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ERETZIR

Annual Report

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Words from Our Chairperson

Now, as the white storks returning turns into squadrons of jet planes across the sky, we are reminded how strong the ribs are, how brave the warm air inside the lungs, and how much courage it takes to love in the open plain, when great dangers arch above – and how much love is needed to fill the empty vessels.

Yehuda Amichai, “Now and in Other Days”



How precisely Yehuda Amichai’s words capture this spring, this year. The gap between the strength of people and the pain of war and its losses. Within this reality—when great dangers arch above us—we continue to fill the empty vessels. We need love for Israeli society, and no less importantly, practical hope and faith in our professional path at EretzIrr: nurturing urban community life, developing social entrepreneurship, strengthening community resilience, reducing inequality, and expanding civic responsibility and participation.

This year, I have the privilege of joining EretzIrr’s Board of Directors and taking part in this work of repair, enriching and expanding our activity, as Chairperson of the Board.

My thanks to the members of the Board for their partnership and commitment. We have welcomed new members who bring extensive experience and professional knowledge, and together, we will support the organization’s thoughtful and impactful leadership.

A special thank you to Eran Buchaltzev, the outgoing Chairperson, for his deep commitment and tireless dedication over the years.

And finally, thank you to the EretzIrr team—a professional and devoted group of people that continues to lead this work responsibly, in both routine times and times of emergency.

Michal Zamir
Chairperson of the Board

Words from our CEO

Dear partners,

It took us a moment to pause and reflect on the previous year—to gather data, stories, and understand what we have been through together. This was a year of war, and of living within a wartime reality, with brief moments of hope for a simpler routine.

I am writing these words in the midst of yet another phase in a sequence of challenging years. It is not always easy to hold on to optimism, but looking at the communities, the activists, and the social entrepreneurs, and their ability to grow from within pain gives us strength and faith that change is possible. Because real change begins from the ground up: when people come together, see one another, listen, and ask how life here could look different. At EretzIrr, we believe in civil society and work every day to strengthen it, a society in which every individual can have an impact.

That is why we operate in circles:

A circle of equals, where no voice is more important than another.

A circle of community, where leadership grows from within, rooted in local knowledge, relationships, and solidarity. And circles of action, where an idea becomes an initiative, an initiative becomes action, and action grows into broader impact.

Like a startup in its early stages, a social initiative begins with identifying a real need and grows into a solution. This is how clinics are established, alternative educational frameworks are created, housing solutions are developed, and forgotten spaces are

revived, not because someone asked for it, but because people believe they have the power to act. As these circles expand, their impact flows – from projects into policy, and from one community to society as a whole. This is change that takes time, and endures, because it remains connected to people and to the place from which it grew. We wake up every morning with the belief that change is possible, and that with every initiative, our society can become a little better. And this is how we will continue to act.

In the end, it all comes back to people and community, to initiatives born in small circles that manage to reach far beyond their borders. That is where we choose to be.

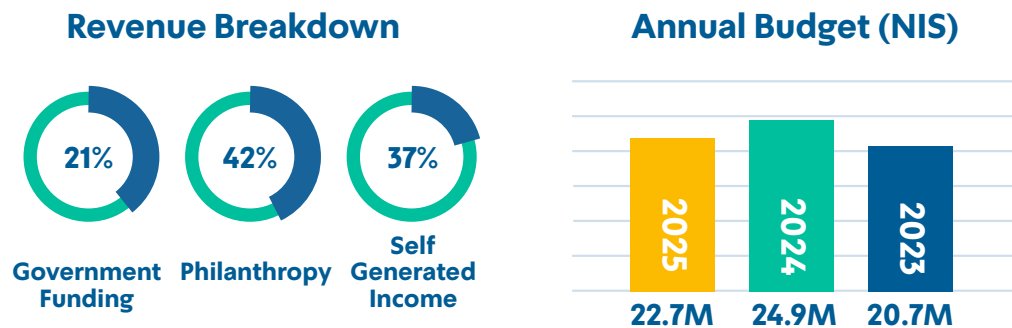
Yours,
Keren Ben-Dor, CEO



Impact 2025



Financial Overview



Community Innovation Division

The Community Innovation Division works to strengthen local initiatives and communities in cities and towns across Israel's geographic and social periphery. Its goal is to enhance community resilience, foster a sense of belonging, and expand civic engagement and influence. We believe that the key to effectively addressing social challenges - both in routine times and in emergencies - lies in the strength of organized communities and locally led initiatives.

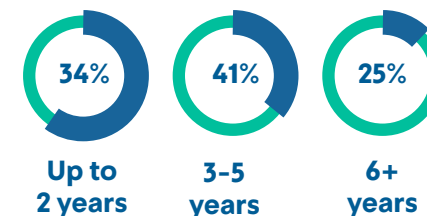
In 2025, the division supported social entrepreneurs, groups, and communities through processes of establishment, organization, and growth. This included developing tailor-made support models, strengthening peer networks, and deepening collaboration with local governments and partners.

In 2026, the division is focusing on expanding these efforts by stabilizing ongoing activity and increasing impact at both the local and national levels.

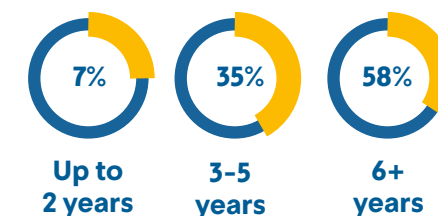
Entrepreneurs & Communities

60 Total in 2025

Initiatives by Years of Activity



Communities by Years of Activity



Comfort Object

the aftermath of the events of October 7, many families in the Gaza border region were left not only without homes, but also without the small personal objects that carry memory and create a sense of continuity and belonging. Out of this need, Comfort Object was created, an initiative that supports affected families through the selection and restoration of a personal item from their home.

The Story of the Engel Family, Kibbutz Nir Oz

Karina and Ronen Engel lived in Nir Oz with their three children, Tom, Mika, and Yuval, in a small, colorful, open home filled with antiques that Ronen loved to collect. Karina and Ronen were very different from one another, yet together, they built a warm home and a loving family, just steps from the border fence.



On the morning of October 7, Karina, Ronen, and their daughters entered the safe room, while Tom remained on base. At 9:10 a.m., Ronen left the safe room to protect his family. Later that day, Karina, Mika, and Yuval were taken hostage to Gaza. After 23 days, they were reunited in captivity, and later, released as part of a hostage deal.

Only after returning to Israel did they learn that Ronen had been killed in their home that same morning and that his body had been taken to Gaza. When Karina returned home after captivity, she found very little among the ruins. One of the neighbors had found an old pendulum clock that Ronen had especially loved. The clock was restored and became Karina's "comfort object."

One day, in their temporary home in Karmeit Gat, the clock suddenly chimed loudly. "Mom, Dad is home!" Mika called out.

For Karina, the clock is a memory of Ronen—but also a symbol of what remains, and of the ability to carry loss and rebuild life.

Ma'agalim Meshulavim (Interwoven Circles)

Ma'agalim Meshulavim has been active for six years in Pardes Hanna-Karkur. Susan, one of the community leaders, shares how it began:

"We came together as a group of entrepreneurs—people who love to initiate and take action for the community. Over the past ten years, more and more people have arrived from across the country, sincerely searching for this sense of community and connection. Many different communities have formed in Pardes Hanna, and I'm happy to be part of them and to help connect between them.

What brings me the most joy is creating spaces where people can meet face-to-face, do things together, plan together, and create together. It's truly a great gift to have wonderful people here who take initiative and make things happen in Pardes Hanna."



Core Programs

Core Programs are initiatives in which EretzIr serves as a leading managing and operating partner. These programs operate across various cities and communities, encouraging resident-led initiatives, strengthening community life and local resilience, and expanding civic impact.

While the programs differ in focus and model, they all share the potential to scale into national-level initiatives.

In 2025, EretzIr operated eight core programs:

B'Tzavtah, ArtBay, CommuniTree, Kiryat Eliezer, Northern Resilience in Arab Communities, the Multi-Sector Roundtable for Policy Change, the Community Resilience Program in Negev Cities, and Rashit, an initiative to improve the quality of early childhood education in the Negev.

The year 2026 will focus on strengthening activity hubs in northern Israel and expanding target audiences.



Community Resilience Program in Negev Cities

In the aftermath of October 7, municipalities across the Negev have been facing an ongoing reality of emergency, exhaustion, and mounting social and economic pressures, while also carrying the responsibility of holding their communities together. In response, EretzIr launched a dedicated program together with the Mack Ness Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater MetroWest New Jersey, with the aim of strengthening municipal capacity from within through resource development, partnership-building, and support for local community initiatives.

Shai Hajaj, Mayor of the Merhavim Regional Council, reflected on the value of the process, saying it gave the council a stronger, more professional understanding of fundraising - and of the commitment required to do it right.



ArtBay

In Haifa, Eretzlr works together with local partners to strengthen the connection between urban renewal, community, and policy. Through ongoing work in the city, one central question continues to emerge:

How can we ensure that urban transformation processes do not remain only at the level of physical development, but also translate into community resilience, local belonging, and long-term infrastructure for civic action?

Mor Dar, Program Director at the Gandyr Foundation, reflected on this partnership: “Through our many years of work with Eretzlr in Haifa, we see the organization as a key partner in advancing the foundation’s work in the city and in the field of urban renewal in Israel. We trust the professionalism of the team and are grateful for the partnership.”



‘Around the Tree’ Convention

HaBustan

HaBustan, EretzIr's school for urban community innovation, translates the professional knowledge accumulated over years of on-the-ground community work into practical tools for professionals from civil society and local governments. We believe that training people is a key driver for advancing community innovation and creating systemic impact in the urban sphere.

In 2025, HaBustan evolved from offering individual courses into a structured school. It now includes foundational courses in community innovation and community-building, specialized training programs, and a rotating lecture series, all aimed at strengthening the professional capabilities of entrepreneurs, community leaders, and change agents from around Israel.

Training Program for Civil Society Professionals Working in Community Development



Neighbors' Day

Neighbors' Day is a nationwide initiative that encourages gatherings among neighbors in urban spaces, aimed at deepening familiarity, building trust, and strengthening local community life. As part of the initiative, residents are encouraged to take the lead and organize gatherings in their own neighborhoods.

This past year marked the fifth annual Neighbors' Day to be celebrated in Israel, with activities taking place in approximately 550 locations across the country.

The initiative is carried out in partnership with the Community Work Service of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, JDC Israel–Ashalim, and the Israel Community Centers Network, and is inspired by the President's initiative, "Time to Talk – Toward a Shared Israeli Future."



Our Partners

Eretzlr's work is made possible through the partnership and support of a wide network of philanthropic foundations, public sector institutions, and strategic partners. Their commitment enables us to expand our impact, strengthen communities, and advance community innovation across Israel.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our partners:

Gandy Foundation | Yad HaNadiv | Rashit MiYesoda of Yad HaNadiv | Beracha Foundation | The National Insurance Funds | Shachaf Foundation | Charles H. Revson Foundation | Meyerhoff Charitable Trusts | Social Venture Fund for Jewish-Arab Equality and Shared Society | International Christian Embassy Jerusalem | Mack Ness Fund | Shashua Family Foundation | Hadarim Foundation | First Narayever Congregation | Accord | Winograd Trust | Be'er Sheva Municipality | Dimona Municipality | Pardes Hanna-Karkur Local Council | Haifa Municipality | Arad Municipality | Sdot Negev Regional Council | Ashkelon Municipality | Yavne'el Local Council | Lod Municipality | Ramla Municipality | Katzrin Local Council | Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality | Rosh HaAyin Municipality | Mitzpe Ramon Local Council | Merhavim Regional Council | Majd al-Krum Local Council | Misgav Regional Council | Bir al-Makzur Local Council | Daburiyya Local Council | Jerusalem Municipality | Kiryat Tivon Local Council | Hatzor Local Council | Southern Soreq Eshkol | Hura Local Council | Kuseife Local Council | Tzedek Centers | MAKOM – Council of Mission-Driven Communities and Groups in Israel | The Joint (JDC Israel) | Israel Community Centers Network | Community Work Service | Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs | Government Authority for Urban Renewal | "Time to Talk" – The President's Initiative for a Shared Israeli Future | Ministry of Culture and Sport | Ministry of Community Affairs | Ministry of Health | Ministry of Environmental

Protection | Keren Kayemeth L'Yisrael | Derech Tzel – The Green Building Council | The Good Energy Initiative | Ikar Ha'lr

And to those partners and donors who have chosen to remain anonymous – thank you for your trust and support.

To all the communities and social entrepreneurs who call Eretzlr home - you are the heart and soul of our work. Thank you for being our partners and for giving us the privilege to grow, act, and create impact together..

Zuzima | Peima | Keramiko | The Negev Refugee Center | Pride House of the Negev | Peoteva Bet | Peoteva Nahal Beka | Achvat Gvarim Be'er Sheva | Mesudarot | Mami Productions | Going South | Earth's Promise | Al Harumi Shamsona | Negev Anchors | Kama Community | Be'erot | Hareshet Be'er Sheva | Emtza HaChaim | Acherai B'Midbar | Shuva Community | Ruach Yam | Rimon Farm | Winning the Game of Life | Omnia - Lod | Omnia - Ramle | Al Hamakpeza | Beit Ha'Beer | Transition - Shapira | Krovim-Krovot | Transition - Maagalim Meshulavim | Transition - Communal Sustainability | Transition - Yavniel | Hatzor Community | Katzrin Community | Hanevi'im School of Art | Haifa Trails | Grandma and Grandpa's Yard | Alef | Neta | 'Hakshava' | The Day After | Mishkafayim Vrudot | Forum Yerusalem | Zero Separation | Medabrim Beyachad | Social Delivery | Comfort Object | Thyroid Support | Helek | Tomchot Be'ahava | SNAP | The Community Carpentry | HaReshet Mitzpe Ramon | Maayan Jerusalem | HaMaagal | Organizing in the Periphery

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