

A Jewish Response to the DFID white paper

צדק צדק תרדוף

Justice, Justice you shall pursue (Deuteronomy 16:20)

Introduction

The UK Jewish community is increasing its support to international development. This paper identifies ways to work with DFID to translate our shared concerns into a positive programme of action.

This paper highlights:

1. Background on the UK Jewish community
2. Development education: Jewish schools, synagogues and youth movements
3. Development advocacy and campaigns
4. Development aid and emergency relief
5. An open offer to DFID
6. A request to DFID
7. Conclusion

This paper is written by *Tzedek: Jewish Action for a Just World* and The Pears Foundation with contributions from World Jewish Relief and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

1. Background

The Jewish community in the UK numbers approximately 300,000.

The exact level of global Jewish philanthropy to the poorest two and a half billion people who live on less than \$2 a day is the subject of current academic research. Indications from the British Jewish community are that such assistance has been historically limited both in absolute terms and relative to other Jewish communal spending priorities.

However, in recent years, there is evidence of an increasing number of Jewish people, particularly in the younger generation, seeking to play a greater part in international development efforts. These people are asking how they can contribute as global citizens acting through a Jewish prism and doing so because of their faith rather than in spite of it. These trends in the Jewish community appear to mirror trends in other faith communities.

This paper highlights some of the work of Jewish organizations and projects directed towards these aims and suggests practical ways for DFID and the Jewish community to work together.

2. Development Education and Awareness:

Engaging Jewish schools, synagogues and youth movements

The Jewish Global Citizenship Project (JGCP) is developed and managed by Tzedek and funded jointly by DFID and The Pears Foundation.

a) Nature of the JGCP

Tzedek are recipients of a grant for the JGCP from DFID's DAF fund, match funded by The Pears Foundation for £200,000 over three years.

The project aims to increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of sustainable development, global interdependence and the poverty reduction agenda in the Jewish community. The aim is to change attitudes and behaviour at an individual and communal level.

b) Impact of the JGCP

Tzedek has established and led a coalition of educators and education institutions across the UK Jewish community and built twinning links with partner communities in the developing world.

Main activities:

- developing curricula and resources for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 and working to embed these within the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship and Jewish Studies syllabuses and supporting other subject syllabuses;
- training teachers and youth leaders and supporting front-line deliverers;
- developing and delivering a theatre in education project in summer 2009;

The project is now having real success and impact reflecting a receptiveness of schools to tackle educational material that looks beyond the Jewish community at issues of social justice and development.

Ivan Lewis, Minister for DFID, will be visiting a Jewish school in June 2009 with representatives from The Pears Foundation to see the JGCP in action.

This project has enabled DFID to reach a part of the British community that it could not have reached without an organisational partner of faith.

We recommend that in all development awareness and educational work, faith is considered as instrumental to bringing DFID's messages to a wider audience.

3. Development campaigns and advocacy

Community Mobilisation.

Faith can play a key role in changing understanding and behavior. Our faith network allows us to exploit these opportunities for good. Recent examples include:

- a) Darfur campaign - The campaign was launched with the publication of a booklet 'Darfur: A Jewish Response' at the 2007 Board of Deputies dinner in the presence of The Prime Minister and Sarah Brown. At the last three Darfur rally's, over 50% of the participants have been Jewish, standing alongside other human rights campaigners and refugees from Darfur. These people were mobilized through their synagogues and youth movements.

- b) Fairtrade campaign – The Jewish community has developed a comprehensive booklet on Fairtrade from the Jewish perspective that includes activities for schools, youth movements and synagogues. The aim of the campaign is to encourage all Jewish establishments to be Fairtrade by 2010.

4. Development Aid and Emergency Relief

There are few Jewish people living in the developing world, and consequently, we are less able to take advantage of faith networks as Christian and Muslim organisations can. However we can and do contribute in other ways.

Examples of Development aid and emergency relief from the UK Jewish organisations include:

Tzedek

Since Tzedek's creation they have invested over half a million pounds in over 50 small scale, grass roots development organisations mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian sub-continent.

World Jewish Relief (WJR)

In 2008-09 WJR spent £1.7 million on international humanitarian, chronic welfare and community development projects in thirteen countries including Rwanda, Ukraine, Moldova and Zimbabwe.

The bulk of WJR's programming supports vulnerable Jewish isolated older persons or families with "children at risk" within the Former Soviet Union. Utilising a range of innovative interventions (ie cash based), these programmes seek to tackle both the short and long term needs of clients.

In Moldova, for example, WJR is establishing a vocational training programme for vulnerable single mothers based in Kishinev.

WJR works with partners to provide a acceptable old age for some of Zimbabwe's most destitute citizens as well as supporting children from families living with HIV/AIDS.

In Rwanda, WJR is working with its local partner association to develop an integrated, community based prevention of family-child separation in Eastern Province. This project aims to prevent children from leaving home and becoming street children rather than waiting for children to arrive on the streets before working with them.

WJR's unique Gifts in Kind programme sends much needed new clothing and household items to vulnerable people across the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, allowing scarce family budgets to focus on nutrition, health and utility bills. This initiative continues to mobilise a significant element of the UK Jewish community in a tangible "hands-on" means of engagement with vulnerable communities.

At times of major international disaster, WJR's appeal and support mechanism enable the organisation to partner with local and international humanitarian actors to meet both immediate emergency and rehabilitation needs. In recent years, WJR has responded to events in Iran, Sri Lanka, Burma, Bangladesh, Georgia, Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. WJR's Pakistan Kashmir earthquake appeal of 2005 raised over £200,000. These appeals have been a remarkable entry point for the UK Jewish Community to begin to engage in supporting contexts that they might traditionally have ignored.

In times of international disaster the Jewish community, including the other organisations mentioned in this document, cooperate by channeling money through WJR.

The earthquake that hit NWFP and Kashmir (Pakistan) in 2005 killed over 73,000 people, orphaned 17,000 children and left 3.5 million without shelter.

WJR's support provided assistance to six projects and over 22,000 individuals. WJR's support for Maqsood Welfare Foundation provided not only assistance to families needing to rebuild their homes but also an opportunity for people in a deprived region to gain a new perspective on life. An unintended consequence of WJR's mandate to help individuals and communities regardless of faith or ethnicity, in this situation, was that thousands of Pakistanis saw Jews in Britain reaching out to help because they should, and because they could.

Pears Foundation

The Pears Foundation invests approximately £1,000,000 per annum in international development causes including:

ActionAid: support for the core costs of ActionAid's office in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Afrikids : core support for community based development in Northern Ghana

Pears Scholars: annual scholarships in public health and plant sciences for 10 scholars from the developing world.

Plan UK: support for a teacher training and school building programme in partnership with the Government of Honduras.

Tel Aviv University: Academic research programme on 'Faith and International Development' aimed at increasing Jewish and Israeli participation in international development efforts.

Tzevetz: core funding for Jewish volunteering initiatives in Nepal and Ethiopia

Tzedek: core funding and discounted office space

5. An open offer to DFID

Examples of possible areas of collaboration :

Campaigns : Mobilisation of the Jewish community, for example, in support of a DFID '0.7%' campaign.

Projects : Creation of a new National Prize: To work with DFID to promote an Inter-faith prize to recognize the most engaged faith students and enable them to visit DFID projects. This could help create 'Young Champions of development' within faith groups and promote interfaith action.

Bi-lateral relations : Help DFID build links with MASHAV, Israel's international development agency.

Conference : To contribute Jewish participation to events and conferences on the relationship of 'faith and International Development'.

6. Requests to DFID

Advocacy: DFID encouraging Jewish involvement in international development by:

- a) Putting it on the agenda at official and un-official meetings between Ministers and communal representatives.
- b) Ministers being informed and referring to Jewish involvement in International Development as appropriate in speeches and articles.
- c) Considering Faith as a key criteria across the board when DFID makes funding decisions and allocating some DFID funds to faith communities, acknowledging their unique position to reach and influence their community in the promotion and support of Britain's DFID work.

Funding for Jewish volunteer placements : Along similar lines to DFID's 2008 commitment to Christian and Muslim communities to support volunteering in the Platform 2 programme. .

7. Conclusion

DFID's engagement with the British Jewish community has historically been limited but positive. We admire and congratulate DFID on their work and request that they continue to support the Jewish community in their efforts to raise the agenda of international development and make its contribution to ending extreme poverty.

Contributors

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Appendices

Jewish Guide to Fairtrade booklet
Darfur: A Jewish Response

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