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PARIS SOUTH FEASIBILITY STUDY



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A. DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY INFORMATION AND PHOTOS

Information from <http://www.ciup.fr/en/> : The “Cité internationale universitaire de Paris” (Cité U) is a centralized student-housing campus, with a 5,800-student capacity distributed among 40 dormitories. The Cité U is on a 34-hectare terrain in the 14th arrondissement in the southern limits of Paris, easily accessible by RER B.



The International University Campus in Paris is a private foundation, recognised as being in the public interest since 1925 and closely linked to the Paris universities, which own the buildings and which are represented at its Management Board by the Rector of the Academy and Chancellor of the Universities of Paris, Acting Vice-President of the Foundation and the Presidents of two universities.

Ever since the Middle Ages [the University of Paris](#) has always welcomed students from all over the world. In what they used to call the « College of Nations ». When the international university campus in Paris was created in 1925 it continued this tradition of the Paris universities: a tradition of welcome. The International University Campus in Paris plays a central role in the policy for accepting internationally mobile students in the Ile-de-France.

“Paris’ International University City offers Paris a unique device in terms of a campus. It is a formal campus which isn’t at the service of a single university but rather all the universities of Paris and Ile de France.”
François WEIL, Government representative and Chief Education officer for the Universities of Paris

The International Campus continues to pursue the Utopian dream of its founders and offers its residents somewhere to meet other students in an atmosphere of tolerance and reflection.



The residences



With 5,800 rooms in [40 residences](#), the International University Campus in Paris is the largest site hosting foreign students and researchers in the Ile-de-France.

Linked to countries or to the grandes écoles, 18 of them are managed directly by the National Foundation of the International University Campus in Paris and operate under its auspices. The others are foundations in their own right, recognised as being in the public interest, with their own legal personality.

Its first students' residence, today called the [Fondation DEUTSCH DE LA MEURTHE](#), in homage to the Alsatian philanthropist, opened its doors in 1925.

Very soon afterwards, other residences were built, financed by patrons, industrialists and foreign governments: the [Fondation BIERMANS-LAPOTRE](#), the [Maison des étudiants canadiens](#), the [Collège d'Espagne](#), the [Maison du Japon](#), the [Maison de l'Inde](#)... On the eve of the Second World War there were 19 residences already in existence, dominated at their centre by the international residence, the Maison Internationale, constructed thanks to the John ROCKEFELLER JR. competition.

After the war, work began again and a new series of building and construction was begun. From 1948 to 1969 17 new residences opened their doors. The poet, Edmond HARAUCOURT also bequeathed a residence on the isle of Bréhat, off the coast of Brittany, which is still a holiday centre for students.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the International University in Paris acquired two residences outside its perimeter, in the 19th arrondissement of Paris. The [Lila Hall of Residence](#) and then the [Quai de la Loire](#) hall of residence were the last to be opened in 2007.

These residences have housed more than 200,000 students in eighty years.

The [development plan](#) envisages that 10 new Residences will be constructed by 2020, giving accommodation for a further 1800 students. In other words, a 31% increase in capacity to accept students.

« The raison d'être of the Campus from the beginning has been to promote international mobility among students as a catalyst for the Universalist values of peace and solidarity. »

Marcel POCHARD, President.

The residents

Some 12,000 students, researchers, artists and athletes are accepted each year on the International University Campus in Paris.

The International University Campus in Paris admissions policy is based on academic excellence and a balanced distribution of various national cultures.

Priority is given to students enrolled for Master's Degrees, doctorates and post-doctoral studies.



A « school of human relations for peace »

The globalisation of higher education presents an incomparable opportunity for all students to encounter diversity and the excellence of knowledge and to become open to other ways of being and of thinking in the world.

The mission of the Campus, since its inception, consists in promoting mobility international for students and researchers for one purpose only, which is to say, as a catalyst for the Universalist values of peace and solidarity.

The Campus offers to the [12,000 students, doctoral candidates, young researchers and young artists](#) from 140 nationalities, whom it accepts every year more than the best possible conditions of reception and lodging.

Its whole aim and purpose is to encourage them to form lasting bonds of understanding, confidence, if possible, even of friendship, by responding to their deep need for contact with other students, to exchange ideas and viewpoints and share their desires for the future. This is the underlying originality of the Campus, which makes it a unique facility and an exemplar in the global university landscape.

B. Feasibility Analysis Topics Summary

1) Support Organizations and Partner Churches

Only one English-language church in the southern region of Paris, St Mark's Versailles : an international Anglican community situated on the outskirts of Versailles to the south-west of Paris. According to Christina Galley, member of St Mark's, most of their members come from the western suburbs of Paris.

According to Tony Ross, elder at Trinity International Church Paris, they would be supportive of the idea of an English church-plant in the south, as their ministry is concentrated on central Paris.

According to Marion François, French Catholic student highly involved in the Aumônerie (diocese/parish) of Cachan, the aumônerie is the only religious organization reaching out and proposing activities for the university students in her area, and she thinks the aumônerie would welcome the presence of an English-speaking church (especially one reaching out to the youth) in the southern region. She thinks they would be willing to let a church rent out one of their function rooms for on-campus events.

According to Nicolas Blum, GBU/IVCF Coordinator for southern Paris, if there were an anglophone IBC church in his region he would definitely recommend it to his students.

According to Xiao Yao, she likewise thinks that her Chinese church in Anthony would be welcoming to the idea of an English-language church in the south region.

According to Shaun Hughes, elder of French church Église Baptiste du Centre, their leadership would be interested in a potential partnership : renting out of their premises to the church plant. They have a building that is 10-minute walk from the Cité U but at the moment the future of that building is uncertain based upon some legal issues with their landlord.

2) History of English-language Church Planting

According to Nicolas Blum, Hillsong Paris has a small group meeting in the Opera House of Massy, but he does not think that they plan to plant an actual church there.

No known concrete initiatives to plant anglophone churches in that area.

3) English Population and Trends

Within the Cité U itself are the American, Canadian, Swiss, Indian, French-British, Norwegian, and German dormitories, among many others. According to interviewees Hector and Clara, all the students they have met living in the Cité U speak English.

In the southern region of Paris in general, the English-speaking/international population has been steadily growing and is foreseen to grow even more in the next 3-5 years : in the Saclay area alone, a well-known science and engineering hub, there are currently around 25,000 researchers, 17,000 students and 160 public and private labs existing (source : <http://www.grand-paris.jll.fr/en/grand-paris-project/cdt/cdt-paris-saclay/>).

There is government initiative in making the south region the “French Silicon Valley” (source : <https://www.capital.fr/votre-carriere/paris-saclay-la-silicon-valley-a-la-francaise-1315895>), and according to Nicolas Blum all schools in this area are trying to attract foreign students for money, and that most engineering schools in IDF have moved to Saclay so a lot of companies are moving there as well to recruit.

In 2021 the government plans to build an international high school in the same area (source : <http://www.leparisien.fr/essonne-91/le-premier-lycee-international-de-l-essonne-ouvrira-a-palaiseau-e-n-2021-15-01-2018-7502853.php>).

International students stay anywhere between 3-6 months to 2 years.

4) Ease of Obtaining Work Credentials

Church-planter would need to get a “ministre du culte” visa and would have to be sponsored by an established French-based or European church or agency.

Visa is possible to get but French admin process can be long and confusing.

5) Ease of Establishing a Presence

Shaun’s church is open to possibly renting out their church in the future.

In the Cité U, renting a function room is a possibility.

Building rental/property is generally expensive in the Paris region.

Small group meetings in homes or house churches seem to be a more viable idea, a more “mobile” church (as per input of Xiao Yao, Hector, Clara). For students, a church meeting in a restaurant or a movie theatre is not weird and they would not be put off because of the unusual venue.

According to Nicolas and Christina, the church would have to be near a train/bus station, as students and Parisians in general tend to think according to accessibility and not necessarily distance or geography (meaning : willing to travel 45 mins-1h as long as it’s easy to reach via public transport).

According to interviewees, Cité U residents have easy access to Paris (where there are already English-language churches), so it would make better sense to establish another one further down south. The following cities were suggested : Bagneux, Bourg-la-Reine, Anthony, Palaiseau.

6) Existing Relationships

EIC Rueil and Ternes are very supportive of the idea of a church plant and would most probably be willing to send a core team to help out the church-planter.

All individuals interviewed are all favourable towards the idea of a church-plant : Clara and Marion would likely attend if there was an anglophone church in the south, Nicolas would send his GBU students.

7) Geopolitical Realities and Trends

Not much information gathered on this. But as per EIC’s experience, getting officially registered as a church in France is doable but with a lot of possible administrative obstacles. It would help if it would be registered under an already existing church.

8) Spiritual Openness

There is a general openness to spirituality, especially among university students/younger people. There is willingness to talk about existential issues in life, but not necessarily to Christianity. English is a big draw to younger people (even non-Cs) who want to learn the language/practice it.

There is still a pervasive suspiciousness about “church’ and institutions.

Church-planter would need to be creative in his approach to outreach : karaoke nights, dinners at home, raclette nights, English tutorials, talks on science and the Bible, talks on polemical issues and their relation to the Christian faith, concerts, etc. Church-planters would need to be willing to open up their homes and be non-imposing in their approach to discussions in order to attract the young population. Sense of belonging and community are very important to internationals.

Church-planter would need to know that Paris is hard ground, he needs to be persevering and know how to deal with cynicism towards his faith.

Churches and religious organizations are not allowed to do evangelism on campuses, nor can they be officially recognized as university associations.

According to Clara, Hector, Nicolas : apart from the GBU, no other known churches or religious orgs are doing outreach in Cité U or southern Paris.

According to Hector and Clara, the smaller French churches they have attended in central Paris do not have enough student/young people-oriented activities to attract people from the Cité U.

9) International Schools/Universities

See item #3.

10) Liveability / Support Network for Families

French administration is known to be very disorganized : renewing visas is a pain.

It takes a while to get drivers' licenses, and expensive as well.

"Ministres du culte" usually do not pay taxes, but they cannot do any work outside of their church mission. Neither can their wives. Given that Cité U/south of Paris is mainly composed of transient students, it is foreseeable that money coming from tithes would not be a lot : maybe a bi-vocational pastor would be needed for the church ?

Paris is not a kid-friendly/family-friendly city, in terms of getting around in public transport, availability of nurseries and daycares, very high cost of living.

While you can survive without speaking French, daily life would be difficult without any knowledge of the language. Younger people usually speak English but not the older generation. You would need French for restaurants, grocery stores, admin stuff, doctor appointments.

C. INTERVIEWS

Christina Galley, member of Anglican church in Versailles.

Nicolas Blum, GBU South Paris Coordinator.

Hector Caballero Artigas, international student, lives at Cité U.

Clara Kolta, international student, lives at Cité U.

Stephan Eucharis, pastor of Bagneux Adventist Church.

Marion François, Catholic, university student at Cachan.

Xiao Yao, member of Chinese church in Anthony.

Mrs Xhao, Chinese, Christian, who lives near Cité U.

Shaun Hughes, elder of Église Baptiste du Centre, French church near Cité U.

Spontaneous interviews with Cité U residents.

Tony Ross, elder of Trinity Church, anglophone church in Paris

D. Feasibility Analysis (averaged vote of 5 team members)

1) Support Organizations and Partner Churches	3
2) History of English-language Church Planting	3
3) English Population and Trends	4.5
4) Ease of Obtaining Work Credentials	2.5
5) Ease of Establishing a Presence	2
6) Existing Relationships	4
7) Geopolitical Realities and Trends	3
8) Spiritual Openness	3.75
9) International Schools/Universities	5
10) Liveability / Support Network for Families	2.5

E. Executive Summary

Overall score of Cité U/Southern Paris evaluation : 33 (out of possible 50 points)

Overall recommendation of team : Yellow

There is tremendous potential for an anglophone church in this area but a particular kind of church-plant model would be needed to reach it : adapted to the transient nature of the international population, the “laïcité” challenges for churches, the questions of financial sustainability of the church plant, the cultural specificities of the French way of life.

A particular kind of church-planter would be needed as well : flexible, persevering, knows that this is long-term work, willing to open up his home, does not have a 9am-5pm work-day expectation, not a lot of kids.

A lot more things could go wrong versus what could go right.

F. Team Roster + Photos

- 1) Tim Faulkner, IBC President , tim@faulkner.net
- 2) Justin Hendricks, Associate Pastor of Emmanuel International Church Paris, jnh.eic@gmail.com
- 3) Dominique del Corro, missionary with the Groupes Bibliques Universitaires (Intervarsity Christian Fellowship), dominique.delcorro@gbu.fr
- 4) Grace Gaffet, former EIC Paris member and current member of IBC Antwerp
grace.gaffet@gmail.com
- 5) Ryan Powell, TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission) missionary, powell42@yahoo.com
- 6) Blake Rogers, Associate Pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Atlanta, USA,
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