ecojesuit

ECOJESUIT LEAD ACTIONS

To build a better normal

The emergence of a deeper dialogue with the Ecojesuit teams of the six Jesuit Conferences develops as the global network seeks to respond to covid-19 and its global impacts. Immediate concerns for Jesuits and institutions, some of whom are engaging in emergency relief, include the collaborations needed towards building a better normal with renewed urgency as the cries of the earth and the poor – the most vulnerable – grow ever louder. All of us are at risk, but, as with other disasters, **it is always the poor and those on the margins that suffer most from society's continuing neglect**, leaving them with limited options and weakened voices.

It is clear that what we face is not merely a matter of health. Awareness has grown that this pandemic is an acute crisis that is part of a much broader and more deeply rooted ecological crises of climate change, land use, deforestation, business as usual, wealth accumulation and environmental injustice. **Social questions concerning public health, inequality, consumerist lifestyles, and what it means to live a good life *(buen vivir)* have emerged in their relation to the common good.** These points shed light on our reality and help us in deepening the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs).

With solidarity as the basis, Ecojesuit is taking a **"learning through networking"** approach where we collaborate to deepen learning, humbly acknowledging that we do not hold the answers but have the desire to contribute to a basis for social action. The integrity of that response requires internal conversion that is at the heart of these changes and the humble transparency in Jesuit community and institutional life that we also seek to share.

Six Lead Actions identified together by the Jesuit Conferences contribute to the process of building a new normal through active engagement and collaboration.

Ecojesuit Lead Actions

1. Connect agriculture and entrepreneurship

Access to food is a primary concern clearly echoed throughout the Conferences. This action involves tapping into and connecting agriculture and entrepreneurship activities of practitioners, organizers, other networks, and alumni associations. Related to this is the concern for generating local employment and broader questions of rural development, returning migrants, producer market inequalities, and land use change.

Key commitments:

• Develop an online platform for sharing local stories and strategies around agroecology, fostering care for farm, food, people, and ecosystems

• Conduct skills trainings and learning programs for farmers and youth to improve capacity and promote greater community resilience

2. Address social-economic-environmental integrity in the face of deepened poverty–business as usual–environmental degradation

There are no textbook answers for how to build back better, but the biggest hopes lie in the actions taken at the local level in response to experiences there and effective measures taken by local governments and organizations. Engaging with the State, government, and local decision-makers is also necessary to deepen our response.

Key commitments:

• Collaborate on research and related efforts to support policy and action recommendations from local to global levels

• Engage in shared advocacies and actions that include women, youth, local decision makers, migrants

3. Advocate for climate action, human rights and the contribution of Indigenous Peoples

The youth-led climate action movement in recent years, builds on landmark achievements like the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. This indicates the growing global awareness that climate change impacts are not just environmental and highlights the human right to a stable climate. Indigenous Peoples, whose relations with the natural environment are integral to their survival, are among the most threatened as they seek to protect their lands, culture, and livelihoods.

Key commitments:

• Support the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon by providing platforms where indigenous voices can be heard and support the emergence ecclesial networks

• Engage in shared advocacies linking climate action, the human right to a stable climate and the contribution of Indigenous Peoples in caring for forests

4. Track and explain economic institutions and practices emerging at the global level

International economic institutions (i.e. IMF, World Bank, etc.) and the UN have a major influence in the direction and priorities of investments and broader financial systems. Some shifts in their policies are leading to greater inclusivity, e.g. by addressing unemployment and aligning with green ventures like alternative energy. We seek to explain and communicate these economic shifts in partnership with experts through social media and publications.

Key commitments:

• Create and share publications on global economic processes and how Jesuit networks and partners can engage
• Contribute to the new normal discourse

5. Strengthening the Laudato Si' Universities Action Platform, other Action Platforms of Laudato Si' Year, and Querida Amazonia

The Laudato Si' Universities and six other Action Platforms are emerging and are an opportunity to highlight the role of our educational institutions in social and environmental action, and community based research. Querida Amazonia calls for greater integral ecology and synodality influences and informs Ecojesuit's work and approach. Ecojesuit also continues to be supportive of divestment efforts by Jesuit institutions.

Key commitments:

• Contribute to criteria and guidelines for Laudato Si' Universities and other Action Platforms
• Support REPAM, REBAC, and RAOEN in communicating the message of and encouraging deeper dialogue around the different encyclicals

6. Promoting ecospirituality and the need for its awareness in basic education

Ecological awareness and ecospirituality go hand-in-hand in developing a deeper sense of purpose and meaning of integral ecology among the youth. Schools are places we can help plant seeds of interconnectedness, community, and care so that they can lead and pursue the collaborative actions that are needed with other Secretariats and Networks.

Key commitments:

• Facilitate dialogue and promote discussions around reimagining Jesuit and basic education to better integrate ecospirituality and contribute to a broader ecological conversion
• Accompany young Jesuits and Scholastics in their local efforts to influence ecological thinking and action in their communities.

Through the Lead Actions that emerged from over two months of dialogue and discernment amongst the six Jesuit Conferences, Ecojesuit seeks to contribute to forming a renewed attitude as we build a new normal where ecological and social justice are better integrated in our values and lifestyles. This focuses Ecojesuit's efforts and affirms our commitment to the UAPs. Ecojesuit continues to facilitate and enable discussions that include voices from local communities, business leaders, faith leaders, policy makers, and economic experts to contribute to a broader perspective for a sustainable and just society.

Ecojesuit also seeks to collaborate more clearly with other Global Ignatian Advocacy Networks like Justice in Mining, Right to Education, and Migration, and continue to promote their work towards a more integral ecology.

Ecojesuit Core Team

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