

SEVEN YEAR PLAN FOR GENERATIONAL CHANGE FOR THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Part 1 - Current activities of the worldwide Society of Jesus

The commitment of the Society of Jesus to the environment was expressed in the documents issued by its most recent General Congregation (GC35), which ended in March 2008¹. These documents, or “decrees”, give guidance to the whole Society of Jesus and will be implemented worldwide throughout the coming years. GC35 said: “In our preaching, teaching, and retreat direction, we should invite all people to appreciate more deeply our covenant with creation as central to right relationships with God and one another, and to act accordingly in terms of political responsibility, employment, family life, and personal lifestyle.”² The following presentation of projects and initiatives attempts (without claiming to be exhaustive) to give some indication of the great number of initiatives undertaken by Jesuits and Jesuit communities and institutions around the world.

1. Faith-consistent Use of Assets – land, investments, medical facilities, purchasing and property

Individual Jesuit communities, mainly in the global North, are trying to adapt their properties and adjust their lifestyles so as to be more environment-friendly, as this example from Canada shows³: “We are a community that has been trying intentionally in the past two years to put into practice more ecologically sensitive ways of living, from the goods we buy, the food we purchase and eat, the energy we use and the means of transportation we employ. We have also been making substantial efforts to retrofit our house to be more ecologically sound by insulating it, by replacing windows and by installing solar panels to heat our water, etc.”

Elsewhere in Canada, within the wider context of a Retreat and Training Centre at Guelph in Ontario, Ignatius Farm⁴ is an example of Jesuit organic farming.

In Zambia, the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre⁵ trains local farmers in organic, sustainable farming methods and promotes the formation of study circles in villages.

In India, Jesuits train the local population in rural areas to produce energy-efficient equipment such as solar thermal equipment⁶.

Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology in Frankfurt, Germany, consists of a seminary, a university and a community house for Jesuits. Much has been done in recent years to address energy use, water consumption and CO₂ emissions:

- An efficient water management to separate drinking water from water for toilets and laundry has been introduced
- A combined heat and power unit has been installed
- Geothermal energy is now used throughout the campus
- Solar plants are employed in the seminary building
- A car running off natural gas has been bought and is in use

¹ <http://www2.seattleu.edu/sustainability/jesuits.aspx>

² Decree 3, number 36.

³ Community website: http://en.ignatianwiki.org/Ogilvie_Residence

⁴ <http://www.ignatiusguelph.ca/csa/index.html>

⁵ <http://www.loyno.edu/~kac/aboutus.htm>

⁶ <http://www.solar-alternatives.com/>

All rooms in the Jesuit community house are currently being refurbished to minimize CO₂ emissions. This refurbishment will be completed in October 2010.

Santa Clara University in California “has divested its holdings in a leading mountaintop removal mining company”⁷ and the National Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility (NJCIR)⁸ is encouraging socially responsible investing among Jesuit institutions in the USA.

Social Entrepreneur and TED Fellow⁹ Fr Xavier Alpasa SJ is running an eco-tourism social enterprise called Hotel Maya on the Philippine island of Culion, which had a “soft opening” in August 2009.

2. Education and Young People – including school buildings, curricula, nature teaching and camps

Jesuit schools (high schools, colleges, universities) around the world are promoting ecological awareness, as these three examples show:

Benoît Mbuyi SJ launched with others the group « Amis de la Nature » at Collège Kubama in Kisantu in Democratic Republic of Congo.

A student initiative led to the creation of the Environmental Advisory Council at Seattle University (in Seattle, USA, run by the Jesuits) in 2004. The purpose of the EAC is to “offer advice and leadership regarding the identification, creation, assessment, and implementation of environmental planning and policies for the University.” The council acts as a seed bed and catalyst for campus sustainability and environmental initiatives coming from students, administrators, staff and faculty. The council’s 20 members include alumni, students, staff and faculty. The University has a very informative “Sustainability” website¹⁰.

Loyola University in Chicago has a Center for Environmental Communications¹¹ which serves to educate students, stimulate discussion among environmental shareholders and as a resource for environmental information.

There are many more initiatives around Jesuit campuses¹² in the USA, including a student environment club at the University of Detroit Mercy¹³.

INEA in Valladolid (Spain) is a Jesuit-run school for Agricultural Engineering which is offering courses and producing publications on organic (“ecological”) agriculture, and undertaking research into different aspects of this issue.

Jesuits in India have been famous taxonomers since the early 1900s. They have categorized the biodiversity of entire regions of India and, over many years, have passed their knowledge on to the local people. In the process they have trained 49,825 students,

⁷ <http://www.southernstudies.org/2009/03/congressmen-jesuits-and-a-movie-star-target-mountaintop-removal.html>

⁸ <http://www.jesuit.org/SocialJustice/SRI/default.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.ted.com/index.php/profiles/view/id/242851>

¹⁰ <http://www2.seattleu.edu/sustainability/default.aspx>

¹¹ <http://www.loyno.edu/lucec/>

¹² <http://www.companysj.com/v262/262greentimeswith%20cover.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.uofdjesuit.org/html/environmental-club>

3,088 teachers, 2,681 leaders, 4,234 activists and 15,078 villagers (2008 data)¹⁴. K.T. Chandy SJ (Associate Director, Catholic Health Association of India) has provided training programmes on “Sustainable Management of Natural Resource Management”. Over the last forty years he has given some 1,500 training programmes to a variety of clients ranging from government officials to farmers at the grass roots level. He has also written course materials in the form of booklets on 635 topics related to sustainable Natural Resources Management.

Elsewhere in India, “Tarumitra” (Friends of Trees) is a Jesuit-run organisation with ECOSOC status at the UN. It now has over 2 million members in over 1,000 colleges and schools. Its aim is to spread environmental awareness among young people. In 2008, it conducted 150 workshops, reaching some 15,000 teachers and students.

The Lauriston Jesuit Centre in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, has been running a series of talks on the environment throughout 2009.¹⁵

At the Jesuit-run Gregorian University in Rome, two courses on ecology are being taught in the faculty of theology in 2009-2010: “La crisi ecologica corrente: le dimensioni morali implicate” (The Moral Dimensions of the Current Ecological Crisis)” (by Prem Xalxo SJ) and “The Fields of Creation, Grace and Redemption” (by Gerry Whelan SJ).

Jesuits, other religious and lay people whose lives and work are inspired by St Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus, gathered for four days before the World Social Forum 2009 in Belém, Brazil. The meeting, called “Fé’namazônia” (Faith in the Amazon), which included talks, prayers, sharings and awareness-raising exercises, involved groups of indigenous people with whom the Jesuits work in Latin America and India and created a sense of community and shared responsibility among the members of the “Ignatian Family”.

3. Pastoral Care - including theological education and training , rediscovering past traditions and wisdom, and helping people adapt to new situations in areas where climate change makes this necessary

In a number of countries around the world, Jesuits work with indigenous populations, helping them to protect their ancestral land and to pass on their lifestyles. For example, in India, Fr Lancelot D. Cruz SJ of St Xavier’s College, Ahmedabad, has developed in the Dediapada forests of South Gujarat, “People Forest-Laboratory-Industry Linkages”. This is an organization for socioeconomic development and the preservation of knowledge about traditional medicine, a project which involved the setting up of an interactive network of medicine men.

In the Philippines, the Jesuit-run organisation “Environmental Science for Social Change” (ESSC), works with local populations, mostly indigenous, in adapting to climate change¹⁶. Their work includes mapping, networking and telling the stories of the people affected.

¹⁴

<http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/networks/ecology/Indian%20Jesuits%20Contribution%20to%20Environmental%20Protection.pdf>

¹⁵ http://www.lauriston.org.uk/index_files/environment.htm

¹⁶ <http://essc.org.ph/>; read their mission statement here: <http://essc.org.ph/content/view/139/89/>

In Colombia, PDPMM (Peace and Development Programme for the Magdalena River) and SUYUSAMA (Sustainable Development Programme for Nariño and Putumayo departments) work with the local populations in order to establish peace as well as communion with nature.

Al Fritsch SJ in the United States is running a website with daily reflections on the environment and simple living¹⁷ that has had 16 million visitors since it started in 2004. Also in the United States, Joseph Carver SJ (Berkeley) is currently developing a Licentiate of Sacred Theology (STL) course on "Ignatian Spirituality and Ecology". Joseph Carver SJ and John Braverman SJ have written an "Ecological Examen".

Eco-retreats are held at, for example, the Ignatius Jesuit Centre¹⁸ in Guelph, Canada, as well as in India.

Factsheets on the Spiritual Exercises and Ecology and Catholic Social Teaching and Ecology were produced for the benefit of the General Congregation in 2008.¹⁹

"Green groups" have started among scholastics (Jesuits in training) in Rome and Paris, in order to encourage thinking about sustainable development, creation and ecology and to make sure that rubbish is properly sorted and recycled in their communities.

4. Lifestyles

As air travel is a major contributor to global warming, the use of video-conferences instead of long-distance travel is being investigated as a way of addressing the issue. A room in the General Curia is being equipped for video-conferences to enable Father General and the members of the Curia to participate in "virtual" meetings and consultations with Provincials and others throughout the world.²⁰

In the global North, as described in the example under point 1, some communities are committing themselves to living a more simple and sustainable lifestyle, with varying degrees of adherence by individual members.

In rural India, the "Integrated Tribal Watershed Development Programme"²¹ at Sangamner run by Fr Robert de Costa SJ encourages indigenous people to take responsibility for their own environment and provides examples of ways in which lifestyle changes have been made by the poorest of the poor. This programme has been running since 1989 and the director reports its social benefits in this way: "Watershed programmes have stopped people from going to moneylenders because they have their own crops".

5. Media and Advocacy

A new network for environmental advocacy is currently being set up at the Jesuit European Office (OCIPE) in Brussels which will link together existing Jesuit

¹⁷ <http://www.earthhealing.info/>

¹⁸ <http://www.ignatiusguelph.ca/>

¹⁹ http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/networks/ecology/Exercises_ENG.pdf;
http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/networks/ecology/CST_ENG.pdf

²⁰ News from July 2009: <http://www.sjweb.info/news/index.cfm?Tab=7&Language=1&PubNumID=35>

²¹ <http://www.punejesuits.org/socitwdp.html>

environmental initiatives. It will have a website²² to both support and promote networking.

The Instituto Mayor Campesino in Colombia is an example of a Jesuit organisation that empowers farming communities and trains them in agriculture and trade. It also lobbies against transgenics, as does a Jesuit organisation in Mexico, Semillas de Vida²³.

The Jesuit-run Munich School of Philosophy's Institute for Social and Development Studies is coordinating a project called "Climate Change and Justice: Climate policy as the basis for fair and sustainable globalisation"²⁴ This also involves the Catholic overseas aid agency in Germany, Misereor, and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK). The aims of the project are: researching into the effects of climate change on the poor, networking, awareness raising and reporting.

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection in Zambia lobbied the Zambian government which decided subsequently not to introduce Genetically Modified Organisms to feed its population. This set an example for other African governments to resist pressure from GMO-promoting multinationals.

6. Partnerships, eco-twinning and creating your own environment department

OCIPE, the Jesuit European Office, has taken on the task of setting up an environment department for the Society of Jesus. A website will be launched later in 2009 to help connect and inform Jesuits around the world about the environment and initiatives for its preservation.

The Social Justice Secretariat of the Society of Jesus is very active in the environmental group set up by the leaders of religious orders in Rome ("Integrity of Creation Working Group"). It has helped to produce a 42-page spirituality resource called "The Earth Community"²⁵ and to conduct a survey²⁶ of 125 religious congregations regarding their ecological commitment.

The Jesuits in the USA are actively involved with the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change²⁷ and with the Caritas Internationalis/CIDSE campaign for Climate Justice²⁸.

The Jesuit centre "Environmental Science for Social Change" (ESSC) in the Philippines, mentioned above, is linking with three other projects in Europe and Australia.

They have a long time association with the Jesuit FUNDP, at the University of Namur in Belgium, to develop the academic competence of the students in the poorer provinces of the Philippines in the area of environmental resources, planning and management. This is planned to involve the three Jesuit Universities of Mindanao (Philippines) in the coming year. They also work with the Jesuit-run Munich School of Philosophy's Institute for Social and Development Studies in

²² <http://www.ignatian-eco.net/>

²³ <http://www.semillasdevida.org.mx/>

²⁴ <http://www.klima-und-gerechtigkeit.de/index.php?id=82&L=1>

²⁵ http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/EN_creation

²⁶ http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/EN_creation_survey

²⁷ <http://www.jesuit.org/SocialJustice/WarandViolence/IPA/default.aspx> (Ignatian PeaceAction 2009 encouraged people to join the Catholic Climate Covenant)

²⁸ http://www.cidse.org/Area_of_work/?id=84

the area of community adaptation in the face of climate change focusing this time in Indonesia. ESSC hopes to have a workshop in Sanata Darama Jesuit University in Yogyakarta in October 2009.

And thirdly, they have an ongoing engagement with “Magis Australia” and their youth formation and growth in social analysis programme. They also hope to engage Jesuit Social Services Australia in strengthening social reflection in the areas of youth, environment and indigenous peoples.

And lastly, they will continue to engage through Asia Forest Network with interested Jesuits, especially those in Cambodia and Indonesia.

7. Academic Research

The John J. Carroll Institute of Church and Social Issues in the Philippines is using environmental economics to reduce greenhouse gases and to analyze the financial sustainability of community-based natural resource management projects.²⁹

At the Manila Observatory³⁰ in the Philippines, meteorological physics is employed in various climate change-connected projects.

The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change which included the Jesuit scientist Jose Ramon Villarin SJ, the president of Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan in the southern Philippines.

Daniel Syauswa Musondoli SJ from the Democratic Republic of Congo has submitted a thesis at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley in May 2007 on “The Ecological Dimensions of Peace and the Church Mission – Ecology, Faith and Culture from an African Perspective”. He now teaches theology in Kimwenza, DRC.

A number of Jesuit and lay academics have produced eight 2-page factsheets before the General Congregation in 2008, to inform the members of this decision-making body of the Society of Jesus about burning ecological issues with respect to forests, landslides, desertification, agriculture³¹, pollution and public health and biodiversity.

8. Celebration

Jesuit parishes around the world celebrate harvest or creation time according to their local customs and traditions.

²⁹ http://www.jjcicsi.org/programs_eep.htm

³⁰ <http://www.observatory.ph/>

³¹ One example: http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/networks/ecology/agriculture_ENG.pdf

Part 2 – An Invitation to the worldwide Society of Jesus

*The following list of **creative suggestions** has come from several consultations that the Social Justice Secretariat has carried out since 1999. Conferences, provinces, works, communities and individuals **are strongly encouraged** to choose projects from this list of suggestions and then to implement them, thereby implementing the mandate of GC35 to “move beyond doubts and indifference and take responsibility for our home, the earth.”³²*

*They are invited to use their own words and formulations to express their commitment³³. The **suggestions below are meant as an inspiration**, each starting with the words “we will”.*

Father General is considering the setting up of a Task Force on Ecology and Jesuit Mission to suggest concrete steps along the lines suggested below to make the care of the earth an aspect of all our ministries. This Task Force will review the lessons learnt from existing projects and propose, after consultation with Jesuit Conferences, Assistances and Provinces. practical ways of “restoring right relationships with creation” (GC 35, D 3, no. 34).

1. Faith-consistent Use of Assets

We will run our retreat centres in an ecologically sensitive way, sourcing food as much as possible from local, organic, fair-trade sources and making sure that the buildings are audited according to local eco-standards. This will benefit nature as well as the retreatants who often are eager to experience God in nature while on retreat.

2. Education and Young People

We will seek to inspire the next generation to commit themselves to protect the environment. We shall do this not only through our teaching and research but also by making our university, school buildings and grounds environmentally friendly.

3. Pastoral Care

We will set up a commission of Jesuits, religious and lay collaborators to write on the topic of Ignatian Spirituality and the environment, using the Spiritual Exercises in particular. We will encourage all those in theology and spirituality to reflect and write on how Ignatian spirituality/theology takes creation seriously (finding and serving God in *all things*).

We will promote and give priority to days of prayer, retreats and/or liturgies around the themes of Sustainability and Ecology for both Jesuit communities and apostolates.

We will encourage the giving of Eco-retreats as part of the programmes of all our retreat centres.

4. Lifestyles

We will carry out energy audits and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) to assess the ecological footprint of our community, our work and our province. This will lead to our

³² D. 3 n. 31

³³ For more possible commitments, feel free to consult these 2009 recommendations to Father General: http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/networks/ecology/EcologySurvey_FrGeneral.pdf and Annexes B & C: http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/networks/ecology/EcologySurvey_AnnexesBC.pdf.

adopting ways of conserving resources and of introducing renewable energy practices. We will first comply with local mandated civil sustainability practices and then go beyond them in a voluntary way.

Air travel makes a significant contribution to global climate change; we will factor this into our planning and promote alternative ways of communication.

Our social centres and NGOs will be the first to commit publicly to recycle all their paper, reduce their carbon footprint, derive 35% of their energy from renewable resources, offset their air travel by planting trees and replace their fleet of cars with energy-efficient ones, within a given timeframe.

5. Media and Advocacy

We will publicize and show our appreciation for what is being done by Jesuits, both in our immediate areas of influence and beyond. We shall start by making public part 1 of this document. We will monitor regularly what is being done in this area in our educational centres, our research institutions as well as in our pastoral and social works.

6. Partnerships & creating an environment department

We will do all we can to establish structures within the Society at Curia and at regional and local levels to act on our concern for the environment, under the guidance of the Task Force being established by Father General.

We will use our extensive network of parishes, schools, JRS, JVC, etc to piggy-back on existing projects and institutions already involved in promoting environmental sustainability. We will publish examples of 'best practice' and details of where further advice and assistance can be obtained

We will designate a certain percentage of the grants made by the Curia ("FACSI") in any one year for projects related to 'healing the land,' or to the setting up locally or regionally of a specifically designated environmental fund.

7. Academic Research

Continuing in the learned tradition of Jesuits like Teilhard de Chardin, we will encourage special studies, particularly among Jesuits, in environmental science and related fields such as environmental law, environmental economics, population studies, environmental anthropology, etc.

8. Celebration

We will announce this "Seven Year Plan" for the Society of Jesus in November 2009 at a special mass at the Gesù Church in Rome and in Jesuit parishes around the world.

Possible candidates for Jesuit environmental celebrations could be the anniversaries of two people who were closely involved, in very different ways, with the environment:

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ³⁴ who died on April 10, 1955 in New York City.
Georg Kamel SJ³⁵ who died 2 May 1706.

³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Teilhard_de_Chardin; there is talk of a ‘rehabilitation’ of Teilhard by the Vatican: <http://ncronline.org/news/ecology/pope-cites-teilhardian-vision-cosmos-living-host>

³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Joseph_Kamel