

Courses "Local Assets for Community and Economic Development" and "Local Development and Strategies for Poverty Reduction in Africa" concluded

Last Wednesday July 23rd, the Weitz Center for Development Studies held a graduation ceremony for both the international seminar entitled "Local Assets for Community and Economic Development" and the international course entitled "Local Development and Strategies for Poverty Reduction in Africa".

These two programs were organized within the framework of MASHAV, the Center for International Cooperation of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The seminar "Local Assets for Community and Economic Development" was also conducted in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of Social Affairs and Services, while the Course "Local Development and Strategies for Poverty Reduction in Africa", was organized in collaboration with UN-HABITAT.



Forty nine professionals from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe participated in the activities. They expressed their satisfaction with the concepts learned during the lectures, workshops and field trips. The participants visited several neighborhoods throughout Israel where social and economic development projects have been successfully implemented. The professionals spoke with community leaders and saw first-hand the results of those initiatives. Among the sites, they toured the renewed open market in Jerusalem –where they had a moving encounter with the person in charge of the project- and the Old City of Acre that, after a process of rehabilitation, was chosen as World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



They also visited Kibbutzes to see how cutting edge techniques are applied to agriculture. The participants were especially interested in the methods used by the Israeli farmers to recycle water. The manner small businesses are promoted and supported in the country was also a topic highly discussed among the visitors. Representatives of the various countries' diplomatic delegations to Israel attended the graduation ceremony and presented the diplomas to the participants from their respective countries. The event offered an opportunity to newly express the strong ties and friendship between Israel and these nations.



After the ceremony, the participants returned to their homes with an expanded knowledge on regional planning, implementation of development projects, as well as newfound skills to strengthen their communities.