

The Bengis Center for Entrepreneurship and Hi-Tech Management

Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management



Highlights of 2013 Activities

March 2014



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
Bengis Center for Entrepreneurship
& Hi-Tech Management
Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business & Management

The Bengis Center for Entrepreneurship and Hi-Tech Management was established with great vision and foresight at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev's (BGU) Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management (GGFBM) to:

- promote a spirit of entrepreneurship, support its practice, and to conduct research in this area
- as a means of creating an ecosystem of innovation with far-reaching impact in Beer-Sheva, the Negev region, and the State of Israel.

The Bengis Center is dedicated to educating Israel's future cadre of business leaders and scientists and instilling within them the interest and skills needed to transform ideas into viable ventures and businesses. The Center serves as a catalyst, fostering entrepreneurship by hosting special events; providing unique educational activities, services including curriculum development, practical student coursework, and research; and initiating partnerships and collaborations.

In addition, an inextricable part of the Bengis Center's activities are done in effort to strengthen ties with the community; the Center reaches out to the community by implementing a range of activities to educate the public and stimulate interest in entrepreneurship and innovation in order to promote these forces of socio-economic development in the Negev. Over the years, the Bengis Center has advanced and become a recognized leader in entrepreneurship-based growth and development. In doing so, the Center helps define the entrepreneurial character of the business and economic sector in the Negev and across Israel.

Throughout 2013, the Bengis Center was involved with an impressive range of programs cultivating entrepreneurship and innovation. We are pleased to present the major highlights of the past year. Additional details follow in the appendix.

HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Business Plan Competition "From Idea to Enterprise"

The Bengis Center has developed BGU's Business Plan Competition, "From Idea to Enterprise," into a fundamental tool for promoting business ideas, developing skills, and encouraging entrepreneurship. The Competition provides a framework that enables participating students and faculty members to acquire the knowledge, experience, and tools needed to develop an idea into a business venture. The Bengis Center offers courses, workshops, and individual mentoring and consulting in order to support these efforts and develop a viable project grounded in a professional business plan.

This past year, over 250 students submitted 87 projects. Among them were business plans for new ventures and plans for leveraging existing businesses and organizations from the public, business, industrial, and social sectors. The plans were based on extensive preparation, including: market research, strategy development, and comprehensive assessment of the venture's

feasibility. The 2013 contest featured two tracks: the Hi-Tech and Innovation track and the Socio-Economic Development of the Negev track.

The Competition continues to expand. This year, in addition to prizes awarded to the top three projects in each track, additional projects received special citations recognizing their unique strengths. During the opening ceremony for the 2014 contest, winners of the 2013 competition were announced, and a third track was introduced targeted at startup companies and entrepreneurs in the area of clean tech. The goal of the new track is to promote innovation, create and strengthen business opportunities, and contribute to the development of clean tech in the Negev.

The growth of the Business Plan Competition to include three tracks demonstrates the manner in which the Competition has become central to regional development. More and more organizations and regional authorities have become interested in entrepreneurship and collaboration with the Bengis Center. The new citations awarded reflect the high quality of the projects and the need to recognize the range of innovation found in the business plans.

The Innovation Un-Conference 2013

The Un-Conference is now in its fourth year, and it has become a tradition at BGU! This year it was the largest and most important event of its kind in Israel, drawing over 3,200 attendees to BGU to network and celebrate innovation, including individuals from the financial market; well-known investors and financing players; representatives of venture capital funds and startups; entrepreneurs; company representatives; members of the public sector, such as Israel's Chief Scientist and his team; researchers; and of course, students. Furthermore, over 130 participants took an active role as speakers, panel members, technology presenters, and more. During the event over 80 speeches and short workshops on entrepreneurship and innovation took place, specific areas were designated for the display of technologies, and participants participated in discussions, panel discussions, and networking gatherings. In addition, the presentation of senior projects took place at the Un-Conference, and this forum provided the opportunity to showcase the projects of over 1,000 students from the Faculty of Engineering Sciences and the GGFBM and promote the ingenuity of BGU students and their efforts. The posters exhibited at the event presented our students' accomplishments and their role as a source of innovation in the Negev. These activities form the core of the event, and each year the Un-Conference continues to evolve and add new elements, always building on the success of past years.

This year, every 30 minutes participants could choose between 12-15 lectures, workshops, round table discussions, panels, and even a festival. Five panels on the subject of Negev development were held during the course of the day! Throughout the event anyone could set up a display in a designated central area. This twist created a buzz of activity and made it possible for entrepreneurs, global corporations, and students to display their technologies, products, or services. A number of companies set up stands at the event, among them, Elbit Systems who

used the event as a premiere launch for their smart pilot-helmets and IBM who used the event to recruit participants to try various products, such as a social network for developers.

In order to tap into the concentration of national leadership present at BGU during the Innovation Un-Conference, BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi hosted a new gathering, the President's Event, an informal forum established to bring together many of the high profile individuals present at the Un-Conference to discuss and promote regional development.

Further demonstrating the stature the Un-Conference has achieved, this year's event also served as a launch for Elbit Systems' Incubit incubator, a new hi-tech incubator focusing on investments in the electronic and information systems fields. The incubator will be located at the Advanced Technologies Park adjacent to BGU's Marcus Family Campus in Beer-Sheva, and it kicked off with great fanfare at the Un-Conference by Elbit executives, Prof. Carmi, and the Mayor of Beer-Sheva.

Global Entrepreneurship Week 2013

International Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) provides a forum to promote entrepreneurship worldwide, including Israel! Year after year, the Bengis Center is at the helm in a leadership role of the major GEW activities in the Negev which took place November 17 - 22.

The aim of the initiative is to promote innovation and broaden awareness of entrepreneurship within academia and society. Each year, the Bengis Center expands GEW's repertoire of programs in the Negev, and this year was no exception. Approximately 2,000 participants took part in a wide range of activities, including new events such as a "Hackathon" (a marathon for application development held in cooperation with Google), a women's entrepreneurship conference, and a panel on the topic of entrepreneurship in education. These new elements reflect collaboration, and this year's events were executed with individuals from the business and public sectors and in conjunction with organizations such as Keren Shemesh, the Young Entrepreneurs Organization, and the American Embassy. As always, GEW programs were open to interested parties throughout the Negev region and Israel. Creative attempts to inspire and educate the general public included the increasingly successful Entrepreneurship at the Bar events in which the topic of innovation is presented in a more informal venue.

This multipronged approach strives to make entrepreneurship and innovation accessible to all. Our efforts are rewarded by the increasing number of participants drawn to GEW programs, as well as the growing interest in collaboration by community organizations.

Additional Special Events Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovation

As in the past, the Bengis Center held a number of unique events promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and thinking “outside the box” throughout the year. One of the most engaging events was the TEDxBGU conference with an audience of over 400. TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience, in the spirit of ideas worth spreading. The essence of TEDx is one of collaborative interaction and this, along with the Bengis Center’s focus on entrepreneurship and innovation, makes for a great combination, and the conference has become an integral part of the Bengis Center’s annual activities. The student-led BGU event was coordinated in partnership with BGU’s American Medical Student Association. This year’s theme was “re:THINK: How does a willingness to rethink, revisit, and reimagine enable us to be innovative members of a global community?”

The Big Data Conference at BGU also took place, in collaboration with the Department of Information Systems Engineering, and focused on sharing information and strengthening connections in the big data field. Business information represents an underdeveloped opportunity to turn knowledge into profit, and the field strives to make use of the vast resource of big data. The conference brought leaders in the field from academia and industry together at BGU to share innovative ideas and connect.

ONGOING ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Bengis Center is dedicated to educating Israel’s future business leaders and leaders and instilling within them the interest and skills needed to translate ideas into viable ventures and processes. The Bengis Center is based at the GGFBM, both physically and strategically, and from this position the Bengis Center can maximize its impact in the areas of entrepreneurship and innovation. The Faculty is the Bengis Center’s primary partner and is involved with nearly all of the Center’s activities. Thus, a great deal of entrepreneurship education takes place in ongoing academic activities within the framework of courses and seminars in the classroom or in the field. Content is interwoven into existing academic courses, and the Bengis Center also offers specialized courses to help build entrepreneurship skills and inspire innovation.

Each year, the Bengis Center strives to introduce new material and broaden and enrich the students’ experience. During 2013, the following new components were added: a Brazil seminar as part of the *Innovation and Entrepreneurship in a Growing Economy: Brazil* course and tours and site visits for third year students from the GGFBM’s Department of Management to support their senior projects.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES, COLLABORATION, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Entrepreneurship knows no boundaries, and the Bengis Center fosters a spirit of innovation that emanates from the University into the community and beyond. The Bengis Center reaches out, forming natural partnerships with BGU’s budding alumni groups and collaboration with local organizations and international entities and shares its expertise and experience with the diverse

Negev population, including the seniors and youth in the local community. The end result is a variety of engaging activities and programming open to students, alumni, and the public that inspire innovation and provide tools for entrepreneurship. In 2013, collaborations included involvement with the launch of the Negev Alumni Club and the BGU Managers Club, two new BGU alumni initiatives, new collaboration with MindCET, an educational innovation center in the Negev, and more. The Bengis Center also stepped into a new role and serves as a resource (alongside the US Embassy) to a prestigious program of the United States State Department that strives to advance female entrepreneurs.

Each activity or collaboration brings with it the potential of future partnerships and new endeavors. The Bengis Center continues to cultivate new relationships and projects, facilitating increased innovation and entrepreneurship at every opportunity. We thank you for your commitment and support of our efforts. Together we have created an ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation in the Negev which will continue to grow in the years to come.

Each year we look forward with pride to sharing this report presenting the fruits of our labors. We are pleased to provide more extensive details in the appendix that follows.

APPENDIX

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Business Plan Competition “From Idea to Enterprise”

Hi-Tech and Innovation Track

- First place was awarded to the team of Asaf Eshel, Yogev Peretz, and Eliran Kedoshim who developed a new social application for students. This tool presents social activities and services available on campus and helps students navigate the University, adjust to campus life, and access services and activities that interest them.
- The second place winner was Efi Shema with Estateya, a new platform specializing in real estate investment. The real estate field has undergone significant change and crises during the last few years, and these circumstances have opened up new investment possibilities and drawn new people, with little experience, to the field. The Estateya platform is the first of its kind and serves as a game-changer. Each user has their own profile that includes details regarding their investment interests, networks that are being formed, etc., and the platform enables those without prior experience to effectively and easily locate and invest in real estate while gaining the ability to evaluate the market.
- Third place went to Arie Meirovich for developing a platform that links small and medium businesses in order to improve their trading/ purchasing power and strengthen their position when negotiating with large suppliers, particularly those that promote their services with coupons, websites, and social networks.

This year, in addition to the awards given to the Competition’s top three business plans, several projects received special commendation:

- **Project Leveraging a Hi-Tech Business**
The plan assessed viable strategies for successfully introducing radar products into the European market for Magna BSP.
- **Most Creative Project**
The project provided strategic formation and viability assessment for initiating a service that provides advanced photography and documentation of sports training at selected sports facilities.
- **Most Promising Project**
The BGU Racing Group designs and constructs racing cars, and the business plan assessed opportunities to generate financing and investment for the first years of the company’s operation.

Socio-Economic Development of the Negev Track

- First place was awarded to Nurit Osadon for her business plan for a new project, Accessible Hospital, developed to provide informational resources to patients at the Soroka University Medical Center. Patients are often unaware of important information regarding their hospitalization and benefits. The availability and accessibility of information can improve a patient's hospital experience and recovery. Nurit teamed up with a partner from the community participating in a BGU course on social entrepreneurship open to the public. With the assistance of representatives from the Bengis Center and the GGFBM, the pair developed the project. Accessible Hospital is currently being implemented for the first time at one of Soroka's inpatient units with the aim of expanding the project to other hospital units in the future.
- Second place went to the team of Dana Abraham, Shiran Bazaz, Alina Melamed, Liron Pashe, and Inbar Kirshentzweige and their business plan consisting of a branding proposal for the nearby Bedouin community of Rahat. In preparing the business plan, the group examined the roots of Rahat's negative image, and the business plan suggested different ways to improve this image in order to draw people and commerce to Rahat, increase employment opportunities, and develop an economic base. The business plan is currently being implemented and business connections with the Jewish community are being reestablished in order to strengthen the city's economic standing. This plan also has the potential to contribute significantly to numerous businesses in Rahat's Bedouin sector.
- Third place went to Shani Berginer, Idan Yechezkal, and Maayan Cohen who prepared a business plan for branding and promoting a tourist hiking trail surrounding the city of Beer-Sheva. The team identified different target markets and developed a marketing strategy for each market in order to increase awareness of the trail, attract more visitors, and promote tourism in Beer-Sheva.

In addition, the following projects received special commendation:

- **Project Leveraging Small and Medium Sized Business Enterprises (SMEs)**
A bakery in the nearby community of Lehavim, Dosha Pastry Boutique and Café, was the focus of this project aimed at strengthening the business and making it more profitable. The business plan recommended analysis of the current operation of the business, evaluation of the market and opportunities, and strategies for future growth.
- **Negev Development Project**
This business plan centered on a coaching and training program for youth operated with the corporate support of EMC. The program provides technical education and training to local youth in order to address the shortage of skilled personnel in the region. The business plan provided a framework to assess the program and improve it.
- **Social Project**
A new program, "Living in the Negev," was created to encourage settlement of the Negev by providing an opportunity for youth and students to join a community, build a career,

and pursue social and community projects. The business plan centered on strengthening the program in order to maximize its impact on individuals and the region.

The award ceremony took place during Global Entrepreneurship Week in November, and the Sonnenfeldt Auditorium was crowded on this occasion, with an audience of 450. As each winner was announced, the winning team members went to the stage to accept their award presented by rector Prof. Zvi Hacoheh; Prof. Dafna Schwartz, director of the Bengis Center and head of the MBA track in Entrepreneurship and Hi-Tech Management at the GGFBM Department of Business Administration; and Dr. Orna Berry, EMC Vice President, CEO of EMC's Center of Excellence in Israel, and chairperson of the competition's panel of judges. A feeling of pride was felt by all present as representatives from each team spoke passionately about their projects, and students were cheered on by their fans (friends and family). The three winning teams in each track won prizes worth \$2,000, \$1,500, and \$1000, respectively.

The prestigious panel of judges included senior representatives of academia and industry:

- Dr. Orna Berry – EMC vice president and CEO of EMC's Center of Excellence in Israel
- Dr. Yitzhak Sharir – Israeli entrepreneur involved in hi-tech and startups, former President and CEO of Sapiens International Corporation
- Zion Bitton – CEO of MATI Beer-Sheva
- Prof. Arie Ovadia – managing director of Shamrock Israel Growth Fund, Chairman of Teva Naot and Silynx, director of Israel Discount Bank and the Strauss Group
- Arnon Kashansky – treasurer of the Yoav Regional-Council, director of the southern branch of the Manufacturers Association of Israel and academic advisor at BGU
- BGU faculty members: Prof. Amos Drory, Prof. Oded Lowengart, Dr. Yotam Lurie, Prof. Joseph Kost, and Prof. Schwartz

Introducing the Clean Tech Track

The 2014 Business Plan Competition includes a new track designated for startup companies and entrepreneurs in the clean tech field. The goal of this track is to contribute to the development of the clean tech sector in the Negev by creating and strengthening business opportunities and further foster regional development through direct investment in the advancement of clean tech. The clean tech arm of the competition is administered by the Bengis Center and supported by the Negev Funding Coalition.

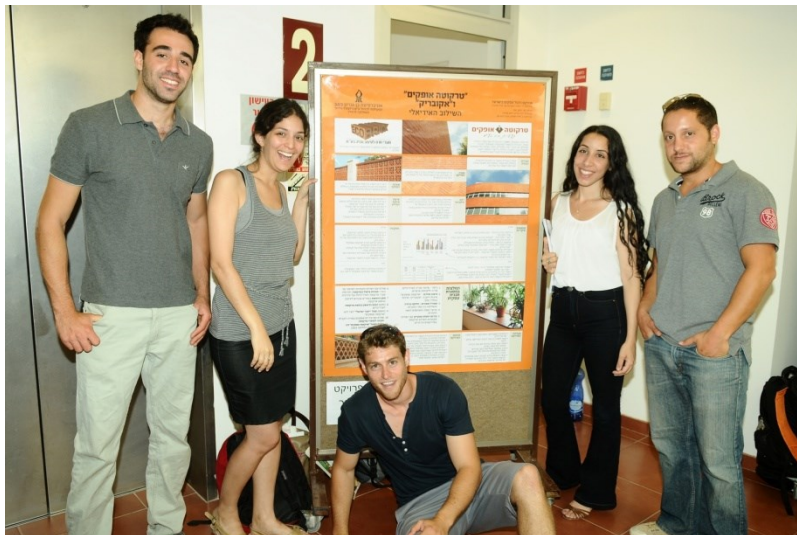
The contest is primarily directed at businesses and entrepreneurs in the field of clean tech and participation provides entrants the opportunity to receive significant exposure, impact regional growth, and strengthen their ties to the community. In this track, the two winning groups will receive prizes worth \$30,000 and \$50,000 to further their business idea. The competition

promises to contribute to growth in the clean tech field in the Negev and inspire innovation in this emerging area.

The Innovation Un-Conference 2013



This year's Innovation Un-Conference drew thousands to BGU, among them were Israeli hi-tech guru, Dr. Yossi Vardi; managing director of Google Israel, South Africa, and Greece; Meir Brand; and many others. The following quote sums it up well: "Whoever wants to know what innovation is, doesn't need to search for it in Google, they just need to come here, to BGU," said Brand, "Essentially everything begins and ends with desire. The amazing projects that you see here are a result of that passion, that strong desire that motivates students to curiosity and action, the results of which you see at this amazing conference."



This year's Innovation 2013 event also welcomed Ormat CEO, Yehuda Bronicki; Dr. Yossi Vardi of ICQ fame; Dr. Orna Berry, CEO of EMC Israel; Haim Russo of Elbit Systems; Yair Sarusi of Bank Hapoalim; representatives of IBM, Microsoft, AT&T; and other well-known multinational business leaders to campus.

During the opening ceremony hosted by Dr. Vardi, Prof. Dafna Schwartz, Prof. Amos Drory, Haim Russo, Prof. Joseph Kost, and others made remarks ([click to see the opening ceremony](#)). Throughout the event, there was an open discussion with the participation of Dr. Vardi and Meir Brand ([clip](#)).

In addition, some of the prominent attendees shared their impressions of the event in the following video clips:

BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi ([clip](#)); Zion Biton, CEO of Mati Beer-Sheva ([clip](#)); Dean of the GGFBM Prof. Oded Lowengart ([clip](#)); Dr. Nimrod Kozlovsky, venture partner, JVP ([clip](#)); Meir Brand, CEO of Google Israel ([clip](#)); Dr. Yossi Vardi ([clip](#)); Yair Seroussi, chairman of Bank Hapoalim ([clip](#)); Jon Medved, CEO of OurCrowd ([clip](#)); Amir Hayek, director general of the Manufacturers Association of Israel ([clip](#)); Israel's Chief Scientist, Avi Hasson ([clip](#)); Dr. Eli Oppen ([clip](#)); Yoram Oron ([clip](#)) and Prof. Schwartz ([clip](#)).



Lectures and Workshops

The event featured over 80 short lectures on a wide variety of topics by leading figures from the corporate, public, industrial, and academic sectors. The lectures were held in 15 rooms dedicated to specific subjects, including: cyber, hi-tech, corporate financing, innovation in education, the environment, marketing, law, and technologies of the future (to view the list of workshops and lecturers, [click here](#)). Five panels on the subject of Negev development were led by Dr. Mosi Rosenboim, one of the senior project coordinators from the GGFBM. The panels focused on the following: the role of small businesses in Negev development, tourism as a driving force of economic development, essential policies of Negev development, improving local economics as a tool for strengthening settlement in the Negev, and promoting technological industry in order to develop the Negev.

Technology Displays and New Ways of Thinking

A central area was designated in which anyone could set up a display during the Un-Conference. This made it possible for entrepreneurs, global corporations, and students to freely and easily present their technologies, products, or services and provided them the opportunity to network and receive feedback from conference participants.





A number of major companies set up stands at the event, such as IBM, NESS, EMC, Strauss, Rotem, and Elbit. In fact, Elbit Systems also used the event as a premiere launch for their smart pilot-helmets, the most advanced of its kind. IBM recruited participants for various products, for example a social network for developers. Strauss presented challenges of the food industry and introduced current technological developments, and additional companies presented unique financing options for startup companies. Google presented Google Liquid, a smart system which includes eight computers synced to run Google Earth on seven large screens, allowing the viewer to take in a comprehensive, breathtaking, and dazzling experience of flight around the world. Developing businesses were also present at the conference; ErgonoMIX Concept showcased their innovative technological development in home faucets; Feedbox, a company that supplies on-line feedback for events, presented their product; and technologies developed by Israel's security forces were displayed, such as a communication platform used to transfer classified information to cellular devices, a system that aids soldiers at risk of abduction by creating an "abduction profile," and the CyberDock smart box that allows the user to receive messages on their cellular device while disabling the access of others to prevent eavesdropping and listening in. This list represents just some of the goings-on and demonstrates the range of concepts shared, as well as the level of excitement and energy that prevailed during the Un-Conference.



The event also served as a launch for Elbit Systems' [Incubit incubator](#) (click on the link for photos), which will be located at the Advanced Technologies Park in Beer-Sheva. The incubator will focus on investments in the electronic and information systems fields. The event took place in collaboration with Elbit executives, Prof. Rivka Carmi, and Rubik Danilovich, the Mayor of Beer-

Sheva. The decision to launch the incubator at the Un-Conference reflects the prominence the event has achieved over the years.

The Innovation Un-Conference included additional unique gatherings, as well. The event attracts leaders from across Israel, and representatives from the hi-tech, industrial, financial, and business sectors were in attendance. In order to tap into the concentration of national leadership present, BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi hosted the Un-Conference's President's Event, an informal forum established to bring these high profile individuals together to discuss and promote regional development. The President's Event provided an opportunity to share BGU's commitment, expertise, and leadership in this realm and opened the door for widespread participation in the exciting enterprise of advancing the Negev.



As in years past, the senior projects of third year students from the GGFBM's Department of Management were on display, including 50 strategic, management, and marketing plans prepared for various organizations in the Negev (municipalities, local councils, non-profits, and businesses). The plans were prepared as part of the "Business Management in Israel" program, and this year the program focused on the socio-economic development of the Negev ([click here for the clip](#)). For the complete list of the projects displayed by the GGFBM, please [click here](#).

Collaboration between the Bengis Center and the Faculty of Engineering Sciences (the largest of BGU's faculties) resulted in the display of engineering students' senior projects as well. More than 500 engineering/technology projects were exhibited, including a puzzle solving robot and a rescue team robot, a lip-reading system for tracheotomy patients, a foreign language educational system, computerized analysis of facial expressions, and a rehabilitation accessory for post-hip replacement surgery. The fields of cyber security and information systems were part of this display, and the projects added to the event's spirit of innovation. Among the projects was the Hydro Camel autonomous submarine, the first of its kind in Israel. 20 students worked together to design and construct the sub as part of an international competition, laying the groundwork for the development of advanced technology for underwater research, defense, and communication. Another presentation was the MUSE Summarizer application for iPhone devices. This app uses a summary algorithm to summarize documents and Internet pages in all languages, based on a method that does not rely upon the language itself. Another innovative project enabled restaurant customers to order meals without the need of a waiter using an interactive management system with a digital menu and, the use of a touchscreen. Conference participants were invited to join a tour of the projects hosted by the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences, Prof. Joseph Kost.

The Un-Conference was a great success on all counts. For a one day event, the breadth of programs to participate in, presentations to experience, projects to view, and opportunities to interact and network was tremendous and reflects the Bengis Center's dedication and commitment to the mission of inspiring innovation.

Global Entrepreneurship Week 2013

Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) is an international initiative in which organizations and academic institutions around the world promote innovation and entrepreneurship. The Bengis Center was deeply involved with GEW 2013 in the Negev, hosting and leading events that attracted approximately 2,000 participants during one week in the month of November.

Creative attempts to bring knowledge and information directly to the public continued based on last year's success, and young people interested in entrepreneurship were invited to meet with experienced entrepreneurs and discuss the world of entrepreneurship in informal settings. Two such events were held during the Global Entrepreneurship Week:

Entrepreneurship at the Bar 1: *Starting a Business in Beer-Sheva – Israel's "Opportunity Capital"*

100 participants converged on a local bar where they were presented with the principles of establishing businesses in Beer-Sheva, recently branded Israel's opportunity capital. In addition, participants discussed whether Beer-Sheva truly is Israel's opportunity capital and benefitted from some myth busting by the guest speakers. This event was held in conjunction with Keren Shemesh and the Young Entrepreneurs Organization. ". [For more photos.](#)



Entrepreneurship at the Bar 2: *Social Entrepreneurship and Jewish Heritage*

The second Entrepreneurship at the Bar event was held at HaHalutz 33, a unique pub in Beer-Sheva that integrates social activities and concerts. During this exclusive event, a performance group, the Kedma Project, exposed the audience to Jewish poetry and its connection to entrepreneurship and innovation. Guests also participated in learning circles on Jewish entrepreneurship facilitated by seminary heads and policymakers. [For additional photos click her](#)



The Young Entrepreneurs Do Business Event

This annual event coordinated by the Bengis Center kicked off the year's activities for the Young Entrepreneurs Organization, an organization dedicated to encouraging young people to establish a business or develop and market a product. During this high energy event held at BGU, 350 youth and teachers from schools throughout the Negev were enriched and inspired by lectures on social entrepreneurship, its contribution to society, and its potential to make a change.



Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Education Panel

This year, the Bengis Center's new collaboration with BGU's Department of Education was introduced with a Global Entrepreneurship Week event entitled, "Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Education" that drew 200 students and individual from the world of education.

The program featured a panel of experienced entrepreneurs who offered practical advice on how to develop an educational initiative and discussed the challenges of promoting it.



Tools in Advancing Women's Entrepreneurship in Israel and Abroad Conference

This new event was organized with the US Embassy in Israel and featured a number of guest speakers. Tali Heruti-Sover, editor of the entrepreneur, career, and management sections of *The Marker*, spoke on the topic "Are Entrepreneurs Born or Made?" Esther Luzzatto, Ph.D., and president of Luzzatto et Luzzatto Patent Lawyers, Inc. discussed "Women, Entrepreneurship, and Technology"; while Michele Dastin-van Rijn, cultural attaché at the US Embassy, shared information about the Embassy's activities and plans to empower women through entrepreneurship.



Following these presentations, a panel of five participants in the Embassy's program "Advancing Women Entrepreneurs and Economic Leaders" discussed the experience and tools they acquired. Among those joining us for this inspiring conference were: Vered Pear Swid, national consultant to the Prime Minister on women's issues; Prof. Iris Shai, adviser on the advancement of women in academia to BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi; Prof. Oded Lowengart; and Prof. Dafna Schwartz. [For more photos](#), please click.



Award Ceremony for the Business Plan Competition

The Business Plan Competition award ceremony has become an exciting part of Global Entrepreneurship Week at BGU and provides an opportunity to showcase our students' accomplishments in innovation. The Business Plan Competition is described more fully previously in the Business Plan Competition section of this report.

First Global Developers Hackathon of the Negev



In 2013, the Global Developers Hackathon (Marathon & Hack) was held as part of a series of one of a kind events held around the world in which people gather for a finite amount of time to work together to develop a product from concept/idea to final development. Hackathons have become associated with the hi-tech industry, and the Bengis Center hosted this event as a tool to promote technological entrepreneurship. Already, in their short period of existence, Hackathons are known for their high energy, innovative atmosphere; networking orientation; teamwork; and the numerous technological ventures they have generated.



The Global Developers Hackathon was the first of its kind in the Negev and represents the first collaboration between BGU and the Google Developer Group. During this unique competition, 150 developers, designers, hi-tech entrepreneurs, and students divided into 15 groups in order to develop an application that contributes to regional development. The groups worked intensively over the course of two days – day and night! During the event, the teams were in direct contact with other developers around the world. At the end of the second day, the groups presented their applications to the judges. The three winning teams won prizes worth \$20,000 each, courtesy of Google. In addition, the first place project became part of Incubit's technology ventures business incubator, and this privilege provides the winner with incubator's consulting services aimed at fostering further development and commercial success. The Hackathon was the first of a series of expert meetings which will continue at BGU, and this activity has also spun off a local developers group. This novel event generated a great deal of interest, in addition to the innovative applications it inspired. We hope it will become an annual event.



The Hackathon's panel of judges was rich in business development experience and strategic thinking expertise and included: Prof. Dafna Schwartz, Prof. Ehud Gudes (BGU's Department of Computer Science), Idan Katz (Incubit vice president of business), Frederick Granit (director of the Negev Business Development Center), Moni Avraham (Bank Hapoalim's Technology Audit System manager) and Menny Barzilay (head of IT Audit at Bank Hapoalim).

WeCARE, an application for a socially conscious system of remote consulting, was the Hackathon's first place winner. The application links people who need consulting with professional consultants and helps overcome geographical constraints by making online consulting services available to individuals in remote regions.



Second and third place were awarded jointly to applications called Regional and Goodly. Regional is a useful tool for hazard notification and monitoring, targeted at regional councils that have limited means of gathering this information accurately from their citizens. The system consists of a mobile application that enables users to send reports to regional councils about hazards by sending a photo that includes an image as well as the GPS location of the user. The app also has a mechanism to enable the recipient of the hazard report to review, monitor, and handle it.

Goodly is a mobile/web platform that connects volunteers, organizations, and sponsors. Organizations publish their needs to recruit new volunteers. Interested potential volunteers use the platform to find nearby options and connect with organizations, while sponsors use the platform as an advertising device that also provides benefits and supports the efforts of

volunteers. Goodly can also be used as a social network for volunteers and a communication forum for organizations with an intuitive web-based control panel.



Additional Special Events Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovation

TEDxBGU Conference

In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. TEDx events integrate videos as well as live talks and inspire in-depth conversations and discussion. The “x” represents the individual organizer of the event, and TEDxBGU was coordinated in partnership with the American Medical Student Association at BGU with a theme of “re:THINK: How does a willingness to rethink, revisit, and reimagine enable us to be innovative members of a global community?” The event created a natural setting for inspiring entrepreneurship as it brought together students, faculty, and guests to facilitate the development of creative approaches and innovative perspectives building on past experience in order to imagine innovative possibilities for the future. 12 speakers from around the world took the stage and shared their ideas with an audience of 450 participants. Between

each talk, well-known actor and stand-up comic, Julian Shagran (famous for two short movies nominated for an Oscar) entertained those present. For photos, please click [here](#).

Big Data Conference

While in recent years Business Information (BI) has become part of the lexicon, this area continues to represent an underdeveloped opportunity to turn knowledge into profit. New algorithms are being developed in order to identify and collect useful information hidden in data, yet enormous potential remains in the field of BI. The Big Data Conference was organized by the Department of Information Systems Engineering and the Bengis Center to tap into this potential, and it focused on sharing information and strengthening connections within the big data industry. Leaders in the field from academia and industry spoke, presenting the current state of the industry and innovative ideas and sharing their forecasts for the future of BI.

ONGOING ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Academic Courses and Seminars

First Steps in Entrepreneurship

This course takes place several times a year and consists of two intensive sessions. During 2013, the course was offered three times, and about 20 to 40 University students and alumni took part each in each session. Some of the participants were in the early stages of developing a business venture, whereas others were interested in learning the principles of starting a business so that they could apply them to an existing concept. Practical content is presented on various topics such as formulating a business idea, starting a venture, communication with tax authorities, and aspects of the business world.

Leading Social Entrepreneurship

This course was created in recognition of the increasing role social entrepreneurship plays in society. The format for the course is innovative as well - the course pairs participants, which in this case includes students and local retirees rich with business experience, around a specific idea for a social venture, and together they initiate a project with social impact. The Bengis Center is involved on many levels by providing tools to plan and execute a socially oriented venture, planning and marketing the course, and serving as an ongoing resource to participants (examining their work and outcomes, strategizing, etc.). Students acquire the skills and guidance to write a socially-oriented business plan and learn about the unique characteristics of a social venture and Israeli society, financing, customer needs, marketing, etc., and creative thinking and innovation are encouraged throughout the course.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship in a Growing Economy: Brazil

Prof. Rafi Bar-El's area of expertise lies in emerging markets, specifically in Brazil, and students in his *Innovation and Entrepreneurship in a Growing Economy: Brazil* course had a valuable opportunity to gain international exposure last August. With support from the Bengis Center, Prof. Bar-El organized a seminar as part of the course in collaboration with the University of Fortaleza - the Federal University of Ceara and the country's industrialists association. The seminar featured academic lectures, company visits, tours, and meetings with the country's leading government and academic figures including: the president of the industrialists association and the heads of the training and technological advancement department and the department of industrial promotion at the industrialists association; Brazil's minister of Science; and rectors of the University of Fortaleza and the country's technological university.

The seminar took place in Ceara, Brazil, and over the course of the visit, students toured numerous innovative industrial businesses and a bank involved with regional development. Students were also present at a number of panels featuring local startups which included discussions on various topics, such as comparisons between Israel and Brazil, and provided students with the opportunity to participate and share their knowledge and experience.

The group consisted of 15 students, largely from the Entrepreneurship and Hi-Tech Management track in the GGFBM Department of Business and Management. Visiting Brazil was an eye-opening experience for the students. The seminar allowed them to study emerging markets intensely from a new perspective and gain an in depth understanding of Brazil. However, this is not the program's only contribution to the students' education; being immersed in a remote economy enabled the students to better understand the capabilities and unique characteristics of the Israeli economy. Students will continue to reap the benefits of this exceptional educational experience long after they've received their academic degrees.

Supporting Senior Projects with the Opportunity to Observe Entrepreneurship in the Field

In addition to integrating the topic of entrepreneurship into diverse academic courses, the Bengis Center provided third year students from the GGFBM's Department of Management with the opportunity to observe entrepreneurship in the field with tours and site visits in order to support their senior projects. During 2013, the Bengis Center supported the following tours for the first time and plans to make this assistance a yearly tradition.

The first tour began at the Beer-Sheva Path, a new tourist and hiking trail, where students met with Sima Cachlon, the CEO of Beer-Sheva's business development division, who inspired students with her vision for Beer-Sheva's advancement and Tal El- al, a city council member, who spoke about industrial development and hi-tech in Beer Sheva. The students had an opportunity to visit the nearby Bedouin community of Tel Sheva where entrepreneur Miriam Abu Rkiik presented her business venture "Daughter of the Desert" and discussed her experience of transforming an ancient legacy into a business. Students then continued on to Omer, a Beer-Sheva suburb, and evaluated the feasibility of building a golf course there, with Pini Dvash, Omer's Mayor and Eli

Cohen, Omer's city engineer. The tour concluded at Omer's Open Museum where the students met with the museum's marketing manager and viewed Eitan Wertheimer's car collection, one of the museum's most prized collections.

The second tour started off in the Bedouin town of Lakiya where students met Hadera Alsana, the founder of "Desert Weaving," a project that seeks to empower Bedouin women in Israel's Negev region, both personally and economically, by applying their traditional weaving skills to the manufacture and sale of woven products. During the visit, Alsana shared her experience and explained how she transformed her venture from a community organization into a business. In Arad, students met with Tali Ploskov, the Mayor of Arad, and Oren Amit, manager of the city's artist quarter. They later continued on to the Yeruham Lake, where they spoke with Michael Biton, Yeruham's Mayor. The finishing point was Neot Hovav, home to an eco industrial park south of Beer-Sheva, where students learned about the council's role in promoting industry and entrepreneurship, its commitment to protecting the environment and its image, public relations, and marketing strategies.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES, COLLABORATION, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Alumni Initiatives

Negev Alumni Club

BGU has identified alumni development as an item of great importance, putting increased effort into maintaining ties with its graduates, and the Bengis Center has assisted in strengthening the University's ties to alumni of the GGFBM. In addition, the University strives to encourage its graduates to continue to play a role in advancing the Negev by remaining in Beer-Sheva after graduation. In recognition of the unique difficulties imposed by the decision to stay, the Negev Alumni Club was established to facilitate an ongoing relationship with local alumni and support their decision to remain in the Negev. The Club kicked off with a meeting which brought together local alumni for directed conversation on a variety of topics including "Entrepreneurship in the City of Opportunities," led by Yossi Shavit, the Bengis Center's project manager. Additional discussion groups focused on networking, building community, and activism.

BGU Managers Club

This past year the Bengis Center has also been involved with the establishment of the BGU Managers Club, a new professional platform and business network for GGFBM alumni and students; the Bengis Center helped this initiative advance by providing professional expertise and consulting services which helped the Club's founders establish the organization. The Bengis Center also provided funding to support the activities of the Club and promotional support.

The first event was aimed at managers from the public and business sectors enrolled in GGFBM managerial programs, and 60 managers attended the first meeting hosted by Liz Safrani, a recruitment manager in the aerial industry. She addressed the importance of professional

networking and how relationships with fellow classmates can play a role. The alumni club is well on its way to becoming a professional arena for GGFBM alumni and students to network and collaborate, while serving as a mechanism for the University to stay in touch with alumni. The club also provides another mechanism to bridge industry and academia and promote innovation and entrepreneurship. For pictures of the event, click [here](#), and for a video of the event, click [here](#).

Conferences and Seminars

The Israeli Regional Science Association's Annual Conference

The Israeli Regional Science Association's 2013 conference took place at BGU, sponsored by the GGFBM, the Faculty's Department of Public Policy and Administration, and the Bengis Center. The theme of the conference was "Current Challenges in Regional Development and Innovation," and the conference included a presentation of current research on topics including: the innovative ecosystem, local and regional management, trends and developments in Israeli real estate, regional planning, economic development, etc. Prof. Rafi Bar-El was recognized for his work in the field of regional development. Israeli Regional Science Association researchers delivered lectures based on their interdisciplinary areas of expertise which included geography, architecture, statistics, industrial engineering, management, and economics.

"Creative Credit Solutions for Local Businesses" Seminar

This seminar was held in collaboration with the Shatil Organization, the New Israel Fund's initiative for social change, which proactively supports women's rights, religious pluralism, environmental justice, and more. The seminar was hosted by Edgar Kampers, founder and CEO of the QUIN organization, an internationally acknowledged expert on credit solutions, local business resource exchange, and creative currency system management. The "Creative Credit Solutions for Local Businesses" seminar provided an understanding of the credit solutions available and included a discussion of local currencies and their role in building local economic communities and an introduction to fascinating topics, such as local currencies, the leaking bucket problem, taxation principles, and more.

New Collaboration with MindCET

Hi-Tech and Innovation in the Negev

The Bengis Center held an open meeting and panel discussion as part of its growing collaboration with MindCET, an educational innovation center that brings together entrepreneurs, educators, and researchers to develop innovative educational technology, to discuss the options and opportunities available to hi-tech entrepreneurs in the Negev. Individuals working to advance entrepreneurship and hi-tech also attended, such as representatives from the Security Division of the EMC Center of Excellence and the Keren Shemesh Fund for Young Entrepreneurs. Each

member of the panel explained their role in promoting entrepreneurship and startups in the region, and members of the audience also had an opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Educational Hackathon

The educational system is an essential part of the technology and innovation revolution around the world. To strengthen the connection between both worlds, the Bengis Center and MindCET organized a two-day Hackathon for educational technology ventures. At the Hackathon, developers, entrepreneurs, and designers formed teams to develop a prototype for a new program or an improvement to an existing one, while focusing on the integration of technology, innovation, and education together, all in a short time period. The event, held at the MindCET hub in Yeruham, was open to the public, as well as to students interested in contributing to change in the educational system.

Global Activity

A Relationship with the United States State Department Based on Facilitating Entrepreneurship in the Region

The Bengis Center's impact now extends globally with involvement in the United States State Department's prestigious program, the Advancing Women Entrepreneurs and Economic Leaders delegation, which empowers women and promotes their achievements in the economy and business settings. The program exposes participants to women who have successfully navigated a global landscape which often places boundaries and limits on women in the job market. The program provides women with opportunities to interact with high level individuals that play a role in advancing business and entrepreneurship among women, thus expanding their worldview and professional contacts. Based on the Bengis Center's expertise in this area, the State Department looked to the Center to help reach its goals of promoting entrepreneurship in the region.

"Tools in Advancing Women's Entrepreneurship in Israel and Abroad" Conference

Miri Arbiv, a doctoral student in the GGFBM Department of Public Policy and Administration, was recommended by the Bengis Center to take part in the State Department program, based on her extensive research which focuses on the barriers that exist in the development of small businesses in Negev Bedouin communities, with a particular emphasis on the barriers Bedouin women face. As a program participant, Miri brought Israeli and Palestinian women involved with economic development and entrepreneurship together, along with American women in similar positions. She also initiated the "Tools in Advancing Women's Entrepreneurship in Israel and Abroad" conference described in detail in the Global Entrepreneurship Week section of this report (for more information, please see this [article](#).)

Community Outreach

“Leading Seniors” – Students and Senior Citizens Leading Community Projects

This program was initiated by two GGFBM students who teamed up with the Bengis Center, the Rothschild Cube – Center for Social Innovation, the Beer-Sheva municipality and others to promote social entrepreneurship among retirees and BGU students. Participants took part in a series of meetings, lectures, and seminars that introduced them to the Negev’s third sector and provided assistance in the process of generating an idea and writing a business plan, essentially equipping participants with the tools to put their ideas into motion and promote innovative social ventures.

The program contributed on many levels. The interaction and ties developed between participants led to a large pool of knowledge that enriched everyone involved. Students benefitted from the senior citizens’ vast experience and network of connections, and gained knowledge and tools during the course of their studies. Community organizations were strengthened and energized by the initiatives and participant’s motivation. The retirees benefited from the program as well, enjoying the opportunity to volunteer, work actively, and contribute. The program also reinforced students’ bond to the Negev. Over 120 community members and students participated. The program’s open ceremony celebrated the potential of the program for social impact and value to the students, volunteers, and the community.

Youth Initiatives

Youth Tour on the Subject of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at BGU

The Bengis Center is called upon to share its expertise in a variety of settings with diverse audiences, and each year the Bengis Center organizes an academic tour at BGU at the request of the Ethiopian Empowerment Center in Beer-Sheva. The tour is designed by the Bengis Center to expose Ethiopian youth to the University and the innovative activities taking place here and encourage them to think outside of the box. Participants were inspired by their visit which included the chance to operate robots in Dr. Amir Shapira’s robotics lab at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, tour the Ilan Ramon Physics Center and visit the planetarium, hear a lecture on space, and take part in a seminar provided by the Bengis Center that promoted innovation and creative marketing tactics. This initiative represents another way in which the Bengis Center grooms future generations of entrepreneurs in the Negev.

The “Young Entrepreneurs Do Business” Project

Israel’s Young Entrepreneurs Organization strives to expose youth to business and entrepreneurship with school-based programs, special events, and guidance which encourages students to become part of the business world. Based on these shared goals, the Bengis Center partnered with the organization’s local branch to implement business oriented competitions, organize guest lectures on creative entrepreneurial topics, and advise students on their business

projects, in addition to the special Young Entrepreneurs Do Business event held each year during Global Entrepreneurship Week.