

News from Tzedek

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Tzedek Approves Support for Six New Projects**by Will Schreiber**

Over the past few months, Tzedek's Overseas Projects Team has been working through the many outstanding project applications we have received to help the most vulnerable members of our global society. I am delighted to report that we have now approved support for six new development projects. As is typical of our partner base, the projects are spread across two continents (Africa and Asia) and run activities ranging from providing ex-prostitutes with vocational training to giving young people access to income-generating projects.

These new projects will directly benefit almost 1,100 individuals. Some of the highlights:

SIMLI AID, Ghana

Women continue to be one of the most discriminated groups in societies around the world. In Tamale, Ghana, things are no different and it is here that a new project is under way to train and educate rural women about their legal rights, in order to curtail domestic violence and help them know their rights on key issues such as inheritance laws.

VSS, India

Helping families get out of poverty takes a lot more than just giving out small micro-finance loans. VSS has taken an integrated approach by linking their activities to schools and other social bodies, ensuring that all loans are returned successfully by the beneficiaries. Tzedek is supporting this project in the delivery of training,



micro-finance, education, and reinforcement of cultural and community bonds.

MUSLIM FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICES, Ghana

Just like Tzedek, this organisation works regardless of religious beliefs to eradicate poverty from the community. The project aims to provide vocational training to young people who can no longer afford school fees and will assist the participants in finding work at the end of their course.

This is an exciting time for Tzedek and its Overseas Projects Team. Our biggest challenge at the moment is simply to keep up with all of the requests from our great partners and

applicants around the world. When we evaluate project applications and see how little it actually costs to make a profound and visible impact, it becomes only too obvious that a little truly does go a long way.

Because Tzedek works at the grass-roots level, our projects have a comparatively small cost compared to other organisations. In all of these projects the average cost of the support, per beneficiary, is only £33. That means that for the same price as going out for a decent meal in London, you could be putting an uneducated teenager through a six-month vocational training course, where a job is waiting for them at the end.

Contact Will at: will@tzedek.org

News in Brief

Two significant grants from the Samuel Sebba Foundation and Rothschild's Foundation Europe have enabled the appointment of Katie Hill as volunteer coordinator, starting in October. More details about Katie on Page 3.

In addition to Katie, Tzedek has appointed two more staff members to work on its projects in the UK and Ghana. Full details

about Peter Ndonwie and Yolande Kerbel also on Page 3.

David Bush has started working for Tzedek as a full-time intern. A former Geography student at Bristol University, David will be working on



Vikki Lawrence and Lauren Isaacs attempt to dry off after the Community Fun Run

fundraising in the UK office for six months and then with our partners in Ghana for six months. He will also be in Ghana to help with next year's volunteer programme.

Eight Tzedek volunteers have spent the summer in Tamale, northern Ghana, working with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the area. This year's programme was a great success and benefited from the guidance of Tzedek's new overseas coordinator. Read first-hand volunteer reports on Page 4.

Five Tzedek activists competed in the Community Fun Run at Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School in North London in late May. Running in torrential rain, they raised £150 for Tzedek. (see the picture, left)

We Are Together Thursday 26th June 2008, Trafalgar Square, London

by Lauren Isaacs

We Are Together is the award-winning film released earlier this year about the orphaned children from the Agape Children's Choir in South Africa.

At this special event, organised by Tzedek and South Africa Positive, the children gave their only public performance aside from Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday concert in Hyde Park. Anyone who had seen the film knew they were in for a treat, and they were not disappointed.

More than 100 guests attended the stunning South Africa House on Trafalgar Square to witness a few hours of outstanding talent. During the warm-up entertainment from South African singers Loyiso and Obita, the audience's attention was briefly drawn to the back of the room where the Children of Agape had been standing. Dancing freely, the children were lapping up the chance to see South Africa's rising stars less than 5 metres away. With smiles to match the



children's enthusiasm, it was clear that some of the audience wished they too could be part of a culture so naturally attuned to music and dance, even if for one night only.

After two great warm-up performances, it was time for the 14 stars of the night to take to the stage. From the moment the first note left their mouths, the audience were treated to a stunning set of African songs, sung from the hearts and souls of 14 children randomly discovered in an

orphanage in the countryside of South Africa. With a mix of solos, group singing, differently paced tunes and dancing, the Children of Agape exceeded expectations and finished to a richly deserved standing ovation.

The courage and triumph over adversity that the children represented shone through. With all proceeds from the evening going directly to the Agape orphanage, the evening was a true success and showed what faith, resilience and courage really can achieve.

Freshly Ground Thursday 19th June 2008, Shoreditch London

by Elana Goetz

In late June, Tzedek brought MTV award-winning South African band, FreshlyGround, to the UK for a fundraising event at Cargo, a live music venue in central London.

The event was sold out well in advance and certainly did not disappoint the expectant gig lovers. The night kicked off with support from DJ King Toby and the Freewheelers. FreshlyGround themselves were introduced by Dan



Berelowitz and the evening culminated with a phenomenal performance from the band. Their energy and passion had fans hooked from the very first note and everyone danced and listened to the unique sounds of this exceptional band.

This was a highly successful night, with a total of £3500 raised for the sustainable development projects that Tzedek supports. Once again thank you to everyone who took part in this event – without you it would not have been possible.

Global Village Tuesday 27th May 2008, Chalk Farm, London

by Baruch Solomon

Organised by Tzedek in conjunction with the Jewish Cultural Centre (JCC), this event aimed to get behind the scenes of a multinational corporation. On the panel was Samantha Maher of Labour Behind the Label, an organisation representing the rights of garment makers worldwide; Andy Rubin of Pentland Brands, an ethically aware sports and leisure company; and a representative of Impactt, which helps large clothing companies to improve their labour standards.

There is little dispute about the pitiful wages, unpleasant and dangerous working conditions and excessively long hours endured by many garment workers in countries like China, India and Indonesia. But how to respond to the challenge is another matter. Participants wanted to know exactly how to tackle these problems and how to persuade employers to act more ethically.

Difficulties came from the fact that there are so many stages in the supply chain that even retailers who want to source their goods ethically have a difficult job in

ensuring their suppliers also adopt ethical employment practices. Another issue is whether rigid enforcement of standards on the part of consumers might simply create deeper problems.

Is it right for example, to completely reject goods made by child labour, if the alternative is destitution for those making the garments?

There are no simple solutions to these moral dilemmas, but the Global Village event, and we hope there will be more in the series, certainly helped to uncover the key issues.

Fresh Faces at Tzedek

Tzedek has recruited three highly talented and experienced employees as its resources and operations continue to grow. Yolande Kerbel, Peter Ndonwie and Katie Hill are now working alongside Dan Berelowitz and Vikki Lawrence to help Tzedek reach ever more exciting goals. Joel Clark talks to them.



Yolande Kerbel started working as Tzedek's education projects worker at the beginning of September. Originally from Pretoria in

South Africa, Yolande replaces Benji Stanley, who left Tzedek earlier this year to pursue rabbinical training. Yolande brings a wealth of education experience and useful contacts to Tzedek's Jewish Global Citizenship Project and will work directly with Vikki Lawrence, the director of the project.

A qualified teacher and Ashdown fellow, Yolande has previously taught Jewish Studies at Hasmonean High School for Girls and City of London School for Girls. Having done a lot of curriculum writing in the past, Yolande jumped at the opportunity to work in a position that combines her expertise in education with social action. "It's so exciting that Tzedek is a Jewish organisation getting involved with developmental issues," she reflects, "it's important that there should be a strong Jewish voice in this area."

Yolande's responsibility at Tzedek will be to expand and consolidate the work that has already been achieved by the Jewish

Global Citizenship Project in the last year. She has been working hard on Tzedek's Succot educational pack that is now being used in many Jewish schools. "The message of the pack is to look at the idea that the Jewish people choose temporary housing in a Succah for seven days of the year," says Yolande, "but a fifth of the world's population have no such choice and we want pupils to be thinking about housing problems in that light."

Yolande first moved to the UK in 1994 and lives in Edgware, North London with her husband and five children



Peter Ndonwie was recruited earlier this year as Tzedek's first-ever overseas coordinator, based in Ghana. Peter, 40, was born in

Cameroon, West Africa, and has worked in a number of development roles in Cameroon, Israel and the UK. Peter completed an MSc in Humanitarian Studies at the School of Tropical Medicine in Liverpool in 2007 and then spent a year working for Oxfam and Plan International in the UK. Prior to moving

to the UK, his main role was national coordinator for African Community Development and Environmental Protection (ACDEP), a large Cameroonian development group.

Although not Jewish himself, Peter has previous experience of the Jewish world and spent four months at the Weitz Centre for Development Studies in Rehovot, Israel in 2003, studying for a postgraduate diploma in economic development.

Peter started working for Tzedek in the UK in March and moved out to Ghana two months later. Since then, he has

spent his time creating and strengthening Tzedek's links with the local organisations it supports as well as securing office and accommodation space for volunteers in Tamale, northern Ghana. He developed and coordinated this year's summer volunteer programme and believes that the volunteers have had a very valuable experience. "Tzedek has been active here for a long time, but the impact this year has been so much greater because of the resources we now have," he says. "The volunteers have worked very hard and they have done wonderful work for local organisations."



Katie Hill, 23, starts working for Tzedek in October as full-time volunteer coordinator, based in London. She will support the

many volunteers who work with Tzedek, making sure that their activities are as productive, meaningful and enjoyable as possible.

Born in Leicester, Katie studied Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Sussex, graduating in

2007, and has spent the last year working as part-time UK coordinator for Development in Action (DiA), a British organisation that aims to promote global citizenship by encouraging engagement in global issues among young people. As a former DiA volunteer, Katie spent four months in Udaipur, India in 2006, working with Seva Mandir, a local charity that supports illiterate women.

In addition to DiA, Katie has also been working part-time as projects coordinator for Brighton & Hove Volunteers, making her well-suited to the Tzedek role. "I'm very excited about the challenge," she tells Arevut. "I think it's really exciting to

work with a small Jewish organisation that is growing and evolving so rapidly."

Yolande, Peter and Katie can be contacted at

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katie@tzedek.org.uk

All other enquiries should, as usual, be directed to

info@tzedek.org.uk

Or call 0207 443 5121

Tzedek Volunteers Return from Ghana

This summer, for the fifth consecutive year, Tzedek organised a two-month volunteer programme in Ghana, West Africa. Under the professional guidance of overseas coordinator Peter Ndonwie, eight young people from the UK were given the invaluable opportunity of living and working in Tamale, capital of the northern region. Hosted by local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), they were able to make a small contribution to the local society, while also learning about development and the Jewish responsibility to help others. Writing from Ghana, the volunteers reflect on their experiences, with additional extracts taken from the group's online blog.

“I knew that coming to volunteer in Ghana would be an eye-opening experience, full of trials and tribulations, but nothing quite prepared me for the reality of it.

I've been teaching at Tamale's Morning Star International School for orphans. Most of my pupils, despite being between the ages of seven and eleven, cannot read or write. Founder Madam Cecilia has built the project up from six orphans studying in her garage to

today's successful school of 65 pupils.

The biggest challenges I've found in the teaching have come from the vast differences in capabilities. Half of my class can read perfectly, while the other half think that every word which begins with 'c' must be 'cat' and every word that begins with 'f' must be 'father'. I've found it virtually impossible to teach them all at the same time and during the summer school programme, I've tried to give them each a little bit of

individual attention, which they wouldn't otherwise get.

Despite the challenges, I've learnt a huge amount over the past month and a half and I've found there is nothing more rewarding than a child finally being able to read a sentence by themselves.”

–Sasha Maisel



“This is my last morning in Tamale. Looking back on my time here, I have so many memories and experiences to remember. What I'll miss the most will definitely be the people I've met.

Leaving school on Friday was a very emotional experience. Madam Cecilia presented us with cards signed by the children and new African dresses in matching print!”

–Jo Grainger

“After nearly two months working for an NGO here and seeing first-hand what they are up against, I began to feel a bit disillusioned about the benefits of small-scale development.

A number of larger, mainly economic challenges prevent poor countries from pulling themselves out of extreme poverty, so I sometimes felt we were working



in vain on small-scale projects when underlying issues, such as unfair trade, remain unresolved.

But when we talked as a group about the effects some of our NGOs have actually had, my views changed. These organisations achieve incredible things at a grass-roots level. They provide an education to orphans, teach vocational skills to girls who would otherwise be unemployed and ensure that Tamale, a town of 28,000 people, has a safe and reliable water supply.

Other projects run by NGOs across the world help countless numbers of people in similar ways. It is impossible to question their value.”

–Aron Lewis

MARK YOUR DIARIES..

...for the Tzedek Annual Public Meeting
(Incorporating the AGM)

In the Chair: Clive Lawton

This year we are fortunate to have Jothi Rama Lingam, director of Crusade, a long-standing Tzedek partner based in Tamil Nadu, as our guest speaker. Jothi will give us an insight into the realities of development work in India with funds raised by the UK Jewish community.

This year has been one of huge growth for Tzedek, increasing our income by a third and growing the Tzedek staff from just one to six people, including a permanent staff member based in Ghana. There will be a chance to discuss these developments and Tzedek's exciting future.

All are welcome.

Date: Sunday 12th October 2008
Time: 10am – 12 noon
Venue: London School of Jewish Studies,
44a Albert Road, London, NW4 2SJ

Issue 6

“At times over the last week the depth of the poverty out here has really hit me.

Most of the children come to school with no shoes, wearing dirty and torn clothes that do not fit them properly. Many schools lack basic furniture, such as tables and chairs. The village school where I teach every day has only benches; when the children write, they must kneel on the floor and lean on the benches. And then there are the children who often miss school when they have to look after their fathers' sheep for the day.

But there are so many good things as well. Today I watched the smiles on some of the children's faces as I helped them to write out the alphabet. And their enjoyment when I gave them pictures to colour in was touching. The work is challenging and the effect is slow, but I try to give the children love and attention on a simple level. I am enjoying every moment.”

–Pnina Nathan

“I am working for the Programme for Women and Children in Development (PROWACID), a very small NGO which is only four years old. PROWACID deals primarily with women's rights in the villages of Northern Ghana. Since starting here, I've realised just how difficult it is to be a woman in these small communities. The men feel that they have paid a substantial dowry for their wives, so there's no need to treat them as equals. There is also the crisis of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, which are very prevalent because of the lack of education and the stigma attached to them.”

–Abigail Miller



Mitzvah Day

Join Tzedek, in conjunction with the JCC, in helping to reduce the use of plastic bags by making special recycled wine bags.

You will have lots of fun making these practical gift bags and once you have made your own, help spread awareness of Tzedek projects by making bags which will be distributed through local wine shops.

Recycled activities are also available for children of all ages as well as fun and interactive games on fairness and activism.

Come and join in the fun!

Date: Sunday 16th November 2008
Time: 1.30 - 5pm
Venue: Hampstead Town Hall,
213 Haverstock Hill,
London, NW3 4QP



“On Monday, the brother of a girl in our school died; he was just 2½ years' old.

This little boy probably had a condition that was easy to cure, but because his family couldn't afford healthcare, he died. The people we have met here live in mud-huts that barely have running water, let alone electricity. They can't afford to go to state hospitals, where a consultation would cost just £5. I feel so

lucky to live in a country with a national health service, where whoever you are, you will be treated for free.”

–Dan Sommer

We have designed a micro-credit scheme to stimulate shea trading in the area.

The basic idea is that the villagers would get a loan in May, just before the shea harvest, with repayments due monthly from November to April. The loan should allow them to buy up shea when the price is low, without having to make repayments until November when the price is at its highest, thus maximising profits. According to their own estimates, they can realise a 200% profit in this way. Now we need to find funding for the scheme.”

–Sam Borin

Educating Jews on Global Citizenship

Education projects director Vikki Lawrence reflects on the challenges and impact of Tzedek's Jewish Global Citizenship project.



As one of the few Jewish educators to focus solely on international development, I was slightly apprehensive when I first started working on Tzedek's Jewish Global Citizenship project more than a year ago.

Along with our visionary volunteers who applied for funding from the Department for International Development, I knew that the benefits of this type of education for young people can be far-reaching. They gain a deeper understanding of their place in the world and their worth and power as individuals. But I worried about how our materials would be received in schools and youth movements. Would the community understand our issues and would they recognise the

importance of teaching young Jewish people about their role within our 'global village'?

The reaction so far has been mixed. We have been faced with some difficult challenges, in particular in getting our foot in the door at some schools and community organisations that don't really see this as a Jewish issue.

Jewish tradition is in fact full of laws and customs which encourage us to take responsibility for those outside of our own community. As our Rabbis taught: "Give food to the poor of the non-Jews along with the poor of Israel. Visit the sick of the non-Jews along with the sick of Israel. Bury the dead of the non-Jews along with the dead of Israel." (Gittin, 61a.)

Another challenge has been the concerns of educators that they are overstretched and trying to pack too much into their schedules. It's a common misconception that one would need to find more time to teach these topics. We do not need to see development education as an add-on. Our responsibility to learn and care about the world, as well as to act for social justice, threads throughout Jewish communal life, particularly for our young people; through the rich array of

Jewish festivals, their youth movement ideologies and their desire to learn leadership skills. This should be an integral part of the curriculum, not an after-thought.

But despite the challenges, the response has been encouraging among most of the educators I have met and there seems to be a real understanding of the importance of teaching young people about the world beyond their doorstep.

The most encouraging experience so far has come from the young participants themselves. They care deeply about the world. Learning about issues such as fair trade appeals to their natural sense of justice. Following on from these activities, they are left with a desire to do something positive, to speak out and act on related issues. One youth movement member said our activity had opened their eyes to the world.

As a charity which seeks to combat social injustice and inspire action, it is paramount that we work towards educating the Jewish community about their global community. This project is allowing us to make huge strides in achieving that aim. We hope that everyone who takes part will act socially because they are Jewish and not in spite of that fact.

Clive's Column



We Jews are a paradoxical lot, especially at this time of year. No sooner do we have a cycle of festi-

vals focussed on the universal than we all start behaving as Jewishly as we can. Jews who are fairly indifferent to other Jewish activities flock to shul on Kol Nidre night, get together with their families at Rosh Hashana and fast on Yom Kippur. Film stars and footballers who don't think anything of breaking every other rule in the book forego huge payouts to avoid doing their thing on Yom Kippur.

And yet, our tradition determined two millennia ago that these High Holydays should focus us on both our basic humanity and all of human-ity. The last reading from the Bible

on Yom Kippur is the Book of Jonah, where a Jew is sent to save a town full of non-Jews – and the only person who behaves badly in the whole story is the Jew! The rabbis decided that Rosh Hashana celebrated the birth of humanity; we've got other events to celebrate the birth of the Jewish people. The huge list of sins for which we make communal confession are mostly basic moral things, not technical Jewish behaviour like failing to keep kosher.

So what do we do? We huddle together in our shuls and families for more time than usual, doing Jewish stuff. And that's fine so long as it

Clive's Column - *continued*

makes us focus all the more on our universal responsibilities after the festivals are over. Jonah wasn't told to set off to help non-Jews on Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur, but he did have to go and help. Non-Jews are our business as well as Jews.

Some shuls do this in a very practical way, by naming Tzedek as one of the recipients of their High Holyday charity appeal. They rightly raise money for Jewish causes, but they share the money they raise with Tzedek too. (If your shul doesn't do so yet, find out why.)

Of course, it all seemed different to our grandparents and great-grandparents. They had their work cut out

to keep their own heads above water. Life was hard and Jewish needs were amongst the most pressing in the world, or at least the world they knew about.

But we haven't got the same excuses. We know about world poverty. We know the part we play in maintaining it, or at least not alleviating it.

The Chief Rabbi was invited by the worldwide convocation of Anglican bishops to give them insights into global responsibility. Whole synagogue movements have put the task of putting the world to rights, Tikkun Olam, at the very centre of their articulation of what it is to be a Jew today.

So I hope your festivals with your families and friends are lovely, full of reawakened memories, pleasure and enjoyable, inspiring services. But I hope too that they will serve as a springboard for us all to work still harder for justice in the whole world, not just by talking about it, but by changing our ways and giving some of our money and time to help, acting on our sense of responsibility.

Shana Tova – Happy New Year.

Clive A Lawton is chair of Tzedek's trustees

Director's Diary



In August I spent ten days in Tamale, Northern Ghana, visiting the eight Tzedek volunteers who worked there over the summer. I received excellent feedback from both the hosting organisations and the volunteers themselves. But when we talked about poverty, I was struck by the fact that several volunteers felt they hadn't really seen poverty on their placements.

In sub-Saharan Africa (not including South Africa), about 35% of people live on less than \$1 per day. Ghana, and its northern region in particular, is slightly poorer than average. There is no doubt that each volunteer had come into contact with people who live in extreme poverty, but why did they feel they hadn't actually seen poverty?

To answer that question, let's look at the life of 19-year-old Bakisu and her 5-year-old son Diau, two ordinary Ghanaians. Diau is a fiercely intelligent and inquisitive child who does very well at school. (In Ghana there is free primary education for all). His day starts with a cupful of water to wash, because Bakisu is determined that he will not wash in the local sewage-infested water. Then it's time for breakfast; scraps from last night's dinner of ground cassava, mixed with some water. Once Diau has gone to school, Bakisu walks into town, taking 1½ hours, to find work wherever she can. She is a bright woman, almost unfailingly cheerful, and is willing to accept any job that she can get to make sure that Diau has better chances than she had. When she can't find work she spends time chatting and joking with friends, just as any other young woman would.

Bakisu's parents died when she was very young and so she has no support network. Problems start when she is presented with impossible choices. Bakisu might get malaria and so can't work for two whole days. She could buy medicine that can cure her quickly, but this would mean that she will have no money left to buy food. She realises that she should have bought an anti-malarial mosquito net but has never had enough money to do so. She decides that as she can't make much

money, food is most important and so she starts to wash Diau in the local, unsafe water. With impossible choices like this, it's not surprising that average life expectancy in Ghana is just 46.

In the UK we are bombarded with images of sick-looking African children when Ghanaians like Bakisu are generally very cheerful people. Almost everyone in the street will have a smile for you and even the kids in rags bound around, dodging goats with energy. People might be earning barely enough to get by, but smiling makes it a little bit easier. Perhaps this is why some of our volunteers didn't immediately recognise the poverty in front of them.

In everything it does, Tzedek works to break this vicious poverty cycle. A small loan for Bakisu and some training will mean that she can save enough money not to be forced into making impossible choices. The vast majority of Jewish people in the UK will never have to make an impossible choice. It is our duty to make sure that our neighbours don't either.

Dan Berelowitz is executive director of Tzedek



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Account name: Tzedek. Account number: 16689. Sort code: 40-52-40.

Our ref:

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Thank you for your support

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Tzedek is...

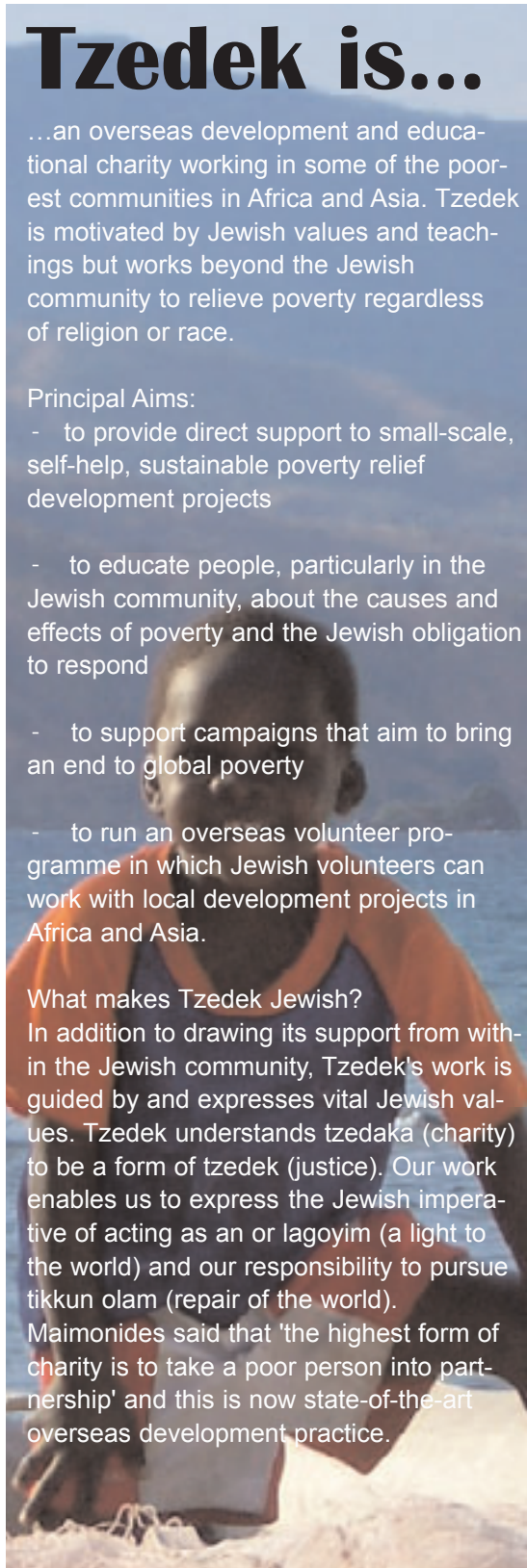
...an overseas development and educational charity working in some of the poorest communities in Africa and Asia. Tzedek is motivated by Jewish values and teachings but works beyond the Jewish community to relieve poverty regardless of religion or race.

Principal Aims:

- to provide direct support to small-scale, self-help, sustainable poverty relief development projects
- to educate people, particularly in the Jewish community, about the causes and effects of poverty and the Jewish obligation to respond
- to support campaigns that aim to bring an end to global poverty
- to run an overseas volunteer programme in which Jewish volunteers can work with local development projects in Africa and Asia.

What makes Tzedek Jewish?

In addition to drawing its support from within the Jewish community, Tzedek's work is guided by and expresses vital Jewish values. Tzedek understands tzedaka (charity) to be a form of tzedek (justice). Our work enables us to express the Jewish imperative of acting as an or lagoyim (a light to the world) and our responsibility to pursue tikkun olam (repair of the world). Maimonides said that 'the highest form of charity is to take a poor person into partnership' and this is now state-of-the-art overseas development practice.



If you would like to contribute or get involved in Arevut, please email: joelsclark@gmail.com


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DFID Department for International Development