***Email and pictures from Michael Muszkat-Barkan*, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Jewish Education, HUC-JIR, Jerusalem. Sent, January 14, 2020:**

Dear friends and colleagues,

Last week we were honored to host the EMA students and have a joint program with our Rikma students.

Many times, such encounters are built around the visiting group “viewing” the Israeli group, showing the visitors the “desired” picture of an authentic yet liberal blend of educators. The visit then becomes one “site” in a very busy schedule. This kind of encounter can remain very shallow, without gaining real depth, knowledge and/or mutual understanding. It also doesn’t give an opportunity for the two groups to really get to know each other, get a sense of what they care for or discuss shared values and ideas.

The morning that we spent together was a fruit of our faculty desire to create a serious opportunity for students, who are educational leaders, to develop a shared language. We wanted them to get to know each other personally, professionally and to gain motivation for future collaboration. After an opening by Naamah and Miriam that set the tone for a joint journey, we did a workshop led by the artist Hanoch Pivan. He challenged us to create collages that tried to answer the question “what is a Jewish solidarity?”. In order to explore this question, we worked in small and mixed groups and were able to investigate the various answers whilst creating a common language between the different participants. Our Rikma students were thrilled. Opal, one of the students said: “I was a bit hesitant before we met.

Can we bridge our worlds in such a short time? I was surprised at the depth we got into. I met wonderful colleagues, we spoke seriously and laughed a lot, it was a great experience”.  Michal Abramoff, another Rikma student said: “the workshop was a great opportunity to build a real dialogue with the EMA students, get to know them on a personal level and find mutual challenges and experiences we share in our everyday lives. These initial connections are a great foundation for more collaborations that I look forward to building in the future. This meeting was the first time I’ve heard about the EMA program and it was interesting to experience the shared educational vision of the HUC in Israel and abroad. As a Jewish educator in the IMPJ working with teen and young adults, I was inspired by the people we met, the content we discussed as a global community and the experience as a whole”

I heard more from my students but I felt that I wanted to give you some of the spirit. As an international institution I feel that HUC can have a central role in bridging, in leading collaborations and in becoming a role model for “pedagogy of responsibility” for the Jewish people. I would like to thank our inspiring educational faculty Miriam, Lesley. Sam and Jeremy for being a role model of creativity and partnership.

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Michal

**פרופ' מיכל מושקט-ברקן**

**מנהלת מחלקת חינוך ופיתוח מקצועי**

Michal Muszkat-Barkan

Associate Professor of Jewish Education Parallel Track

HUC-JIR Jerusalem 97226203382