

How Liberal Jewish Values Inspire my Work

UK Task Force - Toni Rickenback

Toni Rickenback is Director of the UK Task Force, a coalition of 40 British Jewish organisations, raising awareness of issues relating to Arab citizens of Israel.

Over the years, the progressive Jewish values that have resonated most strongly with me were the very first ones I encountered at RSY-Netzer: the concentric circles of *tikkun olam*. Changing the world starts with each person, and each person can make a difference. Each change has an impact individually, and then as the ripples spread, through a family, community, society, a people, a country, even the world. It might sound too idealistic to be possible, but it happens every day.



Tikkun Atzmi – Healing the self

One youth movement session changed my life: the power that youth leaders have to inspire, educate, and create a vision, is huge. My experience in Israel with RSY and LJY-Netzer, on Israel Tour and Shnat Netzer, learning, volunteering with NGOs, and taking part in social action projects, led directly to my ongoing connection with Israeli civil society organisations, a feeling that I could make a difference through the choices I made, and that Israel is strengthened by having a diverse society.

Tikkun Kehilla – Healing our community

Some of the skills I learnt on RSY-Netzer summer camps allowed me to take a more active role at synagogue. We ran *shacharit* and *ma'ariv* every day, and I learnt how to lead services. I came back home after a couple of weeks away with the knowledge, skills, and confidence that I could offer to lead Friday night services when my rabbi was away.

Tikkun Am – Healing the Jewish people

My involvement widened following the completion of my MSc in Middle East Studies: I worked in UJIA's Informal Education department, and learnt how to educate, engage, and work in a cross-communal environment. There were opportunities to develop resources with Israel Tour leaders, discuss the vision for the year ahead with movement workers, and learn from superb educators from across the British Jewish community.

Tikkun Medinat – Healing Israel

After nearly a decade at UJIA, I took up the opportunity to become Director of the UK Task Force. We're a cross-communal coalition of 40 organisations that support Israel's Declaration of Independence promising equality to all citizens, and we raise awareness about the issues, both challenges and opportunities, relating to Arab citizens of Israel. By working with all parts of the community, from schools, youth movements, charity and business leaders, religious leaders, to philanthropists, policymakers, and academics, we are

able to address issues of social and political equality while also strengthening British Jews' connection to Israel.

Tikkun Olam – Healing the world

Repairing the world is still an ongoing project, but the progressive Jewish values that I was shown and taught 20 years ago in my youth movement have taught me independence, confidence, useful skills, as well as the knowledge that each one of us can make a difference.