



ALLIANCE *for* GLOBAL GOOD  
IT'S WHAT WE DO NOW THAT MATTERS.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Tikkun Olam:  
Improving the Lives of a  
Quarter of a Billion People in a Decade  
A Global Engagement Strategy for  
the State of Israel and the Jewish People**

**Executive Summary of Conceptual Framework**

**Version A  
Nisan 5772  
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**"Nivrichu b'cha kol mispachot  
ha'adama."**

**("Through you all the families of the  
earth shall be blessed.")**

**Genesis 12:3**

**"A great historic privilege, which is  
also a duty... helping to solve the  
central problems of all humanity."**

**David Ben-Gurion**

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## About This Document

This document is the result of a partnership between the [Reut Institute](#), mentored by Avraham Infeld, and the [Alliance for Global Good](#). It is the executive summary of an eighteen-month effort of engaging more than 100 governmental and non-governmental experts and practitioners in Israel and the U.S., as well as an extensive review of literature. **Please [click here](#) for a partial list of the contributors to this effort.**

The Reut Institute and the Alliance for Global Good are committed to effectuating the vision embodied in this document by working with innovators, activists, and entrepreneurs inspired by the values of Tikkun Olam in Israel and across the Jewish world. Our implementation strategy is forthcoming.

## **A Core Value: Bringing a Blessing to Families of the Earth**

1. **The vision that inspires the Reut Institute and the Alliance for Global Good in the area of Tikkun Olam is embodied in the biblical story of God's promise to Abraham that his seed will bring a blessing to all families of the earth** (*nivrichu b'cha kol mishpachot ha'adama*).<sup>1</sup> It is echoed in the common Jewish belief that living as a Jewish people has transformative powers that can influence other nations.
2. **The modern concept of Tikkun Olam embodies values and actions aimed at improving the general human condition within the Jewish community and beyond.** Its traditional meaning referred to restoring God's ultimate sovereignty on earth.<sup>2</sup> As of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this concept was broadened, and it became popularized primarily in the United States during the Civil Rights Era and the South African anti-apartheid movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, it is increasingly mainstream although carrying different meanings for various communities, including fighting poverty and insecurity, performing community service, volunteering internationally on development projects, raising money for Israel, and teaching *Torah*.<sup>3</sup> The logic of Tikkun Olam continues to evolve, with Jewish philanthropic funds focused largely on universal causes skyrocketing, and participation of Jews in volunteer service projects also markedly increasing.<sup>4</sup>
3. **This logic of Tikkun Olam was a core tenet of Zionism and a central practice until 1973.** Its founding leadership, including Theodore Herzl and David Ben-Gurion, envisioned the State of Israel to serve this ideal. Indeed, in its early years (1957-1973), Israel became a global leader in international development due to its foreign assistance program led by MASHAV of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with leading nations and international agencies. The program received domestic political and public support and international acknowledgment.

This period ended when African countries severed relations with Israel following the 1973 War. Israel cut its budgets for foreign assistance, and political and public support for it dropped. Since 2000, Israel's foreign assistance budget has ranged between 0.03% to 0.07% of the Gross National Income (GNI), a small fraction compared to the 1960s and modest relative to other nations.<sup>5</sup> Domestic support for robust Israeli foreign assistance is meager: Knesset members have three times failed to pass an international aid bill. Nevertheless, MASHAV still produces innovative and inspiring projects and

activities, Israeli science and technology continue to provide a significant contribution to humanity, and a new generation of civil society leaders that are committed to this ideal is stepping to the fore.

## **A Unique Value Proposition: Commitment and Capabilities**

4. **Israel and the Jewish people have unique value to offer the world in international development that stems from the combination of expertise and core commitment.**
  - **World Jewry strongly identifies with the ideal of Tikkun Olam** – In Jewish communities around the world, social and business entrepreneurs, visionaries and philanthropists, and public servants and innovators are disproportionately present at the frontiers of many local, national, and global challenges;
  - **Israel has established itself as a ‘start-up nation’ and a world leader in creatively dealing with some of the greatest challenges facing humanity** in the fields of medicine, communications, energy, food and water security, large-scale immigration, homeland security, and society building;
  - **There is a unique opportunity to join the power of a state with the strength and diversity of a globally dispersed people for the purpose of making a positive impact.** A Jewish state brings to bear capacities, resources, and global reach through its national government as well as through its society. A global network of vibrant Jewish communities boasts strong communal institutions, a focus on knowledge and education, and innovation abilities in pioneering industries and in fields that require cutting-edge knowledge development.

## **A Renewed Mission: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tikkun Olam**

5. **This document calls for world Jewry and the State of Israel to work together to help solve pressing global issues, and to make a significant, global, and distinctly Jewish and Israeli contribution to humanity.** The common basis is a shared identification with a Jewish and Israeli responsibility to humanity.
6. **This vision is ever more relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** Beyond the obvious ethical imperative, its underlying logic is three-fold:

- **Security** – A consistent and genuine Tikkun Olam effort will improve Israel's image and standing in the world and counterbalance the concerted delegitimization campaign that is being waged against it. While Israel faces attempts to isolate it, international development cooperation can serve as a platform for strategic relationships with nations, organizations, communities, and influential individuals;
- **Identity** – A credible Tikkun Olam effort that provides a platform for Jews in Israel and around the world to work together will strengthen common bonds between them and a sense of shared history, destiny, and peoplehood in a time of growing gaps;
- **Prosperity** – Trillions of dollars will be spent on addressing the challenges that face humanity's poorest nations and people. If Israel establishes itself as a forerunner in related areas, it will have new export markets, benefit from foreign direct investment, break down barriers to partnerships, and open new horizons for its venture capital, R&D, business, non-profit, and academic communities.

Therefore, **the shared objective of Israel and world Jewry must be to become global leaders in addressing humanity's toughest challenges.** Furthermore, many believe that such a joint pursuit of solutions to issues of global importance is imperative for Jews' ability to thrive as a people in a globalizing world.

## **The Challenge: Shared Vision; Enhanced Focus and Synergy**

7. **The various Tikkun Olam efforts in Israel and the Jewish world are *not* aligned for achieving global impact and establishing Israeli and Jewish leadership at the frontiers of humanity's challenges.** Key shortfalls include:
  - **No shared vision or commitment to an audacious goal of impacting humanity on a large scale.** Often the focus of Tikkun Olam efforts is on the benefit to, and experience of, the giver rather than on achieving impact that is both sustainable and scalable. Consequently, **there is no shared policy and strategy to realize such an objective;**
  - **Little focus and concentration of efforts on the distinct Jewish and Israeli value proposition.** This is manifested, for example, in a multitude of projects that are labor-intensive and not scalable;
  - **Insufficient connection between Israeli and Diaspora Jewish efforts.** Israel is often either a beneficiary of world Jewry's Tikkun Olam projects,

or considered irrelevant to its global efforts. Few efforts search for the potential synergy and leverage of such partnership;

- **Insufficient focus on creating an indelible imprint.** Many projects are a short-term, one-off, and one-way engagement with no lasting footprint.

**In addition, the following areas limit the ability to impact:**

- **Lack of prioritization and focus on specific expertise or geographic areas** to create disproportionate impact;
- **No multi-sector collaboration that creates economic clusters in areas of Tikkun Olam in Israel.** Israel's foreign assistance is a government-dominated field, led by MASHAV. Other government ministries, hospitals, or universities are not adequately involved. There are no clusters of engaged government agencies, businesses, nonprofits, academia, individuals, and projects;
- **Few leveraged interventions** that mobilize external resources from foreign agencies and other nations or develop local leadership around the world to expand the reach and impact of Israeli and Jewish interventions.

## **Principles for Israeli and Jewish Global Humanitarian Impact**

8. The Reut Institute and the Alliance for Global Good propose the following principles as a framework to guide the vision, mission, and strategy of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Tikkun Olam initiative:

### **Audacious Vision: Impacting a Quarter of a Billion People in One Decade**

9. **An audacious vision** serves as a source of aspiration and inspiration, as well as an indication of the scale and the seriousness of the endeavor. The Reut Institute and the Alliance for Global Good call upon the Government of Israel (GOI) and leadership across the Jewish world to join forces **to help hundreds of millions of disadvantaged individuals around the world achieve a significant and sustainable improvement in their quality of life within one decade.** Sustainability requires protection of environmental, economic, and social resources.

### **Israel and World Jewry Forming a Vibrant Partnership**

10. This principle refers to **an explicit partnership between the State of Israel and world Jewry in pursuit of Tikkun Olam.** It is demonstrated by, for example, **a growing number of collaborations connecting Israeli**

**institutions and leaders of all sectors with their counterparts among world Jewry.** These may be **promoted by powerful financial incentives** provided by philanthropists, Jewish institutions, and the GOI.

## **A Strategic Priority for the State of Israel and the Jewish People**

11. This principle calls upon the **GOI and institutions in Israel and across the Jewish world to adopt Tikkun Olam as one of their central objectives and allocate resources accordingly.** In doing so, they recognize a real opportunity to make a distinct and significant impact in helping to address humanity's most pressing problems. They also recognize the power of an impactful ethical mission to join Israelis and other Jews around the world, and to guide global engagement and economic development.

**Strategic prioritization can manifest in:**

- **The GOI adopts a formal decision to pursue Tikkun Olam as a national project, and subsequently mobilizes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all other relevant ministries,** e.g. the Ministries of Health; Environment; Agriculture; Trade, Industry, and Labor; and Energy and Water Resources; as well as government agencies;
- **The GOI grants incentives for business and nonprofit sectors** in designated Tikkun Olam areas of focus (see below), for example through fund allocation for venture capital, technology greenhouses, and academic centers of excellence. One promising model is promoting Israel as a beta site for innovative solutions with global application;
- **Leading Jewish world institutions provide resource and programmatic support** for a 21<sup>st</sup> century Tikkun Olam objective based on these principles.

## **Focusing on Few Fields of Expertise: Water, Food, and Energy Security and De-Desertification; Natal Health; Entrepreneurship**

12. The focus of a global engagement strategy for Tikkun Olam should be on a **limited number of areas that leverage Israeli and Jewish unique knowledge and expertise and meet the following criteria:**
  - **Large global need** at the scale of hundreds of millions of people in many nations, particularly within focus countries (see below);
  - **Unique expertise in Israel and across the Jewish world,** compounding knowledge, experience, and resources of key institutions with leadership



in business, nonprofit, government, and academic spheres, for example in the areas of medicine, research, and finance;

- **A global priority issue**, manifested in formal declarations, such as in the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations; availability of international resources; and global attention;
- **Partnership opportunities** primarily with other nations and organizations that do not have overlapping capabilities or that possess synergizing assets.

13. **In our assessment, fields that meet these criteria include:**

- **Food, water, and energy security and de-desertification**, which acquire greater global urgency as deserts expand and populations grow. For example, more than one third of the people on each continent – including the vast majority of Arab and Muslim populations in the Middle East – face water scarcity. Meanwhile, Israel is a world leader in addressing these needs, such as in recycling 75% of its wastewater and having exported more than \$1.5 billion worth of water technologies and services in 2010.<sup>6</sup> Israel's unique successes in building thriving communities in arid conditions can be invaluable in its immediate region and beyond;
- **Maternal, pre-natal, and neo-natal health** – This issue is a recognized global health care and community challenge, as in many places infant mortality and the health of women remain painfully unsatisfactory. Jews and Israelis share strengths in medical fields. In particular, Israel has had remarkable successes in the area of maternal, pre-natal, and neo-natal health, including among indigenous populations and in the face of waves of immigration. For example, while more than 358,000 women – 99% of which live in the developing world – die in childbirth each year, Israel has the 7th lowest death rate of women in childbirth globally;<sup>7</sup>
- **Entrepreneurship** – The development of small businesses is critical to poverty alleviation in developing countries. Israel has the highest number of start-ups per capita in the world and civilian R&D as a percentage of GDP.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, social and business entrepreneurship thrive in Jewish world communities. This culture and the institutions that support it may be invaluable to developing societies;
- **Community building** – The rebuilding of communities, particularly in urban areas, is increasingly seen as essential for sustainable social and

economic development. The Jewish people have developed unique societal knowledge about developing strong communal institutions addressing a wide range of needs.

For our detailed evaluation of strategic areas of focus, [click here](#).

## A Cluster Approach to Tikkun Olam

14. This principle calls for **cultivating collaborative innovation across multiple sectors**. An economic cluster is a dense network of interconnected companies and institutions located in a certain geographic sphere. These relationships increase information flow among firms and organizations within the cluster, thereby accelerating growth, learning, and innovation.<sup>9</sup> Developing a cluster in the area of Tikkun Olam requires deploying incentives for collaborative and complementary activities.
15. **One strategy for promoting a cluster approach among existing infrastructure and networks within Israel and the Jewish world** is creating virtual backbones and providing physical spaces to serve as:
  - **Platforms for multi-sector collaboration** across sectors and geographical locations that bring together diverse actors to expand activities within the network. Related activities may include: distributing grants and subsidies, enhancing communication and information flow, and providing working space to facilitate collaboration;
  - **Innovation incubators** that promote research and development of knowledge, systems, and products;
  - **Training centers** that promote mentorship and technical and managerial learning for Jewish and Israeli Tikkun Olam leaders, and international civil society and developing world leaders.

## Partnership with the Emerging Global-Local Leadership Community

16. This community comprises a densely interconnected network of individuals that stand out in their capacity to lead change in their societies either from positions of formal authority or through their informal leadership.<sup>10</sup> The World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders provide a tangible example of emerging global-local leadership recognized for professional accomplishments, commitment to society, and potential to contribute to shaping the future of the world.<sup>11</sup>

**Focusing on this group is critically important for achieving the multiple goals of the Tikkun Olam initiative:**

- **Reaching quarter of a billion people** – Such individuals are connectors and amplifiers with the capacity to spread Israeli and Jewish technology and ideas to many others. Partnership with such individuals over the coming decades can enable reaching hundreds of millions of people. Partnership with such local leaders who are able to articulate the needs of their communities can make development cooperation more effective and responsive, facilitating demand-driven interventions;<sup>12</sup>
- **Strengthening international standing** – These individual will rise to national and international leadership, and will become more supportive of Israel and Jews;
- **Improving economic relations** – Many of them will mature to become leading business persons or decision-makers on economic matters. Their experience in Israel may bring them to explore economic and business partnerships with Israelis.

**Leveraging through Partnerships**

17. This principle calls for **drawing upon budgets, capacities, and expertise of global institutions and other nations, as well as private-sector involvement, to maximize and sustain Tikkun Olam impact.** A leveraged Israeli and Jewish Tikkun Olam initiative is characterized by:
  - **An emphasis on partnerships with international donor agencies and foundations, as well as with other governments,** in which the deployment of Israeli and Jewish technical expertise is made scalable by external financial and other resources;
  - **Public-private collaboration promoted by powerful public incentives to the private sector to encourage Tikkun Olam activities** and to promote ‘for-benefit enterprises,’ which have a ‘double-bottom-line,’ i.e. maximizing profits while subject to and serving a broader social cause. Such partnerships hold potential to sustainably remedy pressing social problems, and represent a shift from a ‘charity’ paradigm to one based on a mutual value proposition.

## Development Cooperation in the Middle East

18. **A conscious focus on, and aspiration toward, regional development engagement is an ethical imperative.** While engaging with Israel's immediate neighborhood may be challenging, headway in pursuit of **this principle can also enhance Israel's:**
- **National security:** In an era of radicalizing Arab nations, it is important to demonstrate that Israel can build constructive, empowering relationships with Muslims and Arabs, and particularly with Palestinians;
  - **Legitimacy:** Israel will surely be challenged if the needs of its immediate neighbors are accorded secondary priority relative to its efforts overseas. Therefore, credibly reaching out to Muslims and Arabs, and especially Palestinians, is critically important in this regard.

## Country Focus in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe

19. **Furthermore, adopting a country focus is essential for synergy and scalability, as well as for political considerations.** We suggest the following parameters for determining country focus:
- **Conditions** that enable access, safety, and sustainable operation;
  - **Critical need** among disadvantaged populations **in a technical area in which the Jewish world and Israel have expertise;**
  - **Prior existing relationships,** for example through the State of Israel, Jewish communities, Jewish organizations, or the business community;
  - **Regional gateways for scaling Tikkun Olam activities** to neighboring areas;
  - **Potential for financial leveraging** through partnerships with other nations, international institutions, or the private sector;
  - **Geo-political importance** to Israel and the Jewish people due to factors including regional influence, economic market size, and proximity to Israel and other strategically important countries.
20. **Countries that best fit these parameters are Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Peru, South Africa, and Ukraine.** Additional countries of interest may include: **Nepal and Vietnam; South Sudan; Colombia and Venezuela; Turkey; Macedonia, Romania, and**

**Bulgaria; and Morocco, the Palestinian areas, Egypt, Jordan, and Mauritania.**

To see our detailed evaluation of strategic country focus, [click here](#).

### **Boots On-The-Ground in Countries of Focus**

21. **A continuous presence in affected communities enables exposure at the frontier of need**, which signals commitment and helps in cultivating long-term partnerships on-the-ground. In addition, innovators gain access to valuable insights and opportunities for inventive problem-solving. A field presence can entail:
  - **Maintaining field staff in countries of operation** to promote an iterative cycle that builds upon R&D efforts by testing new products and solutions in the field, which then feed back into research efforts;
  - **Bringing the field to the hub**, for example by inviting members of the local community to Israel for collaboration with the designated clusters, thereby enriching both sides.

### **Formative Personal and Professional Experience in Israel**

22. **Israel can serve as a training and mentorship center for global leaders, as well as for Israelis and Jews involved in 21<sup>st</sup> century Tikkun Olam.**
23. **A formative personal and professional experience is essential for building a global network of leaders who have sympathy and affinity towards Israel and the Jewish world.** It has been demonstrated that such a visit is not only irreversibly transformative for its participants in terms of their association with Israel, but also essential for building productive, long-term relationships. Activities may include providing introductions to organizational and individual members of the technical clusters, as well as training, study visits, mentoring, and networking opportunities.
24. **The opportunity for Jews and Israelis to share such an experience is critically important as well.** This is particularly true for professionals, who otherwise might not collaborate and are not eligible for visits to Israel on programs such as Birthright.

## **Call to Action: A 'Must Have' not a 'Nice to Have'**

25. **This document sets forth a vision, mission, and strategic guidelines for a global engagement strategy for the Jewish People and the State of Israel toward Tikkun Olam.** It calls for Israel and world Jewry to work together to help solve pressing global issues, and to make a significant, global, and distinctly Jewish and Israeli contribution to humanity. Based foremost on an ethical imperative to alleviate suffering, and due to specific challenges and opportunities facing Israel and the Jewish people, Tikkun Olam is no longer 'nice to have,' but is a 'must have' for the future of the Jewish people.
26. **Setting the stage for the emergence of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Tikkun Olam requires:**
  - **A declarative and formal commitment from the Government of Israel and Jewish world organizations** that is symbolically and practically significant;
  - **Global discourse in Israel and the Jewish world** emphasizing shared historic and cultural values and a shift from an ethos of victimization and isolation to embracing empowerment and engagement, and readiness to adopt a joint mission adapted to a world of global citizenship. This would hopefully lead to changing mindsets, forging common language, embracing new heroes, and bolstering institutions that embrace the change;
  - **Pioneering leadership by individuals** from the GOI and Israeli and Jewish civil society, research, business, and philanthropic sectors.
27. **This document will be followed by an implementation strategy** that will aim to provide a road map to, and best practices for, effectuating the vision, mission, and strategic guidelines proposed in these pages.

End.

## End Notes

- 1 See: **Genesis** 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14 and Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, [Tikkun Olam: Orthodoxy's Responsibility to Perfect God's World](#), **Orthodox Union Institute for Public Affairs**, 12/97.
- 2 See, for example, Rabbi Asher Meir, [Meaning in Mitzvot](#), **OU/NCSY Israel Center**; Jill Jacobs, [The History of "Tikkun Olam," Zeek](#), 07/07; and Seth Winberg, [Aleinu: A Popular Prayer with a Controversial History](#), **MyJewishLearning**.
- 3 Jill Jacobs, [The History of "Tikkun Olam," Zeek](#), 07/07.
- 4 See: Erik Ludwig and Aryeh Weinberg, [Following the Money: A Look at Jewish Foundation Giving](#), **Institute for Jewish & Community Research**, 2012, and Shifra Bronznick and Didi Goldenhar, [Visioning Justice and the American Jewish Community](#).
- 5 According to the **OECD Development Assistance Committee**, in 2010 Israeli foreign assistance as a percentage of GNI was 0.07%, as compared to the OECD/DAC average of 0.32%, with a high of 1.10% from Norway and a low of 0.15% from Italy. Additionally, the 0.07% that Israel gives includes funds for immigrant absorption, defense, homeland security, and part of the Water Authority budget. Aliza Belman-Inbal and Shachar Zahavi, [The Rise and Fall of Israel's Bilateral Aid Budget 1958-2008](#), **The Tel Aviv University Hartog School for Government and Policy**, 07/09.
- 6 See: The **World Health Organization Fact File** on water scarcity, **WATEC web site**, and Yuval Azulai, [Israel looks to export water to tech world's mines](#), **Globes**, 12/27/2010.
- 7 See: **World Health Organization**, [World Health Statistics 2011, p.15](#), Margaret C Hogan et al, [Maternal mortality for 181 countries, 1980—2008](#), **The Lancet**, 4/12/2010 (online) and Mikkel Zahle Otergaard et. al. [Neonatal Mortality Levels for 193 Countries in 2009 with Trends since 1990](#), **PLOS Medicine** table S1.
- 8 See: Singer and Dan Senor, **Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle**, (Hatchette Book Group, 2009).
- 9 See: Reut's term [economic cluster](#), based on Michael Porter's description of clusters from **On Competition: New Agendas for Companies, Governments, and Institutions** (Harvard Business School Press: 1979) and **The Competitive Advantage of Nations** (The Free Press: 1990 and 1998).
- 10 *Formal authority* is defined as an elected or appointed position through a recognized process and wielding some degree of formal power. Leadership refers to activities that are designed to mobilize the adaptation of the community toward greater security and prosperity. These concepts are adapted from Ronald Heifetz, **Leadership without Easy Answers**, (Harvard University Press 2003).
- 11 See: [The Forum of Young Global Leaders](#), **World Economic Forum**.
- 12 In international development, demand-driven projects respond to the articulated needs of the communities they target. See: [Multi-Sector Demand Driven](#) OVC Toolkit, **World Bank**.