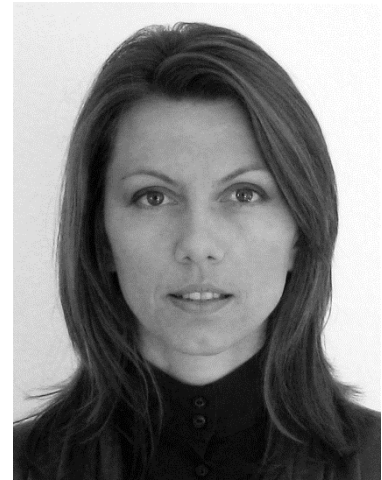


## University Alliance for Sustainability

Research and study stays 2015 in the field of sustainability

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### Brief Report

My research project is focused on the concept of an integrated approach to local economic development and nature protection policy-making, promoted by the United Nations through the concept of Biosphere Reserves. The aim is to address the challenges of the public participation process in the aim of integrating nature conservation and sustainable development policies. Particular emphasis is given to the relationship between the social and ecological systems, focusing on transformation processes towards new regimes of protecting the nature while encouraging local development. The main purpose of my research stay in Israel was to complete data collection in relation to two of the case studies in my dissertation research – the Megiddo Biosphere Reserve and the Mount Carmel Biosphere Reserve.

As an exchange scholar at the HUI I have to say that I was flattered to have Prof. Eran Feitelson as a host professor. His influential work in Israel has significantly helped me in locating the right representatives of relevant stakeholders, for which I owe him an immense gratitude. Especially valuable for me was the opportunity to get in touch with other participants of the UAS as well as other PhD visiting scholars at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Other than within the partner university, I established contacts with relevant professors and scholars from other research institutions, such as the Technion University, University of Haifa, Tel Aviv University, Open Landscape Institute (SPNI) and Agricultural Research Organization under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The beginning of my research stay I spent in Jerusalem, at the Hebrew University. I took this opportunity to have helpful interviews with the representatives from the governmental institutions, which are involved in the biosphere reserves related issues, such as the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Nature and Park Authorities and the Man and Biosphere National Committee of Israel. After my stay in Jerusalem I moved to the north of the country where the

two biosphere reserves are located. During the period of my research stay in Israel I completed a great deal of my foreseen field research. For this purpose I managed to make 19 interviews with stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in the management of both biosphere reserves.

My research stay in Israel was rather intensive, extremely productive and inspiring. Field research can be at the same time challenging and rewarding, intensive and exciting. The advance of the UAS program that I found extremely beneficial is the prospect of moving from student-focused and community-based empirical research in meaningful explorations on issues of local relevance. Hence I am delighted to have had the chance to be part of the University Alliance for Sustainability Fellowship Program 2015.