

Social integration of international students in Israel

A perspective by the Erasmus Student Network

Field work July 2019

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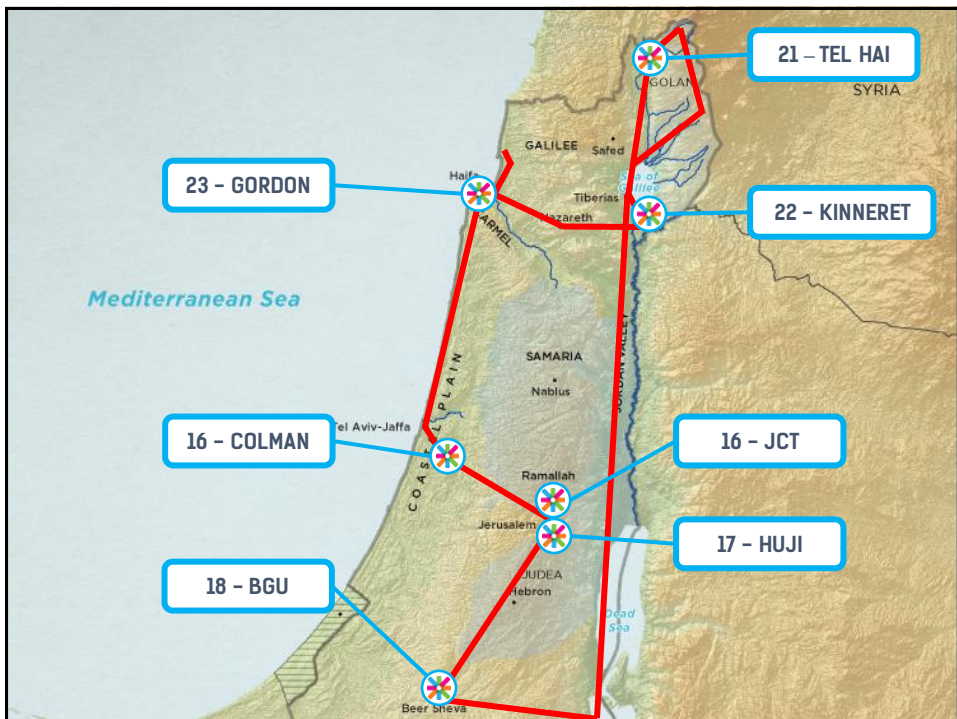


The ESN team in Israel, 16-25/07/2019

We visited seven Israeli higher education institutions

(and many impressive sites!)

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We have discovered best-practices across the country

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COLMAN – Start up nation experience

International students are given the opportunity to work in start-ups for 8-9 hours per week for a semester. The work is graded by employers and is part of a larger program including an incubator and an accelerator.



JCT - Hackatons

JERUSALEM COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY



International and local students join forces in mixed teams to participate in hackathons. Companies provide mentors and present problems for them solve and often absorb into their work the solutions presented by the students.

HUJI – First year not alone

An internal buddy system for first year students. These are gathered in large groups who are supported by older students. The program is ran by the student union and can be easily scaled up to include international students.



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BGU – Welcome Guide



A welcome guide tailored for international students produced by a dedicated body in the student union in collaboration with the international relations office. The guide is available both online and offline and it has useful information for both exchange and full degree.

Tel Hai – Town Square Academia

Joint courses prepared by academic staff and a practical expert from the community. Even though there are no international students yet, when they arrive they will have a good framework to share knowledge and learn from the local community.



Kinneret Academic College – Social Wednesdays



Every Wednesday students take over the campus for two hours. All sort of activities are organized and no classes take place at the same time. It is a great moment for students to meet each other and in the future can benefit from the presence of international students.

Gordon – Integrated volunteering

Students already volunteer for 60 hours in community engagement projects. A future buddy system could be included as one of these projects. It could later be expanded into joint activities done by buddies in the community.





Ideas for implementation

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Ideas for implementation

- Specialized **mental health support** for incoming and outgoing students.
- **Family counseling** and support when needed.
- Online and offline **communication** also in English.
- **Community engagement** initiatives for international students to contribute to the development of their host community.
- **Exchange ambassadors:** international and local returning students to promote study abroad opportunities, also off campus.

Ideas for implementation

- **Staff training**, both on academic and non-academic aspects.
- Organize **joint assignments** between local and international students.
- Provide the opportunity for **short-term exchanges** to open the appetite for longer study abroad periods.
- Websites to provide **information about social and cultural life** on and off campus.
- **Develop joint actions plans with the student unions!**
- **Implement a buddy program!**

From the visit in July 2019

- Short individual analysis and report for each institution.
- A PowerPoint presentation with best-practices and suggestions for the future.
- A workshop focused on the creation of an action plan to foster the social integration of international students.

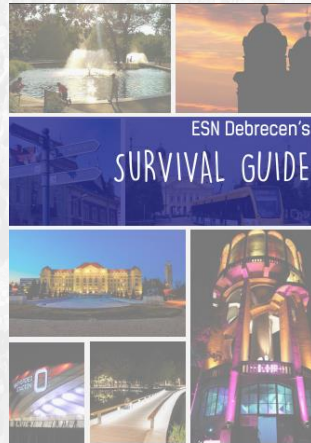
Within the next year

Invitation for participation in **ESN Regional Platforms** (31/10-03/11/2019): Baku (Azerbaijan), Debrecen (Hungary), Malaga (Spain), Utrecht (Netherlands) and Vaasa (Finland). Practical immersion in the world of ESN.



Within the next year

Compilation of **materials related to the Buddy Program** in ESN.



Within the next year

- **Evaluation of this year's visit.** We focused on understanding the state-of-the-art when it comes to social integration. We also raised awareness about the importance of working with students, knowledge transfer, best-practice sharing, and action plan creation.
- Continuous assessment of **communication materials**, both online and offline.
- Preparation for the visit in the second year. Focus on staff and student union **training**.
- Other grant commitments (meetings, etc.).



**Thank you for the hospitality
and for the opportunity to
experience Israel in such a
special way!**

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תודה רבה!




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