

## Individual meetings per higher education institution

### General notes from the meetings

- There is a need for more intercultural communication.
- Social integration of international students is a new concern so not much is done.
- There is a big focus on offering programmes, or at least some classes, in English.
- Most of the student activity is based on subsidies offered to students who “volunteer”. This can raise questions about the students’ motivation to engage in programmes such as buddy systems.
- Students in Israel tend to be older and some have families. This is a fact mentioned in all meetings and often it felt like a natural justification for the lack of interaction between local and international students. Both students and institutions appear to be stuck in the idea that they are older, appearing to feel less open to try new things. ESN must work to address the fact that age does not need to be a limitation.
- The cultural attractiveness of the country is not explored yet. There needs to be a stronger connection between strategies to attract more tourists and more students.
- Short-term exchanges can open the appetite for longer exchanges. These can be explored through summer courses to attract both incoming and outgoing students.
- Alumni of exchange programmes can be used as ambassadors of those programmes in order to attract more students to spend an exchange period abroad. In general, there is a lot of space to establish peer-to-peer communication.
- Online and offline communication must be prepared for foreign students. In particular, websites must be shaped to explain potential international students how they can enrol in an institution but also which social and cultural services or opportunities are offered.
- There is a lot of fertile ground to establish well-functioning buddy systems in Israeli higher education institutions. ESN can gather some best-practices from its network and share with them. These can include rules, application procedures for buddies, buddy training, discount systems, etc.
- There is a need to break national bubbles in most institutions. Buddy systems or ESN-like organisations can greatly improve the situation, targeting directly WILLIAM’s goals.
- Staff training is essential. Future ESN interventions must target staff and students separately to address their specific needs.