



The Together Plan is a UK charity dedicated to the rehabilitation, repair and revival of Jewish communities coming out of collective trauma in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

A charity that is enabling, rather than providing, through a self-help approach.

For Jews living in the former Soviet Union today, many fail to understand ‘community’ and its benefits, since it was quite literally deconstructed and eroded during the communist years. Yet in spite of the traumatic past, there are many with a yearning to reconnect with their lost identity. ***It is the mission of The Together Plan charity, not only to help those Jews still living in the region learn how to rebuild their communities, but also to reconnect those in the diaspora to their ancestry and the homes they left behind.*** The Together Plan is playing a vital and much needed role in the repair and renewal process for a better connected and meaningful Jewish future for Jews everywhere.

background to the together plan

The Together Plan was founded by Artur Livshyts (Belarusian, Jewish and resident in Minsk) with almost 20 years’ experience in Belarusian Jewish organisations, and Debra Brunner (British, Jewish and London based) who has over 20 years’ experience in the charity sector and has had connection to Belarusian Jewish communities since 2008. The Together Plan works in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, winning hearts and minds in order to help communities help themselves.

The majority of Jews in Belarus do not have opportunities to approach their Judaism in any way that would be accessible and not be construed as overwhelming for them. Many identify as Jews based on their eligibility for free handouts or some form of financial benefit/subsidy. **In no way does this system grow community or enable people to identify with Judaism.**

For those Jews who chose not to make Aliyah, or leave Belarus for other countries, there has been very little to support and guide them. They have had little to help them to revive community and restore what they lost through Communism and years of oppression. Jewish organisations who have been working in the region since the fall of Communism, have developed a model that has perpetuated need.

Jewish people in Belarus are disenfranchised and want change. Helping them to work towards change is the work that The Together Plan is doing, and it is a challenging process. The journey for Jewish people, who have lived through and are emerging from the darkest period of history in the 20th century, is complex. There is collective trauma. There is an ingrained mentality not to challenge and just accept, and they don’t trust easily.

What The Together Plan is doing is hand holding, guiding, teaching and supporting. Helping people collectively understand where they are, who they are, and what they themselves have the capacity to initiate and take ownership of. The charity places the community firmly at the centre of positive change. Rehabilitation, restoration, revival.

The Together Plan helps Jewish people collectively recognise the problems and supports them on a new development path. We go on this journey together. We help to rehabilitate, repair and revive communities in a way that they did not know was possible. This approach is giving people freedom of choice over their projects, and we work with them to help them develop and manage their communities. Projects on heritage, youth development and Jewish education are the tools which are facilitating change. The process and the outcomes to date have been transformative and The Together Plan continues to seek support to enable them to do more, and to develop their programmes so that they are able to reach more people and support more communities.

Some of The Together Plan's 2018 highlights:

Concluded a four-year project translating from Russian to English, '[We Remember, Lest the World Forget](#)' a book of memories of survivors of The Minsk Ghetto. The Together Plan works with the community of survivors (and their families) many of whom still live in Minsk to this very day. There was an official launch in Belarus hosted by the British Embassy in October and a UK launch hosted by the Belarus Embassy in London in November.

Debra Brunner, CEO, spoke at a round table conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Minsk in October, in support of the need for Holocaust education in Belarus.

Featured on [i24News](#) in Israel to discuss the [restoration project of the Great Synagogue in Slonim](#) Belarus, one of the oldest baroque buildings in the country. The Together Plan is acting as consultants to this Jewish heritage restoration campaign.

Planned and ran a Jewish youth symposium in Belarus called [Zoymen](#) (Yiddish: seed) with 40 participants.

Facilitated the [first bar mitzvah of a Belarusian](#) on the territory of the the Great Synagogue of Slonim for over 75 years.

Continued to work with the Polotsk and Slutsk Jewish communities, and facilitated '[Mitzvah Day](#)' in Polotsk, Slutsk, Mogilev, Minsk and Slonim.

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