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Yeholot =

Yeholot ("Abilities Potential") Association
Founded by the Rashi Foundation

An Invitation to Partnership
Prepared by the Rashi Foundation

March 2011



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Tafnit Program

A determined, accelerated and comprehensive approach for reducing educational gaps and increasing learning success

The scholastic performance of students in the Israeli school system, as measured by international and other standardized tests, shows gaps that begin in elementary school and grow wider as the children reach junior high and high school.

The **Tafnit Program**, now under the **Yeholot Association** founded by the **Rashi Foundation**, was launched in 2001 with the aim of reducing educational gaps by giving schools the tools for helping pupils fulfill their potential. Chosen among 60 leading initiatives with the potential to change the face of tomorrow in the Israeli Presidential Conference 2008 under the auspices of President Shimon Peres, Tafnit is one of the flagship programs of the Rashi Foundation.

Since its inception a decade ago, the program was implemented successfully in several models, addressing the needs of tens of thousands of children and youth in elementary, junior and high schools and post high school frameworks across Israel. Its activity has expanded over this period thanks to partnerships with the Ministry of Education, local authorities and philanthropies. Following a strategic decision of Rashi to deepen Tafnit's involvement in post-primary education and to gradually expand its activities, the Yeholot Association was created in December 2010 as an operating arm specializing in matriculation programs.





The Need: Matriculation Rates and School Dropout in Israel

The education system in Israel aims to lead every child to succeed in school, regardless of his or her social or economic background, and to promote social mobility and access to higher education as a key for their future integration in society as productive adults. This is also essential for building solidarity and national strength in Israel's multi-cultural society.

The matriculation diploma attained at the end of high school, which is a prerequisite for academic studies, was granted in 2008/9 only to **46.1% of all 17-year olds**; matriculation rates were lower among children from the periphery compared with their peers in well-established localities. Moreover, the matriculation rate was **52.2% in the Jewish population** but only **34.4% among Arab youth** and **29.4% among the Bedouin population** of the Negev.

These figures indicate that despite persisting efforts, school performance in Israel is still strongly linked to socioeconomic status and ethnic background.

School dropout is another acute problem, with **20.2% of all 17-year olds not attending 12th grade** in 2008/9. According to a Brookdale Institute study (2003), **11%-19% of the pupils in 6th-10th grade are "hidden dropouts"** at high risk of actual dropout, and are characterized by truancy, poor scholastic achievements, alienation, behavior problems etc.

Principles

Yeholot and the Tafnit Program work in schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Education based on the belief that every child is able to succeed in school, and that the school and the education system are responsible for making this potential into reality.

We believe that it is possible to reduce learning gaps and lead pupils towards success by universal standards at any grade level, even those who have fallen far behind or are on the verge of dropping out of school.

Our activity is based on the method of accelerated reduction of learning gaps that was developed by Tafnit (Yeholot) and applied successfully in working with thousands of students of all ages. These principles are:

- **Everyone is able!** - with very few exceptions, every child can succeed in school and reach remarkable achievements
- **Chain of success** - instead of failure after failure, the child must experience a chain of success so as to build self-confidence and restore the teachers' and parents' belief in his ability
- **Accelerated learning** - large gaps in knowledge can be reduced through accelerated learning techniques that break the classroom routine, with highly challenging, measurable goals
- **Empowerment of teachers** - by succeeding with the weakest pupils, the school teachers gain a sense of capability and motivation and acquire tools and knowledge to assist all their pupils
- **Results orientation** - the study program must be driven by achieving good results, and led by teachers who can generate the will and motivation to succeed
- **Standards** - the pupils must not merely improve their performance, but achieve high grades according to universal standards
- **Individual attention** - since children learn at different paces, there must be a differential investment of time and resources through small-group study and the employment of teaching assistants
- **Significant others** - a coalition of school teachers, program staff and parents must be formed to encourage and direct the child towards scholastic success
- **Addressing the emotional needs** at the root of under-achievement
- **Personal monitoring and external supervision** of the situation of every child



Tafnit for Matriculation – “Last Hurdle” Program

Implemented in schools with a low rate of matriculation success, the Last Hurdle program targets 10th-12th grade pupils who failed, or are expected by their school to fail the matriculation exam in one particular (“obstacle”) subject, which remains their “last hurdle” to a matriculation certificate.

The program employs Tafnit’s principles of accelerated learning over one semester for each subject. It takes place mainly after school hours and in intensive “learning marathons” outside the school. With few exceptions, the teachers are members of the school staff who received specialized training beforehand.

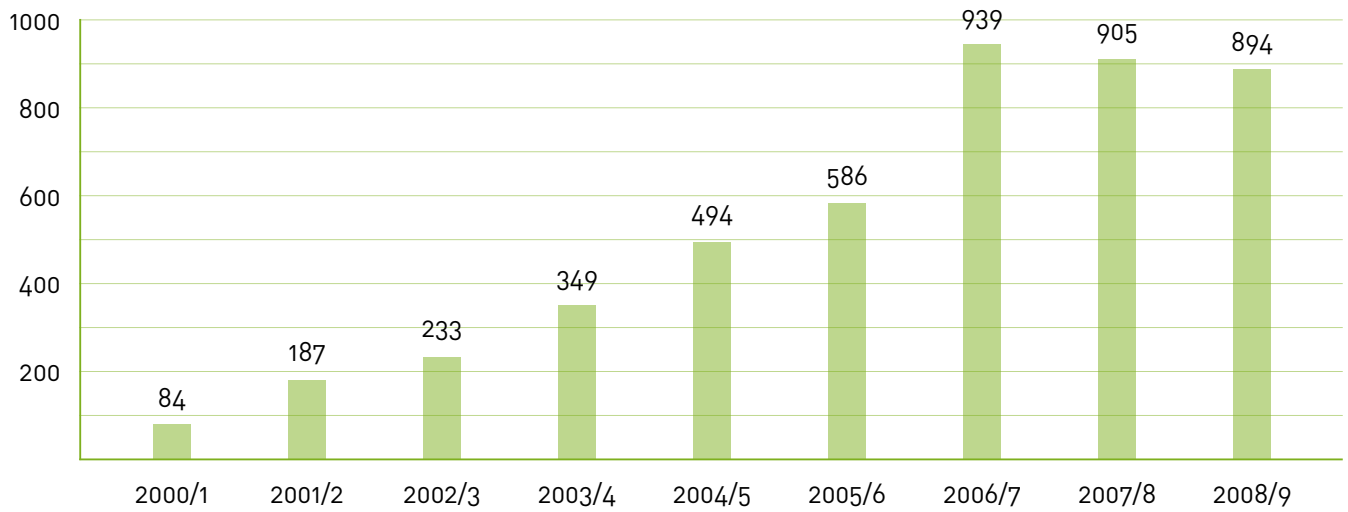
The program is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the municipal education departments in participating localities.

Results over the past 5 years:

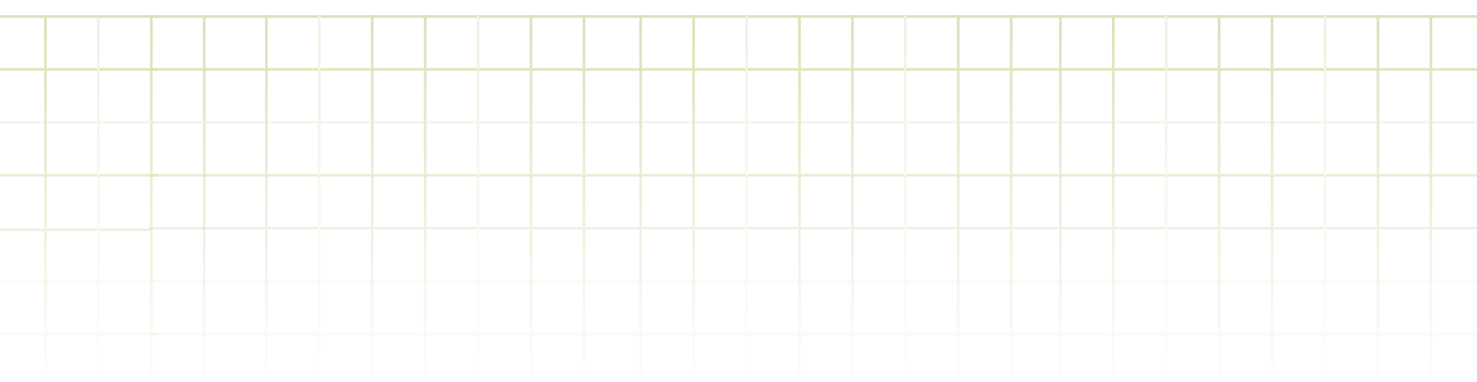
- 94% of all the pupils who entered the program have passed the matriculation exam in the obstacle subject successfully.
- 99% of the pupils who entered the program completed it and took the matriculation exam in the “obstacle” subject.



Number of participants in the Last Hurdle Program by year



Success rate in the matriculation exam among participants



Tafnit for Matriculation and Prevention of High School Dropout – “Start” Program

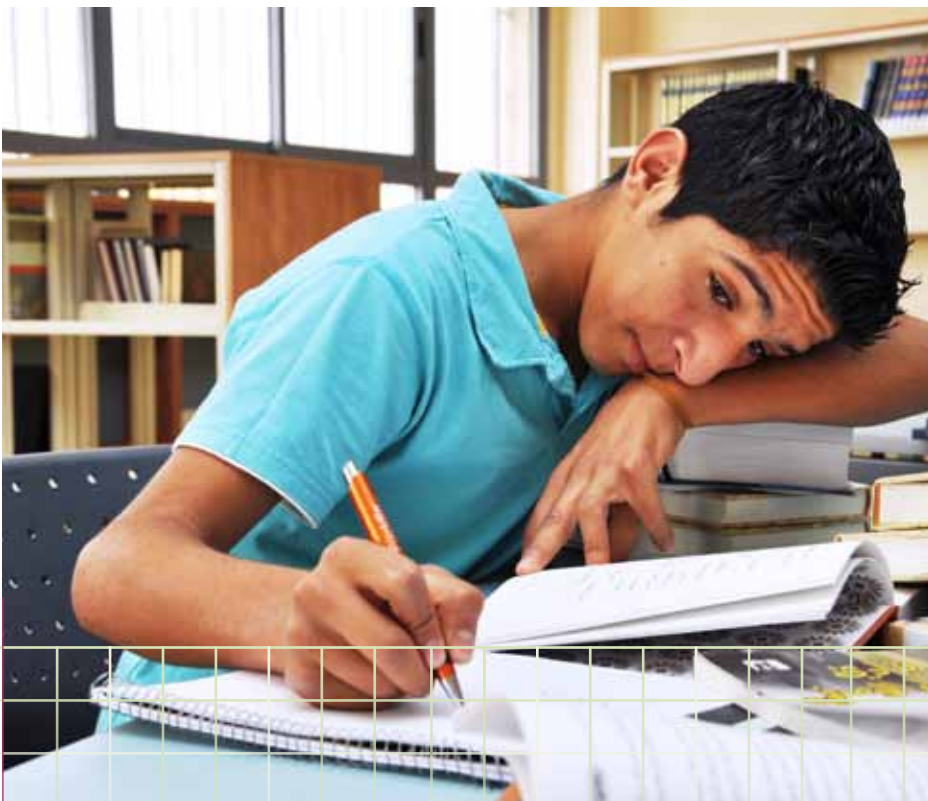
In an effort to increase matriculation rates and reduce hidden and actual dropout, the program, using the method of accelerated reduction of learning gaps, takes the unconventional approach of focusing on the lowest-achieving pupils.

Operating in high schools in the periphery, the program accepts youth at risk who are on verge of dropping out, starting with a group of 30-50 pupils with an average mark under 54; more than half have at least 7 failures across all subjects. The program works with this group for more than three years, from the end of 9th grade through 12th grade, and aims to extend the support until they reach academic studies.

The pupils in the program join a separate class, taught by regular school teachers who are trained and guided by Tafnit instructors. Studies take place during school hours, as well as after school and during part of the vacations. By changing the pace and structure of study, providing individual attention and assistance, building pupils' motivation and dealing with the emotional roots of underachievement, the cycle of failure is broken and the path to success is paved. Studying towards matriculation is considered as both an end in itself and as a means to prevent school dropout.

The program makes a deep impact on the entire school when the lowest achievers are led to success by universal standards, causing a fundamental change in the self-perception of these pupils and in the way they are perceived by their classmates, parents and teachers.

The program is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the municipal education departments in participating localities.



The program was launched in 2004/5 in two schools, and the first participants graduated high school in 2007. In 2008/9 there were 2,000 participants from 20 schools in 10 localities with low socioeconomic rating, representing different population sectors – Jews (religious and secular), Bedouins and Druze.

More than 1,100 pupils have completed the program to date.



Program Results 2008/9:

- Out of the 2,000 participants from 9th-12th grades in 2008/9, **399** graduated high school. **Before** entering the program in 9th grade (2005/6), these students had **an average grade of 52 and an average of 7 failing grades**.
- **64%** of the participants gained a matriculation diploma.
- The average matriculation rate in all participating schools went up from **52% to 66%** (14% increase) – which is significantly higher than the national average of **58%** and the rate in localities with similar socioeconomic rating, and even exceeds the rate in well-established localities (**65%**).
- The matriculation rates in a third of the participating schools increased by more than 30% (from **42% to 76%**).
- A significant drop in behavior problems and a significantly higher internal focus of control were noted among the participants.
- **95%** of the pupils who entered the program remained in the educational system until the end of 12th grade.
- **23%** of all the pupils who received a matriculation diploma in the participating schools in 2008/9 are “Start” graduates.

“The work methods in the Start class caused a transformation in the school. Beyond the fact that the matriculation rate went up from 43% to 70% in the past year, the educational and social atmosphere in the school has changed dramatically. The change involved hard, demanding work of both pupils and teachers which proved before long that success is possible and that every one is able to succeed, teacher and pupil alike... The success was contagious - pupils, teachers and parents went through an experience that enabled each of the partners to be satisfied and pleased with the results.”

Ms. Mati Mindlin

Principal, Comprehensive High School 6, Be'er Sheva



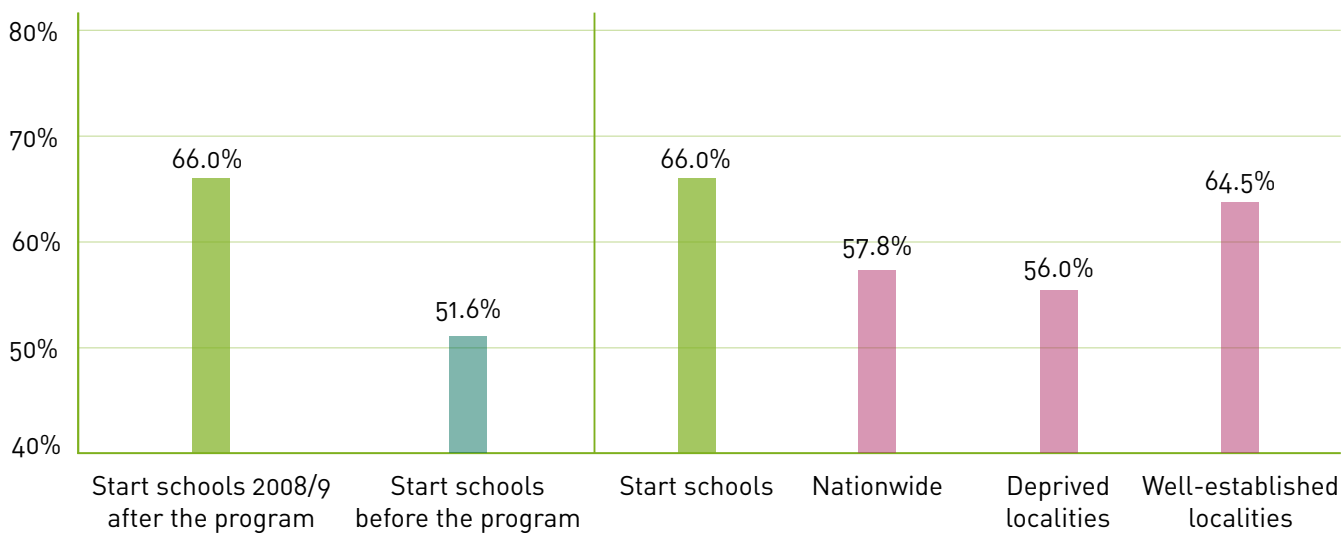
IDF Enlistment:

we believe that the success experienced by the pupils at school will have an impact on their social integration. Among those who qualify for military service, this is expressed in higher enlistment rates.

- 96% of the boys graduating the program in 2008/9 enlisted in the IDF, compared with a nationwide average of 74%.
- 95% of the girls graduating the program in 2008/9 enlisted in the IDF and the National Service (75% enlisted in the IDF and 20% volunteered for National Service).

Matriculation rates in schools participating in the Start program - 2008/9 graduates

before and after the intervention (left)
and in comparison with nationwide results for 2008/9 (right)



“Tafnit is not just another program. It’s a whole new approach to life; a new and basic change in perception about yourself, about your ability and about the relation between dream and reality. It affects the parents, the teachers, and above all, the child. What once seemed practically impossible is suddenly possible. For those at risk of dropping out, the program offers the promise of success; an insurance policy for matriculation.”

Ms. Ruti Frankel
Director of Education Department,
Be’er Sheva Municipality



Yeholot Association: Activities and Future Directions

The following programs are operated by Yeholot in the current school year:

Tafnit for matriculation and prevention of dropout - "Start" - will continue and expand its range through a joint initiative with the Ministry of Education, reaching a scope of 100 schools in the periphery and 12,000 participants within five years.

Tafnit for matriculation - "Last Hurdle" - an intensive program for National Service girls- high school graduates, who need a matriculation diploma in order to join National Service. The program operates in cooperation with National Service organizations, and helps them to pass the exams in one or two subjects to a full matriculation diploma. While in the program, the girls participate in social activities and volunteer in the community as part of their National Service.

Support for Start graduates - aiming to promote their successful integration in academic studies, the program will offer scholarships, assistance in improving matriculation marks to meet admission criteria and in preparing for the psychometric exam, etc.

Students Tutors program - a joint program with Check Point providing scholarships to students working as teaching assistants in Tafnit's high school programs.

Tel Aviv University Academic Accreditation - the School of Education at Tel Aviv University will be involved in the supervision and development of Tafnit programs. Furthermore, "Start" methodology will be taught as part of the academic curriculum of the school.

"A teacher entering the class must consider himself first and foremost as an educator, a figure that provides direction and shows pupils the road towards success, not only academically but also ethically.

The task of a teacher in the Start class is not easy, but when the results of the matriculation exams arrive and the teacher can see where he succeeded, it gives a good feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment for going on."

Ms. Tammy Mozes

Principal, Comprehensive
High School 6, Be'er Sheva

Yeholot will also continue to develop programs targeting high schools in the periphery, among them:

Right from the Start: a program aiming to enable all the high school pupils to gain 6 credit points towards a matriculation diploma by the end of 10th grade, with no dropout.

Incorporating **Last Hurdle** as part of the regular school activity, so that the program is operated independently with school resources, by school teams that were trained to apply its principles.

Value-oriented education: developing and implementing a program focusing on social values, which will complement the scholastic programs and enhance their impact.



Partners

Yeholot aims to build cross-sector partnerships that will enable it to increase the range of its programs and deepen their impact.

We work in full cooperation with the Ministry of Education on the national and regional levels, with the education departments of the local authorities, and with school networks such as Amit and Amal.

Philanthropic partners – foundations, private and corporate donors – play an essential role in shaping the activity as we define together specific issues and target populations for intervention within the shared vision. The main philanthropic partners in 2010 are:

Check Point Software Technologies

U.S. State Department – M.E.P.I

Glencore Foundation

DM Foundation

Sklare Family Foundation

Ben and Esther Rosenbloom Foundation

Morningstar Foundation

Jewish Funders network

Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation

JFNA Social Venture Fund for Jewish-Arab Equality and Shared Society

Goldberg Charitable Trust

Israel Diamond Exchange

Dr. Steve Solomon

Berman Foundation

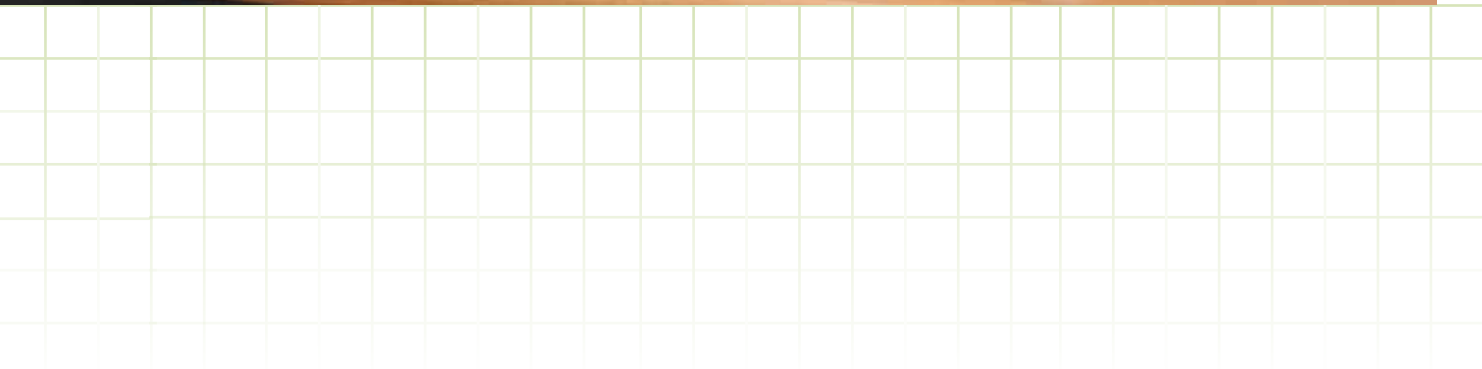
Earth Alliance Fund

About Rashi

The **Rashi Foundation** was founded in 1984 as an independent private fund dedicated to assisting the underprivileged in Israel, focusing on children, youth, young adults and special-needs populations. Over the past 25 years, Rashi has worked vigorously to realize the vision of a stable and prosperous Israel that draws its strength from a society in which each and every citizen can realize his or her innate potential.

We concentrate on Israel's northern and southern regions and inner-city neighborhoods, investing in solutions that strengthen public education and social welfare systems so as to increase opportunities for self-fulfillment and social mobility. We initiate, develop, operate and fund programs that reach some 250,000 individuals in Israel every day. In the field of education, we work to provide equal opportunity through programs that reduce learning gaps, promote excellence and upgrade physical, pedagogic and organizational infrastructure.

Rashi builds partnerships with other private philanthropies, community federations, public organizations, government ministries and local authorities, leveraging each partner's resources in order to achieve greater impact and sustainability.



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