EDUCATION & SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT
INTERNATIONAL SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2017

BERKLEY CENTER
for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
GEOGETOWN UNIVERSITY

In collaboration with the Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service at Georgetown University
ABOUT THE BERKLEY CENTER FOR RELIGION, PEACE, AND WORLD AFFAIRS

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, created within the Office of the President in 2006, is dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of religion, ethics, and public life. Through research, teaching, and service, the center explores global challenges of democracy and human rights, economic and social development, international diplomacy, and interreligious understanding. Two premises guide the center’s work: that a deep examination of faith and values is critical to address these challenges, and that the open engagement of religious and cultural traditions with one another can promote peace.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH, TEACHING AND SERVICE

The Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service (CSJ), founded in 2001, seeks to advance justice and the common good through promoting and integrating community-based research, teaching, and service by collaborating with diverse partners and communities. CSJ works in three key areas: community and public service, curriculum and pedagogy, and research. Through such critical and engaged work, Georgetown builds on its tradition of academic excellence and contributes in singular ways to the Jesuit ideal of justice education and action “for the glory of God and the well-being of humankind.”

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the outcomes of the eighth year of the Education and Social Justice Project (ESJ). The purpose of this fellowship program is to explore the deep connections between the global challenges of poverty and marginalization and innovative educational programs. The foundational insight of ESJ is the idea that educational opportunities provide a pathway to enhanced well-being in an increasingly global economy. Religious communities are often the leaders in local efforts to advance economic and social development and parity through education, yet their efforts are generally ignored by national and international governments.

In order to engage Georgetown undergraduates and build knowledge in this critical area, two Georgetown University centers—the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and the Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service (CSJ)—created the Education and Social Justice Project in early 2010. Under faculty guidance, ESJ fellows conduct interviews, analyze best practices, and share their reports and conclusions with a wider global audience. The project is made possible through the generous support of Rodney Jacob (MBA’86, L’89) and other members of the Georgetown community.

During its eighth year, the project awarded fellowships to four students who spent three weeks with institutions engaged in efforts to promote social justice through education. Nicholas Na (SFS’18) spent three weeks in Sydney, Australia, at St. Ignatius’ College, an elite high school with a specific program designed for First Nations students. Mary Breen (SFS’19) spent three weeks conducting research in the Dominican Republic on how Jesuit values impacted the marginalized communities in the border region of Dajabón. Harshita Nadimpalli (SFS’18) spent three weeks in Mozambique at St. Ignatius Loyola High School (Escola Secundária Inácio de Loyola, ESIL), where she focused on how ESIL promotes local empowerment as a form of social justice grounded in Jesuit theology. Anastasia Sendoun (C’18) spent three weeks in Ukraine at the Catholic University of Ukraine focusing on how Catholic education impacts youth and the development of civil society.

During the course of the project’s eight years, students have traveled to 25 countries to conduct research: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, India, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Senegal, South Africa, South Korea, Ukraine, Uganda, and Uruguay. Full reports and interview transcripts for all years are available on the project website (berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/esj).

The Education and Social Justice Project is administered by Melody Fox Ahmed of the Berkley Center and faculty advisor Andria Wisler of CSJ.
First Nations Unit. The program actively seeks students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent to receive a full secondary education at St. Ignatius’ College. Scholarships and independent donors fully cover all tuition and boarding costs for students. The school started this program as a step toward reconciling with the First Nations. Catholic schools have historically played an integral role in the loss of indigenous culture through the forced resettlement of hundreds of indigenous children. In light of this historical injustice and in the spirit of the school’s Jesuit identity, reconciliation is both fundamental to St. Ignatius’ College’s ethos and necessary for future work in social justice. Social justice at the school is embodied in three ways through the First Nations Unit: 1) academically, in giving First Nations students opportunities to which they were previously disadvantaged; 2) culturally, in aiding First Nations students to reclaim much of their lost culture; and 3) spiritually, in providing ways for First Nations students to practice both indigenous and Catholic spirituality.

The general mission of the school is “to provide a holistic Catholic education for boys that inspire them to a life-long development of their faith.” Because spiritual formation is fundamental to the school’s ethos as a Jesuit institution, the school deeply cares about the holistic cultivation of its students. The focus in holistic education is derived from the Jesuit value of cura personalis, which in Latin means “care for the whole person.” With this concentration in educating the whole person, St. Ignatius’ College promotes social justice for its First Nations students by attempting to care for all facets of its students’ lives in addition to academic success. Therefore, the First Nations Unit as a program has various support systems, such as the Learning Enrichment program and the Cultural Enrichment program. All programs aim to restore the significant gaps in learning, culture, identity, and spirituality that First Nations communities lost when their children were stolen from their homes and resettled in Catholic missions.

OVERVIEW
Nicholas Na is a senior in the Walsh School of Foreign Service, majoring in international political economy with a concentration in international development. In May 2017, Nicholas spent three weeks in Sydney, Australia, at St. Ignatius’ College in Riverview. At the Jesuit boarding school, Nicholas examined the relationship between the school and First Nations students. He then analyzed the ways in which these relationships underscored the broader connections between Jesuit education and social justice in Australia. He primarily collected qualitative data by interviewing teachers, faculty, administrators, priests, program coordinators, tutors, students, and parents. With a diverse pool of interviews, Nicholas explored the various ways in which the school incorporates social justice into its programming and curriculum. Nicholas also researched the historical injustices committed by Catholic schools on First Nations children, namely, the forced removal of indigenous children from their families and the subsequent erasure of their culture. This specific act of injustice—known as the Stolen Generations—provides the context for this project. At St. Ignatius’ College, the primary work of social justice—reconciliation with the First Nations—is done through the First Nations Unit, a program that seeks to specially care for First Nations students who are admitted yearly into the school.

PARTNER INSTITUTION:
ST. IGNATIUS’ COLLEGE IN RIVERVIEW, AUSTRALIA
St. Ignatius’ College, a Jesuit boarding school for boys of years seven through 12, is located in Riverview, a suburb in northern Sydney, Australia. In 2001, the school began a program called the
INTRODUCTION

The need for social justice implies the existence of an inherent social injustice—in this instance, the denial or removal of an individual’s or community’s intrinsic dignity. In Australia, understanding the context of social justice and education, particularly of Catholic institutions, first requires an understanding of the historical social injustices committed by Catholic missions on the First Nations. This report specifically focuses on the Stolen Generations, which still carry rippling effects today. First coined by historian Peter Read in The Stolen Generation in 1996, the Stolen Generations are the children of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who were forcibly removed from their families by the Australian government and church missions during the early twentieth century. In 1869, under the Victorian Aboriginal Protection Act, the Australian government authorized the forced removal of First Nations children from their homes, labeling them “at risk” or “neglected” by their families. Removals did not require the consent of the child’s parents or legal guardians. Mothers would frequently return home to find their children gone, and they would have no way of knowing where their children were relocated.

In this way, the Australian government in collaboration with Catholic missions stripped the Stolen Generations of agency. The Victorian Aboriginal Protection Act was followed by several other laws affecting the entire nation, such as the Aborigines Ordinance 1918 of Northern Territory, the Aborigines Act 1934 of South Australia, and the 1936 Native Administration Act of Western Australia. These laws demonstrate that the social injustice perpetrated on the Stolen Generations was structural in nature. After removing young children from their families, law enforcement officers would then resettle the children in white Australian communities which were often Catholic missions. The purpose of these resettlement actions was to “breed out” the First Nations by forcing the children to assimilate to white culture. The Australian government saw Aboriginal culture as a threat or “menace to the State,” thereby necessitating not only the erasure of First Nations culture but also the complete replacement of it with white values. In the words of missionary William Shelley, the aim of resettling indigenous children was educational, “to render their habits more domesticated and industrious.” In other words, the social injustice of the Stolen Generations, the removal of their agency, culture, and identity, was perpetrated through education. Although some Catholic missions did not cooperate in removing Aboriginal children, many of them worked with the government to make First Nations children “whiter” through a process of re-education. For example, schools would often forbid and penalize speaking native languages, thereby promoting the view that indigenous languages were inferior to English. The erasure of First Nations culture undervalued and discredited the basic humanity and identities of these peoples.

POPE JOHN PAUL II’S ADDRESS

In 1986 at Alice Springs, the geographical heart of Australia, Pope John Paul II addressed the social injustices committed on the Stolen Generations by Catholic missions. The Pope asserted that the work of social justice, reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the First Nations, must come first through cultural restoration:

Your culture, which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race, must not be allowed to disappear. Do not think that your gifts are worth so little that you should no longer bother to maintain them. Share them with each other and teach them to your children. Your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages must never be lost…. The Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.

The Pope’s address illustrated both the injustice that the Catholic Church had committed and the future, necessary work of reconciliation that all Catholic institutions were obliged to pursue. Anthony Reilly, director for the First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College, explained, in other words, that “the Catholic Church can’t really take root in this land until there’s a reconciliation with the dispossession of the Aboriginal people, with the disrespect that we showed to their religions—casting them as pagan and of the devil and to be forbidden.” To move forward toward justice, Reilly stated, “The Catholic Church can’t really take root until we actually welcome [First Nations peoples] to Aboriginal ways of being Christian and Catholic, instead of European ways.” Both statements from Pope John Paul II and Reilly illustrate how social justice for Catholic institutions in Australia comprises two parts—the acknowledgement of social injustice and the inclusion of the marginalized into community. Therefore, in this context, social justice can be defined as “a way which incorporates those on the periphery into the full life of the community.”

According to Reilly, the Pope’s address laid the theological groundwork for the First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College. The program’s vision statement lists six axioms that are derived from the address. St. Ignatius’ College strives to be a community that “(1) acknowledges the Cammeraygal people as the first
Anthony Reilly explained, “The boys here, the role that they take and that our universal dignity of all people, with a specific focus on indigenous communities. For the First Nations students, and (2) educates non-indigenous students in the school, the work of social justice (1) affirms the value of indigenous cultures and identities and the expression of First Nations culture at the school. This form of cultural expression is fundamental because it communicates to the entire school the deep values and wisdom of First Nations cultures; and (6) encourages the greater pursuit of justice for the First Nations peoples of Australia.” This vision statement is the heartbeat of social justice through Jesuit education at St. Ignatius’ College. In the first axiom, the school lays the most fundamental claim for social justice for First Nations people—the restoration of their dignity. The second axiom then introduces a path toward reconciliation in that the school invites First Nations students to come to St. Ignatius’ College with their families and communities. This second axiom marks a stark contrast from the Stolen Generations in two distinct ways. First, whereas the Stolen Generations were forced to go to Catholic schools, St. Ignatius’ College gives agency to First Nations people to choose whether or not to join the school. Second, whereas the Stolen Generations were torn apart from their communities, St. Ignatius’ College invites the students to come to school without separating from their families. Axioms three through five all show the restorative work of social justice: the goal of an education at St. Ignatius’ College is for First Nations students to reclaim their “stolen” cultures and identities. Finally, the last axiom underscores the continual work of social justice that needs to be done by not only St. Ignatius’ College but other institutions in Australia.

RESTORING DIGNITY FOR FIRST NATIONS

In the Australian context, if social injustice is denying the dignity of an individual, social justice is restoring that dignity. In a Jesuit framework, “justice acknowledges the universal dignity of human beings, and recognizes that those on the farthest edges and at the lowest rungs of society have been created equal with us in dignity as sons and daughters of a loving God.” For the First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College, the restoration of dignity is embodied in the sharing and expressing of First Nations culture at the school. This form of cultural expression is fundamental because it communicates to the entire school the deep values and worth that First Nations cultures hold. When the students share their culture with the school, the work of social justice (1) affirms the value of indigenous cultures for the First Nations students, and (2) educates non-indigenous students in the universal dignity of all people, with a specific focus on indigenous communities. Anthony Reilly explained, “The boys here, the role that they take and that our program takes, is one of modeling pride and respect for everything that we can celebrate in Aboriginal culture—its wisdom, its ancientness, its worldviews that are so different from our own but are so earthed in a land-based spirituality. We have that role of shining our light, the indigenous light of ancientness, of wisdom, of closeness to the land, in the school and in the country.”

One of the most significant ways that St. Ignatius’ College achieves this goal of restoration occurs during National Sorry Day, an annual event held in Australia on May 26 in memory of the Stolen Generations. For National Sorry Day, St. Ignatius’ College organizes an assembly that all students, both indigenous and non-indigenous, are required to attend. During the assembly, the First Nations Unit leads all addresses and ceremonies. One of the most memorable events during the assembly is the traditional dances that the First Nations students perform. These dances are a medium through which the students can express their identities and struggles. One of the students stated that “dancing in front of the school is really important to me because I get to show my friends a part of my identity that I often don’t have the opportunity to share.” One of the most popular dances is the Platypus Dance which tells the story of a tiny platypus navigating the currents of an immense river, trying to find its way home. As the students dance around in a circle, they relay to the entire school how this story personally resonates with them, and it becomes a powerful moment of expression of both culture and identity for the First Nations students.

Through expressing their culture to the school, the First Nations students also contribute to the school’s culture. Stefan Pulpitel, a coordinator for the Learning Enrichment program for the First Nations Unit, explained that “the First Nations unit needs to be constructed not around academics but as being a resource for the school, where students themselves are contributing in a meaningful way.” In a school that focuses on social justice, the school must not only affirm marginalized communities but also invite them to contribute to the school. As stated before, social justice in education calls in those on the periphery to shape the larger community. The principal of the school, Paul Hine, expressed that the First Nations students have already been formative in shaping St. Ignatius’ College’s culture: It’s not what the school does for those boys...it’s what they do for us. It’s what they bring by way of the richness of their culture, an understanding of their life, the perspectives that would otherwise not be here, and indeed, an appreciation of the difficulties of disadvantage. And it’s changed the way we do things. You’ll notice that we don’t have an assembly here without the acknowledgement of country by
This form of inclusion, one that changes the institution itself, differs significantly from the form of exclusion that Catholic schools practiced on the indigenous children of the Stolen Generations.

AGENCY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A crucial question for social justice and education is who actually does the educating. At St. Ignatius’ College, the First Nations Unit is designed in a way so First Nations students are not solely educated by the school. The school invites other educators, especially those from indigenous communities, to contribute to the learning and cultivation of the students. Abiding by the Jesuit value of cura personalis, educating the whole student, the school brings a diverse array of educators who can reach different facets of a student’s life. These educators act as multiple points of relational access to the students. In Anthony Reilly’s words, “the main thing around First Nations kids is relational support.” These “relational supports” comprise parents and mentors from indigenous communities, and they are embodied formally by the Parents Consult and the Elders Group. The Parents Consult consists of any parents of the First Nations students who want to further engage with St. Ignatius’ College. The group functions as an access point for parents to express concerns to the school, keep in contact with their children, and stay updated on their children’s progress. The Elders Group, in contrast to the Parents Consult, comprises three or four First Nations adults who are specially chosen from the Riverview community for their wisdom and cultural knowledge. Through these two groups, parents and elders both play a formative role in the education of First Nations students.

These groups demonstrate the importance of community engagement in an education that promotes social justice. One of the parents of the First Nations students expressed, “Yes, I do feel heard by the school, even though they don’t always completely understand a situation that my child is struggling with.” In addition, the majority of First Nations students stated in interviews that one of the critical factors for their staying at the school was the support of a parent or elder. The involvement of parents and elders from First Nations communities empowers those very communities with the agency to shape their children’s education. Compared to the historical relationship between Catholic schools and the Stolen Generations, this aspect of the First Nations Unit is radically different. For the Stolen Generations, being torn apart from their communities caused many to forget their own parents. St. Ignatius’ College, in contrast, attempts to closely involve an indigenous student’s family and community in the education of that student. The inclusion of a student’s larger community into their experience at St. Ignatius’ College is essential to the program. This aspect illustrates how social justice and education can empower not only the student but also the community.

SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH ACADEMICS

The Jesuit value of cura personalis encompasses educating all aspects of a student’s life in addition to academics. St. Ignatius’ College cares deeply about educating its First Nations students in academics in a socially just way through which the students are affirmed and valued. This special care arises from the context of the Stolen Generations who were unjustly judged solely for their academic performance, utility, and productiveness. The role of missions was to produce more “domesticated and industrious” indigenous people. St. Ignatius’ College, in contrast, aims to value students for their effort and determination to learn. This desire is reflected in the school’s Jesuit motto: Quantum Potes Tantum Aude, Latin for “as much as you can do, so much dare to do.” Caleb Clifford-Jones, a year-12 student, reflecting on his time at St. Ignatius’ College, said, “In my mind, what really helps to motivate me is that as long as I do my best, I can’t be down on myself. [The Jesuits] have a lot of values around the whole thing about doing your best. They believe in educating the entire person, not just trying to focus on their grades.”

For a student like Caleb, cura personalis has immensely supported his academic learning. Prior to St. Ignatius’ College, Caleb had several gaps in mathematics. For example, when he first started his calculus class at St. Ignatius’ College, he realized he had never been taught how to multiply fractions. Teachers in his home community followed the education systems of the Stolen Generations, which were impersonal and not focused on a student’s holistic development. The First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College differs in its Learning Enrichment program, which is highly relational. The Learning Enrichment program is led by two coordinators—Kate Hilyard, the main point of contact for students in years seven through nine, and Stefan Pulpitel, the main point of contact for students in years 10 through 12—who become personal mentors for the First Nations students. Although the main objective of Learning Enrichment is to provide core academic support for all First Nations students, Hilyard attested that the coordinators often simply offer a listening ear to their students.
The indigenous boys here at times see what other boys have. It's quite an affluent college. You are going to go and get that demographic of boys who are from well-off families. But I definitely tell my boys my story, I'm from a small, seaside, surfing village. My parents are blue collar workers, have worked incredibly hard to support my brothers and myself. Nothing came easy for us. My parents are 70 and still working full time because they can't afford to retire just yet. My context, of course, is always going to be different to these boys, but it's similar in ways that I can understand some of their struggles with seeing things around here in terms of money and wealth and opportunity that other boys can get, whereas sometimes my boys feel like they're constantly fighting for it. So I can definitely say that I've fought for being here and had to really work hard to get to the position I'm in. Hopefully it's those life lessons that encourage them to have a little bit of resilience in their learning.

Hilyard's account demonstrates that the work of social justice in academic learning is that of building resilience. The struggle for indigenous students has historically been judged for their merit and constantly falling short. In contrast, the St. Ignatius' College seeks to do social justice by valuing resilience in learning more than grades.

CULTURAL RECLAMATION

A crucial aspect of social justice for First Nations communities, especially in light of the Stolen Generations, is cultural reclamation. Although culture is generally passed down through heritage, the forced removal of First Nations children from their homes and the rejection of their culture by white communities caused much of indigenous culture to be lost with each successive generation. Most First Nations students who were interviewed stated that they grew up not knowing much about their culture. When asked about the salience or pertinence of indigenous culture to their identity, one of the students, Caleb Clifford-Jones admitted, “I’ve never really thought about it. It’s just part of my heritage. At times, I get this feeling that I’m connected to this whole 40,000-year-old culture, but most of the time, I’m not really thinking about it often.” Most of the other First Nations students expressed similar sentiments—the feeling that they knew their indigenous identity and heritage was important, but they did not know why.

The First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College incorporates a Cultural Enrichment program through which students can reclaim their “stolen” cultures. In the Cultural Enrichment program, the coordinator Kaleb Taylor, who is one of the few indigenous staff employed at the school, leads and educates the First Nations students in various cultural activities throughout the school year. Examples of these activities include partaking in smoking ceremonies, learning traditional First Nations dances, or playing the didgeridoo. Anthony Reilly explained, “We do not want to educate them just in ‘whitefellow’ ways; we want them to grow stronger in their own First Nations culture.” An important moment for the Cultural Enrichment program occurred in 2016, when Malalndirri McCarthy and Patrick Dodson, both indigenous, were elected to the Australian Senate. Senator McCarthy was formerly involved as staff for the First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College. Her inauguration was a milestone event for the school and the First Nations Unit. In honor of the two senators, the First Nations students from St. Ignatius’ College were invited to perform a dance for the inauguration. In an interview, Reilly used this event to illustrate the value of the Cultural Enrichment program:

“When Aunty Malalndirri got elected to the Senate along with another Aboriginal founder, Pat Dodson, the grandfather of reconciliation in this country, Aboriginal people were permitted to do traditional dance with these two senators for the first time ever in Australian history in the Parliament House. Within the building, within the high security and everything else, to dance these senators into their inauguration were our boys, led by elders of Borroloola, a remote community that Malalndirri comes from. Our boys were the first ever to dance within these corridors of Parliament. That’s emblematic of what we’re trying to do. One of the boys on a TV interview said, ‘At home I don’t learn anything about culture, but when I come to school, I learn so much.’ That’s fantastic. The school is taking a role in showcasing, not in a grandiose way, in shining out in the light of Australian social discourse, the beauty of Aboriginal culture and the pride, and that’s it’s still there and it’s got something to contribute.”

Reilly’s anecdote about the student learning about his own culture at St. Ignatius’ College highlights the broader work of social justice being done through cultural reclamation. Cultural reclamation is essential for social justice because it affirms the dignity of the person. Conversely, in the case of First Nations in Australia, the denial of their culture led to the rejection of their human dignity. The experience of the student at the inauguration event also highlights the fact that cultural reclamation is essential for social justice and education in Australia because reclaiming culture necessitates teaching culture. In other words, due to the immense difficulty in passing down indigenous culture through family lines, one of the few ways culture can be reclaimed is through education. Schools like St. Ignatius’ College that are committed to social justice for the Stolen Generations must educate students about First Nations culture.
SPIRITUAL RECONCILIATION

Social justice in the context of the Stolen Generations also necessitates a spiritual reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the First Nations. Spiritual reconciliation in the Catholic faith is a sacrament that refers to the restoration of harmony between God and man. This reconciliation also carries implications for interactions between people because each person bears the image of God. In light of the marred relationship between the Stolen Generations and the Catholic Church, St. Ignatius’ College started the First Nations Unit in 2001 as a step toward reconciliation. Since its beginning, the First Nations Unit has worked to restore the dignity of the First Nations, engage the larger First Nations community, give students agency in shaping the school, support students in all areas of their lives in addition to academics, and guide a process of cultural reclamation. However, most recently, the school recognized the need for a formal spiritual reconciliation with the First Nations, beginning with atonement for sins and injustices committed by St. Ignatius’ College on the First Nations.

In December 2015, Pope Francis called the Catholic Church into an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, a special year-long period of prayer that emphasized the giving of mercy. The Pope defined mercy as “the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life…the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.” The marriage between mercy and reconciliation is the heartbeat of social justice in the Australian context because it both restores and affirms the lost dignity of the Stolen Generations. Paul Hine, principal of St. Ignatius’ College, described how the Pope’s call for the year of mercy catalyzed a formal atonement ceremony on July 14, 2016, in which the school asked for forgiveness from the First Nations:

Last year we had a fairly confronting set of circumstances, whereby we wanted in the year of mercy in the Church to ask for mercy—not to give it, but to ask for mercy from those boys who had been abused while students at this school. We cut and landscaped a whole section of the grounds, and put in a brass plaque that says the school unreservedly apologizes to those boys for the abuse that was perpetrated in the past.

For the ceremony, the school invited previous students who had been victims of abuse. All participants gathered at a special site cut into a rock formation by a river that borders the school. The location of the ceremony was significant in that it gave a certain reverence to the land and water that the First Nations had occupied. Kaleb Taylor, the coordinator for the Cultural Enrichment program, led the ceremony through prayers and several First Nations rituals that centered on reconciliation. The infusion of indigenous values into the Catholic ceremony embodied the reconciling between the Church and the First Nations. This ceremony demonstrated that social justice in Australia requires not only admitting wrong but also asking for forgiveness. The First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College realized that, in order to move forward with a process of healing for the Stolen Generations, reconciliation must first come through the expression of profound regret and sincere apology. The final words on the plaque left at the site of the ceremony read, “May those who have experienced pain and suffering in the past find healing and peace.”

CONCLUSION

Education and social justice in Australia require caring for the whole person, the Jesuit value of *cura personalis*. *Cura personalis* acts as a vehicle for institutions like St. Ignatius’ College. This research project reveals that Jesuit institutions engage issues of social justice through education in multiple ways. First, the school values the restoration of dignity for the First Nations through student cultural expression. Second, the First Nations Unit invites the wider First Nations community to offer insight and shape the culture of the school. Third, St. Ignatius’ College employs a pedagogy for the holistic education of First Nations students through the relationally focused Academic Enrichment program. Fourth, the Cultural Enrichment program guides First Nations students in reclaiming their lost cultures and finding pride in them. Finally, the school continually extends a sincere apology in the hope of continual reconciliation and spiritual healing between the Church and the First Nations. All these components of the First Nations Unit reveal that the school engages in social justice from multiple perspectives, striving for the holistic care of each student.

This form of holistic care is essential to social justice because it empowers communities to speak for themselves and lead their own reconciliation efforts.
In an interview, Paul Hine told the story of one First Nations student who, upon graduating, became a community leader as an organizer for a homeless shelter near the school. This experience shows that the work of social justice in caring for the whole person did not end with school, but rather continued to impact the communities around the school. Hine also explained that the work of social justice is far from completed:

*This is not a project for tomorrow. This is to say that at the end of this century, we need to be in a lot better place than we are now. Does that make sense? This is an intergenerational response. It’s taken 200 years to mess this thing up. It’s going to take at least a hundred to get it right. I won’t see results within my life. But later on in this century, we would like to think that, like in the United States where an African-American can become president, we will have an indigenous prime minister. And wouldn’t it be great if he came from here? It must be a big vision. It must traverse the divide that now sits between the institutions of this country.*

Hine highlights the continual work of social justice, which synergizes well with the vision behind education. In Australia, both education and social justice require a long-term vision, in which both individuals and institutions must commit to the restoration of dignity for the First Nations.

**INTERVIEW EXCERPTS**

**Anthony Reilly, Coordinator for the First Nations Unit at St. Ignatius’ College, Riverview, Australia**

*In terms of the program, could you tell me a little more about the basic mechanisms?*

First, let’s talk about the academic component. I have to ensure that I select students that have a chance of surviving our academic life here, and that there are supports in place for them to flourish. Now with First Nations or Aboriginal students, almost universally, they come with gaps in numeracy and literacy. This is Australia-wide, and I suspect it might even be global for indigenous communities because there’s a tradition of non-participation in mainstream education. Then there is the cultural, spiritual dimension. We want them to grow stronger in their own First Nations culture. So we have programs around that. I have various Aboriginal people associated with the school, sometimes living here. The main thing around First Nations kids is relational support. The critical factor for survival, although there’s probably a couple, but the first one is that our students have relational support.

*Could you delve into a bit of the groundwork theology behind the vision?*

Australia’s history and spiritual consciousness that’s been ignored for the past 200 years: that is the contribution Aboriginal people might have to make to our culture and our spirituality. The theological foundations came from a landmark address in 1986 by Pope John Paul II at a place called Outer Springs, which is at the geographical heart of Australia. He stressed this mutuality that should be essential to Christian theologies of mission. It’s not “here we are bringing God to Aboriginal people,” which was the mistake of the first missionaries in thinking that “we’ve got exclusive rights and knowledge of that God.” His address stressed the fact that the Catholic Church can’t really take root in this land until there’s a reconciliation with the dispossession of the Aboriginal people, with the disrespect that we showed to their religions—casting them as pagan and of the devil and to be forbidden. He stressed that the Catholic Church can’t really take root until we actually welcome them to Aboriginal ways of being Christian and Catholic, instead of European ways. So that’s the foundational theology.

**Caleb Clifford-Jones, Year-12 Student at St. Ignatius’ College, Riverview, Australia**

*When did you find out that you were part of the First Nations?*

I have always known. My grandma was “stolen”—a part of the Stolen Generation. She’s always made sure that we knew about it. When she was stolen, she knew she was indigenous but she didn’t know her family, and she was adopted. So she spent a good portion of her life trying to find her real family. I think that was after my
mom grew up a bit. Our family’s always known because she tried really hard to incorporate indigenous culture in our lives and make us know where our background’s from. I think she started the National Sorry Day committee which made Sorry Day happen, when the government apologized. She spent a lot of her life dedicated to that.

Are you friends with any of the other First Nations boys, and if so, is there anything special about those relationships?
With the First Nations program, you get put in an environment where you meet up a lot. And you see these boys all the time. And I think I made friends with them easier just because they come similar backgrounds as me or they have similar struggles. That’s another big thing—when I got here, just the fact that I’m on a bursary—I kind of felt like I didn’t deserve to be here. But seeing these boys in the same situation helped.

Could you describe how the spiritual programs at the school have impacted you?
For St. Ignatius, his whole thing is reflection—reflecting on your actions before you do something. And that’s really emphasized here. Every day, we have something called an examen which is where we basically spend five or 10 minutes looking back on the day and thinking about what we did wrong, what we could have done better, all of that, actually thinking about what you’ve done instead of just doing it and just going about your day.

Dr. Paul Hine, Principal of St. Ignatius’ College, Riverview, Australia
You mention how Jesuit schools particularly are supposed to be provocative. Could you talk about that further? What do you mean by provocation?
When I think of the word provocation, I think of agents of change. When we provoke, we stir the pot, and it kind of bangs around a bit because it says something isn’t right. Father Ross [Jones, S.J., rector of St. Ignatius’ College] once said this school isn’t here to cover the curriculum: we’re here to uncover it, what’s underneath it. So when we talk about agents of change, if we are to effect change, we are to be an agency that will redress where we see wrongs. What’s happened in this country is ascendant forces have grudgingly conceded one of these that they think that they’re prepared to relinquish in the event that they can still hang on to a lot. It took a long time to get land rights here. Out of 1,300 claims, only a couple hundred have been processed since I’ve come in. So how do we get indigenous people to take control of their affairs, rather than us doing the patrimonial thing and take over on their behalf? This is what this program was designed to do. But it won’t happen tomorrow. It’ll take generations.

Do you think there is something that other schools with similar programs are missing?
I think they define themselves differently. We don’t have any scholarships here—we don’t have any academic scholarships, music scholarships, sporting scholarships. The only way in is if you’re a person of need. That to me is a Jesuit value. When you look back at St. Ignatius’ story, he didn’t want to go into education. He wanted to go into prison ministries and go into orphanages with girls and try to save them from prostitution. He was persuaded by his companions ultimately that education had the greatest reach. If you’ve got them in those formative years, you can change their worldview so that they can become a force of change in the world. That’s why he was prepared to relinquish, in a sense. So by the time of his death, they had opened dozens and dozens of schools, because he could see value in the formation of young people that could transform societies to which these men and women would belong. And this is that.

Where would you like to see this program move forward?
We would like to get an indigenous person here on site that will give us advice and pastoral management of the boys and be a more complete interface with our school and the community. We would like to see the expansion to the Elders’ Forum that will in a proactive sense address how we can best deliver education and incorporate the perspectives of those First Nations families.
PARTNER INSTITUTION: SOLIDARIDAD FRONTERIZA, DAJABÓN, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Founded in 1997, Solidaridad Fronteriza, meaning “Border Solidarity,” is an initiative of the Society of Jesus in the Dominican Republic with four offices located in Santiago, Santo Domingo, Jimaní, and Dajabón, each with a staff coordinator. National Director Father Mario Serrano Marte, S.J., oversees all four offices and heads the social center.

Benigno Ricardo Toribio has worked for Solidaridad Fronteriza for 15 years and now heads the office in Dajabón. Here, the organization’s mission is to raise the dignity and self-worth of rural populations and those living on the border by empowering them to participate in their own personal and community development. First, Solidaridad Fronteriza accompanies marginalized people, such as the poor, disenfranchised workers, and immigrants. As a Jesuit value, accompaniment refers to companionship with the poor and vulnerable members of society in an effort to better understand their realities and support them. For example, Father Marte regularly shared meals and listened to the challenges of the unaccompanied Haitian boys living on the streets of his community, which ultimately led him to launch...
a shelter program for the boys. Second, Solidaridad Fronteriza educates people about their rights and provides them with strategies for organizing themselves. It teaches both Dominicans and Haitians how to fight for their rights. Finally, Solidaridad Fronteriza encourages marginalized people to organize in groups and provides them with legal resources, advocacy, and support. Specifically, the non-profit organization works with groups of workers, women, and children. Its agenda also includes lobbying and advocacy both at the local and national levels. During the summer of 2017, Solidaridad Fronteriza campaigned for the right to health, as many people in the border region lack access to proper healthcare and facilities. As new issues arise in the community, Solidaridad Fronteriza works on grant and project proposals that secure funding from entities including USAID, the European Union, Oxfam, Christian Aid, and Jesuit Refugee Service.

Solidaridad Fronteriza in Jimani, located in the southwest of the country, focuses on work similar to that of Dajabón, since they are both border towns; however, Dajabón, an area stronger in agriculture, has a greater focus on the rural population. The Santiago office supports many countryside people and trains the youth in the province. Located in the national capital, the Santo Domingo office specializes in lobbying, advocacy, and research while also attending to the residents in struggling neighborhoods. The four offices regularly update each other on their projects and events, while finding opportunities to collaborate on overlapping issues. For example, Canadian investment and international mining companies greatly jeopardize health and the environment in both Dajabón and Santiago. If implemented, recent international mining proposals along the border could exploit mines and pollute rivers. Haitian rivers start in the mountains that overlap issues. For example, Canadian investment and international mining companies greatly jeopardize health and the environment in both Dajabón and Santiago. If implemented, recent international mining proposals along the border could exploit mines and pollute rivers. Haitian rivers start in the mountains that

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DAJABÓN ON THE EDGE

The Europeans reached the island of Hispaniola in 1492, yet the island’s division took shape only in the seventeenth century when the Spanish governor decided to relocate people living in the north and northwest, areas he struggled to control, closer to the Spanish colonial city of Santo Domingo. The French, on nearby Tortuga Island, took advantage of this emptied land and established French Santo Domingo on the west side of the island. The French brought thousands of slaves to their territory, intentionally targeting people from different ethnic groups in Africa. These slaves spoke different languages and came from different cultures, thus making communication within slave groups challenging. In the eyes of the French, this gap in culture and language between slaves created more focused and easily controllable workers. On the backs of these African slaves, the French developed sugarcane plantations that drove their economy. On the eastern side, the Spanish relied on cattle farms, on which a small number of people and horses could manage large herds of cattle. The bosses of these farms needed to communicate with workers to raise the cattle, so the slaves in the east learned the Spanish language and elements of Spanish culture and Catholicism.

The current cultural and economic differences between Haiti and the Dominican Republic have roots in these two different forms of organization on the French and Spanish sides of the island. Inhabitants of the east began to identify more with European culture, language, and religion, while the western people held stronger

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ties to Africa, and their diverse backgrounds led them to invent the Creole language and their own religious practice of Vudú. Haiti’s independence was born out of a celebration of Vudú and a rejection by slaves of their exploitative rulers. Sugar exports to Europe made Haiti the wealthiest colony in the Caribbean; however, achieving its independence so quickly isolated it and its markets from the world. In 1804, Haiti dismantled the colonial system through organization and revolution, resulting in a split from France. At the time, slavery sustained the economy globally, making Haiti’s independence radical and threatening to nations across the world that relied on slaves for their economy and way of life. Many large countries chose not to recognize Haiti’s independence and economically suffocated the country; even France, who lost the revolution, fined Haiti.

In 1822, the island was unified under Haiti and 22 years later, the Dominican Republic was born. At this time, three groups were lobbying for power: 1) the nationalist group that called for independence; 2) the annexation group that wanted to build relationships with Spain again; and 3) the alliance group looking to ally with the United States. After independence, Dominican President Pedro Santana annexed the bankrupt republic to Spain. Then, two years later, the Dominican Republic’s guerrilla armies defeated Spain and restored the republic for the second time on the island. The Dominican Republic historically achieved independence from Spain, not Haiti. However, Dominicans celebrate Independence Day on the day that marks the end of Haitian occupation because it severed the connections from Haiti and Africans in addition to Spain.

**JESUIT ROOTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

With the support of Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo (1930–1961), the Jesuits came to the Dominican Republic in 1936 with a mission to “Dominicanize” the population and put into practice Trujillo’s ideology. Trujillo’s Dominicanization of the border area translated into efforts to wipe out all dark-skinned people in the Dominican Republic. Trujillo hoped the Jesuits would legitimize the situation and keep the peace until his violent orders were carried out, such as the 1937 Massacre, known as the Parsley Massacre, in which Trujillo’s soldiers killed thousands of Haitians and black Dominicans in Dajabón. Dominicans and Haitians pronounced the Spanish word for parsley, perejil, differently, so Trujillo’s troops forced border inhabitants to say it in order to determine who lived and died.

In May 2017, the first director of Solidaridad Fronteriza, Father Regino Martinez, S.J., presented on the role of the Jesuits in the Dominican Republic, highlighting four distinct periods from 1936 to 1997: sacrament, word, organization, and binationality. When the Jesuits first arrived, they were dedicated to pastoral sacraments. After Vatican II, scripture took prominence as Masses were offered in the native language of Spanish. The second era of the Jesuits also saw a rise in liberation theology, as God became more of a reality and less of an intangible concept for believers. Then, the Jesuits transitioned to a ministry focused on supporting organizations of marginalized people with a new consciousness of people’s rights and the goal of uniting faith with life. At this time, the state owned all of the land, so the people had to organize and fight for land titles with the help of the Jesuits.

After 1975, Jesuits collaborated with Protestant evangelicals in the Dominican Republic to further their work with populations in need. The fourth era of binationality from 1989 to 1997 witnessed the coming together of a group of Haitians and Dominicans to recoup their land, and a new relationship between border farmers emerged. The Jesuits accompanied community organizations and helped them work toward autonomous development and independent objectives. This binationality was characterized by respect for multiculturalism and cooperation on both sides of the border. During this age of binationality, the Jesuits founded two sister organizations, Solidaridad Fronteriza in Dajabón and Solidarite Fwontalyè in Ouanaminthe (Wanament to Dominicans), Haiti, based on the values of faith, justice, and border culture. This period broke the ultranationalism of Trujillo, and the Church that was once linked to that ideology now fights against it.

Father Martinez explains that the goal of the Jesuits is for both people to be side by side respecting their own national identities, which is different from the state’s efforts to strip the nationality from Dominicans of Haitian descent. Historically, people were persecuted based on the pronunciation of one word, but today they are divided by their last names, with French family names revealing Haitian heritage. Father Martinez argues that today the same genocide and slavery experienced in
the nineteenth century exist, but this time it is simply more technical. For him, the
campaign for the country’s youth is to humanize the nations.

CHALLENGES IN DAJABÓN

FUNDING
While the border region has progressed over the years in terms of economic
development, the lack of national investment in the area presents meaningful
change. The current mayor of Dajabón, Miguel A. Cruz Jiménez, points to the
increased presence of banks in his municipality as a sign of progress and credits
the change to the burgeoning commercial ties between the Dominican Republic
and Haiti. Despite an increase over the years, the speed and level of development
in border towns like Dajabón pale in comparison to other areas of the country.
One local high school student, Nicolette Almánzar, describes the lack of
urbanization at the border where “there are limitations to getting some things,”
such as intensive English courses or simply a hamburger from the fast-food
chain McDonald’s, which cannot be found in Dajabón.23 The lack of investment
in development, infrastructure, education, and health at the border reflects an
inaccessibility to critical services and a low level of modernization.

Major cities in the Dominican Republic that generate important revenue from
tourism, such as Santo Domingo, Santiago, and Punta Cana, attract government
resources and funding; however, the commercial and overall binational relationship
with Haiti plays its own unique role in keeping the Dominican economy afloat.
Between 2014 and November 2015, the Dominican Republic exported $1.4
billion of goods to Haiti, totaling approximately 17 percent of its national
exports.24 Haitian migrants also add more than 5 percent to the Dominican
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Between 2014 and November 2015, the Dominican Republic exported $1.4
billion of goods to Haiti, totaling approximately 17 percent of its national
exports.24 Haitian migrants also add more than 5 percent to the Dominican
GDP in the form of inexpensive labor.25 Although the border provinces sustain
more than the national average;27 healthcare is costly and inaccessible to many residents
in border towns like Dajabón.26 The lack of development, infrastructure, education, and health at the border reflects an
inaccessibility to critical services and a low level of modernization.

HEALTHCARE
Unfortunately, a higher burden of poverty corresponds with more incidences of
malnutrition and more challenges in accessing quality medical care. Malnutrition
rates for children under the age of 5 are 6 to 13 percent higher in border provinces
than the national average.28 Healthcare is costly and inaccessible to many residents
at the border. National Director of Solidaridad Fronteriza Father Marte explains
that “most of the money that a family has to spend goes to health problems. There
are some poor families here that have to spend the few incomes that they have on
private health service because the public health service is not working and we have
a bad health service system.”29

POVERTY
Unemployment, limited access to schools, and unreliable healthcare plague the
border region and perpetuate its history of poverty. The border provinces of the
Dominican Republic experience higher levels of poverty than the national average;
in particular, 51.6 percent of Dajabón’s population lives in poverty and 27.6 percent
faces extreme poverty.30 In 2016, the Dominican Republic held a 14 percent
unemployment rate overall, but a 31 percent unemployment rate among youth
between the ages of 15 and 24.31 Obtaining legal documentation poses a large
barrier to escaping poverty. The International Fund for Agricultural Development
explains that “the poorest of the poor include Dominicans of Haitian origin living
in the border areas. They are particularly vulnerable, and they suffer not only from
low incomes and poor living conditions but also from social exclusion. Because
they are without proper documentation such as birth certificates and identity
papers, about 20 percent of the poorest Dominican families do not benefit from
most types of social assistance programmes.”32 Students must present documents to
enroll in local high schools, and a lack of documentation jeopardizes the rights of
workers along the border.

WORKERS RIGHTS
Hundreds of employers in the Dominican Republic target undocumented
Haitians who fall outside the formal workforce and fail to provide any services,
such as social security, minimum wage, and job security. Along with wrongful
termination without notice, many Haitian workers have problems crossing the
border and returning to work after holidays and visits with their families in
Haiti. Organizations, such as the Solidarity Association of Migrant Workers of
the Northwest Line (Asociación Solidaria de Obreros Migrantes de la Línea
Noroeste, ASOMILIN), aim to help undocumented migrant workers obtain
legal documentation and limit violations of their rights. With 10,000 members,
ASOMILIN advocates for human rights, labor rights, and the promotion of
workers. Jackson Lorrain, employee in the Migration Department of Solidaridad
Fronteriza and leader within ASOMILIN, states:

We have been in this fight for many years since the beginning of Father Regino
[Martinez, S.J.] who was the first director here in Solidaridad Fronteriza.
Father Regino was always accompanying them to the meetings with the civil
society and the military authorities, also with immigration officials and leaders of
the armed forces so that they know what we are doing. Even still, we are working
in favor of human rights and workers’ rights. Our work is to serve, defend, and
accompany. We are always here to accompany the community when they have
problems with violence…. This part—the violence—is the more vulnerable part
of the Haitian immigrants.33
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Three common perspectives characterize the divisions among the people of Dajabón. First, some residents acknowledge the issue of immigration but focus on the victimization of Dominicans rather than the humanitarian challenges of law enforcement practices, societal discrimination, and the rights of Haitians in Dajabón. Lifelong resident of Dajabón Diosmani García explains that the complex situation involves many types of immigrants, “Some [Haitians] come with the desire to study or work in order to better oneself. Others come to rob, to sell on the streets, to raid the trash, and to disturb.”36 In 2016, the United States Department of State listed the Dominican Republic’s crime rating as critical, emphasized the border region as an area of concern, and stated: “The border areas are often regions in which nationalistic tensions can result in violence and where black U.S. citizens may be delayed at checkpoints while Dominican authorities review their passports and question their purpose of travel.”37 Crime exists in Dajabón, especially as the site of the crowded and compact binational market, and crimes committed by Haitians on Dominicans fuel an inherent hatred and fear of Haitians.

A history of racial discrimination and the 22-year Haitian occupation cause some Dominicans to view Haitian migrants in a much different light than other migrants. Recently, the Dominican Republic has received more immigrants from South American countries, such as Venezuela. Rather than a prejudice against all immigrants, the discrimination against Haitians seems very unique. Several residents of Dajabón articulated their view that Venezuelan immigrants, for example, are hard workers who go to the cities and contribute to the Dominican economy, while Haitians come for more negative reasons, such as crime. In some cases, Dominicans, both actively practicing religious people and others, perceive Haitians as different from all other humans, as heartless. What prevents this opinion from being a conflict of morality or faith? Discrimination is sustained among a segment of the population through education, history, and tradition. Local teacher Pedro Rodríguez believes that “there are schools that lead to encouraging prejudices, because many times they are producing what was said previously. They tell [students] that Haitians with many children are creating a terror, the Haitians do not want to know us and they hate us, and all of these prejudices that came from earlier. They are reproduced in the schools, because many people do not have the formation we discussed.”38 Informal education through the family and government groups also influences societal perception of Haiti and Haitians. Nationalists in Dajabón continue to argue for a deeper divide between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as they cling to the memory of the 22-year Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic from 1822 to 1844. Through these mechanisms, some Dominicans see the problem of immigration only as an issue of victimized Dominicans and ineffective separation between countries. The need for more control and less violence at the border

DIFFERING VIEWS OF MIGRATION

Dajabón sits on an open border with a dynamic environment composed of an ever-changing population, as Haitian migrants enter the town simply for the day or for more permanent work in rural areas. Immigration plays an important and complex role in this dynamic; however, the challenge of immigration is often viewed in different ways. Since Dominicans represented the majority of interviewees and the study took place mostly on the Dominican side of the border, an analysis of the ways in which Dominicans view the immigration issue is critical. Without a unified outlook on the problems facing this border town, it becomes nearly impossible to constructively engage with the topic of immigration, much less agree upon a viable solution.
is a widely agreed upon goal; however, this first view narrows its focus on the negative consequences of immigration for Dominicans, excluding the benefits of immigration for the Dominican economy and society, consideration of the forces driving migrants across, and the rightful humane treatment of Haitian migrants.

Second, some Dominicans do not view immigration as a pressing problem, but instead describe everything as calm and normal. Some people have not personally dealt with the issue, leading them to feel distant from it. When asked about the existence of migration challenges and border problems, Father Florentino Hernández, S.J., says “No, I cannot speak about this, because I have not experienced it…. In all my time here, I never had a problem with anyone and no one had a problem with me…. For me, it is good. There is another point of view that everything is not good, but I am not at the market with the Haitians or anything like that.” This outlook demonstrates a continuing gap in interaction and understanding between Dominicans and Haitians. The open nature of the border and slow development on both sides has forced more crossovers between Dominicans and Haitians in recent decades. A local high school student says “the fact that I live here on the border with [Haitians] gave me the opportunity to learn a little more about them. The fact that I have always lived in Dajabón means I see more or less the reality that exists. When I speak with my Haitian classmates at the other school, they tell me things that I have always lived in Dajabón means I see more or less the reality that exists. When I speak with my Haitian classmates at the other school, they tell me things and their stories. When you know Haitians, when you go to the market and to the other side of the border, you are able to see their reality.”

Finally, there are people who see the problems present along this border and empathize with both the interests of Dominicans and the hardships of Haitian migrants. When asked how he would like to see the border change, Mayor Miguel A. Cruz Jiménez responded, “I want development on both sides…. I had the privilege to be part of the state establishment but also to be a farmer and to live at the base where racism does not exist for me. The Haitians that worked with me are my friends. They have two children, and I was there when they were baptized by water. I am friends with them just like I am friends with other Dominicans, under the same conditions. When I go on Saturday to the countryside, I cook for all the employers and I see Haitians and Dominicans together. But, yes, I also think we have to see the way in which we are talking about helping Haiti in a sincere manner.” Acknowledging the existence of discrimination, problems with development along the border, and necessity of legally regularizing and providing documents for migrants set an essential foundation for a comprehensive understanding of immigration.

FORMAL EDUCATION

Jesuit schools at the border provide their students with a holistic formal education centered in Jesuit values. While they further their faith and commitment to service, students learn to tackle real-world problems relevant to their country and region. Still under the direction of the Society of Jesus, the Technical Institute of Saint Ignatius of Loyola (Instituto Tecnológico San Ignacio de Loyola, ITESIL) welcomes over 500 students into its technical school in Dajabón. Founded by the Jesuits in 1946, ITESIL has progressed over many decades to include female and international students. The ITESIL students interviewed during summer 2017 quickly revealed that their mentality surrounding immigration aligned with the third type, which included consideration for Haitians’ rights and well-being as well as a comprehensive understanding of the challenge of immigration. Students spoke about life at the border with maturity, respectful language, and relevant identification of core problems surrounding the issue, such as lack of access to legal documentation, violence, and a difference in the realities and opportunities on both sides of the borders. In addition to obtaining a high-quality technical education, ITESIL students possess this outlook because their school emphasizes education as a formation rooted in Jesuit values.
One ITESIL student spoke from experience: “When I entered here, our focus was to love and serve. On various occasions we have seen that Haitians have not found themselves in good positions. The Jesuits have taught us and I have seen with my own eyes, including in the Catholic Church, that the Jesuits do not look at the color of a person's skin, at the sanitary conditions, or at the conditions in which a person lives. The student explained a firsthand understanding of the Jesuits as people who “simply work so that if a person needs help, they help him. This is specifically what we learn in school—to not judge based on skin color or discriminate. If this person needs a hand or our help, the Jesuits and this school have taught us to help. More than an education of religion, it is an education in values and in help and service to others. I think a Jesuit education has an important role for us as people, for my formation as a person. Conversations with students, teachers, and administrators revealed that formation was at the forefront of their idea of education.

When reflecting on the founding of the school, current ITESIL Principal José Ramón López, S.J., maintained that “it is interesting that the Jesuits discovered that a fundamental part of education was able to form people.” This approach stands out in the context of the region’s larger education system. A student described the distinguishing characteristics of ITESIL, saying “a Jesuit education is a little more complete in comparison to other public schools, because they give a deeper formation. It is more internal for us.” A fellow classmate shared similar sentiments: “We are taught to love, to love the other, and to serve society. At other schools it is more about the classes; they teach mathematics and Spanish language, subjects. But here we are formed with integrity and as humans.” These students’ opinions about a Jesuit education reflect the publicized vision of a Jesuit education that “affirms the radical goodness of the world ‘charged with the grandeur of God’; regards every element of creation as worthy of study and contemplation, capable of endless exploration”; “probes the meaning of human life and is concerned with the total formation of each student as an individual personally loved by God”; and “is also concerned with the ways in which students will make use of their formation in the service of others.”

The intentional nature of this formation revolves around Jesuit values, individual thinking, and an ethical consideration. ITESIL Principal José Ramón López asserts, “When you think about education, if you form individuals that are not critical, cannot interpret reality, and are not self-critical, for me this is worrying.” When asked about the importance of education in his community, Father Marte responded, “it is not only education but an education that helps you think by yourself and think through the lens of ethical values.” Along with its technical training for students, ITESIL stresses critical reasoning, values, and a constant interaction with the realities surrounding the students.

Jesuit schools like ITESIL offer quality technical training ingrained in an environment of Jesuit tenets, ultimately empowering the next generation and challenging them to solve the social justice problems surrounding them. From a Catholic perspective, “society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation,” and social justice “can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of man.” The Jesuits have not limited themselves to operating solely within the sphere of formal education. In the Dominican Republic, especially in the border region, many people fall outside the bounds of the formal education system. For years, the Jesuits have confronted the problem of access to education.

**RADIO EDUCATION**

In the 1970s, the Jesuits in the Dominican Republic, specifically in the border region, saw a need for more schools accessible to people living in the countryside and on the outskirts of the cities. Many schools only went up to sixth grade and high schools could not be found everywhere, making a secondary education challenging to achieve. At the same time, the Jesuits in La Vega, a more central area of the Dominican Republic just southeast of Santiago, had been implementing an innovative radio education program called Radio Santa María, beginning in 1956. In 1976, a Jesuit priest and former director of Radio Santa María used his radio broadcasting experience to found Radio Mariant in Dajabón in order to meet the needs of those in the border region. The current director of Radio Mariant, Father Guillermo José Perdomo Montalvo, S.J., articulated the core purpose of Radio Mariant: “Historically, the fundamental mission is educational; above all, to broadcast the schools of Radio Santa María, which is a work of the Society of Jesus in La Vega, Dominican Republic… but also evangelization.”

Radio Mariant broadcasts its educational courses four hours each day from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. The state pays a portion of the cost of these formal education programs which occupy prime listening hours. The radio station sells advertisements and raises the rest of the cost through activities, such as raffles and sports competitions. In order to reduce financial barriers to education, Radio Mariant offers half scholarships for books. The education of Radio Mariant is composed of the radio, book, and teachers who facilitate the learning. Students in primary school or first through eighth grade listen to the courses for one hour every weekday and meet with their teachers for one hour each week. High school students listen to the radio for 15 minutes every weekday and work with their teachers for five hours once a week. The radio station repeats the high school segments twice each day and rotates between topics like mathematics and biology.
This radio education program targets uneducated adults, the poor, rural residents, full-time workers, young mothers, prisoners, and anyone wanting to further their education. Father Montalvo described the students his program reaches:

At the beginning, the network of schools in the outskirts here was very limited and did not include all grades of basic education…. Some people wanted to achieve more; for example, we have a woman here who only made it through fourth grade. She had three children, and by taking classes on the radio she finished primary school and high school. Then, she went to university and became a nurse. There are cases like this in which people begin their family life very early.

With high poverty rates at the border, many residents are forced to leave school at a young age due to childbirth or the need to work. Radio Marién has evolved to serve those in need, as Father Montalvo articulated:

At the beginning, it was used mostly just for adults, but now it is for all of the poor and people who work and cannot study. Formal education is not obligatory in the Dominican Republic, so people fall outside of the education system. We are filling a gap for all of the people who were not able to finish their education formally…. In this country, when a person with three kids receives their high school diploma it would be comparable in importance to someone from the middle class in North America getting a degree from Harvard, Yale, or Georgetown.

Radio Marién not only makes education accessible to hundreds of self-motivated border residents each semester, but also shapes that education in a meaningful and Jesuit way. Father Montalvo believes the station impacts the region at large, as “there are people that listen to us due to the way we treat the themes…. Our opinion in the radio content is less tied down or chained than that of other radio stations. Where the money comes from permits or limits the words, so we are freer of this.” Father Montalvo explained, “The curriculum in general is determined at the state level, but the examples, tone, explanations, and the way in which we help are from the Society of Jesus. The subjects considered include proper treatment, corruption or something bad, justice, and faith in God. It is not Catholic, but faithful.” This specific type of Jesuit education plays an important and unique role at the border where it discusses the topics of immigration and the binational relationship with Haiti in a conscientious way.

Ultimately, the way in which Radio Marién addresses its neighboring country and immigration has drawn both Dominicans and Haitians into its audience. He believes Radio Marién likely has more listeners in Haiti than in the Dominican Republic. Father Montalvo reflected on his radio program:

We have tried to establish a positive relationship with Haiti despite the problems of migration, commerce, and transporting products that create tensions…. Our mission is to present positively this relationship between the two sides…. After the earthquake, we had promotions for Haiti with expressions like "Soyos, Haití" in Spanish and Creole. We were the headquarters of a radio marathon for the four northeastern provinces of the Dominican Republic to bring help to Haiti…. We try to be a bridge to combine the formal education that produces a degree with informal education that people get from these programs.

Every topic and segment broadcast by Radio Marién provides an informal education to listeners, in addition to the formal education program offered. In the case of Dominican-Haitian relations, this radio station acts as an important counterbalance to nationalist narratives and mainstream sensational media.

Father Montalvo articulated the reason his program works effectively with its target students: “The people that use these programs have realized their position in life and have a strong desire. The degree of motivation in the students, professors, and community is very high. The motivational part is very important.” By equipping highly motivated yet marginalized people with holistic education and a resource to reach their goals, the Jesuit radio schools in the Dominican Republic revolutionize education in the developing world. The quality of the education and self-drive of the students make Radio Marién a competitive program that in some cases is a better fit than a traditional school. Father Montalvo explained: “There is a national test that is taken by adults of these programs and students of regular schools. The information that I have heard about Radio Santa María is that they are competitive. The adult when he decides to study is very focused, while a child might attend a bad school. He does not progress. We are able to compete, and it is very equivalent to formal schooling.” Jesuit radio education fills a large and important gap along the Dominican border by providing access to competitive education programs and by creating a space that respects listeners on both sides of the border, breaking ground on a common foundation for constructive dialogue.

CHRIST’S HOME FOR STUDENTS

While educational programs through ITESIL and Radio Marién reach a number of Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic, many still lack the resources, access, or language ability to attend traditional or even radio schools. The influx of migrants has swelled in recent years. In one single week in 2017, the Dominican Specialized Border Security Corps (Cuerpo Especializado de Seguridad Fronteriza Terrestre, CESFRONT), Dominican Army, and General Directorate of Migration worked together to return 7,000 Haitians attempting to cross the border into the Dominican Republic illegally.12 With an open border like this one, many migrants still manage to successfully cross, and for the past decade, this has left many unaccompanied minors on the streets of Dajabón. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti...
affected approximately 3 million people and took an estimated 200,000 lives, especially due to the existing poverty and poor housing conditions. After the tragedy, many Haitian children came to the Dominican Republic because they lost their parents, family members, houses, and opportunities.

Father Marte saw these unaccompanied Haitian boys living on the streets of Dajabón. One boy recounted meeting Father Marte:

One day, I was in the park at 10:00 p.m. It was cold and I wanted to sleep. I was with five other boys who were looking for food. Around 11:00 p.m., I saw an SUV and did not know who it was so I left because I was afraid. When I saw the person, it was Father [Marte] and he said he was a priest of Dajabón. He asked where I was from, and I said I was from Port-au-Prince and came here when the earthquake happened. He asked if I had a place to stay, and I said I was sleeping on the street. He asked if there were other boys with me, and I said yes. He asked if I was hungry, and I said yes. He said to wait. He went to buy fried chicken and soda and then he sat with us. Each boy took a little and shared it. We ate.54

In 2014, Father Marte found a house for the boys to stay at night and founded El hogar de Cristo (Christ’s Home).

One of the projects of Solidaridad Fronteriza, El hogar de Cristo serves as a shelter for unaccompanied migrant Haitian boys in Dajabón where they can sleep, eat dinner, bathe, receive formation each night, and experience community. Normally between the ages of 8 and 16, the boys only stay the night at the shelter and return to the streets during the day. Noris de los Santos, a teacher at El hogar de Cristo and receptionist at Solidaridad Fronteriza, explains, “During the day, some [children] clean shoes and others are at the front of companies like the supermarkets or banks covering the motorcycles from the sun so that the people who visit these places may give them 10, 15, or 25 pesos—whatever the person considers giving. Others have small jobs washing cars or helping with the boxes at the market, and others are just playing in the park.” El hogar de Cristo offers a community atmosphere, structured environment, and personal care that the boys do not have on the streets. From 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. each night after dinner, one of the teachers at El hogar de Cristo instructs the boys on a series of subjects that include mathematics, writing, reading, drawing, painting, crafts, catechesis, hygiene, and values such as respect, living together, and fellowship. On the most basic level, the home informally educates about 25 to 40 boys each night about their human worth. The way in which the teachers, cooks, and supervisors treat the boys creates a supportive community.

Julian Peña works on the grounds of ITESIL during the day and at the shelter at night. He believes it is important that El hogar de Cristo is a Jesuit organization because:

The Jesuit approach to this specific project includes a multifaceted formation that allows the boys to exercise, learn about their faith, receive lessons in multiple subjects, and grow socially in the company of children with similar experiences.

When the home opened up in 2014, the surrounding neighbors did not support the shelter and would hold on to the boys’ soccer balls that crossed the fence. Looking forward, this domestic resistance poses a challenge to protecting the rights of all marginalized communities at the border and to supporting the advancement of new opportunities in the sending country of Haiti. Noris asserted that “El hogar de Cristo is sustained by support and donations, but the donations come from people in other countries and places, not inside the province of Dajabón. The people in Dajabón and the authorities here are very indifferent to this work. This could be work of the entire community, since the boys were living in the streets and that affects all of the community members.” Informal education that teaches the community about the topic of migration and involves them in its projects and events is a vital piece of the work of Solidaridad Fronteriza and its peer organizations.

Every year, several boys transfer from El hogar de Cristo to Lakay Jezi or Jesus’ Home, a second shelter located in Haiti and run by the same Jesuit organizations, Solidaridad Fronteriza and Solidarite Fwontalyè. Unlike El hogar de Cristo, Lakay Jezi houses Haitian boys full time in Wanament, Haiti, the sister town of Dajabón. These boys first migrated to the Dominican Republic, passed through El hogar de Cristo, and earned approval to come to the new shelter in Haiti. The qualifications for entering Lakay Jezi include the boys’ attitude, age, and ability to follow rules and live in community. At Lakay Jezi, the boys live and attend Jesuit schools in Haiti, specifically the local Fe y Alegría. Fe y Alegría is an international education institution that provides Jesuit education in the poorest areas of 19 countries around the world. The staff at Lakay Jezi contact the boys’ families, if they have them, in the hopes of facilitating their transition back into their homes after one or two years at the shelter. Ultimately, this project provides both a temporary solution and long-term support system to facilitate unaccompanied Haitian minors’ transition back to their home country and into the Jesuit education system in Haiti.
CONCLUSION

The work of the Society of Jesus in Dajabón is deeply interwoven with its partner organizations and community. The Jesuit organizations operating in this region have an on-the-ground understanding of the challenges, needs, and appropriate solutions to the often intermingled issues of resources allocation, healthcare, poverty, rights, migration, and education. Jesuit methods of formal education have instilled in students this desire to be hands-on and see the reality of a situation with their own eyes. One student of ITESIL reflected: “Sometimes there are many videos, posts on social media and YouTube, that do not present the realities of the issues. For people who are in other countries that have the opportunity to listen to this interview, I invite them to go to the Dominican Republic, come here to Dajabón, and have the opportunity to go to Haiti to see the reality in all.”62 On the other side of the education system, the Jesuits have worked to include teachers in their programs that will foster a sense of community. When asked about the qualifications of the Radio María teachers, Father Montalvo explained that “to be in any of these positions, you need the spirit of service. It is guaranteed that these people want to serve.”60 Even some of the teachers and supervisors of El hogar de Cristo live in the same neighborhood as the shelter, just a few houses away. One boy from El hogar de Cristo, who moved on to Lakay Jezi in August 2017, said the home in Dajabón “is paving the way. We feel very grateful for Father [Marte] and the people that are working for us. We are not now able to say that we are living on the street…. The mother and father of us here are these people that are working here…. They treat us very well, like their sons.”61

The web of networks and services created by the Jesuits allows for a comprehensive and holistic approach to social justice at the border. The Dominican-Haiti border is an exciting place where two twin cities, Dajabón and Wanament, vibrate with activity. Cultures mix at schools, radio stations, NGOs, government projects, and the binational market. Through it all, immense issues, such as poverty and migration, loom above the Río Masacre and tether both countries to their histories. According to Father Marte, “[Dominicans and Haitians] are two people that are facing great challenges, big challenges, but in the midst of those challenges two people that live happily in the midst of their problems, in the midst of their challenges. That’s an example of how hope remains in the midst of difficulties and that helps us keep on dreaming that we can change this world through love, through engagement, through relationships, through solidarity.”62

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

Mario Serrano Marte, S.J., National Director of the Social Sector for the Society of Jesus in the Dominican Republic

**Can you describe the greatest challenges you face at the border here in Dajabón?**

There are many. In general, in the whole border poverty is the biggest challenge. Poverty exists at the border on both sides because Haiti is poor and on this side of the Dominican Republic the poorest areas are in the border. There is a lack of investment by the government in the border in social issues—housing, lack of jobs, lack of school, possibilities in order to get health services, and also there is not a lot of help for the countrywide people.

The second one has to be the violation that immigrants suffer in the hands of the military—the people who are controlling the entrance of the border. And I mean the CESFRONT, which are the border patrol here, and also the people at the gate on market days that bribe the Haitians and take their money from their pockets. These people are asking for money to let the Haitians cross even if the Haitians are doing everything legally. This is a very challenging one, because in Dajabón we depend on this market. We depend on the good relationship between Haitians and Dominicans and on the business that they develop. So, the income that Dajabón receives also depends on that relationship. It is not only an issue of humanity but also an economic issue, an economic issue.

The third challenge we have to face here is the lack of health services in the city. This is a very huge challenge because most of the money that a family has to spend goes to health problems. There are some poor families here that have to spend the few incomes that they have on private health service because the public health service is not working and we have a bad health service system. I think that is the third important challenge that we face in this city. Really, poverty is the biggest challenge in the border; second, the migration relationship—how we deal with Haitian immigrants and all of the violations that they suffer; and third, health services.

**How are Jesuits specifically contributing to this and what is different about the education, schools, organizations, and work that is done with the ideology of the Jesuits behind it?**

Sometimes in our formal education, like high school and schools in general, I don’t think we invest the time which is necessary to form, to educate people for justice and peace and brotherhood or sisterhood. I don’t think we invest enough time for that in Jesuit schools. Jesuit schools are meant for that. Other people can do whatever, just teach the people how to write and read, but our
mission is to educate people for justice and peace, brotherhood and sisterhood, and to build a better world. I think we are not investing the time that we should invest in that.

Right now, what is your greatest concern here for life at the border in Dajabón? My greatest concern here is to help the people in Dajabón to be more active in facing their challenges. I tell you this because people here have a lot of meetings, but they are caught by the politicians that do not like them to be free and to think and act based on ethical values. Most of the politicians have caught our people, but most of those politicians are corrupt. That is my main concern—how to help people be more active so that they can change and face their challenges and not wait until those politicians who are very corrupted come and lie to them or try to cut them based on their needs. My concern is how to open the eyes of the people and the organizations in this place. The second concern is also linked to the Christians of Dajabón, and it is to help them remove their prejudice against Haitians. That one is a very very hard one and I think as part of the Society of Jesus, which has been here for such a long period, our process of evangelization has affected very few on that specific issue.

Elizabet Cruz, Checker at St. Ignatius of Loyola Technical Institute, Dajabón, Dominican Republic.

Can you describe your experience living here at the border? Have there been changes? It has changed greatly from when I was a child until now. When I was a child, we didn’t see a single person of Haitian nationality that was crossing over or walking along the streets. There were some cases but not many. Once the selling of used clothes and the commerce between people started, there has been a great flow of people. There are people that come only to sell and they go back to their country of origin. On market days, they return. It has changed greatly. The market and commerce has increased the population and changed the economy and environment.

How would you like to see the situation at the border change? Permit not as many immigrants here. At the border when there are new people, I do not want the mistreatment. It is about control and which foreigners are able to stay here and which cannot. At a social level, there are many girls that come to work in prostitution here, and I do not like that a border has this type of work.

Santiago Rodríguez Reyes, Student Wellbeing, St. Ignatius of Loyola Technical Institute, Dajabón, Dominican Republic.

How would you characterize the mission of this school specifically, given that it is a Jesuit school at the border? The dictator Trujillo permitted the Society of Jesus to establish themselves here at the border, especially to exercise a bit of control for the purpose of what was called the Dominicanization of the border and to try to support the development of agricultural activities with the farmers. The foundation of this school in 1946 focused on the agricultural concentration. It transitioned to accept both genders and expand concentrations. We began to include concentrations in computing, metal mechanics, and infirmary. Moreover, we are a regional school, not just a school of Dajabón, but including all of the border, the northern border territory—Restauración, Mao, La Rosa, Santiago, Loma de Cabrera, El Pino, Monte Cristi, Palo Verde. We, as a school, comply with the mission of the Society of Jesus, which is to try to evangelize across education. We have provided human capital that has created the institutions in the public and private sectors so that they are able to provide at a good level. We have always been immersed in watching growth—economic growth, social growth, and institutions in the zone, but also the profile of liberty and well-being. It was our function as a leader in the Dominican society with a special focus on the border. It is an important function in the development of the border, both with the Dominican Republic and Haiti, because we also have students who are Haitian in our school.

Do you consider this school a model for the larger border environment? I think it is a prototype in terms of employability and the formation in values. It is about a better life, employment, social mobility, but above all values and how to be human.

How would you describe the role of education in immigration? For example, is improving their education in the Dominican Republic a principal motivation for Haitians? Yes. I was at a university in Santiago with many Haitians, but these Haitians had economic power. There are many universities in the Dominican Republic with Haitians, but universities have different admissions criteria than we have here at the institute. Foreigners at universities have to pay much more than Dominicans, but not here at the Saint Ignatius of Loyola Technical Institute. There is not this discrimination by pay.
ESIL leads the quality religious education in the region as the only Catholic secondary school within miles of its location—in a region left without education infrastructure after the successive colonial and civil wars. As a community school, ESIL is neither private nor government-owned. It is run by the Society of Jesus in coordination with the Mozambican Ministry of Education. The professors and administrators in the school are paid by the government through contracts, and the school follows an academic curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education. Students who attend ESIL do not have to pay fees other than the matriculation and enrollment fees that other public schools in the country also have. Since the school is only in its second year, it is currently phasing in the number of students by grade. There are about 600 students, and approximately half of them live in the boarding house at ESIL. Students who live in the boarding school pay a monthly fee of 250 meticais and have mandatory study hours when they are not in class. Few Mozambican schools have boarding facilities, making ESIL stand out in this regard. ESIL hopes to offer boarding to all students in the future. The remaining students either live with their families or rent rooms for a small price in nearby villages such as Njalanjira, which is the closest, and about a 30-minute walk away. In the short time ESIL has been open, many Mozambican government and education sector employees have already sent their children to ESIL, which is a positive sign of the expectations for future growth that the school sees.

ESIL also has ties to two other local Jesuit organizations. The first is Seeds of Tomorrow, a set of six orphanage homes scattered in the area. The second is Satemwa, an agricultural mission and farm that conducts agricultural training for adults from the area.
The Jesuit educational values that ESIL seeks to instill in its students are the following: seriousness and responsibility; integrity and human dignity; solidarity and social justice; promoting an education that incentivizes care for the common good; love of work; and respect for others and diversity, as a better way to eradicate poverty and contribute to sustainable development of the country. It is based on the precept of educating men and women “for others and with others.”

As a result, the school incorporates civic education into its curriculum and extracurricular activities, which highlights the Jesuit character of the community. It teaches students to reflect on community, compassion, and the importance of every individual in the success of a community, including the workers who help build the school. On Worker’s Day, Tomás Neto Leitão da Cruz described the party that the school held for the workers to offer them a rest day and celebrate their contributions to making ESIL physically possible. It demonstrated that “everyone is valued…each person’s opinion is respected, be it a student, professor, a school employee, worker…. We are all a family and we are all important. If the rooms aren’t cleaned, we can’t have class. If the students are not respected as humans, there won’t be an environment for them to learn and to work to their full human capacity.” The Jesuit ideas of caring for the whole being and of cura personalis, or care for the individual, are integral to the ESIL lifestyle as well, especially in its process of reconciliation.

Students also need an outlet and time to have fun. In many rural areas, topics such as sexuality are taboo, and as a result, young people are not informed about critical matters that can impact the quality of their lives and their life choices. In Tsangano, for example, there is a prevalence of premature marriages and pregnancies in young girls, and without formal and widespread education about these issues, they will persist. Jesuit-in-formation Narciso Mariano Belo, S.J. is an advocate of holistic education with a curriculum and programs of other subjects such as civic classes, and classes about sexuality, pregnancy, and other culturally taboo topics. Other programs that ESIL incorporates are soccer games and other sports; the school transports students on some weekends to play against teams outside of the district. ESIL also holds a series of talent shows where students present poetry, skits, or other artistic ventures to their peers to increase their confidence and public speaking abilities. This provides an enriching cultural experience that aids in their formation as competent adolescents and helps them discover their talents.

In a document from the regional Jesuit organization that outlines values essential to promoting justice in the region, the following ideas were listed:

Reconciliation and Peace-building: Our countries have either experienced protracted civil wars, sustained violence directed by the government against its citizens, or xenophobic violence…. Gender-based violence has also emerged as a cause for concern. Apostolates related to this priority would include those that promote reconciliation, non-racism and non-tribalism…. There is an increasing need for dialogue and peace-building....

Environmental Justice: Pope Francis has prophetically called the world to a greater care for its common home. He has pointed out the inextricable link between justice for the poor and justice for the world, our common home. This priority is seen in the work done with farmers, ensuring not only food security for the poor, but that it is done in a sustainable manner, in programs that teach the value of recycling.

At ESIL, the Jesuits have done exactly this and incorporated these ideas innovatively into their programs for community engagement. Portuguese-learning initiatives in both academic and extracurricular areas are held parallel to activities that allow for students’ cultural expression and agricultural classes.

INTRODUCTION

Mozambique is currently navigating a post-colonial situation defined by violent conflict. In the rebuilding and restoration process, education system stakeholders are met with a long list of challenges and complexities beyond the lack of resources and basic infrastructure in many parts. In rural areas, these deficiencies are even more evident, and the rural education is, simply put, failing the youth in the country. In order to see more successful development and progress in the coming years, educating youth to be capable leaders of tomorrow is absolutely vital. As such, understanding the innovative and successful ways in which rural institutions such as ESIL meet existing challenges, guided by Jesuit values related to justice, is important to finding applicable solutions. This report examines how ESIL empowers its students and the surrounding community through three main avenues of reinforcement: reinforcing community engagement to expand its sphere of influence beyond just the students who attend the school; reinforcing Portuguese curriculum as a key to expanding opportunity, but recognizing that it does not need to come at the expense of preserving and celebrating indigenous culture; and reinforcing the value of agricultural education.
LOCAL CONTEXT

In this region, the predominant ethnic group is the Chichewa group. The Chichewa people speak Chichewa, which is a dialect of Cinyanja. Cinyanja is a Bantu language that is spoken in Mozambique, as well as in parts of Malawi, Zambia, and Tanzania. The school is isolated in a rural area on the Angónia plateau, close to the Malawi border, and connected to the main road by a small dirt road. The closest village, Vila Ulongue, is about a 45-minute drive away, and the closest city, Tete, is a three-to-four-hour drive away. The founding of ESIL brought access to pre-university secondary education to a number of students who would otherwise not have it. More than half of the population in the district is between 11 and 15 years old. Less than one-third of the youth have access to secondary school, largely due to lack of transportation, and only a minority of the one-third who have access end up finishing secondary school. Beyond just the challenge of transportation, as one student, Lúcia Isaac Paulo, explained, "We have some people in this zone who still don't want to study, and just want to work. Their families do not want them to study, but this limits the child, and they grow up not wanting to study." In the rural parts of Mozambique, there is a clear gender gap in education, especially secondary education, and women are expected to stop studying and marry once they reach puberty. Early pregnancies and young marriages are very common, and girls comprise the majority of school dropouts.

ESIL wants to change and eradicate the educational disparities between boys and girls and rural and urban students. As part of this effort, ESIL reserves 50 percent of its openings for girls. In addition, it gives first preference to students of the rural Angónia plateau, second preference to students from the Tete province, and finally, third preference to students from other areas and cities. This aligns with its mission of bringing educational opportunity to students from rural areas. In the local rural context, parents rarely speak Portuguese with their children unless they have spent significant time in an urban area or have attended university. Furthermore, as student Jonas Zaquem Elias explained, "Many times, when students do not know Portuguese, it is a result of the family background that they came from. For example, it might be that the father and mother are farmers, and the grandparents did not go to school. So the student may not have a great feeling that they need to study."

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION

Mozambique is a former Portuguese colony. In 1962, Mozambique started to look toward its independence as parties opposing colonialism formed. Eduardo Mondlane was the first president of the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, FRELIMO). During the colonial period, Mozambicans could not study past fourth grade, a rule that suppressed the chance of revolt against the Portuguese regime. This also was the period when Portuguese became the official language. Mozambique has more than 42 dialects, so rather than choosing one local language to implement as official throughout the country, the colonial administration chose Portuguese. Portuguese thus became a remnant of colonialism, and "in innumerable ways colonial subjugation in Africa brought not only political oppression and economic exploitation but also profound psychological humiliation." A professor, Tony, discussed the painful memories of repression of how local dialects and cultures were treated during the colonial period:

There was a preconceived notion that Cinyanja or other local languages during the colonial period were not considered languages. They were languages of monkeys and cows. People who spoke Cinyanja for a long time were not considered. They were always seen as unable to study. So there has to be a reconceptualization that
both [Cinyanja and Portuguese] are languages and can be used to study and be complementary.

Today in Tsangano, the nyakwawa, or local chiefs, often know how to speak Portuguese. But still, they resolve local disputes in Cinyanja, because they have to resolve them in a language known by everyone. Tony continues, that “we cannot put local languages outside in this process of social justice. Preservation of these languages is also social justice. I think there is a damage to them, and they need to be restored.”

In 1964, Mozambique entered a colonial war between the Portuguese and Mozambican people, primarily the FRELIMO fighters, which went on for 10 years until Mozambique achieved independence on June 25, 1975. Samora Machel became the first president of Mozambique for the FRELIMO party. At this time, politically, the idea of having distinct tribes and ethnicities, such as the Chichewa ethnic group, was not popular amongst nationalist politicians who sought to rebuild and unite the country:

In striving to build nations such as Malawi and Mozambique, nationalists (politicians and academics alike) regarded Africa’s complex ethnic relationships as a hindrance. ‘Tribes’ were the antithesis of a nation. They were portrayed as retrogressive, part of the past, and an obstacle to progress…. Ethnic associations were also often banned, and even the numerous indigenous languages spoken within each African state were disregarded.72

As a result, although the colonial war ended and the country achieved independence, its struggles were far from over. Mozambicans were allowed to return to schools, but the civil war violence only worsened the education system in rural areas. Another civil war began in 1976, between FRELIMO and the Mozambican National Resistance (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, RENAMO), which was formed by Mozambicans who opposed FRELIMO rule. It uprooted close to six million people.73 The civil war was a time of absolute terror in the country as the FRELIMO and RENAMO forces both forcibly conscripted young men into their armies and inflicted an immense amount of violence on civilians, completely destroying entire villages. In the Angónia zone, schools were mostly destroyed, and many youths were recruited for obligatory military service. Those who were not recruited distanced themselves from school as it risked capture for forced military service. As Laissone Evaristo Matias, S.J., a Jesuit-information and ESIL professor who is from the Angónia plateau, explained:

"War traumatizes people…. For example, with the recent instability in 2013 and 2014, it gave people fear and they left because they already knew the consequences of war…. Of course, education is also affected. Instead of receiving five or 30 people in a class, you receive only one…. A good education and good development happens when the country is safe and the people are safe, and they can participate and know that if they plan for five years, that is what will happen."

The civil war lasted for 16 years, leaving the country in turmoil and poverty. Finally, in 1992, it ended with the Rome General Peace Accords. The issue of the official language arose again during the civil war, as questions about Mozambique as a post-colonial country arose. Portuguese was used in Maputo, the capital, and it made sense for it to become the official language and unite the country. However, ethnic groups began to question why their native languages could not be used as the official language instead of Portuguese. Why not Chichewa, or Shona, or Tewe, or Chiute, or Cibalke, or Makua? This desire to use native languages in daily life is largely still reflected today. Although Portuguese is commonly used in Maputo and other major cities, in rural areas such as Tsangano, where ESIL is located, most Mozambicans use their local dialects when communicating within their communities.

The Tsangano district area was almost empty by the end of the civil war; families were afraid of guerrilla fighters and fled to Malawi, which is just 10 miles away from ESIL. Today, although the civil war is over, there are occasional tensions and flare-ups of violence between the two parties. RENAMO has never held power, so there is a discontent among RENAMO supporters that the FRELIMO regime has held office since Mozambican independence. At ESIL, the school's isolation leads to a sense of calm, although outside events sometimes influence the students' perception. In one incident last year, when a student's father was kidnapped because he belonged to RENAMO, ESIL students were forced to question their safety at the school.

As a result of a remaining memory of the traumatic civil war experience, in rural areas, there is still some fear that the country might regress into conflict. In a neighboring community, about 10 kilometers away, some politicians were recently killed. Professor Mateus Elias Mesa, stated, however, that “we have the idea that ESIL is not concerned with politics, and we are only worried about education, not politics, and we do not mix the two things. That is one of things that probably helped us escape this [occasional violence] and kept us away from it… the students feel safe.”
MOZAMBIQUE

MOZAMBICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

All primary and secondary education is supposed to be conducted in Portuguese, and professors are officially instructed to only speak Portuguese in class. The government has, at times, encouraged schools to implement bilingual education, especially in rural areas where the use of native dialects is more predominant. In 2005, the government introduced a new curriculum that gave the option for teaching in local languages in grades one and two.74

The normalized system of bribery is concerning. In many schools, teachers are under pressure to ensure that a certain percentage of their students pass their final exams and the class. Many teachers accept payments from students to pass the class and move to the next grade. As a result, students can pass through their entire primary education without ever learning the material they need to meet the standards for their grade, and end up in secondary school without even a basic understanding of academic subjects or the ability to speak Portuguese. Professor Eloia Amelia Rangeiro said that the situation is so dire that some of her students don’t even understand when she asks them their name in Portuguese.

A component of Jesuit ideology is the condemnation of corruption; this is a guiding principle that reflects a just society.75 A major distinction at ESIL is the lack of corruption. Many students and professors commented on the rigor and discipline that ESIL instills in and requires from its students, with zero tolerance for bribery. Professor Chinyama explained how bribes psychologically reduce the incentive for students who are not paying bribes to study or actually learn material, because “a student there [in public schools] might get a 5 but in the report it says 12. And then another student who gets a 12 also has a 12. So they [the second student] ask, why do I study so much more for this 12 if I am just going to get the same grade at the end of the term?” It demotivates the students,76 and the system of bribery is reinforced. Professor Tomás Neto Letiá da Cruz shared an observation about the effects of past bribery on his students’ current education:

These students always speak in Chichewa, and this reflects enormous difficulties when the education is integrally in Portuguese. There are many students who clearly need primary education in Portuguese, but we are a secondary school, and some students in eleventh grade do not know how to speak or read Portuguese. They cannot understand what I say in classes. Without a primary education in Portuguese it is difficult to achieve the objectives of a secondary education.77

Students’ inability to speak or understand Portuguese is a severe impediment to academic progress. ESIL’s policy on corruption ensures that students learn, and cannot move forward by bribing teachers, resulting in an honest education. Since Portuguese is the official language, students must master it to have job or university prospects after they graduate; it is a pillar of education. This applies anywhere in Mozambique, because the country has so many dialects that it is difficult to communicate with other Mozambicans without knowing Portuguese.

Not knowing Portuguese is a barrier to further employment or education anywhere beyond the Tsangano district, which is why it is so critical. Students at ESIL recognize this, and also explain the mentality of some of their peers who hold an opposing opinion that Portuguese is not important. One student, Anastasio, shared that some of his friends say that Mozambique is their land and they want to speak in Chichewa and do not need to learn Portuguese. However, he understands that if he leaves Tsangano, and goes anywhere else in Mozambique or the world, he will come across people who do not speak or understand Chichewa, and then, Portuguese will be very useful for communication.

Partly as a result of this challenge of language learning, the current reality is that many students will remain in their communities after graduation and do agricultural work. Only a small percentage will pursue higher education or jobs in urban areas. ESIL ensures that it does not make the choice for students to pursue higher education or a city job. It does not portray academic pursuits as superior to local farm work after graduation. Instead, it equips students with the confidence that they can make a difference in their local communities regardless of which path they pursue. This is important, because “the point of this is to give students better social inclusion since the school is in a predominantly agro-pastoral area.”78

As volunteer Tiago Lopes Baptista Salazar expressed:

What we do here is work to open their horizons…. You have this life [here], but there is something else that exists, something more than [and different from what you have] here in Tsangano…. If they want to stay here in Tsangano, and be an agriculturalist, and build their own homes, that is good…. But if they choose this option because they do not have other ones, I do not think that is just. Then social justice does not exist.

ESIL has proactively responded to these local challenges and realities in a way that distinguishes it from other schools in Mozambique. By making community engagement, reconciliation through language, and agricultural training its priorities, ESIL demonstrates a commitment to Jesuit ideals of social justice.
ESIL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ESIL focuses on community engagement as a gateway to expanding the school’s language-learning and agricultural curriculum beyond just the students themselves and aiding in a broader process of reconciliation and empowerment. ESIL instills in its students the value of being men and women for others—using one’s education for positive community change and development.7 As Fr. Heribert Muller, S.J. put it:

*A Jesuit education as I know it personally is an education with passion towards greater consciousness of reality…[helping the student] to become a person that can think and reflect critically and make a contribution to society, a person for others…to help the person insert himself or herself in society and make a positive contribution towards justice and the common good.*

In addition, for a region to truly reconcile with its colonial past, the whole community needs to be supportive of the youth, and of ESIL’s efforts to lead this process. Jesuit Refugee Service explains the importance of communal support when it states: “Thus education often becomes a way of drawing communities together and of promoting integration…. Ultimately, the emphasis on communal participation is another way of casting the net of education as far out as possible, in a bid to fulfill its universal aim of offering hope through opportunities for learning to all.”78

School officials often invite the local traditional authorities, the village chiefs, to come to ESIL and spend time with the students, teaching them about Chichewa culture. They are also invited to cultural events and performances such as the talent show, where students more consciously express their distinct cultural identities. They are also invited to cultural events and performances such as the talent show, where students more consciously express their distinct cultural identities. The founders and administrators at ESIL seek to integrate the school into the preexisting network of relationships. For this, community engagement is critical. Matias is from the Tsangano district, and he understands the importance of receiving community authorities’ approval:

*Our policy is that interacting with people helps you to serve God. They feel that they belong to this development and take an indirect ownership of the school…. How do they get to trust us? If it is to invite them to anything—to work the land, and when we have different events, the local chiefs come here…. That is how we make them feel part of the school. We say, let us go together and work together.*

So far, the strategy has been working, and in fact, it is bringing tangible development to the community as a whole. Volunteer David observed:

*I think the school is a motor in the development of this region…. The education of the students can lift the education in their communities. Whatever students learn here, they will take it to their communities and they can work in their communities, with their communities. Next, the contact this school has started to have with other schools and other regions; it is a collaboration, a way to inspire, a reciprocal collaboration.*

ESIL also makes a commitment to buy products from the community: maize, tomatoes, beans, and other vegetables that it uses for meals in the dining hall. Since the school is still under construction, it hires workers from the surrounding village, providing them with a fair salary and a chance to earn some extra income. These practises are small gestures that build goodwill as a foundation before expecting positive receptiveness to changes in language development and agricultural innovation.

LOCAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

ESIL also focuses on building the Portuguese language abilities of its students while being sensitive to local cultural and language expression within school activities. This is critical to local empowerment of present and future rural generations. As a Jesuit institution, one dedicated to *cura personalis*—caring for the whole being, with individual attention, and attention to a student’s unique gifts, insights, and circumstances—and social justice, this dedication to supporting students’ cultural expression and Portuguese language development becomes imperative to allow them to develop to their fullest potential. Students who speak Portuguese well are equipped to pursue higher education or employment in urban areas without forgoing their individual identities, and are thus more likely to achieve better representation and advancement of their rural communities.

If students from rural areas do not get government jobs or higher education degrees in cities simply because they do not have a sufficient level of Portuguese to do so, there is an automatic disadvantage that reinforces the cycle of a lack of adequate representation of rural inhabitants. Fr. Muller explained why ESIL was built from this mission: “as Jesuits, we are called to really serve the people who are often neglected at the margin of education.” Students from urban areas do
not face this same challenge, because they have more exposure to television, the radio, and so on, whereas rural students might go their entire lives without ever using or hearing Portuguese outside of the classroom. A 1997 census revealed that the percentage of people who spoke Portuguese as their first language in the Tete province was only 3 percent of the population. Of that 3 percent, 71 percent of the speakers live in urban Tete and the rest live in rural Tete. Looking at the numbers of people who speak Cinyanja as their first language, only 4 percent come from urban areas, and 96 percent come from rural areas. This makes it clear that there is an enormous divide in language usage practices between urban and rural dwellers.\(^7\) ESIL addresses this through its establishment as an institution targeting rural education development in order to help those left at the margins of education—it gives admissions preference to students from the rural Angónia plateau before students from other areas and cities. In addition, once students are at ESIL, the school plans to provide students who need extra Portuguese reinforcement with extra small-group tutoring—something that most other Mozambican schools do not provide.

The second part of this empowerment is cultural—current and future generations must be encouraged to preserve their cultures, which are tied to local dialects. Matius agrees that cultural expression through language matters, sharing that “when I was talking to my students, [I realized] one of the things to marginalize people is to refuse them the right to their language. If you refuse them the language, you refuse them their culture, because all of the concepts and heroes of their life are in their language. So what you can do to boost that spirit is to give them back their language.” Students and teachers have explained that in other schools, mother tongues are repressed, and students are punished for using them in class. Matius Elias Messa spoke about his own experience in schools growing up. “If the teacher found you speaking something other than Portuguese outside of the classroom, there would be a problem. The punishment was cleaning the bathroom, or something like that.” Unfortunately, this harms students, as it creates more distance between them and teachers and discourages students from asking questions, placing them even further on the margin of education.

ESIL tries to approach this challenge differently. Although Portuguese is still mandated in class per the Mozambican curriculum and standards, Messa explained that “if students speak Chichewa on the patio, [or outside of class], there is no punishment.” Rather, students are encouraged to challenge themselves to use Portuguese in the classroom, but are allowed, and even encouraged, to use Chichewa outside of class in cultural and extracurricular matters. At ESIL, students are encouraged to challenge themselves to use Portuguese in the classroom, but are allowed, and even encouraged, to use Chichewa outside of class in cultural and extracurricular matters. ESIL, allows for Chichewa cultural and lingual preservation through songs and traditional dances—in talent shows, for example. The priest and director of the school, Father Muller, has learned how to give parts of the daily Mass in Chichewa, and asks students to teach him Chichewa songs of worship. During one Mass, he explained the concept of reconciliation in Portuguese. He asked students to explain in Chichewa to others who did not speak Portuguese so interested students were not at a disadvantage in receiving the same access to religious education and spiritual development.

Formal Chichewa studies would bring a new dimension and change the path in cultural preservation and community engagement entirely for future generations. Tony thinks that at first, students might view it is ridiculous to formally learn Chichewa in school, because they already speak it. But beyond just the conversational Cinyanja they use, he points out that they can use it to learn other subjects and to write movies and books, since very few currently exist. This venture into literature and other forms of published media can be a way of valorizing and preserving Cinyanja. By promoting local languages as a component of the same educational curriculum that pushes for better Portuguese learning amongst students, ESIL is presented with an opportunity to be a leader of how to achieve both goals: academic and cultural empowerment. Both are necessary for students to become conscious citizens who understand community needs and can communicate effectively in the local language and Portuguese.

**ESIL AND AGRICULTURE**

ESIL also teaches students sustainable and cost-efficient agricultural and livestock techniques, giving them the tools to create community change by improving agricultural practices. The Zambezi river area that ESIL is located near is the most fertile part of the entire country. It is a region that has vast areas for agriculture and livestock but faces cyclical famines due to a lack of basic knowledge. In the Pope Francis era, there is specific focus on Catholic communities’ responsibilities to uphold environmental justice. Agriculture, especially in Mozambique, is an important intersection of environmental and social justice. Pope Francis is cited in ESIL’s founding documents as one of the reasons that agricultural education is vitally incorporated into the curriculum, and it is an issue that he is passionate about spreading to Catholics globally.
Climate change’s worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.

As such, ESIL incorporates a more formal academic study of agriculture into its curriculum so students who want to pursue agriculture and livestock post-graduation are able to do so successfully. As director of the school Father Muller stated, “[agriculture] has also to do with social justice. I believe that to give a young person the skills to do agriculture and to have a sense of the environment is also a key aspect we want to develop, to make use of the resources through organic agriculture.” Students also appreciate this, and Anastasio said that it was his favorite part of his ESIL experience. “When we are in the house we are always studying, but when we have practical [agricultural] classes in the fields, we can leave and create something, go to the fields and spend time with friends,” he said. All ESIL students are assigned a plant within the school grounds to take care of, and the vegetables they grow are used for school meals. This practice gives students a concrete example of the importance and usefulness of agriculture. Muller hopes to solidify and expand the agricultural focus of ESIL and hopes to one day have a small agricultural school attached to ESIL. His vision for students is for them “to appreciate and love their countryside and the possibilities of life through agriculture and hard work, and teach them that they can make a living and be of assistance to their parents, and not just leave the villages and disappear.”

In this aspect, ESIL’s relationship with Satemwa, the nearby Jesuit agricultural mission, is very important. Satemwa targets the adults in the community by holding workshops and providing agriculture-based jobs, and together, ESIL and Satemwa allow for both students and their families to become empowered in transforming agriculture in their communities; it’s a way to reach out to both generations and help them with new agricultural methods.

CONCLUSION

In order to fulfill its mission of social justice and local empowerment, ESIL concentrates on community engagement, Portuguese language support parallel to outlets for cultural expression, and agricultural education. The first step, community engagement, better facilitates the other two steps, because it leads to increased acceptance in rural communities of Portuguese language education parallel to continued cultural learning, and to agricultural innovations that they might be unfamiliar with otherwise. These three concentrations are guided, respectively, by the Jesuit principles of educating men and women for others, cura personalis, and environmental justice, which are most crucial to guiding meaningful rural educational change in Angónia. They equip students to become future leaders who understand community needs, are respected by their communities, and can shape educational and agricultural initiatives and policies to tangibly improve their communities.

ESIL’s education, thus, is not just a path to academic success, but a capacity-building solution for the future. In line with the agricultural spirit of the community, Cruz used a harvest analogy to explain the long-term impact education has: “If we want to harvest tomorrow, we plant lettuce today. If we want to harvest in one year, we plant a tree. If we want to harvest after many years and generations, we have to educate. Education is a ramp to improvement for these students to have a better life, profession, stability in life, and of course the Jesuit values that we pass along to them in the school.” ESIL’s approach demonstrates that education does not consist of solely an academic curriculum, but of developing well-rounded and capable students who have an acute understanding of their communities and the ability to discern the path through which they will best be able to bring social justice to their community.

[ESIL] equips students to become future leaders who understand community needs, are respected by their communities, and can shape educational and agricultural initiatives and policies to tangibly improve their communities. ESIL’s education, thus, is not just a path to academic success, but a capacity-building solution for the future.
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List of Interviews

Narciso Mariano
Belo, S.J.
Administrative Jesuit at ESIL

Tomás Neto Leitão da Cruz
ESIL Volunteer Portuguese professor

Etevinho Orvaldo Daniel
ESIL French teacher

Jonas Zaquem Elias
ESIL Student

Laiosse Evaristo Matias, S.J.
ESIL teacher philosophy, IT, and English

Mateus Elias Messa
ESIL Math professor and Adjunct Pedagogical Director

Fr. Heribert Muller, S.J.
Director of ESIL

Lúcia Isaac Paulo
ESIL Student

Eloia Amélia Rangeiro
ESIL History teacher

Tiago Lopes Baptista Salazar
Volunteer manager of Jesuit orphansages Seeds of Tomorrow

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

Fr. Heribert Muller, S.J., Director of ESIL

Since ESIL is a Jesuit school, and you are a Jesuit yourself, can you share with me what makes a Jesuit education stand out to you? And how do you think it affects the culture and mindset of the youth because it is a Jesuit school?

A Jesuit education as I know it personally is an education with passion towards greater consciousness of reality, competence, and compassion, and [the desire] to help the student to know himself or herself, and to somehow lead out what is in him, to discover himself, to give greater capability to the student through a process of learning, reflection, evaluation, and so on. And [helping the student] to become a person that can think and reflect critically and make a contribution to society: a person for others—we often use that [phrase], and I like it a lot because it summarizes a lot. Not just giving [the student] competence and skills, and developing the intellectual self, but to also help the person to insert himself or herself in society and make a positive contribution towards justice and the common good.

How does ESIL address educational and linguistic challenges?

We have a dream that we would love to introduce the bilingual system, meaning that some lessons can be given in Chichewa and we would also have Chichewa as a subject. The government encourages that, but it needs another teacher or two teachers, and it needs also learning material. That is one thing. Another challenge we’d like to address is the young people leaving the rural area. We want them to appreciate and love their countryside and the possibilities of life through agriculture and hard work, qualified work, and teach them that they can make a living and be of assistance to their parents, and not just leave the villages and disappear... so the agricultural dimension is very strong, and we even think and hope that one day we would have a kind of secondary institution, a small agricultural school, where students can come and train in agriculture more professionally. So at ESIL, through human formation, we try to address some issues that are happening in the families and in the country, of reconciliation for example, and help the students to make good choices in their life. With the future opening of the new block and in the country, of reconciliation for example, and help the students to make good choices in their life. With the future opening of the new block and in the country, of reconciliation for example, and help the students to make good choices in their life. With the future opening of the new block, we’ll be able to do all of the teaching in the morning, and the afternoon can be used for all kinds of extracurricular activities.

How is ESIL engaging with the indigenous communities, beyond helping the students understand the importance of local agricultural practices?

We have invited some of the local traditional authorities, the village chiefs, [to the school]. We already had one meeting, and we will have another one with representative authorities who will speak to the students and spend half a day with them and try to explain the culture. We try to have cultural events where the students can have their dancing, and they are influenced also by the modern culture, what comes in from other countries and continents, but we want them to be proud of being from the Chichewa clan and group. But we also want to create among them a kind of national consciousness, that we are Mozambicans, and we have different cultural backgrounds. So that is also one of our aims that they appreciate their own culture, and I think we earn some goodwill for trying to do that.

What do you think is the future of Jesuit education in Mozambique and also other Jesuit institutions in the country?

I feel very lucky to witness a situation where we move away from having expatriate Jesuits being in charge of projects, but more local Mozambican Jesuits who will take over and be in charge of schools and parishes; there are quite a number in the pipeline. I think the way the province is developing, there will be more internationality. One of our priorities is youth education, so I think from that point of view there is a future of ESIL. With regard to schools in Mozambique, we are trying now to redo the educational efforts in Beira to improve the school we are running there for the archdiocese, but also schools a bit outside Beira, to have a school system there, and in Maputo, God willing, we have a plot where possibly we can also build a school. That would be great. It’s 10 hectares. It’s not quite resolved yet, the property question there. But in Beira we have a place that could be turned into a day school, so we are hoping to do something in the next 10 years. ESIL would be the first, but we could continue that with Beira; there are ideas to upgrade the school we have there and renew the structures. A lot of it depends on whether the Mozambican Jesuits will remain with us, as some will decide to leave.

Eloia Amélia Rangeiro, History Teacher

What do you think differentiates a Jesuit education and separates it from other schools that may be secular or government schools?

From what I have seen, it is very different. First, it is connected to a religious congregation. So the attention is different from public and private schools. It is connected to the priests, so their focus is different, and they are concerned with individual education; not just the formal education of the students, but also social education. And they want to know about the situations and families of their students. The education is different because there [in other schools] they are not as preoccupied with the family situations of the students. They might be concerned with it, but it isn't given as much importance as it is here or in other schools connected with priests.
What do you think are the biggest challenges or opportunities that indigenous students face in the local education systems?

Here in this region a big challenge has to do with their own language. It is difficult to involve the students, each with their own languages from their provinces, and then the official language of Portuguese. It’s difficult. It is a challenge that is different from the big cities, where they have more opportunities and they also speak Portuguese fluidly.

How does ESIL try to resolve the language challenge as a school?

I think the main thing we need to do is to give reinforcement classes to the students after the normal classes. Give a test where they have to translate something to Portuguese. I don’t know if this will help, but we can try. The past year we had really big challenges with the Portuguese language, but we have improved.

Narcisso Mariano Belo, S.J., Administrative Jesuit at ESIL

ESIL is a Jesuit school, so what do you think highlights or differentiates a Jesuit education and separates it from other schools that may be secular or government schools?

First, people in a Jesuit school having something called Ignatian pedagogy. It is a form of education that is very personalized and looks at the students’ personalities and needs. In the morning, everyone has class, and in the afternoon, everyone has obligatory study hours. This makes a difference for the students and in the school. This makes a difference—this is the second year—but we are growing and improving in quality. In ancient times, the Jesuits, who essentially developed education in the plateau of Angónia...many government officials today [in the region] came from schools that were the work of Jesuit schools from the plateau of Angónia. We also have a curriculum and program of extracurricular activities that are not just academic subjects such as biology but other things that the students can explore. We have activities such as soccer and civic classes about two or three times per semester where we talk about sexuality, pregnancy, and things that they need to know because in the culture here, nobody will talk about that. It’s a bit complicated and another problem [here]. These are things that really make a difference.

What do you think are distinct challenges or opportunities that indigenous students face in the local education systems in Mozambique?

The challenge of academic material and sustainability. When this school came in the middle of nowhere, it came to a place where the students had nowhere to go after they finished studying tenth grade. But when there is a school nearby they will continue to study. I know many students personally who do not continue to study because it is far and difficult to travel to the village for school each day. Access to education is a big challenge, as is cost. In terms of opportunities, this is a really rich zone in the plateau of Angónia that is very fertile. This is why ESIL tries to give more opportunities to study agriculture. The students learn new sustainable techniques and techniques that cost less. Agriculture is a way to have a way of making a living. So the school tries to develop new techniques to help the students with this and make them see that it is possible to make something better out of this.

How does ESIL try to resolve the various challenges in the region?

We have a project that brought students here, and there is another part of this project that is connected to the Jesuits here. So maybe if you have one child in school, it can open [the community] up more. Also, in our school, you do not pay tuition because it is called a community school and the teachers are paid by the government. All of the students who are orphans have a certificate that they are in a state of poverty and they don’t have to pay. But practically everyone can pay the cost we have. Pretty much everyone’s parents can pay the small fee we have for administrative costs of the school. Technically if someone can’t pay after 15 days I have to send them away, but I am unable to do this to the students, so we find a way and arrange for someone to pay for education.
INTRODUCTION

In 2013, Ukraine was thrust into the international spotlight following a series of explosive developments that took the world by surprise. The Euromaidan protests, ousting of President Viktor Yanukovych, annexation of Crimea by Russia, and separatist movement in the country’s eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk attracted new attention to the country. At the moment, Ukraine is a state caught between a painful history, a conflict-filled present, and a future full of hope, as well as trepidation, for many. In the midst of this turmoil, the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv differs from other universities in Ukraine in terms of the quality of education and mission. Since its founding in 2002, UCU has consistently strived to enact best practices in higher education. Through the example of UCU, this case study aims to provide an overview of the education landscape in Ukraine and to identify how notions of social justice intersect with education in Ukraine.

OVERVIEW

In summer 2017, Anastasia Sendoun spent three weeks conducting research at Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, Ukraine, as part of an ongoing initiative of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and the Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching, and Service at Georgetown University. Using Ukrainian Catholic University as a case study, Sendoun’s research examined gaps in Ukraine’s higher education system and sought to identify the specific strategies used by UCU to address those gaps. By highlighting interviews conducted with students, alumni, and faculty at UCU, her research amplifies stakeholder voices and provides insight into a region that has in recent years attracted a great deal of attention as a result of ongoing political turmoil. UCU demonstrates a commitment to social justice in that it models just processes for other Ukrainian institutions and seeks to provide its students with a toolbox of knowledge, skills, and values that they can then use to shape their own communities and society at large.

UKRAINE

ANASTASIA SENDOUN (C’18)
HISTORY OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

In 1928, the university was founded as the Greek Catholic Theological Academy by Metropolitan Andriy Sheptytsky, who served at the metropolitan archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church from 1901 until 1944. The school was then closed in 1944 by the Soviet government, and many Ukrainian Catholic clergymen went underground or into exile, fearing persecution from the atheistic regime. Notwithstanding this religious suppression, the alumni of the Greek Catholic Theological Academy remained clandestinely active, particularly abroad, in countries with high numbers of Ukrainians emigres.

In 1963, Cardinal Josef Slipyj founded the Ukrainian Catholic University of Pope Clement I in Rome. The school offered a small seminary program and a number of summer programs for students from the Ukrainian diaspora—that is, the children and grandchildren of Ukrainians who migrated to other countries. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, a small number of international branches of the university were formed in Europe and the Americas, with the intention of keeping alive its tradition and name. Then, in 1992, with the fall of the Soviet Union and declaration of Ukrainian independence, faculty and alumni of the university in Rome began planning a revival of the academy in Ukraine. Two years later, the Lviv Theological Academy was re-established, and the school opened its doors to a diverse group of students, including both laypeople and the religious.

In 2002, the university was formally inaugurated as the first Catholic university on the territory of the former Soviet Union and was legally re-registered as the Ukrainian Catholic University, receiving recognition for its undergraduate program in history from the Ministry of Education. In the spring of 2006, Ukraine's Ministry of Education accredited the UCU theology program. This meant that in the summer of that year, the university was finally able to award government-recognized degrees in theology to its graduates. In the years since 2002, the school has grown, adding new academic and professional programs, and expanding its facilities, often with support from fundraising events held both in Ukraine and abroad. Currently, the school has academic programs in a wide range of fields, including history, theology, pedagogy, psychology, foreign languages, journalism, communication, and business.

Officially, the school’s mission statement declares that “the Ukrainian Catholic University is an open academic community living the Eastern Christian tradition and forming leaders to serve with professional excellence in Ukraine and internationally—for the glory of God, the common good, and the dignity of the human person.” This mission informs the work of the university at all levels, as evidenced by the university’s success in developing a model for higher education that accomplishes two primary tasks. First, UCU provides a high-quality educational experience that is aligned to broader values for its students, equipping them with the skills they need to become agents of change. Second, UCU models just processes for other institutions in Ukraine, serving as a rare example of transparency and inclusivity.

FAITH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AT UCU

UCU has shaped itself around a set of values that guides not only the pedagogy at the university, but also student life. The school has a set of expectations for its graduates that serve to illustrate this fact. According to the university, a graduate should demonstrate: 1) “moral integrity and responsible citizenship,” 2) “language skills and international exposure,” 3) “leadership and critical thinking,” 4) “rootedness in Christian culture,” 5) “an ability to successfully organize projects and to achieve planned results,” and 6) “experience in community service.” These values not only show a commitment to a rigorous education (language skills, critical thinking, project organization), but a broader mission of the formation of moral leaders (integrity, responsible citizenship) who are grounded in the Eastern Rite Catholic tradition (Christian culture). Furthermore, the university has a set of specific values that differentiate it from other universities in Ukraine. They are: 1) “[Playing] a leading role in developing and promoting contemporary Christian reflection and dialogue with the culture,” 2) “excellent and quality education acknowledged internationally,” 3) serving as a “place where leading Ukrainian and international intellectuals work and communicate,” 4) being a “leader in student life programs, formation and campus environment,” 5) serving as a “respected moral and public voice,” and 6) “fostering respect and integration.”

These principles serve as a guide to the everyday work and the broader mission of UCU. While UCU is not a Jesuit university, it demonstrates its own unique form of a commitment to social justice by providing students with a quality education, modeling just processes for other institutions in Ukraine, and instilling values in students who will hopefully shape society in the future according to those values. This commitment was illustrated by the words of one of the interviewees, who, when asked about what made UCU different from other universities, said:

First and foremost, it is different because it is Catholic. This is something unique in Ukrainian higher education, since we are not just concerned with students’ professional development. For us, it is important to shape students as good citizens, as good Christians, and as good people. This formation of students with an education grounded in values is very important. There are very few institutions in Ukraine that are like this, that are like UCU. Most universities in Ukraine are focused on students’ professional preparation, but not their preparation for life. We try to prepare students for life.
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

In Ukraine, the greatest injustice within the education system is not a lack of access, but rather, a lack of quality. UCU enacts its vision of social justice, which is shaped largely by its commitment to the values of Eastern Christianity, as well as a broader societal understanding of social justice through providing access to certain basic goods, dignity, and self-realization. By providing students in today’s Ukraine with the highest-quality education possible, UCU is advancing its social justice mission in the short term. However, the university also works toward social justice in the long term by fostering the development of individuals who will shape the country’s future. This mission, combined with UCU’s emphasis on morality and Christian values, promotes a unique environment for the formation of community leaders, public servants, and professionals who advance social justice. Moreover, by modeling fair, transparent processes for other institutions in Ukraine, UCU demonstrates that success does not have to come at the cost of integrity. Rather, it is a willingness to break with the status quo that has made this particular university so successful. The intersection of social justice and education at UCU, then, lies primarily in this two-fold approach that advances individual student learning in the short term and the common good in the long-term.

VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN UKRAINE

The term “social justice” challenged the participants in this case study, as many struggled to concretely explain what the term meant for them and to construct a possible cultural interpretation of the phrase (in other words, to explain how Ukrainian society at large might understand the term). A number of participants suggested alternative phrases that were more familiar than “social justice” (spravedlivist), such as “social responsibility” (vidpovidalnist) or “social equality” (rivnist). Generally, interviewees’ answers tended to revolve around three key, non-mutually exclusive ideas: first, access to resources and opportunities; second, basic human dignity; and third, self-realization. These responses form the foundation for understanding the Ukrainian vision of social justice.

The most common definition of social justice was centered on access to resources and opportunities. Notably, the Ukrainian vision of social justice has strong political overtones, with a number of participants using the language of the government’s responsibilities to its citizens to describe their own understanding of social justice. One participant, for example, stated, “This for me is social justice—the ability for citizens to access the goods that are guaranteed by the Constitution.” When asked to define what she meant by “goods,” the interviewee listed healthcare, pensions, education, and quality infrastructure, such as modern roads and bridges. This response reveals a tendency seen in multiple interviews in this study—namely, the tendency to situate notions of social justice within concrete systems, such as healthcare or the legal system. Moreover, for many participants, the injustices residing within these systems are not practices of discrimination or bigotry, but rather of corruption and inefficiency. While this definition may depart from a traditional understanding of social justice, insofar as these inefficient, corrupt institutions prevent individuals from meeting their basic needs, they reveal a form of structural violence present in Ukrainian institutions.

Dignity, the second theme, is understood as a set of basic rights individuals deserve by virtue of their humanity. While not dissimilar from the notion of access to rights and opportunities, those who spoke of dignity tended to speak in terms of democratic norms rather than the provision of goods by concrete systems. For example, rather than discussing pensions or education, participants noted concepts like human rights, labor rights, and equity. This answer was particularly influenced by the current political context, as a number of interviewees referred to the Euromaidan protests in their responses. One, for example, noted the demands of students in the protests, saying, “During the Euromaidan protests, the students would often say that we, as a society, deserve better from our government. We deserve better. This phrase illustrates that there is still a great deal of injustice in society.” Because the Euromaidan was often referred to as the “Revolution of Dignity,” the word “dignity” has likely filtered into the societal lexicon, particularly when discussing issues of justice and oppression.

The third response centered on self-realization. This fits with the first idea of access to basic goods, which are necessary for individuals to establish a minimum standard
of living and then focus on other concerns, such as personal fulfillment. However, individuals who framed social justice as self-realization tended to express a slightly more radical understanding of this first idea. Generally, participants tended to focus on input rather than outcomes when speaking about social justice—there is a tendency for Ukrainians to view social justice as equality of opportunity rather than equality of results. Those who defined social justice as self-realization, however, indirectly discussed the importance of results in addition to equal opportunity. They seemed to believe that, provided a certain set of basic resources, every individual could realize him or herself. While Ukrainians seem to define social justice in fairly conservative terms, there is still a sense that society should ensure that all individuals should enjoy equal outcomes for equal efforts at self-actualization.

Finally, when comparing the answers of respondents, there was a noticeable difference in how participants under the age of 40 and participants over the age of 40 defined social justice. The younger generation responded to the question without mentioning the Soviet Union while the older generation qualified their answers with a wary recollection of the Soviet legacy. Older generations define social justice as equality (understood as equal treatment), rather than equity (defined as providing individuals with what they need). This is because for those old enough to remember Soviet rhetoric, the language of equity triggers memories of policies that were associated with oppression and authoritarianism, rather than a socially just society. Given this divide, older individuals defined social justice as access to opportunities and resources, while younger individuals were more likely to speak about self-realization. As one older participant explained:

> Many people say that justice is equality. I, however, do not agree with this definition because not all equality is good. For those of us who grew up in the Soviet Union, the question of social justice and social injustice was a tricky question. Social injustice, for those who grew up under the Soviet regime, is our history. My family lost everything they had—not just their physical possessions, but their rights to religious freedom and freedom of speech. These histories have shaped the concept of "social justice" in Ukraine because for the longest time, we heard the language of equality but lived the opposite. These wounds are incredibly fresh and incredibly painful still.

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

Schools have been historically understood as a reflection of the society of which they are a part and are seen as social laboratories of societal norms and trends. As such, education broadly serves a sociopolitical role because it reflects and generates certain identity norms. The education system filters ideas about identity and transmits those ideas to society via the classroom. In the case of Ukraine, education plays a unique role in the formation of national identity in particular. As a post-Soviet nation, national identity in Ukraine is still taking shape as citizens negotiate what the concept of “Ukrainian-ness” means in their newly independent country. Given the understanding of schools as social laboratories, the Ukrainian classroom is necessarily a politicized space as broader societal discussions of historical interpretation, language, and religion shape not only what information students receive, but also how they receive it. When asked about the role of higher education in Ukraine, those interviewed expressed both positive and negative opinions on higher education.

When discussing the positive aspects of higher education, participants answered in future-oriented and normative terms revolving around ideas of nation- and institution-building. Specifically, notions of “good citizenship” seemed particularly powerful, as a number of respondents discussed how they hoped that students would, as a result of their UCU education, be armed with the tools to positively shape the country. Essentially, respondents believed that beyond transmitting practical knowledge, a university education should challenge students critically and cultivate a strong sense of morality to guide them when they are in positions of power and influence. As one of the professors at UCU explained, “Education is very important. Education forms societal discourse, not just in Ukraine, but in every country. A lower level of education leads to a more radical mentality, more black-and-white thinking. Education, then, teaches individuals to think critically and to see that situations are not always black and white—that the world is more complicated.”

An important concept in today’s political lexicon is the generation that has “grown up in the independent Ukraine.” These young people, having grown up without the specter of the authoritarianism of the Soviet Union, are distinct from past generations in that they are generally more committed to advancing social justice than their parents or grandparents. Notions of good citizenship among young people are viewed as the key to Ukraine’s political future and the formation of an authentically Ukrainian identity free from Soviet influence. This understanding of the young generation’s potential is important to understanding the connection between higher education and social justice. Given that many Ukrainians see social justice as a top-down process, by preparing students to be both moral and political leaders, Ukrainian society can work toward a more socially just future.

When these students come into positions of power, they will be able to enact the concrete changes needed in order to make society more just. This hope was expressed by one of the administrators interviewed who said, “If there is any one thing that can change our nation, that can change Ukraine, it is an educated and enlightened youth. We will soon be celebrating 27 years of Ukrainian independence. Clearly, if we are looking at some situations—whether in politics or economics or in social life, in questions of community life, or in education, whatever it may be—if we see problems in that system, it is probably because new people have not yet gone into that environment and the old, conservative mentality still reigns.”
Despite this optimistic understanding of the role of higher education in Ukraine, many participants also expressed a more negative outlook, explaining that many Ukrainians view higher education as little more than the obligatory capstone to an individual’s education. That is, an individual with a college education is not considered to have any special sort of skills or knowledge, and simply acquires a diploma because all of his or her peers will do the same. For many, obtaining a diploma is similar to completing primary school or high school. One of the students interviewed pondered this very question, saying, “I have always wondered about why there are so many people [in Ukraine] who want a higher education—this is the standard path after completing school, you have to complete higher education because without a diploma, you are a nobody. Students are told this from a very young age by their parents and their teachers.”

Although Ukraine’s population is half that of Germany’s, there are 260 more institutions of higher learning in Ukraine than in Germany.62 This statistic illustrates the opinion expressed by many interviewees that the system of higher education does not suffer from inaccessibility; in fact, higher education seems to be almost overly accessible in Ukraine. As one student said, “There are few barriers to access to higher education in Ukraine. I actually think that fewer people should enroll in universities because there are currently too many. Oftentimes, students go to university because there is a certain stereotype that if you don’t have a diploma, you are a loser. We need to work toward achieving a system that is of a high quality in which people understand why they want to attain a diploma.” One participant explained why this is the case, saying:

“Here it is important to understand the Ukrainian mentality. If there are 10 people and nine of them enroll in university and this is considered prestigious, the tenth will also enroll whether or not he needs to do so. In Ukraine, there are many universities in which the cost of attendance is not particularly high, and there are also a number which do not require any particular effort by the student who, nevertheless, earns a diploma. On paper, there are many universities in Ukraine. ‘They pay the government in order to maintain their accreditation, and everyone is satisfied. The student wants a diploma and the university wants money, so the student pays the cost and everyone is happy.’”

While at first the high number of university-educated individuals may seem like a non-issue, or even a plus, the problem lies in the fact that there are currently too many. Oftentimes, students go to university because there is a certain stereotype that if you don’t have a diploma, you are a loser. We need to work toward achieving a system that is of a high quality in which people understand why they want to attain a diploma.”

A TRANSITION UNFINISHED: GAPS IN UKRAINE’S EDUCATION SYSTEM

During the complicated transition to democratic governance and a market economy in the period immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine took steps to become a more open society. This ideological shift was reflected in education policies, as one of the main priorities of the government became the development of a plan to transform Ukraine’s system of education from a Soviet model to a national model, aligned to the needs of a democratic society and European educational standards.

Education was one of the first policy areas to experience rapid reform after Ukraine gained independence. By targeting education, political leaders capitalized on the potential to instill new norms of social and cultural behavior. During this period, the government restructured and revised educational infrastructure at all levels, introducing the possibility for the creation of private educational institutions and new models of teaching and learning. In 1992, a commission from the Ministry of Education released an education blueprint to reflect the changing social and political landscape of the country. The Ministry of Education’s report highlighted the intention of the post-Soviet reforms to eradicate the “authoritarian pedagogy put in place by a totalitarian state which led to the suppression of natural talents and capabilities and interests of all participants in the educational process.” Moving away from a model based in collectivism and uniformity, the commission intended to create an education system that would promote “individuality, nationality, and morality” among students and practitioners. Despite this, Ukrainian education continued to practically and structurally resemble Soviet practices.

Today, this stagnation continues to plague the system of education in the country, which is marked by three notable gaps: a lack of innovation, a preference for theoretical over practical education, and deeply-rooted practices of corruption and bribery. Given that these gaps are seen as the primary impediment to the attainment of quality education, they are key to understanding the intersection of education and social justice in Ukraine. UCU, in striving to fill these systematic gaps, both enacts its vision of social justice and provides its students with the education they need in order to become agents of social justice in the future.
LACK OF INNOVATION

When asked to describe the Ukrainian educational system, the most common answer participants gave was “outdated” or “stale.” As one student at UCU explained, “The biggest weakness of the education system is that it is outdated and there is an unwillingness to adapt to new standards or to adopt new programs. We are still studying according to old systems—that is, we are learning things that are no longer useful, and we are not being taught things like financial literacy or IT. I think it necessary for us to adapt. We are not in line with the twenty-first century, but rather the 1950s or 1960s, and this produces individuals who are not thinking about the world as it is now, but according to the past.” There is widespread sense that education in Ukraine has not kept pace with the changing world and that Ukrainian students have fallen behind their peers in the age of the global knowledge economy. As another interviewee stated, “Universities need to adapt to teach what will be necessary in five years, rather than what was necessary 10 years ago. Without this flexibility, without these processes of adaptation, universities will become irrelevant.”

There have been attempts at reform in Ukrainian education in the last several years. For example, in 2015, the parliament passed a new law on higher education to give universities more autonomy, including control over their own finances. The goal was to “encourage private investment, fundraising and even the creation of endowments, and to sweep away the top-down Soviet model of university management.” Despite these efforts, many of the students and administrators interviewed expressed the sense that the education system has remained stagnant.

UCU challenges this outdatedness and lack of innovation by providing students with innovative experiences that do not exist at other universities in Ukraine. One notable example of this is the English Summer School. The English Summer School is an immersive three-week experience that is mandatory for all students at UCU. In this time, students interact with volunteer teachers who are native English speakers, quickly improving their proficiency and becoming comfortable using the language in a variety of settings. The emphasis of the university on English learning is reflective of the university’s international orientation and its unique commitment to a sense of innovation and intellectual experimentation.

THEORETICAL VERSUS PRACTICAL EDUCATION

The Ukrainian education system strongly favors theoretical education over more practical acquisition and application of knowledge and skills. According to a study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Curricula [in Ukraine] provide theoretical learning but lack preparation for a labor market that requires strong applied practical experience. The skills that are required by employers have also evolved over time while curricula still carry a strong legacy from Soviet times.” As undergraduates, many students are unable to gain practical experience given that they are often required to take many courses which do not necessarily pertain to their chosen field of study. Because these classes consume most of their time, students are unable to participate in internship programs or conduct independent research—experiences which provide students with valuable hands-on knowledge that serves to complement a more theoretical curriculum.

While there is certainly value in a well-rounded liberal arts education, many of the students interviewed for this project expressed frustration that they did not feel as though they were being prepared for their future careers, despite the number of classes they were required to take, stating “education is very formal, in the sense that it is too theoretical.” At UCU, however, many students are able to partner with local businesses to gain work experience, with the university allowing students special flexibility in their schedules if they choose to take advantage of internship opportunities.

CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY

Corruption and bribery were identified as impediments to social justice in nearly every interview conducted for this project. Moreover, corruption is considered the greatest weakness of the Ukrainian education system. According to Ararat Osipian, “At least 30 percent of Ukrainians enter colleges by paying bribes, while many others use their connections with the faculty and administration.” In Lviv alone, a survey of 600 students revealed that 46 percent had paid bribes as part of the university application process. Framed in terms of social justice, corruption creates inequalities
that contradict the standard of universal access to higher education and undermines the value of education broadly.

The main explanation for the prominence of bribery in education is low salaries for educators. Because professors and teachers receive small salaries, they feel compelled to extract additional money where they can in order to provide for themselves and their families. Given the endemicity of corruption in Ukraine in general (Ukraine is 130 out of 168 countries ranked by Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index 2015), it is unsurprising that the education system too manifests this tendency. However, beyond bribes paid to professors and administrators in exchange for good grades or assured acceptance into a desired program, other institutionalized forms of corruption exist as well. These include "embezzlement, extortion, fraud, ghost instructors, abuse of public property, nepotism, cronyism, favoritism, [and] kickbacks."

Another problem in Ukrainian education is the prevalence of diploma mills—that is, institutions of higher learning that essentially sell diplomas. This practice is particularly harmful as it devalues education and fails to produce professionals with the skills needed to successfully participate in the workforce. As one interviewee explained, "If someone is able to simply pay for a diploma, then why should I work for four years to earn one?" A number of individuals interviewed indicated that the practice may be becoming less popular, as many universities which subscribe to the practice of "selling" a college education have earned negative reputations over time. Some participants even said that some workplaces no longer accept applicants with diplomas from certain schools because their degrees are deemed worthless.

Although the government plans to ramp up efforts to close down institutions who engage in this practice may be becoming less popular, as many universities which subscribe to the practice of "selling" a college education have earned negative reputations over time. This aspect of the university’s administration not only attracts a number of students, but it also encourages a great deal of the external donations that fund the school. Essentially, UCU stands to lose much more than it stands to gain from practices of corruption. As such, UCU is one of few institutions in Ukraine that demonstrates that ultimately, corruption does not pay. Its commitment to transparency is a key aspect of what has made the school so successful in a relatively short amount of time. This success, then, encourages other institutions in Ukraine to adopt this model of transparency, which helps to promote more socially just processes at large.

CONCLUSION

Conducting research on social justice in a post-Soviet context can pose a number of challenges. Oftentimes, the language used by Western academics and activists to discuss issues of inequality inspires some trepidation, as it is reminiscent of the very Soviet rhetoric these individuals would rather forget. However, as these interviews illustrate, Ukrainians are beginning to develop their own personal and cultural understandings of social justice.

One of the greatest social justice challenges in today’s Ukraine is the low quality of university education. In aiming to provide its students with the best education possible, UCU demonstrates its own unique form of commitment to social justice. While there are a number of gaps in Ukraine’s current system of higher education, UCU has managed to create specific programs to fill those gaps in quality, enacting best practices for educational innovation in the country. Furthermore, the university models just processes for other institutions in Ukraine and instills values in students who will hopefully shape society in the future according to those values, ensuring that its reach extends far into the future. Ukraine is currently at a crossroads—while it faces many challenges, there is also great potential for it to become an unparalleled success story, having withstood territorial occupation, six decades of an oppressive regime, major war, famine, and an uncertain transition to democracy. With continued leadership from institutions like UCU, there is much about which to be optimistic.
The Education and Social Justice Project: International Summer Fellowships 2017

Ukraine

Catholic University

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Student at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Andriy Rubtsov
Administrator at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Dmytro Sheremhovsky
Student at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Mikhailo Shelemba
Administrator at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Roman Nazarenko
Student at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Fr. Yuriy Kozlovsky
Administrator at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Orysya Bila
Program Coordinator at the Emmaus Center for persons with special needs at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Andriy Rudnov
Director of the Philosophy Department at the Ukrainian Catholic University

Yuliya Farylenko
Student at the Ukrainian Catholic University

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

Dmytro Sheremhovsky, Administrator at the Ukrainian Catholic University

The Ukrainian education system has such a vibrant history. Can you share some significant parts of this system, how it has changed, and grown over the years?

The system of education in Ukraine has indeed changed in recent years, and I would say it is trying to understand exactly how it fits into the system of European education at large. While we cannot copy the system of another country because it will not work in the Ukrainian context, we are looking toward other countries’ universities to see how they are successful and trying to adapt their success for the Ukrainian system. Independent of the level and style, the education system is, nonetheless, a remnant of the Soviet system of education. In a certain sense, this education system was successful because in the Soviet Union, nearly everyone was able to complete higher education, which was not the case in imperial times when education was not accessible to the average person.

What is the greatest strength and weakness of the Ukrainian education system?

There is still a very traditional understanding of education as a stage of life through which one must pass. It is understood that a person goes to school, goes to university, and then goes into the workforce. However, this can be problematic because this education system very rarely transfers practical knowledge. This system is very theoretical, very complex. As the market changed, new skills and new knowledge became necessary. However, students were not acquiring these new necessary skills. Education remained formally functional mastery of information. In the last few years, we have begun to feel the effects of this system. Many universities are very focused on the theoretical. This is not to say that academia is not “allowed” to be an ivory tower at times—education does not have to be completely practical. However, education should not be completely theoretical either. It is important to include professional training in education and to give students access to diverse career paths.

Fr. Yuriy Kozlovsky, Administrator at the Ukrainian Catholic University

How many young people who desire to access higher education in Ukraine have the opportunity to do so?

It seems to me that in Ukraine there is free access to higher education in terms of numbers. That is, most individuals are able to enroll in a university and study. This was part of the Soviet system of education—that everyone could study, that there was free, universal education for everyone. The downside of such a system is that there is lowering of educational standards. Higher education stops being something particular and becomes something common in a disadvantageous way. Universities in Ukraine often have to concern themselves with questions of quantity of students studying rather than the quality of the education because quantity is what determines how much money that university gets from the government. Quality doesn’t earn anything. Because we are able to concern ourselves with the quality of education and not the quantity of students, we are truly very different when compared with other Ukrainian universities. Everyone knows about us, despite the fact that we are so small. Students pay tuition, but 80 percent of tuition costs are paid for by benefactors. This allows us to be independent and to care about quality.

How do you envision the future of Ukraine, and what role do you think UCU will play in that future?

It is almost impossible to predict because, even in the last three years, things that no one could have predicted have occurred. The loss of Crimea, the conflict in the east, the weakness of the government—even a month before they happened, nobody foresaw them. Because of this, I am hesitant to predict what the future will be like. Given the events of the Euromaidan, Ukraine is oriented toward the West, toward Europe. Because of this, our history for the next 20 to 30 years will be very dependent on European processes. UCU has always been in the avant-garde of social institutions. We have been able to impact the educational environment, for example, in that we have categorically rejected any form of corruption, which in other institutions of higher learning is accepted. Just four years ago, we had only 600 students. I hope that the university sticks to its foundational values, which include religious, spiritual, and socially just principles. Our financial model is transparent—anyone can see our income and how we spend our money. We pay our taxes. Anyone who knows Ukraine knows that it is very difficult to be honest in Ukraine. I am proud that our university is honest. I hope that our university maintains this sense of innovation, progressivism, and honesty. This is the role I hope our university plays in society.
Mikhailo Shelemba, Student at the Ukrainian Catholic University

What are some of the challenges people face in accessing higher education in Ukraine?

There are few barriers to access to higher education in Ukraine. I actually think that fewer people should enroll in universities because there are currently too many. Oftentimes, students go to university because there is a certain stereotype that if you don’t have a diploma, you are a loser. We need to work toward achieving a system that is of a high quality in which people understand why they want to attain a diploma.

What are some challenges to social justice in Ukraine today?

There is lack of a sense of social responsibility. There are often disagreements around topics of social justice, and we do not respond to these questions. We do not understand that we are responsible for ourselves and our actions.

How do you envision the future of the Ukrainian Catholic University?

I envision it as the kind of university in which I would like my own children to study. I would proudly be able to say that I was here when it was just being built. This is because I naturally would want the best for my kids, and if they choose this university, that means it is the best. I would want them to develop in this kind of environment.

ENDNOTES

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43 Interview, Student 1, May 25, 2017.
46 Interview, Student 4, May 25, 2017.
47 “The Characteristics of Jesuit Education: An abridged
ENDNOTES (cont.)

49 Interview, Mario Serrano Marte, S.J., June 1, 2017.
51 Interview, Guillermo José Pedrón Montalvo, S.J., June 5, 2017.
54 Interview, Guillermo José Pedrón Montalvo, S.J., June 5, 2017.
55 Interview, Noris de los Santos, June 6, 2017.
57 Interview, Noris de los Santos, June 6, 2017.
59 Interview, Student 1, May 25, 2017.
60 Interview, Guillermo José Pedrón Montalvo, S.J., June 5, 2017.
62 Interview, Mario Serrano Marte, S.J., June 1, 2017.
65 “Regulamento Interno.”
67 Joint Apostolic Plan of the Provinces of Zambia–Malawi; Zimbabwe – Mozambique and the Region of South Africa. Companhia de Jesus.
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83 Ibid.
87 Iulia Mendel, “In Ukraine’s Universities.” Politico.