In 2015, Europe’s refugee crisis saw our continent’s largest mass migration since CBF’s day and once again we acted courageously, using our expertise to lead the Jewish community’s response. In Turkey and Greece, your generosity has made a significant difference to those fleeing war and conflict through the provision of food, medical and educational support. Sadly we cannot yet see an end to this emergency. This international crisis has now developed a UK dimension with the pending arrival of 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next five years. Once again, we will act on our community’s behalf, using our expertise in helping people develop livelihoods in the former Soviet Union, and work in partnership with the government and our community to assist refugee integration. This small but significant initiative is funded by a number of private donors, so rest assured we will not be coming to you to fund this work.

Last year we changed the lives of 68,911 people. Without your incredible dedication and support, this would not be possible. That’s why your trust is vital to us and why we’re committed to being fully accountable to you, making sure that your money is spent wisely and that all of our communications to you are friendly, honest and respectful of your wishes. Our newly developed Supporter Charter, which you can view on our website, seeks to ensure that our supporters remain at the very heart of everything we do.

Thank you for your fantastic support.

Arguably our finest moment was our role in August 1945 in helping 732 child survivors, known as “The Boys”, to be flown to Britain to gradually rebuild their shattered lives. This special group of Jewish survivors went on to form The 45 Aid Society, providing remarkable charitable support. In celebration of the 70th anniversary of their rescue I was truly humbled this winter to receive wonderful support from the Society.

Indeed our history has come to life with the launch of our recently digitised historical archives. We have photographed and digitised over 35,000 files which tell the story of the assistance we provided to those we rescued between 1933 and 1946. You can read on the next page how we helped Jerry Springer’s parents... and we might well have helped yours too. Let us know if you think we helped you or your family and we’ll see if we have a copy of your file in our archives.

With our rich history informing what we do today, we continue to change the lives of the world’s poorest Jewish communities. On pages 4 & 5, you’ll read how the Ukrainian economic collapse has made basic foodstuffs unaffordable, yet how a combination of social intervention and employment assistance are creating a long term safety net for these fragile yet significant communities. I’m convinced that the right interventions mean we can all but eradicate poverty from our Jewish communities within our lifetimes. With a healthy older client group and an employed younger generation, we are creating the building blocks of viable Jewish communities in the former Soviet Union.

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JERRY SPRINGER WAS RECENTLY PRESENTED WITH HIS PARENTS’ HISTORICAL RECORDS FROM WORLD JEWISH RELIEF’S NEWLY DIGITISED ARCHIVES. HE SAID: “I WAS DEEPLY TOUCHED WHEN I RECEIVED THE RECORDS OF MY PARENTS’ IMMIGRATION. THESE PAPERS ARE A PIECE OF FAMILY HISTORY WHICH I WILL TREASURE FOREVER”.

Like so many boys, the young Jerry Springer dreamed of being a bus driver. He was inspired by looking out of the window of his parents’ home in Belvedere Court, opposite Norrice Lea, and seeing the 102 bus go by on Aylmer Road. He was born Gerald Norman Springer in February 1944 in Highgate tube station to Margo and Richard Springer, both of whom managed to escape the clutches of Nazi Germany.

His parents were amongst the last people to get out of Europe, fleeing in August 1939 just weeks before Germany invaded Poland. His grandparents and many family members were left behind to face their fate at the hands of the Nazis. Both of his grandmothers were murdered in concentration camps.

Like many refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe, Jerry’s parents arrived in the UK with very little and needed urgent help. The Central British Fund for German Jewry (CBF) – the precursor to World Jewish Relief – was their lifeline. Jerry himself attributes his parents’ survival to the organisation. As he said: “I am delighted to support the organisation which helped my parents”.

Jerry’s story is remarkable. His family moved to the United States when he was just five. They believed America represented a place where people could live without persecution. Jerry became mayor of Cincinnati at the age of 33. A stint as a news presenter led to him becoming one of America’s best-known talk show hosts.

World Jewish Relief was integral in bringing over tens of thousands of refugees like Jerry’s parents from Nazi-occupied Europe, including 10,000 children who came on the Kindertransport and 732 orphan survivors known as “The Boys”.

World Jewish Relief is now offering people free access to their family records, so if you think that we may have helped you or a family member, please get in touch with us at www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives or on 020 8736 1250 or info@worldjewishrelief.org.
Boom and bust in Ukraine

World Jewish Relief’s programmes officer Kateryna Roshchyna has experienced the strain the ongoing conflict in Ukraine is having on the economy and how your support is making a crucial impact.

It is not only those on the front line of the conflict who are suffering. The effects of the war have permeated through all of Ukraine. Everyone is affected. Fraught even before the conflict, Ukraine’s economy is now on the brink. The currency, the Hryvnia, has collapsed. Inflation and consumer prices have increased so now even basic necessities are unaffordable. The economy contracted by 12% in 2015 and is predicted to shrink further. Unemployment continues to rise while work opportunities are increasingly stifled by companies choosing to relocate to more stable neighbouring countries.

With fewer work opportunities available, it is vital people have the necessary skills to be competitive in an increasingly depressed job market. Our Livelihood Programmes provide people with the relevant skills and knowledge to enter a variety of industries. From computer competency to business management, our training programmes help people to find work. With secure employment, our participants, many of whom are single parents, are able to triple their income - last year the average income increase amongst participants was 279%. Most importantly, this income allows people to support their families.

Whilst our livelihood programmes provide many families with a route out of poverty, for many older Jewish people who we support, they are simply too old or infirm to work and have no means of income aside from their pension, which averages just £50 per month in Ukraine. With spiralling costs of food, medication, rent and heating, older people often have to make the difficult decisions to prioritise their needs. Thanks to your support we provide vital medicine and food, so that they don’t need to make the choice between going hungry or without medicine.

Bringing people into work enables people to support themselves, their children and a significant proportion of our community’s older people. For older people who don’t receive familial assistance, we provide a lifeline. Thanks to your support, we can aspire towards an end to Jewish poverty in the former Soviet Union within our lifetimes.

Thank you
Elena’s story

A single mother to two young boys, Elena’s life changed forever when her husband walked out of the family. Demoralised and alone with no support, Elena struggled to provide for her family the basic necessities – even pencils for school.

Elena enrolled on a sewing course on one of our Livelihood Programmes to pursue her dream of becoming a seamstress. She now designs clothes for religious men and women and works part-time as a sewing teacher in a Jewish school. Her creativity means that she has been asked by the community to decorate rooms for weddings and celebrations, which she loves doing. All of this work is only possible thanks to your support.
The incurable optimist: thoughts from Fergal Keane OBE
I’m very familiar with the work that World Jewish Relief does and have been for many years. I have seen it bring practical benefit in different parts of the world. I’ve spent 25 years reporting from conflict zones, on genocide, civil war, famine and all the misery that we human beings are capable of inflicting on each other. Yet in spite of that I remain an incurable optimist.

I have great faith in people. I have great faith in our capacity to work things out because we do get up and many of you will know it from your personal lives; you take the most horrendous knocks and you get up and go on. There is hope.

In Ukraine, World Jewish Relief does such magnificent work. In the east, at the height of the conflict last summer, I produced reports on the fighting. I went to Pisky, next to Donetsk airport, where shelling was happening. When I got in, I met a couple, Anatoliy and Svetlana, who were living on a tiny patch of land where they kept bees and hens, and grew vegetables. Their vegetable patch was cratered by mortars – and I said to them “why on earth do you stay here”? Anatoliy said: “Well, she went away to the city but I had to stay to protect what we had created together”. And I looked at her and said “why did you come back”? “He was too lonely without me”. Love had brought her back. It’s a word we shy away from using, as foreign correspondents and journalists because it’s somehow too sissy and soft-hearted.

I will happily use the word ‘love’ as the essential ingredient in a place like Ukraine in keeping some idea of civilization and humanity alive.

Or in a place like Rwanda during the genocide. When I came across a 14-year-old girl called Valentina who to survive had to lie under the corpses of her parents. She hid amongst the corpses for nearly two weeks before being rescued. I met her the day after she was rescued. She was a skeletal frame, with a huge gash on her head, her hand was chopped off and she already had gangrene. I didn’t believe she’d make it. A year later I went back and found out that she had survived but was extremely traumatised. Year after year I went back and saw her grow stronger. An aunt had survived, the only other family member, and took her in and gave her the love that her parents would have given her. Last year I received an email from the USA; Valentina is in America studying to be a lawyer.

Our story, the human story, is littered with appalling brutality. But deeper than that, stronger than that, is our capacity to get up and go on and to build, create and renew. So have faith in that idea. Don’t fall prey to the voices of fear. Primo Levi the Holocaust survivor used the beautiful and haunting expression about the bestial vice of hatred, “whatever provocation is given, let us not fall to that”.

I went back and found out that she had survived but was extremely traumatised. Year after year I went back and saw her grow stronger. An aunt had survived, the only other family member, and took her in and gave her the love that her parents would have given her. Last year I received an email from the USA; Valentina is in America studying to be a lawyer.
With rations cut, resources expended and the conflict at home in Syria showing no sign of abating, some refugees decided that the only option of a better future was a move westwards into Europe.

The British Jewish community felt a moral imperative to act. Whatever our family backgrounds, we don’t have to go too far back in our history to find family who have also been refugees. Often it’s the story of the Second World War, the Kindertransport and tens of thousands of adults who were saved thanks to the Jewish community here.

Your outpouring of generosity has been unprecedented, raising more than £820,000. It is only thanks to this support World Jewish Relief has been able to focus on those close to their country of origin, in Turkey, where the vulnerability is huge. Providing education facilities and winter emergency packages to Syrian refugee children there encourages them to feel that there is, at the very least, a reasonable sense of normality.

In addition, there remain thousands of refugees on the move. We have two partner organisations in Greece providing medical support and emergency packages to refugees both on the North Aegean islands and for those transiting in Athens, Thessaloniki and on the Macedonian border in Idomeni.

Chief Rabbi Mirvis, who recently joined us on a trip to one of the refugee camps in Idomeni, said, “Easing the plight of the hundreds of thousands of people caught up in this immense upheaval is a complicated, ongoing challenge and requires a significant, ongoing response”.

All the support we are able to provide is only possible thanks to your generosity.

Thank You.

Closer to home
The announcement that the UK would accept 20,000 Syrian refugees led to widespread calls for us to play a key part in the Jewish response. In January, we launched our employment programme for refugees, so that as the international refugee crisis has reached the UK, World Jewish Relief’s international expertise will now be applied here too.

The gap in provision for employment services for refugees, combined with our extensive experience in livelihood development, means that we hope to make a significant contribution to their experience of settling in the UK, after the war and persecution that so many faced in Syria.

This programme, backed by the government, will be funded by a small number of private donors. Money raised by World Jewish Relief for our refugee work in Greece and Turkey and our separate core projects in the Former Soviet Union, will not be used to support this work.
Inspiring work, inspiring people

By World Jewish Relief’s President Henry Grunwald OBE QC

WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE LONG HISTORY OF WORLD JEWISH RELIEF, I IMAGINE HOW THE FOUNDERS OF THE THEN CENTRAL BRITISH FUND WOULD VIEW THE ORGANISATION TODAY. I’D LIKE TO THINK THAT THEY WOULD BE AS PROUD OF IT AS I AM.

I try and take every opportunity both within and without the Jewish community to talk about our work, and explain what the “Jewish” bit of World Jewish Relief actually means, because, to me, our work is everything that being Jewish should mean. We look after our own, as we should, but we also look after the non-Jewish world, as we should, and we do it because it’s the right thing to do, but we also do it because we need to show the world that Jews are not as inward looking as many think we are.

A few years ago, I did a session on this topic at Limmud - a very challenging session - but I’m glad to say it had a very positive effect. Three people came and spoke to me at its conclusion. One was a lapsed supporter, who had lapsed because of our work in the non-Jewish sector. He told me I’d changed his mind.

The second was an about-to-become Trustee of World Jewish Relief, whom I’d not yet met and did not realise had been in the audience. He said that he was now even more enthused about becoming a Trustee.

It’s the third whose words will always remain with me, and I will respect that person’s anonymity by referring to him/her as X. X waited until there was no-one else about and then said that X was really glad he/she had been there because X was half-way through conversion to Judaism but had had second thoughts as X had been coming to the conclusion that Jews and Judaism were too insular. However, having heard about the principles and work of World Jewish Relief X was so relieved that he/she had decided to go through with the conversion.

We are a fantastic people, and World Jewish Relief shows us at our best.
Four rabbis crowded into a tiny room in Zaporozhye, south-eastern Ukraine with a young mother and her three children.

In hushed silence we waited as Sara, the eldest child, carefully prepared her treasured second-hand violin. She began to play a beautiful, but haunting, melody. As I listened, spellbound, to Sara’s playing, uppermost in my mind was the unspeakable hidden human cost of the Ukrainian conflict. Sara hasn’t seen her father for months. Last April, he was picked off the street by Ukrainian police and mobilised to fight in the east. Aside from emotional trauma, this already desperately poor family must subsist on just £75 a month.

Sara and her family are one example amongst countless who have become part of the reality of life for Jews in Ukraine. I was one of seven United Synagogue rabbis on a fact-finding mission with World Jewish Relief. We met people who fled the fighting and are trying to make ends meet in Zaporozhye. Olga, a 27-year-old mother, wept as she recalled her terror at seeing the barrel of a drunk rebel soldier’s gun pointed through the window of her car as she fled her hometown, Donetsk, with her two-month-old son. It brought home the extent of the collective emotional trauma suffered by this community.

Yet, there were stories of hope too. Speaker after speaker expressed gratitude towards a wider Jewish world which refuses to forget them. World Jewish Relief’s revolutionary Livelihoods Programme has helped over 1,000 people in Zaporozhye to find work and break the cycle of poverty. Through it, Olga is training to become a freelance photographer.

Touring the Jewish Community Centre, we saw a renaissance of Jewish life in Ukraine. Pre-school children drew dreidels for Chanukah, senior citizens sang Yiddish songs about the shtetl and people with severe disabilities enjoyed Chanukah-themed group therapy activities. This was a Jewish Ukraine of hope, not despair; a place full of people in need of assistance, but who are thankfully finding it through World Jewish Relief’s work.

We departed Ukraine with a sense of the strength of the Jewish spirit and its desire to hope despite the challenges it faces. We also left with a renewed appreciation of the capability Jewish people elsewhere have to help improve the suffering of Ukraine’s Jews.
HOW YOU CELEBRATED GRANDPARENTS DAY

Sukkot is a time of joy, warmth, shelter and, most importantly, family. On 4th October 2015, World Jewish Relief introduced UK Grandparents Day to the Jewish community. Generations came together all over the UK to celebrate Sukkot, spend time together and learn about World Jewish Relief’s work with the world’s poorest Jewish communities, particularly older people in the Former Soviet Union.

Liverpool’s King David School Year 1 pupils, together with Sara Radivan of Liverpool’s Jewish Community, spent the morning decorating Chag Sameach cards for their grandparents. Edgware United Synagogue’s Bar Mitzvah class invited their grandparents to join them in learning about the mitzvot on Sukkot while tucking in to a delicious Kiddush. Meanwhile at Edgware District and Reform Synagogue, our own Samantha Martin, Community Engagement Coordinator, spoke to the attendees of their Simchat Torah party about our elderly welfare programmes. Other communities across Manchester, Leeds and London joined in the Grandparents Day at Sukkot fun too.

Bringing people together is at the heart of what we do. We are already looking forward to next year’s Grandparents Day at Sukkot. If you are interested in hearing more about 2015’s activities and how you can get involved next year, please get in touch with Samantha Martin at samantha@worldjewishrelief.org or 020 8736 1250.

OUR THANKS TO...

World Jewish Relief would like to thank the following supporters and their families for generous gifts left in their will:

Bernice Goldsmith
Edna Levis

We couldn’t achieve what we do without the invaluable support of those who want to leave a lasting legacy. We wish your families a long life.

Gifts in wills are critical to World Jewish Relief. Over the past five years, legacy donations have funded over £3 million worth of our life-changing projects. Without this ongoing support we would be unable to provide such a range and depth of services to people suffering lives of hardship and poverty.

For more information about leaving a gift to World Jewish Relief in your will please contact Richard Budden, Head of Individual Giving & Legacies on 020 8736 1250 / richardb@worldjewishrelief.org.

RIDE FOR THE LIVING...

Join us in Poland on Ride for the Living 2016 to cycle 55 miles from Auschwitz to the Jewish Community Centre in Krakow. On this profoundly meaningful trip you will meet cyclists from all over the world and share in a unique experience. You will spend a day visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau before riding through the beautiful Polish countryside into the vibrant city of Krakow and celebrating the life of the Jewish community today.

The event is taking place from 2nd – 5th June.

For more information please contact Samantha Martin on samantha@worldjewishrelief.org or 020 8736 1250.
Join us for a unique, life-changing experience to Ukraine or Moldova on a World Jewish Relief Insight Trip. You will visit people in their homes, visit Jewish Community Centres and get an understanding of how these vulnerable people live their daily lives. The people you meet will welcome you into their homes, share their stories with you and be delighted that you have taken the time to visit them. From the young to the elderly, from programme managers to programme participants, you will meet all kinds of inspirational people. If you already support World Jewish Relief it will bring even more meaning to see where your money is spent. If you are new to World Jewish Relief it is the best way to truly learn, and understand, our work.

A participant on a recent visit said: ‘I’ve always supported World Jewish Relief, but have never really understood what they do. It amazed me to see what people have lived through but the trip showed me how much of a lifeline World Jewish Relief is to the people they help, from the home repairs to the community centre’.

There are a variety of trips in 2016 including a trip for Bar and Bat Mitzvah students (with a parent), a young professionals trip and a general trip to see our work.

For an initial chat or to receive your Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah Giving pack please contact Samantha Martin at Samantha@worldjewishrelief.org or on 020 8736 1250.

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Your child can change lives!

Is your child embarking on one of the most important years of their life? If they are coming up for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah and you’d like them to learn more about charitable giving, this could be the perfect way to do it. Participants will learn about World Jewish Relief’s global work and we’ll help them to find ways to raise money to make a huge difference.

For an initial chat or to receive your Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah Giving pack please contact Samantha Martin at Samantha@worldjewishrelief.org or on 020 8736 1250.

Raphael S.

“It felt great to know that my Bar Mitzvah helped to make a real difference to the lives of so many vulnerable people. I enjoyed every minute of it!”

Aaron B.

“World Jewish Relief was my chosen Bar Mitzvah charity because it allows me to help fellow Jews and reach beyond our community and borders to assist others.

I want to be a constructive part of the next generation, inspiring faith in humanity whilst repairing the world. World Jewish Relief makes this possible.”

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See Our Work

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Bar / Bat Mitzvah Giving

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Bar Mitzvah Giving

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