



# **ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE MATANEL FOUNDATION**

## **Ta'atzumot: Professional Development Program for Community Rabbis 2024 - 2025**

**Name of the Program:**

Ta'atzumot: Tzohar's Professional Development Program for Community Rabbis

**Year of activity:** 2024-2025

**Name of the report's writer:** Rabbi Eran Daum

**Function of the report's writer:** Coordinator of the Ta'atzumot Program

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**Number of active participants in the program:**

15 rabbis serving as community rabbis in communities throughout the country, 4 of whom are rabbis of cities.

**Estimated number of impacted participants:**

~10,000. *Note: remote towns typically have 50-800 families.*

**Indicate the current status of the plan (where the plan stands on the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):**

The Ta'atzumot Program accompanies serving rabbis for a two-year period. We are currently preparing to welcome a new tranche of rabbis in November 2025. The program will meet bi-weekly during the school year over the course of two years.

Our programming focuses on 3 main goals:

- Enriching the rabbi's knowledge of Jewish sources on community ethics and law
- Providing the rabbi with skills needed to address the day-to-day needs and challenges of his community, both for individuals (e.g. coping with illness, loss, mental health, family structure, gender, marital crises, and the impact of challenges on personal and family violence) and community building
- Introducing the rabbi to technologies that can help him carry out his work (for more detail, please see Appendix A below)

**Main achievements during 2024-2025:**

- This year was again marked by extended reserve duty and maintaining community leadership during wartime, including "Operation Am K'Lavi." Many participants served long reserve periods, leading to intermittent absences. Two participants who served hundreds of days withdrew from the program during the year.
- In total, 21 meetings were held. Despite the challenges and absences, these meetings created a space of trust. A final meeting was held via Zoom due to "Operation Am K'Lavi," and an "extra" 21st meeting was held at the home of Program Director Rabbi Tzachi Lehmann. In addition, a special seminar was held in July focused on managing community leadership during prolonged reserve duty and reintegration afterward.
- Throughout the year, emphasis was given to training the rabbis in the use of technological tools and platforms for community management and engagement.
- In the area of community building, we required the participants to plan and present a new initiative, an effort that demanded practical thinking in terms of target audiences, fundraising and execution.

- We also offered in-service training opportunities during the year for the program graduates and the broader rabbinic community.
  - An online session about the **challenges faced by community rabbis due to the war** was attended by ~150 rabbis.
  - **A study day on AI** and its practical usage by rabbis held at Tzohar headquarters was attended by 18 rabbis.
  - A dedicated support group was created for rabbis struggling to deal with the **bereavement** trauma of their congregants and communities.

**Assessment (methodology, results, comparisons to the previous year, conclusions for the future...):**

Assessment of the program was carried out primarily via formal questionnaires. Feedback from participants indicates high satisfaction despite the challenges created by the wartime environment. The content presented was found to be meaningful and relevant to the participants' daily life as community rabbis.

Feedback was particularly positive about the following elements:

- The value of the professional networking opportunities that the program made possible
- The ability to seek advice and receive both group and individual support
- The supportive "vibe" and information sharing that was created within the group
- The usefulness of content shared via the program's WhatsApp group.

***Feedback from a Ta'atzumot rabbi:*** "My favorite parts of the program were the opportunities for one-on-one guidance, the chance to hear many different viewpoints, and the connection with the other rabbis in the group."

**Planned program for 5786 (2025–2026):**

Given the success of our program so far, in the new 2-year tranche beginning in 2025 we plan to continue the programming with the same structure used in previous years. In addition,

- We will create a follow-up group under the leadership of Rabbi Dov Zinger
- We will carry out community-building work with organizational consultant Meni Katz
- We will further increase the focus on digital and technological tools in service of the rabbi's communal role.

## **Appendix A – Main Content Areas 5785 (2024–2025)**

### **Professional Community Tools:**

- The rabbi's role in supporting individuals through their challenges.
- Divorce from both legal and personal perspectives
- Supporting children in divorce conflicts
- Mental health issues
- The rabbi's role during reserve duty and working with spouses of reservists

### **Ethical and Moral Tools:**

- Halachic issues of Shabbat during wartime
- Issues of marital law and family purity during wartime
- Kashrut issues during reserve duty and when the public volunteers food en masse
- Meeting with Kobi Ohel, father of Alon Ohel, held captive in Gaza

### **Technological Tools:**

- Study day on producing Torah podcasts, with a focus on adult classes/lectures and special content for children
- Updates in AI tools with program graduate Rabbi Yoni Lavi.
- Sharing experiences in preparing Reels, recording video divrei Torah, with Rabbi Akiva Zuckerman, director of "Shig VeShiach" podcast and "Bible Stories for Children" podcast.

## Appendix B – Participant List - 2024 – 2025

	Name	Community	Year
1	Yitzhak Friedman Ben Shalom	Jerusalem - Gilo, Beit Israel	2
2	Ezra Pacino	Leshem, rabbi of the community	2
3	Amichai Shoham	Modi'in, Dorot	2
4	Yochanan Schrader	Nir Galim, rabbi of the community	2
5	Moshe Gold	Ginot Shomron, Neve Aliza	2
6	Neria Teich	Peduel, rabbi of the community	2
7	Eran Giladi	Gadera, community synagogue	2
8	Rafiel Almu	Netanya, Azorim	2
9	Elad HaLachmi	Gadera, Kol Eliyahu	2
10	Shabtay Shalev	Menucha, rabbi of the community	1
11	Yitzhak Shemlov	Shoham	1
12	Moshe Lev Tov	Motza	1
13	Haim Trabelsi	Rishon Lezion, Birkat Yitzhak	1
14	Ariel Nezrit	Rehovot	1
15	Shai Yakobovitz	Neve Tzuf, rabbi of the community	1

## Appendix C – Ta'atzumot Financials 2024 – 2025

	Budget 2024		Actual 2024		Budget 2025	
EXPENSES	USD	NIS	USD	NIS	USD	NIS
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b> (including employer taxes and social benefits) Director of Pastoral Training and Manager of Pastoral Training	135,947	503,004	134,276	496,823	131,760	487,512
<b>OPERATIONAL COSTS</b>						
Pirchei Rabbanim (Young Rabbis) – training, stipends and in-service training	23,027	85,200	-	-	32,324	119,600
Ta'atzumot (Community Rabbis) - stipends for participants	51,966	192,276	56,925	210,623	62,703	232,000
Ta'atzumot (Community Rabbis) - training	18,919	70,000	12,449	46,063	18,919	70,000
Ongoing costs (mail telephone, rent, taxes etc.)	5,276	19,520	5,613	20,766	7,555	27,955
Overhead 10%	23,514	87,000	20,926	77,428	25,326	93,707
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>258,649</b>	<b>957,000</b>	<b>230,190</b>	<b>851,703</b>	<b>278,588</b>	<b>1,030,774</b>

INCOME	USD	NIS	USD	NIS	USD	NIS
Income from donors in Israel and abroad	16,216	60,000	15,405	57,000	13,514	50,000
Income from Safra Foundation	81,082	300,000	81,135	300,202	81,081	300,000
Tzohar participation / remains to be raised	161,351	597,000	133,650	494,703	183,993	680,774
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>258,649</b>	<b>957,000</b>	<b>230,190</b>	<b>851,703</b>	<b>278,588</b>	<b>1,030,774</b>

## Appendix D - Photos

