**“Uniservitate Global Award 2024” goes to Poland and Germany**

**One of the world’s most prestigious awards for Service Learning projects at universities has been awarded to The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) in Poland. Another award goes to the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (KU) in Germany. The Bethlehem University in Palestine is honoured with a “Special Mention” for several experiences.**

The “Global Award” is being presented for the second time in 2024 as part of the international Uniservitate network. Uniservitate is funded by the Porticus Foundation and coordinated by the Latin American Center for Solidary Service Learning (CLAYSS) in Argentina. The award is given within the Uniservitate Hub for Central & Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

The “Global Award” honours outstanding Service Learning projects and supports their continuation with prize money. The project “Bacteria Antibiotic Resistance: A Global Challenge - Local Action. The student’s project carried out as part of the activity in the Scientific Club” at The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) in Poland was awarded the 2024 Uniservitate Global Award. The project leaded by Ilona Sadok and Rafał Łopucki addresses the growing issue of drug resistance in microorganisms (commonly known as antibiotic resistance) and responds to the need to monitor and study this phenomenon, as well as to minimise its negative consequences. To meet this demand, students collected numerous samples from public playgrounds in the city of Lublin, such as swabs from playground equipment (e.g., swings and slides), sand from sandpits, soil, and air samples. By utilising microbiological procedures and mass spectrometry analysis, the students isolated and identified pathogenic bacterial strains. These strains underwent experiments to confirm antibiotic resistance. However, the project extended beyond scientific results; a crucial objective was to share the acquired knowledge with the public interested in the microbiological safety of children’s play areas. To achieve this, a dedicated platform for exchanging information between scientists and the public was established.

In the project led by Kristina Löblein, KU students develop lessons whose planning, implementation, and evaluation are pedagogically realised through Service Learning. The project aims to promote the common good by providing better access to the German language for primary school children with a migration background. The project’s cooperation partners, which started in the summer semester of 2023, include the Eichstätt primary schools St. Walburg and Am Graben. In the summer semester of 2024, the Adelschlag primary school also participated. KU students from various disciplines offer voluntary language support in German as a second language. A weekly seminar with Kristina Löblein accompanies the students’ work, providing them with fundamental knowledge on language promotion, literacy acquisition, and dealing with heterogeneity in the school context. The seminar offers a supportive environment where students can integrate this theoretical foundation with the development of lesson plans, selection and practical testing of appropriate methods and materials, and intensive reflection on their experiences from the support sessions. Kristina Löblein provides professional feedback and continuous advice to the students – not only during the seminar but also through individual consultations and classroom visits, including follow-up discussions.

Projects from Bethlehem University (BU) and KU were also awarded “Special Mentions”. The Department of English and Communication at Bethlehem University, under the supervision of Ramzi Asali, Layth Awwad, and Ruba Ayyad, conducted ten initiatives under the theme “Global Citizenship, Sustainability, and Service Learning”, involving 32 students. These initiatives were carried out in collaboration with notable international and local organisations operating in Palestine. One notable initiative, in collaboration with EducAid, an Italian NGO based in Rome, aimed to bridge the digital divide among people with vision impairments in Bethlehem. These partnerships underscored the importance of global citizenship, intercultural communication, and international solidarity and cooperation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The projects highlighted the interconnectedness of local and global issues and emphasised the importance of fostering a global mind-set among students in their community engagement and efforts to address local challenges. Meanwhile, under the direction of Hanan Saca-Hazboun, Amal Abu Nijmeh Fakhouri, and Fatmeh Madani Hammad in the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, students carried out several Service-learning projects titled “Health Awareness Programs – Students’ Activities for Course Work”. These projects focused on cancer screening initiatives, such as those for breast and cervical cancer. Additionally, the second initiative expanded its reach into the field of paediatric health, aiming to empower parents, carers, and children with the information and skills to handle common childhood emergencies effectively, thereby strengthening family health literacy and community resilience. Finally, midwifery students produced educational videos on women’s health for social media, instructing women on how to give birth during a crisis. Through these efforts, students made a significant impact on community health education and empowerment while gaining real-world experience.

The jury also praised the project “Awareness: Pastoral Care in the Context of Festivals and Events” led by Simone Birkel (KU) for its innovative character: For the second time, students of religious education, in cooperation with the Diocese of Eichstätt and the Malteser Hilfsdienst, offered festival pastoral care as part of the annual ‘Open-Air am Berg’ festival in Eichstätt over the Pentecost weekend. The festival organisers, the cultural association Joke e.V. Eichstätt, engage the festival pastoral care to ensure greater safety and well-being for the visitors. The pastoral care team is available around the clock for festival-goers, providing support for emotional situations, addressing discomfort or harassment, or simply offering a break from the festival hustle. The Service Learning project is part of the teaching curriculum and aims to benefit not only the festival-goers but also to enhance the competencies of the students.

Applications for the Uniservitate Global Award went through a three-stage process: In two evaluation rounds, internationally recognised experts identified the best projects. These were then presented to a six-member international jury, which decided on the award winners. The Global Award ceremony will take place as part of a Uniservitate Symposium in early November in Rome.