

MIU – MOVEMENT FOR ISRAELI URBANISM

The Need for Urban Renaissance in Israel

Be'er-Sheva December 2005

The first conference of Merhav (MIU) Movement for Israeli Urbanism, was held on 12-13 Dec. 2005 in the "Teacher's Center" in Beer-Sheva.

The first day opened with a lecture by Dr. Yodan Rofe who spoke about "MIU – Who Needs it, and Why?" and Architect Dror Gershon who spoke about "Cities in Israel – The Challenge". Both Dr. Yodan and Arch. Gershon are MIU board members.

The main session of the morning was focused on the city hosting the conference. The subject of the session was: "Thinking It Over – Beer Sheva as a Case Study". The session was opened by Arch. Irit Solzi, chairman of MIU board and Hillel Shocken, MIU board member.

Three lecturers from overseas arrived at the conference – two architects and urban planners from the U.S.: Neal Payton and Dhiru Thadani, and an urban and regional planner from Germany: Harald Kegler. These guests brought examples of urban renaissance from around the world and introduced the conference participants to a world of different urban possibilities.

Thirty additional lecturers took part on the first day: Prof. Naomi Carmon from the Technion, Dr. Raseem Hamaisi from Haifa University, Prof. Yoram Shiftan from the Technion, Benny Shalita from NTA, Amit Har-Lev, Prof. Yehuda Grados from Ben Gurion University and Tamir Ben Shachar MIU board member.

350 participants from all over the country arrived for the first day of the conference. 90 of them were architecture and design students from Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Ariel, Jerusalem and Beer-Sheva.

Local events accompanied the conference: students from schools in Beer-Sheva drew the city and their dream city – these drawings created the entrance to the teacher's center. Local groups sang and danced.

The most important events were the planning workshops which took place on the second day of the conference. Residents, architects, planners and also the guests from overseas participated. These planning workshops were begun a few months before the conference. Residents and planners from all over the country participated and three projects in the older neighborhoods in the city center were chosen. During this day of the conference, the vision, objectives, planning options, time table and ways to advance these three projects were decided.

