

---

## Project Spotlight: AICAT

---

### AT THE ARAVA INTERNATIONAL CENTER

for Agriculture Training (AICAT), the new \$170,000 mobile classroom recently erected by JNF in memory of Zevi Kahanov, longtime JNF employee and emissary to Israel, is the latest development pointing to the school's impressive growth and success. With an alumni base of 9,000 and current annual enrollment of 1,200 students, the school receives nearly twice that in applications. The goal



*Students at AICAT.*

is to grow the program to 3,000 by 2020. The need for physical expansion is obvious.

Located in the desert town of Sapir in the Central Arava, AICAT was founded in 1994 as a joint venture between the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Arava Regional Council to train agricultural students from developing countries. In addition to the mobile classroom, the school has three classrooms in its central building.

Said Hanni Arnon, AICAT's director and founder: "Our students come for an entire year's growing season, so they can take part in planting, nurturing

and harvesting crops. It's important for them to see the entire process, a full agricultural season."

This year's students hail from Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Nepal, Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Indonesia (the largest Muslim-populated country in the world with no formal relations with Israel). The goal for trainees is to introduce more sophisticated methods of agriculture and food production upon return to their countries and become goodwill ambassadors for Israel in their home country. AICAT graduates become community leaders, pursue higher academic education in Israel and abroad, establish successful model farms and businesses, and integrate professionally in the public and private sectors.

Currently AICAT has 67 lecturers (six were brought on this year along with a new academic director) to meet the demands of the global student body. Further, in 2014 AICAT introduced a new 38-credit master's degree program in partnership with Tel Aviv University. Subsequently, there's not a day when any one of the only 230 seats in the four classrooms is not occupied.

"Without JNF's assistance in providing us this new classroom we couldn't meet the needs of our students," said Arnon. "With JNF we can dream and meet the vision and master plan that we set to become a university." ■

---

*For more information on AICAT, visit [jnf.org/central-arava](http://jnf.org/central-arava).*