

The President of the Ruppin Academic Center

The Ruppin Academic Center has identified the importance of immigration and social integration in both the Israeli and the international context. In 2005, as a result of its innovative position, the Ruppin Academic Center founded the Institute for Immigration and Social Integration, the first of its kind in Israel. A study program that operates alongside the Institute and which is now in its seventh year, annually awards an M.A. degree in Immigration and Social Integration to dozens of graduates, preparing them for work and research in the field.

The Institute for Immigration and Social Integration operates through several channels that combine research, teaching, field training and various activities aimed at examining the Israeli migration policy and increasing public awareness of immigration and social integration issues. Our decision to support the *Hagirah* journal, the only academic peer-reviewed journal in Israel dedicated to immigration issues, is another expression of our commitment to these subjects.

As part of its ongoing activities, The Institute for Immigration and Social Integration organizes international conferences in order to provide a unique opportunity to exchange ideas. Experts in the field of immigration arrive from throughout the world to share knowledge and ideas and hold an enriching dialogue with Israeli researchers, professionals and policymakers. The international conference that took place in 2014 hosted 44 scholars from various countries, who joined the Israeli participants and presented many updated studies over the course of two intensive days. The conference dealt with the migration trends over the past 25 years – since the downfall of the Berlin Wall and the massive immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel and other locations around the globe. The conference received positive feedback and engendered much interest.

This special issue of *Hagirah* consists of a collection of articles from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ruppin International Conference on Immigration and Social Integration (May 2014). It offers all those who take an interest, including researchers, policymakers and those who are active in this field, exposure to select prominent studies.

We invite you to join us in the center's many activities, and to sail with us beyond the horizon.

Prof. Shosh Arad

President of the Ruppin Academic Center