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### Cover Page Footnote

The author would like to thank the Creighton students who participated in the pilot program. The author additionally owes gratitude to René Padilla and Tom Kelly for offering recommendations in the development of the IDC 320 course and to René Padilla, Alexander Roedlich, and Mary McFarland for their comments and suggestions that improved an earlier version of this paper. Thanks also to the JWL staff, Creighton's Global Engagement Office, and the anonymous donor who made the CGI grants possible.

## Learning with Students at the Margins: Creighton University's Pilot Program with Jesuit Worldwide Learning 2017-2018

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### Abstract

Creighton University in cooperation with Jesuit Worldwide Learning: Higher Education at the Margins (formerly Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins) piloted a program in 2017-2018 in which eight Creighton University undergraduates in the College of Arts & Sciences took an online course in Jesuit Worldwide Learning's Diploma in Liberal Studies and a newly developed online course at Creighton University that framed their online experience in a global classroom with students living at the margins through readings, videos, discussions, reflections, and community service. This small-scale qualitative study seeks to understand what benefits arise for privileged students in a global classroom with students at the margins who also take an accompanying course designed to enhance this experience. Drawing upon questionnaires, an interview, and an essay, these findings are primarily descriptive in nature and reveal that students gained knowledge of and appreciation for the empowerment of (a Jesuit) education, displayed empathy with the marginalized populations, increased their self-knowledge, and also discovered a commitment to serve others.

### Introduction

Online learning has helped democratize higher education globally to those who have access to online educational resources.<sup>1</sup> Studies show that tertiary education for people living at the margins greatly assists the individual and her community, but little is known of the benefits to privileged students who study in an online, global classroom with these individuals.<sup>2</sup> This paper seeks to address this gap by elucidating the self-reported benefits to privileged participants in a global classroom who also take an accompanying course designed to frame their experience. Before examining the case study at Creighton University in which eight undergraduates studied online with students living at the margins through Jesuit Worldwide Learning's Diploma in Liberal Studies, I will first contextualize the findings with a brief overview of the benefits and availability of higher education for those living at the margins as well as the new opportunities for expansion of higher education through online programs and the advantages of a global classroom.<sup>3</sup>

### Benefits of Tertiary Education to Those Living at the Margins and for Post-Conflict Recovery

The value of tertiary education to refugees and internally displaced people is irrefutable. Higher education helps community members understand and cope better with their situations, providing meaning in life and rendering them less susceptible to military recruiters, criminal gangs, and the sex industry; it facilitates integration into their new community; and it can contribute to the qualification of human resources needed in three durable solutions: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement.<sup>4</sup> It also inspires students to finish their secondary education and it trains teachers for primary education.<sup>5</sup> Studies of the repatriation process in Afghanistan found that refugees who had access to higher education were repatriated earlier with 70% working as civil servants or as NGO managers, "filling much needed roles in a society in the process of national reconstruction."<sup>6</sup> Higher education additionally "...contributes to the development of the human and social capital necessary for future reconstruction and economic development in countries or regions of origin."<sup>7</sup> Lastly, tertiary education can be a catalyst for effective and sustainable post-war recovery in terms of

stabilization and securitization, reconstruction, state-building and peacebuilding.<sup>8</sup>

### **Tertiary Education Availability to Those Living at the Margins**

Today over 70.8 million people are refugees or internally displaced.<sup>9</sup> Eight-five percent of refugees live in developing countries that are extremely poor and receive meagre support to care for them.<sup>10</sup> The UNHCR Global Trends 2016 report cites 20 years as the average duration for those living as refugees and 51% of the refugee population as being below 18 years of age.

Only 3% of refugees worldwide attend universities, compared to 34% of the global population.<sup>11</sup> Recently, more attention has been drawn to the need for refugees to access higher education. The UNHCR Education Strategy 2012-2016 report includes as one of its strategies the improvement of access to higher education for refugees.<sup>12</sup> Still, donor nations and NGOs generally view tertiary education as a luxury and prefer to fund primary and secondary education.<sup>13</sup>

The response to the availability of higher education opportunities has generally been limited to scholarship programs, distance learning, the provision of e-learning platforms, and a few projects to found universities for refugees.<sup>14</sup> Various obstacles block access to higher education outside of humanitarian structures: a lack of proper documentation (school diplomas, exam scores, etc.), and the treatment of refugees as foreign nationals, which leads to higher tuition costs and quotas.<sup>15</sup> One year after the 2014 surge in refugees travelling to Europe, higher education became a more pressing priority but the delivery of higher education to conflict-affected areas still faces numerous challenges, namely, "... physical destruction, population displacement, war-related conditions, and low resilience of the sector."<sup>16</sup> Avery and Said recently examined higher education in Lebanon and Jordan and found that it was out of reach for most refugees and that opportunities outside of host countries require a "disproportionate amount of time, resources and energy to meet formal entry requirements and to overcome other obstacles."<sup>17</sup> And while those located in developing countries can perform "valuable services in many ways...it will not

replace the need for local people with relevant educational attainment."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the curricula in developing countries often does not meet the present and future needs of the region, especially those for "...post-conflict recovery and reconciliation processes." In addition, students who receive scholarships for higher education in host countries may be disincentivized to return home and may instead contribute to a "brain drain."<sup>19</sup>

### **Online education**

Online education for those living at the margins removes many obstacles to tertiary education and the necessity of relocation for educational purposes, as mentioned above. Online university courses have grown in popularity over the years, with one in three college students predicted to take at a minimum one online course over their college career.<sup>20</sup> While the number of students increases, so does the reputation of online learning. Among the conclusions of a U.S. Department of Education report: "Students in online conditions performed modestly better, on average, than those learning the same material through traditional face-to-face instruction."<sup>21</sup>

Online learning offers several advantages to both institutions and students, among which are a chance for greater inclusivity and global interaction. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* reports a digital-learning study's findings of a more diverse student body with online offerings.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, online education affords globalization opportunities. Dennis Stanworth, Head of Academics at Yokohama International School, cites these advantages to students of online courses: "This chance to learn together with other students across the world gives them global awareness and connectivity that are perhaps less common in the traditional classroom."<sup>23</sup>

### **Jesuit Worldwide Learning**

Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) is one of several NGOs delivering higher education to refugees, internally displaced people, and others living at the margins. Founded in 2010, it currently serves students in 14 countries and offers studies in Global English, Certified Professional Programs, and a Diploma in Liberal Studies. Its mission is to

provide “equitable, high quality tertiary learning to people and communities at the margins of societies—be it through poverty, location, lack of opportunity, conflict or forced displacement—so all can contribute their knowledge and voices to the global community of learners and together foster hope to create a more peaceful and humane world.”<sup>24</sup>

JWL’s Diploma in Liberal Studies comprises 45 credits accredited by Regis University in Denver, Colorado. Each course lasts eight weeks, and students take one to two courses each term. JWL uses a blended learning model, offering online instruction while providing space in host countries for students to form cohorts and to be aided by onsite tutors or coordinators.<sup>25</sup> Online classrooms of 15-20 students from across the globe form a learning community.

### **Creighton University**

Creighton University (CU) is a Jesuit, Catholic university located in Omaha, Nebraska that serves roughly 4,250 undergraduates and comprises 9 schools and colleges. Founded in 1878, “Creighton exists for students and learning. Members of the Creighton community are challenged to reflect on transcendent values, including their relationship with God, in an atmosphere of freedom of inquiry, belief and religious worship. Service to others, the importance of family life, the inalienable worth of each individual and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity are core values of Creighton.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Purpose of the Study**

To produce a grounded theory of privileged students’ perceptions of benefits gained through the study in 1) an online global classroom with students at the margins and 2) an online course that includes pertinent readings and videos, guided reflections and essays, and community-based service-learning projects.

### **Creighton University’s and JWL’s Pilot Program 2017-2018**

#### ***Setting***

In spring 2017 and 2018, CU in collaboration with JWL piloted a program in which eight Creighton

undergraduates in the College of Arts & Sciences studied in JWL’s Diploma in Liberal Studies. The project sought to promote a shared, global learning experience for students attending a Jesuit university and those studying within the JWL diploma program while embodying the Ignatian values *cura personalis* (individualized attention to the development of the entire person), Men and Women for and with Others, and Faith That Does Justice.

To frame the students’ experience in a 3-credit JWL course, a 1-credit online course entitled “Jesuit Worldwide Learning: Global Perspectives in Liberal Arts” (IDC 320) was developed at and approved by CU as a co-requisite.<sup>27</sup> An internal grant from the Creighton Global Initiative funded the course’s development and the two-year pilot program. Students studied concurrently with the IDC 320 course 1 JWL course for eight weeks, and in 2017 became teaching assistants for the next eight weeks. No teaching assistantships were assigned in 2018 because they were largely ineffective in 2017.

IDC 320 is a 16-week online course designed to enhance the student learning experience with people living at the margins. Ignatian discernment is a major component of it. Throughout the course students are asked to reflect on the readings, videos, and their interactions with both their fellow students online and their work with local, marginalized people. The course has two parts: units 1-8 require essays and discussions on readings and videos covering Jesuit pedagogy, the mission of JWL, internalized oppression, privilege, barriers to higher education in refugee camps, educating for justice, educating the disadvantaged, and the daily lives of refugees. The final eight units require reflection on the students’ experiences and insights as both teaching assistants in a JWL course (2017 only) and as volunteers in community service-learning projects.

#### ***Participants***

In 2017-2018, eight CU students participated in this project. Including the four credits required of this project, the students enrolled in 16-18 credits total. Each student took a JWL course with circa 15 students living at the margins.

In 2017, two freshmen (both Honors students), two sophomores (one Honors student) and one junior enrolled in IDC 320 while concurrently enrolled in JWL courses: two in “Religions of the World,” and three in “Introduction to Political Thought.”<sup>28</sup> One freshman failed IDC 320 due to his lack of performance in community service and was allowed to repeat IDC 320 in 2018. His responses to the pre-course questionnaire (pre-cq) in 2017 (ID4) and the post-course questionnaire (post-cq) in 2018 (ID8) are included in this study with no overlap. In 2017, another freshman (ID5) submitted very little work in her JWL course, failed it, repeated it, but again performed similarly with the same result. Freshmen were excluded from the 2018 cohort.

In spring 2018, two juniors and one senior (all Honors students) enrolled in JWL’s “Ethics and the Human Person” course. Of these three, one junior was a returnee from the previous year and therefore did not take IDC 320.

### ***Teaching Assistantships***

In 2017, four students became teaching assistants in a different cohort of the same JWL class after first completing their JWL course. There are multiple sections of each JWL course and each course must offer the same content, and thus TAs were largely limited to the following: to create online flashcards, to instruct on the creation of online flashcards, and to help facilitate discussions. In 2018, the IDC 320 course focused more on community service-learning projects and the teaching assistantships were dropped.

### ***Service-Learning***

Each student in IDC 320 was required to perform a total of 12 hours of community service with people living at the margins within the Omaha community. Bringle and Hatcher's definition of service-learning is “a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.”<sup>29</sup> Service-learning provides

numerous benefits to students. A large study conducted by Astin and Sax found that “all 35 student outcome measures were favorably influenced by service participation” and that undergraduates who participate in volunteer service enhanced their “academic development, civic responsibility, and life skills.”<sup>30</sup> College curricula that include multicultural experience affords learning opportunities that can reduce negative stereotypes and increase tolerance for diversity.<sup>31</sup> Other studies demonstrate that service-learning can translate into “greater personal development through building meaningful relationships with individuals throughout the community” while also increasing an exchange of cultural knowledge.<sup>32</sup>

In 2017, the CU students individually chose community partners within Omaha from a list of suggested agencies. Students assisted refugees at the Refugee Empowerment Center, Lutheran Family Services, and the Benson Area Refugee Taskforce. In 2018, the instructor selected a community partner, Lutheran Family Services (the largest refugee resettlement agency in Omaha); a meeting was held with the volunteer coordinator that involved two students and the instructor; a tour of the facility was given; and various service-learning opportunities were described and offered to the students. One student volunteered at Lutheran Family Services while the other two, because of transportation difficulties and convenience, tutored disadvantaged students at a community center and an elementary school close to campus.

### ***Ignatian Discernment***

IDC 320 was designed to inform, to afford the opportunity for service to those living at the margins within one’s own community, and to promote reflection on the material and experiences in the JWL course and the community service-learning project. This course applies the principles of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius as outlined by Duminuco in guiding students in a relationship with truth.<sup>33</sup> Experience, reflection, and action are important in the Ignatian exercises toward the goal of finding truth: students assemble and recall material from their own experience “...to distill what they understand already in terms of facts, feelings, values, insights

and intuitions.”<sup>34</sup> Through reflection, students use memory, imagination, understanding, and feelings to “grasp the essential meaning and value of what is being studied, to discover its relationship to other facets of human knowledge and activity, and to appreciate its implications in the continuing search for truth.” Reflection should shape the consciousness of the student so that they feel “impelled to move beyond knowing to action.”<sup>35</sup>

## Methodology

Because this study seeks to understand the students’ perceptions of their benefits gained from this experience, their self-reported material alone is examined. Through a grounded theory methodological approach, qualitative data were collected from students via open-ended questionnaires administered at the start and end of the IDC 320 course (see the appendix for the questions), and upon the conclusion of the course, a directed questionnaire, a published essay, and a published interview.<sup>36</sup> Next, an inductive process of analyzing responses to discover common themes was employed. The emerging themes were then coded and pooled into categories pertaining to the purpose of this study. A comparative method was used throughout the analysis of the data to determine similarities and differences in the students’ responses.<sup>37</sup>

## Findings

### *Increased knowledge of and appreciation for the empowerment of (a Jesuit) education*<sup>38</sup>

In the pre-cq, students gave several different responses when asked about the value of a Jesuit education to those living at the margins. Of the six students responding, 50% cited care for the whole person, *cura personalis*, while 33.3% listed the learning of skills. Other responses, singly given, were to help those at the margins find asylum or a job, and to communicate and to understand each other in the promotion of tolerance.

When posed the same question in the post-cq, 100% of the six students responding cited the empowerment of the people at the margins to help themselves through skills and knowledge gained, and 83.3% mentioned, as an additional benefit, the improvement of their community. One student (ID1) remarked in the post-cq that

one of the most important things that he had learned from this experience was “...the value of empowerment on improving the lives of the marginalized.” By extension, the students also learned how a (Jesuit) education improves their own lives; one student states that he now understood: “...more specifically, the ability of education to empower, which in turn sparks the human spirit that is present within all of us” (ID1).

### *Empathy and Self-discovery*

In the post-cq, 86% of the students responding expressed empathy with those living at the margins.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, 71% of the students acknowledged the common humanity of their fellow man, with 29% indicating that they gained an understanding of human solidarity. One student (ID6) explained how this experience had opened his eyes to the commonalities among all people: “These people are not these exotic beings that are unlike us; they experience the entire range of emotion that we do.”

Furthermore, 43% of the students disclosed they had gained a better perspective of their own lives and 29% reported feeling humbled by hearing the stories of the JWJL students. Two students interviewed for *Creighton News* summed up their self-discovery: “For me, there was a lesson in the privilege I have as an American to not have suffered through major upheavals and tragic losses of friends and family. To hear about what they had endured and to see that they still had the motivation to be in a class and learn was an eye-opener” (ID1), and “There were times when I thought, ‘Oh, I don’t have time to do that assignment...’ And then I’d remember that some of my classmates are worried about where they’re going to live or what they’re going to eat or why they haven’t heard from their family” (ID2).<sup>40</sup>

### *Commitment to Service*

One hundred percent of the seven students in the post-cq expressed a commitment to serve those living at the margins, 43% of whom tied it explicitly to a commitment to promote justice through service. One student (ID3) stated, “As learning became service to justice, it dawned on me that actions and beliefs cannot stand alone.

Instead, they need each other in order to be effective.” Additionally, 57% of the students said human solidarity is insufficient without action and 57% expressed an increase in their desire to perform service.

An independent survey conducted by CU’s Center for Academic Service Learning upon the conclusion of the IDC 320 course in 2018 asked directed questions with the following options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. It revealed that 100% of the two students surveyed strongly agreed that the service learning component of the course made them more interested in the course content; showed them how the subject matter translated into real-life issues; and helped them to gain a greater appreciation for cultural diversity and to explore interconnections between cultures, people, and systems of power. Additionally, both students surveyed strongly agreed that the service-learning component of the class aided them in exploring the concept of social justice, increased their interest in community service/engagement, and empowered them to begin work for social change.

### Discussion

The emerging themes revealed in the data are intrinsically linked and noteworthy. The data indicate that the CU students gained a better understanding of and appreciation for a Jesuit education to empower the individual to improve his own life and his community. Three units in IDC 320 focus on education: Unit 1 introduces the history, vision, and educational opportunities of JWL; Unit 3 discusses Jesuit goals in higher education and education for justice; and Unit 6 centers on the power of education for the disadvantaged and the preconceived biases of instructors and of administrators that affect the disadvantaged in educational opportunities. Therefore, it was not surprising that the students’ initial belief in the purpose of education shifted after IDC 320 and their experience in a global classroom. In the pre-cq, 50% of the students stated that a Jesuit education informs students at the margins that the world still cares about them, i.e., is a demonstration of *cura personalis*. The gaining of skills was listed by 33.3% of the students as a benefit of a Jesuit education, presumably for utilitarian means for finding a job

or gaining asylum. The post-cq posed the same question concerning the value of a Jesuit education to those living at the margins; 100% of the students recognized how a Jesuit education empowers the people at the margins to help themselves, and 83.3% understood how it also enables the individual to aid his community, a benefit mentioned by only 14% of the students in the pre-cq. One student (ID7) concluded in the post-cq, “Being alive is so much more than existing, and if we are going to afford refugees any dignity, we need to acknowledge that they all deserve the chance at a life of meaning and purpose, a life of flourishing and creativity, a life of learning and developing their God given gifts to be able to better serve their communities.” In sum, students at the end of the course recognized the benefit of education for the person and by extension, the improvement of one’s community, a lesson that was not lost on the privileged students as they too felt more empowered from this global experience to help their own community. One student remarked, “It really did put into perspective the Jesuit values we try to learn and live by at Creighton. It made me more thankful and intentional about my education and what I want to do with it” (ID2).

The online global experience, the community service, and the readings led the students to discover who the people living at the margins are and fostered empathy with them while also inducing the students to put their own lives in perspective as they compared and contrasted their own privileged lives to those living at the margins. “In order to increase empathy, both the intellect and the emotions need to be engaged.”<sup>41</sup> Empathy is defined as seeing “reality from the other’s perspective to sense what others are feeling.”<sup>42</sup> The CU students demonstrated empathy in the post-cq through a variety of expressions: “Even if I feel like I cannot do much, I realize that any contribution I make to stand beside those on the margins is an act of solidarity because I am recognizing the humanity of my fellow man” (ID2); “They are people who experience emotions like us, heartbreak and happiness like us. They clearly wish to just make the best out of a bad situation...” (ID6); and “I gained a solidified sense of humanity and how it flows through all of us...” (ID8).

Empathy can be a powerful motivator to action. Empathy is regarded as “a core component of engaging in ethical and other prosocial behaviours” and can “help put a human face on and make a personal connection to moral injustice and thus enhance their commitment to address the situation.”<sup>43</sup> One student evaluated her experience in this project as follows: “I am reminded of the words of Paul, who tells us that without love, we are nothing—even if we have special gifts, or work really hard, or earn lots of credit—none of that matters if we forget how to love our neighbor. I would also tell them that this class will challenge their notion of who their neighbor is” (ID7). Additionally, research indicates that people are innately motivated to behave fairly and to seem moral and good, and “when someone considers something morally or spiritually wrong, it provides an impetus to act to remedy that situation.”<sup>44</sup> In the post-cq, 43% of the students connected their commitment to service to promoting justice.

The data concerning the service-learning component of the course is particularly noteworthy. All of the students reported a commitment to service at the conclusion of the course while 57% expressed an increased desire for service and 57% recognized that human solidarity is insufficient without action to accompany it. One student (ID1) concluded: “This experience is something that I share with everyone I come across who is concerned for the marginalized. I tell them of the people whom I have interacted with, the things that I have learned both in my class and from the people working with me. I also tell them of the experiences I have had in my community and how reflecting on all of this has helped to shape the moral ground from which I base all of my actions.”

Lastly, this study would be incomplete without tying it to the Jesuit, Catholic mission. In 1990, Pope John Paul II published *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which examines Catholic higher education. This document exhorts Catholic universities to include “a study of *serious contemporary problems*” such as “the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all...that will better serve the human community at a national and international level.”<sup>45</sup> The shift in beliefs concerning a Jesuit education’s empowerment exhibited in the post-cq and the

students’ affirmations of commitment to service fulfil the Jesuit mission of educating for justice and embody the Ignatian charisms of *cura personalis*, Men and Women for and with Others, and Faith That Does Justice. Additionally, the data reveal a development within the students similar to what Dean Brackley, S.J., urges all Christian universities to do: “...help students advance in life’s journey, to become more fully human and God-like... [and]...prepare them to transform an unjust world, not function comfortably, ‘successfully,’ within it.”<sup>46</sup> In the post-cq, the students revealed a desire to transform the injustices in the world, which implies the belief that they can do so: 100% expressed a commitment to serve those at the margins and 47% of these mentioned justice as an end goal. One student (ID7) tied her experience in this project directly to the Jesuit mission: “Having taken this class, it makes me want to advocate for greater involvement in this kind of thing from Jesuit Institutions. If we, as an organization, as a university, are going to tout being ‘for and with others’, then we need to take that seriously, and take a bigger role in listening to and equipping the people being barred from Jesuit education because of crisis and marginalization.”

### Limitations

The data pool is very small with only eight participants, and variations from one year to the next exist: the second year dropped teaching assistantships and excluded freshmen (the two freshmen in 2017 did not perform well due to self-reported time management issues). The student who took a JWL course in both 2017 and 2018 did not retake IDC 320 in 2018. Her contribution to the study derives from her responses in IDC 320 2017, and in the 2017 interview. Additionally, a project of this kind naturally attracts students who already have a strong interest in or commitment to service, the community, and justice. In Unit 1 of IDC 320, students were asked why they took this class. Of the six students who responded, 50% sought personal growth, 33.3% wished to be part of a program that impacts so many via education and to work with refugees and other people living at the margins.

## Concluding Comments and Recommendations

As online education expands and offers new opportunities for people living at the margins to access higher education, so also grows the potential for privileged students to engage with those living at the margins via online, global, educational programs. Seeing that only 16% of the refugee population is housed in developed regions of the world, it is arguably easier for privileged students to learn with refugees through online education than in a traditional classroom.<sup>47</sup>

Evidence shows that higher education for people living at the margins brings tangible benefits not only to the individual but also to his community; likewise, this small study demonstrates benefits to privileged students and their community through their studies in an online, higher education, global classroom with people living at the margins and an additional online course enhancing their experience.<sup>48</sup> The findings in this study are interlinked and particularly salient in the students' self-reported knowledge gained about the empowerment of (a Jesuit) education not only to improve the life of the individual through the attainment of skills and knowledge but also by extension his community. Although the question in the pre- and post-cq asked specifically about the value of a Jesuit education to those living at the margins, the recognition of education's abilities to "spark the human spirit", as one student remarked (ID6), applies to these privileged students as well and is one component that, as Duminuco explains, compels them "to move beyond knowing to action."<sup>49</sup>

The discovery of empathy with those living at the margins and of their own sense of privilege and of human solidarity is another component of the movement toward action. The experience of reading about the lives of and studying with those living at the margins, and of working with those living at the margins within their own communities created a strong sense of human solidarity with their fellow man or "neighbor", as one student put it, and led students to appreciate the privileges within their own lives: "For me, there was a lesson in the privilege I have as an American..." (ID1). Additionally, the discovery that those "others" are not exotic beings but

instead "experience the range of emotion that we do" (ID6) created empathy, which, in turn, spurred on a call to action for service and justice. One (ID1) student concluded, "My experience with the JWL program...has also motivated me to continue serving my community and interacting with the marginalized to further understand their plight, because it is through understanding and listening that change is made."

Lastly, another reported benefit is the commitment to service and to justice, with the majority of students reporting that the recognition alone of human solidarity is insufficient; action must accompany the recognition. Just as the studies concerning the benefits of higher education for refugees include tangible advantages for their communities, so also here, the benefits of privileged students studying with people living at the margins in higher education courses also extend to their community. As one student remarked: "As I move forward in this uncertain world it is the experience that I have had with the JWL program and performing service in my community that will help to keep my eyes fixed on the end goal of justice." (ID 1)

Further and larger studies of this kind are required to gauge student development of and benefits to privileged students participating in online global classrooms with people living at the margins. The findings in this study include the self-reported benefits of privileged students who also took a course designed to enhance their experience with the people living at the margins. Further studies might examine differences in benefits to privileged students when they engage in the global classroom with students living at the margins without the benefit of an online course that frames their experience. In this study, the Ignatian pedagogy of experience, reflection, and action included in the IDC 320 course seemed to serve the students well so that they did not end up like the narrator in Eliot's *Dry Salvages*, who confesses, "We had the experience but missed the meaning..."<sup>50</sup> One Creighton student (ID7), when asked what she gained from this experience and what she would tell others, demonstrates that she did not miss the meaning: "I would tell them that the biggest thing I learned, is this—it doesn't matter how much head knowledge you gain, if you can't use it to love another person at the end of the day." 卍

## Declarations

### *Availability of data and material*

The datasets used and analyzed during the current study are available from the author on reasonable request.

## *Funding*

Funding for this pilot program was provided by a Creighton Global Initiative grant through Creighton's Global Engagement Office. The funding paid the author for the development and teaching of the IDC 320 course and for the tuition-sharing costs between CU and JWL for the participating students' JWL courses.<sup>51</sup>

## Appendix

### Questions for pre-course questionnaire

1. What are your expectations as you begin this course set in a global environment?
2. How do you think this global experience will enhance your learning experience?
3. What advantages or disadvantages do you foresee in this learning environment?
4. What are your expectations/assumptions of other students in this class?
5. Why have you elected to take this course with JWL and to assist in the teaching of one of these courses?
6. What is the value of a Jesuit education to those living at the margins?
7. How do you think this experience will shape your sense of human solidarity, and concern for the common good as learning becomes service to justice?

### Questions for post-course questionnaire:

- \*1. What is the value of a Jesuit education to those living at the margins?
2. What did you gain from this experience that you would be willing to share with others who might be interested in this experience?
3. What will you now do with what you have learned from this experience?
4. How do you think this experience shaped your sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good as learning became service to justice?

*\*The first question was also posed in the pre-cq and responses in both the pre- and post-cq were compared and contrasted.*

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "Higher education" and "tertiary education" are used interchangeably throughout this paper. Thomas M. Crea and Neil Sparnon, "Democratizing Education at the Margins: Faculty and Practitioner Perspectives on Delivering Online Tertiary Education for Refugees," *International Journal of Education and Technology in Higher Education* 14, no. 43 (2017), doi:10.1186/s41239-017-0081-y; Jane Seale, Jan Georgeson, Christoforos Mamas, and Julie Swain, "Not the Right Kind of 'Digital Capital'? An Examination of the Complex Relationship Between Disabled Students, Their Technologies,

and Higher Education Institutions," *Computers & Education* 82 (2015): 119.

<sup>2</sup> "People at the margins" include those who are disadvantaged due to "poverty, location, lack of opportunity, conflict or forced displacement," in "Our Mission," Jesuit Worldwide Learning: Higher Education at the Margins, accessed June 27 2018, <https://www.jwl.org/en/home>; Barbara Zeus, "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no. 2 (2011): 257-258; Claas Morlang and Sheri Watson, "Tertiary

Refugee Education Impact and Achievements: 15 Years of DAFI,” *DAFI/UNHCR Report* (November 2007), 28-36; Class Morlang and Carolina Stolte, “Tertiary Refugee Education in Afghanistan: Vital for Reconstruction,” *Forced Migration Review* 1, no. 30 (July 2008): 63.

<sup>3</sup> For an assessment of the pilot program of Jesuit Worldwide Learning: Higher Education at the Margins (formerly Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins), see Thomas M. Crea and Mary McFarland, “Higher Education for Refugees: Lessons from a 4-year Pilot Study,” *International Review of Education* 61, no. 2 (2015): 235–245.

<sup>4</sup> Salah Alzaroo and Gillian L. Hunt, “Education in the Context of Conflict and Instability: The Palestinian Case,” *Social Policy and Administration* 37, no. 2 (2003): 171-179; Helen Avery and Salam Said, “Higher Education for Refugees: The Case of Syria,” *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review* 24 (2017): 106; Laura-Ashley Wright and Robyn Plasterer, “Beyond Basic Education: Exploring Opportunities for Higher Learning in Kenyan Refugee Camps,” *Refugee* 27, no. 2 (2010): 43; Zeus, “Exploring Barriers,” 257-258.

<sup>5</sup> Wright and Plasterer, “Beyond Basic Education,” 44; Dominique Sherab and Kelly Kirk, “Access to Higher Education for Refugees in Jordan,” *Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development* (ARDD-Legal Aid, 2016), 12, accessed May 13, 2020, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/access\\_to\\_higher\\_education\\_for\\_refugees\\_in\\_jordan.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/access_to_higher_education_for_refugees_in_jordan.pdf); Ita Sheehy, “Refugees Need Access to Higher Education,” *University World News* 339 (October 15, 2014), accessed 3 June 2018, <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20141015204738526>.

<sup>6</sup> Sheehy, “Refugees Need Access.” For the cons of providing higher education under certain conditions see Sarah Dryden-Peterson, “The Politics of Higher Education for Refugees in a Global Movement for Primary Education,” *Refugee* 27, no. 2 (2010): 11, who discusses its effect on reducing income inequality and on perpetuating inequalities in divided societies; Avery and Said, “Higher Education,” 114, who warn of creating an educated elite out of touch with the rest of the country.

<sup>7</sup> Dryden-Peterson, “The Politics,” 15. For the limited availability of tertiary education for Syrian refugees and its impact on economic growth, see Lorraine Charles, “The Private Sector and Education of Syrian Refugees in the Middle East,” *New Research Voices: International Journal of Research from the Front-Line* 1, no. 3 (March 2017): 19-21.

<sup>8</sup> Sansom Milton and Sultan Barakat, “Higher Education as the Catalyst of Recovery in Conflict-Affected Societies,” *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 14, no. 3 (2016): 406-415.

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR, “Figures at a Glance,” accessed 1 May 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/ph/figures-at-a-glance>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR, “Tertiary Education,” accessed 1 May 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/tertiary-education.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Sansom Milton, *Higher Education and Post-Conflict Recovery* (New York: Springer, 2017): 19-23; “Education Strategy 2012-2016,” UNHCR 2012, (article 4), accessed 25 June 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/operations/5149ba349/unhcr-education-strategy-2012-2016.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Duncan MacLaren, “Tertiary Education for Refugees: A Case Study from the Thai-Burma Border,” *Refugee* 27, no. 2 (2010): 105; Sheehy, “Refugees Need Access.”

<sup>14</sup> Avery and Said, “Higher Education,” 114; Sultan Barakat and Sansom Milton, “Houses of Wisdom Matter: The Responsibility to Protect and Rebuild Higher Education in the Arab World,” Brookings Doha Centre (2015), accessed May 13, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/houses-of-wisdom-matter-the-responsibility-to-protect-and-rebuild-higher-education-in-the-arab-world/>; Ning Luo and Ashley Craddock, “The Refugee Crisis and Higher Education: Access Is One Issue. Credentials Are Another,” *World Education and News & Review* (December 6, 2016), accessed June 27, 2018, <https://iiepeer.org/article/refugee-crisis-and-higher-education-access-one-issue-credentials-are-another>.

<sup>15</sup> Dryden-Peterson, “The Politics,” 13.

<sup>16</sup> Milton and Barakat, “Higher Education,” 404.

<sup>17</sup> Avery and Said, “Higher Education,” 112.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Milton, “Higher Education,” 133-134.

<sup>20</sup> Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman, *Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States* (Babson Park, MA: Babson Survey Research Group, 2013), 19.

<sup>21</sup> “Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies,” U.S. Dept. of Education (September 2010), accessed June 27, 2018, <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> “What 6 Colleges Learned About Improving Their Online Courses,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 31, 2018), accessed 27 June 2018, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/What-6-Colleges-Learned-About/243540>.

<sup>23</sup> Dennis Stanworth, “Online Learning: Providing the Context for the Global Classroom,” *International School* 17, no. 3 (Summer 2015): 18.

<sup>24</sup> “Our Mission,” Jesuit Worldwide Learning, <https://www.jwl.org/en/home>.

<sup>25</sup> “Academic Programme,” Jesuit Worldwide Learning, <https://www.jwl.org/en/home>.

<sup>26</sup> “The Mission Statement of Creighton University,” accessed June 27, 2018, <https://www.creighton.edu/about/mission>.

<sup>27</sup> This course was proposed by Dr. Mary McFarland, international director of JWJL, and Dr. Carey Treado, Chief Academic Officer of JWJL, to Father Hendrickson, President of Creighton University, who offered to pilot this course at Creighton. It was designed and taught by the author of this article.

<sup>28</sup> Creighton University has a robust Honors program that admits circa 50 freshmen each year based on their high school GPA, ACT/SAT scores, an essay, and an interview. Honors students' core requirements differ from and are fewer than other undergraduates' requirements at CU. Therefore, Honors students often have more room in their schedules to participate in projects such as this one.

<sup>29</sup> Robert G. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher, "A Service-Learning Curriculum for Faculty," *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 2, no. 1 (1995): 112.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander W. Astin and Linda J. Sax, "How Undergraduates Are Affected by Service Participation," *Journal of College Student Development* 39, no. 3 (1998): 255.

<sup>31</sup> Aaron Einfield and Denise Collins, "The Relationships between Service-Learning, Social Justice, Multicultural Competence, and Civic Engagement," *Journal of College Student Development* 49, no. 2 (2008): 97.

<sup>32</sup> Patricia A. Gross and Virginia A. Maloney, "Embracing Diversity through Service Learning," *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas* 85, no. 5 (2012): 192; Anupama Pasricha, "Service Learning and Pluralism: Working with Immigrants," *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* 100, no. 2 (2008): 51; Gross and Maloney, "Embracing Diversity," 195.

<sup>33</sup> Vincent J. Duminuco, ed., *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Perspectives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 247-248.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>36</sup> Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 12-21; Brian Mullison, "Inspired by Opus," *Jesuit Higher Education*, 6, no. 2, article 14 (2017), accessed September 21, 2018, <https://epublications.regis.edu/jhe/vol6/iss2/14/>; "After Opus Nomination, JWJL Becomes Classroom for Creighton Students," *Creighton News* (July 6, 2017), accessed September 21, 2018, [http://www.creighton.edu/publicrelations/newscenter/news/2017/june2017/june12017/jwlnr060117/?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=news](http://www.creighton.edu/publicrelations/newscenter/news/2017/june2017/june12017/jwlnr060117/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=news).

<sup>37</sup> Strauss and Corbin, *Basics*, 12-21, 93-99.

<sup>38</sup> It is not always clear from the students' responses if they are discussing the benefits of Jesuit education specifically or higher education in general.

<sup>39</sup> The only one not explicitly expressing empathy is the one (ID5) who twice did not complete her JWJL courses and therefore had little contact with the JWJL students. Future research should provide more insight on this important issue.

<sup>40</sup> "After Opus Nomination," [http://www.creighton.edu/publicrelations/newscenter/news/2017/june2017/june12017/jwlnr060117/?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=news](http://www.creighton.edu/publicrelations/newscenter/news/2017/june2017/june12017/jwlnr060117/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=news).

<sup>41</sup> Diane J. Goodman, "Motivating People from Privileged Groups to Support Social Justice," *Teachers College Record* 102 (2000): 1066.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam, 1998), 134.

<sup>43</sup> Verity Litten, Lynne D. Roberts, Richard K. Ladyshevsky, Emily Castell, and Robert Kane, "The Influence of Academic Discipline on Empathy and Psychopathic Personality Traits in Undergraduate Students," *Personality and Individual Differences* 123 (2018): 146; Goodman, "Motivating People," 1080.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 1067.

<sup>45</sup> John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), sec. 32, accessed June 27, 2018, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_ip-ii\\_apc\\_15081990\\_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_ip-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html).

<sup>46</sup> Dean Brackley, "Justice and Jesuit Higher Education," 2005, accessed July 23, 2018, [https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/documents/keynote\\_brackley.pdf](https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/documents/keynote_brackley.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR, "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016," 2016, accessed June 25, 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Zeus, "Exploring Barriers," 257-258.

<sup>49</sup> Duminuco, *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum*, 247-248.

<sup>50</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1943).

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