



NOMINATION of ASPER-HUJI Innovate for Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center

1. CENTER RATIONALE:

Israel: As the bestselling book “Start Up Nation” suggests, a landlocked arid country based on immigration provides many challenges, and at the same time, many opportunities, to develop an entrepreneurial culture. The Hebrew University (HUJI) grew out of this background, attracting top level researchers from around the world over its 100 year history. Today HUJI boasts 8 Nobel laureates among its researchers and alumni. HUJI includes 24,000 students, 1,000+ faculty and 3,000 staff and is Israel’s highest rated University (consistently rated in the world’s top 100 universities).

ASPER-HUJI Innovate was opened as a result of a strategic decision by executive management (President, University CEO and TTO CEO) at HUJI to see Innovation and Entrepreneurship not just as a nice to have by-product of the world class research performed at the University, but as a critical part of the strategy to ensure the future of the University. ASPER-HUJI Innovate leverages the University’s innovation potential to solve substantial problems through entrepreneurship. The center promotes the University as a supportive environment for entrepreneurship, cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset and skills among students, researchers and staff and serves as a catalyst for the development of startups and social enterprises. As such, ASPER-HUJI Innovate is based on 4 pillars:

- **Grow our Innovation Ecosystem and Culture**
ASPER-HUJI Innovate creates and strengthens a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at HUJI. The intended impact will be an awareness of the value that Innovation and Entrepreneurship holds for students, administrative faculty, research faculty and alumni and the growth of the participation of these communities within our University.
- **Create New Ventures to Drive Impact**
ASPER-HUJI Innovate serves as a platform to assist students, faculty and alumni to create successful and sustainable ventures that are moved from the Lab into the world. ASPER-HUJI Innovate supports the creation of ventures with a positive Impact on society and the world.
- **Train Entrepreneurial Leaders that are Future Proof**
Students at HUJI will enter a workplace that will be fundamentally affected by technological disruption in the coming generation. We believe that many of the skills and capabilities required to succeed as an Entrepreneur are also those needed to be successful in a “disrupted” work world. ASPER-HUJI Innovate develops and offers a mix of academic and practical courses and workshops to help students become better ready to survive in tomorrow’s challenging world.
- **Build ASPER-HUJI Innovate Sustainability**
As a startup itself, ASPER-HUJI Innovate must find a sustainable model to ensure its future. We use a three pronged model that includes Public funding, Philanthropic funding and For Profit services.

Key Tenets: HUJI Innovate believes in the following:

1. **Innovation can be found ANYWHERE:** We believe that All disciplines are relevant for innovating.
2. **Innovation needs DIVERSITY:** We believe that diverse groups (gender, disciplinary and cultural) will exhibit more innovation. Jerusalem is a diverse and complicated city (multiple religions, multiple cultures, many political problems) and can act as an excellent feeder for this.
3. **Entrepreneurship skills are IMPORTANT FOR ALL:** We believe that All students should have the opportunity to explore how entrepreneurial skills can help them survive the coming disruption in the world of work. We will use a mixture of Active Learning and Learning by Doing to do this.



Ecosystem: ASPER–HUJI Innovate does not live in a vacuum. We are part of the University, which itself is part of the City. Part of our vision is to strengthen the existing ecosystem while creating a meeting point between the University, the City, the Region, Industry and our educational partners. As such, we have founded and launched the JLM IMPACT consortium that includes the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and the Azrieli College of Engineering. A goal is to work with all parties in the ecosystem to identify problems and work to solve them together in a cooperative and practical manner.

Process: The ASPER–HUJI Innovate process includes a 3 tier system that acts as a funnel:

1. **INSPIRE:** By creating visibility, student clubs, events and competitions, HUJI Innovate strives to make sure that all campuses buzz with excitement around innovation and entrepreneurship.
2. **LEARN:** A set of for credit and extracurricular courses and workshops enables participants to learn about Innovation and Entrepreneurship as well as develop and hone their soft skills.
3. **BUILD:** A set of researcher business–opportunity–exploration Workshops and Venture Creation Studios help students, faculty, staff and alumni learn how to go from idea to validated business model. We now include initial POC funding for relevant ventures.

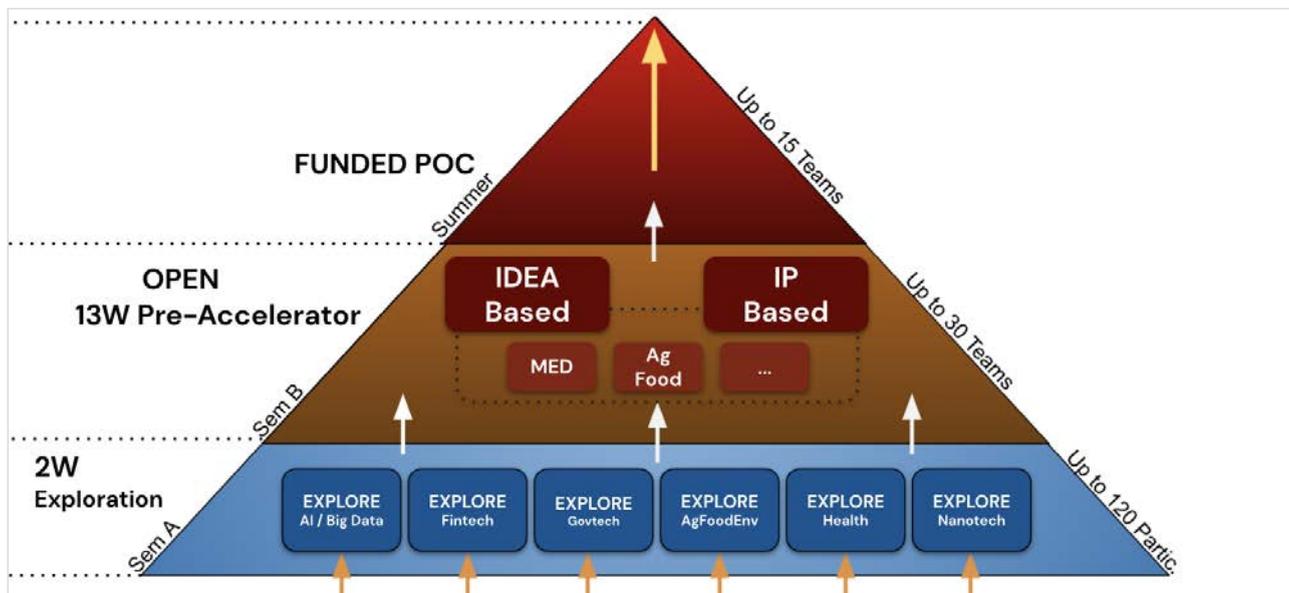


Figure 1: Our BUILD Funnel. Specific verticals will be supported according to each cohort's accepted ventures

2. PRODUCT MARKET FIT:

As any startup that is developing a product, we must work to ensure that it fits the needs of the market. In our first full year (2019) we tested the waters with our initial offering. In 2020 and 2021 we have been refining our activities to better fit the needs of our target audiences and are seeing impressive uptake in participation (i.e. our communities have grown from approx. 2,000 participants in 2019 to almost 5,500 in 2021). In every program, course, workshop or activity that we run – we also measure – using the gathered data and insights to refine and develop our work plan going forward. Examples of our activities are shown on the next page:

INSPIRE

EVENTS: More than 50 Events in 2021 with more than 4,800 participants



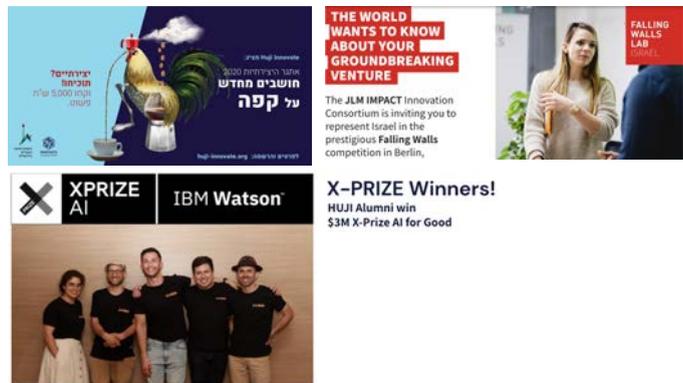
COMMUNITIES: We have created 9 Communities with 5,500 members, and are creating more



LEADERSHIP INCUBATOR: Training new leaders to create and grow our communities



COMPETITIONS



HACKATHONS: Close to 800 Participants in 4 Hackathons



LEARN

OUR FIRST MOOC:
Launched in Mar. 2021 with 250 Students (seats filled in 4 hours)



Ran our First INVESTORS COURSE
with 30 students
(over 150 applicants)



STAFF INTRAPRENEURSHIP Course. 400 Staff participants.



FUTURE FIT Staff Training
209 lecturers learned new Tech tools in workshops





BUILD

OPEN EXPLORE: Researcher Business Opportunity Workshop (+100 participants)



OPEN VENTURE CREATION STUDIO
Our third Cohort with 15 Teams + POC Funding



THE SOCIAL ACCELERATOR:
6 teams In Cooperation with the Student Union



HIF - The HUJI Innovate Fund
A philanthropic Gift enabled us to offer \$10,000 POC grants

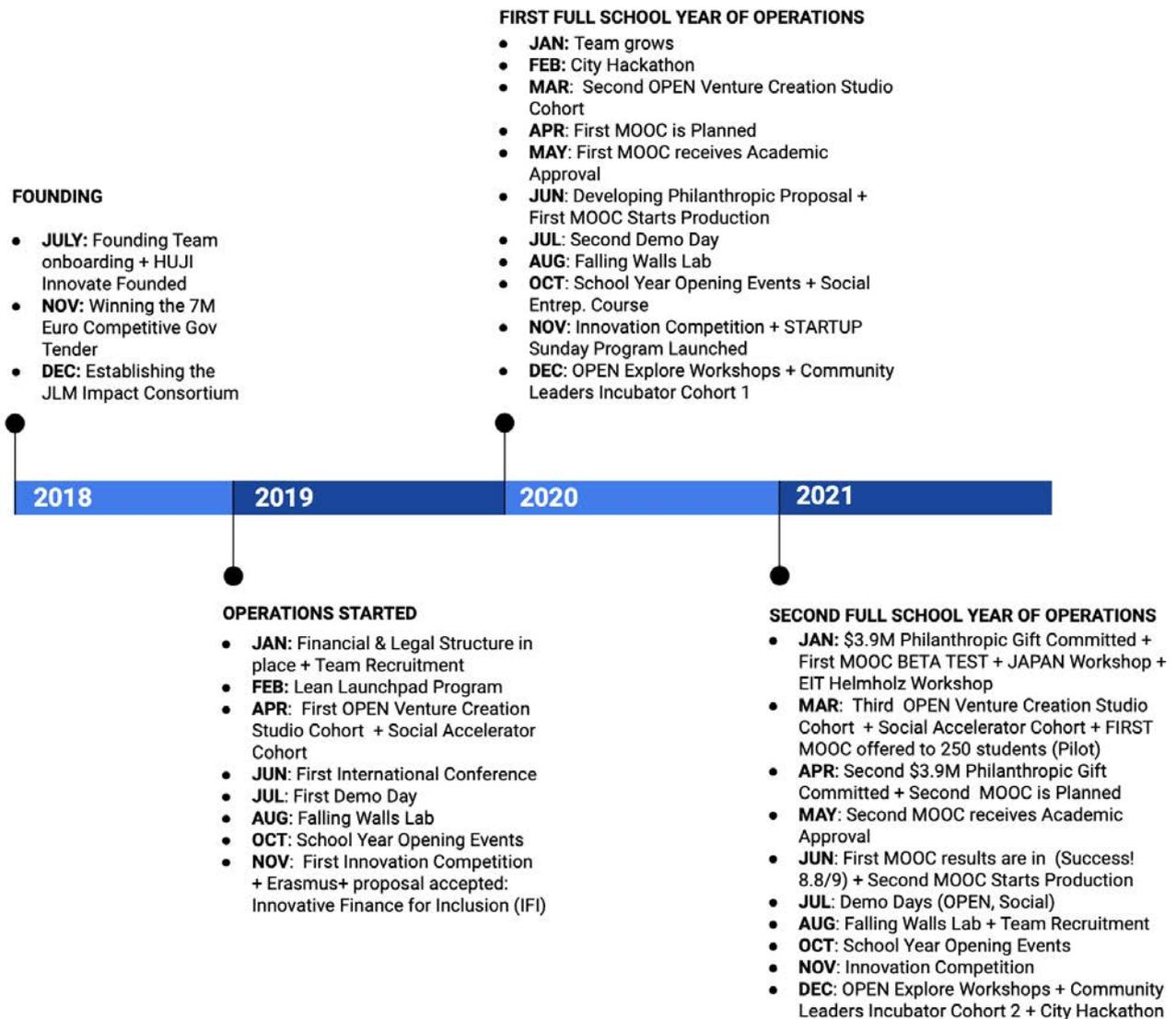


HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT FUND
A POC fund in cooperation with the Council for Higher Education





3. Our 3.5 Year TIMELINE (10,000 foot view) : July 2018 – Dec 2021



4. ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. Gathering more than \$19M in funding:

- Winning a €7M Competitive Grant:** We are proud to report that we led the JLM Impact consortium to win a Government Competition for the development of Entrepreneurial Centers and have been granted the sum of 7M Euros for the next 4 years.
- Creating a 10 year funding commitment of \$10.9M (\$1.1M+ per year) for the center:**
 - Receiving a **\$3.9M gift** from The ASPER Foundation. This 10 year gift will bring \$390,000 per year in funding and includes a 10 year Naming of the center.
 - Receiving a **matching \$3.9M gift** from another Philanthropist (asked to remain anonymous) that will generate another \$390,000 in annual income for 10 years.
 - Receiving a University **commitment for \$3.1M** over 10 years, resulting in \$300,000 in annual income for 10 years.

Overall – we have gathered **commitments for a total of \$19.1M** since we started operating in 2019 (including the €7M competitive grant above).



2. Creation of the JLM Impact Consortium: As presented above, we were able to lead the creation of the 3 university consortium focused on the creation of positive impact on the city and region, for all its diverse cultures (Jews, Christians and Muslims), across socio-economic, political and gender borders.



3. Success in international competitions:

- a. Amit Rimon, an MD/PhD student at HUJI, won the Israel Falling Walls Lab competition that we run. We trained and prepared him for the 2020 world finals in which he went on to be in the **top 10 worldwide** (over 1,200 competitors from 100+ countries).
- b. Second place winners in our Falling Walls Lab competition in 2020, **ZZapp Malaria**, were asked to take part in the world finals. In June 2021 they **won the global X-PRIZE competition in AI for Good** (we hosted them for the finals in our center) and received a **\$3M prize** from IBM.

4. Creating Measurable Impact at HUJI: The numbers below present our main activities at the Hebrew University between Oct 2020–Aug 2021. Below that you can see growth since launch.

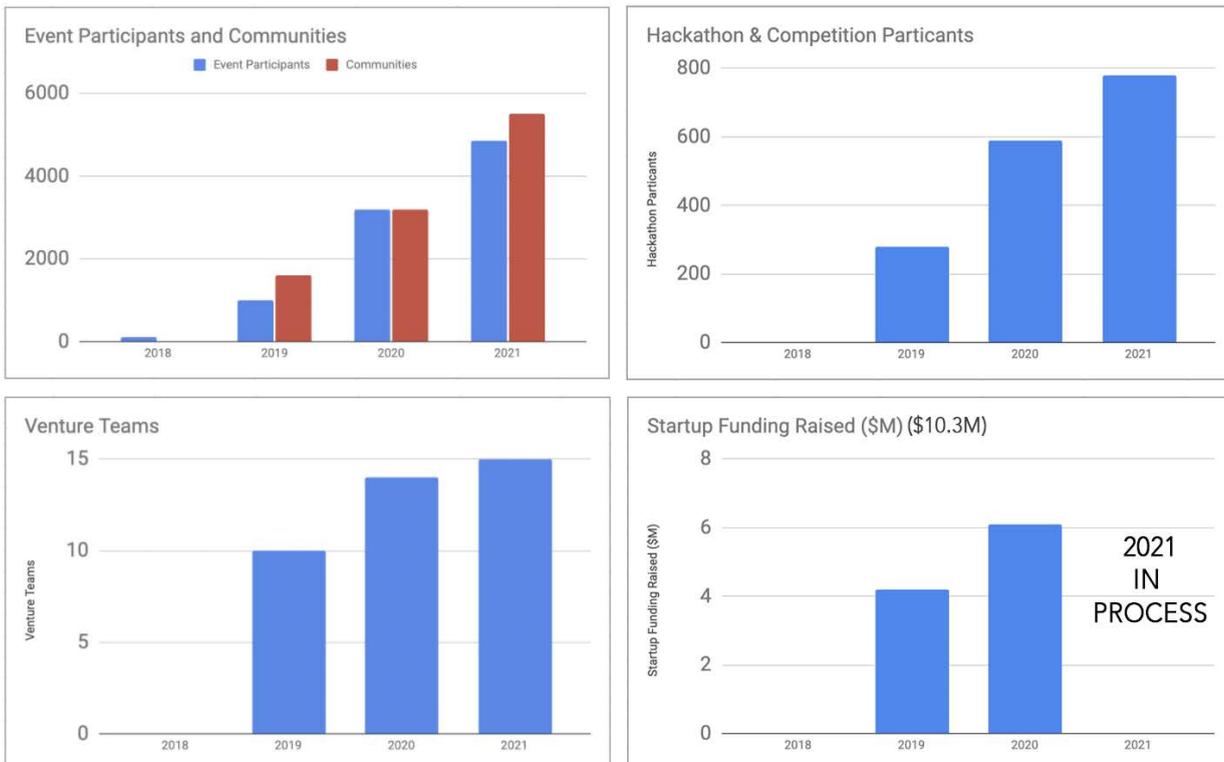
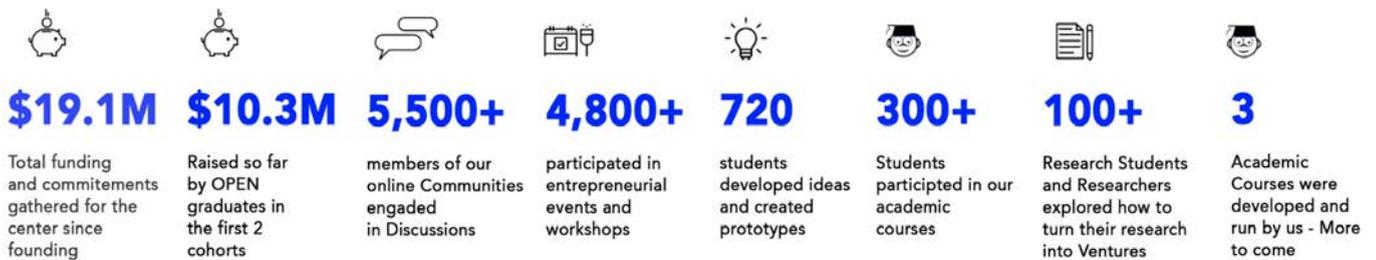


Figure 2: Growth Since launch on 4 key metrics



Summary: Even though HUJI Innovate is only 3 years old, we have driven measurable impact that is highlighted in the achievements presented above. From an unknown entity, we have become visible to thousands of students, faculty, staff and alumni. Every week we receive multiple requests for information, meetings and collaborations. Because of this success, HUJI executive management has decided to promote HUJI Innovate into the level of a University Authority, Our mandate from the University and strategy going forward lead us to strengthening our efforts with deep tech researchers, the development of an entrepreneurship Postdoc program, as well as developing our future sustainability with for profit programs. Happily we have been able to gather more than \$10.9M of additional funding commitments (for a total of \$19.1M since founding the center 3.5 years ago), buying us a decade of time to continue growing and developing the center.

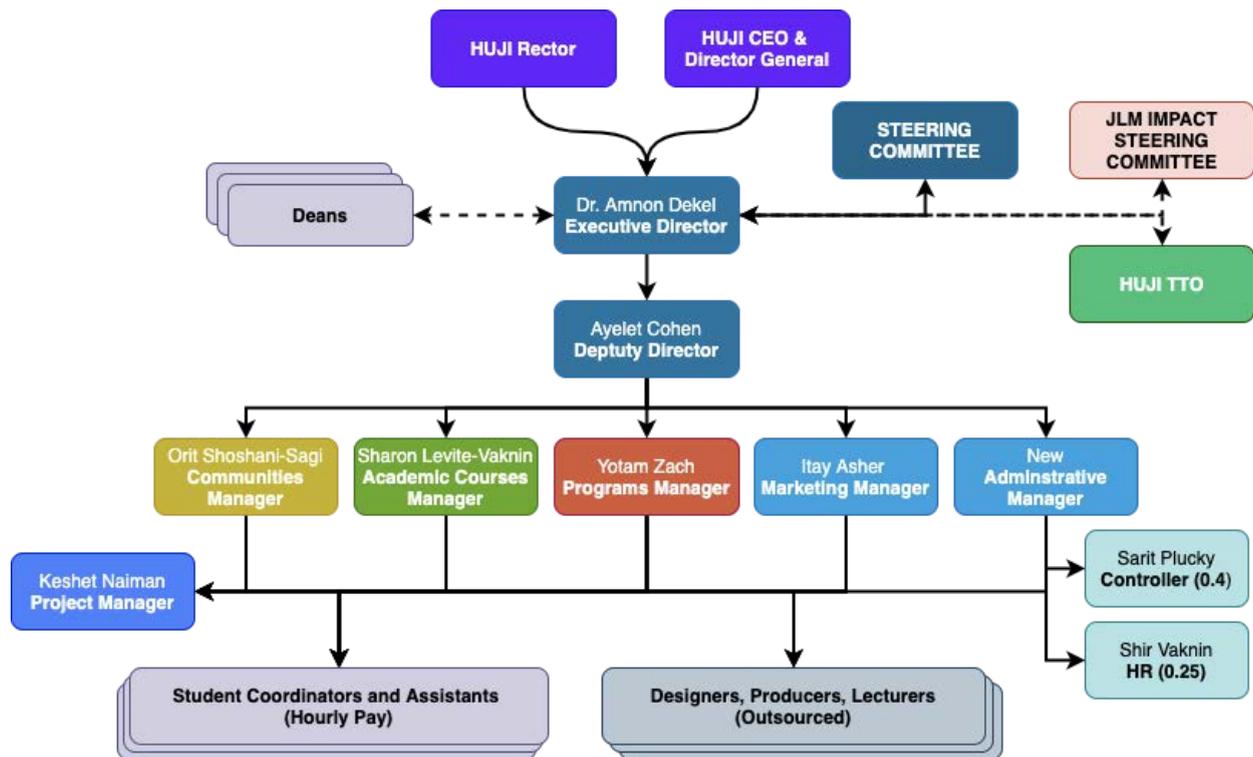
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APPENDIX

1. CENTER Org Chart:



As can be seen in the org Chart above, HUJI Innovate has been able to place itself in a critical juncture point in the University:

- **From above** the Executive Director reports directly to both the University Rector (who is the Highest Authority for all Academic affairs at HUJI) and to the University CEO and Director General (who is the highest administrative authority at the University). They report directly to the President, and thus ASPER-HUJI Innovate is highly visible and in daily communication with the most important authorities at the University. This puts HUJI Innovate at the level of a University Authority (like the R&D Authority which manages approximately \$300M a year).
- **Horizontally** the Executive Director of ASPER-HUJI Innovate interacts directly with all University Deans, enabling him to work with them to hear their needs as well as to make the services of ASPER-HUJI Innovate accessible within all faculties. At the same time ASPER-HUJI Innovate has a Steering Committee headed by the highly regarded [Prof. Shlomo Magdassi](#) (apart from being a successful entrepreneur in his own right) and includes representatives from most Faculties (represented by deans, vice-deans and researchers), the Students Union CEO and city representatives (the Jerusalem Development Authority).

2. OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. **Community Leaders Incubator:** We developed a unique incubator that trains community leaders in planning, designing and developing special-interest communities that are related to our core mission. Our first incubator trained 16 students from different faculties. The graduating cohort has so far developed 9 new communities in areas such as Arab Women Entrepreneurs, Engineering, Brain Sciences, and more.



Cohort 1 of the Community Leader Incubator

2. **Our First MOOC is a Success!** In the spring semester of 2021 we ran our first MOOC to a limited group of 250 Students. After spending a year planning, getting academic approval for the course, producing it and then running a Beta test with 6 students, we felt ready. But knowing that things can go wrong, we opted to limit the amount of students so that if things do go wrong, at least it will be in front of a limited audience. Only 4 hours after opening the course for signups the course filled up and we had to close registrations. This showed us that there is a lot of pent up demand in the University for such a course. The course is in English and is run on the Israeli version of EdX, called Campus.il. We are happy to report that the course has been a great success. Completion ratings were very high (88%) and the course received rave reviews by students (8.8/9 !) and the lecturers (Dr. Amnon Dekel, Executive Director of the center and Sharon Levite-Vaknin our Academic courses manager) received a score of 8.9/9 ! We are now getting set to scale the course as well as to offer it on the international EdX platform next year.



"I really enjoyed the course and the form of learning and the videos which was really fun to watch and contributed to my knowledge. Most importantly - I was exposed to the world of entrepreneurship and innovation in the most clear and experiential way"