

## MICRO-LENDING OPINION

# Maximizing the impact of giving

By [Na'ama Ore](#)

## In Short

With loans as low as \$25, lenders from around the world can change the entire trajectory of an Israeli business's lifespan. SparkIL users can choose from a wide selection of ventures that are in need of a modest loan to provide the boost they need to take their business to the next level.

As the mother of four children, it's important for me to teach them the power of giving — to create a better world where people instinctively extend their hand to others and provide them with opportunities to elevate their lives, and most importantly, to give with humility and compassion.

As such, ever since they were young, I had my children accompany me to the volunteer events I helped coordinate, including with the Jewish Women's Circle, the Israeli-American Council and Leket Israel. My kids would witness the awe-inspiring impact that a simple act of kindness can have on others. They also saw that you don't have to write a big check to positively influence someone's life. Rather, giving is most powerful when it's done in accordance with everyone's unique abilities.

Today, I'm proud when my children take the initiative to give back. Guided by the values they learned at home, each of them is independently involved in youth initiatives where they volunteer their time; they're aware of when others need help and provide that help selflessly.



*Sewcream*

This mindset governs much of my professional life as well. As CEO of SparkIL, the first peer-to-peer lending platform to support small businesses in Israel, I'm privileged to witness how each contribution makes an outsized impact.

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The business has five years to repay the loan. During that time, two things occur: The loan is paid back to the lender intermittently, and the borrower gives the lender consistent updates as to how their business has grown thanks to the investment. Therefore, simultaneously, these loans elevate an Israeli small business and nurture a connection between lender and recipient. Once the loan is paid back, lenders have the option to either

withdraw their money or reinvest it, creating a ripple effect of change, economic growth and connectivity — all with a click of a button.

This simple act of kindness facilitates the very notion of “kol Yisrael arevim ze le ze” — that all Jews are responsible for one another. And the fact that SparkIL is a big tent where non-Jews can also contribute to help Jews and non-Jews alike, makes our mission of solidarity even broader.

From David Elimelech, a young man from an impoverished neighborhood in Ashkelon who grows his own mushrooms that are now being sold to restaurants across the country; to Ziva Mizrachi, a single mother who owns a thriving jewelry store in Jerusalem; to Jamal Asad, a Druze businessman who has expanded his laundromat in the North, each SparkIL beneficiary is living, breathing example of the impact of giving. The loans offer them that elusive fresh start. It is not one I take for granted.

When I speak about gratitude at my Shabbat table, I often share the stories of SparkIL loan recipients. My family even brainstorms who might be an appropriate lender for each company. We get to know each business and determine their unique needs, so that the network of giving facilitated by SparkIL can reach its full potential.

At SparkIL, all lenders are treated equally regardless of how much they contribute. They receive the same updates and offer the same opportunities to connect with the businesses they are assisting. All the while, the relationships lenders and borrowers help both sides understand different facets of the Jewish world.

As many of us celebrated with our loved ones under the Sukkah recently, consider asking each other what you're thankful for and how you can pay that gratitude forward for someone in need. It doesn't take much to make big things happen.

*Na'ama Ore is CEO of SparkIL.*