

# SHALOM CLUBS

MASHAV maintains contact with many of its over 220,000 former course participants through its network of more than 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 Clubs activities in 2005:

## Bulgaria

Shalom Club Bulgaria held a special meeting in Sofia this past December 2005 with the participation of over 25 MASHAV course graduates. Israeli Ambassador to Bulgaria H.E. Abraham Sharon and the Embassy's Second Secretary Uri Resnick addressed the participants. The main purpose of the meeting was to consolidate an activities plan for this coming year and propose new ideas for future implementation for the benefit of the community.

Earlier this year, the Israeli Embassy in Beijing sent 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 keep 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."

## China

The Fifth Annual Event of MASHAV graduates from the city of Shanghai and the provinces of Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang took place in February 2005. Over 200 people participated in the event, among them graduates from MASHAV training courses, representatives of governmental and public organizations, academic institutes, members of the written and electronic media and many distinguished guests. The event was hosted by the Consul General of Israel in Shanghai Ilan Maor who gave a review of MASHAV activities in China and expressed his hope of expanding these activities next year. This event marks ten years since the inauguration of the Israeli Consulate in Shanghai.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

The 5th Congress of Latin America and the Caribbean Shalom Clubs was held in the Dominican Republic in October 2005 with the participation of over 200 delegates from 16 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The theme of the Congress was "Education: Community and Environment."

This framework encouraged an exchange of ideas and proposals to influence the development process in the



continent. Among the distinguished guests were the Dominican Republic's Minister of Agriculture and the Deputy Minister of the Environment; and representatives from the Diplomatic Corps, governmental bodies; the media; the Israeli Embassy and of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting allowed the participants in the Congress to express their friendship and commitment to continue working in benefit of their communities.

## Venezuela

Over 50 MASHAV graduates from all over Venezuela participated in a reception celebrating the end of the Shalom Club Venezuela Activity Year. The graduates were the guests of Israeli Ambassador to Venezuela, H.E. Shlomo Cohen, and the Israeli Embassy staff. Ambassador Cohen stressed the importance of Shalom Club activities and expressed his hope that more activities will be planned for 2006.



## Mauritania

The Shalom Club in Nouakchott renewed its activities on January 2005. Shalom Club members, media representatives and distinguished guests met at the residence of the Israeli Ambassador to Mauritania, H.E. Boaz Bismut. The President of the Shalom Club, Nouakchott's University Professor Muhammed El Mukhtar Ahmadu, greeted the participants. He stressed the important role of the Shalom Club in strengthening the relations between Israel and Mauritania.

## Benin

The Shalom Club Benin met this past March 2005 in Cotonou on the occasion of the visit of H.E. Israeli Ambassador H.E. Michael Arbel, resident in Abidjan,

Cote d'Ivoire. The Shalom Club President Col. Lawani and the Club's members decided to renew their activities in benefit of the community. During his visit, Ambassador Arbel discussed future implementation of MASHAV's development activities in Benin, including an on-the-spot course on drip irrigation in September 2005.

## Vanuatu

The Shalom Club Vanuatu met this past February 2005. The meeting took place in Port Vila with the participation of about 20 Shalom Club members, and was organized by the Club president, Mr. Godwin Ligo, a MASHAV graduate from a Journalism Course which took place in Kfar Saba in 1994.

The event for the reunion was the first visit of Sharon Polishuk, Second Secretary at the Israeli Embassy in Australia accredited to Vanuatu. The Israeli Embassy in Australia has offered to computerize the Club's data base. The Shalom Club is also getting ready to host in the near future an on-the-spot course for the Quarantine Service.

**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's courses former participants around the world. The magazine is a strong link between MASHAV and its graduates worldwide, addressing the many issues that lie at the core of development.



MASHAV's Official Website focuses on international development cooperation issues in general and the ongoing activities of MASHAV in particular, providing access to all MASHAV publications.

The website at: <http://mashav.mfa.gov.il> is part of the overall Internet framework of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

