y Seminario de Tesina para conjugar todo en una experiencia profesional y comunitaria que pone en práctica los saberes profesionales de los estudiantes en sus últimos semestres.	Además de estudiantes graduados, se recupera que "hay una intencionalidad en este programa para reconstruir, colaborar, reconocer, favorecer espacios de respeto, de convivencia, para colaborar en esa, colaborar como, favorecer esquemas que garanticen esos derechos" (Saravia, 2024:10).
Ibero Puebla	La universidad cuenta con el Programa Intercultural de Vida Universitaria Pedro Arrupe, SJ (PIVU) para estudiantes comprometidos con sus pueblos originarios.	Vinculación	Existen estudiantes universitarios originarios de comunidades indígenas o afro-descendientes que tienen fuertes carencias económicas, este programa otorga una beca que cubre el 100% del costo de los créditos, del costo de titulación, una comida de lunes a sábado, el acceso a actividades universitarias y los servicios escolares aplicables al programa de estudio.		Además de estudiantes graduados, se recupera que "hay una intencionalidad en este programa para reconstruir, colaborar, reconocer, favorecer espacios de respeto, de convivencia, para colaborar en esa, colaborar como, favorecer esquemas que garanticen esos derechos" (Saravia, 2024:10).
Ibero Tijuana	Laboratorio de interacción humana de la frontera que consiste en proyectos que relacionan procesos psicológicos, sociales y fenómenos migratorios.	Investigación	Tijuana es una ciudad de paso migratorio de poblaciones en movilidad hacia los EEUU y esta práctica analiza cómo se afectan procesos psicológicos de las familias migrantes, en particular salud mental, interacciones sociales, y el desarrollo psicosocial de infantes.	Como proyecto de investigación-acción, se colabora de cerca con los albergues de migrantes en la región y en estos proyectos se involucran equipos de estudiantes y docentes de psicología, nutrición, etc. que a la vez que ofrecen servicios paliativos a las y los migrantes, también se acompaña al equipo de trabajo de los refugios migrantes.	Además de contar con productos académicos de cada investigación, han resultado prácticas de trabajo docente-estudiantil, donde se combina con voluntariado. También se ha vinculado trabajos o proyectos de clase con el desarrollo de algunas cápsulas en video que han facilitado, por ejemplo, en el albergue Espacio Migrante, que es un albergue como muy reconocido en la ciudad de Tijuana.

Todas las universidades del SUJ en México tienen muy presente en su horizonte institucional y de manera transversal diversos grados, profundidades y densidades sobre la interculturalidad. Existen prácticas de interculturalidad que sobresalen de otras que se encuentran más bien presente en todo el proceso de formación, investigación y vinculación de tal forma que es muy difícil destacar un tipo de práctica en particular, como es el caso del ISIA en Oaxaca, por ejemplo.

Sin embargo, así como cada universidad jesuita ha logrado configurar su talante intercultural y expresarlo de manera que responda de la mejor forma a los imperativos de su comunidad universitaria y de su contexto social, es evidente que el entorno global cambiante coloca sobre la mesa retos nuevos que las estructuras universitarias tardan en reconocer, asimilar y responder.

Los retos a los que se enfrentan las ocho universidades del SUJ -según lo recuperado del trabajo de campo y del foro realizado para identificar hallazgos- se sintetizan en la Figura 3, destacando una inadecuación entre las aspiraciones conceptuales y las prácticas institucionales que no terminan por responder cabalmente a los retos actuales.

Una de las mayores lecciones aprendidas de este trabajo de investigación colaborativo con académicas y profesores de las universidades del SUJ se puede sintetizar así:

> (…) "incluso de que, si ya se reconocen como lenguas y se le siguen diciendo dialectos, cuando ya también hay estudios que hablan de todo e implican una configuración lingüística por la originalidad de sus ancestros, pero se sigue diciendo

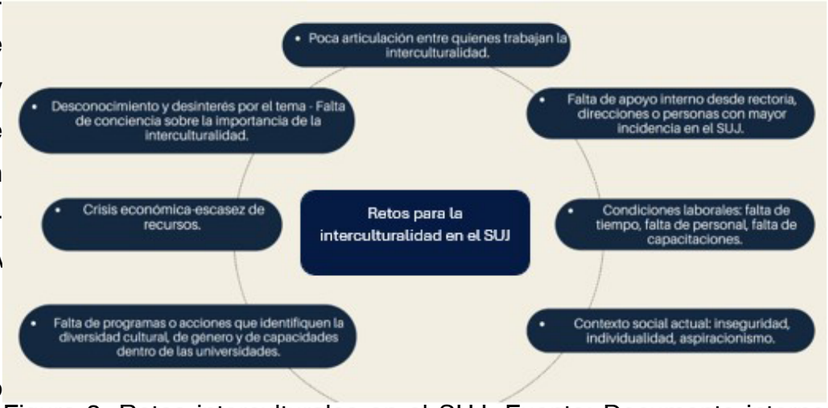

Figura 3. Retos interculturales en el SUJ. Fuente: Documento interno hallazgos preliminares trabajo de campo SUJ.

dialecto para discriminarlo. Entonces hay cuestiones o secuelas de eso que se le llama colonialismo: todas estas cuestiones que tienen que ver con discriminar lo propio y valorar lo extranjero, lo ajeno. Y pues el reto es ¿cómo capacitar? Entre ambos actores, docentes, a lo mejor indígenas, y personal, que tenga algún vínculo con los pueblos originarios, empezar a hacer examinación de información y trabajo en conjunto para poder estar en sintonía y tener prácticas interculturales más abiertas. También hay generaciones nuevas, gente mucho más abierta a valorar, a luchar y reconocer. El principal reto es reducir nuestra propia ignorancia de lo que sabemos" (García, 2024:10).

De manera que esta constatación conduce la reflexión al inicio del este trabajo, es decir, al reconocimiento de un contexto estructural en el que devienen las universidades del SUJ y sus programas de docencia, investigación y vinculación que van a contraflujo de las dinámicas hegemónicas coloniales, asimétricas, dominantes.

4. Conclusiones

El territorio mexicano es una amalgama étnica de culturas y cosmogonías que coexisten, interactúan y, en la mayoría de los casos, son excluidas e invisibilizadas por la cultura hegemónica occidental.

Reconocerse en el actual contexto histórico colonial y como universidades jesuitas plantearse la interculturalidad de manera institucional supone retos y desafíos particulares a cada región y su dinámica social que han de ser entendidos y formulados de manera específica. Es así como en este trabajo de investigación se resaltan tres tipos de prácticas de interculturalidad en ITESO y en la Ibero de Tijuana y de Puebla; de docencia, de investigación y de vinculación, respectivamente.

Si bien hay resultados cuantitativos que podrían parecer magros a la luz de los desafíos actuales, los mayores resultados que se aprecian son de carácter cualitativo: cómo son los estudiantes que se forman en las universidades jesuitas en México. En este rubro, destacan su compromiso con las personas, su quehacer profesional que responde a las necesidades más apremiantes y que las comunidades universitarias se encuentran profundamente vinculadas con los sujetos sociales de frontera.

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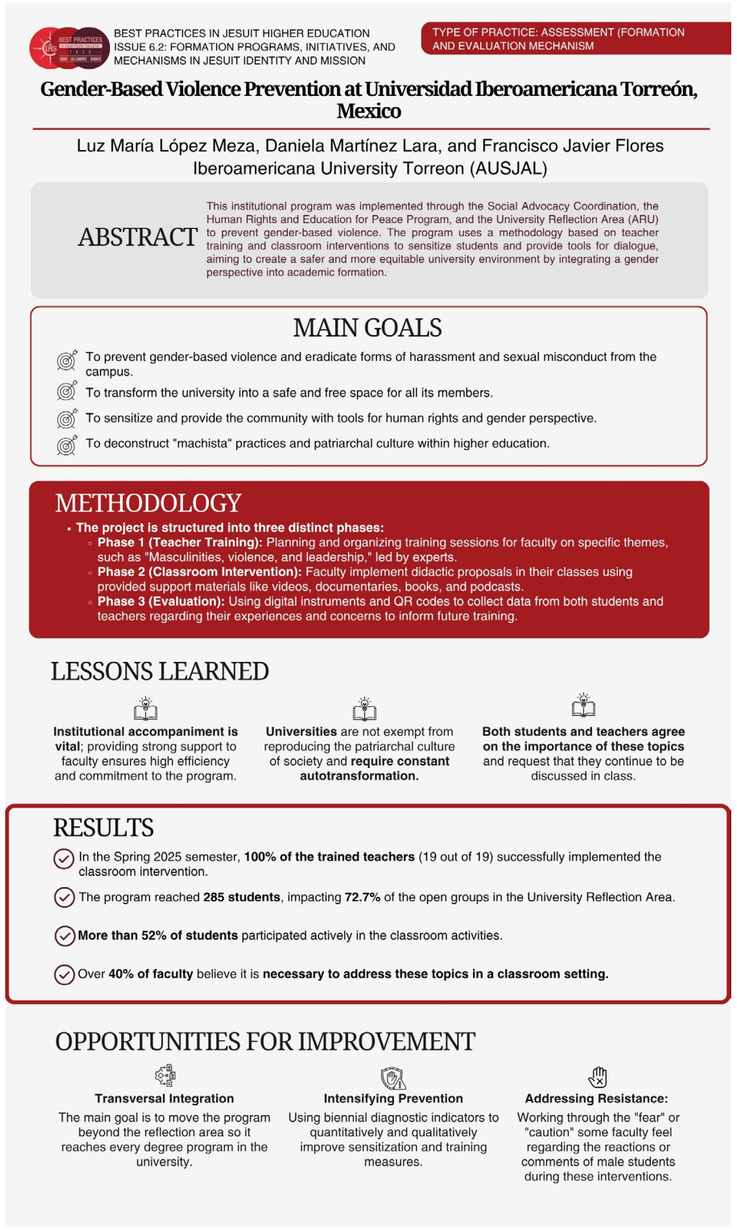

BEST PRACTICES IN JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION
ISSUE 6.2: FORMATION PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN JESUIT IDENTITY AND MISSION

TYPE OF PRACTICE: ASSESSMENT (FORMATION AND EVALUATION MECHANISM

Gender-Based Violence Prevention at Universidad Iberoamericana Torreón, Mexico

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ABSTRACT

This institutional program was implemented through the Social Advocacy Coordination, the Human Rights and Education for Peace Program, and the University Reflection Area (ARU) to prevent gender-based violence. The program uses a methodology based on teacher training and classroom interventions to sensitize students and provide tools for dialogue, aiming to create a safer and more equitable university environment by integrating a gender perspective into academic formation.

MAIN GOALS

- To prevent gender-based violence and eradicate forms of harassment and sexual misconduct from the campus.
- To transform the university into a safe and free space for all its members.
- To sensitize and provide the community with tools for human rights and gender perspective.
- To deconstruct "machista" practices and patriarchal culture within higher education.

METHODOLOGY

- **The project is structured into three distinct phases:**
  - **Phase 1 (Teacher Training):** Planning and organizing training sessions for faculty on specific themes, such as "Masculinities, violence, and leadership," led by experts.
  - **Phase 2 (Classroom Intervention):** Faculty implement didactic proposals in their classes using provided support materials like videos, documentaries, books, and podcasts.
  - **Phase 3 (Evaluation):** Using digital instruments and QR codes to collect data from both students and teachers regarding their experiences and concerns to inform future training.

LESSONS LEARNED

Institutional accompaniment is vital; providing strong support to faculty ensures high efficiency and commitment to the program.

Universities are not exempt from reproducing the patriarchal culture of society and **require constant autotransformation.**

Both students and teachers agree on the importance of these topics and request that they continue to be discussed in class.

RESULTS

- In the Spring 2025 semester, **100% of the trained teachers** (19 out of 19) successfully implemented the classroom intervention.
- The program reached **285 students**, impacting **72.7%** of the open groups in the University Reflection Area.
- **More than 52% of students** participated actively in the classroom activities.
- Over **40% of faculty** believe it is **necessary to address these topics in a classroom setting.**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Transversal Integration
The main goal is to move the program beyond the reflection area so it reaches every degree program in the university.

Intensifying Prevention
Using biennial diagnostic indicators to quantitatively and qualitatively improve sensitization and training measures.

Addressing Resistance:
Working through the "fear" or "caution" some faculty feel regarding the reactions or comments of male students during these interventions.

Prevención de violencias de género en la Universidad Iberoamericana Torreón-México

ASSESSMENT

LUZ MARÍA LÓPEZ MEZA, DANIELA MARTÍNEZ LARA, AND FRANCISCO JAVIER FLORES
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RESUMEN

La Universidad Iberoamericana Torreón, a través de la Coordinación de Incidencia Social, el Programa de Derechos Humanos y Educación para la Paz, y el Área de Reflexión Universitaria (ARU) implementó un programa institucional para prevenir las violencias de género entre integrantes de la comunidad universitaria.

A través de la capacitación de docentes del Área de Reflexión Universitaria (ARU) en asuntos de género se buscó sensibilizarles y otorgarles las herramientas necesarias para que en un segundo momento ellos/as organizaran una intervención con sus estudiantes en la que abordaran el tema seleccionado con base en los resultados del Diagnóstico sobre Violencia de Género en estudiantes de nuestra Universidad. Se utilizó una metodología basada en formación, trabajo colaborativo y desarrollo de contenidos adaptados a distintas asignaturas para generar un espacio de diálogo y reflexión en torno a las experiencias del alumnado con el objetivo de prevenir las violencias de género en la universidad.

Al final de cada intervención, se realizaron evaluaciones tanto con docentes como con estudiantes para medir el impacto y eficacia del proyecto. En general, esta estrategia representa un esfuerzo por crear un ambiente universitario más seguro y equitativo, integrando la perspectiva de género en la formación académica.

Contexto

Las universidades son espacios privilegiados para la deconstrucción de las prácticas machistas en los que se puede formar jóvenes con perspectiva de derechos humanos y de género, para lo que se necesita una sólida autocrítica para tomar conciencia de la cultura patriarcal en la que estamos inmersos/as y que por lo tanto se reproduce también en las instituciones de educación superior (Lagarde, 2021).

La tarea pendiente de todas las universidades es lograr erradicar de sus campus las formas de violencias de género que se dan específicamente en los espacios educativos, como el acoso y el hostigamiento sexual (Lagarde, 2021).

Es por ello que la Universidad tiene el deber de idear, diseñar e implementar medidas de prevención de la violencia de género, que contribuyan a transformar a la Ibero Torreón en un espacio seguro y libre de violencias para sus alumnas y alumnos. Además la violencia que cotidianamente sufren y temen las mujeres vulnera sus derechos, libertades y capacidad de disfrutar plenamente su vida.

La Universidad Iberoamericana Torreón dentro de su Protocolo para la prevención y atención de violencia y discriminación por razones de género u orientación sexual, en el artículo 5, menciona las obligaciones que tiene el Comité de Género en cuanto a la prevención de esta violencia. El primer inciso establece que se debe realizar un diagnóstico cada dos años sobre el comportamiento del alumnado y de la comunidad universitaria en materia de violencia de género y discriminación por razones de género u orientación sexual.

Dicho diagnóstico deberá aportar indicadores para valorar la necesidad de intensificar, cuantitativamente y/o cualitativamente la aplicación de otras medidas de prevención, sensibilización y formación; y considerar el diagnóstico como valor estadístico de referencia para llevar a cabo un análisis evolutivo sobre la eficacia de las medidas preventivas y formativas, así como la pertinencia de implementar otras medidas.

Es así que con base en el diagnóstico realizado en el periodo de Otoño 2023, se crea el Programa de Prevención de Violencias, el cual consta de tres fases. La primera, que es la capacitación a docentes de ARU, la segunda que es la intervención de las/os docentes con estudiantes en el aula y la tercera que es la evaluación de la actividad.

Con todo esto en mente, más que sólo un espacio de capacitación, deseamos provocar procesos de reflexión y desarrollo continuo para mejorar el ambiente en el que se desenvuelven las academias y la calidad de la enseñanza en nuestra institución; sensibilizando y capacitando en temas de violencias de género a nuestra Comunidad Universitaria, ya que es nuestra obligación institucional reflexionar qué universidad queremos, y crear espacios para que las estudiantes, trabajadoras académicas y administrativas puedan desenvolverse plenamente tanto profesional como personalmente (Lagarde, 2021).

Este proyecto de Capacitación e Inserción de Temática en Aula, representa un anhelo continuo por transformar el espacio universitario en un entorno más consciente, seguro y equitativo, integrando temas de género de forma transversal en la formación académica de nuestros estudiantes.

Metodología

El proyecto “Prevención de violencias de género en la Universidad Iberoamericana Torreón en México”, lo asumen 3 departamentos de la universidad: Incidencia Social, Derechos Humanos y Educación para la Paz y el Área de Reflexión Universitaria y consta de 3 fases: Capacitación a docentes de ARU, intervención en aula y evaluación de la actividad.

Fase 1:

Los primeros pasos nos llevaron a la planeación y organización de la capacitación para docentes del Área de Reflexión Universitaria. Cada semestre se elige el tema, se inicia con la logística, es decir, elegir a la persona experta encargada de impartir la capacitación, establecer la fecha para llevar a cabo el espacio de formación, apartar el auditorio o sala en el que se reunirán los/las docentes, etc.

Fase 2:

La práctica de inserción en el aula con nuestros/as estudiantes a partir de la propuesta didáctica, planeada por el/la mismo/a docente titular de la asignatura.

En esta fase, los departamentos encargados del proyecto ofrecimos acompañamiento a los/as docentes en la planeación de su intervención en el aula, facilitando herramientas como videos, libros, podcasts, presentaciones, entre otro tipo de materiales de apoyo para trabajar con el alumnado.

Fase 3:

Al final de la participación, el/la docente tiene como tarea aplicar el instrumento elaborado por los departamentos encargados del proyecto para recoger la experiencia dentro del salón de clases. Esta información de cierre, aplicada a todo el alumnado que participa en la actividad nos permite tener datos de primera mano sobre sus inquietudes e intereses relacionados con los temas de violencias de género y sobre el desempeño de sus docentes al realizar su intervención.

Además, se les solicita a las/los docentes que respondan otro instrumento que nos permite conocer su sentipensar acerca de la actividad y de la participación de sus estudiantes.

Por último, se sistematiza la información recopilada, con la que se elabora un informe que se comparte con las direcciones correspondientes para su análisis y para elegir el tema de capacitación del próximo semestre.

Proyecto por fases del primer año de trabajo

Semestre Otoño 2024

Semestre Primavera 2025

Proceso	Tarea	Especificaciones	Criterio de inserción en Aula
Investigación y planeación para talleres de capacitación docente.	• Selección de tema • Selección de capacitadores expertos • Calendarios Académicos • Fechas • Presupuestos • Lugares para trabajo	1 tema (Violencia de Género) (Facilitadora: Alejandra Padilla) (8 horas de capacitación) (29 y 30 de agosto 2024) 2o tema (Masculinidades, violencias y liderazgo) (Facilitador: Daniel Garza) (8 horas de capacitación) (17 y 18 de febrero 2025)	Informar sobre los tipos de Violencia de género (1er tema) y Reconocer sobre la temática de Masculinidades (2o tema) como preocupación Institucional.
Diseño de estructura en tiempos y forma	Conformación de temas, tiempos y horas para la capacitación	Ajustes	Ajustar calendarios de cada assignatura.
Logística y costos para la formación de Talleres de Capacitación.	Confirmación de conferencistas Aplicación de presupuestos	Ajustes	Presupuestos y compra de traslados y viáticos.
Involucramiento de docentes de ARU. CAPACITACIÓN	Invitación y compromiso hacia los/as docentes. PRESENCIA Institucional.	Acompañamiento puntual. Entrega de Reconocimientos a quienes finalizan el curso.	Generar compromiso para llevarlo al aula.
Preparación de material para acompañar la INSERCIÓN dentro de las aulas de clase de ARU con estos temas.	Selección de material para la inserción en aula (Videos, documentales, libros, artículos, presentaciones)	Manejo de liga para para facilitar los accesos a los DRIVE con los materiales para selección del profesor(a)	Acompañamiento a docentes con preguntas.

Proceso	Tarea	Especificaciones	Criterio de inserción en Aula
Acompañamiento a docentes INSERCIÓN EN AULA—	Apoyar a los/as docentes para la inserción en aula (Dudas, criterios, escenarios adversos, avisos y recordatorios sobre calendario propuesto para su actividad).	Acompañamiento puntual y recordatorios de fechas para inserción.	• Hacer énfasis en la importancia de no minimizar ningún tipo de agresión. • Comunicar la importancia de denunciar y señalar las instancias pertinentes que existen en la Universidad y su ámbito de competencia. • Compartir sobre la importancia de recibir acompañamiento tanto psicológico como espiritual y de sentirse seguras/os de acudir con las personas indicadas. • Informar sobre la confidencialidad del caso al momento de compartir alguna situación con la persona del primer contacto. • Crear un ambiente seguro para el primer contacto al compartir su caso.
Obtener información de las experiencias	Aplicación de encuestas -digitales- en aula. Tanto a estudiantes como a docentes.	Manejo de QR para facilitar los accesos a las aplicaciones	Invitar a que todos/as los/as estudiantes contesten la encuesta.
Estratificar la información tanto de estudiantes como docentes.	Acomodo e interpretación de datos, a partir de las encuestas.	Presentación de resultados a los Departamentos involucrados, a las Direcciones y Rectoría	

Primeros resultados

- Se ha logrado una buena participación activa por parte del cuerpo docente del área de reflexión -ARU- de nuestra universidad. En el semestre de Primavera 2025 (tema Masculinidades, violencias y liderazgo) se logró que el total de profesores que finalizaron el curso de capacitación -19 docentes- implementarán la intervención dentro del aula de clase.
- A diferencia de Otoño 2024, en donde de 21 docentes que finalizaron el curso, sólo 15 aplicaron la experiencia en el aula. En otoño 2025 de los 19 docentes que finalizaron, 19 aplicaron la experiencia en aula.
- De todos los grupos académicos que se abren en el semestre en el área de reflexión, la inserción en aula representó un 72.7% de los grupos abiertos. Impactando a 285 estudiantes de un total de 500 alumnos/as.
- De los/as docentes participantes en el segundo tema, más del 30% tuvieron la percepción de “mucho interés” por parte del alumnado y más del 40% cree que es necesario tocar estos temas en el aula.
- Este mismo interés de los/as estudiantes, conlleva su participación activa en más del 52% dentro de la inserción en aula y en las actividades propuestas por su docente.
- Lecciones aprendidas- El buen acompañamiento hacia el cuerpo docente permite una eficiencia y compromiso en la capacitación institucional de nuestros docentes.
- Áreas de oportunidad- provocar la transversalidad de ejes temáticos de importancia sobre todo aquellos relacionados con violencias de género para la prevención como meta a corto plazo.

Conclusión

El tema de prevención de violencias, es un eje importante en la Universidad, por ello desde el semestre Otoño 2024 nos propusimos realizar diferentes actividades para poner sobre la mesa los tipos de violencia que más se presentan en la comunidad universitaria, tomando como base los resultados del Diagnóstico sobre Violencia de Género en las alumnas de licenciatura de Ibero Torreón, de manera que podamos comprenderlas, prevenirlas y sensibilizar a la comunidad universitaria en estos temas con el objetivo de que la Ibero Torreón sea un espacio seguro y libre de violencia para todas/os sus integrantes.

Frente a las respuestas de los primeros resultados relacionados con -el miedo frente a posturas de los estudiantes hombres y de la prudencia comentarios frente a grupo-, nos parece muy importante resaltar que semestre a semestre la actividad se va posicionando y tanto docentes como estudiantes concuerdan en la importancia de seguir aprendiendo sobre las violencias de género y solicitan que se continúe dialogándolos en clase.

Aún y cuando originalmente el proyecto se asumió por tres departamentos de la institución y los/as docentes del Área de Reflexión Universitaria, consideramos fundamental que la idea culmine en un programa transversal para que llegue a todas las licenciaturas de nuestra universidad.

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Service Learning in Action: Students' Recognition of Experiential Education

UNKOWN

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of Service Learning as a pedagogical approach to bridge academic instruction with meaningful community engagement and as a tool to promote a pedagogy through experience, encounter and reciprocity, in coherence with the Ignatian tradition. The methodology has as an aim to interconnect the curricular contents of the career with real problems of the social environment, to improve on an integral formation in the students, and to upskill students' critical, communicative, and intercultural skills through collaborative work. The research main objective is to inquire into studentship positions on Service Learning after undergoing the practice through the methodology for 10 weeks. A simple multiple-choice survey measured the level of acceptance and satisfaction with this kind of experiences. The results show a high level of recognition and acknowledgement of Service Learning importance for university students. Specific results display the highest level of acquisition of empathy in students, followed by systemic understanding of global affairs, and social consciousness development, even though, little percentage of students declared that, after the visits, they feel more ready for making actions toward resolution of global issues that affect locally. The participants highlighted that the experience strengthened their social and environmental awareness, while developing academic skills in critical analysis, writing, and research. In addition, they confronted the complex reality of excluded territories, facing structural tensions such as the precariousness of access, as 13 out of 17 SDGs were chosen in class and examined in the territory.

Introduction

The Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE) focuses on the integral formation of its students, seeking to develop not only their academic abilities, but also their human, ethical and social dimensions. This is achieved through an educational model that promotes research, works on outreach projects with vulnerable sectors, and the critical appropriation of knowledge for the transformation of the current matter of the things (PUCE-2024 Educational Model, p. 11). The PUCE-MAGIS Strategic Plan 2021-2026 reinforces this commitment, establishing as one of its priorities the interassociation with community to generate social impact and contribute to the common good (PUCE-MAGIS Strategic Plan 2021-2026, p. 23). This vision is consistent with the role of universities in working toward sustainable development, as pointed out by UNESCO, by emphasizing the importance of higher education responsibility to rejoinder to global and local challenges (UNESCO, 2017, p. 19). The study pays tributes to social transformation from below, recognizing communities as active actors in the process of change. The approach firmly supports UNESCO's vision of higher education as a driver of sustainable development and social inclusion (UNESCO, 2017, p. 45). Its potential for replicability is broad, especially in other humanities and social sciences programs that seek to incorporate territorial, community, and social justice approaches.

Description of the practice

The practices were carried out in the neighborhood surrounding Instituto de Investigación Educación y Promoción Popular del Ecuador (INEPE), which is a non-profit community organization, recognized through Agreement N°12732 of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Ecuador. INEPE is located in Quito, in Chilibulo neighborhood, on the slopes of Ungui Hill, at 3 100 meters above sea level, surrounded by Chilibulo Huayrapungo Ecological Reserve.

For longer than 40 years ago, the institute founders have tried to transform society through education; their action began in an adobe small house that was gifted by one of the governmental entities. In this place, the literacy processes in the neighborhood La Dolorosa began. The project later developed into educational institution for children who live around. Besides educational projects, jointly with neighbors, improvement of sector inhabitants' quality of life was achieved: the neighborhood now boasts of drinking water, electricity, sewerage and a paved access.

Moreover, INEPE renders a service to activities through theoretical and methodological innovation developing a proposal of integral education for peace. This pedagogical proposal is framed under the socio-historical paradigm of Paulo Freire, who considers that pedagogical practice should be a permanent effort to generate actions that encourage the participation of the entire community, to understand and solve their problems.

As part of the educational work at INEPE, gardening and cultivation platforms in the Ecological Reserve Chilibulo Huayrapungo are implemented, spaces of perception in which, through direct observation and work with the land, awareness of the importance of healthy nutrition is raisen, the educational instution students' parents, as well as volunteers foreign volunteers and university community join this work. Organic waste recycling, on the other hand, goes along with the philosophy and transforms organic waste from markets and households near the institution into useful compounds for the soil, compost. The harvested products are used in the preparation of food in the community dining room; students, teachers and administrative stuff also benefit from it.

Nevertheless, the educational relationship in this institution goes beyond the classroom through community integration, INEPE managed to get the 320 hectares of eucalyptus forest declared as an ecological protection zone, which allows to carry out research projects in this open laboratory, whose primary objective is framed in minimizing the effects of climate change. In this area, 6,500 native trees have been planted as a result of reforestation campaigns in which INEPE community, students from nearby educational establishments, students from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, and public entities such as the National Police and Eloy Alfaro Zonal Administration have participated.

The context in which it was carried out

During the second semester of 2023, a group of 13 third semester students of the Languages Applied to Global Studies (LAEG) major at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador and their teacher of the subject Human Rights and Culture of Peace applied Service Learning Methodology in collaboration with Instituto de Investigación, Educación y Promoción Popular del Ecuador (INEPE).

Each student chose one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and described it in Dep-

th, which means 13 out of 17 SDGs were covered. Then, they searched for an article in the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador that refers to the chosen SDGs, and connected both contents. The students with their teacher visited the community for 10 Saturdays. After each visit to INEPE, the students of the course reflected with students from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in Spanish for Mental Health Professionals course, aimed at students of Spanish, through COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) methodology.

COIL is a methodology that involves learning in pairs or small groups with students from foreign universities, with little intervention from the professors of each local and foreign university. The planned activities included 30-minute-long discussion about global issues and SDGs with foreign peers, in English, and for 30 minutes it was conducted in Spanish. An important part of the methodology to be mentioned is each session's peer assessment and short reports about foreign country situation and position on global affairs.

It is worth mentioning that one of the students was unable to attend the activities at INEPE due to scheduling problems, however, she visited the same number of times another community, analyzed the situation following the same steps and indications of the teacher and had weekly discussions with Wisconsin-La Crosse University.

It is worth mentioning that he experience was deployed in a peripheral urban environment, characterized by tensions related to access to basic services, unregulated population growth and structural inequalities. These conditions allowed linking the educational practice with the principles enshrined in the 2008 Constitution of Ecuador, particularly the Human Right to Water (art. 12), Universal Access to Health (art. 32), Gender Equity (art. 70), Decent Housing (art. 30), and Sustainable Urban Planning (art. 277 and art. 314).

Type of practice

The practical part permitted meaningful interaction between the students and the community. The pedagogical approach was based on field learning, where students applied theoretical knowledge in real contexts. The methodology sought mutual learning: students contributed their knowledge and, at the same time, learned from community wisdom, thus breaking the unidirectional logic of academic knowledge.

The outreach project carried out in INEPE was designed as a service-learning space focused on the dialogue of knowledge, community action and ethical commitment.

The activities developed included:

- Observation and documentation of local problems such as water scarcity in Collaquí.
- Analysis of gender equity conditions in INEPE's educational and workspaces.
- Participation in agricultural activities, composting, and workshops on sustainability.
- Reflection on the right to health and wellbeing, including primary care and mental health in the community.

Analysis of urban sustainability and participation in neighborhood assemblies related to infrastructure and urban planning.

These experiences revealed the interconnection between global issues (such as climate change, poverty, or inequality) and their local manifestations. The students, far from being external observers, became committed actors in the search for solutions.

The practice had as its main goal the formation of global citizens with deep empathy, critical awareness and service skills. At the pedagogical level, value was placed on the development of meaningful learning, rooted in reality and oriented towards transformative action. The experience demonstrated that integral education cannot be achieved without a direct connection to contemporary social and ecological challenges.

These actions allowed students to play an active role in processes of popular education, social participation, empirical research, and community documentation. The methodology was predominantly participatory action research, combining interviews, participant observation, formative workshops, and collaborative work. The PUCE Educational Model stresses the relevance of active and participatory methodologies that involve students in the construction of their own learning and in the resolution of real problems (PUCE-2024 Educational Model, p. 25).

Objectives and methodology

The objectives designed corresponded different aims: academic, civil and social, personal and professional, and institutional.

- In academic aspect, the objective was to

apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations.

- In civic and social, to foster a sense of civic responsibility and community engagement.
- Personally and professionally, students were encouraged to self-reflection, empathy and emotional intelligence.
- For higher educational institution, the objective was to build sustainable partnership with the community.

Image 1. How much the experience fostered your social consciousness?

Results obtained

A short survey, aimed to identify students' perception towards Service Learning experience that was carried out within class methodology, was applied. There were 4 multiple-choice questions, whose results can be observed in the images below.

The first question was about the level lof social consciousness after facing Service Learning experience.

To large extent (Green): 46.2% of surveyees feel that the experience fostered "to large extent" their social consciousness.

To fair extent (Orange): 46.2% feel that fostered it "to fair extent".

Barely (Red): 7.7% considered that it was strengthened "barely".

Not at all (Blue): There is no visible portion for this category, indicating that 0% of respondents selected "Not at all".

Consequently, the vast majority of respondents (92.4% combining "A lot" and "Quite a lot") perceived that the experience strengthened their social awareness significantly, while a very small minority (7.7%) felt that the strengthening was slight.

The second question (Image 2) tried to explore the level of empathy towards other social realities.
Yes (represented in blue)

I am not sure (represented in red, but not marked by any participant)

No (represented in orange, but not marked by any participant)

100% of the students who responded to the survey consider that they did develop greater empathy towards other social realities.

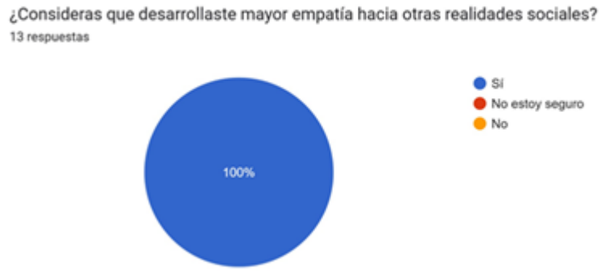

Image 2. Do you consider that you developed a greater empathy towards other social realities?

Image 3. Do you think you acquired a more systemic comprehension of global issues through this collaboration?

The third question (See image 3) was focused on systemic comprehension of global problems through the collaboration with INEPE.

Yes (Blue): 61.5% of respondents (8 out of 13 responses) believe that they did gain a more systemic understanding of global issues.

At some extend (Red): 30.8% of respondents (4 out of 13 responses) believe that they acquired systemic understanding in a partial way.

No (Orange): 7.7% of respondents (1 out of 13 responses) believe that they did not gain a systemic understanding of global issues through co-

llaboration.

The majority of respondents (61.5%) felt that the collaboration enabled them to gain a more systemic understanding of global issues, while a sizeable group (30.8%) gained a partial understanding, and a minority (7.7%) did not at all.

The 4th question (Image 4) was about their feeling of readiness to act locally from global point of view.

Image 4. Do you now feel more ready to act locally from global perspective?

Very (Green): 7.7% of respondents feel “very” prepared.

Fairly (Orange): 38.5% of respondents feel “fairly” prepared to act locally with a global perspective.

Some (Red): 38.5% of respondents feel “a little” prepared.

Not at all (Blue): 15.4% feel they are “not at all” prepared.

Responses are split, with the majority of participants feeling “Fairly” or “A little” prepared (both categories at 38.5%). A smaller proportion feel “Not at all” prepared, and the smallest proportion feel “A lot” prepared.

Lessons learned

Academically, students not only applied theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, they also fostered their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, besides developing interdisciplinary understanding, needed for future cultural and linguistic mediators, who are forming in this major, and improving academic performance through active, engaged learning.

Likewise, young fellows boosted their sense of civic responsibility and community engagement, awareness of social issues and systemic inequalities was raisen, ethical reasoning and social justice perspectives were promoted.

On personal and professional level, communication, collaboration and leadership skills were strengthened, students’ self-reflection, empathy and emotional intelligence were encouraged, after buildiong practical experience and transferable skills, students felt more ready for the future career.

Finally, there is an agreement signed between two institutions, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador built more sustainable partnership with INEPE. It is worth mentioning that through this experience that PUCE contributed to community development and capacity-building, encouraging co-creation of knowledge among all actors interlaced in the process (studentship, faculty and stakeholders, INEPE community in this case).

Opportunities for improvement

Even though Service Learning methodology is an excellent tool inasmuch in reasoning described above, there is a need of constant improvement of the practice, which could be obtained by working on the same project as replica in the same place with the same stakeholders, or different ones. Furthermore, students and teachers engagement can turn out difficult, because of the common belief that there are many obstacles in the process, some of thr mentioned are: insecurity in the place, transportation problems, communicational complication and impotence in engaging sufficient number of students and teachers for proper results. Probably one of the most relevant issues that have to be solved is the design of the evaluation mechanisms in teaching as well as research or outreach projects for social inclusion. Lastly, there is lack of experimental studies longitudinal data, long-term effects research is fundemental, application of the programs in samples that are significant in number, conclusions based on perceptions and not data are paramount as well.

Conclusions

From the perspective of Jesuit higher education, this experience embodies the principles of integral formation, service to justice, Ignatian discernment and solidarity with the excluded. The practice was not limited to a formal or instrumental

linkage, but allowed a transformative process for both students and community actors. PUCE, as a Jesuit university, has as its mission the evangelization of culture through the formation of professionals who are agents of social and ethical change, inspired by Christian and Ignatian values (PUCE-MAGIS Strategic Plan 2021-2026, p. 10).

Furthermore, UNESCO, in its vision of higher education, emphasizes that institutions should be spaces for critical reflection and engagement with society, fostering social justice and respect for diversity (UNESCO, 2017, p. 30). PUCE's Educational Model emphasizes the importance of students developing critical and reflective thinking, capable of analyzing social reality and proposing solutions to its challenges (PUCE-2024 Educational Model, p. 21).

INEPE, for its part, reaffirmed its character as a transforming institution, in which education is conceived as a liberating practice. The educational community valued students' contribution in the systematization of their challenges, as well as in the generation of spaces for intergenerational and intercultural dialogue. The practice carried out in collaboration with INEPE constitutes a good practice in Jesuit higher education for at least three fundamental reasons:

- It integrates the academic curriculum with social realities, without losing critical depth or ethical commitment. PUCE seeks to make its curricula relevant and responsive to the needs of the environment, promoting interdisciplinarity and linkage with society (PUCE-2024 Educational Model, p. 18).
- PUCE Strategic Plan highlights the importance of a transformative pedagogy that promotes problem-based learning and service to the community (PUCE-MAGIS Strategic Plan 2021-2026, p. 16).
- It is imperative to sustain strategic alliances with organizations such as INEPE and to have teachers committed to Ignatian pedagogy.
- Among the recommendations to strengthen this practice are the following:
- Establish long-term processes with communities, beyond one academic semester.
- Strengthen the interconnection between education, research and outreach projects. PUCE seeks the integration of these substantive functions to generate knowledge and solutions to social problems (PUCE-2024 Educational Model, p. 15).
- Promote the systematization of these experiences as an input for inclusive and transformative university policies.

Therefore, the project between PUCE and INEPE reflects a concrete example of how higher education can be a path towards the common good, inspired by Ignatian spirituality, committed to the most vulnerable and articulated with the construction of a more just, supportive and sustainable world. PUCE, by developing this type of initiatives, reaffirms its commitment to Ecuadorian society and its mission to form transformational leaders for a better world (PUCE-MAGIS Strategic Plan 2021-2026, p. 8).

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Spes Nova, Inc. a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation

A network of educational institutions on a mission to offer students a global, skills-driven education while building a path towards sustainable, inclusive development for the working poor through access to low-cost capital, overseas markets, and insurance products.1

FORMATION

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ABSTRACT

We live in a globalized world, yet most artisans from developing countries lack access to local, regional and international markets. These artisans also lack the financial resources, specialized training, and security necessary to grow their small businesses into successful enterprises. That's where Spes Nova steps in. Meaning "New Hope" in Latin, Spes Nova is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to help establish sustainable and inclusive development in the poorest regions of the world by collaborating with an extensive global network of academic institutions.
Spes Nova was developed under the Jesuit traditions at Fordham University. From there, the pilot project has grown and includes several partners in the USA, Latin America and Africa. Currently, Spes Nova is developing partnerships with more academic institutions, mostly in the Jesuit network of universities, focusing on its initial goal of helping the working poor families around the world.

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1. Three Pillar Approach

Sustainable and inclusive development for the working poor has traditionally focused solely on microfinance efforts. Spes Nova, however, recognizes that stable, long-term development requires the additional support of complementary activities. As a result, it has created the Three Pillar Approach which includes market development, micro-credit, and micro-insurance. The stability of these pillars rests upon the wellbeing of individual micro-entrepreneurs, their families, and their communities, including health, housing, education, and environmental preservation.By connecting artisans to academic bodies in its network of partner universities (Business Development Partners - BDPs), such as fair-trade clubs, classes, and faculty support, Spes Nova implements the three-pillar approach, and is establishing a strong, long-term system of support.

2. Products And Services

Spes Nova provides a range of products and services that reflect its mission to empower underserved entrepreneurs and artisans through ethical trade and sustainable economic development.

i. Products

All items are produced by small-scale artisans from developing communities around the world. This includes:

- Ethically made goods.
- Handcrafted artisan products: jewelry, bags and accessories, home décor, textiles etc.
- Fair Trade merchandise.
- Limited-Edition Collaborations.
- ii. Services
- Entrepreneurial Empowerment.
- Connects underserved artisans and entrepreneurs with global markets.
- Microenterprise Support through collaboration of university students.
- Offers guidance and opportunities to help local producers grow their small businesses sustainably.
- Education & Awareness: Runs workshops, talks, and events (often in partnership with universities like Fordham) to promote:
  - » Ethical consumerism.
  - » Jesuit values in action.
  - » Social entrepreneurship.
  - » Student Engagement Programs.
- Global Partnerships: Builds and maintains partnerships with grassroots organizations, NGOs, and schools.
- Offers internships, volunteer opportunities, and academic collaborations, primarily with Jesuit institutions.

3. Spes Nova and the Jesuit Values

Spes Nova was founded by Steven Carlsen and Erick Rengifo. At the time, Steven Carlsen was a PhD student while Erick Rengifo was an Associate Professor of economics at Fordham University, the Jesuit University of New York.

They founded Spes Nova with a vision to implement its Three Pillar Approach to sustainable and inclusive development by establishing a network of academic institutions that offer long-term benefits while supporting the dignity of the working poor, drawing on the desire to improve the lives of families and communities and eventually allowing them to escape from cyclical poverty. This initiative was born on the Jesuit values that Fordham University inculcates in its faculty and students. Spes Nova, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, aligns closely with the Universal Apostolic Preferences[6] in both mission and practice. Spes Nova embodies the UAPs in the following ways:

i. Showing the Way to God

The first Universal Apostolic Preference concerns the ability to utilize discernment in decision-making. Spes Nova represents this idea by focusing on the holistic well-being– economic, social, and personal– of artisans and entrepreneurs. By collaborating with academic institutions and creating amical and professional bonds, Spes Nova encourages each faculty and student to better follow their faith in every choice that they make and the problems that they encounter.

ii. Walking With the Excluded

By building long-term relationships with global

6. Universal Apostolic Preferences - Introduction | The Society of Jesus

partners and encouraging cross-cultural exchange, Spes Nova lives out a model of mutual respect and shared humanity, core to Jesuit ideals. It isn't just a charity, it's a movement that reflects the Jesuit mission of justice, service, and transformation.

iii. Journeying With the Youth

Spes Nova helps to instill values of sustainability, community, and culture in local youth. By working with academic institutions and selling products both online and on university campuses, Spes Nova can spread its message to the next generation and help cultivate a future that is well-adjusted to, and able to further develop, our globalized society.

iv. Caring for our Common Home

Spes Nova pushes for deeper impact through partnerships and capacity building, always seeking to do "more". Spes Nova's network of academic institutions and local artisans help to ensure that the mission of sustainability and global development reaches every corner of the world.

4. Case Study: Helping One Artisan at a Time: Spes Nova at Fordham University (New York - USA) And ITESO (Guadalajara-Mexico).

In this Section, we present as a case study a project developed by Spes Nova at Fordham University (the Jesuit University of New York, USA) and the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (the Jesuit University of Guadalajara, Mexico). The focus of Spes Nova-Fordham-ITESO (SNFI) efforts started in 2018 and has continuously focused its efforts on helping artisans get access to the USA market.

Trying to address this situation at the Mexican level, ITESO and Fordham University sought to work through the PAP CEDECOM Internaciona[7] under the Spes Nova umbrella. The project involves students from both universities working together in a real learning scenario. The students' collaboration helps a group of artisans (previously identified by ITESO) not only to give them access to new markets for their final products but also by providing them with pre-production payments to cover the costs of manufacturing their products and to cover their export and shipping expenses.

Prior to starting the collaboration effort, the Spes Nova-ITESO-Fordham model was developed, defining objectives, working system, requirements, tasks and strategies. This work was done

7. https://www.iteso.mx/en/web/general/detalle?group_id=7007438

at ITESO by a group of professors within the PAP CEDECOM team, under the leadership of Professor Carlos Riggen. At Fordham university the effort was led by Professor Erick Rengifo and Dean Brian Dunn[8] a team of graduate students from the International Policy and Economic Development (IPED), and a group of undergraduate students at Fordham University.

The project at ITESO started with a multidisciplinary group of students who developed the work plan with clear and measurable objectives. Throughout the work carried out, they identified, contacted, supported, and worked with several craftsmen in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara.

In this process, ITESO's students worked on the legal requirements and the suitability of the product with respect to the use of materials that met the standards of the target country[9], and worked on the ideal product (packaging material, video creation, etc.) in order to tell the artisan's story; a strategy to receive the production pre-payments was designed and implemented, and a logistics process was developed so that the crafts would reach the final clients via Fordham's student body.

Meanwhile, Fordham students incorporated this project as part of their requirement in their Fair-Trade Entrepreneurship class. We introduced Spes Nova into the curriculum of this class starting in Fall 2021.

The integration of Spes Nova's projects is grounded by the fact that similar classes regularly include a group project that involves some form of survey research and statistical analysis. Several students choose to study a topic on or around their campus in topics such as food service quality, participation in campus events, or usage of local transportation options. While projects focusing on these topics provide students with an opportunity to apply knowledge and techniques covered in the class, they are lacking with respect to an extant problem to solve, interaction with real clients, external requirements on the metrics of interest, or maintaining continuity with an existing stream of research. For these reasons, a research project focusing on the Spes Nova projects was novel, yet similar in scope to previous years' topics.

8. Assistant Dean of Honors Opportunities · Fordham University's Gabelli School of Business
8. It is important to clarify that in the creative part, the artisan had full control. Several ideas and comments raised by Fordham students were shared with him. Based on this he created the products that were finally exported.

For the years 2023-2024, ITESO introduced Cesar Lucano Siordia, an artisan from San Pedro Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, Mexico. César is the fourth generation of artisans in his family and has been practicing this profession for 10 years. In his workshop, he specializes in cold polychrome clay work.

Currently, his workshop is accredited by the government as an artisan workshop. Due to the creativity and quality of his work, he has products in various parts of the world (museums, exhibitions and foreign clients) that endorse the level of his products. Cesar is also certified by the government as a "maestro," meaning that he teaches other artisans and would-be artisans. He has no experience in export, legal or tax matters when sending his products to clients abroad. It was the ITESO's students who took care of this.

ITESO's Artisan's offerings included 1 artisanal category with 2 products. These products were designated as two group projects, assigned to student teams. Each student in the group was able to do a drill down analysis into a product. This knowledge was shared with Fordham's students, starting a process which helps the local artisan form final products that can be sold to Fordham's market at or around its New York campuses and online. Students familiarized themselves with the existing product lines, conducted market and product analysis, and communicated with their Mexican peers and stakeholders to present a final class report, which consisted of a list of products to be acquired from the artisan presented by ITESO's students.

The first shipment, containing 40 of each product– a sheep piggy bank and a dog piggy bank– was exported to Spes Nova – Fordham University. Achieving the first export was challenging. The processes, the regulations, and the parties involved were, initially, not clearly understood. The ITESO's team learned and documented the processes, setting up the baseline for the next exports.

This was the start of a project that we hope will help the artisan with sales in Mexico and the USA year after year and integrate more artisans as we continue working on the Spes Nova-Fordham-ITESO project. ITESO's efforts also helped the local artisan to sell his products in ITESO's campus in Guadalajara, Mexico. Cesar produced a piggy bank of Nachito, the university mascot and another of Nachito driving a small plane, also a piggy bank. Three orders have been made for these products for a total of 73 pieces.

5. Project Impact at Fordham University and ITESO

During the life of this project (Spes Nova-Fordham-ITESO), we have had the following participation in terms of faculty and students' involvement since 2022:

Member	Fordham University	ITESO
Faculty	2	2
Students	83	51

6. Hearing from our Students

We next present several reflections from ITESOS's as well as Fordham's students that were directly involved with the project.

a. ITESO:

Carmen Valeria Lucero Higuera: I think this project has a great social impact on the artisan, since it is designed to increase their sales and improve their quality of life. In addition, being part of this project helped me see the reality of thousands of artisans within the city who live from daily sales of their products.

Paulina Gabriela Franco Moreno: For me, the interaction with the artisans is very important, as they are the fundamental part of the project, that they see us as allies and that we can share with them what we know and have learned at ITESO and with this help them grow their businesses seems to me an excellent way to contribute. My professional services will help them to soon reach an external market where their work will have a higher price than in the domestic market and that will add value to their products and consequently to their income.

Paula Tortajada Valdivia: The biggest learning I have taken away is that even living in the same country, same city or even in the same municipality, the mentality of people is extremely different, we all get used to doing things in different ways and we live in a bubble where we believe that we all think in a similar way, I realized that people's realities are very different and that our social context is everything.

Paola Estefania Velderrain Lechuga: An initiative that seeks to generate a social impact requires creativity, innovation and commitment, I believe that when combining these principles, a real change can be generated, without losing focus and the solutions that are sought. All this work benefits the artisans and their value as artists, as well as us as students by being able to learn more about this field and being able to contribute

a grain of sand with our knowledge.

Josué Valentín Quezada Ramos: Personally, the greatest personal impact is the awareness gained from working closely with artisans, people who allow Mexican traditions to be perpetuated, with a love and passion for what they do. Understanding their lifestyle as well as the challenges they face as self-employed people such as economic support, the lack of a documented procedure, an effective business strategy, legal issues, among many others.

Edgar Amado Castro Palacios: I am grateful to Spes Nova and ITESO for the opportunity to work on this project that will truly leave a mark on the artisans and the students at Fordham. This experience will undoubtedly leave a precedent in my development as a person. I want this great project to continue in other directions to have a greater impact.

Santiago Díaz del Castillo Valenzuela: The social awareness in this project made me realize the conditions that many people have. This drives me to seek to use the knowledge I have to raise and improve businesses in the surrounding communities to improve the economy of those people who, due to lack of opportunities and knowledge, do not have the capacity to grow in their businesses and improve living conditions.

Alejandro Orendain Sánchez: It was great to realize the positive impacts on the lives of artisans leads me to want to continue carrying out projects with positive social impacts in the future. It opened our eyes to a reality, although we know it is there and it is real, we do not always take the time to understand or put ourselves in the shoes of others, who in this case were the artisans.

Cristóbal Rodríguez López: In this PAP it is important to know the main objective of the project and the meaning of Spes Nova, which means new hope. In it we were able to realize how difficult and incredible crafts are, and at the same time, we were also able to get closer to the life of the artisans who were part of this project, being able to connect with them and being able to help them diversify their projects may not make a big change for us as students as it can for them.

b. Fordham University:

Camila Perez: Students involved with Spes Nova can enhance their teamwork, communication, and organizational skills. We collaborate to organize our sales, help promote ethical consumerism, and partner with other clubs to broaden our reach. The club fosters a welcoming environment that encourages leadership, creativity, and initiative, making it easy to get involved and make a difference

Sukhmani Kaur: Since my freshman year, being involved with Spes Nova has been one of the most meaningful parts of my college experience. As the Vice President of Finance, I have been able to skillfully manage all financial operations, including overseeing accounts payable and receivable. I've found an incredible community of passionate and socially conscious peers who are all committed to support Spes Nova's global artisans and connecting their work to a broader audience

Okan Isik: At Spes Nova I really found a strong sense of community with a dedicated team. As head of the goal management team, I found myself thinking about all of the opportunities and ways to help the artisans in the developing countries have a source of income and better quality of life. The message of "it's about the people, not the product" really resonated with me and my team where we would often use this quote to excite the other members of the group before a big sale. As for its connections to Fordham's Jesuit values, they perfectly align where we are serving an underprivileged community and giving back to them.

Elizabeth Rengifo: Students contribute to Spes Nova's mission in a variety of ways. At the start of each semester, we send out a Google form to our members so that they can describe their interests, skills, and professional goals. This helps us to tailor the role so that the students feel confident contributing and learning while interning with Spes Nova. It's been wonderful to see many students take the initiative and request particular roles in the team because they have pre-existing experience in the area or because they want to push themselves to learn something challenging for the good of the club and their own academic development.

We believe that with the Spes Nova project, which requires the active participation of students, faculty and administrators, there is a light at the end of the tunnel that allows students to collaboratively work with local artisans in their production process as well as in the sales of the products. We at Fordham University and ITESO are proud members of this initiative, and we look forward to continuing improving our efforts to contribute to the well-being and development of local artisans.

BEST PRACTICES IN JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION
ISSUE 6.2: FORMATION PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN JESUIT IDENTITY AND MISSION

TYPE OF PRACTICE: FORMATION

Jesuit Telecollaboration: Virtual, Generous, and Reciprocal Collaboration Giving Life to the AUSJAL Virtual Intercampus

Óscar Nájera, Francisco Urrutia de la Torre and Rafael Chavarría Pérez
AUSJAL

ABSTRACT

Jesuit Telecollaboration is a proposal for generous and reciprocal collaboration mediated by virtuality, grounded in the principles of inclusive and democratic education. It goes beyond the mere use of technology to embody the Ignatian ideal of "being more for others," creating bridges for active listening, diversity, and the co-construction of collective knowledge. This practice nourishes innovation and social transformation within a globalized world.

MAIN GOALS

- To boost access to the virtual academic offerings of AUSJAL and its member universitues
- To promote inter-institutional colaboration and the development of joint projects
- To favor innovation, exchange, and academic mobility
- To contribute to the social impact of the global Jesuit educational community

RESULTS

Platform Launch
Successful creation and launch of the Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL website in October 2023.

High Network Participation
Engagement of 27 out of the 29 universities that belong to the AUSJAL network.

Significant Academic Offering
A pilot launch featuring 400 virtual subjects, over 500 groups, and 2,000 available spots for students.

Diverse Educational Content
Inclusion of more than 20 diplomas, 20 self-managed short courses from the IDB Academy, and partnerships with external actors like the Inter-American Development Bank.

METHODOLOGY

- **Creation of a Centralized Platform**
- **Inter-Institutional Participation Agreement**
- **Shared Governance Model**
- **Pilot Program Implementation**
- **Integration of Diverse Perspectives**

LESSONS LEARNED

Collaboration as a Necessity:
Collaboration is not merely an option but the "**only possible path**" for the Society of Jesus to fulfill its mission in the contemporary world

Generosity as an Ethics: Successful networking requires a culture of **generosity** that enables the exchange of perspectives and reciprocal cooperation.

Human-Centered Technology: It is vital to **prioritize interpersonal relationships** and strengthen community trust even within virtual environments.

Collective Institutional Learning: Virtual coexistence between institutions of different sizes and technological capacities enriches the entire network through the sharing of **best practices**.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Dynamic Evolution: The project is viewed as a "permanent co-construction" that must continuously evolve based on the feedback and experiences of its participants.

Critical Evaluation: There is a need for solid mechanisms to measure and evaluate both educational and social results to ensure the project remains an active agent of social transformation.

Ongoing Adaptation: The initiative must maintain a dialogue-based approach to adapt and grow in response to the changing needs of the global environment.ction" that must continuously evolve based on the feedback and experiences of its participants.

Telecolaboración jesuita: la colaboración virtual, generosa y recíproca que da vida al Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL

FORMATION & TRAINING INITIATIVE

ÓSCAR NÁJERA RAMOS, FRANCISCO URRUTIA DE LA TORRE Y RAFAEL CHAVARRÍA PÉREZ
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La propuesta de "Telecolaboración jesuita", entendida como una forma de colaboración generosa y recíproca mediada por la virtualidad, se fundamenta en los principios de una educación inclusiva y democrática, los cuales son inherentes al modelo educativo jesuita. Esta forma de colaboración no se limita al empleo de tecnologías para facilitar la interacción entre personas e instituciones. Va más allá al encarnar el ideal ignaciano de ser más para los demás, reconociendo y valorando la diversidad, abriendo espacios para la escucha activa de todas las voces, y creando puentes que posibiliten una mayor inclusión. Implica también el compromiso de compartir saberes, "co-construir" conocimiento y articular subjetividades comunitarias para enriquecer una visión más universal, humana y colectiva de nuestro mundo.

Lo anterior, visibiliza la diversidad en el planteamiento de propuestas metodológicas y pedagógicas. Al integrar diferentes miradas educativas provenientes de diversas realidades sociales, culturales e institucionales, se fomenta un enfoque más completo, abierto e inclusivo del aprendizaje. Esta multiplicidad de perspectivas permite enriquecer la reflexión educativa y propicia un diálogo pedagógico constante que nutre la innovación en las prácticas de enseñanza y aprendizaje, coherente con la misión ignaciana de educar desde y para la diversidad.

En esta perspectiva, la Telecolaboración jesuita se sustenta en las bases de la educación

inclusiva, democrática y de la formación universitaria ignaciana en un entorno virtual que favorece el aprendizaje colaborativo y el compromiso social. Al consolidarse como una metodología educativa, puede aportar significativamente a las formas en que se promueve la educación en el mundo globalizado en el que vivimos, asegurando que el conocimiento sea un puente hacia la justicia y la transformación social. Esta práctica ayuda a superar desafíos contemporáneos al priorizar las relaciones interpersonales y fortalecer un sentido de comunidad y confianza en entornos virtuales. Una de sus apuestas es crear lazos interculturales formados entre docentes, estudiantes y equipos directivos, promoviendo un espíritu de colaboración basada en la generosidad y reciprocidad para caminar hacia un propósito común. Asimismo, facilita el diálogo más allá de las fronteras para analizar cuestiones complejas desde múltiples perspectivas, lo que contribuye a una mayor diversidad cultural en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje. La Telecolaboración jesuita responde al llamado de "ser más para los demás" desde una propuesta que fomenta la solidaridad, la comprensión mutua, la reflexión crítica, la compasión, el diálogo intercultural y la acción transformadora. Más que una herramienta tecnológica, se presenta como una forma de construir puentes colaborativos y comunidades de aprendizaje basadas en la generosidad y la reciprocidad entre personas e instituciones que viven la misión jesuita de formar personas comprometidas con los y las demás. En consonancia con el llamado de la Congregación General 36, se trata de una invitación concreta a "construir puentes, para reconciliar a pueblos y culturas a través de la colaboración, como la única manera de realizar la misión" (Compañía de Jesús, 2016, p. 6- 8). Se proyecta así el quehacer de las instituciones confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina hacia una nueva forma de colaboración global con profunda raíz humanista e inclusiva, la de telecolaborar según el "modo nuestro de proceder".

Ejemplo de lo anterior es el Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL, un sitio web que materializa la propuesta de la Telecolaboración jesuita denotando la generosidad de las universidades miembros de la AUSJAL al construir este espacio colaborativo con sus ofertas formativas virtuales y apostar a la apertura internacional. El Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL ha tenido como propósito crear propuestas formativas colaborativas, internacionales y virtuales que respondan a las demandas de la región latinoamericana, de las comunidades universitarias, de las demás obras de la Compañía de Jesús y de la sociedad en general. A través del uso de las tecnologías para la educación, este espacio posibilita la creación de proyectos interuniversitarios que no solo optimizan recursos, sino que fomentan una cultura de encuentro, de diálogo y de construcción colectiva de saberes, abriendo nuevas rutas para los aprendizajes significativos y el desarrollo de las competencias para la ciudadanía global. La virtualidad, en este caso, no es simplemente una modalidad tecnológica, sino una oportunidad pedagógica y ética para expandir las fronteras de la colaboración académica y social. El Intercampus permite a las instituciones jesuitas caminar hacia un horizonte común, sustentado en la generosidad y reciprocidad al compartir sus ofertas académicas y recursos formativos. Las universidades fortalecen su identidad y misión común, al tiempo que consolidan una red solidaria que promueve el acceso equitativo al saber. Así, se multiplica el impacto transformador de la educación jesuita en contextos diversos, particularmente en comunidades históricamente excluidas o con menor acceso a oportunidades educativas internacionales.

Además, el Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL abre el camino a nuevas formas de sinergia con otras instituciones dentro y fuera del ámbito jesuita. La inclusión de actores como el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo en la oferta académica es un ejemplo claro de cómo la telecolaboración genera oportunidades de cooperación que trascienden las fronteras geográficas e institucionales. Esta convergencia de esfuerzos refleja un trabajo interdisciplinario y multinivel, donde cada universidad, docente, estudiante y aliado contribuye desde su particularidad a una obra común que se construye en clave ignaciana: con discernimiento, apertura, y compromiso con la reconciliación social.

En este sentido, el Intercampus es un espacio privilegiado para el aprendizaje institucional. La convivencia virtual entre universidades de distintos tamaños, contextos, trayectorias y niveles de experiencia tecnológica y pedagógica enriquece profundamente el proceso formativo. Las instituciones comparten sus buenas prácticas y aprendizajes, a la vez que surgen nuevas preguntas, inquietudes y enfoques locales valiosos. Este intercambio continuo favorece un aprendizaje colectivo, fomenta la cooperación equitativa y fortalece la capacidad institucional para enfrentar de forma conjunta los desafíos educativos contemporáneos.

El Intercampus no solo es una plataforma tecnológica o un proyecto académico interuniversitario. Es, ante todo, una manifestación viva de la misión compartida que impulsa la educación superior jesuita en el siglo XXI a construir comunidad, promover la solidaridad, la empatía, el colectivismo y fortalecer el sentido del trabajo en red.

Desde el 2023 se comenzó a trabajar directamente en la propuesta de creación del Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL, teniendo como primer resultado la creación del sitio web "intercampusausjal.com" en octubre del 2023. Para el primer trimestre del 2024, se logró consolidar el trabajo en red con las Redes de personas homólogas de Vicerrectorías Académicas, de EDUTIC (Tecnologías para la Educación), de Educación Continua y con el equipo coordinador del proyecto liderado por la Secretaría Ejecutiva y la Coordinación de Telecolaboración Interuniversitaria de AUSJAL. Como resultados de este esfuerzo compartido es la creación de un Acuerdo de Participación Interinstitucional, Este documento representa un hito en la formalización del compromiso colectivo, al establecer criterios compartidos para la colaboración y la convivencia en el entorno virtual, bajo la lógica de la Telecolaboración jesuita.

Dentro de este documento se encuentra el propósito del Intercampus, el cual refiere a: "Impulsar el acceso a la oferta académica virtual de AUSJAL y sus universidades, a través de un espacio en línea que promueva la colaboración interinstitucional, potencie el desarrollo de proyectos conjuntos, favorezca la innovación, el intercambio y la movilidad académica para contribuir al impacto social de la comunidad educativa de la Compañía de Jesús en el ámbito global". Así, también, se logró establecer la gobernanza del Intercampus, la cual se comparte a continuación a través de un gráfico:

En octubre de 2024 se lanzó el primer piloto del Intercampus. Se cuenta con 27 universidades participantes de las 29 que conforman la AUSJAL. En el sitio del Intercampus se encuentra una oferta de 400 asignaturas virtuales (para estudiantes AUSJAL y la Universidad de Deusto, y abiertas a nuevas colaboraciones), con más de 500 grupos y 2,000 cupos. Además, se ofrecen más de 20 diplomados y cursos de Educación Continua, así como, más de 20 cursos cortos auto gestionables de la Academia BID.

La consolidación de esta iniciativa, así como su impacto, dependen en gran medida de contar con mecanismos sólidos para evaluar y medir sus resultados, tanto en lo educativo como en lo social. No se trata de un proyecto estático; es dinámico, está en constante evolución y se nutre de la participación de los múltiples actores involucrados, quienes aportan constantemente sus percepciones, experiencias y aprendizajes, permitiendo así la co-construcción permanente del Intercampus. Esta mirada colectiva, basada en el dialogo abierto y la reflexión compartida, fortalece la capacidad del proyecto para adaptarse, mejorar y crecer en respuesta a las necesidades cambiantes del entorno. La evaluación crítica y continua de esta experiencia será indispensable para realizar ajustes oportunos y asegurar que el Intercampus sea no solo un espacio académico innovador, sino también un agente activo de transformación social.

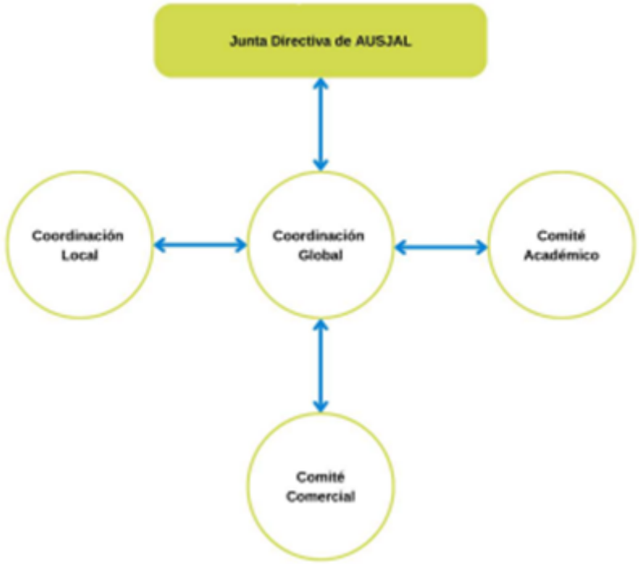

Figura 1
Gráfico de la Gobernanza del Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL.

El P. General Arturo Sosa, S.J. (2019), nos recuerda con claridad que la colaboración no es una opción entre otras, sino el único camino posible para que la Compañía de Jesús cumpla su misión en el mundo contemporáneo. Nos exhorta a cultivar una actitud de apertura y sinergia que nos permita reconocer, en el trayecto compartido, a personas e instituciones comprometidas con el servicio a los demás, orientadas por la búsqueda de la reconciliación humana y el cuidado integral de la creación. En su visión, el trabajo en red y en colaboración no sólo am-

plía las posibilidades de servicio, sino que inaugura horizontes inéditos donde la cultura de la generosidad se convierte en principio articulador: una generosidad que habilita el intercambio de perspectivas, la cooperación sustantiva y el reconocimiento de liderazgos eficaces que armonizan los esfuerzos colectivos.

Desde AUSJAL, reconocemos en el Intercampus Virtual una expresión concreta y transformadora de esta lógica de colaboración ignaciana. Se trata de una práctica que encarna la generosidad como ética operativa y la reciprocidad como fundamento de sentido. Es una experiencia que, mediante el uso estratégico de las tecnologías, como la virtualidad, amplía el acceso a una educación superior de excelencia, diversa e inclusiva, que respeta las culturas, lenguas y metodologías particulares de cada universidad. En este espacio común, las instituciones se reconocen como compañeras de camino, comprometidas en la cocreación fraterna de nuevas formas de compartir saberes y de nutrirse mutuamente a partir de sus respectivas riquezas.

El Intercampus Virtual AUSJAL es, en definitiva, una apuesta por la colaboración interuniversitaria, una red que entrelaza comunidades, construye puentes, derriba muros y abre caminos de oportunidad, justicia y transformación para nuestras sociedades.

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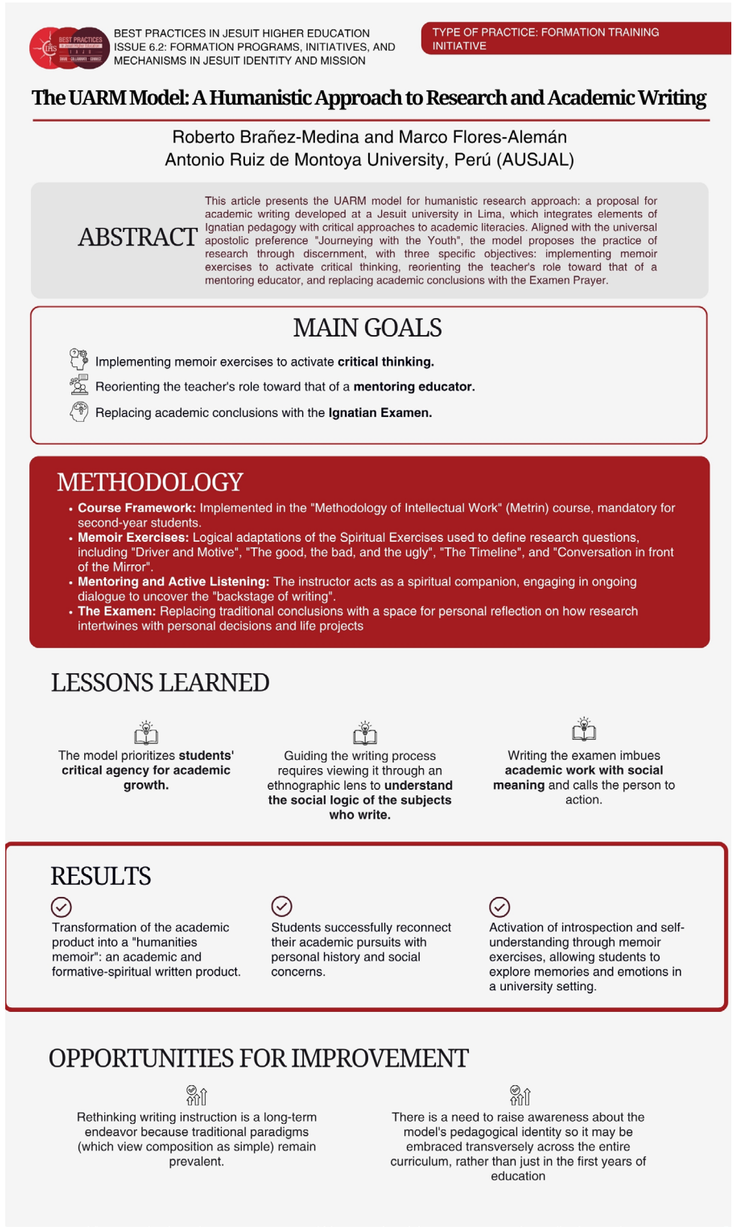

The UARM Model: A Humanistic Approach to Research and Academic Writing

FORMATION & TRAINING INITIATIVE

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the UARM model for humanistic research approach: a proposal for academic writing developed at a Jesuit university in Lima, which integrates elements of Ignatian pedagogy with critical approaches to academic literacies. Aligned with the universal apostolic preference “Journeying with the Youth”, the model proposes the practice of research through discernment, with three specific objectives: implementing memoir exercises to activate critical thinking, reorienting the teacher’s role toward that of a mentoring educator, and replacing academic conclusions with the Examen Prayer. Thus, the proposal responds to a context of crisis for the Humanities in the university environment, exacerbated by the sociocultural dynamics of active diversity, such as those found in Peru.

1. Context

It is evident that the 21st century is shaping up as a period of crisis for the Humanities. In university settings, pressure on the Human Sciences is increasing, jeopardizing spaces dedicated to the holistic formation of students. This crisis is part of a broader process: the crisis of democracy in the contemporary world. The connection between democracy and the Humanities is not coincidental. It was highlighted by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum in Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities, first published in 2010. In this book, the author emphasized the importance of the Humanities for cultivating critical, creative, and empathetic citizens. These qualities are essential for democratic practice. Regarding this, she observed a dangerous trend of subordinating education to economic goals and productivity.

In a way, we can claim that the Society of Jesus anticipated this crisis when, in 1993, it established a central reference for education in its institutions: Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach, also known as the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP). The IPP emphasizes reflection, an element often overlooked in contemporary education. It aims, this way, to form individuals who not only experience and participate in the world but who also delve into the reasons behind their actions and imbue them with meaning, both for the world and for themselves.

The Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University (Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, UARM) follows this educational tradition while adapting it to the Peruvian context and addressing the challenges described above. This context is further shaped by the Peruvian government's university scholarship program, initiated in 2011, which opened doors for historically excluded social groups to access higher education. As a result, UARM is a space of "diversity of diversities," where students of various religious beliefs, gender identities, abilities, age groups, and linguistic backgrounds converge.

Concurrently, in Latin America, traditional models of teaching academic writing in culturally diverse regions are being questioned (Ávila Reyes, 2024; Ávila Reyes, Navarro & Tapia Ladino, 2020). The debate focusses on whether universities should socialize young people into the norms of the academic world or rethink those norms based on students' own practices (McKinney, 2017; Ivanič & Moss, 2004). In response, we propose designing a critical model for teaching academic writing that draws on both literacy studies and the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm.

2. Description and type of practice

Within this framework, this article offers a proposal for teaching academic writing in higher education, which we call the UARM model for humanistic research. Specifically, we focus on the course Methodology of Intellectual Work (Metodología del Trabajo Intelectual, Metrin), a mandatory subject for all UARM students in their second year. The course centers on producing a humanities memoir: an academic and formative-spiritual written product. With guidance from their professors and teaching assistants, students reflect on how their worldview has evolved through their humanities education. As a result of this reflection, the student designs a research proposal that leads to personal questioning and life decision-making.

Thus, the UARM model primarily contributes to the third universal apostolic preference: "Journeying with the Youth," particularly through Ignatian discernment adapted to academic research contexts. For university students, higher education is a space of identity and epistemic conflicts, where discernment is essential for making thoughtful decisions. Accordingly, the Metrin course encourages students to take ownership of their personal development with the support of their mentoring professor.

3. Methodology and Objectives: Discernment and/for research

The Metrin course adopts two dimensions — academic and formative-spiritual— each with a specific purpose. On one hand, the academic dimension is necessary given the stage of the students' formation; by their fourth semester, they are closer to advanced research, such as monographs or theses. On the other hand, the formative-spiritual dimension, in Ignatian terms, is a space for discernment: having progressed in academic life, it is fitting to reflect on our journey as social beings before moving forward. University life is not disconnected from the outside world; the aim for research is not for personal intellectual gratification but for awareness of one's role in society. Thus, the Metrin course draws not only on specialized literature in academic writing but also synergizes with the institution's Ignatian approach.

Having said this, our methodological proposal

focuses on three main objectives: Implementing memoir exercises to activate critical thinking, reorienting the teacher's role toward that of a mentoring educator, replacing academic conclusions with the Ignatian Examen.

4. Results

In the following, we elaborate on each objective of the UARM model, illustrating them with student testimonials who participated in the course. We aim to articulate these experiences with elements of Ignatian pedagogy and the framework of critical literacies.

4.1. Memoir exercises

Memoir exercises are a logical adaptation of St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises. The goal is to discern or align God's will with the individual's desires or will. As a result, life becomes more coherent with the purpose for which one were created. This way, the memoir exercises prompt students to question their personal history and recognize how their worldview has evolved. To formulate their research question, students must begin by completing one or more memoir exercises, which are explained in the first weeks of the course. Below, we briefly review four exercises and how they guide students in defining their memoir topic.

Inspired by the "Principle and Foundation" of the Spiritual Exercises, the first of the memoir exercises is titled "Driver and Motive" (Motor y motivo). It invites reflection on the driving forces and motivations that have shaped one's life, both past and present. Ignatius' original call was to recognize that all existence is grounded in God. In our secularized context, however, this exercise also aims to help individuals reconnect their academic pursuits with their original motivations.

For example, one student in the course, while applying this exercise, contrasted how her life's drivers and motives had strengthened during her university years. Note how her research work intertwines with both personal and social concerns:

> As someone from the district of Qarin in the province of Ayacucho, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by the hamlets and villages in my community, where gender inequality in education remains a persistent issue. […] The "Driver and Motive" exercise allowed me to reflect on my university journey. My initial expectations were always to gain technical knowledge and learn from my professors and peers. Over time, I began considering how, as a future industrial engineer, I could contribute to the fight for equality and the defense of the rights of the most vulnerable people, those who still face discrimination and stigma perpetuating inequality in our country. […] Also, I want to engage in projects that promote sustainable development, generate employment, and improve the quality of life for marginalized communities, including women like my mother, who have been historically excluded. […] This is what drives me to keep studying.
>
> Research Question Generated: How is implicit or symbolic violence manifested through gender roles in the documentary "The School of Silence" (La escuela del silencio)?

The second exercise is titled "The good, the bad, and the ugly" (Lo bueno, lo malo y lo feo). In this exercise, students reflect on the "good," "bad," and "ugly" experiences from their early years of university education. These may include a specific course they enjoyed or struggled with, as well as extracurricular activities outside of the classroom. One student, for instance, reflects on her daily commute using public transportation. Notably, this exercise allows the student to explore memories of anxiety-inducing experiences, revealing an attempt at self-understanding. This is a crucial skill in a university setting that emphasizes the personal growth and awareness in the student.

> I chose the exercise "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." The biggest challenge I faced when starting university was the time I spent commuting, time which I often saw as wasted or lost, time that could have been invested in studying, reading, or being with family, etc. During the first days of the semester, I tried to adjust to my new routine. […] Whenever I thought about my academic workload and how the time I could have spent studying was slipping away during my commute, I often felt short of breath and a tightening in my chest. […]
>
> Research Question: How do students at UARM (Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya) who live far from campus experience the time spent on public transportation?

The third exercise is also inspired by the Igna-

tian tradition. We need to recall that Ignatius of Loyola himself dictated an autobiography, framing his existence as a journey, more precisely, a pilgrimage. Thus, the concept of time is central to self-understanding. Accordingly, the proposed exercise is called "The Timeline" (La línea de tiempo). In this one, participants examine their social media profiles, moving backward through their timeline to reflect: What did I post, and why? Who did I interact with? One student traces her interpersonal connections over recent years:

> Looking back at my timeline, I noticed that two years ago, when I was still in high school, I rarely went out alone or with friends to public spaces (parks, shopping malls, beaches, etc.). […] But after starting university, I began exploring new public spaces where I formed pleasant bonds with new people. […] Thus, experiencing different environments, each with unique infrastructures and social dynamics, has fostered in me a newfound appreciation for going out, whether alone or with friends, to these spaces.

Research Question: In what ways do shopping malls reshape contemporary youth dynamics?

The fourth exercise, "Conversation in front of the Mirror" (Conversación frente al espejo), involves looking at a personal photograph, preferably from a few years ago, and engaging in dialogue with one's younger self. What advice would I give myself? What has not my past myself discovered yet? One student reflects on his pandemic-era experiences with the virtual world:

> After doing the "Conversation in front of the Mirror" exercise, I deeply connected with my past self through a process of introspection. This experience brought me back to an unexpected moment that defined my adolescence: the global Covid-19 pandemic. […] This exercise helped me see how technology did not just help us keep us connected during isolation but also it reshaped how we face emotions. My experience allowed me to understand that while virtual spaces offer quick fixes, real inner dialogue and reconnection with yourself and others mean stepping away from those digital platforms. […]

Research Question: What dilemmas and tensions does the movie Wonderland (2024) explore about virtuality's impact on human relationships?

Students may choose to complete one or more memoir exercises as they see fit. This way, research does not emerge in a vacuum but rather stems from discerning lived experience. We recognize, of course, that discernment is a cornerstone concept of Ignatian spirituality. Yet this approach also aligns with contemporary pedagogical concerns around developing students' critical agency (Zavala, 2011) – which requires acknowledging the self in writing.

When we write, we are neither objective nor impartial subjects. Rather, we are shaped by cultural, familial, and educational beliefs, and we invariably produce knowledge from specific situated perspectives. Thus, these memoir exercises encourage us to approach writing as a personal-social practice: we write about issues affecting our society while consciously acknowledging our individual positionality.

4.2. The Mentoring educator and active listening

The second element is centered on the methodological approach supporting this pedagogical model and the role we assume as guiding educators. In the Ignatian tradition, discernment does not happen by itself, it is guided by a spiritual companion. Between the two, guide and guided, is established a mutually committed relationship: the former must be willing to listen attentively, while the latter must also begin by sharing their experiences to receive proper guidance (Rodríguez Hernández, 2021).

Within this framework, the Metrin instructor is more than just a "writing professor." Their role is not limited to lecturing and grading with a rubric. Instead, they commit to accompanying students through active listening, engaging in ongoing dialogue throughout the memoir-writing process.

The following interaction takes place in the first moments of the course. Here, Author1 (R) speaks with their student, Fernando (F), after his first submission: the research proposal. Fernando recounts his journey in refining his research question, which is centered on the analysis of moral conflicts in song lyrics.

> R: Okay, let me see your research question.
>
> F: Actually, my original work was different, it was broader. As I told you last week, it

was going to be focused on ethics and morality, how perceptions of them shift over time. […] But since it was too broad, I narrowed it down to something easier to research: a song.

R: If I had not conditioned you to focus on a song, what would you have done?
F: I would have kept it broader. [...] I wanted to explore how moral perspective is a dissolving thing in a person, shaped by everything around you [...]

R: [...] I feel like your research topic does not really convince you...

F: Actually, I am trying to be as honest as possible, because I was in this limbo about how to write my memoir, and when I first started thinking about my topic, I picked something more abstract like morality, I even dreamed about it! I discussed it with all my classmates and they all told me "change your topic". And I was like "do I change it or not?" and decided not to. Then when I came to class quite confident, I had this other Word document, showed it to my theory professor and he said "No, narrow it down more; it is still too abstract." So now I see I have to make it more focused.

The work Fernando ends up submitting has a backstory. The final product stems from an internal process of wandering thoughts, consultations, doubts, expectations, and more. Fernando wants to pursue a topic that his classmates and theory professor consider too broad, and he makes decisions accordingly to that. In this context, the conversation helps uncover these elements of what we call, in our course framework, the backstage of writing. This methodology is inspired by Theresa Lillis's (2008) work on talk-around-texts, a technique used in ethnographic studies of writing to reconstruct the history behind each submission and recognize the social logic of the subjects who write. Thus, guiding students requires both parties to engage in dialogue and active listening to navigate the memoir-writing process, unpacking the conflicts inherent in this journey.

4.3 The Examen

The conclusion of the written memoir also draws on Ignatian foundations. As in the Spiritual Exercises, the final stage is none other than gratitude, embodied in the "Contemplation to attain love" and, more precisely, in the practice of the Ignatian "examen". In our case, the examen constitutes the memoir's final section, serving not only as an exposition of academic conclusions but also as a space for personal reflection: how research intertwines with personal decisions, life-project reorientations, or future actions. We ground this in the certainty that the examen is a "transformative practice", in the sense that it offers individuals "a new outlook on life, a distinct existential attitude" (Boné Pina, 2016, p. 393; our translation).

The following excerpt comes from a student's examen in their memoir on hikikomori and neoliberalism's contemporary influence:

> [...] Neoliberalism has transfigured the meaning and essence of being human, and thus society and culture, which need interaction between each other. You must remember Kazuo to understand how his Self, his essence, was destroyed through jobs that were never chosen by him but that granted him social worth in his mother's eyes. [...]
>
> [...] Remote work, emojis supplanting identities, the new monosyllabic lexicon, and the genie's lamp replaced by a keyboard's 'enter' key was destroying social interaction. At first, I wanted to expose this in my memoir, only to discover that hikikomori and this neoliberal dystopia predated the seductive allure of cloud connectivity. So I must admit I was wrong. The technological advances were not the culprits; rather, they have become the grim refuge for stolen and lost identities. [...]

It is no exaggeration to say there are traces of gratitude and awareness in the student's examen, since she does not just focus on academic content - like how neoliberalism has transformed the lives of hikikomori. She also proposes how these social logics intervene in her own life and makes commitments to herself. In this way, the memoir writing connects with contemporary criticism in recent literacy literature: inscribing writing within specific social purposes. The examen seals a space of discernment that calls the person to take action.

5. Lessons learned and opportunities for improvement

The UARM model conceives memoir writing as a space that combines the university's Ignatian spirit with contemporary current critical studies on academic literacies. The memoir exercises

prioritize, first and foremost, students' critical agency for academic growth. Guiding this process means viewing the process of writing through an ethnographic lens. And writing the examen imbues the work with social meaning.

Nevertheless, rethinking models for teaching writing is a long-term endeavor, as traditional paradigms remain prevalent - paradigms that have eliminated critical reflection about how to teach writing at the university level and reinforced a perception of apparent simplicity regarding "teaching composition." New horizons must consider raising awareness about the model's pedagogical identity among the university community, so that the proposal may be embraced as a sine qua non not only in the first years of education but transversely across the entire curriculum.

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BEST PRACTICES IN JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION
ISSUE 6.2: FORMATION PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN JESUIT IDENTITY AND MISSION

TYPE OF PRACTICE: FORMATION

An Institutional Chair in Identity, Leadership, and Commitment as a Best Practice at the Andrés Bello Catholic University

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ABSTRACT

The Identity, Leadership, and Commitment first and second chairs (ILC I and ILC II) are mandatory, transversal courses for all first-year undergraduate students at Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB) in Venezuela. These chairs serve as a primary tool for accompanying new students as they transition into university life, grounding their experience in Ignatian values and principles. By integrating academic reflection with community service, the program socializes the "ucabista mode of proceeding," forming students who are conscious, competent, compassionate, and committed.

MAIN GOALS

- Strengthen Ignatian Identity
- Integral Formation
- Social Responsibility
- Academic Success

Connection with the UAPs

Walking with the excluded: through commmunity insertion in marginalized
Accompanying youth: in the creation of a hope-filled future by helping them discover their purpose and life project through Ignatian discernment

METHODOLOGY

- **Two-Semester Curricular Sequence:**
  - **ILC I:** Focuses on anthropological reflection and the history of Jesuit education.
  - **ILC II:** Focuses on University Social Responsibility (i.e. social commitment), leadership, and the Ledesma-Kolvenbach paradigm.

LESSONS LEARNED

Caring for the Teacher: The success of the program depends on the personal accompaniment of faculty, as well-supported teachers have a greater capacity to receive and guide their students.

Sequential Formation: The transition from the question "Who am I?" in ILC I to "For what purpose?" in ILC II is essential for building a committed professional profile.

Logistical Solidarity: Coordination between the university academic and the community units is vital for managing the complex logistics of transport and safety for off-campus activities.

RESULTS

Broad Institutional Reach
The program serves approximately 1,500 students per semester, representing about 21% of the total undergraduate population.

High Engagement
Approximately 59% of enrolled students successfully completed the sexual violence prevention module in the most recent semester.

Shift in Perspective
Through community insertion, students return to university life with a "peripheral vision," having challenged their prior images of marginalized communities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Addressing Resistance:
The program must continue to find ways to manage student resistance to community work and resolve scheduling conflicts.

Contextual Risks:
There is a persistent need to mitigate threats from the external political and social contexts that can affect community involvment activities.

Programmatic Updates:
Maintaining a regular schedule of working groups to continuously update the curriculum and share best practices among the 20+ faculty members.

Una cátedra institucional, en identidad, liderazgo y compromiso, como buena práctica de la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello.

FORMATION

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Como herramienta de formación para los estudiantes, las cátedras de Identidad, Liderazgo y Compromiso I y II, ubicadas en los dos primeros semestres, de forma transversal para todos los pregrados buscan acompañar desde los valores y principios ignacianos al alumno de nuevo ingreso en el proceso de convertirse en un estudiante universitario, de una institución con identidad propia: la ignaciana.

El nacimiento de las cátedras atiende a la necesidad de la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (en adelante UCAB), de generar espacios para socializar su identidad, misión, visión, valores y demás elementos que agrupamos en lo que llamamos nuestro modo de proceder ucabista.

El camino inicia en el año 2011, cuando la institución modifica elementos de su gestión y docencia, poniendo foco en las diversas iniciativas que podían propiciar el fortalecimiento de la identidad institucional. Se concretan de esta forma, dos materias, bajo la modalidad de materias institucionales o comunes, según el Reglamento de Cátedras Comunes 2.60:

> "Artículo 3º. Las Cátedras Institucionales agrupan unidades curriculares comunes a todas las carreras o titulaciones de la universidad. Corresponden a dos áreas curriculares, a saber: iniciación universitaria: dirigida al desarrollo de las competencias básicas necesarias para el desempeño exitoso en la universidad, y las de formación integral: orientadas a la educación en valores, sustentabilidad identidad universitaria ucabista, ética profesional y cualquier otra que la Universidad tenga a bien proponer."

Estas cátedras contribuyen con las competencias generales de la UCAB: Aprender a aprender con calidad; aprender a trabajar con el otro y aprender a convivir y servir. Siendo las formas de evaluación sugeridas para este tipo de cátedras:

- Diagnóstica: técnica de la pregunta, evaluación diagnóstica y cuestionario escrito.
- Formativa: foros virtuales, preguntas reflexivas, reportes semanales, participación en discusiones en clase, registro anecdótico y registro de observación.
- Formadora: mediante la autoevaluación y la coevaluación.
- Sumativa: exposiciones, ensayos, estudio de casos, debates, portafolio, pruebas orales y escritas, mapa mental y conceptual, infografía, talleres grupales, controles de lectura, tareas auténticas (informes específicos de actividades particulares), resumen y elaboración de videos.
- Instrumentos: prueba escrita, lista de cotejo, escala de estimación y rúbrica.

Las cátedras de identidad, como primera instancia de socialización de los valores y modos ignacianos de la universidad, residen en la Dirección de Identidad y Misión, donde además la figura de la dirección se comparte con el ejercicio de la jefatura de cátedra; esta duplicidad garantiza que estas dos materias resguarden su función académica en los contenidos relacionados con la identidad, el liderazgo y el compromiso, y hace que estén vinculadas con los diversos programas de formación a estudiantes que la dirección ofrece como parte de los procesos de identificación con la institución.

Identidad, Liderazgo y Compromiso I (en adelante ILC) centrada en la reflexión antropológica del estudiante y el conocimiento de la historia de la universidad en la que estudia, entendida esta como parte de un conjunto más grande, representado en la obra educativa de la Compañía de Jesús a nivel mundial (IAJU y AUSJAL). Esta unidad curricular, según su última actualización programática aprobada por Consejo Universitario en sesión del 09 de abril de 2024 busca:

1. Fortalecer en el estudiante, el conocimiento de los elementos de la identidad jesuita de nuestra universidad y su impacto en el entorno.
2. Comprender la Misión y Visión de la Universidad en un contexto social complejo.
3. Fomentar el conocimiento del funcionamiento académico-administrativo de la UCAB y de su Proyecto Formativo Institucional.
4. Promover el conocimiento de servicios y programas que ofrece la UCAB al estudiantado para favorecer su integración a la comunidad universitaria, así como su participación en la vida ucabista.
5. Facilitar el conocimiento de información institucional y académica referida a los derechos, así como los deberes de los alumnos en el contexto de la UCAB para fortalecer modos de proceder asociados a las competencias institucionales seleccionadas para la cátedra, haciendo énfasis en la responsabilidad individual en el desempeño como estudiante, su protagonismo y participación en las actividades académicas, el aprendizaje autónomo y el trabajo colaborativo.

Las unidades temáticas de esta materia se pasean por la revisión general de las características de la persona: la hitos históricos de la universidad como institución educativa superior; el camino transitado por la UCAB en sus más de 70 años de historia; los desafíos de la universidad jesuita, los desafíos de la universidad venezolana; elementos básicos del funcionamiento académico y administrativo de la institución (incluyendo reglamentos relevantes para el estudiante); para cerrar con la actividad más significativa de la siguiente materia ILC II: Las Prácticas de Inserción Comunitaria. Lo que se espera es, que el estudiante tenga espacios de reflexión acerca de su ser persona, desde el quién soy, reciba el contexto de esta universidad, para que al pasar a ILC II, pueda avanzar a la pregunta del para qué, y tenga entonces un primer contacto estructurado y acompañado con comunidades desfavorecidas a través de la práctica.

La existencia de estas dos materias, en este caso de ILC I, genera un espacio del que se desprenden otras buenas prácticas. Esta cátedra entendida como de iniciación, desarrolla tres (3) actividades fijas dentro de las distintas semanas de cada semestre, que colaboran con la familiarización del estudiante con su universidad, con el hacerse parte y que, en lógica ignaciana, buscan

desde la inmersión, formar la mente, el corazón y las manos. Las presentamos a continuación:

1. Aplicación del instrumento: La Adquisición del Oficio del estudiante universitario: trabajo en sinergia con el Vicerrectorado Académico, la Dirección de Apoyo Educativo y el Centro de Asesoramiento y Desarrollo Humano (en adelante CADH). El instrumento busca ofrecer una radiografía de cómo recibimos a los estudiantes de nuevo ingreso, de caras a sus obstaculizadores: desagrado por las matemáticas, pensamiento repetitivo, confusión, desprecio a la ayuda académica, emocionalidad excesiva; y sus facilitadores: compromiso académico, focalización, auto aceptación, adecuado afrontamiento del estrés y persistencia. Intenta medir el balance entre los elementos a favor y en contra que el nuevo estudiante tiene hacia convertirse en universitario; su función principal no es ser un insumo para las unidades académico/administrativas que desarrollan la actividad, si no que los resultados se socializan con los estudiantes en espacios de reflexión dentro de las horas de clase de ILC I, guiados por los psicólogos del CADH buscando colaborar con el auto conocimiento, reflexionando acerca de cuáles son aquellas características previas que pueden facilitar y/o dificultar su inducción y paso por la universidad. En el semestre anterior participaron alrededor de 1300 estudiantes.

2. La segunda actividad, se realiza en equipo con la Dirección General de Cultura, y consiste en visitas guiadas al Centro Cultural P. Carlos Guillermo Plaza SJ, inaugurado en el 2013, en el marco de los 60 años de la UCAB, con 14.000mts2, diseñado por los arquitectos Orlando Capiello y Francisco Pimentel. Cuenta con áreas de estudio, tres pisos dedicados a la biblioteca, auditorios, salas, y áreas abiertas de exposición, contempla espacios conmemorativos como la sala Simón Alberto Consalvi o la sala Andrés Bello. El Centro Cultural marca la sexta década de la universidad. Integrando la cultura y el arte, desde la continuidad, sin categorías dominantes, respetando y promoviendo la interconexión entre disciplinas, le permite a la UCAB no solo tener una biblioteca, sino un Centro Cultural y dentro de ILC I queremos hacer parte propositiva a los estudiantes de esta integralidad entre lo artístico y la academia, además de acercarlos a la oferta de actividades culturales de la UCAB.

3. La tercera actividad, va direccionada a colaborar desde la cátedra con el espíritu de respeto y cuidado entre quienes hacemos vida en la UCAB. Esta universidad cuenta con el Protocolo para la prevención y atención en casos de acoso y violencia sexual 2.38, siendo la primera universidad del país con una herramienta de este estilo. Con la intención de garantizar su socialización entre nuestros estudiantes, todas las secciones de ILC I, semestralmente participan de un módulo virtual, interactivo, evaluado dentro de sus Módulos 7 (plataforma oficial de aula virtual de la UCAB), en el que van desde los elementos teóricos mínimos de estos casos, hasta el conocimiento de la ruta de atención de los mismos; la actividad se enmarca, dentro del tema de los reglamentos de la universidad de relevancia para el estudiante. En el último semestre en el que se aplicó la actividad participaron 760 estudiantes, representando un 59% de los inscritos en ILC I.

De caras a Identidad, Liderazgo y Compromiso II (en adelante ILC II), los contenidos se profundizan. Esta cátedra, ubicada en el segundo semestre, con características semejantes a ILC I: transversal para todos los pregrados. Parte del principio de que el estudiante se forma con excelencia para la sociedad. ILC II tiene como propósito, según su última actualización de programa, aprobada por Consejo Universitario del 10 de septiembre de 2019:

1. Brindar una visión global y articulada de información básica, así como de herramientas prácticas, necesarias para fortalecer competencias con las cuales enfrentar, efectivamente, los desafíos académicos que les supone esta nueva etapa.
2. Facilitar el conocimiento de la Responsabilidad Social Universitaria de la UCAB y sus aportes al país en investigación, docencia y extensión.
3. Promover la reflexión, en los alumnos, sobre la importancia del cultivo personal de la responsabilidad social.
4. Promover acciones para el desarrollo de competencias asociadas al liderazgo con enfoque ucabista.
5. Promover actividades para que los alumnos interactúen con contextos de periferia existencial, procesen su experiencia y saquen sus conclusiones, en clave de responsabilidad social universitaria.
6. Promover el conocimiento del proyecto de país que apoya la propuesta educativa de la UCAB y sus implicaciones en el modo de proceder cotidiano desde la condición de ciudadano.

Entre los temas diversos que revisa están: la UCAB en su contexto; el humanismo solidario; rasgos de la universidad jesuítica para la eficacia

política según el planteamiento del P. Ignacio Ellacuría SJ; revisión de los términos: política, democracia, Estado y nación; el enfoque de la responsabilidad social universitaria de AUSJAL; aspectos claves en las iniciativas de responsabilidad social universitaria según AUSJAL; conocimiento de la realidad del país; aportes específicos de la UCAB a la historia de Venezuela; el liderazgo universitario y el liderazgo ucabista y el paradigma Ledesma-Kolvenbach como horizonte para nuestro perfil de egresado: profesionales consientes, competentes, compasivos y comprometidos.

La actividad central de ILC II, son las Prácticas de Inserción Comunitaria, las mismas que se realizan en conjunto con la Dirección de Proyección y Relaciones Comunitarias y el Centro para Innovación Educativa, como su nombre lo indican insertan al joven universitario en siete (7) sesiones en comunidades desfavorecidas aledañas a la universidad. Las prácticas, le permiten al estudiante incluirse en proyectos de acción comunitaria, que funcionan durante todo el período académico desde la figura del voluntariado, y que durante estas inserciones son parte, evaluada de nuestra asignatura. Los proyectos en los que participan los estudiantes son variopintos: club de lectura; formación en origami; narra cuentos para niños; acompañamiento en la enseñanza de robótica; acompañamiento en la enseñanza de las matemáticas; talleres acerca del manejo de las emociones; actividades lúdicas de aprendizaje; actividades varias de acompañamiento a abuelos; entre otras. Al inicio de las prácticas los estudiantes se registran de acuerdo a sus intereses y disponibilidad horaria en alguno de estos proyectos, reciben una inducción general acerca de elementos de seguridad, logística, presencia personal, manejo y trato de comunidades vulnerables; para luego participar en una sesión especial dedicada al proyecto específico en el que se registraron y luego de estos primeros dos momentos, comienzan a ir a las comunidades.

Esta actividad requiere una amplia logística, y fuerte apuesta presupuestaria de parte de la institución (la cual se invierte principalmente en el transporte que lleva y regresa a nuestros estudiantes desde la universidad hasta la comunidad y de regreso), representa uno de los centros esenciales de nuestra cátedra, implica para todos los involucrados salir de nosotros mismos para: propiciar mecanismos de acompañamiento al docente que guiará secciones que asistirán a práctica; formas efectivas de comunicación entre el personal de la cátedra (actividad académica) y el personal de las otras dos unidades involucradas (inserción comunitaria); además de una alta demanda de atención individual a las resistencias del joven estudiante ante este tipo de actividades, las dificultades horarias que algunos presentan, y no menos importante el acompañamiento a los procesos que se generan en estos jóvenes una vez fueron a comunidad y regresan a su vida universitaria, con una nueva visión periférica de lo que sucede afuera, que han contemplado y experimentado. Esto sin contar las amenazas externas a la actividad: condiciones de seguridad, contexto político y social, por mencionar las más evidentes.

Semestralmente, un aproximado de entre 300 y 350 estudiantes de ILC II, asiste a estas prácticas de inserción comunitaria y al terminar las mismas, debe entregar un informe contrastando su experiencia desde la razón y los sentimientos con cuestionamientos como: ¿Qué actividades realizaste?; ¿Cuáles son valores de la UCAB que pudiste fortalecer a través de esta experiencia?; ¿Cómo se cumplió en esta experiencia, la triple acción del pensamiento del P. Ignacio Ellacuria S.J. cuando habla del “hacerse cargo, cargar y encargarse” de la realidad?; ¿Cómo lograste que los participantes del proyecto lograrán contigo los objetivos de la experiencia?; Describe a la persona de tu proyecto que más te marcó: Presenta su nombre, características, tamaño, género y edad estimada ¿Qué vivencia especial tuviste con esa persona: ¿niño(a), abuelo(a)?, ¿Qué enseñanza te dejó esa persona y al momento ella no lo sabía?; ¿Qué imagen tienes ahora de la comunidad a la que asististe y de las personas que viven allí? ¿Es la misma imagen que tenías antes de ir? ¿en qué cambió?; ¿Qué opinión tienes de esta experiencia de las Prácticas de Inserción Comunitaria y del equipo que te acompañó tanto en clases como desde la Dirección de Proyección y Relaciones Comunitarias? y ¿Repetirías en tu vida una experiencia similar?

Existen dos objetivos subyacentes en la realización de estas prácticas: vincular al estudiante con las actividades de voluntariado de la universidad y con los programas de formación para estudiantes ofrecidos por la Dirección de Identidad y Misión. Si hablamos de una cátedra, de carácter obligatoria, como oportunidad de formación permanente, no podemos dejar a un lado el acompañamiento docente, más considerando que tenemos un promedio de 30 secciones, con unos 20 docentes por semestre. El profesor de ILC requiere un perfil específico: comenzando por estar vinculado, sentir y participar de la identidad de la universidad. El docente de ILC tiene necesariamente que estar vinculado con nues-

tra identidad ignaciana, por lo que, egresados ucabistas no solo de pregrado, sino también de los programas de la Dirección de Identidad y Misión; personas pertenecientes a la obra jesuita no solo a la UCAB, si no a otras instituciones de identidad ignaciana, y por supuesto docentes con funciones administrativas en la UCAB, que al hacer vida aquí en el campus tengan y quieran dejarse afectar por esta identidad, ejerciendo el cumplimiento de sus funciones desde un liderazgo que acompaña y promueve, son los recomendados como profesores de esta cátedra. Desde la jefatura de cátedra y coordinación académica se promueven espacios de formación en temas vinculantes como: Paradigma Pedagógico Ignaciano; discernimiento ignaciano; estrategias y herramientas para la evaluación continua; sinodalidad y educación; mesas de trabajo para cuando se requiera actualizar los programas de alguna de las dos cátedras; espacios para compartir buenas prácticas entre docentes y la presentación de los resultados del desempeño docente a través de la socialización de los resultados de la gestión tras el cierre de cada semestre, cuidando elementos como: la evaluación docente y debido reconocimiento al profesor bien evaluado por sus estudiantes según los instrumentos que la UCAB ha dispuesto para esto; la asistencia y el cumplimiento de los requerimientos administrativos de la universidad, sin olvidar cuando sea requerido el acompañamiento personal al docente, porque al cuidar a la persona del docente de forma integral este, tendrá una capacidad más amplia y certera de acercarse a sus estudiantes desde la receptividad propia que se necesita en una cátedra de este estilo. Así, la expectativa es que ILC I, sea una dimensión de bienvenida, acompañamiento y acogida para el estudiante de la UCAB, mientras que ILC II sirva para contextualizar y vincular al estudiante con la realidad social.

Finalmente se trata de valorar y resguardar, estas dos materias de identidad, que semestralmente atienden a unos 1500 estudiantes, representando aproximadamente un 21% del total de inscritos en la UCAB (alrededor de 7000 estudiantes de pregrado), como espacios privilegiados para alinear al estudiante con la identidad ignaciana y el sentido de comunidad de una universidad como esta.

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Una Experiencia de Acompañamiento Espiritual Universitario

FORMATION

IVÁN DARÍO CARO JIMÉNEZ Y JUANITA MARCELA DEL PORTILLO SOLARTE
PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA

RESUMEN

El proyecto Contigo en el Camino es la apuesta del Centro Pastoral San Francisco Javier de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, Colombia por acompañar espiritualmente a la comunidad educativa. El acompañamiento que se brinda desde los diferentes espacios y está inspirado en la Espiritualidad Ignaciana, tiene como marco de practica el espacio universitario, por medio de un espacio concertado la comunidad educativa (Estudiantes, docentes y profesores) pueden acercarse a esta experiencia que busca ayudar a discernir la búsqueda de sentido y el discernimiento de las mociones que el Espíritu suscita en cada persona que se acerca a este espacio. En el documento encontrarán la naturaleza de la experiencia, sus características y su origen, así como algunas cifras de su evolución a lo largo de estos últimos años. El proyecto Contigo en el Camino es una apuesta surgida en el marco de la pandemia del COVID 19 como respuesta del Centro Pastoral de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana a la necesidad de acompañamiento de la comunidad educativa.

Escuchando a la Comunidad Educativa Javeriana

Cada uno de nosotros, sin lugar a duda, recuerda la pandemia del COVID-19. Fueron los años 2020 y 2021 cuando la humanidad se vio enfrentada a una situación completamente surrealista que, como toda experiencia humana, hemos intentado verbalizar, sin lograr agotarla o describirla del todo. Fue la época en la que escuchamos sobre un virus mortal surgido en China, que se expandía rápidamente y parecía un hecho lejano, quizás incluso una noticia más. No obstante, no podíamos estar más equivocados: fuimos testigos de cómo ese virus se acercaba progresivamente, primero en Asia, luego en Europa, América y, finalmente, en nuestros propios países, territorios, regiones y familias.

Durante este periodo vivimos el encierro y las cuarentenas como nunca lo imaginamos. Se activaron nuestros miedos más profundos; no era para menos: una amenaza real a la vida tocaba a nuestra puerta. Experimentamos incertidumbre, angustia, presión emocional, discusiones familiares y, en no pocos casos, aprendimos una nueva manera de despedir a nuestros seres queridos: los duelos virtuales.

La época del COVID-19 nos retó como humanidad. Hoy podemos mirar atrás y recordarla como un episodio extraño, casi como un lapsus en la conciencia colectiva. Aunque logramos salir adelante, también pagamos un precio: algunos con la vida, otros con secuelas psicológicas aún presentes.

Las universidades, como muchas otras instituciones, tuvieron que adaptarse a esta nueva realidad, marcada por la digitalización de procesos y, lo que es más importante, de los encuentros humanos.

Fue en este contexto que la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana y el Centro Pastoral San Francisco Javier reconocieron la necesidad de responder con creatividad, atendiendo el llamado de distintos grupos y comunidades que acompañaban. En esas conversaciones emergió una necesidad urgente: ser escuchados, acompañados y sostenidos en la búsqueda de sentido y espiritualidad.

Aunque el Centro Pastoral ya ofrecía acompañamiento espiritual mediante experiencias como misiones y Ejercicios Espirituales, la situación reveló la necesidad de formalizar y fortalecer esa dimensión. Así nació el proyecto Contigo en el Camino.

Un llamado a acompañar

En el año 2022 el Centro Pastoral inició un proceso de investigación, fundamentación y diseño de la propuesta. Para ello se hizo una indagación exhaustiva de las fuentes del Acompañamiento Espiritual Ignaciano (AEI), no iniciamos de cero, una larga tradición nos precede y nos inspira para poder articular este proceso que se iba gestando.

Desde el programa de Ejercicios Espirituales se lideró este proceso investigativo que recolectó documentos, e indagó por las fuentes inspiracionales del acompañamiento en los principales conocedores del tema, en todo este proceso, sin duda, la inspiración de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio fueron la piedra fundamental en la construcción de esta propuesta.

Una vez realizado este proceso investigativo que fue realizado durante el primer semestre del año 2022 se procedió a la elaboración concreta de una propuesta de Acompañamiento Espiritual Ignaciano. Para ello, durante el segundo semestre del mismo año se fue haciendo esa elaboración y retroalimentándola con la experiencia que distintas personas fueron proponiendo para mejorarla y así poder ofrecer una experiencia de calidad, pensada y articulada a toda la comunidad educativa javeriana. Para el año 2023 se lanzó la propuesta como tal y se puso en marcha con los Profesionales del Centro Pastoral. Se dispuso de un tiempo específico en la agenda de cada profesional para el acompañamiento, de dos horas semanales por profesional, y se lanzó la propuesta en primera instancia a algunas facultades más cercanas y receptivas a procesos del Centro Pastoral como la Facultad de Ciencias y las del área de la salud. Fue así como durante el primer semestre de ese año fue tomando forma en la práctica la propuesta de acompañamiento llamada Contigo en el Camino.

Al interior del Centro Pastoral se acogió con entusiasmo esta nueva experiencia; se dispuso no solo de tiempo disponible para el acompañamiento sino de espacios y lugares propicios para el mismo, las salas de acompañamiento del Centro Pastoral fueron testigos de esos primeros acompañamientos que se ofrecieron.

Al mismo tiempo que se fue consolidando la

propuesta de Contigo en el Camino al interior del Centro Pastoral se fueron gestando algunos cambios en su ser y quehacer, en aquello a lo que queremos apostarla para el 2023. En este camino, el equipo del Centro Pastoral quiso darle relevancia al proceso del acompañamiento y por tanto estableció como parte de su naturaleza el ofrecer una experiencia de acompañamiento espiritual ignaciano para toda la comunidad educativa, de esta manera se le dio lugar al proceso Contigo en el Camino y fue propuesto como un proyecto transversal de toda la actividad del Centro Pastoral y al que todos los miembros del equipo estamos llamados a acompañar.

Con todo, como es natural, muchas preguntas empezaron a surgir al interior del equipo, la distinción, por ejemplo, entre el acompañamiento psicológico y el acompañamiento espiritual, qué hacer ante determinados casos que empezaron a llegarnos. Fue así como se dio inició a un proceso formativo de largo aliento al que se quiso invitar a distintas personas expertas que pudieran acompañar al equipo del Centro Pastoral en su proceso de cualificar su oferta de acompañamiento espiritual. Para ello se invitaron psicólogos, acompañantes espirituales y varios miembros del Centro Pastoral fueron enviados al Curso taller de acompañamiento espiritual ofrecido por el CIRE (Centro Ignaciano de reflexión y ejercicios de la Provincia Colombiana).

Todo ello fue proporcionando herramientas y fue cualificando el proceso del acompañamiento ofrecido por el proyecto, aún tenemos un largo camino por recorrer, pero hemos ido consolidándolo y compartiendo nuestros aprendizajes.

En este año de 2025 al Proyecto Contigo en el Camino hemos querido sumar una experiencia más de acompañamiento y es un espacio contiguo a una capilla de la Universidad en la que sacerdotes Jesuitas ofrecen su tiempo para acompañar también a toda la comunidad educativa. Como parte del proceso de inscripción preguntamos a las personas que se acercan al Centro Pastoral si desean ser acompañadas por un profesional de Pastoral o por un Sacerdote Jesuita; en muchas ocasiones prefieren el acompañamiento con el sacerdote. Por tal motivo este espacio se ha ido consolidando y fortaleciendo al interior de la Universidad y se ha buscado la mejor manera de poder comunicarlo a toda la comunidad educativa para que todo aquel que desee tener un espacio de acompañamiento por distintas razones pueda sentirse acogido, escuchado y acompañado en todo aquello que este viviendo.

Vale la pena resaltar que esta relación entre acompañante y acompañado que está presente en los Ejercicios Espirituales y en el acompañamiento ofrecido es arquetípica a su vez de la relación alumno profesor en la pedagogía ignaciana. La Pedagogía ignaciana es una pedagogía basada en la experiencia espiritual de San Ignacio de Loyola. En este sentido, el Acompañamiento Espiritual Ignaciano es la fuente fundamental que ilumina e inspira la relación profesor estudiante, un ejemplo de ello es la indicación de San Ignacio de “mantener en el centro” es decir, que el acompañante no debe inclinar al ejercitante a una cuestión o a otra (según su discernimiento), de igual manera el profesor en el aula no está llamado a “inclinar” al estudiante a una visión u otra.

Contigo en el Camino como un modo de acompañar

Contigo en el Camino es un camino de acompañamiento personal inspirado en la Espiritualidad Ignaciana que acoge a los estudiantes, administrativos y docentes, por medio de la escucha y el diálogo para discernir sus búsquedas, opciones e inquietudes de sentido de vida. Pretende que la persona tome consciencia de sus pensamientos, emociones, palabras y acciones (lo que en la Espiritualidad Ignaciana se llama mociones), con el fin de discernir lo que está en sintonía con su propósito vital —lo que San Ignacio llama Principio y Fundamento.

En nuestro enfoque espiritual abordamos la pregunta por el sentido de la vida desde una perspectiva trascendente y ofrecemos las herramientas que la Espiritualidad Ignaciana nos ofrece para ello.

Los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio, como eje articulador de la Espiritualidad Ignaciana, nos presentan una serie de insumos para acompañar la búsqueda espiritual: el examen de conciencia o examen general, el examen particular, la oración (meditación, contemplación, entre otras formas) el discernimiento como modo de acercarnos a descubrir la forma de concretar nuestro Principio y Fundamento en nuestra vida.

La manera como una persona puede acercarse

a esta experiencia es diversa. En primer lugar, puede hacerlo mediante la inscripción al formulario donde se le pedirán algunos datos y se le brindara toda la información necesaria para su acompañamiento. En segundo lugar, si la persona llega al Centro Pastoral o es remitido desde el Centro de Asesoría Psicológica y Salud (CAPS) de la Universidad, un profesional le atenderá de manera inmediata. En este primer encuentro se hará un encuadre del acompañamiento espiritual, se le explicará la naturaleza de nuestro acompañamiento y el número máximo de sesiones (7) a las que puede acceder. En ocasiones hemos tenido personas que desean ser escuchadas en ese momento particular, en otras se ha visto un proceso más sostenido con algunas sesiones de acompañamiento.

De igual manera, el acompañamiento se ofrece en modalidad presencial o virtual, con el fin de facilitar el proceso de acompañamiento y aprovechar todos los beneficios que nos ofrece el universo digital. Brindar la posibilidad de ofrecer un acompañamiento de forma remota, es fundamental, ya que un buen número de estudiantes de la universidad es proveniente de otras ciudades del país, o bien, porque, en una ciudad como Bogotá, el desplazamiento hasta las instalaciones del campus de la universidad no siempre es fácil.

Características del Acompañamiento Espiritual Ignaciano (AEI)

1. Escucha sagrada:

La experiencia del AEI se da solo desde la confianza. Es capital para el proceso poder contar con acompañantes formados y que vivan la Espiritualidad Ignaciana, capaces de ser testimonio y de generar confianza en sus acompañados, que posibilite un clima adecuado para el acompañamiento. Esta confianza es la que posibilita la búsqueda espiritual de las mociones que el Espíritu suscita en el acompañado, es el espacio donde se busca sintonizar con Dios y con su amor misericordioso que nos acoge en nuestra propia historia, desde lo que cada uno es.

Dada la naturaleza del acompañamiento, donde surgen temas muy personales, es muy importante este aspecto de confidencialidad que posibilita el acompañamiento mismo. Cabe resaltar que esta confidencialidad solo se pausa cuando la vida de la persona puede estar en riesgo por situaciones personales delicadas relativas a su salud mental.

2. Discernimiento:

El discernimiento como modo fundamental de buscar y hallar la voluntad de Dios en la vida es otro aspecto clave del AEI, lo que buscamos es sintonizar con las mociones que despierta el Espíritu en la persona. En medio de todo el cúmulo de emociones, sentimientos, vivencias y pensamientos procuramos que la persona tome consciencia de la acción del Espíritu en ella, según como la persona nombre esa experiencia y le invitamos a discernir esas mociones o movimientos interiores. Acompañamos el discernimiento para que la persona pueda elegir, desde la libertad y no desde los afectos desordenados, lo que más conduce a ese fin para el que hemos sido creados, como reza el Principio y Fundamento de los Ejercicios Espirituales.

3. Encuentro - Diálogo:

El AEI es ante todo encuentro, entre acompañante y acompañado, en el cual el primero es testigo de la acción de Dios y de la búsqueda humana de sentido, consuelo y plenitud. El acompañante, como lo dice San Ignacio, no debe guiar u orientar a la persona a algún aspecto particular, sino estar en el medio, dejando que sea el ejercitante quien se comunique con su Creador. No debe sustituir, por tanto, la acción de Dios que se hace presente de manera consciente o no en el acompañado. En este sentido, lo que prima en ese encuentro no es un monólogo sino un diálogo.

Como todo encuentro verdadero, este diálogo está basado en la confianza la cual posibilita el verbalizar lo que sucede en el interior y la vida de la persona, para así poder acompañar los distintos procesos que esta va experimentando. Solo en la medida en que acontece este diálogo es que el acompañamiento se hace más pertinente y eficaz.

4. Cura personalis:

El cuidado integral de la persona es otro aspecto clave o rasgo característico del AEI, dado que estamos llamados a formar integralmente, atendemos al cuidado de la persona, desde su dignidad más profunda como ser humano e hijo e hija de Dios.

La experiencia del proyecto Contigo en el Camino busca aportar también en el horizonte de las Preferencias Apostólicas Universales de la Compañía de Jesús, particularmente en la primera y tercera: Acompañar a los jóvenes en la creación de un futuro esperanzador, así como en Mostrar el camino hacia Dios (en particular

desde el discernimiento que moviliza el acompañamiento). En este sentido, buscamos ofrecer una propuesta de Acompañamiento Espiritual Ignaciano para toda la comunidad educativa que acompañe el camino y despierte la pregunta por el Dios de Jesús.

Algunas cifras

A lo largo de los años la experiencia Contigo en el Camino ha venido creciendo significativamente, particularmente a finales del 2024 e inicios del 2025. A continuación, presentamos algunas cifras históricas del proceso y la proyección que en su momento nos trazamos como meta del 2025:

Fuente: Datos del Proyecto Contigo en el Camino

Actualmente contamos con alrededor de 90 acompañados y esperamos aumentar el número hacia unas 110 personas acompañadas. Para fin de año esperamos un cierre por encima de lo proyectado alcanzado más de 200 personas acompañadas en este 2025.

Oportunidades de mejora

Las oportunidades de mejoramiento del proyecto son diversas. Por ejemplo, este año se ha identificado la posibilidad de abrir un espacio de acompañamiento brindado puntualmente por Sacerdotes Jesuitas a toda la comunidad educativa. La idea es poder proporcionar un servicio activo durante todo el día y todo el periodo académico que esté disponible para estudiantes, administrativos y profesores que buscan tanto acompañamiento como la celebración del Sacramento de la Reconciliación.

De igual manera, existe la posibilidad de ampliar el equipo de acompañantes vinculando a personal externo de la Universidad contamos con algunos interesados en hacer parte de la propuesta y es importante discernir bien el perfil de estos acompañantes para garantizar una experiencia cualificada y de corte claramente ignaciano.

Conclusión

La apuesta de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana por una formación integral, que atienda a todas las dimensiones y capacidades del sujeto y que potencia sus talentos y habilidades solo se logra con experiencias y espacios concretos de crecimiento a todo nivel. El Proyecto Contigo en el Camino es una experiencia valiosa que tiene el potencial de articulación con muchas otras propuestas al interior de la Universidad y que busca aportar a la formación integral desde su propia naturaleza. Somos un equipo que motiva un proyecto en crecimiento que busca ser un espacio valioso para la comunidad educativa javeriana y que pueda ante todo ser útil y pertinente a la realidad universitaria de hoy. Hacemos una apuesta decidida por inspirarnos en el humanismo Jesuita que sigue vigente después de cuatro siglos para fomentar el desarrollo de seres humanos conscientes, competentes, comprometidos y compasivos.

El Acompañamiento Espiritual Ignaciano ofrecido desde el proyecto Contigo en el Camino se enmarca en el ámbito universitario, lo que configura un modo propio de acompañar. La experiencia universitaria es un proceso de cambio, de tránsito desde la estructura del colegio, más marcada por la heteronomía dada la edad del sujeto, a la mayor autonomía que la caracteriza y que implica una mayor responsabilidad del estudiante. Este cambio suscita en el estudiante preguntas y búsquedas que pueden ser acompañadas desde el AEI lo que posibilita la configuración de su identidad personal, así como la búsqueda del sentido de su vida.

El espacio universitario está orientado desde la opción que cada estudiante elige al inscribirse a una determinada carrera o programa y, por lo tanto, es un camino que debe ser nutrido, acompañado, sostenido o, en algunas ocasiones, replanteado para que el estudiante logre construir su identidad, y estructure lo que sueña, lo que proyecta para su propia vida. En este sentido, el acompañamiento logra ser un medio fundamental para experimentar esa evolución y el desarrollo de sus opciones fundamentales.

En conclusión, la etapa universitaria es un momento en el que el sujeto debe seguir creciendo como persona y como adulto, responsable de sus acciones y decisiones.

Está llamado a asumir y ver de manera crítica la crianza que se le ha ofrecido, así como a buscar sus propias opciones fundamentales, las cuales pueden confirmar o no las que le fueron brindadas.

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