

ONLINE WORKSHOP TRAINS EDUCATORS IN ONLINE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Myanmar is currently in the grip of a brutal and isolating civil war. Christians in this nation are struggling greatly to continue to train the next generation of leaders as conflict rages around them. At the request of our partners in the country, OCRPL's networking arm called the Global Institute for Leadership and Development (GILD) project stepped in to offer Christian faculty training in using online education.

Due to the ongoing national crisis in Myanmar, we saw that the learners' educational experiences were regularly hampered. The challenge manifested itself in the form of irregularities in the supply of electricity and internet connectivity issues. Even through these difficulties, participants showed signs of earnestness and a willingness to learn despite the country being in a state of crisis.

From 10 April to 14 April 2023, GILD collaborated with a group of Christian institutions in Myanmar to organise an online training workshop. Twenty-three faculty members from various institutions were able to join, in addition to the facilitators and organisers.

In order to best teach this subject, which was new to many of the participants, we built an online course especially for them to work through. This course was titled "Introduction to Online Learning for Theological Educators" and was designed, developed, and subsequently made available online via a learning management system. This format was chosen as it enabled the participants to directly engage themselves practically in online learning instead of simply listening to presentations on the subject.

We began the training with an hour-long course induction and enrolment session on 10 April as the majority of the learners were unfamiliar with this form of self-paced learning. After that, the learners were given the chance to go through the course at their preferred pace and at their convenience. Following this, a two-hour workshop was conducted under the guidance of our colleagues (online facilitators). The workshop consisted of presentations delivered by the facilitators and active participation from the learners.

Upon the conclusion of the workshop, it was noted that the participants displayed a keen interest in delving deeper into the intricacies of blended learning. This form of teaching uses a combination of in-person and online teaching. Following this workshop, we are conducting a comprehensive exploration of the various forms of blended learning in order to tailor the approach to the specific requirements and circumstances present in Myanmar. We are also following up with participants who showed increased aptitude and offered further training.

