

Deutschlandtreffen 2023

Excursus: Panel discussion with GJU alumni and exchange of experiences with the partner university network

MAGBDEBURG, 07.11.2023: Discussing the outstanding alumni work of GJU graduates in Germany has been a central focus of this year's GJU network meeting, which took place on 06./07. November 2023 attended by representatives of the International Offices and Career Services of the German GJU partner university network. As part of the World Café session, Abdallah Nsair, Reqqa Salem and Qusai Masharqa, in cooperation with Julia Kölbl (coordinator of the GJU-Alumni-Ambassador Programme), presented the goals and current developments of the GJU Alumni Ambassador Programme of the GJU Project Office. Currently, there are around 250 GJU alumni contacts who are working, pursuing further studies or seeking employment in Germany.

In-depth insights into personal experiences and critical discussions about integration in Germany were exchanged on the second day during a panel discussion with the three GJU graduates, which was moderated by Anne-Katrin Lerke (Head of International Office/h2). For many young Jordanians, the decision to study at GJU is a crucial foundation for life in Germany. The obligatory year abroad, which Jordanian students complete as part of their Bachelor's degree, makes cultural and linguistic integration easier for graduates and paves the way into the German labour market with a degree from GJU that is recognized in Germany.

With regard to their situational and temporary intentions to stay, the Jordanian graduates stated that living in Germany is attractive at least for a certain period of their lives/careers, but that returning to Jordan or the MENA region in particular also plays and will play a role in their future. For the German labour market to remain attractive for international specialists/executives, the three confirmed that a good work-life balance in professional life should be made possible by the company, a monthly monetary income should be guaranteed and solid integration into the professional and a social environment is vital.

The everyday level of discrimination and racism play a decisive role in the GJU graduates' plan to stay. The values of equality and (religious) freedom in Germany, which are believed to characterize Western culture, were challenged. Offering a balance between work and civil freedom, as well as establishing and living a welcoming culture in Germany is still in its infancy. In addition, the position of being an outsider and not feeling part of German society was communicated openly, directly, and transparently. It remains undisputed that the German language is an essential tool and that individual openness, to the world, is the key to integration and socialization into the German society and western societies at large.

The solutions suggested to the issue at hand, regarding the role of the International Offices and Career Services of the German partner universities in supporting the integration of international students and graduates, clearly confirmed a lack of knowledge and understanding of the partner cultures. A stronger focus on (cultural) mediation is required and the emphasis should be placed on understanding the other culture. At this point, higher education institutions are called upon to carry out extensive research and to provide comprehensive information and regional studies. With these words, the GJU Project Office would like to thank the GJU alumni Reqqa Salem, Abdallah Nsair and Qusai Masharqa for their open, authentic and critical dialogue.

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