



UNITED NATIONS

International Workshop on

Support Systems for Women in Small Businesses at National and Local Levels

in cooperation with

**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
(UNECE)**

July 17-30, 2013

The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC) Haifa, ISRAEL

**MASHAV - Center for International Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem**

ABOUT MASHAV

MASHAV – Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation - at Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs was founded in late 1957, and is responsible for the design, coordination and implementation of the State of Israel’s development cooperation programs.

MASHAV concentrates on human and institutional capacity building by sharing Israel’s own development experience and expertise, imparting know-how and transferring innovative technologies and tested methodologies adaptable to developing country needs.

MASHAV’s approach is to ensure social, economic and environmental sustainable development, joining the international community's efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

In the event of natural disasters, MASHAV also provides humanitarian assistance and participates in reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

ABOUT MCTC

The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC) was established in 1961 to assist in the training of women engaged in community work in the newly emerging states in Africa and Asia.

Since the establishment of MCTC, some 18,700 participants from over 150 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Oceania and the Caribbean have attended over 560 capacity building programs and 27 International Conferences for Women Leaders, conducted in Israel. In addition, MCTC conducts between 20 - 30 institutional capacity building programs in partner countries throughout each year, for hundreds more trainees throughout the developing world.

MCTC focuses on three areas of study: Community Development, Early Childhood Education and Organization and Management of Microenterprises, all with gender as a cross-cutting issue. In each training program there are up to 30 women and men from 10 to 27 countries. Usually two workshops are conducted concurrently in different languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian or Arabic).

The Center is located on Mount Carmel in Haifa. The building consists of living accommodation, classrooms, recreation and dining facilities. A library specializing in education, social sciences and humanities, and a computer laboratory with internet access serve the participants.

MCTC enjoys the active cooperation of a number of international organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and development authorities.

ABOUT UNECE

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), is one of the five UN regional commissions. Its major aim is to promote economic integration across its 56 member-countries, located in the European Union, non-EU Western and Eastern Europe, South-East Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and North America. UNECE provides policy-oriented analysis, advice and capacity building to member

states and cooperates with partner agencies, civil society, and key actors from the private sector.

UNECE works to facilitate international cooperation within and beyond the UNECE region through norms, standards and conventions, as well as monitoring international commitments in a wide array of areas. These range from economic cooperation and integration, energy, environment, housing and land management, to gender, population, statistics, timber, trade and transport.

UNECE has a long-standing commitment to the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in South-East Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. In addition to capacity building workshops for women entrepreneurs on information and communication technologies and support systems organized in cooperation with MASHAV and MCTC, activities include research assessing the business environment for women entrepreneurs and sub-regional forum for women entrepreneurs to address issues of particular concern, such as lack of networking opportunities, difficult access to credit and lack of specific knowledge and skills. In November 2012 UNECE organized its Third region-wide Forum of Women Entrepreneurs in Baku, Azerbaijan. It brought together policymakers, female and male entrepreneurs and academics, as well as representatives of international organizations to exchange good practices and lessons learnt on how to overcome remaining barriers to women entrepreneurs in various areas across the ECE region. They addressed issues on access to finance, regulations and administrative procedures, access to education, providing knowledge and skills, building networks and supportive institutions as well as physical and social infrastructure supportive to successful business. At a sub-regional level, UNECE co-organized the First Forum for South East European Women Entrepreneurs in Istanbul in September 2010. The promotion of women's entrepreneurship is supported by the Working Group on Gender and Economy within the United Nations Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The group works to raise awareness on gender and economy issues, exchange good practices in mainstreaming gender into economic policies, develop pilot projects in selected areas and promote cross-sectional linkages and synergies with other relevant areas of SPECA activities such as statistics, trade and information.

Another important area of UNECE's work is monitoring and supporting the development of effective mechanisms for gender equality through periodic reviews and research in cooperation with UN WOMEN and all UN regional commissions. UNECE actively participates in the work and task forces of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) including on women's economic empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty eradication and gender equality are major development goals for the twenty first century. Women's economic empowerment, which includes the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, supports both goals. In the Beijing Platform for Action, agreed by member countries at the Fourth World Conference

for Women in 1995, the United Nations advocates the improvement of women's situation in the economy. The fifteen year review of its implementation, which took place in March 2010, highlighted "support to women entrepreneurs wishing to expand their businesses should be increased , including through greater access to formal financial instruments, training and advisory services, access to markets and facilitation of networking and exchanges¹" At the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit in September 2010, countries committed themselves to "promoting small and medium-sized enterprises through initiatives such as skills enhancement and technical training programs, vocational training and entrepreneurial skills development" as well as "the promotion of financial services(...) for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises²

Progress in women's economic empowerment is especially relevant in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where women's economic position has deteriorated and female poverty is on the rise. Accelerated migration flows from and into this sub-region calls for an active approach to supporting women migrants, through creating an enabling environment and providing them with the opportunity to earn income for themselves and their families.

The International Workshop on ***"Support Systems for Women in Small Businesses at National and Local Levels "*** is organized in cooperation with UNECE by the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center, operating within the framework of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) and supported by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a major contribution to the work of the UNECE Working Group under SPECA on gender and economy.

Micro and small enterprises, many of which are run by women, are recognized as an important tool to create new opportunities and to generate additional sources of income. There is a recognized need for support tools and systems that can give a holistic package to a woman who wants or sometimes is forced to find some alternative income by starting her own business.

Micro-enterprises are more flexible and adaptable to rapid changes than bigger companies. However, small-scale entrepreneurs, especially at the early stages, often lack the necessary information and tools needed for running their businesses. They are also in need of updated data about the market and about the threats and opportunities around them. Planners have thus become aware of the need to enhance knowledge and managerial skills to ensure the success and survival of new small business ventures and of the importance to create appropriate frameworks that can offer support, guidance and managerial tools to those willing to take the risk of entrepreneurship.

Israel has been engaged in supporting small businesses for over two decades and its professional centers - Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and

¹ E/2010/4 – E/Cn.6/2010/2

² A/65/L.1,Para 70(d) and (h)

Technological Incubators - provide a wide range of services to entrepreneurs and business owners.

The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center has been sharing the Israeli experience with participants from all over the world and has successfully cooperated in entrepreneurial training and in the establishment of business support centers in former participants' countries. It is within this framework that the present workshop, the fifteenth in a row, is offered.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the proposed workshop, the participants will have:

- widened their knowledge of support systems for small-scale entrepreneurs as a tool for regional and local development
- become acquainted with the support systems for micro and small entrepreneurship in Israel, including technological incubators and drawn lessons on how to implement them
- discussed the position of women entrepreneurs at times of rapid global change and outlined best practices
- considered ways of strengthening institutional resources

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Workshop is designed for 26 – 30 participants between the ages of 30 – 55, working in governmental institutions and SME support agencies, NGOs dealing with small business support and development and women's business associations. The Workshop is designed for women and men alike.

Candidates are expected to have relevant studies in economics, business administration, regional planning, industrial management or related subjects, with a minimum of five years of work experience. Candidates working in rural areas and in remote regions of a country are encouraged to apply.

WORKSHOP PROCEDURE

Participants will reside at MCTC and the studies will be intensive. Five days a week are normally devoted to classroom study and observation visits. Saturday and Sunday will be spent on assignments or on excursions to places of historical, religious or general interest. The themes will be presented in the form of **lectures** and **workshops**, both by lecturers from the academic world and by those with experience in the private and institutional sectors.

The Workshop will be held in Russian; translation will be used when necessary.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

- Support systems in Israel
- Microcredit schemes

- Marketing strategies for small businesses
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and new opportunities for women; the Internet as a source of information and advice
- Women in business networking
- Budget planning
- Business ethics
- Preparation of a project proposal

Study Visits

Participants will have the opportunity to meet Israeli women entrepreneurs in different settings and to visit Development Centers and other institutions involved in supporting microenterprise development.

Among them:

- Small Business Development Centers
- Technological Incubators
- Women's enterprises

Exchange of Professional Experiences

An important aspect of the Workshop is the exchange of experiences amongst its participants and several sessions will be devoted to this purpose. The rich knowledge brought by the students from different countries is a very valuable contribution both to the proceedings and to their future development.

Final Assignment

At the end of the Workshop, participants will present to the plenum a practical project proposal or innovative idea related to the subject matter that could be implemented in their own settings.

CERTIFICATE

Upon completion of the Workshop the graduates will receive a certificate confirming their attendance and active participation.

APPLICATION

Application forms may be downloaded from MASHAV's website (<http://mashav.mfa.gov.il/mfm/Data/204248.doc>), or obtained from Israeli Diplomatic and/or Consular Representatives serving the applicant's country. All forms must be returned to Israeli Diplomatic and/or Consular Representatives who will forward them to us.

The completed applications for admission to the Workshop must be received at MCTC in Haifa, as soon as possible **but not later than May 16, 2013.**

ITEMS COVERED BY THE SCHOLARSHIP

Studies:

Lectures, group and individual tutoring, field visits, written study material and use of reference library.

Accommodation:

- two students to a room
- linen, heating

Full Board

Cultural and Social Activities

Excursions to historical and religious sites

Health Services

Medical insurance covers medical services and hospitalization in case of emergency and accident. **It does not cover the treatment of chronic or serious diseases, specific medications taken by the participant on a regular basis, dental care, eyeglasses, or the period of pregnancy. Participants using specific medications on a regular basis must bring sufficient quantities for the duration of their stay.**

Health forms must be completed and signed by a physician. If the trainee's health deteriorates due to a chronic ailment or serious disease not described on the form, he/she will be held responsible for all medical and other expenses incurred in treatment in Israel. Furthermore, the Center will not be obliged to retain the trainee until the end of the Workshop.

The Health Authorities recommend that visitors to Israel make sure they have been inoculated against tetanus in the last ten years.

Miscellaneous

- Daily papers and periodicals
- Laundry facilities on the premises

Participants are responsible for all other expenses.

N.B. The scholarship does not cover flight tickets to and from Israel.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Informative Material

Please bring with you literature relevant to the workshop, video films, newspapers, tapes of radio programs, slides and pamphlets, as well as examples of traditional crafts.

Weather

The Workshop will take place in summer, when temperatures may range from 27° C to 32° C.

Clothing

Participants are advised to bring light clothing and comfortable low-heeled shoes for excursions and study visits.

Passport and Visa

Passports must be valid for the period of the workshop and include an entry visa into Israel. Your visa will be issued by the Israeli representative serving your country. **Two additional passport-size photographs** are also required for various documents.

Booking

The date and flight number of the booking to Israel must be confirmed to assure arrival **before** the opening of the Workshop on **July 17, 2013**. Rerouting is entirely at the participants' expense.

Luggage

Many airline companies allow only 20Kg. (44 lb.) of luggage. There is an extra charge for overweight.

Personal Insurance

Participants are advised to insure any valuable personal belongings, since MCTC takes no responsibility for them.

Foreign Exchange

All the major currencies are exchangeable in Israel.



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