



## **Final Report to The Matanel Foundation** **Ani Shlishi 2023**

Ani Shlishi (I Am Third) is a nonprofit organization providing workforce training, financial education, and community engagement opportunities for Israel's low-income, at-risk youth ages 16–18 regardless of gender, religion, or ethnic background. Since its founding in 2016, Ani Shlishi's mission has been to prepare young at-risk Israelis to enter the workplace, support their personal and financial stability, and develop their ability to lead and mentor others. Ani Shlishi assists teens in acquiring hands-on retail experience and customer service skills through six-month paid internships in its second-hand clothing stores. While working at Ani Shlishi, participants receive assistance in finding employment or resuming their education. The Alumni Program offers ongoing training in interview skills, resume writing, and online job search techniques. Ani Shlishi provides these young people with the tools and motivation they need to succeed.



We thank the Matanel Foundation for its generosity and support of our efforts over the last three years. The Foundation's grants have enabled Ani Shlishi to provide many at-risk youth with critical skills that have changed their lives for the better. The following is a final report to the Foundation: a description of Ani Shlishi's accomplishments in 2023, and a summary of the important decisions that have been made regarding the future of the organization.

### **ORGANIZATION SUMMARY**

Ani Shlishi's philosophy is "First comes the greater good, the welfare of others is Second, and I am Third." This principle has guided the organization's efforts in support of youth who have dropped out of school, live in shelters, and struggle with significant social, emotional, and behavioral issues. Ani Shlishi's stores operate as alternative schools, training young people with no prospects for employment or achievement within conventional educational frameworks. Ani Shlishi builds self-confidence through accountability and structure; teaches practical workplace, financial, and interpersonal skills that are transferable to any working environment; and provides mentorship and guidance in a supportive atmosphere. While working as a team toward a common goal –



creating an enjoyable shopping experience for Ani Shlishi's customers -- participants gain self-esteem, a strong sense of community, and a recognition of their own potential.

In 2023, Ani Shlishi's participants were referred by ELEM: Youth in Distress, the Otot Shelter in Herzliya, and the cities of Abu Ghosh, Bat Yam, Or Yehuda, Jerusalem, Rishon



LeZion, and Tel Aviv. Collaborating with social workers and shelter case managers, Ani Shlishi guided teens through hands-on training in sales and service as they worked with customers in the stores. As they

learned the many aspects of store operations, their responsibilities steadily increased. They coordinated donation pickups, helped with store displays and signage, and assisted in training new participants; they also received budgeting assistance to avoid debt and save for the future.

As they prepared to graduate, Ani Shlishi worked with participants on interview skills and helped to connect them with potential employers. After graduation the Alumni Program continued to support them, offering ongoing financial education and training in resume preparation and job search methods.

Since completing their internships, these teens have been more likely to finish their education, find sustainable employment, and become financially self-sufficient. They are also more likely to become leaders who can mentor others and, in so doing, help to address the social challenges they themselves have faced.

Comments of our participants after graduation include:

- "The thing I liked the most about Ani Shlishi is the attitude towards the youth, the work, the store. I loved that there is listening."
- "Here I learned the value of work, discipline, and diligence."
- "At Ani Shlishi I learned to work in a team and listen to my teammates, the customers, and my managers. I've learned how to behave interpersonally."

## **2023 OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS**

**Process Objective:** At least 72 at-risk youth (24 per store) will complete paid Ani Shlishi staff internships. In 2023, 36 at-risk youth completed paid Ani Shlishi staff internships; due to the closing of the Tel Aviv store and Ani Shlishi's merger with Shekulo Tov (please see below), we were unable to meet our original objective.

**Impact Objective 1:** After their internships, program participants responding to a survey



will state that they have gained at least four of the following during their rotations:

- Skills that will help me to find employment
- Skills that will help me to manage my finances
- Increased motivation to work hard and succeed in life
- Positive relationships with the peers and adult mentors at Ani Shlishi
- Increased self-esteem and the confidence that I can become a leader

In 2023, after their internships, 100% of program participants responding to the survey stated that they had gained skills, motivation, positive relationships, and increased self-esteem during their rotations.



**Impact Objective 2: At least 85% of Ani Shlishi graduates will find jobs, resume their education, or register for national service.**

100% of 2023 Ani Shlishi graduates have found jobs, resumed their education, or registered for national service. Graduates' jobs include retail customer service, administrative work at a law firm, and hospitality work at a hotel. Graduates who have turned 18 have all drafted into the army.

### **CHALLENGES, CHANGES, AND THE FUTURE OF ANI SHLISHI**

In early 2023, the flagship Ani Shlishi store in Tel Aviv was forced to close due to light rail construction on Allenby Street, removing a substantial source of revenue toward organizational operating expenses. However, in Spring 2023, Shekulo Tov, a nonprofit social service organization based in Lod, Israel, expressed a strong interest in replicating the Ani Shlishi model in its own retail stores, operating under the name Dan Dasha (Dasha is “to spring forth or sprout” in Hebrew). A large organization founded in 2005, Shekulo Tov has a significant amount of government funding and considerable resources. Its mission, like Ani Shlishi’s, is to help youth at risk successfully integrate into the workforce. The three pillars of Shekulo Tov are vocational training, career development, and social inclusion, in perfect alignment with the goals of Ani Shlishi. Dan Dasha “trains girls and women at risk with occupational barriers in order to integrate them into the labor market. The network provides [mentorship], training, and guidance to every woman according to her abilities, skills, and the career she aspires to. The women of Dan Dasha strive to lead.”

When Shekulo Tov offered to absorb Ani Shlishi, Ani Shlishi’s founders and Board saw an opportunity to multiply our impact many times over. In September 2023, the Rishon LeZion store reopened under the Dan Dasha banner, applying the Ani Shlishi workforce development model to its support of women and girls at risk.



Ani Shlishi's successful store in Mevaseret Zion has continued its operations. In early 2022, Ani Shlishi developed a partnership with the Arab city of Abu Ghosh, which supplies all youth participants for the store. This store is co-managed by a Jewish woman and a Muslim man, and its clientele is also mixed. Staff members are fluent in Arabic and the Ani Shlishi curriculum has been translated into Arabic for the benefit of our participants. The store's partnership with Abu Ghosh is a model of coexistence, despite the challenges created by the events of October 7. In April 2024, the store will become HaZula ("the gathering place,") operated by its current store managers according to the Ani Shlishi model.



As of December 31, 2023, 336 at-risk teens have graduated from Ani Shlishi and now have brighter futures. The success of our graduates has led to this exciting merger with Shekulo Tov and will give many more of Israel's youth at risk the opportunity to gain the skills and experience they need. We are extremely grateful for our partnership with the Matanel Foundation, which has helped to bring us to this pivotal point. We feel privileged to have been able to do such impactful work, and look forward to seeing our mission and model grow and thrive under the care of Shekulo Tov.