

# Yalla, Let's Go! Strategies for Effective Recruitment in the Middle East

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# Why MENA?

The MENA region has become an increasingly important recruitment hub for higher education

- Interest to modernize education systems and delivery methods
- Cultural diversity, languages, traditions
- Wide range of curriculum offerings across MENA (ex. IB, Sabis, CBSE etc)
- Affluent expat communities in search of high quality education



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# Why MENA?

The MENA region has become an increasingly important recruitment hub for higher education

- Education gap in the MENA region - leading to a high demand for outward mobility
- Study Destinations: US, UK, Canada, Australia, Europe
- leading education hubs in the world
- Rapid economic growth
- Rising demand for skilled professionals



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# Some Demographics

The MENA region has become an increasingly important recruitment hub for higher education

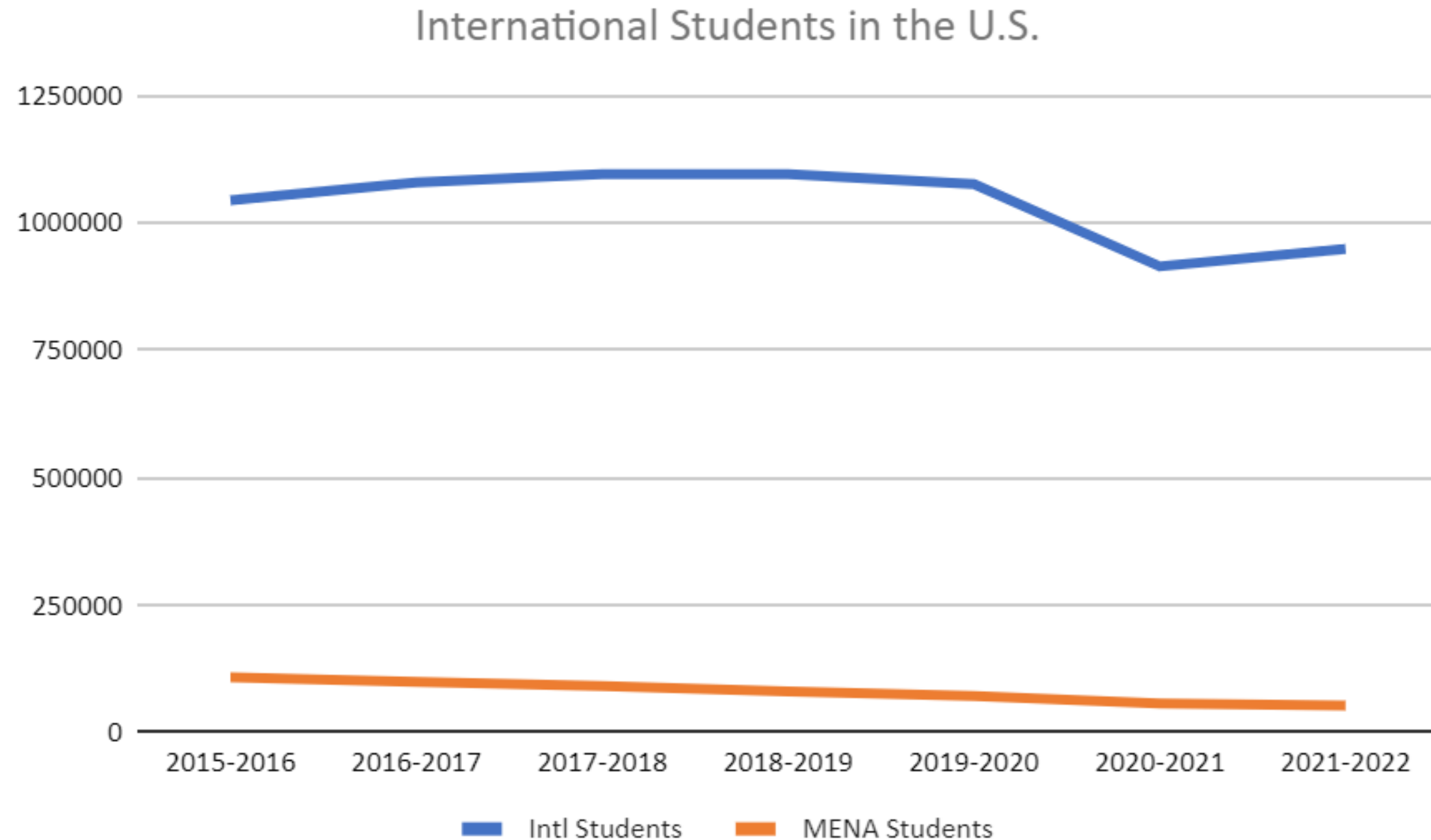
- Over 585 million population
  - Egypt most populous
- 5 major languages - Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Turkish and Kurdish
- 3 major monotheistic religions - Islam, Christianity and Judaism
- Major Airport Hubs: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Istanbul, Cairo, Doha, Riyadh



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# MENA Students in the U.S.



## Top Sending Countries

1. Saudi Arabia
2. Iran
3. Kuwait
4. Egypt
5. Jordan

## Countries with Growth

1. Algeria
2. Palestine/Israel
3. Tunisia
4. Morocco
5. Lebanon

Source: IIE, Open Doors Data, 2023



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# MENA Recruitment Challenges

- Funding and affordability
- Reliance on scholarships
- Developing strategies to recruit both local and expat students
- Regional conflict displacing students
- Language barriers
- Understanding cultural and religious influence on study abroad options
- Environmental factors
- Last-minute decision making
- Many options to consider (study destinations)
- Challenges with acquiring Study Permits



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# MENA Recruitment Tips and Tricks

- Rethink your approach to marketing
- Increase engagement with current students
- Tap into your alumni network
- Hire an Arabic speaking staff member or student worker
- Attend events at least twice a year in key markets
- Use local connections (agents, in-country staff)
- Expand your presence in the region (partnerships)
- Engage online
  - social media
  - virtual meetings with counselors
  - virtual meetings with students and parents
- Flexibility



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# Recruitment Strategies

- implement a recruitment strategic plan
  - factor in consistent visits to the region
  - Scholarship opportunities
  - Cultural Awareness
  - Different messaging and branding for different audiences within the MENA region
- Keep up with trends and technologies
  - investment in recruitment tools
    - Counselor connect platforms, planned tours, applications for students
- Engage with carefully selected agents
- Attend recruitment fairs
- Plan school visits



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# Networking and Counselors

Counselor Network is crucial to student recruitment in the MENA region

- Knowledgeable of changing education trends within their schools/country
- Guide students through testing, school choices, career decisions
- Assess students skills, future aspirations
- Filter through thousands of schools for best fit their their students



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# Networking and Counselors

- Guidance Counselors refer students to colleges and universities who visit their schools
  - keep up with communication and visits (3 year plan)
- Follow-up email with information to share with counselor and students
- Word of mouth
  - students share their experiences with counselors and friends
- Friend in the region



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# Local Representation & Alumni Network

- Consider hiring a local representative
  - cost-effective
  - real-time responses
  - Accessibility
  - Cultural knowledge
- Consider engaging your Alumni network
  - Champion for your institution
  - Brand Ambassador to use during recruitment events, interviews, speaking with students & parents
  - sharing experiences
  - word of mouth



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# Partnerships

- strategic partnerships can help to brand an institutions name in the region
- consistent brand recognition
- exchange of faculty and students
- continuous and frequent visits to the region ensuring consistent presence
- opportunities for articulation agreements
- financial considerations for parents



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# Considerations

- how frequently are you coming to the region?
- do you have a local representative?
- have you worked on a strategic recruitment plan?
- how is your agent performance?
- are you meeting with your students online?
- are you engaging your alumni network?
- are you working closely with high school counselors?



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# Thank you!

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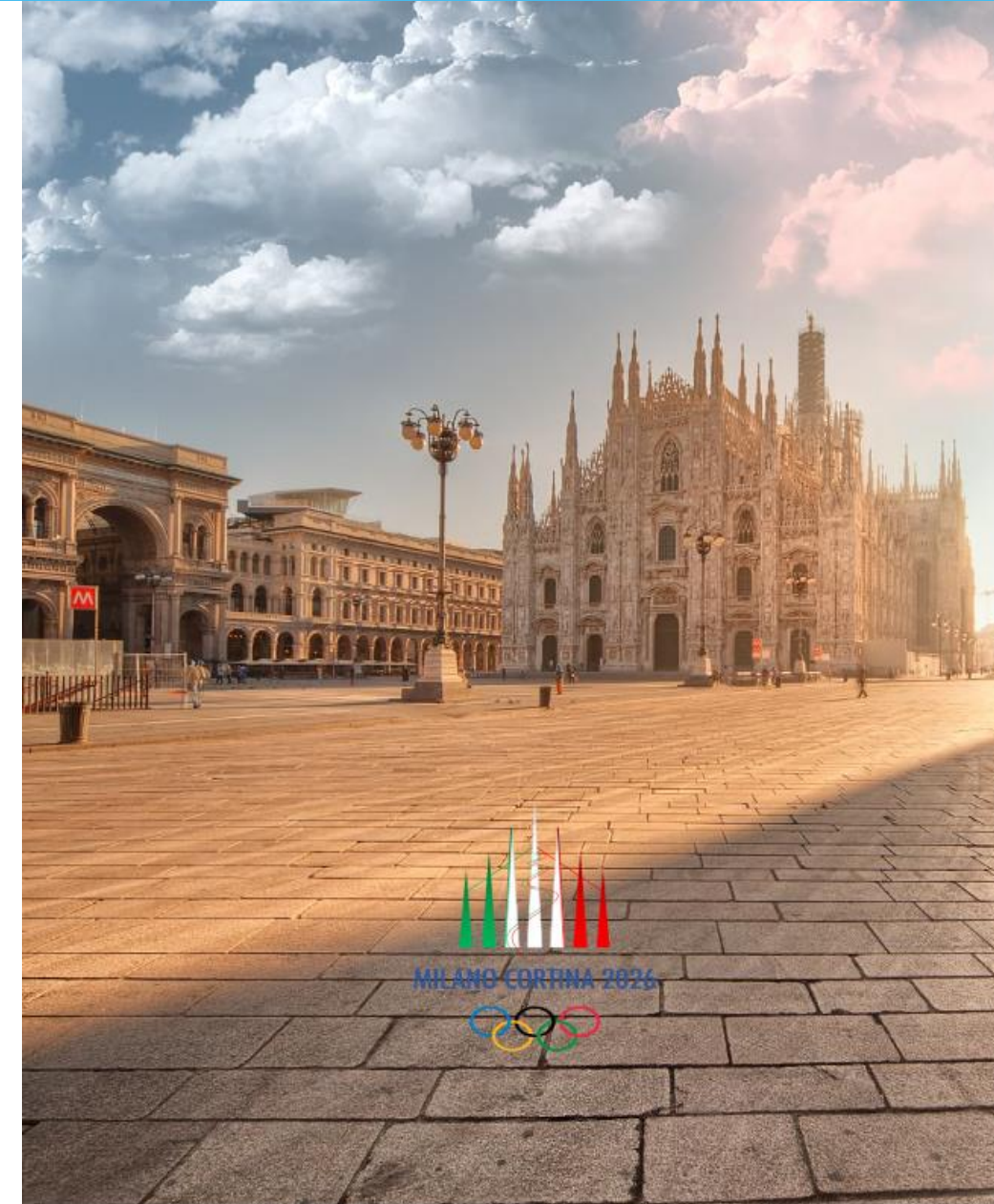


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# Bocconi's Perspective

One chooses to study in **Milan** not only for the excellent food, but because they want to surround themselves with **creativity, innovation, design, commerce, politics, culture**, and a **global mindset**.

- The center point of the Italian economy
- Founding Member of EU & Member of G8
- Lombardy region: Ranked 2nd in Europe by GDP
- Hub to Europe: strongly connected with other global cities
- Population: 1.4 million
- Student city (8 universities, 200.000 students)
- Finance and Banking center
- Fashion, Design & Technology
- Home to many multinational companies
- Best Student city in Italy



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# Bocconi's Perspective

## *Why Bocconi recruits in Middle East*

- International culture
- Better employment
- Language skills
- Access to university
- Soft Skills



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# What Bocconi Looks for in students:

- A curriculum that challenges the student and may include AP or IB classes
- Rigorous high school grade point average in major subject
- High score on standardized tests (SAT , ACT)
- Passionate involvement in a few activities that are meaningful, inside or outside of school
- Special talents that could contribute to campus life
- Student's character and values are seen as conducive to being a good community member
- Demonstrated interest and enthusiasm in attending ( through campus visits, open days, ecc)



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