



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)**

March 7-24, 2011

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

**MASHAV - Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem**

About MASHAV

Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, known as MASHAV, was founded in 1958 as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is responsible for initiating and implementing Israel's development cooperation program worldwide. MASHAV aims at transferring the expertise and technologies which have assisted Israel on its own path to development to other countries.

Today, MASHAV cooperates with over 140 countries, providing training and capacity building programs in Israel, as well as operating on-site demonstration projects and building medical infrastructure in partner countries. MASHAV is active in fields ranging from agriculture to medicine and from community development to entrepreneurship.

About MCTC

The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC) was founded by MASHAV 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, more than 15,500 participants from 148 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Oceania and the Caribbean have attended over 480 capacity building programs and workshops, and 26 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: **Micro-enterprise Development:** Organization and Management, Micro-credit, Support Systems and Rural Tourism, all with an emphasis on women entrepreneurs; Entrepreneurship for Youth, a Tool for Poverty Alleviation; Information and Communication Technology (ICT): **Community Development:** NGO and Community Service Management; Crisis Intervention; Human Trafficking; Child Abuse; Care of the Elderly; Media Strategies for Social Change; Rehabilitation within the Community; Special Needs of Women and Youth at Risk; Local Government and Socio-economic Development: **Early Childhood Education:** Children with Special Needs, Parental Involvement, Emergent Literacy, Science and Technology, Music and Art, Bilingualism, Holistic Infant Development for Doctors, Psychologists and Community Workers; Psycho-Social Care for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS.

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 five regional commissions of the United Nations. 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 forums for women entrepreneurs to address issues of particular concern, such as the lack of networking opportunities, difficult access to credit and lack of specific knowledge and skills. UNECE co-organized the First Forum for South East European Women Entrepreneurs in cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council and the Government of Turkey in Istanbul in September 2010. A region-wide forum for Women Entrepreneurs is planned for the early part of 2012. 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).

INTRODUCTION

Poverty eradication and gender equality are central 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 "that 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 exchanges"¹. 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 programmes, vocational training and entrepreneurial skills development" as well as "the promotion of financial services (...) for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises"².

¹ E/2010/4 – E/Cn.6/2010/2

² A/65/L.1, Para 70 (d) and (h)

Progress in women's economic empowerment is especially relevant for countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where women's economic position has deteriorated and female poverty is on the rise.

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 on behalf 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 **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 support systems that can give a holistic package to a woman who wants or sometimes is forced to find some alternative income by her starting 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 of creating 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 Technological Incubators - provide a wide range of services to entrepreneurs and business owners.

The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC) 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 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 learned how to implement them
- discussed the position of women entrepreneurs at times of rapid global change and outlined best practices

- undergone a "hands-on experience" on how to start, organize and run a small scale business
- considered ways of strengthening institutional resources

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The workshop is designed for 26 – 30 participants between the ages of 27 – 50, working in governmental institutions and SME support agencies, NGOs dealing with small business support and development and women’s business associations. Outstanding individual entrepreneurs should also apply.

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**, by lecturers from the academic world and by those with experience in the private and institutional sectors. A special **practical module** on organizing and running a business will be part of the program.

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
- Entrepreneurial Training – Business Laboratories
- 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 should be obtained from Israeli Diplomatic and/or Consular Representatives serving the applicant's country and returned to them.

The completed applications for admission to the workshop must be received at MCTC in Haifa, as soon as possible but not later than **February 15th, 2011**.

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, hot water, 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**Weather**

The workshop will take place in spring, when temperatures may range from 15° C to 25° C.

Clothing

Participants are advised to bring warm and 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. (If there is no possibility of contact with an Israeli representative, MASHAV will arrange for you to receive the visa on your arrival at Ben-Gurion- Tel Aviv-Airport). **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 **March 7th, 2011**. 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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