The Weitz Center is excited to share with you the news and activities of the New Year thus far. Spring has been busy with the completion of three MASHAV sponsored training in the fields of development and capacity building, as well as welcoming our new director Adi Dishon, new staff member Jeremy Ben-Shalom and two new interns.

**International courses in the framework of MASHAV**

The international training on **Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Development Planning** was conducted by the Weitz Center from January 9 to February 2, 2012 in the framework of MASHAV. The Weitz Center had the pleasure to host 25 participants from five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

The training focused on methods of drawing environmental and other resources towards the development process, specifically in poverty-stricken areas. The participants benefited from listening and working together with experts in the field of agriculture development, water management, energy conservation and development, forestry, land planning, biological pest control and more. The Israeli experience in developing support systems as well as technical expertise has enhanced the participants’ knowledge and will allow them to develop new work methods in their localities, aiming at stronger development prospects.

In March 2012, the Weitz Center for Development Studies, in partnership with MASHAV, has carried out a one month international training course titled: **Integrated Approach for Upgrading Poor Urban Areas**. The course's participants were 28 professionals, working in national and local governments, NGOs and in the private sector in the subject of planning and upgrading the urban poor. Participants came from over 15 countries creating a rich and diverse learning experience.

Participants benefited from the knowledge and experience of lecturers from Israeli national and local governments, academia and the private sector. Additionally, the participants had the opportunity to create individual and team projects and have visited five municipalities in Israel, where they have learnt of the different experiences in upgrading poor urban areas in Israel.
In cooperation with MASHAV, the Weitz Center for Development Studies is holding a course titled *Integrated Rural Development for Indigenous Communities in Latin America*. The course runs from April 23 to May 17, 21012. There are 31 participants that come from 10 Latin American countries including Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala and Peru. Seven participants are Indigenous while the rest are working with Indigenous population.

Participants benefited from the Israeli experience through numerous trainings, lectures and field visits. Field visits included seminars on regional planning, crafts and small businesses, and rural tourism planning. Visits took place in the desert areas in the south as well as Bedouin settlements working to increase eco-tourism.

**Study Visits**

From March 25 to April 2, 2012, the Weitz Center was pleased to welcome Senior Executives from Nigeria to participate in an 8 day field visit on *Local Government and Civil Society's Role in Local Sustainable Development*. Participants were able to visit numerous Israeli cities while combining tourism and education. Topics and locations, among many, included water treatment in Rishon LeZion, revitalizing and urban planning in Bat Yam, strategic planning in Tel Aviv and BIT consultancy in Ram Aviram.

To participate in a Study Visit with the Weitz Center for Development Studies, please visit our Website at [http://www.weitz-center.org/study-visits.html](http://www.weitz-center.org/study-visits.html)

**Staff**

The Weitz Center would like to honor the retiring Director Julia Margulies. Ms. Margulies has worked at the center for 43 years. We wish to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to her achievements within the center and advancing development studies and the integral approach in Israel and in the developing world. We wish her all the best.

We are pleased to welcome Ms. Adi Dishon as the new director. Ms. Dishon has an academic background in Environmental Sciences and Business Administration from the Hebrew University. She is an environmental entrepreneur, founded and managed the first Carbon Trading Company in Israel, specializing in the UN's Clean Development Mechanism. Adi wishes to add to the centers topics courses dealing with Green Growth and Public Health.

The Weitz Center also welcomes Jeremy Ben-Shalom who joins the Center as an academic coordinator. Additionally the Weitz Center is happy to announce two new interns to the Center: Anthony Kaiser and Sara Levin.