

TIKVA Summer Update



Summer 2025



TIKVAUK
A HOME FOR HOPE

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Tikva provides a warm, compassionate home, essential social services and a quality education, and until recently was committed to revitalising the growing Jewish community in Odessa. However, in the wake of war, our scope has broadened significantly. We've undertaken the monumental task of rescuing both children and elderly individuals from the ravages of the conflict in Ukraine, while simultaneously providing ongoing care for those left behind. Our work also includes the support of our refugees in Bucharest and the continued care of our alumni in Israel. The future remains uncertain.



ABOUT TIKVA

1996 – FEB 2022

The only safe home for abandoned and abused Jewish children

Infants' Home
(newborn to six years old)

Boys' Home
(Seven – 17 years old)

Girls' Home
(Seven – 17 years old)

University Dorms
(18-22 years old)



Educating the wider community for over 900 children

Kindergarten
Elementary School
Boys' School
Girls' School
Primary school
Technical School
University



2024 – PRESENT

Evacuated over 4,700 people from war torn Ukraine, including children, alumni community the wider community and others.

A thriving Jewish Community of over 3,000 with:

Synagogue

Mikvah

Kosher Shop

Kosher Restaurant

Communal Shabbats

Communal Festivals

Elderly Feeding Programme

Elderly Support and Social Programme

Youth Programme

Newspaper



AND MUCH MORE

Caring for just under **1,100** people in Romania

Supporting **1,250** elderly and **200 school children** and their families who have remained in Odessa.

Preparing and serving **6,100** hot kosher meals daily across Odessa and Romania

Providing **2,500** hot meal weekly for the elderly in Ukraine

Providing an education during war time in both Odessa and Romania for over **670 children**

Monthly evacuations from Ukraine

Supported **1,015** individuals in making Aliyah

A MESSAGE FROM KAREN BODENSTEIN

CEO, TIKVA UK



As we mark three years since the war began, the Tikva community continues to stand as a beacon of resilience, unwavering in our commitment to those affected by crisis and displacement. Yet, as we look to the year ahead, uncertainty looms over our ability to return to the places that need us most. Still, our mission remains steadfast—to provide aid, hope, and opportunity to those facing unimaginable hardships.

From Israel to Odessa, Romania to the vast expanse of Europe, Tikva's impact extends across borders, ensuring that Jewish families and individuals receive the support they need to rebuild their lives. Guided by the principles of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), our efforts have evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of those who depend on us.

In Israel, Tikva continues to assist its alumni, many of whom have made Aliyah and are striving to establish stable, fulfilling lives. Providing essential refuge, psychological support, and basic necessities, we remain a lifeline for those navigating the complexities of conflict and integration.

In Odessa, the situation remains dire. The city endures relentless bombings, and the disruptions of daily life persist. While our ability to return this year remains uncertain, our dedication to Odessa's most vulnerable never wavers. Despite the challenges, Tikva continues to provide essential supplies, psychological support, and a sense of stability to the children and families who depend on us. For many, Tikva is more than just an organisation—it is home, a source of unwavering care, and a promise that they are not forgotten.

Across Europe, Tikva operates the largest displaced persons camp, serving as a refuge for those who have lost everything. War and persecution have uprooted countless individuals, yet within our camps, they find a community that offers not only shelter but also hope. Our mission transcends physical survival; we strive to restore dignity, belonging, and a sense of purpose to those who have been torn from their homes.

In Romania, Tikva's employment program has become a transformative force. Recognising the importance of self-sufficiency and empowerment, we have created opportunities for adult refugees to gain employment, reducing their reliance on food aid and restoring a profound sense of dignity. By offering vocational training, job placement, and professional development, we are helping individuals take control of their futures, allowing them to provide for their families with pride and stability.

For the children in our care, education and psychological support are at the core of our mission. Many have endured trauma beyond comprehension, yet through our comprehensive programs, we equip them with the tools to heal, grow, and dream again. Our goal is not only to provide them with a safe space but to empower them with knowledge, resilience, and the belief that a brighter future is within reach.

As we navigate an uncertain future, our determination remains stronger than ever. Whether we are able to return this year or not, Tikva's spirit of compassion, solidarity, and action will endure. Together, we will remain a beacon of light in the darkness, bringing warmth and comfort to those seeking renewal and a second chance at life.

From the depths of our collective heart, we thank you for standing with us. Your support is not just an investment in Tikva; it is an investment in humanity, in resilience, and in a world where kindness prevails over despair. With your help, we will continue to uplift, empower, and transform lives—no matter the challenges that lie ahead.

KAREN BODENSTEIN
CEO, TIKVA UK



TIKVA BUCHAREST: MAPPED OUT!



A STORY OF HOPE AND RESILIENCE

This is the story of Liliya (Leia) and Vladislav (Moishe) from Kyiv, Ukraine.

When the war broke out in 2022, like much of Ukraine, Liliya and Vladislav woke up to sounds of explosions, where shock and panic immediately set in. No more than a few hours later, Liliya, Vladislav, and their two young children were cut off from Kyiv, where their food and vital supplies came from. At first, they had hoped the situation would be resolved in a few days, and so they decided to wait. At the time, they didn't realise just how big a mistake this was.

"The first week was consumed by fear. Our hearts raced, hoping for some semblance of normality to return soon. The constant sounds of shelling and the noise of fighter jets surrounded us. We began buying food from every available source in the area, as people started stockpiling supplies, uncertain of what the future might hold. We searched tirelessly for nappies and formula for our daughter in local and neighbouring areas, but these essential items were in limited supply and almost impossible to find."

By the end of the first week, their village was nearly surrounded by Russian soldiers. For four days, they were left without any communication— with Vladislav recalling "our telephone connection, electricity, and water were all cut off."

Vladislav shares "during this time, we sought refuge in basements, carrying our small children in our arms. We spoke to those few who remained in the village, desperately searching for a way out, knowing that the soldiers could arrive at any moment."

Fortunately, after a few days of this nightmare, through the help of Tikva they discovered a relatively safe route and managed to leave the area, seeking refuge in another region.

Returning to Kyiv was not an option – there was simply no road leading there.

In April, Liliya and Vladislav were finally able to return to their neighbourhood near Odessa. Life slowly resumed, and they did their best to adapt to

the new reality of living in a warzone, trying to adjust to the constant anxiety and worry.

Liliya shares, "through Tikva, we not only met people who would soon become like a second family to us, but we also discovered something far more profound. We were introduced to a world where kindness, care, and selflessness thrive. We came to experience a place where there is no room for evil or hostility, only peace, tranquillity, and love. In the darkness of our circumstances, Tikva became our guiding light."

Today, their children attend the Tikva kindergarten in Odessa and are receiving an education. Liliya and Vladislav can now work and contribute to daily life, surrounded by their Tikva Family.

"For all that we've experienced, for our journey, and for the community that has embraced us, we want to express our deep gratitude to Hashem and the leadership of Tikva. In just two and a half years, we have come a long way, and in that time, we have lived a life full of meaning and growth alongside Tikva." – Liliya and Vladislav.



EDUCATION IN BOMB SHELTERS

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

In a world where the classroom is typically a place of safety and stability, students and teachers in war-torn areas have had to adapt to an entirely new reality, learning in bomb shelters. Despite the hardships, we see that resilience, hope, and an unwavering commitment to education shine through.

Elena Yurievna, a dedicated teacher, describes the makeshift learning environment: “Our bomb shelter is a basement room that we have equipped as a classroom. We have tables, chairs, and a blackboard. Of course, it’s not ideal, but we strive to create the most comfortable atmosphere for studying.”

While the surroundings are far from traditional, teachers and students make the best of their circumstances, determined to continue their education despite the challenges.

Adapting to Fear and Uncertainty

Olya, a ninth-grade student, shares her experience: “At first, it was very scary. But as time passed, we got used to it. Teachers try to support us, they make lessons interesting. We try not to think about bad things and focus on learning.”

Adapting to the situation required strength and resilience. Over time, students and teachers developed coping mechanisms to deal with fear and uncertainty.



Finding Ways to Cope

In such extreme circumstances, humour and creativity become essential tools for maintaining morale. “Humour helps us. We try to joke around to lighten the atmosphere,” says Elena Yurena. “We also do a lot of creative activities to distract the children from their anxious thoughts.”

Students find solace in friendship and routine.

“I feel better thanks to the support of my friends and teachers,” **Olya adds.** “We go through anxieties together. I also try not to forget about the usual joys of childhood like reading books, drawing, and talking with friends.”

Lessons in a Shelter

Despite the difficult circumstances, educators work tirelessly to provide quality education. “We try to teach all the main subjects: mathematics, Ukrainian, history, English, and Jewish Studies” explains Elena Yurievna. “Of course, it is not always possible to conduct a full lesson, but we do our best to give children as much knowledge as possible.”

Messages of Strength and Hope

Despite the hardships, both students and teachers remain hopeful for the future. “I want to say that we are strong. We will definitely win. After the war, we will be able to return to normal life,” **says Olya with determination.**



Elena Yurievna expresses her admiration for her students: “We are proud of our children. They are our future. We will do everything possible to ensure they receive a quality education, despite all difficulties.”

Life Under War: A New Normal

For both students and teachers, life has drastically changed. Olya reflects, “I can no longer walk with my friends on the street like before. I constantly think about my relatives who are now at the front. But I try not to lose hope and believe in victory.”

Similarly, for teachers, perspectives have shifted. “I have become more appreciative of every moment spent with children. I understand that now they need not only knowledge but also support and understanding,” says Elena Yurievna.

Lessons in Resilience

Studying in a bomb shelter has taught students and teachers valuable life skills. “I became more firm and resilient. I learned to adapt quickly to new conditions. I also began to value friendship and support more,” says Olya.

Elena Yurievna echoes this sentiment: “I learned to make decisions quickly and act in extreme situations. I became more creative and resourceful in finding ways to teach.”

Despite the adversity, hope prevails. Olya shares her wish: “I wish everyone strength and patience. We will definitely win, and everything will be fine.”

CASE STUDY:

OLENA - THE IMPACT OF TAILORED PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION

Olena is 10 years old and studies in year 5 at Tikva's Primary School.

Upon her arrival, Tikva staff undertook assessments to understand more about Olena and her family history. Her mother was in her second marriage; and her stepfather was physically violent and verbally abusive. At times Olena was forced to sit on her knees for hours on end with no food, water, or toilet breaks. Olena's mother was not able to stand up for herself or her daughter, eventually making the decision to stay with her husband, and abandon Olena.

Olena's parents failed to see the risks in her upbringing and refused to cooperate with the team of child psychologists, provided through Tikva.

When Olena first arrived at Tikva she showed high impulsivity and aggression, often getting into fights, shouting at her classmates, insulting teachers, and becoming physically aggressive towards her

caregivers – behaviours learnt from her harsh upbringing. Initially, she showed no response to encouragement for improved behaviour and responded by becoming more disruptive and aggressive to her teachers and peers.

Through the Psychologist's in Tikva, Olena was given a tailored intervention plan, to help her start her journey to recovery and to a brighter future.

Olena's Psychological Intervention:

- 1. Establishing contact with the child.** Given the lack of support in the family and distrust of adults, the initial stage of the work was the gradual establishment of contact and building a safe environment.
- 2. Emotional Regulation.** Since Olena did not know how to control her impulses and aggression, her initial intervention was aimed at teaching self-regulation methods.
- 3. Behaviour correction in the school environment.** Introducing a system of positive reinforcement to improve behaviour, social skills, and emotional response.





4. Indirect work with the family as parents refuses to cooperate with the Psychologists.

Psychologists gradually build trust without direct confrontation such as providing educational resources or support materials that highlight the benefits of therapy, opening the door for future collaboration without pressuring the family

Thanks to the comprehensive pressurising of the child psychologists employed through Tikva, there are already positive changes in the Olena's behaviour over the last 24-months.

- ♦ The number of aggressive outbursts have decreased, and she has become less likely to pursue arguments.
- ♦ She has started to better control her emotions and made the first attempts to verbally express her anger instead of resorting to physical aggression.
- ♦ She has become more attentive in lessons, trying to follow the rules.
- ♦ She is interested in creative activities, which was not typical before.
- ♦ For the first time, she expressed she would like to be scolded less at home.

However, the work is still ongoing, and continued psychological support is necessary to consolidate these positive changes. Despite her difficult family circumstances and aggressive behaviour at the start of her Tikva journey, Olena is already showing encouraging signs of progress. She has begun to take an interest in managing her emotions and engaging with school life, indicating strong potential for continued growth. With Tikva's ongoing support and psychological guidance, Olena is on a promising path towards a brighter future.

OUR STUDENTS UPDATE

Our oldest students embarked on a leadership trip to Rome, fostering their development and broadening their horizons.

Several of our students aged 17-20 years old achieved commendable recognition in the International Hebrew Olympiad, demonstrating their academic excellence.

In Odessa, a significant rocket explosion occurred near the Elementary and Girls' School just one day after the scheduled winter break. The blast resulted in extensive damage, shattering all the windows. Tikva faced the urgent task of completing repairs within ten days to ensure that students can resume their studies promptly after the holidays.



OUR WORK IN ISRAEL



Over 100 alumni have made Aliyah since the outbreak of war in Israel including 5 families, enriching our Israel community with their presence.

We have also organised separate groups of girls Students and boys students to travel to Israel, where they engaged in an in-depth study of Jewish traditions.

Educational trainers from Israel visited Tikva to gain insights into our unique approach to teaching traditions, fostering an exchange of knowledge and best practices.

THE STORY OF RADEON CHEBANUIK AND REVEKKA GUSAROVA

Revekka, born in Odessa in 2002 went through the full circle of Tikva education starting from Kindergarten in September 2004 and eventually graduating from the Tikva University.

Through Tikva, she met Radeon, her now husband. Radeon also born in 2002 in Kharkov and came to Tikva Home and School in 2013.

This is Revekka's story:

I have been at Tikva since birth. I was born in Odessa, and as long as I can remember, my life has been connected to the Jewish community, attending Tikva schools from kindergarten.

My husband came to Tikva later, from Kharkov, when he was 11 years old. Back then we both attended the Tikva secondary schools and were classmates, but we just knew of each other, nothing more. Much later, when our community was evacuated from

Ukraine, and relocated to Romania in 2022 we started to get to know each other. Far from home, in difficult times, Tikva became more than just a community for us - it became a family, support, home.

During our time in Romania, we spent many moments together, connected, and slowly built a relationship. Eventually, we got married and started our own family. Tikva is not just a place we turn to in times of crisis. It has given us everything - friendships, work, opportunities, and, most importantly, it helped us reconnect with our faith. For Radeon, Tikva gave him the opportunity to grow and flourish in a loving home and become the adult he is today. Without Tikva, we would never have met.

Our marriage is wonderful. Of course, like any couple, we have our disagreements, but we always find a way to compromise, because we understand that love, respect, and shared values are the foundation of everything.



BNEI MITZVAH AT TIKVA



Bnei Mitzvah

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a vital rite of passage for Jewish children, marking their transition into religious and communal responsibility.

In the last 12 months our Tikva children have celebrated 15 Bar Mitzvahs and 17 Bat Mitzvahs.

Bnei Mitzvah for Tikva

The Bnei Mitzvah Programme for Tikva allows students to engage in a meaningful philanthropic initiative, whilst fostering a sense of responsibility and compassion in our young Jewish Community.

UK students are twinned with a Tikva student who is also due to have their Bnei Mitzvah at a similar time. Through different fundraising initiatives, students raise money to ensure their Tikva Twin can receive a Siddur (and Tefillin) to mark their milestone, alongside a small party with their peers to celebrate such momentous milestone in their life.

Nadya's Bat Mitzvah

Recently Nadya celebrated her Bat Mitzvah in Bucharest and was twinned with a UK student from London – this is her account of how the Bnei Mitzvah Programme for Tikva impacted her

My Bat Mitzvah was one of the most incredible and meaningful days of my life. It wasn't just a

celebration—it was a milestone, a moment when I truly felt my transition into adulthood within the Jewish tradition. I realised that from this day forward, I carry a new level of responsibility and a deeper connection to my heritage and community.

Everything about the day was perfect, just as I had dreamed. One of the most touching moments was a beautiful video that Shira, my teacher, made for me, filled with childhood photos. Watching it reminded me of how much I've grown and how special my journey has been. It was an emotional and heartfelt moment that made me appreciate my family, my friends, and the values that shape who I am.

Through the Bnei Mitzva for Tikva programme, I was twinned with a UK student having her Bat Mitzvah in the same month as me. She fundraised to make sure that I (and other Tikva students) could celebrate our Bar or Bat Mitzvah's. I received so many gifts that I honestly lost track, one of the most memorable gifts I received was my own Siddur, gifted to me through the Bnei Mitzvah Programme! But, more than anything, what mattered most was the presence of the people I love. All my friends came to celebrate with me, and I felt so grateful to have them by my side on such an important day. The atmosphere was filled with joy, warmth, and the true spirit of Judaism.

CASE STUDY:

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Aleksei Oliynyk born 12.06.2023

Aleksei's story begins with the harsh reality of being born into a world that was already broken. At just 17 years old, his mother was a child herself when she gave birth to him.

The circumstances they were living in were unforgiving. Struggling to provide for herself, let alone her newborn, Aleksei's mother found herself trapped in an endless cycle of survival, fighting just to meet the most basic needs.

For the first two years of his life, Aleksei lived in a constant state of instability. His mother, consumed by her own struggles, was unable to provide the nurturing environment every child deserves. Relationships came and went, each new caregiver only adding to the uncertainty of his life. The people meant to protect and care for Aleksei failed to do so, leaving Aleksei in a state of emotional limbo, longing for the love and stability that seemed so far out of reach.

As the months passed, things only grew more dire. Aleksei's mother fell deep into the grips of alcohol addiction. It wasn't just the alcohol—it was the cycle of hopelessness that had taken root in her life, a cycle that now threatened to swallow her son's future as well.

Aleksei is just a child; a tiny, innocent soul caught in a web of despair that he did not ask for. His world has been filled with chaos and neglect, and his chances of growing up in a safe, loving home seemed to slip further away each day. The sadness in his eyes reflected a future he could not yet understand, but one that had already been shaped by the instability surrounding him.

What Aleksei needed was simple. He needed safety. He needed stability. He needed love.

In a world that seems to be failing him at every turn, Aleksei deserves a chance to grow up in a nurturing environment, one where he can feel secure and hopeful about the future.

Through Tikva's search and rescue programme, Aleksei was brought to safety where he is now receiving the essential support and care, education and hope for a future he deserves.



PHOTOS FROM THE YEAR



How You Can Get Involved

Each year, there are different ways that you can get involved to support us!

There are countless individuals and groups that have committed themselves to raise money for our work and the Tikva team are there to support you along the way.

We have a host of challenges, events and projects that you can take on as an individual or as a group, together with your friends, your office, school, youth movement or synagogue.

Without your support, we wouldn't be able to continue the work that we do.

For more information about how to get involved, please contact the office on **0208 209 9100** or email **info@tikva.org.uk**



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