



14.03.2024 | ד אדר ב' התשפד

BIU Community Outreach

Bar-Ilan University Students Empower Israeli Society Through Community Project Challenge



A new podcast focusing on the challenges facing Arab communities in Israel.

Initiatives to ease linguistic difficulties faced by immigrant students in Israeli middle schools and high schools and facilitate absorption of French immigrants into the Givat Shmuel community in central Israel.

A Big Brother type program pairing experienced French immigrants with recent immigrants in grades 1-12 for assistance in overcoming languages barriers and integrating into Israeli society.

A solution to help students of various mother tongues better understand academic terminologies presented in Hebrew.

Detailed plans for new sports and social services centers at Bar-Ilan University.

These are some of the many projects developed by students who just completed a new course promoting community outreach. Bar-Ilan University's French Department, in collaboration with the Learning and Teaching Division, spearheaded the innovative "Community Project Challenge," a Project-Based Learning (PBL) course aimed at addressing societal needs. Led by Professors Silvia Adler and Galia Yanoshevsky, the course initially focused on the needs of Israeli-Francophone communities. However, the course's scope expanded significantly in response to the prevailing war, encompassing issues pertinent to the entirety of Israeli society.


The diverse cohort of participants, including female reservists recently returned from Gaza and Arab Israelis from various backgrounds, brought unique perspectives to the table. Throughout the course, students engaged with community entrepreneurs, visited ongoing projects, and delved into the fabric of Israeli communities, ranging from urban initiatives to high-tech ventures and stories of immigration and assimilation.

One of the distinctive features of the course was its emphasis on student-driven community entrepreneurship. Proposals spanned various themes, all rooted in a profound understanding and sensitivity towards the communities and circles to which the students belonged. The projects could be categorized into four main areas:

- The war and its aftermath:** Projects under this category included initiatives like a community of women fighters led by Gal Shidlo and support groups for the families and friends of combatants.
- Supporting the Francophone community:** Students tackled challenges faced by the Francophone community in Israel, such as language barriers affecting children's integration into elementary schools and the complexities of closed communities' integration into Israeli society.
- Improving campus life and image:** Projects focused on enhancing student experience on campus while simultaneously contributing to the improvement of Bar-Ilan University's image.
- Fostering community and identity:** Initiatives within this category aimed at promoting intergenerational support and facilitating conversations on societal challenges within Arab communities, such as marriage and violence.

Through the "Community Project Challenge," Bar-Ilan University students not only demonstrated their academic prowess but also showcased their commitment to making a tangible impact on Israeli society. By addressing pressing issues with creativity and empathy, they exemplified the university's dedication to fostering community engagement and social responsibility.

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