

# Driving Social Mobility



## Our mission

The Rashi Foundation, one of the largest private foundations in Israel, has been working since 1984 to **narrow gaps and address the root causes of socioeconomic inequality**, thereby strengthening the country's social fabric.

Rashi develops and implements high-impact initiatives that **drive social mobility** among Israel's underserved populations, with an emphasis on **children, youth and young adults in the geo-social periphery**.

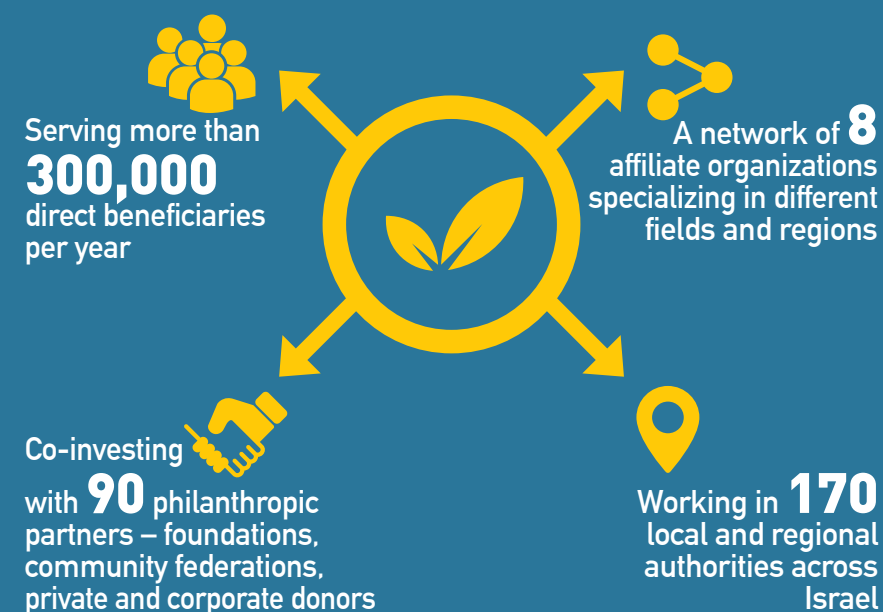
With a focus on the **educational and social welfare systems, from cradle to career**, Rashi creates solutions that provide opportunities and cultivate excellence, while also extending support to vulnerable individuals.

The Rashi Foundation was established by **Gustave Leven** (1914-2008), a French-Jewish businessman and philanthropist with a deep concern for the less fortunate and a strong commitment to Israel and its society. Today, Gustave's nephew Hubert Leven and his son François, the Foundation President, continue to lead Rashi in advancing transformational projects, guided by Gustave's legacy.

## The power of partnership

Rashi believes that **working together with partners** from the philanthropic, public and business sectors is the best way to create **effective systemic change**.

In the face of great social needs, and given that financial resources are limited, bringing about significant change requires pooling of both funding and knowledge. Rashi shares its existing infrastructure to facilitate cross-sector collaborations, with an emphasis on transparency and accountability, and invites partners to join ongoing or new initiatives in order to maximize their potential impact.



## Rashi's Leadership

Rashi's activity is led by a team with broad experience and expertise, as well as a strong commitment to advancing the Foundation's goals through cross-sector partnerships.

**François Leven** has had a professional career in the financial markets and served as Vice President of Rashi until taking on the role of President in 2018. He also follows the family tradition of community service through his involvement with the board of Alliance-KIAH and other civil society organizations.

**Hubert Leven**, the nephew of Rashi's founder **Gustave Leven** and François' father, has headed the Foundation since its inception, leading it for 35 years while developing a broad network of partnerships around the Jewish world. During his term Rashi grew to become one of the most influential and innovative philanthropies in Israel and a recipient of the Presidential Award for its contribution to Israeli society.

**Gabi Ashkenazi**, Chairman of the Board, served as Chief of Staff of the IDF at the culmination of a distinguished military career, and also held the position of Director General of the Ministry of Defense. He brings to the Foundation his leadership capabilities, strategic thinking and dedication to Israeli society.

**Michal Cohen**, General Director, served as Director General of the Ministry of Education. Her track record and capabilities include managing large-scale organizations, driving major pedagogic and structural reforms and advancing innovative initiatives, as well as facilitating cross-sector dialogue and cooperation in the social field.



**François Leven**,  
President



**Hubert Leven**,  
Honorary  
President



Lt. Gen. (ret.)  
**Gabi Ashkenazi**,  
Chairman



**Michal Cohen**,  
General Director

Rashi has developed expertise in **cross-sector partnerships** to design and implement models that are **measurable, replicable and scalable**, with an exit strategy based on state-funded public services adopting the programs.



Aiming to facilitate strategic philanthropic investment in Israel, the advantages that the Rashi Foundation offers to its partners stem from its ability to provide funding from its own sources as well as operating capabilities. These advantages, along with a comprehensive set of professional services, allow Rashi to act as an ideal platform for realizing a wide range of social ventures, from a single project to strategic partnerships.

-  Extensive on-the-ground **experience and knowledge**
-  **Organizational and professional infrastructure** that ensures cost-efficient use of partners' resources:
  - **Main office services:** social R&D, financial administration, legal consultation, IT systems, marketing communications, capital projects management, funding partnerships
  - **Measurement and evaluation** of programs to improve their design and analyze their social return



**Leveraging opportunities** to increase programs' scope and impact

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## The populations we serve



**Early childhood:**  
birth-6



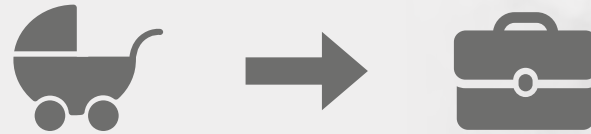
**Children and youth:**  
6-18



**Young adults:**  
18-35



**Family and community**



### Social mobility: cradle to career

Each stage on the continuum from birth to adulthood is critical to a person's development and self-fulfillment. From cradle to career, Rashi reaches out to Israel's underserved geo-social periphery and offers **opportunities for social mobility and economic independence**.

Together with its partners, Rashi invests in developing holistic models that create widespread change in the education and welfare systems and touch the lives of individuals, families and communities.

### Leveraging change

Rashi focuses on high-impact initiatives designed to **build the capacity of organizations and communities** and empower **change agents** such as social activists, parents and teachers to deepen and accelerate the Foundation's activity and effect.

The core areas of Rashi's activity include:

- ✓ **City-based investment** – advancing social mobility for all residents from cradle to career
- ✓ **Early childhood** – providing an environment for optimal development in the first years of life
- ✓ **Educational opportunities** – enhancing formal and informal education, from kindergarten to college
- ✓ **At-risk children, youth and families** – developing community-based support services







## First steps

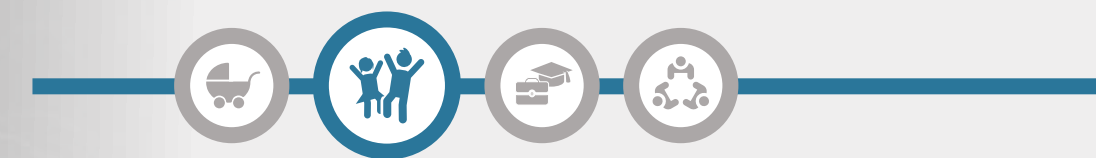
### Early childhood: birth-6

The first years of life are crucial to a child's ability to realize innate potential. As such, Rashi has undertaken to ensure that integrated and professional early childhood services (education, developmental enrichment, paramedical therapies and more) are more widely accessible, particularly in the periphery. The Foundation also invests in providing a suitable physical environment for these services – early childhood centers and daycare centers.

Rashi's latest **Early Childhood Initiative** focuses on infants and toddlers (birth to 3), in partnership with JDC-Ashalim and the Ministry of Social Services. This is a comprehensive community-based approach ensuring the **wellbeing and optimal development of very young children**.

Every municipality taking part in the initiative is requested to take full responsibility for the early childhood services available to its residents; this includes universal services for all children and their parents, as well as individual solutions for special needs. With the project's support, the municipalities build the capacity to supervise the quality of childcare, provide training to caregivers, identify children at risk, and guide parents to enhance their parenting skills. Demonstrating the feasibility of this approach, and bringing together a broad coalition of stakeholders around the initiative, will drive systemic change in early childhood education at the national level.





## Opportunities in education

### Children and youth: 6-18

Education is the main vehicle for social mobility, and Rashi's activity in this field is designed to maximize the opportunities it offers, in **both formal and informal education** settings. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Foundation's programs support and empower school teams, help to close gaps and reduce dropout rates, and promote excellence with an emphasis on STEM fields.

The **Cyber Education Center** was established in recognition of the importance of cyber-tech for Israel's national security and for its economic growth. As Rashi's cyber education initiative **Magshimim** has demonstrated, tapping into the potential among populations that are underrepresented in high-tech can expand the pool of skilled cyber professionals, while offering capable young adults a valuable **springboard to social mobility**.

The Cyber Education Center, operating in conjunction with Israel's security and high-tech sectors, coordinates and manages a growing set of cyber programs across Israel. Its goal is to train the next generation of cyber experts from all parts of the country and all sectors of society, who will strengthen the IDF's cyber units and bolster Israel's cyber security and high-tech industries.

The **Start Matriculation Program** addresses the acute problem of school dropouts and the large disparities in matriculation rates among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. An intensive three-year program of accelerated learning, Start allows students who have experienced repeated failure to complete 12th grade, with **70% of the participants earning a matriculation certificate**. Equally significant is the change in their self-perception and sense of capability, which translates into motivation to contribute to society and to attain higher education. The teachers and the entire school also change, as they adopt new practices and a fresh attitude towards under-achieving students.

The **Revadim Initiative** applies a model of comprehensive intervention in low-performing elementary schools in Israel's periphery. Participating schools are offered a range of pedagogic solutions and services that supplement those provided by the Ministry of Education, including educational reinforcement, remedial teaching and therapy, guidance for principals and teachers, and activities to get parents involved. The initiative's aim is to bring about **measurable improvement in a school's management**, in its faculty's professional capability and in the school climate, in addition to the pupils' achievements.





## From risk to resilience

### Children and youth: 6-18

Community-based services are the preferred option when working with children and youth at risk. Accordingly, Rashi's initiatives **include the parents and the entire family** in the treatment process. Even when out-of-home placement is necessary, continuous contact with the family and community institutions ensures that the child's eventual re-integration is as smooth as possible.

The **Community Anchor Youth Village** in Be'er Sheva was planned from the start as an integral part of the community and operates in close cooperation with the municipal services and education system. The village is a unique facility where several complementary services for youth at risk come together to create a **continuity of care** – either on a residential basis or as day support. The therapists, counselors and educators work as one multi-disciplinary team, which provides for comprehensive care and offers **the best solution for each youngster at every stage**. The village serves approximately 900 youth at risk annually.

The network of **treatment centers for children victims of sexual abuse** was created as part of a long-term partnership with the Ministry of Social Services and the National Insurance Institute. This partnership provides a unique platform for developing social initiatives, where the work model is tested and fine-tuned through a pilot program; after demonstrating its effectiveness, it is **scaled into a nationwide public service**. The service for sexually abused children was developed into a network of regional centers, each one operating an on-site treatment facility and satellite units in nearby communities. In addition to therapy for the children and their families, the centers also engage in community-oriented education and training.







## Aiming high Young adults: 18-35

Rashi's programs encourage young people to fulfill their potential after they graduate high school, and accompany them through college until they earn an academic degree.

**Volunteering and young leadership** – aware of the value of volunteering as a tool for promoting equal opportunities and social mobility, Rashi supports a number of gap year and national service programs, where young people from underprivileged groups volunteer in the geographic and social periphery of Israel. Combining educational and leadership training with volunteer work, the participants serve as powerful role models for the children and youth they teach, while building their own skills and capabilities. At the same time, the interaction between young people from different population sectors – Jews, Arabs, Druze and Bedouin – helps to build a **shared civil society** based on equality, tolerance and social responsibility.

The **Katzir Scholarships Fund** reaches out to qualified and motivated young adults and enables them to **overcome the economic and social hurdles** to higher education that would otherwise be insurmountable. In several scholarship programs targeting different disadvantaged groups, such as single mothers or graduates of youth villages and boarding schools, Katzir offers **all-encompassing support** that includes not only tuition and a living stipend, but also academic reinforcement, personal coaching and even material aid when necessary. Thanks to this approach, the graduation rate of the scholarships' recipients is over 95% - much higher than the national average for students from a similar background.

The **Nur Initiative**: In Israel's Arab society, teen girls and young women face obstacles that result, for example, in poor Hebrew and English literacy; limited access to higher education and to quality employment; and a high rate of premature marriage. Nur ('light' in Arabic) is a community-based initiative in partnership with the Bader Foundation and the Ministry of Social Services, where **holistic centers addressing the most acute needs** and difficulties are set up in Arab towns. The centers' programming combines individual and group work and includes a range of services such as empowerment and life skills workshops, preparation for matriculation and psychometric exams, vocational guidance and training.





## Towards self-sufficiency

### Family and community

In recent years, Rashi has adopted a perspective that focuses not only on individuals, but **extends to the family and the entire community** as well. This **holistic view** is applied in initiatives that protect the wellbeing of children and strengthen the family unit, as well as in an innovative community-wide model to improve social mobility.

**City at the Center** is a citywide planning and implementation initiative, in which local stakeholders join forces to **catalyze and sustain social mobility**. This new investment strategy builds the capacity of the local civil, government, and business sectors to forge shared goals into a masterplan for needs-based, results-oriented infrastructure, programs, and interventions. **Using data and public participation as a basis for city management and decision-making**, a steering committee maps, defines, and implements what is needed to improve the socioeconomic situation of local residents. City at the Center is designed to become a permanent part of the inner workings of a participant city, while greatly advancing the culture of municipal administration.

Rashi, together with partners, launched a pilot program in two cities – Kiryat Malachi and Ashkelon. The short-term results were deemed a success by all involved, and an expansion to additional locales is being planned as the next stage in duplicating City at the Center on a large scale nationwide.

The **Children in Neglect** initiative targets families where the parents' inability to provide for the basic needs of their child seriously affects his or her health and development. Although a large number of the children referred to welfare services suffer from neglect – physical, emotional, educational and so on – no systemic solution existed in the past to address their situation. The pilot project, in partnership with the Ministry of Social Services and the National Insurance Institute, includes 12 locales representing different communities and population groups. Its ultimate goal is to develop an evidence-based model for dealing with neglect as a specific issue, **ensuring the protection and wellbeing of children within their families** and avoiding the need to remove them from home.

The **Family Empowerment Initiative** is a nationwide program whose ambitious goal is to fundamentally **change the social services approach to poverty**. Focusing on families that are motivated to change the course of their lives but lack the tools to do so, mentors work with each family to build a plan for becoming more self-reliant, taking into account every aspect of life – finances, work, education, health and more. Implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Social Services and JDC Israel, the initiative involves some 3,000 families in more than 90 communities. Every town in the program also operates a "Power Center" that serves the whole community, offering guidance in areas such as finding employment, managing the household budget and maximizing social security benefits.





“A secure and prosperous Israel draws its strength from a society in which every individual can realize his or her full potential.”

Gustave Leven (1914-2008)  
Founder of the Rashi Foundation





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