

SHALOM CLUBS

MASHAV maintains contact with many of its 220,000 former course participants through its network of over 70 Shalom Clubs worldwide. These clubs serve as a forum for MASHAV alumni to participate in professional and social activities. Members are invited to attend local lectures by skilled experts, to exchange ideas and to organize technical cooperation and humanitarian assistance as well as holding cultural functions. Among the many activities that have been organized by Shalom Clubs in their home countries have been workshops on professional topics ranging from AIDS education to business management, organization of events to raise funds for local charities, mobilization of club members to donate their professional services for community development and humanitarian activities. Members of the Shalom Clubs play an integral role in determining the focus and scope of programming of their clubs.

Here follow some examples of Shalom Club activities in 2004:

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Annual Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean Shalom Club Presidents was held in Venezuela in October with the participation of over 40 representatives from 9 countries: Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela. The main theme of the Conference, held under the auspices of the Israeli Embassy in Caracas, was the value of volunteerism. Discussion included procedural and theoretical topics of interest.



Shalom Clubs Presidents during their meeting in Venezuela

Kenya

Together with the Israeli Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Emmanuel Seri, and staff from the Israeli Embassy in Nairobi, members of Shalom Club Kenya visited the Mary Immaculate Orphanage, located in one of city's poorer neighborhoods. In a moving ceremony, the Shalom Club members presented the children with mattresses and food supplies. Shalom Club Kenya, which has over 350 members from throughout the country, plans to hold future activities for the benefit of the community.

Romania

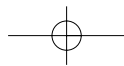
The first meeting of the Shalom Club Romania took place in Bucharest this past March, with the participation of over 100 MASHAV training courses graduates from throughout the country and many important and distinguished guests. Arie Arazi, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Head of MASHAV was present in the event and addressed the participants. The evening concluded with a festive dinner and the participants' commitment to meet again.

Uzbekistan

A special meeting of the Shalom Club Uzbekistan took place in Bukhara with the participation of MASHAV training courses graduates from the districts of Bukhara and Navoi. Also present were representatives from the local NGOs, personnel from the Center for Small and Medium Enterprises, and staff from the Israeli Embassy in Tashkent. Later on the participants enjoyed a festive dinner followed by the performance of a local traditional Bukharian musical group.



Bukhara Shalom Club members



"Peace Train" fundraising in Eritrea

Eritrea

Together with the Israeli Embassy, Shalom Club members in Eritrea organized February's "Peace Train," a fund raising activity for the local Asmara Abraha Bahta Blind School. Over 170 people traveled aboard the train; among them were members of the diplomatic community, representatives of foreign aid agencies, staff of the Israeli Embassy, Shalom Club members, and children from the Asmara House of the Blind School. The funds that were raised were presented to the director of the institution.

Peru

The Annual Shalom Club Peru Meeting took place in Lima in December, with the participation of MASHAV courses graduates from all over the country and the staff of the Israeli Embassy. The general theme was agriculture and the program included lectures and presentations on a variety of subjects such as: The agricultural reality in Peru, the potential of agricultural export, Israeli agricultural innovations, and more. Later on, the participants discussed future activities.



Senegal

Over 25 members of the Shalom Club Senegal gathered at the Israeli Embassy in Dakar to discuss future Club activities. The program they designed includes a series of seminars in various development subjects, study visits to different sites in the country including a special tour of the Israeli-Senegalese Experimental Demonstration Farm, and publishing a Shalom Club bulletin to serve as link with all MASHAV graduates from Senegal.

China

The Israeli Embassy in Beijing sent to all members of the Shalom Club in China a beautiful publication including updated information regarding MASHAV's activities and articles written by the participants themselves. In the introduction the editors wrote that "The main function of Shalom Clubs around the world is to strengthen and maintain alive the connections between MASHAV's training courses graduates. The main purpose of the Israeli-Sino cooperation is to share with our Chinese colleagues the knowledge and know-how Israel has gathered in many training activities around the world, and to apply this knowledge for the benefit of the course participants' communities."

Shalom Magazine for the Alumni of MASHAV Training Courses is published once a year in English, Spanish, French, Russian and Arabic, and is sent to all MASHAV graduates around the world.

MASHAV activities can be also viewed on our official Web site at:

<http://mashav.mfa.gov.il> the site includes material on international development and is part of the overall Internet framework of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also provides access to all MASHAV publications.

