

# News from Tzedek

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Welcome to Issue 7 of Arevut - this update edition fills you in on all the latest developments at Tzedek. As you will see, there has never been a more exciting time to get involved in

Tzedek's work – turn over to see some of the fantastic volunteer opportunities available. The full 8-page Arevut will return just before Pesach. Happy Chanukah!

## A glimpse of the work Tzedek supports in India

In early 2008 Tzedek began to fund a new project in Hindupur, India: Relief Organisation for the Handicapped (ROH). ROH requested assistance in providing disabled members of their community with income generation skills and micro-credit financing, allowing them to create sustainable businesses and reduce their dependency on external parties.

Tzedek was asked to support self-help groups in the area so that they could provide training and then make a grant to be used as a revolving fund for business development activities. The grant is provided to one individual at a time and then returned to the group to be given to another. While the loan is out, the other members of the group assist the recipient and help to establish the new project.

One of the beneficiaries, Mr Bhaskar, is a 24-year-old man who contracted polio at the



ROH meeting in progress

age of seven, resulting in the deformation of both of his legs. After dropping out of school, he picked up the trade of sari weaving and worked for a small shop that did not earn him a large enough income to support his family. Since becoming part of ROH and the Tzedek economic development programme, Mr

Bhaskar has been given training in enterprise management, support from others in similar situations, and a kick-start loan that has enabled him to establish his own business where his income has risen from 50 rupees to 80 rupees (approximately £1) per day. Additionally, he has been medically certified and the government is now providing him with a small pension and a tricycle.

Mr Bhaskar's story is just one of ROH's successes. So far, the project has enabled 40 individuals from eight self-help groups to start their own small enterprises and 60% of project participants have been medically certified to receive government aid. Over the next two years many more will be able to benefit as a result of the partnership with ROH and the grants that Tzedek has been able to provide.

Will Schreiber

## News in brief

Hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers came together in Hampstead Town Hall in November to help Tzedek take part in Mitzvah Day. Projects included toy swaps, a mammoth packathon and workshops on social action issues. With an emphasis on recycling, Tzedek's table in the main hall was packed with people creating colourful chanukiot from wood and bottle-tops, and wine bags from newspapers.

Following Tzedek's very successful 2008 volunteer programme in Tamale, Northern Ghana, the volunteer programmes team (VPT) is busy planning next year's programme. Overseas coordinator Peter

Ndonwie is building strong, durable links with local organisations in Tamale. In 2009, the returned volunteers will join a 'track' of Tzedek - the overseas projects team (OPT), VPT, Events & Fundraising, PR & Communications or Education & Campaigns. They will be required to contribute to Tzedek's work in one of those streams over the following ten months.

Tzedek's executive board has approved a second grant to Pinyin Sustainable Farming System (PISUFAS), a project in Bamenda, Cameroon that helps farmers to increase their yields. The new grant will enable education on organic farming techniques which the farmers can use to reduce their costs and increase production.

Tzedek participated in this year's Marcus Fielding Maccabi GB Inter-Charity Bowling Competition. 20 Jewish charities participated, including CST, UJIA, Norwood and Jewish Care. A Jewish Social Action Hub team, including participants from Tzedek and RenéCassin, came in 13th place!

Tzedek has partnered with Fairtrade chocolate supplier Divine Chocolate to raise awareness of unfair trade laws. Divine now produce kosher Fairtrade chocolate and they have kindly donated a batch to Tzedek for campaigning and fundraising purposes. Tzedek's Chanukah appeal includes two Divine chocolate coins.

Mazel Tov to Tzedek director Dan Berelowitz on his marriage to Sarah Myers.

## Catch Tzedek at Limmud!

If you're reading this newsletter at Limmud Conference, or are planning to go to Limmud, be sure to attend the following sessions, in which Tzedek representatives will be speaking...

**Jews in the Wilderness: Volunteering Abroad Monday 29th December, 19:00-20:10**

What role can and should Jewish people play in the global community? Whether it's in Africa, India or anywhere else, more and more Jewish people are giving their time and energy to help others in the developing

world. Presenters Katie Hill (Tzedek Volunteer Coordinator), Howard Brodie and Fiona Brodie, in association with Tzedek, come together to discuss the possibilities, problems and promise of overseas volunteering.

**Not Fairtrade? Not kosher! Tuesday 30th December, 15:30-16:40**

Hannah Wesifeld and Rafi Zarum, in association with the JCC and Tzedek, come together to push the boundaries of what it is to be kosher. Discussing trade justice and Jewish thought, they ask: In the 21st Century, if it's not Fairtrade, can it really be kosher?

**How to end poverty: a Muslim, a Christian and a Jew discuss aid, trade and**

**corruption Tuesday 30th December, 19:00-20:10**

Chaired by Clive Lawton and featuring Hannah Weisfeld (JCC), Nigel Varndell (Christian Aid) and a representative from Islamic Relief, the panel will discuss whether the three faiths can work together to help relieve the plight of those living in extreme poverty.

For the younger generation, Tzedek will be facilitating three Young Limmud sessions: **Sunday 28th December, 15.10-16.10** – for school years 3-4; **Monday 29th December, 11.00-12.10** – for school years 5-6; **Monday 29th December, 15.30-16.45** – for school years 7-8.

## Volunteer with Tzedek and make a difference

2009 is the year of the ox in Chinese astrology. I didn't think that was particularly relevant to Tzedek's work, but then I read this about the ox: "The ox is steadfast and solid, taking a step-by-step approach and never losing its goal. The ox is ready to act with justice and has a strong sense of morality."

When I came across this, it really made me think about Tzedek and the work of its volunteers. Tzedek is about social justice and acting on behalf of those less for-

tunate. Tzedek's volunteers are solid, steadfast and never lose sight of their goal. It is a community that is growing and uniting more and more every day.

What more worthy counterpart than the ox, and what more relevant time to get involved than 2009? Tzedek is growing rapidly and the work being done is reaching further every day. Now more than ever, Tzedek needs volunteers to lead the way in campaigning, fundraising, educating, event-planning, assessing



grant applications and editing our newsletter.

Act for social justice and join Tzedek's community of volunteers. Your work will make a huge difference. Contact me about any of the opportunities listed here, or to talk about other avenues where your enthusiasm can be channelled. **Katie Hill is Tzedek's volunteer coordinator and can be contacted at [katie@tzedek.org.uk](mailto:katie@tzedek.org.uk)**

## Clive's column

Chanukah is an easy festival: it makes few demands on us and it looks pretty. Both children and even adults love it. All Chanukah asks is that you recognise that making a little go a long way is a miracle, but that not starting is not an option. It just calls upon you to be generous and think about giving gifts. It makes the simple point that if Jews don't light a flame and go on adding to it then who are we waiting for?

The story is simple too. Against apparently insurmountable odds, a small group of Jews decided that it was unacceptable to have the spirit crushed out of them. Oppression and deprivation required robust action even if they couldn't see how it would all end. This small band did not listen to the 'realistic' voices around them, telling them they couldn't do anything and leave it to the powers-that-be. Instead they asserted that when something cries out to be done, there is no choice but to do it.

I can't really see any connection with Tzedek and world poverty there, so you can relax. The challenge is too big and we're too small.

The credit crunch and the financial crisis means we'll probably have to cut back our present-giving a bit this year anyway. Be a bit more sensible. So why not start by cutting back on the world's poorest?

Happy Chanukah, Enjoy!  
**Clive A Lawton is chair of Tzedek's trustees**

## David Bush, Tzedek's intern, writes about his experiences so far

I'm three months into the graduate intern programme and have already gained insight into the international development sector and learnt a great deal. I've looked at financial predictions, budgeting, communications, PR strategy, securing funds and NGO management. The programme involves working with people and organisations

across the development sector and throughout the Jewish community. From March I'll spend six months in Ghana, working with local projects and gaining insight into the potential successes that Tzedek and our partners can achieve. I would recommend the internship to anyone who is interested and committed to social change and sustainable development.



**Tzedek** Opportunities in **Ghana**, sharing skills with **sustainable, self-help** development projects

Jewish action for a just world

...**Volunteer Abroad!**

Tzedek are looking for motivated, independent and enthusiastic volunteers who want to learn about and work with grass-roots organisations for eight weeks in summer 2009 and then make a difference from the UK when they get home.

Visit [www.tzedek.org.uk](http://www.tzedek.org.uk) or call us on 020 7443 5121

Deadline for applications **March 09**

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### Tzedek runs the Half-Marathon

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to run 13 miles and raise the profile of Tzedek's work with some of the world's poorest throughout Asia and Africa! Sunday 15th March Silverstone Race Track.

### Tzedek runs the Maccabi Community Fun Run

Tzedek is an official partner in the fun run and we're looking for an enthusiastic team to run 5k or 10k. Last year was great fun, and we hope to have a bigger and better team this

year! Sunday 24th May, Haberdashers' Aske's Boys School

### Black Gold

On Monday 2nd March join Tzedek and the JCC during Fairtrade Fortnight for a screening of Black Gold. Q&A afterwards with Ian Bretman, deputy director of the Fairtrade Foundation

*If you think you're up for any of the challenges, contact Katie Hill ([katie@tzedek.org.uk](mailto:katie@tzedek.org.uk)) for an entry form and advice on training and sponsorship.*

**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. To donate to our valuable work, please send a cheque

payable to Tzedek to the office, or visit our website.

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