



MEDMOBIL FINAL CONFERENCE: MOBILITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

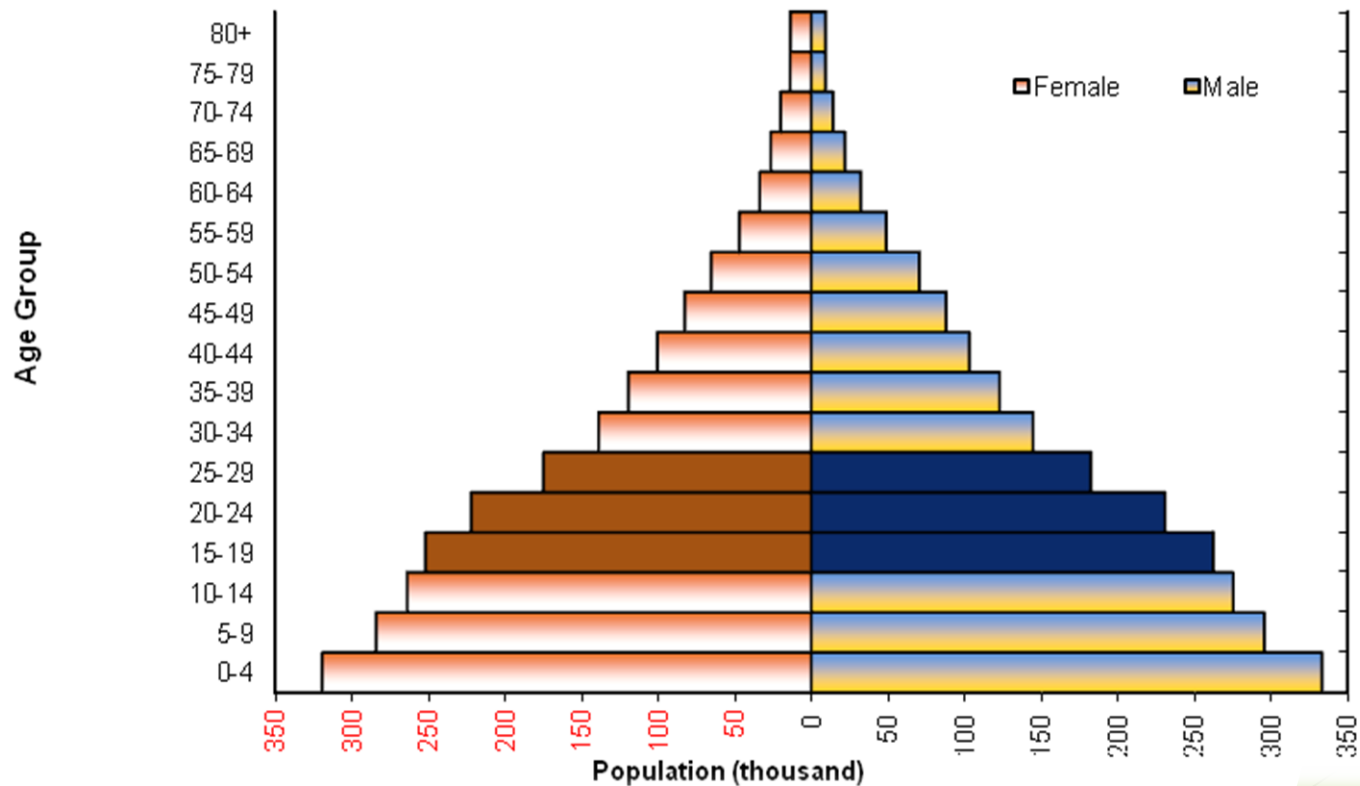
Results, Recommendations and the Way Forward
*On Crossing Borders: Mobility and Exchange in Palestinian Higher
Education Institutions*
(the case of Birzeit University)

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Palestine: a young nation



Youth aged (15 to 29) make up 1/3 of the population
40.1% of which are under the age of 15 years

West Bank: Disconnected Demographic Centers

Population: 2.935 million (2016 PCBS) Area: 5,550 km²

- 227 Noncontiguous enclaves;
- **Area A**: 18% of WB, includes all cities & surrounding areas; under civil and security control of the PA;
- **Area B**: 21% of WB; joint Israeli-Palestinian security control;
- **Area C**: 63% of WB exclusively under Israeli control with **121 illegal Settlements** and **102 outposts**; populated by 0.45 million Israeli settlers;
- **East Jerusalem** completely cut-off from the rest of the West Bank



Mobility Restrictions

- 760km long wall with buffer zone of 30-100m electric fences, trenches & access roads;
- confiscating 23% Palestinian land;
- Isolating 78 villages & communities;
- **520** permanent checkpoints and **420** temporary posts; **None** controls a border with **Israel**.



Gaza Strip: Blockade and Isolation

Population:

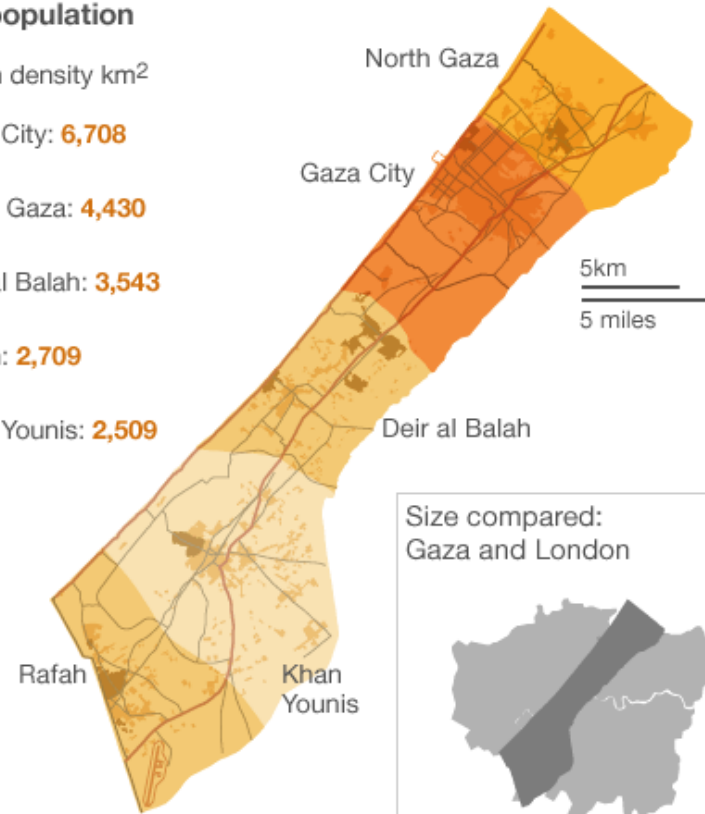
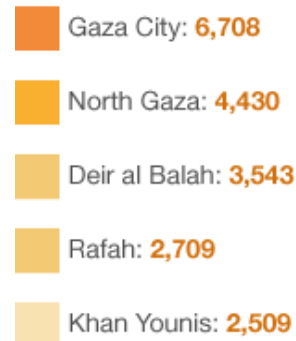
1.881million(2016 PCBS)

Area: 365 km²

- ▶ under strict Israeli blockade with limited flow of people and goods
- ▶ High population density
- ▶ **73%** of population are refugees
- ▶ **53%** of population are youth

Gaza's population

Population density km²

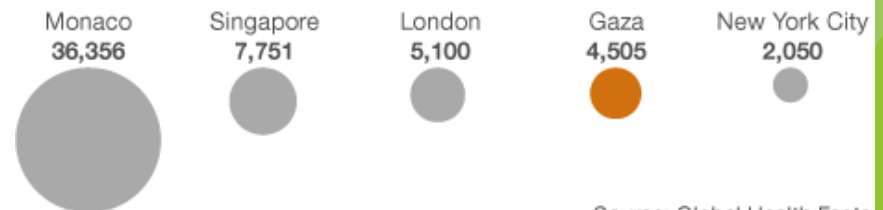


Size compared:
Gaza and London



Source: UN OCHA, ONS

Population density compared



Source: Global Health Facts

Source: Global Health Facts 2013

HE in Palestine: Governance

- Higher Education in Palestine expanded significantly after the establishment of the PNA in 1994
- HEIs are largely autonomous bodies that were partially regulated by **Higher Education Council** prior to 1994
- **Ministry of Higher Education** was first established in 1996 and later merged under Ministry of Education and Higher Education in 2002. The two ministries split again in 2012, only to be merged in 2013.

Financing Higher Education

- ▶ Most HEIs depend on student tuition fees to cover 60-70% of their operation budgets.
- ▶ Economic and political situation has made it impossible to raise tuition fees even to keep up with inflation.
- ▶ Palestinian Authority allocates part of its budget for higher education to **public universities** but is not always able/willing to distribute allocated funds.
- ▶ Universities depend on fundraising to meet annual operating budget and capital development, limiting their ability at long term planning.

“Culture of Maintaining the System”

Higher Education

Higher Education Institutions	Total	Government		Private not-for-profit		Private	
		WB	Gaza	WB	Gaza	WB	Gaza
Traditional University	14	2	1	6	2	1	2
Open University (Gaza & WB)	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
University College	19	4	4	2	1	6 + 1 UNRWA	1
Community College	18	1	1	6	3	3 + 1 UNRWA	2 + 1 UNRWA
Total	52	7	6	15	6	12	6

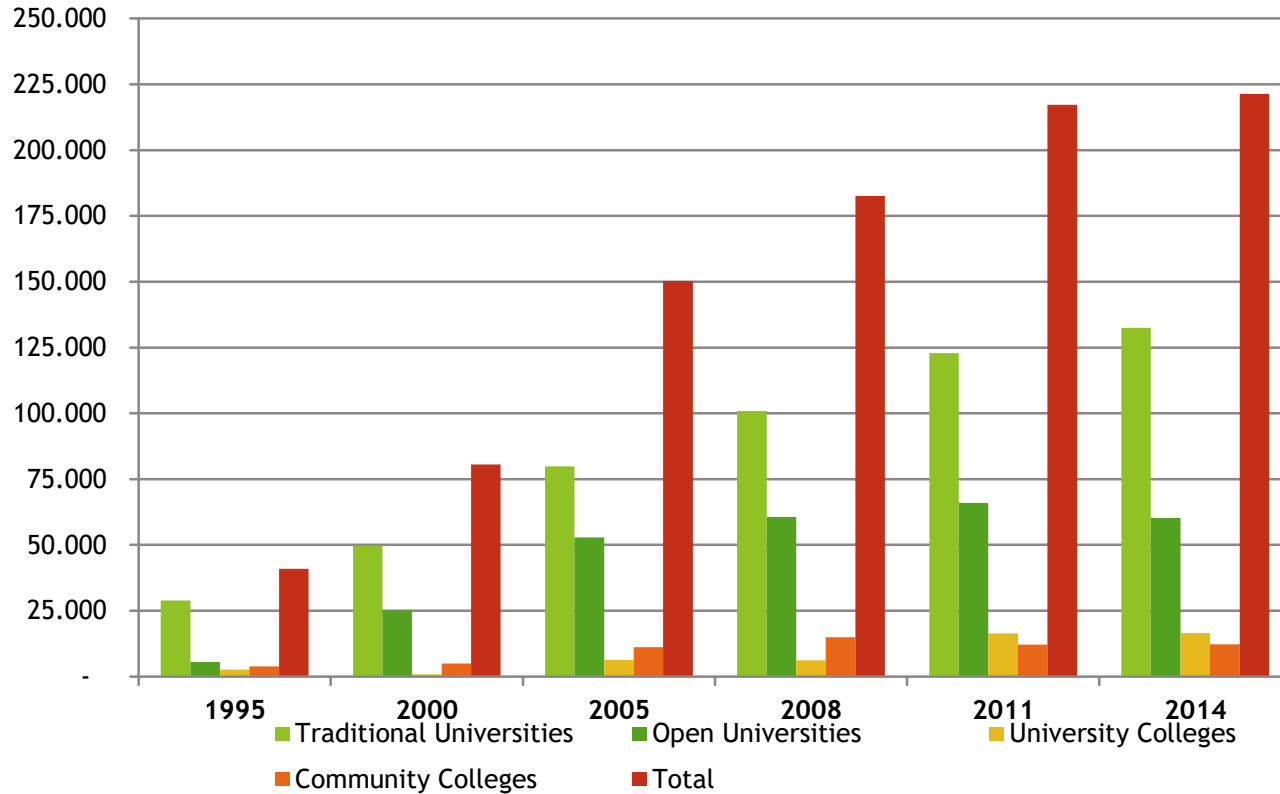
as of 2014/2015

Academic Programs

Higher Education Institutions		Number of Programs							
	# of Institutions	PhD	Masters	High Diploma	Bachelor	Associate Diploma	Teaching Diploma	Prof. Diploma	Total
Traditional Universities	14	4	194	21	575	26	13	13	846
Open Universities	1	-	-	-	30	-	2	-	32
University Colleges	19	-	-	-	46	114	-	4	164
Community Colleges	18	-	-	-	-	126	-	1	127
Total	52	4	194	21	651	266	15	18	1169

as of 2014/2015

Trends in Enrolled Students



Enrolled Students

Higher Education Institutions			Certificate Type							
	Total Number of Students	% form the Total	PhD	Master s	High Diploma	Bachelo r	Associat e Diploma	Teac. Diploma	Prof. Diploma	Other
Traditional Universities	132,449	59.8%	40	7751	194	121008	2624	631	147	54
Open Universities	60,230	27.2%	-	-	-	57405	-	691	-	2134
University Colleges	16,446	7.4%	-	-	-	5903	10431	-	112	-
Community Colleges	12,270	5.5%	-	-	-	-	12206	-	64	-
Total	221,395	100%	40	7,751	194	184,316	25,261	1,322	323	2,188

as of 2014/2015

Graduates

Higher Education Institutions			Certificate Type						
	Total Number of Students	% form the Total	PhD	Masters	High Diploma	Bachelor	Associate Diploma	Teaching Diploma	Prof. Diploma
Traditional Universities	25,166	62.8%	-	2,302	53	21,163	887	589	172
Open Universities	8,072	20.2%	-	-	-	7,702	-	370	-
University Colleges	3,592	9%	-	-	27	1,040	2,472	-	53
Community Colleges	3,213	8%	-	-	-	-	3,142	-	71
Total	40,043	100%	-	2,302	80	29,905	6,501	959	296

as of 2014/2015

Challenges Facing HE in Palestine

- Hardship imposed by occupation
 - ▶ Mobility restrictions after 2002 limited universities' geographic outreach.
- Limited and uncertain funding
 - ▶ Denial of work permits to international teaching faculty and visiting scholars
- Isolation imposed by travel restrictions
 - ▶ Denial of student visa to international students
 - ▶ Denial of some teaching faculty/students right of travel.
 - ▶ Arrests and incarceration of faculty and students
- Finding and retaining qualified teaching faculty
- Quality of school education

Education no longer a guarantee for economic prosperity...

- ▶ Local economy is aid-dependent and crippled by persistent political uncertainty.
- ▶ Youth unemployment rate is the highest in the MENA region at 37% (female 50%; male 35%)
- ▶ Women's participation in the workforce is limited to 16.7%;
- ▶ 43% of youth (15-29 yrs) are enrolled in educational institutions;
- ▶ Around 35,000 fresh graduates annually;
- ▶ Youth unemployment increases with education attainment: highest amongst diploma/bachelor degree holders at 53%.

Cooperation Possibilities

- Curricula Development
- Teaching Faculty Development
- Research collaborations
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Internationalization
- Student Training and increase of employability skills
- Staff Training

International Credit Mobility KA1 2015

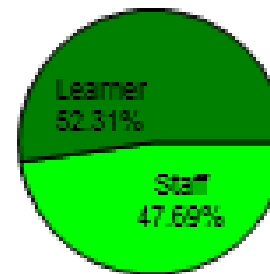
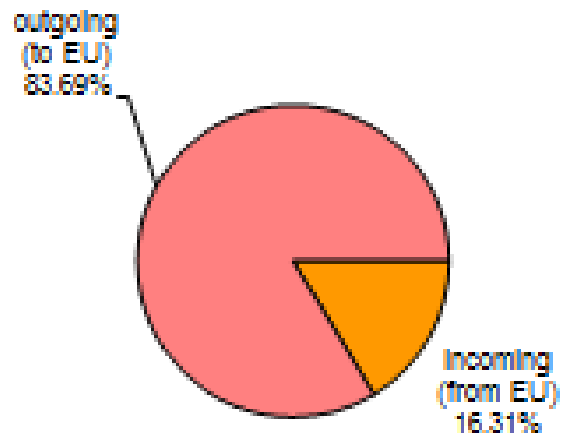


International Credit Mobility (KA107) 2015 Selection Results for Palestine

	Outgoing to EU	Incoming from EU	Total
Learner	155	15	170
Staff	117	38	155
Total	272	53	325

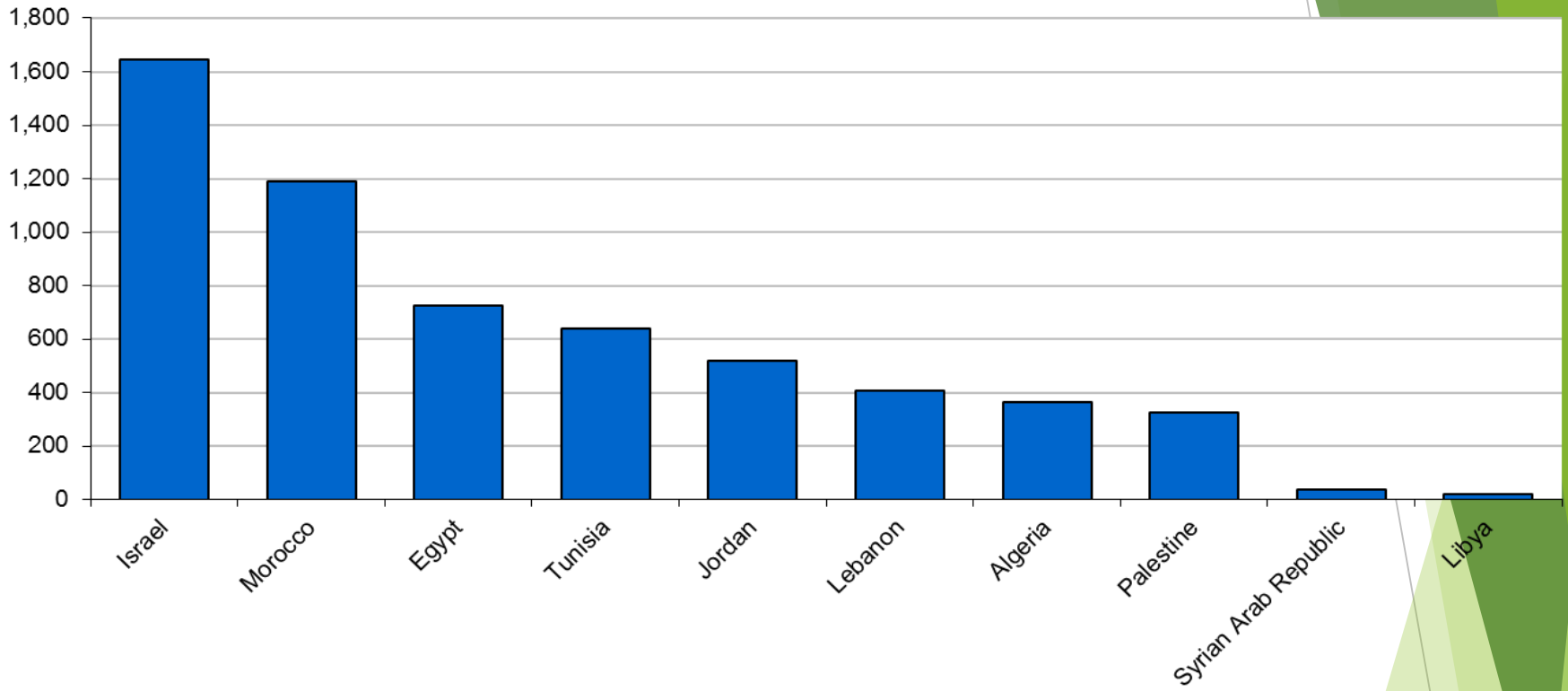


European
Commission



European

Number of Participants by Partner Country



BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

- ▶ **Birzeit University [BZU] is Palestine's first independent not-for-profit institution of higher education governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees. It embodies a success story, inspirational to all Palestinians. Since 1972, BZU has grown to become a leading university in the Middle East, on par with the very best. Our distinguished faculty combine scholarship and professional experience as former officials, diplomats, professionals, researchers, and scientists. Our students come from diverse backgrounds made possible by the university's commitment to provide equal opportunities for deserving individuals.**
- ▶ **BZU characteristic olive green campus lies on a hilltop on the outskirts of Birzeit, seven kilometers away Ramallah. It covers 40% of the 80 hectare-site and is constantly expanding and modernizing through generous donations from Palestinian philanthropists from the homeland and the Diaspora.**

Birzeit University

Academic Year 2015/2016

□ **Total Number of Students**

12,101

(BA: 10710), (graduates MA and PhD: 1290),

(101 diploma and others)

64% female 36 male

□ **Total number of faculty members**

529 (Full-time: 387, Part-time: 142)

Number of Academic Programs Offered

BA: 65

MA: 30

PhD: 1

Diploma: 2,

Palestine and Arabic Studies

► **Total: 99**

Mobility and Exchange Programs at Birzeit University

1. EU-funded Programs (Erasmus Mundus-Dunia Beam, Hermes, Avempace, Phoenix, Erasmus + ENPI-MEDMOBIL)
2. USA Mobility and Exchange- American Consulate and AMIDEAST
3. British Council
4. DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)
5. French Consulate
6. Memoranda of Understanding with higher education institutions worldwide
7. Others

Other Programs

- **Palestine and Arabic Studies Program**
(international students)
- **International Summer Work Camp**
(ten-day summer camp that focuses on community-oriented voluntary work, as well as cultural activities)

**Total Number of incoming and
outgoing mobilities in the last three
years**

~200 annually

Erasmus Mundus(Dunia Beam, Hermes,
Avempace, Phoenix)

Memoranda of Understanding

Palestine and Arabic Studies

International Summer Work Camp

Other projects

Challenges

- ❑ Language Barriers
- ❑ Accreditation of qualification
- ❑ Travel and Visa Issues (the need to offer three-month semesters to align with visa duration for international students)
- ❑ Lack Interpersonal skills
- ❑ Lack of adequate institutional support system
- ❑ Academic Calendar
- ❑ Cultural challenges
- ❑ Financial challenges

Challenges

Movement and access restrictions

- ▶ *Inability to recruit academics and students with foreign passports*
- ▶ *Foreign academics are less willing and able to consider taking up teaching and research posts in Palestinian institutions of higher education due to the arbitrary and unpredictable restrictions on entry and residency to which they may be subjected. (Academia Undermined, field research done by Ruhan Nagra, 2013)*

Impact

- ▶ Limited scope for university study
- ▶ Dependence on a small local pool of knowledge: Palestinian universities' difficulties in recruiting foreign faculty means universities have to resort to the very small pool of local Palestinian talent, despite the fact that Ministry of Education and University officials confirm that there is a significant reservoir of highly accomplished Palestinian academics working abroad ready to come as either permanent faculty or visiting professors.
- ▶ Recycling of knowledge and teaching methodologies
- ▶ Limited

Impact

- ▶ confines the experience of Palestinian students to a much narrower and more insular one than most universities worldwide, systematically limiting students' opportunities for self-realization and exploration. Interaction with international faculty who bring a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences is an invaluable contribution to an enriching education for its students, and to the creation of a true university experience, with all that the word signifies of diversity inclusiveness, and open, positive attitudes towards other cultures.

On Cosmopolitanism in Higher Education Institutions (Former University President)

- ▶ *Universities try to be cosmopolitan and it doesn't serve our students well that they are educated only by Palestinians. Like all self-respecting universities worldwide - we would like our university to be cosmopolitan both in faculty and student composition and in creating attitudes that are cosmopolitan amongst our students. I use the word cosmopolitan in the good sense of the word - in the sense of being open to other cultures, being adaptable, being willing to try and willing to listen and learn from other cultures and interact with them positively. We're thwarted in that effort of inculcating cosmopolitanism by the uniformity of our faculty. We would like to have foreign faculty - not just Palestinian academics holding foreign passports but also foreign academics - because that is part and parcel to what a university is. The word university in most languages indicates inclusiveness, universality, and we're consigned to a very narrow university experience that we provide our students in that respect, because of these difficulties.” (Birzeit University Former President)*

Improving the Present Situation of Mobility and Exchange

- ❑ Explicit internationalization strategy
- ❑ Developing information and support systems (administrative, linguistic, social, educational)
- ❑ Increased presence and visibility of Palestinian HEIs in EU countries
- ❑ Increased support for enabling foreign faculty and students who wish to join Palestinian HEIs
- ❑ Capacity building for beneficiaries especially students in life and interpersonal skills

Thank You

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Website: <http://www.birzeit.edu/>