and by extension at least half of its potential. When a woman earns her own income she contributes to the development of her family members, her community and her society. Enabling women to learn, lead, decide and thrive can not only transform their own self-esteem but also the lives of their families, communities and societies.

We are determined to do more to prioritise women across everything we do, including our work supporting older people, our employment programmes, interventions to support refugees and our humanitarian disaster response initiatives.

Strong female figures are an important part of Jewish history. From the matriarchs and the key roles they played in the formative years of Judaism to the biblical figure of Deborah, who broke societal norms to hold a position as a judge. But for every story of empowerment there are many more of discrimination and inequality.

We want to learn from our heritage and ensure we are able to support women through their most difficult days and give them the opportunity to fulfil their highest potential. I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Reach Out.

Thank you so much for all of your continued support.
A LIFE REBUILT

On the outskirts of Kiev, in a bustling area, a local coffee shop emits a welcoming glow. The owner, Natalia, greets guests and chats with her regular customers. Local residents, random passers-by, and even police patrols pop in regularly and the coffee shop is starting to feel like a community hub. But just two years earlier, life was very different for Natalia.

When war hit the Ukrainian city of Lugansk, the battle raged right outside of Natalia’s front door. Every night the sky lit up with explosions. Shells flew into residential areas and staying in her home was not safe. Natalia had no choice but to take her daughter and flee with her husband to the capital.

In Kiev, Natalia had to start her life again. Despite having had a successful career as a restaurant manager and being trained as a hairdresser, she struggled to find stable work as there is still widespread prejudice against Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Ukraine. Her husband’s meagre wage kept the family surviving, but only just.

Natalia learned about World Jewish Relief’s Livelihood Development Programme from a previous graduate who had successfully found employment. She attended on-the-job training where she learned how to best present herself and how to use her existing skills to earn an income. Within two months she had found a job as a hairdresser.

In working with Natalia we realised her dream was to open her own coffee shop. We knew she had determination and willingness to learn, so with the right training and support this could be an achievable dream.

We invited her to take our entrepreneurship and self-employment training where she learned how to register her business, turn an idea into profit, pay taxes, and to create budgets and financial forecasts. Natalia developed a business plan, attracted initial investment and learned how to write grant applications for materials and furnishing.

“At the self-employment training I was not only given the necessary knowledge for my business, but the initial on-the-job training was very useful. It taught me to be confident in my abilities, to use my experience and to have faith in my strength. And, of course, it’s important to realise that I’m not alone – the team are always there for me!”

Three months later the coffee shop is beginning to become profitable and Natalia is tired, but happy. She is inspired by the idea that she is an entrepreneur. Despite everything she has gone through, she is finally living her dream.

Natalia is a great example of World Jewish Relief’s philosophy that no two people are alike and what works for one may not work for another. This is why we work hard to tailor our support to their specific needs and social context. For Natalia this was recognising that her aspirations would not be fulfilled by work as a hairdresser. In helping her set up a business we hope that she will compound this effect by creating jobs for others who are struggling in Ukraine’s sparse job market.

There are still many people out there like Natalia, victims of conflict and prejudice, who with the help of World Jewish Relief can begin to rebuild their lives. Your generous donations really do help make the world a better place for those who are the most vulnerable.
On 18th October 2018, World Jewish Relief hosted a landmark event at JW3, London’s Jewish cultural centre, to celebrate the launch of our new initiative, Women of World Jewish Relief, engaging the support of our fantastic network of generous and powerful Jewish women who can help us really make a difference.

This inaugural event also marked our commitment to prioritise the needs of women across our work. Women already make up a majority of the participants that we support through our programmes but we recognise that they face unique challenges, whether that is social inequality in the workplace or at home, which prevents them from fulfilling their full potential.

To mark the launch of Women of World Jewish Relief, we invited three amazing women from across our programmes to speak about the challenges faced by women in troubled societies, war zones and workplaces.

**Viktoria Panteley**

Viktoria Panteley is Executive Director of Hesed Shaare Tikva, one of World Jewish Relief’s trusted partner organisations in Kharkov, Ukraine. Her tireless effort supports over 7,000 people, the majority of whom are women.

In Ukraine, structural inequalities have a significant impact on women. The gender pay gap is as much as 25% and the average life expectancy for women is 12 years longer than men. The result is a far greater number of isolated older women living on paltry pensions. During their working lives, Ukrainian women are further impacted if they choose to have children. Without sufficient childcare provision and social stigma around working mothers, returning to well-paid work after having children is very difficult. This not only delays career progression but also leaves them with a much smaller pension than their male counterparts.

Viktoria has a unique insight into the lives of this generation of Jewish women because like her own family, many of them were evacuated during the Holocaust. Many others survived the Nazi occupation and the concentration camps.

“Often, they survived thanks to Ukrainian women who gave them shelter, hid them, adopted them, or changed their surnames and their officially-documented ethnicity.”

Even after the war, many Jewish people continued to face persecution under the Soviet Union and after its collapse in 1989, watched their savings disappear as the value of the Ukrainian currency plummeted.

Working alongside World Jewish Relief, Hesed Shaare Tikva provides holistic support to older Jewish people in Kharkov. From dementia education, home repairs, eye operation and home care visits, our programmes are carefully tailored to the needs of this generation. Viktoria’s deep knowledge and experience of helping vulnerable people is invaluable in ensuring that older Jews in Ukraine can live dignified lives.

**Valentine Mukamuyenzi**

Valentine Mukamuyenzi travelled to London from Rwanda to speak about her work with street children affected by genocide. In 1994 the Rwandan civil war culminated in a horrific genocide. Over the course of 100 days between 500,000 and one million people were murdered. Many of Valentine’s family were killed in the violence.

Streets Ahead Children’s Centre (SACCA) was established in 2003 to help thousands of orphaned children left to live on the streets as a result of the genocide. They became a World Jewish Relief partner in 2005 and over the last 15 years have helped 4,600 children to leave the streets and into safe homes or employment.

Valentine, a trained teacher, has been with the organization from the start, working her way up to become Director of SACCA in 2012. Determined to do as much as she could to help those in need, she went to university and gained an MBA in clinical psychology in order to better support children who have
experienced severe trauma.

“I have watched as kids I helped bring off the streets have grown up and become responsible and flourishing men and women with their own families.

I lost much of my family to the genocide, but through my leadership of SACCA, I have been blessed with more. The children call me mother and they come and talk or ask for advice. For many of them I am the only mother they have.”

Despite being one of the leading nations when it comes to female participation in the workforce and government, the challenges facing girls in Rwanda are still much greater than those facing boys. Traditional gender roles mean women and girls are expected to fulfill the majority of domestic tasks and opportunities for wider education are limited. A lack of family planning initiatives, including sex education and contraception, means there is a high number of unplanned teenage pregnancies which disrupts young women’s lives and their chances for education and meaningful employment. For Valentine and SACCA, the challenge is not only providing material support but also changing the young women’s mindsets and empowering them to gain employment.

“Our government has made gender equality a key part of their mission but it hasn’t filtered down to people in rural areas. According to traditional culture, girls are still expected to do most of the household duties like cooking, cleaning and looking after the children.”

World Jewish Relief worked with SACCA to create a programme which gives training and employment skills to young people. With this support, young people are able to get jobs in hospitality, construction and hairdressing both locally and in the capital Kigali. The transformation of these children’s lives and prospects is extraordinary. Not only do they have an income to support their families, but their confidence, self-esteem and mental health have also dramatically improved.

Kafa Al-Mighribi

Kafa is a participant on World Jewish Relief’s Specialist Training and Employment Programme (STEP) in Bradford, established in response to the refugee crisis. She fled her home in Syria with her husband and two young children and came to Britain on the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS).

Sitting in her home on the outskirts of Homs, Syria, Kafa could hear the sound of bombs falling. At first a distant reminder of the ongoing conflict until they grew closer and closer. Then her neighbour’s house was hit.

Kafa remembers how hard it was being a mother in a war zone. The children didn’t understand what was going on or why they couldn’t play outside. Food supplies became scarce and power and water shortages were common.

“Our lives were turned upside down. Suddenly there was bombing, shelling and fighting… My children couldn’t go to school. I couldn’t look after them properly. There was no peace or happiness.”

Kafa and her husband, whose mobility is limited by polio, decided to leave Syria for the sake of their children. After an exhausting journey they crossed the border into Jordan and tried their best to settle down and continue their lives. But without work they were relying on charity handouts and living in cramped conditions and Kafa clearly recalls the physical and emotional exhaustion.

“It was like a battle; you feel as though you are always fighting. We didn’t go out, we didn’t have family around. You’re just alone all the time.”

Kafa and her family got the chance to come to the UK three years ago. Despite having a degree in English Literature she struggled to find work. With support from our partners, Horton Housing Association, Kafa and her family settled in Bradford and she enrolled in World Jewish Relief’s Specialist Training and Employment Programme (STEP) where she received support in getting her degree and qualifications recognized in the UK, help in preparing job applications and interviews, and further training for qualifications in English, mathematics and interpreting.

“It was always a dream we would visit Europe. I never imagined we would come as refugees.”

Kafa has now found work as an interpreter and with our continued support has begun to make Britain her home.

“I hope my story can give my children the courage and power to look forward and achieve things for themselves and for others.”

Want to know more about Women of World Jewish Relief? Head over to worldjewishrelief.org/wowjr

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CONNECTING WOMEN, UNLEASHING POTENTIAL
I was privileged to go on one of World Jewish Relief’s trips with my mum and my brother Toby to Ukraine in October 2018 and it was full of memorable experiences.

We visited lots of projects, like a Wood Technology classroom in a Job Opportunity Centre where people get training to help them get jobs. We made wooden aeroplanes, a birdhouse and a car.

We also visited some of the older people World Jewish Relief support, where we saw a lot of poverty in terms of their poor housing, and also one lovely old lady who was so poor that she couldn’t even clean her dog!

The feelings I have coming off the trip are massive appreciation for the work that World Jewish Relief does around the world helping Jewish and non-Jewish people, putting them back on their feet when they need help the most, and that I feel really lucky to have the lifestyle that I do back home. I don’t now take good stuff for granted.

The trip was a very important part of my Bat Mitzvah year of self-discovery. One of the most touching things for me is that I have twinned my Bat Mitzvah with a 9-year-old girl called Vera Diskin who perished in a region of the Ukraine we visited on our trip before she had the chance to have a Bat Mitzvah celebration. I will try to carry the torch of Judaism on behalf of both of us as I reach adulthood.

If you are interested in learning about our Bar and Bat Mitzvah Programme, contact Sam Schryer sams@worldjewishrelief.org | 020 8736 1250

Jodi Deacon, aged 11, went on one of World Jewish Relief’s Bar and Bat Mitzvah Trips to Ukraine in October 2018. She told us about her experience and what she learned from the trip.

Life changing experiences...
Karina lives alone in Kharkov, Ukraine, in a small, dilapidated and cold home. Following the death of her husband has had a number of problems with her health. She walks with a stick, and suffers from cardiovascular problems. Although her son lives nearby, he has a family of his own to care for, and cannot provide much assistance to her. She is warm and welcoming and every week her son and three grandsons visit her for a meal.

However, her house has fallen into a state of disrepair since her husband died, and she cannot afford to pay for repairs herself. Women like Karina, who retired during the collapse of the Soviet Union, saw their already meagre pensions vastly devalued. The windows haven’t been updated since the house was built and are entirely ineffective to protect against the cold. With the help of World Jewish Relief, these will be replaced, the leaking ceiling will be fixed and the walls replastered. These repairs will make Karina’s house habitable again. She longs to have a home she is proud of, and most importantly, a place she can safely host her children and grandchildren.

“I was frustrated and felt that my situation would never change. Once my repairs are completed I look forward to living my last years in happiness and comfort again.”

"To find yourself with nothing in your later years is very disheartening and I felt completely hopeless."
Earth turned to liquid

by Mireille Flores
Humanitarian Programmes Manager

OUR EMERGENCY APPEALS ENABLE US TO REACH BEYOND THE COMMUNITY AT TIMES OF DEVASTATING GLOBAL DISASTER. WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI STRUCK INDONESIA IN SEPTEMBER, THE RESPONSE OF THE UK JEWISH COMMUNITY ALLOWED US TO PROVIDE VITAL AID AND ASSISTANCE TO THOSE MOST IN NEED, SAVING THOUSANDS OF LIVES.
I arrived in Palu city, Sulawesi, only a couple of weeks after the devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit Indonesia on 29 September 2018. The destruction and the trauma and fear in people’s eyes were the first things that struck me.

Many of the people I talked to were living in makeshift camps. They looked deeply saddened and traumatised – still in shock about what had happened. Similarly, my colleagues on the ground were teary eyed when they recounted what they had seen. The impact of the earthquake and the tsunami were so strong that the earth turned to liquid under their feet in a process called liquefaction. That was one of the most unsettling and incomprehensible things I have heard in my career as an aid worker.

The 7.4 magnitude earthquake also triggered a devastating tsunami that reached 18 feet in height, affecting the lives of approximately 1.5 million people. More than 200,000 people were displaced from the coastal areas and left homeless. They witnessed their community, livelihoods, and homes torn away in seconds. It felt impossible to me, as it did to the people I spoke to, that the land could reclaim such an expanse of development and swallow it up as though it had never existed. These areas are now considered mass graves.

The loss of life as a result of this disaster was huge, with a death toll of over 2,000 people and over 1,300 still missing. This is horrifying, but those numbers don’t tell us the full story - the story of those who lost their lives, their livelihoods and their communities in an instant. Despite the sheer horror they had experienced, the local response I saw was incredible. It was humbling and encouraging to see community organisations, local government teams, business people and neighbours coming together to help those in need. For example, one of the community leaders I met burst into tears as he recounted seeing his house collapse in front of him. He told me of his worries for his community and people he represents as well as his desire for helping his community to recover.

At the core of the response and rebuilding process after any disaster are women. Often left to care for survivors, make shelter and look after children, the societal pressures on these vulnerable women are vastly exacerbated after a disaster, as are the risks of disease and sexual violence. In the face of this, the women I met were vital to the early recovery and survival of their families and communities. As a woman this is something that makes me proud; women’s ability to rebuild their families and communities even when everything around them has collapsed never ceases to amaze me. The women I talked to had begun making their makeshift tents as safe as possible and as comfortable as they could; they had created support groups to organise themselves and serve each other as a support network; some of them had even set up very small shops in their tents. I am proud that we are able to help them in rebuilding their lives.

Thanks to the huge generosity of the Jewish community, we were able to begin alleviating some of the worst impacts of the disaster and help people meet their basic needs in the early stages of this disaster.

Together with our local partners who are regional disaster response specialists, we were able to distribute emergency kits to help over people without adequate shelter, ensuring they have protection from the elements. These kits provided tarpaulin, rope, blankets and mattresses and have benefited over 900 people so far. Similarly, as a result of listening to women’s needs on hygiene we were also able to supply 480 hygiene kits containing nappies, underwear, and menstrual products to ensure women and girls have dignity and prevent serious health risks.

It’s now been two months since we began our response and since then we have been able to help nearly 3,500 people begin to rebuild their lives. Although the scale and the challenge of reconstruction is huge, it is not impossible and we are working hard to ensure that we deliver what people need most.

It is only with your help, however, that this is possible. Thank you.
Tell us about you, your family and your story

I was born in Ukraine into a large and friendly Jewish family. When I was just one year old, World War 2 broke out. My father went to the front, and my mother made the tough decision to escape to safety with all five of us children to Kazakhstan. Thanks to the courage and determination of my mother, we survived despite all the hardships of evacuation: hunger, anxiety for our father, the daily struggle for survival. All of my family who remained in their homes in Korostyshev were shot. My earliest childhood memory is of my mother crying when news came from the front that my father had been killed in action. After the war, we returned to our ruined home and began to get used to life in peace. I trained as a teacher and was sent to work at a primary school in Western Ukraine, where I had to face brutal anti-Semitic abuse. Driven from my job in Ukraine, I then moved to Moldova. All my life I have tried to learn and to better myself. That’s why I turned back to academia. I graduated from the University of Chisinau and worked as a bibliographer for many years. Unfortunately, Moldova’s government began to close schools like ours that taught in Russian. I found that I was not needed by anyone; my experience and my professionalism were not wanted any more. Now I live alone, relying on my pension of £70 a month. My children have moved away – they have their own lives, their own families and their own problems.

What support do you need?

I’m not used to asking for help. I have always tried to get out of difficult situations on my own, relying on my own strength, wisdom and entrepreneurship. But my age and severe chronic diseases have forced me to limit my usual activities; I can no longer see my friends, lecture at the Kagul Jewish Community Centre in Chisinau, or host holiday celebrations. I used to love being a great hostess and exchanging kind words with old friends. Thanks to World Jewish Relief and Hesed Yehuda I can get help in buying my medicines and they bring me food packages twice a month. Even so, often I do not have the strength to cook a proper hot meal, or afford hearty and healthy food and this is really important for me because I live with diabetes.

Why is the canteen important?

All of these problems are alleviated by the Kagul canteen, which has become for us, the elderly, the poor, and the sick not only a source of food aid, but also a cultural centre; a meeting place to make friends, and the place we celebrate our Jewish ways of life.

What would you do without the support?

The Jewish community of Kagul is just 65 people and World Jewish Relief and Hesed Yehuda support us. I hear from my friends at the Centre who have to cope with problems of everyday life, buy expensive medicines, and wait for the sad outcome of their illnesses, because there is no money for vital surgery. Without your help, we would be on the brink of survival, forced to face extreme poverty and loneliness.

How did it change your life?

I feel like an intelligent, necessary, interesting person again. I can chat with friends and spend Jewish holidays with them. This is a programme where the heart is warmed. With the work of the programme I was given hope and desire to live life to the fullest.

What would you say to people in the UK who help you?

By helping us, the old and sick people living in a small town in the Republic of Moldova, you know that we will pass your gift on to everyone who needs our love and care. I will be able to give lectures again, prepare literary compositions for our community and to support my friends who find themselves in need of my help.

Thank you.
Olga lived with her mother Tamara and seven year old daughter Nastya, in Ukraine. She worked as a cardiologist but the family were forced to flee their home during the conflict in Crimea, leaving everything they had behind. Living in a refugee camp, they turned to World Jewish Relief to get help in rebuilding their lives. With psychological support, building confidence and learning new skills, Olga and Tamara both found new jobs. They can support young Nastya again, giving her hope for her future. Thanks to World Jewish Relief and gifts in Wills, the future looks brighter and they can escape poverty.

Gifts in Wills are critical to World Jewish Relief. We couldn’t achieve what we do without the invaluable support of those who want to leave a lasting legacy.

For more information about leaving a gift to World Jewish Relief in your Will and to find out about our Free Will service, please contact Richard Budden, Head of Individual Giving & Legacies on 020 8736 1255 / richardb@worldjewishrelief.org

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

Judit Beach
Ronald Jacobs
William Latimer
Betty Barnett
For Diana, Jenny is her lifeline. Jenny buys the groceries, cooks for her, makes the tea, washes and dresses her. She is also there to talk to as well as making sure Diana can take part in Jewish festivals.

Without Jenny, Diana just wouldn’t survive.

By sponsoring a homecare worker you are helping older Jewish people to live with dignity.

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Whether you’re looking to give a meaningful gift or celebrating yourself, why not mark a special occasion by giving some of the world’s most vulnerable Jewish people something to celebrate too?

For more information about Donate to Celebrate contact Richard Budden on 020 8736 1250 or richardb@worldjewishrelief.org

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WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

For every £1 we receive, 80p is spent on our life-changing projects supporting older Jewish people and those escaping poverty, primarily in Eastern Europe. We invest the other 20p to manage our income and to help raise the next pound.

To make a donation please visit worldjewishrelief.org