



Mary Ward JPIC Office
Freedom - Justice - Sincerity - Felicity



MARY WARD FAMILY LIVING

LAUDATO SI'

ECOLOGICAL

EDUCATION

2024 edition



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INTRODUCTION

Since the launch of Ecological Education goal in **November 2023**, **Mary Ward JPIC Office** and the JPIC local coordinators have embarked on an ambitious journey to bring ecological education at the heart of school life. Rooted in the Mary Ward *Laudato Si'* 7-Year Action Plan principles, this initiative united students and teachers worldwide in a mission to respond to the **Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor**. Over the past year, this movement has become a beacon of hope, igniting ecological awareness and action across continents.

Through a series of virtual meetings and transformative webinars, the initiative has created a vibrant platform for collaboration among school students and their teachers. Schools have shared their experiences, brainstormed innovative solutions, and taken tangible steps toward sustainability, emphasizing the power of collective action.

A Year of Connection and Growth

Students and educators from **Peru, the UK, Canada, Australia, Tanzania, Spain, Argentina, India, Chile, and Nepal** have united in their commitment to ecological education, sharing innovative ideas and actions to address global environmental challenges.

The initiative's first major milestone came with the 18th of **June 2024 webinar**, which brought together participants from **the five continents** and students showcased an impressive array of projects, including tree-planting, waste reduction campaigns, and initiatives to support vulnerable communities.

The keynote speaker **Sr. Anna Falola** laid the foundation for the discussion, introducing foundational concepts of ecological education and highlighting its transformative potential. Her address emphasized the challenges and rewards of integrating ecological principles into education, inspiring schools to deepen their commitment to sustainability and social justice.

The Mary Ward JPIC initiative underscores the importance of ecology in all its dimensions, promoting not only environmental care and education but also self-care, healthy lifestyles, and practices that positively impact both individuals and their surroundings. As **Belén Sepúlveda**, a teacher from Instituto Santa María in San Carlos, Chile, explains:

"We are pleased to share how our students actively engage with environmental education, thanks to an interdisciplinary and well-structured approach that integrates civic and environmental objectives into the curriculum."

At Instituto Santa María, students participate in various activities aimed at safeguarding our common home. Their efforts reflect a deep understanding of ecological stewardship, as articulated by one student: *"For me, the environment is everything—the earth, water, animals, air, and the sun."*

These activities are grounded in *Laudato Si'*, which inspires schools like Instituto Santa María to incorporate sustainable development goals into their educational frameworks, fostering an integrated approach to learning.

LORETO GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN THE UK

Creativity and Awareness: Art with a Purpose

Students from Loreto Grammar School in the UK have also demonstrated how art can be a powerful tool for ecological advocacy. During the JPIC meeting in June 2024, **Chidera Anyakora** and **Sarah Ashcroft**, winners of the Columban Art Competition, shared their work:

Chidera's piece portrayed Earth as a heart, symbolizing its vital role in sustaining life. "I wanted to show that caring for the Earth is as crucial as caring for the heart in the human body," she explained.

Sarah emphasized interdependence, illustrating how all species on Earth are interconnected.

Their inspiration stemmed from a growing concern for the planet and the desire to raise awareness about the ongoing climate crisis. As Chidera reflected, *"Animals are slowly going extinct due to the climate crisis, and I wanted to show that they should keep on existing because the Earth is not only ours but theirs too."*

Each Square

Of the approximate five hundred and ten trillion square metres on earth's surface, no two are the same. Each is lined with differing coatings of grass, sea, dirt, snow, sand, and rocks while being adorned with earthly decorations. On some squares, trees grow from root-ridden ground while others hold humans, animals, buildings, rivers, the list goes on. At any given time, half of these squares bathe in sunlight while the rest lie in darkness. And between these two halves is the blurry, dusky line of twilight, where the sky is painted saturated swatches of pink, orange, and crimson red. A central equatorial band is warmed by the intense rays of the sun as temperatures dissipate to hard frosts and condensed breaths at the poles.

The loss of just one of these squares would see the loss of a completely unique ecosystem; one that would never be regenerated. Even if you lived five hundred and ten trillion lifetimes, you would never find another square metre quite like that one. Each region is carefully curated to comfortably house species of all varieties, adapted to these delicate conditions. From rolling hills to sunken valleys, arid sands to icy waters, and umbrageous trees to stretching plains, each component contributes to a biome perfect for its purpose. But, as much as each square of earth is distinct, they all merge into one system: a system characterised by a communal reliance that allows each individual part to thrive. Although humans generally regard themselves as dominant, powerful, and independent, the lives we live are facilitated heavily by other entities.

Each gulp of fresh air pervades from photosynthesising trees, while medicines flourish in dense undergrowth. Plates of food bear traces from far and wide, travelled over choppy seas to exotic places. Fertile soil births grassy tufts, speckled with flowering plants and grazed on by livestock. The quiet hum of bees drones steadily as they pollinate plants of petals and fruits. And nothing exists alone, everything in our common home is tightly interlaced. From sitting in the shade of a tree to the recycling of nutrients for new growth. All rests in precarious balance, intricately webbed into a perfectly cohesive, global complex. But, if we don't show nurture, humanity can wreak havoc. We can cut ties and light conjunctive threads as fuses. Whether we realise it or not, our actions can ripple across the world, affecting strangers, strange plants, strange creatures. The mill of car exhausts and chimney smoke funnel to the atmosphere, hunched like smothering blankets over foggy skies. Their fibres of woven methane patch permeable gaps, sending waves of warmth to the earth below. Sheets of polar ice melt into the rising seas, and floodwater submerges low-lying lands. Storms rage as

droughts prevail and the baking sun beats over burned organisms. Homes are wrecked - both of humans and of all other species. Litter-lined coast greets incoming winds of dirty soot, as marine animals are attacked by arrays of domestic rubbish. The prose of bird song turns to chokes and shrieks on lodged plastic shards. And the picturesque views from windows are concealed by layers of industrial waste amongst concrete labyrinths.

Militant troops trample ground, their minds clouded with thoughts of a distinct enemy and destruction. Gunshot billows a dusty haze from smoking rifles. And combustion and flame engulf vibrant vegetal hues with sheets of cinder. The battalions march battered paths: ones of torn grasses and indicators of fleeing animals whilst the masses consume at alarming rates. Millions of materialistic hands grope at trends and fads. They don't see roots of suffering beneath surfaces of status symbols. And poachers view the world through gold-tinted lenses. They don't see the gentle gleam in an elephant's innocent eyes, only its protruding ivory tusks and so hunts for neighbouring species ensue through bare, singed bushes and over tumuli of felled trees, the thump of frightened footsteps on ravaged lands, as wilted plants hang their heads loosely, watching, with helplessness, the man-made scenes of terror.

But, through cries of woe, our common home utters whispers of hope. It calls for our thoughts, our hands, our hearts to tend to its earthy gashes. While the trailing voice of one may seem insignificant, thousands of simultaneous, united words can roar for change. One hand can plant a tree, but a thousand hands can plant a forest and one kind action can spur on movement of the masses. Because behind every differing, fleshy cover is the same pure heart, just as the familiar beauty of our world shines strongly beneath buffering layers of evil. So, together, we can overwrite past mistakes and draft new chapters of care. We can drop our defences and form a force written in love, not hate. Even if we each repaired just one element in one five hundred and ten trillionth of the world, our home would surely be a reformed land, because we can use our billions of hands, billions of words, and billions of hearts to create billions of changes, step by step, square by square. ((by Sarah Ashcroft)

Chidera Anyakora Art work



EMPOWERING STUDENTS IN NEPAL

The Environment Day 2024 celebration at CJ St. Mary's School in Gorkha, Nepal, was an inspiring and multifaceted event that effectively blended education, activism, and community action to address pressing environmental issues, particularly focusing on "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought." Let's break down the initiatives and their significance:

1. 12-Kilometer Rally:

The rally, organized by students from classes 8, 9 and 10, along with teachers and the principal, was not only a physical demonstration of commitment but also a powerful awareness campaign. A 12-kilometer rally signifies a significant distance and reflects the dedication of the school community to spreading awareness about environmental conservation. The inclusion of street plays and catchy slogans, such as "*Together we can build a greener future,*" further amplified their message. This part of the celebration focused on engaging the local population in understanding the critical issues of land degradation, desertification, and droughts that are becoming more prevalent in the region. Street plays are an excellent tool for communicating complex environmental problems in a manner that is easily understood and memorable, especially in rural and semi-urban settings where direct engagement is key.



2. Tree-Planting Program:

With over 50 trees planted in the school playground and surrounding areas, the tree-planting initiative was a concrete action that directly contributed to land restoration. Trees are an essential part of combating desertification and drought, as they help maintain soil structure, prevent erosion, and contribute to water retention. The program was not just about planting trees but about instilling a sense of responsibility and hope. The motto, "Plant a tree, plant a hope," suggests that students, by participating in this initiative, are actively taking part in shaping a sustainable future. They are not just caretakers of their local environment, but also contributors to a global cause, reinforcing the idea that local actions can have a far-reaching impact.

3. Empowering Youth and Promoting Sustainability:

Through these initiatives, the school is also fostering an environmental consciousness in its students, which is crucial for long-term sustainability. By involving youth in environmental advocacy and activism, the school is empowering the next generation to become leaders in sustainability. The theme "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought" is particularly relevant for Nepal, a country that

faces various environmental challenges, including the gradual degradation of arable land, desertification in some areas, and water shortages due to climate change. Educating students on these issues equips them with the knowledge to make informed decisions and advocate for sustainable practices in their homes and communities.

4. Building Stronger Communities:

The involvement of teachers, students, and the school principal in these efforts demonstrates a community-centric approach to environmental activism. The collaboration between different stakeholders fosters a sense of shared responsibility. The tree-planting activity, in particular, shows how the community can come together to improve the local environment. The collective action that St. Mary's School took not only created a greener space for the students to learn and grow but also contributed to a broader movement for environmental conservation in the Gorkha region.

5. Cultural Relevance and Local Impact:

In Nepal, rural communities like Gorkha face challenges such as deforestation, land degradation, and the effects of climate change. By organizing such activities, the school has addressed the environmental concerns of its local community while aligning with global goals such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 15 (Life on Land). Through these efforts, the school is helping to reframe the conversation around environmental issues in a manner that resonates with local communities and their unique needs.

Conclusion:

The Environment Day 2024 celebration at St. Mary's School in Gorkha was an exemplary event that not only raised awareness about important environmental issues but also inspired concrete action. By blending awareness campaigns, hands-on activities like tree planting, and the promotion of sustainable practices, the school has played an instrumental role in shaping the environmental consciousness of its students and the broader community. These kinds of initiatives help ensure that the next generation is equipped to tackle the environmental challenges ahead, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient future.

INSTITUTO SANTA MARÍA – CHILE

The JPIC program in Chile, highlights the essential role of ecological awareness in shaping a sustainable future. The approach taken at the Instituto Santa María in San Carlos, Chile, underscores the importance of integrating environmental education with civic responsibility and sustainable development. Let's explore this approach in more detail:

1. The Role of JPIC in Ecology:

JPIC emphasizes the interconnectedness of environmental care with broader concepts of justice, peace, and integrity. It encourages individuals and communities to adopt a holistic view of ecology—understanding not only the importance of protecting the environment but also recognizing how human actions impact the world around us. The JPIC framework calls for a deeper commitment to ecology in all its aspects, whether it's through sustainable living practices, environmental education, or advocating for policy changes that promote ecological well-being.

2. The Work at San Carlos College:

The San Carlos College in Chile has embraced this broader vision of environmental responsibility by integrating ecological principles into the curriculum and extracurricular activities. The school has carried out various initiatives that focus on the care of the environment—what Pope Francis calls “our

common home.” The school’s activities reflect the school's commitment to environmental stewardship, aligning with the goals of the JPIC program.



Key Actions at the School:

- **Civic Work Objectives:** By linking civic duties to environmental education, the school ensures that students understand the responsibility they have not only as citizens but also as stewards of the planet. This integration helps students connect their learning with real-world issues, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges facing their local community and the world at large.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** The school uses an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education, which is essential for understanding the complexity of environmental challenges. This approach enables students to explore the connections between social, political, and ecological systems, equipping them to think critically about sustainable solutions.

3. Environmental Education as a Key Tool:

Environmental education is vital in helping students understand the direct impact of human actions on the environment. The education process emphasizes that nature is not just a resource to be exploited but an entity with intrinsic value that must be preserved. This approach aligns with the teachings of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, which stresses the need for humans to respect and protect the Earth.

Impact on Students:

- **Awareness of Environmental Values:** Students are taught to appreciate that the environment—encompassing the earth, water, animals, air, and sun—is a vital part of life. They learn to understand the interconnectedness of all living things and the responsibility humans have to maintain this balance.
- **Active Participation:** The school encourages active participation in environmental projects, allowing students to directly contribute to sustainable practices in their community. This not only teaches practical skills but also instils a sense of agency in the students, motivating them to continue working towards a greener future.

4. Laudato Si' as a Foundation for Action:

The *Laudato Si'* encyclical from Pope Francis serves as the foundation for the JPIC program at the San Carlos College. In this document, Pope Francis calls for a global ecological conversion—where people recognize their responsibility to care for the Earth. By grounding their efforts in *Laudato Si'*, the school aligns its educational practices with a global movement for sustainability and justice.

Key Messages from Laudato Si' in Practice:

- **Global Responsibility:** The encyclical emphasizes that environmental degradation is not only a local issue but a global one. The students are taught that they are part of a larger global community that must work together to protect the environment.
- **Integral Ecology:** Laudato Si' advocates for a view of ecology that includes not just environmental care, but also social and economic justice. The JPIC program thus promotes an understanding of the environment as part of a wider social fabric, reinforcing the idea that caring for nature also means addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and access to resources.

5. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and JPIC:

By incorporating the SDGs into the JPIC framework, the school ensures that its environmental education efforts align with global objectives for sustainability. The SDGs offer a clear roadmap for addressing global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and water scarcity. The school's work in this area contributes to these global goals while also addressing local environmental issues that students can relate to directly.

Conclusion:

The JPIC program at San Carlos College in Chile is an exemplary model of how education can play a transformative role in promoting ecological awareness and social responsibility. Through interdisciplinary environmental education, active participation in sustainability projects, and alignment with the teachings of Laudato Si', the school fosters a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between human well-being and environmental health. This approach not only prepares students to be responsible stewards of the Earth but also empowers them to become active participants in building a more sustainable and just world. By grounding their work in Pope Francis' call for ecological conversion, the school's efforts are both locally impactful and globally aligned with the broader movement for environmental justice.

Building on the success of this event, the **November 13th webinar** welcomed **Kehkashan Basu**, a globally recognized environmental leader and founder of the **Green Hope Foundation**. Kehkashan's work has empowered over **500,000 young people and women** in 28 countries, particularly within vulnerable communities. Her keynote address was both a call to action and a source of inspiration, urging participants to take bold steps in combating climate change and promoting social equity. As part of their commitment to ecological education, schools from various countries shared inspiring projects during our recent JPIC meetings.

TRANSFORMING ARID DESERT INTO THRIVING GARDENS – A STUDENT-LED INITIATIVE IN LIMA, PERU

Introduction:

In Lima, Peru, a group of Loreto students successfully transformed an arid desert environment into thriving gardens, thanks to support from Ireland's Laudato Si' initiative. This project highlights the power of youth-led action in environmental restoration, while also promoting sustainable agricultural practices and fostering a deeper connection to the land.

Objective:

The goal of the project was to restore an infertile desert area into productive gardens capable of growing crops. The initiative aimed to:

- Improve soil fertility and restore land.
- Promote sustainable farming practices.
- Strengthen the students' connection to the land and teach valuable agricultural skills.

Project Support:

The Laudato Si' initiative provided resources and guidance, empowering the students with sustainable agriculture techniques. These included: water conservation, soil restoration, and planting drought-resistant crops, enabling the students to cultivate and care for the land effectively.

Activities:

The students engaged in every aspect of the project, from planning to planting and harvesting. They implemented techniques such as:

- **Water-saving methods** like drip irrigation.
- **Soil health improvement** through composting and organic farming.
- **Drought-resistant crops** to ensure sustainability.

The initiative also involved educational sessions, helping students understand environmental issues and the importance of ecological responsibility.

Outcomes:

- **Environmental Impact:** The land was successfully restored, improving soil fertility and creating a sustainable ecosystem.
- **Crops and Food Security:** The gardens now provide fresh, locally grown food, improving food security.
- **Educational Impact:** Students gained hands-on agricultural skills, fostering an understanding of sustainability.
- **Community Engagement:** The project inspired the wider community to adopt similar sustainable practices.

Conclusion:

The Lima-based student initiative, supported by colleagues in Ireland transformed a barren desert into productive gardens, demonstrating the potential of sustainable agriculture. Through this project, students not only contributed to environmental restoration but also deepened their connection to the land, gaining practical skills and encouraging broader community involvement in sustainability.

LORETO SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA

Introduction:

Loreto schools across Australia have been actively promoting sustainability and ecological justice through student-led initiatives. One of their standout projects, created by the Student Environmental Captains, not only highlights the importance of sustainable living but also integrates social responsibility. In addition to collecting bread tags to raise funds for wheelchairs, students took part in a day without electricity, using blankets in solidarity with the homeless, later donating them to those in need.

Objective:

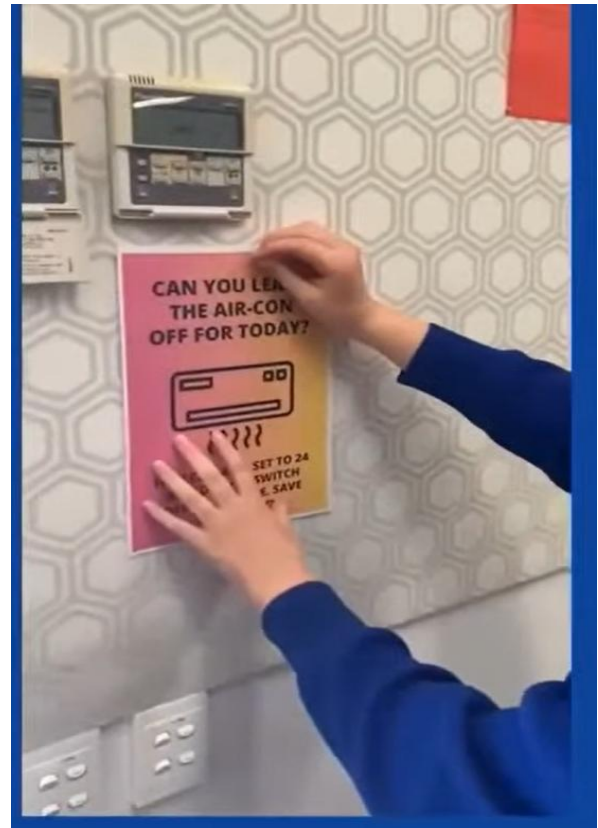
The aim of these initiatives was twofold: to promote environmental sustainability by reducing waste and to raise awareness about social issues, particularly homelessness. The projects sought to

encourage students to reflect on their consumption habits and take meaningful action both for the environment and the community.

Project Activities:

Key activities included:

- **Bread Tag Collection for Wheelchairs:** Students collected bread plastic tags, which were sold to raise funds for purchasing wheelchairs for those in need. This project encouraged recycling and taught students the power of small actions contributing to a larger cause.
- **Day Without Electricity:** In a creative and impactful gesture, the school participated in a day without electricity. Students used blankets instead of turning on heating or cooling, experiencing life without modern conveniences. This exercise was designed to promote energy conservation and empathy for those living without basic resources.
- **Blanket Donation to the Homeless:** After the day without electricity, the blankets used by students were donated to homeless shelters, showing solidarity with those less fortunate and emphasizing the importance of community care and social justice.



Outcomes:

- **Environmental Impact:** Collecting bread tags for recycling and reducing electricity consumption for a day contributed to a reduction in waste and energy use, encouraging sustainable habits within the school community.
- **Social Impact:** The donation of blankets to the homeless highlighted the students' awareness of social issues and their desire to make a tangible difference. The funds raised for wheelchairs provided mobility aids for individuals who may have otherwise struggled to access them.
- **Educational Impact:** The initiatives fostered a deeper understanding of both environmental sustainability and social justice. Students learned that their actions could have a positive impact on both the planet and the people around them.

Conclusion:

Loreto schools in Australia have demonstrated how small, thoughtful actions can lead to significant positive change. Through the collection of bread tags for wheelchairs, the day without electricity, and the donation of blankets to the homeless, students not only practiced sustainable living but also embraced their role in addressing social challenges. These initiatives serve as a model of how environmental and social justice can be integrated into school life, empowering students to become responsible stewards of both the Earth and their communities.

LORETO NYAKATO GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MWANZA, TANZANIA

Introduction:

Loreto Nyakato Girls' Secondary School in Mwanza, Tanzania, has embraced sustainability through a creative project that focuses on repurposing waste. Students showcased their ingenuity by transforming discarded paper into decorative birds and reusing plastic to create stunning works of art. This initiative not only highlights innovative ways to reduce waste but also fosters environmental awareness and creativity among students.



Objective:

The primary aim of the project was to promote waste reduction by encouraging the reuse of materials that would otherwise contribute to pollution. By repurposing waste into art, the school sought to:

- Reduce environmental waste.
- Encourage creativity and problem-solving.
- Raise awareness about the importance of recycling and sustainability.

Project Activities:

Key activities in the project included:

- **Repurposing Waste Paper:** Students crafted decorative birds from used paper, demonstrating how simple materials can be given new life as art.
- **Plastic Art Creations:** Discarded plastic items were transformed into intricate art pieces, showcasing the potential of recycled materials in creative expression.
- **Environmental Education:** Through this project, students learned about the impact of waste on the environment and the importance of innovative recycling practices.

Outcomes:

- **Environmental Impact:** The project significantly reduced the amount of waste destined for landfills, contributing to cleaner surroundings and promoting a culture of reuse.
- **Creative Development:** Students enhanced their artistic skills while learning to think resourcefully about waste materials.
- **Awareness and Advocacy:** The initiative inspired both students and the wider school community to adopt more sustainable habits, encouraging them to view waste as a resource rather than a problem.

Conclusion:

Loreto Nyakato Girls' Secondary School's waste repurposing project is a compelling example of how creativity can be harnessed to address environmental challenges. By transforming paper and plastic waste into beautiful art, students not only contributed to sustainability but also demonstrated that

innovation and environmental stewardship go hand in hand. This project serves as an inspiration for other schools and communities to explore creative solutions to reduce waste and protect the planet.

CJ AND IBVM SPAIN AND ARGENTINA SCHOOLS COLLABORATE ON MODEL UNITED NATIONS PROJECT ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Introduction:

Students from CJ (Congregation of Jesus) and IBVM (Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary) schools in Spain and Argentina recently came together for a joint Model United Nations (MUN) project. This initiative focused on COP29 negotiations, emphasizing the critical role of international cooperation in combating climate change. The collaboration not only highlighted the importance of addressing global environmental challenges but also showcased the power of networking and cross-border teamwork.

Objective:

The project aimed to simulate the dynamics of COP29 negotiations, providing students with a platform to:

- Explore climate change policies and solutions from a global perspective.
- Understand the complexities of international negotiations.
- Build communication and leadership skills through collaborative problem-solving.
- **Leverage networking** to foster connections and shared learning across continents.

Project Activities:

Key activities included:

- **Simulated COP29 Negotiations:** Students represented different countries, debating and drafting proposals on climate action, adaptation strategies, and emissions reduction.
- **Collaborative Research:** Teams from Spain and Argentina worked together to understand their assigned countries' climate policies, ensuring informed and realistic negotiations.
- **Virtual Networking Sessions:** Regular online meetings allowed students to build relationships, exchange ideas, and learn from diverse perspectives.

Outcomes:

- **Global Awareness:** Participants gained a deeper understanding of climate change as a global issue, appreciating the need for coordinated international action.
- **Skills Development:** The project enhanced students' research, negotiation, and public speaking skills, equipping them to engage in complex discussions on environmental policy.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** The partnership between students from different countries underscored the **power of networking**, fostering mutual respect and shared commitment to addressing climate challenges.
- **Empowerment for Future Leadership:** By simulating real-world diplomatic processes, the project prepared students to become informed and active global citizens.

Conclusion:

The collaborative MUN project between CJ and IBVM schools in Spain and Argentina highlights the importance of global cooperation in tackling climate change. It demonstrated that effective environmental action requires not only international policy agreements but also strong networks of

individuals committed to sustainability. This initiative underscores how networking and collaboration can empower young leaders to make a meaningful impact on pressing global issues.

LORETTO ABBEY - CANADA

Urban eco-diversity is a term used to describe the diverse ecosystems and species found within urban environments. Recently, cities have become more and more congested with construction, highways, and high-rise buildings, and this has ultimately prevented biodiversity from thriving in urban areas. As a school located in the heart of Toronto, we wanted to start an initiative that could promote the importance of maintaining different ecosystems in cities.

Our action plan to tackle this issue focuses on installing and maintaining self-sustaining beehives on Loretto Abbey's rooftop in order to support urban eco-diversity and create a safe and essential pollinator habitat right on our school grounds. This hands-on project will be called ABBEES and will educate students about the importance of bees and sustainable practices. The key components of this initiative include rooftop hive installation, educational workshops and partnerships with local beekeeping experts, and sustainable product creation, where students will learn to harvest honey and beeswax into eco-friendly and profitable products to benefit local charities and promote environmental stewardship. To touch on community engagement and connect this plan to others, we plan on live streaming the bees on a Go-Pro feed which will present our hives to other elementary schools in the area in order to introduce urban eco-diversity to students of a young age. Loretto Abbey's ABBES initiative works to connect current students and the local community through a sustainable and biodiverse project that will not only benefit important pollinators necessary in our society, but also the future we want to create to satisfy Pope Francis' Laudato Si.



The ABBES program offers many benefits, including biodiversity conservation, education, community involvement, environmental awareness, and a model for urban sustainability. The beehive system helps restore pollinator populations, which supports local ecosystems and boosts urban biodiversity. Students gain hands-on experience in beekeeping and learn sustainable practices, giving them skills in honey production and product creation while encouraging environmental responsibility. Families can join workshops and events, which strengthens community connections and provides access to locally made products. By raising awareness of bees' role in food production, the program promotes a culture of sustainability and environmental responsibility. This project shows how small-scale initiatives can have a big impact on ecosystems and serves as a model for other schools to follow for urban biodiversity projects. In the long run, it builds a foundation for environmental care and sustainability across generations, which aligns with God's message on caring for our planet.

Submitted by Mme L. Burchell (she/her/elle)

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STEPS

The diverse and impactful initiatives led by schools around the world demonstrate how young people are becoming powerful agents of change. Guided by the enduring Mary Ward values of **sincerity, freedom, justice, and felicity**, these projects embody a commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility, proving that education is a cornerstone of transformative action. At the heart of these efforts is **sincerity**, seen in the students' genuine dedication to understanding and addressing global challenges. From reimagining waste as art in Tanzania to cultivating life in arid Peruvian deserts, their actions reflect an authentic desire to care for our common home and inspire others to do the same.

Freedom is evident in the students' ability to think creatively and act boldly. Whether it's reducing energy use in Australia or engaging in international climate negotiations in Spain and Argentina, these young leaders exercise their freedom to challenge norms and envision a sustainable future. They remind us that true freedom comes with the responsibility to protect the Earth and its inhabitants.

The value of **justice** permeates every project. Whether raising funds for wheelchairs through recycling bread tags in Australia or advocating for climate action in Model United Nations sessions, these initiatives work toward a world where resources are shared equitably, and the voices of the most vulnerable are heard. Justice fuels their determination to build a fairer and more sustainable future for all.

Finally, **felicity**, or joy, is the spirit that animates their work. Despite the gravity of the challenges they face, these young people approach their mission with hope and enthusiasm. They find joy in small victories—planting trees, creating art, or building community connections—knowing that each step contributes to a larger, collective impact.

These stories illustrate how the Mary Ward values serve as the engine driving meaningful change. They show that **sincerity, freedom, justice, and felicity** are not just ideals but powerful tools for action, inspiring individuals and communities to address the interconnected challenges of our time.

Together, these initiatives prove that the future is in capable hands. The commitment, creativity, and collaboration of today's youth offer hope for a world that is more sustainable, just, and joyful. Let these values and actions inspire all of us to play our part in creating a brighter, more harmonious future for generations to come.

As we move forward to the goal of next year's **Ecological Spirituality**, the Mary Ward JPIC Office remains dedicated to supporting and expanding these efforts. Each webinar, project, and initiative strengthens the network of ecological leaders, reinforcing the message that every action, no matter how small, contributes to global transformation.

A sincere thank you to all the students, teachers, and schools for their passion, creativity, and daily commitment to ecological education. Your projects have shown the transformative power of education in building a sustainable world. As we move forward, let us continue to innovate and collaborate, ensuring that schools remain beacons of ecological awareness and action for generations to come. Together, we are shaping a brighter, greener future.

Let's keep the momentum going, knowing that our collective efforts will leave a lasting impact for generations to come.

*Pauline Macharia ibvm and Adina Balan cj
Rome, November 2024.*



Mary Ward JPIC Office

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