

More Than Work: Inside the World of WIZO

For readers who may only know WIZO by name, how would you describe what WIZO actually does beyond the headlines?

We care for thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds- from child care to teenagers at risk to holocaust survivors to women suffering from domestic abuse – we are continually evolving to meet the needs of those in our care – particularly in light of recent wars and the resulting trauma.

What do you think people in the UK often underestimate about the scale or complexity of WIZO's work in Israel?

I think that when people visit Israel, they see the exciting high tech side of the country – Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other cities are thriving buzzy places which are hard to beat on the world stage. When we read about Israel in the press, we see the incredible achievements of Israeli companies and groundbreaking innovation. People generally don't see the individual trauma of its citizens or the impoverished areas when they are on holiday.

A visit to a WIZO centre can be both hugely inspiring and upsetting.

Why do you believe organisations like WIZO are more important now than ever for Israeli society and for the Jewish community worldwide?

A stronger Israel is vital for not only Israel citizens but also the Jewish Community in the Diaspora. As many of us worry about our future in our own countries a strong Israel is not only reassuring but more and more necessary.

If you could change one misconception about WIZO, what would it be?

I think that there is a misconception that we are run by women for women. We have supporters of all ages – men and women and we support men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds.

What role do UK supporters play in sustaining and strengthening WIZO's work on the ground?

Without our supporters we simply couldn't function. Through our committees organising events, to people attending events, to our donors and people leaving us legacies, this is how we can meet our commitment to support our projects in Israel.



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How do you personally stay grounded when working with stories of trauma, displacement and long-term social need?

I found the few months after October 7th to be emotionally very upsetting – focusing on the awful news coming out of Israel every day and reporting on and updating our supporters on what WIZO was doing in response was very hard. In January 2025 I attended our annual conference where we met family members of the victims and the hostages which again was a privilege but also extremely disturbing. After a point I had to make a decision to read less of the constant news.

What first drew you to WIZO UK and what made you feel it was an organisation you wanted to commit to professionally and not just support from afar?

My Mum has been very active in Leeds Aviva WIZO for decades. I grew up surrounded by WIZO events and seeing the toys being collected for the Leeds WIZO Blue and White Bazaar. After I moved to London I joined the WD6 WIZO group and later became the WIZO Aviv Chair. Five years ago Maureen asked me if I would join the professional team as her deputy. How could I say no.



Have you encountered a story or individual through WIZO's work that has stayed with you and shaped how you approach your role?

When I was at our vocational school in Jerusalem last January I met a man who had been part of the army division who had moved all the bodies from the Nova site for identification. He had suffered from severe PTSD as a result. The school teaches music production and had run a competition for entrants to have a song which they had written and produced professionally. He had won the competition and performed the song for us. He told me that focusing on this song (which told of his pain) and being able to produce this had helped to save him from severe depression. He was indebted to the school for giving him something positive.

Is there a particular WIZO project or programme that you feel especially proud of, and why does it resonate with you personally?

WIZO Nahalal youth village in the Jezreel Valley. This has a mix of boarders and day schoolers and is a huge site. The teachers there are inspirational. In particular, I spent time with a group of teenagers who are part of the Na'aleh programme for teenagers who have left their home country and travelled to Israel without their parents. Many are from war torn countries. They live at the village and have a counsellor to care for them 24/7. They have learned Hebrew and the way they have adapted to live and study in Israel with the support of the school is inspirational.

What would you say to someone considering getting involved with WIZO for the first time whether as a supporter, volunteer or professional?

Go for it! You will make a huge difference to those at risk in Israel and you can meet likeminded people – whether on our young patrons committee or women's professional network, volunteering is hugely beneficial to the volunteers as well as those you are supporting.

Interview with Nicola Miller, WIZO UK's Chief Operating Officer.

Was there a moment early on when you realised WIZO was different from other charities you'd encountered?

WIZO has a huge reach. When I went to Israel on a mission in 2025 and visited a number of projects, including a foster home, our vocational school in Jerusalem and a women's shelter, it really hit home the breadth and depth of the work which we do.

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