



Reach Out

Summer/Autumn 2016



Together,
we bring
hope



Paul Anticoni Chief Executive

THIS SEPTEMBER, JAMES LIBSON, OUR CHAIRMAN EXTRAORDINAIRE STEPS DOWN AFTER COMPLETING HIS TERM OF OFFICE. HE HAS BEEN MONUMENTAL IN HIS COMMITMENT, ENERGY, THOUGHTFULNESS, INTELLECT AND DRIVE TO PROMOTE, EXPAND AND PROFESSIONALISE THIS ORGANISATION. HE IS A DELIGHT TO WORK WITH AND A CLOSE FRIEND.

I find it remarkable to think that I joined World Jewish Relief 10 years ago this month. I am privileged to have met both many of those we help and many of you as supporters. Each and every one of you has inspired me to push this charity to achieve even more, to reduce the vulnerability within our Jewish world and demonstrate our core Jewish values in assisting those beyond our community where we can.

Inevitably I still feel that the real mountain is ahead of us. To fundamentally address chronic poverty within the massive but fragile Jewish communities within the former Soviet Union still requires a greater scaling up of our work. But tens of thousands of people's lives and livelihoods are immeasurably better thanks to our work. That wouldn't be possible without you.

Colin Lehmann, our former Treasurer, was an integral and passionate part of our organisation, so it was with huge sadness that we learned of his death earlier this year. Our thoughts remain with his family and friends.

While my grey hairs might deceive you, World Jewish Relief vastly predates my tenure. As the organisation that brought tens of thousands out of Nazi Germany, both on the Kindertransport and post war from the displaced camps, we must not forget our roots.

A quick reminder that we have 35,000 files of those we assisted. If you know of anyone who falls into this category please encourage them to contact us, as we may have their historical records which we will send free of charge: www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives.

Mirjam Bait Talmi, who recently received her family's case file, demonstrates their significance better than I ever could: "Looking back, I can only think about what a hard life we Kristallnacht orphans had. When you sent me the report regarding my brother, I realised that he had been cared for by the best of people and not just be left somewhere to die. The report gave me an insight into my childhood."

When people remind me that there remain more Jews in Ukraine than the UK, it never ceases to make me think. The difference that we are making to these people can be seen in the tale of Nadezhda (p.6-7), whose apartment was in such disrepair she had become totally isolated out of embarrassment; she used to have to wash herself with warm water heated on her stove. Repairing her home and installing a boiler and shower transformed her life. Unbelievably we have now repaired 1,477 houses in recent years. Changes like this give people like Nadezhda a reason to live, thanks to World Jewish Relief and to you.

Have a lovely summer.

I'm delighted to welcome Dan Rosenfield as the incoming Chair of World Jewish Relief. Originally from Manchester, Dan has been a trustee of World Jewish Relief since 2014, building his knowledge and developing a huge passion for our work. I look forward to reading his thoughts which he will share with us through a Q&A in the next Reach Out.

“

My helper is like a daughter to me. She brings me food from the store, she cooks for me, cleans my room and helps me to stay clean. She brings light into my house and heart.

”

A Light unto the Nations: honouring Righteous Gentiles

IRYNA'S STORY IS BOTH REMARKABLE AND DEVASTATING. DOING ALL THEY COULD TO HIDE AND CARE FOR IRYNA'S JEWISH CHILDHOOD FRIEND IN THEIR HOME DURING THE WORLD WAR II, HER MOTHER AND BROTHER WERE ULTIMATELY CAPTURED BY THE NAZIS. IN 2001, IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR HEROIC EFFORTS, IRYNA AND HER MOTHER WERE AWARDED THE STATUS OF RIGHTEOUS GENTILES, BUT UNTIL WE MET HER, SHE WAS STRUGGLING FOR SURVIVAL..

Righteous Gentiles, or Righteous Among the Nations, are the brave individuals honoured by Yad Vashem for risking their own lives to save Jewish people during the Holocaust. Men and women of all ages and faiths; from physicians to peasants, teachers to resistance fighters, they are united by their extraordinary acts.

For years, these inspirational people were given support through German reparation funds. In 2008, however, hundreds lost access to these funds and, thus, critical health and social care services. Increasingly frail, they were forced to survive on tiny pensions. These people, who had selflessly provided Jews with refuge, warmth and food, now found themselves desperate for help.

Today, Iryna is 96 years old. She lives alone in one room in a run-down apartment

in Odessa, Ukraine. With numerous health problems like diabetes and high blood pressure, her monthly pension is barely enough to live on.

Many survivors helped by Righteous Gentiles kept in touch with those who hid them and they spoke to us about the shame of knowing that those who rescued them were facing such hardships. We simply had to act.

We committed to doing more to support this special group of people, across the Former Soviet Union, providing urgent medication, surgeries and basic supplies to those most in need. Our focus so far has been on the provision of vital help around the house for people like Iryna, who now has homecare support 22 hours a week. Without this, Iryna would become increasingly desperate and isolated.

One's heart aches to witness such things.

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg on his visit to Greece

RESCUE TEAMS
WATCHED THE
COAST DAY AND
NIGHT. AT THE FIRST
SIGHTING OF A BOAT,
THEY SUMMONED
VOLUNTEERS AND,
USING FLAGS OR
BONFIRES, DIRECTED
THE INCOMING
REFUGEES TO THE
SAFEST BEACHES.

"They've been arriving day and night." I was standing with Marie from Praksis, World Jewish Relief's partner in Greece, on the island of Lesbos.

The torn plastic sheets on the rocks of the beach puzzled me. 'Those were the dinghies', I was told. 'That's all they're made of. They're meant for fifteen people, but the smugglers pack in fifty.'

I found a life-vest on the shore, but it was fake. Filled with water-absorbent material, it was a death-vest, not a life-vest. Someone had sold it to an unsuspecting refugee for 20 Euros.

Disturbingly, there are always those eager to profit from the misery of others. But I was far more struck by those there to help. 'The Greek people show deep

kindness', Marie explained. 'The grandparents of many islanders were refugees themselves, fleeing Turkey across these very waters in the 1920s. They remember; they bring soup and help the old and the children.'

At Moria, the nearby camp where those who make it safely over the sea are registered, buses arrive constantly. Only after registration can refugees proceed to Athens. Volunteers are ready with essentials; sleeping bags, blankets, backpacks, nappies, food. World Jewish Relief plays an essential supportive role.

Amidst one olive grove was the cemetery where the drowned were buried. There we met Mustafa. When he learned there were dead still in fridges

es

after thirty days, he took responsibility for burying them with dignity. Small marble slabs marked the graves. One word appeared repeatedly: 'agnostica - unknown' - 'unknown child, aged 3 months', 'unknown woman'. Here lay the price of this flight from war and violence, undertaken for a better future for these children.

One's heart aches to witness such things. More than people are on the move; history, identities, perhaps the very notion of borders. The outcomes are unclear. But one cannot be human and fail to help.

Rabbi Wittenberg is the Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism UK.

REFUGEE CRISIS UPDATE

THANKS TO YOUR
GENEROSITY,
WE'VE RAISED
£877,646
SINCE SEPTEMBER 2015.



50,000+
REFUGEES
TRAPPED IN GREECE
AND A STAGGERING

3 MILLION
IN TURKEY.



16,000



BENEFICIARIES
SO FAR.



THE
SANITATION
KITS

WE DISTRIBUTE GIVE
MUCH NEEDED
RELIEF TO PARENTS.



WE
DISTRIBUTE

ITEMS LIKE WHEELCHAIRS
FOR THE MOST
VULNERABLE.

WE OPENED A NEW
CENTRE
FOR REFUGEE
VICTIMS OF
SEXUAL
VIOLENCE.



OUR MOBILE
MEDICAL UNIT
IN GREECE HAS HELPED



5,000
PEOPLE.



OUR
RESCUE
TEAMS

ON THE BEACHES OF
LESBOS. ASSIST THOSE
ARRIVING BY BOAT.

Rebuilding homes, transforming lives

Oliver Knight, Home Repairs Programme Manager, reflects on his experiences...



HAVING LIVED AND TRAVELLED IN AFRICA AND ASIA, I HAVE WITNESSED EXTREME POVERTY FIRST-HAND. BEFORE WORKING AT WORLD JEWISH RELIEF, I WAS GUILTY, LIKE MANY, OF THINKING SUCH POVERTY COULDN'T POSSIBLY EXIST SO CLOSE TO HOME. AS I COMPLETE MY FIRST YEAR MANAGING WORLD JEWISH RELIEF'S HOME REPAIRS PROGRAMME IT AMAZES ME HOW WRONG I WAS.

I would like to share with you an experience from a home visit I went on recently. I visited an elderly lady in Ukraine called Nadezhda Bakanova. Born in Odessa, where she still lives in a run-down part of the city, Nadezhda is sure that without the help of World Jewish Relief she would not have been able to survive.

As I was sitting with Nadezhda in her small kitchen, we shared stories. Admittedly for someone in their 60s, she had many more than me. Since the death of her son 21 years ago, Nadezhda's health deteriorated and she lived an increasingly solitary life. I was shocked by the state of her apartment. In winter, she would sit in her robe to keep warm and end up covered in dirt from the coal she had to use to fuel the stove. Unbelievably, she had no shower to clean herself. Nadezhda would have to

heat water in a pan, to then pour over herself. Her dream was to take a shower in hot water. With her home in such disrepair, she was ashamed to invite anybody to it. Experiencing extreme loneliness, with just the sound of the TV as company, Nadezhda told me she often talked to herself. Watching her made me think of my grandmother, who I could never imagine living in this way.

Thanks to your support, we were able to make the changes Nadezhda so desperately needed, through our Home Repairs programme. We dug up the floor, replacing all the pipes and sewerage system and insulated the flat, replacing the windows and doors. We tiled the bathroom and installed a new toilet and sink. Most importantly, we installed a boiler and a shower. "I used to dream of standing in a shower with hot water. Now, I have a

boiler, I have hot water. My life has been transformed."

With these changes Nadezhda can live independently and in dignity; she is like a new woman. "I am very thankful with all my heart. I couldn't live without this support. I cannot describe it by words. I wish I could thank the UK Jewish community each personally." Her home now fills her with pride – so much so she invited friends immediately. Years ago Nadezhda would always have friends over on festivals; this Rosh Hashanah she's already planning on doing so again. Nadezhda's apartment is just one of the 1,477 homes we've repaired since 2009. In the coming months you will hear more about the impact we can have by repairing peoples' homes and how, together, we can transform peoples' lives and bring hope.

Ukraine: the forgotten crisis

By Vitaliy Kartamyshev, Director, World Jewish Relief Ukraine

WHEN GAVRILOV IVANOVICH'S HOUSE IN EASTERN UKRAINE WAS BOMBED, HE HAD NOWHERE TO GO. HIS NEIGHBOURS HAD LITERALLY DRAGGED HIM OUT OF THE WRECKAGE OF HIS HOUSE AND HE WAS LEFT WITH NOTHING.

Just a tiny outhouse to live in, with no heating, nowhere to cook and no family. Gavrilov, 86, had fought the Nazis; now he fights just to survive. People like Gavrilov don't think beyond tomorrow; they just figure out how to live today. It is only thanks to World Jewish Relief's support, thanks to your generosity, that he is able to survive.

As the media's attention has casually declined since the 2014 revolution, the daily struggles of Ukrainians have increased, and the currency has devalued dramatically. This means that the world's poorest Jewish communities can now only afford one third of what they used to. Conversely, it also means that your donations go three times further.

Over the past few months, we have increasingly focused on how we can maximise our resources in the conflict zones to help those most impacted by the crisis, like Gavrilov. For example, our project in the buffer zone separating Ukrainian forces from pro-Russian rebels delivers food, hygiene kits and other basic essentials like nappies and toilet paper to 300 people.

When I was in Zaporozhye recently, I met an older Jewish couple who had fled Luhansk, leaving everything behind. Thanks to your support, the Jewish community in Zaporozhye is able to support them, house and feed them, as we are doing for 3,500 internally displaced people across Ukraine.

Many pensioners like this couple are also forced to support their grown-up children who have lost their livelihoods. However small, they at least get a pension, whereas their children have lost jobs and cannot find work in the depressed economic situation and in unfamiliar towns. They face the unenviable choice of either accepting financial support from their parents' meagre pensions, or joining the army.

You may have read that Ukraine has a new, Jewish Prime Minister, Volodymyr Groysman. Groysman's openness about his background isn't customary in a country where anti-Semitism and Communist

repression made it undesirable for politicians to be seen as 'too Jewish'. Leaders within Ukrainian Jewry have pointed to Groysman's ascent as proof of the absence of serious anti-Semitism in Ukraine, whilst Russia has pointed to the country's alleged anti-Semitism to justify its conflict with Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea. Whatever the case, life for Ukraine's Jews remains incredibly tough, with many surviving day-by-day thanks to your support.



Seven decades of history staring back at me

By Rabbi David Lister of Edgware United Synagogue

MY MOTHER PASSED AWAY IN NOVEMBER NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO. SHE WAS BORN IN BERLIN DURING THE RISE OF NAZISM, BUT WAS EVACUATED ON A KINDERTRANSPORT TRAIN IN THE SPRING OF 1939. MIRACULOUSLY, HER PARENTS MANAGED TO ESCAPE GERMANY EVEN CLOSER TO THE OUTBREAK OF WAR. THEY WERE EDUCATED, CULTURED AND HARD-WORKING, BUT THEY LEFT GERMANY WITH NEXT TO NOTHING AND LIFE WAS HARD.

Recently, I was intrigued to learn that World Jewish Relief had enlisted volunteers to source the documentation of Holocaust refugees. You simply contact them with any details you can of the person you are trying to trace, and they search their records to see what they can find. I sent off the email and life continued as usual.

Until an email arrived with my mother's maiden name in the subject box.

I was suddenly apprehensive as I opened the document and scrolled through to the scans. The first document I saw was from the Jewish Refugees' Committee – one of the component parts of the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief – filing the date of her arrival in the UK (21st April 1939) and new address. My heart jolted as I recognised my late grandmother's handwriting, the same that cheered me when I used to receive her letters.

From the same day was a Document of Identity issued 'with the approval of His Majesty's Government'. Issued in Southampton, it bears my mother's name and date of birth, together with the names and address of her parents, who were still in Berlin. The reverse has

been stamped by an immigration officer. It was a curious feeling to see the marks of officialdom bestowed so punctiliously by these kindly British people who have long since left this world. Did they know how moving the traces of their clerical routine would be one day? It probably never occurred to them that in 2016 someone would thank them for enabling his mother to live and give birth to him. It probably never occurred to them that in 2016 someone would thank them for enabling his mother to live, or that that uncomprehending little exiled alien would attain a university degree, thrive, and leave behind a flourishing Jewish dynasty spanning three new generations.

Most poignant was her picture. A little girl with wild, thick hair, her expression wavering between solemnity and apprehension, stared up at me, dark eyes fixing my gaze out of a computer screen and across seven decades of history.

So I thank World Jewish Relief for this amazing service to the community. They have made me feel more complete by completing a part of my past, and I urge others to do the same by visiting worldjewishrelief.org/archives, or on 020 8736 1250.



60 SECONDS WITH... DEBBIE CANTOR, VOLUNTEER

Meet Debbie Cantor, Team Coordinator for our team of archives' volunteers. You can read about the archives project opposite. Here's what Debbie has to say about volunteering at World Jewish Relief.

What is your role?

I respond to requests about our archives and manage a small team of volunteers.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I love working for a cause I am passionate about and supporting the great work of World Jewish Relief. It is incredible to see the impact of their work on vulnerable communities across the world.

With the archives project, I am discovering new stories all the time. I love the responses we get when we send out the files.

How often do you volunteer?

I volunteer weekly and have been volunteering at World Jewish Relief over the past 5 years.

What do you like about volunteering at World Jewish Relief?

The office environment is a pleasure to work in. Everyone is friendly, working as a team, with a great deal of professionalism. I am made to feel part of the team, not an outsider, and that my work is valued.

If you would like to find out about volunteering contact Samantha Martin on 020 8736 1250 or email samantha@worldjewishrelief.org.



Jewish Legacy

OUR THANKS TO...

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

Gerald Crossman

Bernice Goldsmid

Henry Myers

Irvin Franklin

Rayner Franklin

Gerry Sigler

Regina Tessler

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 1255 or email richardb@worldjewishrelief.org.

Fancy a challenge?

This year our amazing supporters have climbed Kilimanjaro, completed the Great Manchester 10k Run and cycled through Poland!

Registration is now open for the 2017 Virgin London Marathon and the Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100.

Challenging yourself for a charity is extremely rewarding, but don't just take our word for it...

"I ran the London Marathon for World Jewish Relief which was the most rewarding experience of my life. I had to hobble the final 3rd with cramp but the feeling of crossing the finish line is like nothing else! I'm looking forward to running again for the charity."

- Greg Ilsen, Virgin London Marathon 2016



For more information contact Samantha Martin on 020 8736 1250 or email samantha@worldjewishrelief.org.

Mark a special occasion by supporting World Jewish Relief



If you, or someone you know, is celebrating a special occasion, perhaps a birthday, anniversary, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or wedding, you could use the opportunity to support our work.

1 If you know someone who is celebrating, you can donate to World Jewish Relief in their honour. We will send them a letter with a Mazel Tov card to let them know you have donated.

2 If you have a special occasion coming up, you can ask well-wishers to donate to World Jewish Relief in your name. We will keep you updated on who has donated and the total you raise.

For more information about Celebratory Giving please email Hadas Morris on hadas@worldjewishrelief.org or call 020 8736 1250.