In this issue of Reach Out I want to demonstrate the change we make to peoples’ lives as well as talk candidly about the ongoing challenges that some of our beneficiaries face.

There are still approximately 900,000 Jews living in the Eastern Europe with 10% of this group being extremely vulnerable and needing assistance. The vast majority of them are older Jews living in Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Russia and Georgia and we have been their safety net for 20 years. Without us many would not be alive today.

This year we are on track to have repaired 1,440 homes for older people like Galina, whose story you can read on the next page, since 2015 which is a tremendous success. Thanks to our supporters, they can live safely in their own homes - but the responsibility doesn’t end there. Many of them still need assistance with food, medicines, heating bills and in tackling one of the hardest aspects of old age, loneliness. Our work must continue. If we don’t help them no one will.

We face similar challenges when we lead British Jewry’s response to international disasters. The Cyclone which hit Mozambique in March this year was nothing short of cataclysmic and our food, shelter and material distributions have already assisted nearly 20,000 people. The timeliness and targeting of our support to ensure we helped those hardest to reach was a real achievement but emergency aid just isn’t enough, so we are now planning recovery programmes to help families get back on their feet.

Five years ago we pledged to fundamentally change the face of poverty for the younger generation of Jewish people living in Eastern Europe. Our Back to Work programme has been a shining example of how we are achieving that. We have now helped 66,900 people in Ukraine and Moldova since 2015 with a staggering 78% getting a job on completing the course. The expertise we have developed through our livelihoods work in these countries has helped us develop successful programmes for people beyond the Jewish community who so desperately need our assistance. Everything we do has only been achievable because of the incredible support we receive from you.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

paul@worldjewishrelief.org
Battling Loneliness: Galina’s Story

FOR A LONG TIME GALINA FELT ENTIRELY ALONE, BUT THROUGH A SERIES OF SOCIAL AND WELFARE PROGRAMMES, WORLD JEWISH RELIEF IS HELPING HER START A NEW CHAPTER IN HER LIFE. DESPAIR AND LONELINESS ARE TERRIBLE FATES NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU LIVE BUT SIMPLE INTERVENTIONS CAN BE LIFE CHANGING.

When we went to visit Galina she was sitting alone in the dark and damp single basement room she occupies in Dnipro, Ukraine. She has lived here since she was six years old but whereas it was once a thriving Jewish area, she is now the only Jew left in the vicinity. Sadly, since the death of her son she spends her days entirely alone.

Galina told us that she sits in the courtyard outside her building for hours, in the hope someone might exchange a kind word or offer her a cup of tea. But although her home is surrounded by neighbours, they rarely interact with her.

Each week Galina makes a pot of borscht and meticulously rations it out so that it will last for every meal. If she doesn’t, she will go hungry because her meagre pension doesn’t stretch far enough to cover her heating bills, medicine and food.

For many of the older Jewish people that World Jewish Relief support across Eastern Europe there are a series of physical, medical and social needs to be addressed. For Galina that means providing vital repairs to her small flat to get rid of the damp, let in light and keep her safe and warm. At 76 years old she is still having to use a communal outdoor toilet.

We also supply essential medical equipment such as blood pressure monitors and new glasses which means Galina can actually see the notebook in which she transcribes her mother’s Yiddish songs. And we’ve persuaded Galina to join our ‘Warm Homes’ programme which brings together isolated older people for some much-needed company. We arrange the transport, and there is always traditional Ukrainian treats, as well as a craft session or interesting talk. It has transformed Galina’s life, rebuilding her confidence and self-esteem and helping her make friends for the first time in years.

“Invite me to any event, even the smallest one just invite me for the entertainment and distraction from my loneliness.”

“I’m grateful to everyone in the UK, thank you so much!” Galina told us. One of her new friends, Valentina commented: “When Galina first came to the warm home she sat apart in corner and didn’t speak to anyone. Now she is a completely different person.”

Without World Jewish Relief’s programmes and support, Galina would spend the rest of her life sitting alone in her damp basement room, with just her fading memories of lost family members. This year she knows that is no longer her future. She will be warm, safe, happy and able to spend her time with new friends.

Galina holding a photograph of her and her son
WHEN DASHA FOUND HERSELF HAVING TO START LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN IN A STRANGE PLACE WITH NO SUPPORT NETWORK, SHE DIDN’T KNOW HOW SHE WOULD SUPPORT HERSELF AND HER TWO YOUNG SONS ILYA, 10 AND YACOV, 8. THROUGH WORLD JEWISH RELIEF’S EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME SHE HAS BEEN GIVEN SKILLS, SUPPORT AND A RENEWED SENSE OF HOPE FOR THE FAMILY’S FUTURE.

Dasha’s dreams of raising her two young sons in the peaceful countryside outside of Donetsk in Eastern Ukraine were shattered when Russian separatists invaded in April 2014. Terrified for their safety, Dasha gathered a few belongings and the family fled, risking everything.

“People were running in the street and screaming,” remembers Dasha. “We grabbed our belongings as best we could. I seized my grandmother’s menorah as it’s very special to me. There was no time to withdraw money. Phone lines were cut. Everyone said just leave. We were lucky to get on the train before the line was destroyed.”

Boarding one of the last trains westwards out of Donetsk, the family did not know where they would sleep that night, or even if they would survive the journey. They had become refugees in their own country, heading into the unknown.

In the capital Kiev, Dasha struggled to find work despite having a law degree. With no money and no way to feed her children, Dasha’s only option was to register as an Internally Displaced Person (IDP), which meant relying on government for housing but having no control of where in the country they would be relocated to.

The family were sent to a small town but although they finally had a roof over her heads, they were several hours from a main city and sharing an apartment with two other IDP families. Dasha immediately began searching for work, but she faced constant rejection and prejudice - no one wanted to employ a refugee from Eastern Ukraine. “I kept hearing, no we won’t give you this job. You are from Donetsk. We don’t employ people from Donetsk.”

With nowhere to turn, Dasha felt...
increasingly dejected until she chanced upon a Facebook post promoting World Jewish Relief’s free employment courses in the area. Early last year she enrolled on a clothing repair course which has given her the ability to earn money and given her new hope and the opportunity to start planning for her future.

"It is very difficult to rely on charity... Although I am deeply grateful for everything I have been given, it’s natural to want your own things. Doing the sewing course was the first step in taking back control of my life. It gave me a future. And I am grateful for that."

"It was a lifeline and a comfort to be with people who had been through the same experience as me, and I enjoyed feeling that I could use my skills immediately. I started sewing for neighbours, retired and disabled people. It’s given me so much confidence," says Dasha gratefully, “Suddenly I felt supported. 24 hours a day, I felt part of a big Jewish family.”

The optimism and confidence Dasha has gained from her new sewing skills has helped her family start to settle into their new lives. Her aim is to one day move to Dnipro, the main city in her region which has the second largest Jewish community in Ukraine. She would like to give her children the opportunity to spend time at the Jewish Community Centre like she did when she was a teenager. For now she is focusing on raising her sons and growing her sewing business.

World Jewish Relief will continue to assist Dasha, running further training courses that will teach her to grow her business so that she can work towards a secure future for her young family.
Last year, we reached **92,807** people in **20** countries around the world.

In addition to our work in Eastern Europe supporting Jewish communities, we provided aid in the wake of three emergencies in the course of last year - the 7.1 magnitude earthquake that struck central Mexico, the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, and drastic food crisis in East Africa.

We are currently responding to disasters in Mozambique and Indonesia.
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AMELIA’S HOME AND LIVELIHOOD WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED IN THE WAKE OF THE DEVASTATING CYCLONE IDAI THAT HIT CENTRAL MOZAMBIQUE AT THE END OF APRIL THIS YEAR. WHEN I MET HER SHE WAS ALONE WITH HER FOUR CHILDREN, HAVING FLED THE RISING FLOODWATERS TO SURVIVE. THE IMPORTANCE OF EMERGENCY AID TO PEOPLE LIKE AMELIA CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.

“My house had fallen down completely and the area where I live is still covered in water” she told me. “I am sleeping in an area near my land where the water has gone down. I cook with a neighbour where the land is higher. We only have one cooking pot so we share it. There is no latrine in my whole community as this was also washed away.”

The UN estimates that over 1.8 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian aid following the cyclone, with 7 million square kilometres of farmland uprooted and destroyed. The need was compounded when a second cyclone struck the north of Mozambique mere weeks later. Cyclone Kenneth was the strongest cyclone ever to hit Africa, bringing gusts of wind up to 220 kph and tearing apart already fragile communities.

“When I went back to the house I saw all the destruction. There was nothing left.”

I arrived in Mozambique’s capital Maputo less than a week after the first cyclone hit, to start coordinating our response. With our local partner, I travelled to one of the worst affected areas, Nhamatanda, where I met Amelia and others like...
her. Everyone I spoke to was still in shock and despair at what had happened to them. Everyone told me they had never experienced anything like this disaster before and how it was the first time they had found themselves with absolutely nothing left. No houses, no livestock, no crops, no clothes and, in some cases, the loss of a family member or a friend. Amelia told me she still didn’t know where her husband was, she still didn’t know if he was alive.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of the Jewish community, we were able to initiate a rapid and lifesaving response. Your support has helped fund the delivery of essential items such as shelter kits, mosquito nets, cooking equipment and food packages. Dignity and hygiene kits have also been provided to female headed households including sanitary products and underwear. With such vast numbers of people having lost everything, these items are critical to protect health, dignity, and self-sufficiency.

By the end of May 2019, emergency aid packages had been given to over 19,000 people to help them survive in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

Where such enormous devastation has taken place, the immediate response to save lives, construct shelter and provide food is absolutely necessary. But the uncertainty people are filled with leaves them with little hope for the future. World Jewish Relief has always focused on the protection and development of sustainable livelihoods and that is no different to our work in Mozambique.

Together, with our local partner, we have started the implementation of an agricultural livelihoods recovery programme. This project will support 2,250 farming families to help get their crop production and smallholdings back in order so they can earn a living and ensure a sustainable source of food. We will supply seeds and equipment to enable them to rebuild their agricultural plots, teach them effective farming techniques, provide small animals and agricultural and veterinary assistance.

Communities and livelihoods were decimated by the twin cyclones, but thanks to your support they are beginning on the road to rehabilitation. There’s still a long way to go, but they know they are not alone.
A DIAGNOSIS OF DEMENTIA CAN SEEM WORLD SHATTERING.

Treatment is available on the NHS, local councils provide assistance with daily living and there are charities all over the country which offer extra support and help raise awareness. None of this negates the fact that dementia is a life-altering and ultimately terminal condition, but it means that people with dementia can live out their lives with comfort and dignity.

In Belarus, however, the situation is very different. The symptoms of dementia are often dismissed as a normal part of ageing, or as a sign of poor character. This means that people with dementia are ostracised by society and abandoned by their loved ones. Most people are not diagnosed until the late stages of the disease, and are likely to be admitted into residential institutions or hospitals, where residents share large, grey dormitories with poor facilities, have no freedom and nothing to do all day.

World Jewish Relief has been working in partnership with the Jewish welfare centre in Minsk, Hesed Rakhamim, to change this. We offer training to their staff, helping them to better support those living with dementia, and fund activity programmes for people with dementia and their relatives.

Living With Dementia: Svetlana’s Story
By Judith Fagelson, Older People Programmes Manager

For 80 year old Svetlana, these programmes have been life-changing. She lives alone, and when she was diagnosed with dementia, her only sister cut her off completely. She was left feeling isolated and depressed, losing her will to live. This all changed when she started attending group therapy sessions, which gave her a sense of purpose and allowed her to socialise in a safe and accepting environment. As her dementia has progressed and she is no longer able to attend group sessions, Hesed Rakhamim provides her with a one-to-one keyworker, funded and trained by World Jewish Relief, who visits her at home once a week to keep her company, provide therapy and help her take medications.

Programmes like these transform lives, but they can only reach a limited number of people. With this in mind, we have also been helping Hesed Rakhamim to change the system of dementia support in Belarus. With our support, the Hesed has been working tirelessly to put dementia on the government agenda.

The Hesed regularly trains staff from state welfare centres and residential facilities, and has become the local government’s go-to advisor on dementia-friendly services. The Hesed has also helped the Belarusian government develop a new training programme for student social workers and is now advising the regional state welfare centre on a new day centre for people with dementia.

Using our expertise, we want to ensure that all people with living with dementia in Belarus can lead full and meaningful lives.

1,500 people trained in dementia care since 2015
London Marathon

In May, six intrepid runners took on the London Marathon for World Jewish Relief, raising over £10,000. Next year - it could be you!

“I loved running with World Jewish Relief; I felt very supported and encouraged during the build-up towards the race, and really appreciated the opportunity of personalised coaching tips!

It was fun to be supported along the route, which definitely gave me an extra boost of energy when my legs were sore!”

- Leo Gundle, marathon runner 2019

FANCY THE CHALLENGE? SIGN UP NOW

Go to www.worldjewishrelief.org/marathon to register your interest for 2020 and secure your place now.

GIVE AS YOU SHOP!
Amazon donates 0.5% of the net purchase price of your shopping to us when you choose World Jewish Relief as your Amazon Smile charity. Go to www.smile.amazon.co.uk and select the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief as your chosen charity.
YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE

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.

worldjewishrelief.org/sponsor

DON’T FORGET ME

And don’t forget to leave a gift to World Jewish Relief in your Will

You can help end Jewish poverty

For more information about leaving a gift in your Will, or about our Free Will service, please contact:

Richard Budden
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020 8736 1250

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

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