



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION

Notice

Annual Report

&

Financial Statement

For the year ended
31 December 2014

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Foreword from the Chairman

Dear Members, Donors and Supporters of WZO



AN APPEAL

Last year I made an Appeal for donations for New Premises.

This year I am pleased to inform you that after seeing many premises throughout the inner and greater London area, we finally found a property in a very nice leafy area of London towards the second half of 2014. The property, situated in Feltham, is a three storied building near the railway station and is also very accessible by bus routes and by car. There is ample parking place at the premises as well as public parking nearby.

We had to move fast to secure the deal by getting the legal documents drawn up and overcoming other taxation matters for which we had to take proper legal advise. At present, the property is rented to a school till August of next year, when WZO will have full possession of the property.

Until then, we are engaged in obtaining all professional reports on structure, mechanical and electrical state of the building, lighting, heating and cooling system etc. required for our purposes.

The building when ready will have a hall on the ground floor to hold prayer functions and recitation of common prayers, talks to children on Zoroastrian religion, Gatha classes for the youth and other interested persons. The place will also be available for seminars, social functions, Navjots, weddings etc. and private functions.

As always we will bring the Parsi/Irani population of London and world over to join hands and be together. The building will have a Setayash Gah, where all Zoroastrians will be welcome along with their family. We will have a Library but for reference purposes only.

The above will require significant renovation/refurbishing of the premises. Fixtures and fittings such as chairs, tables, kitchen equipment etc. will need to be purchased.

It is estimated that the total cost of refurbishment will be around £750,000 and we are appealing to you to support this worthwhile Zoroastrian initiative for the worldwide community. WZO has done much in its short history to enhance, rejuvenate and bring prosperity within the community and it has only been possible through your support that this has been possible. Please help us to continue with the good work.

With the grace of Ahura Mazda we will officially open the building in the early part of 2017 and may the grace of Ahura Mazda be on you all wherever you reside.

Atha zamyat, yatha afrinami.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shahpur F. Captain'.

Shahpur F. Captain.
Chairman

You can donate to WZO by visiting the website, www.w-z-o.org, and selecting the 'Property Fund'. Alternatively, you can send your cheque to your local WZO representative.

UK and ROW - Mr Dinyar J Modi, Hon. Treasurer, WZO. 135, Tennison Road, South Norwood, London SE25 5NF. Please make your cheques payable to **"W.Z.O."**.
If you are a UK tax payer, please ask for a Gift Aid Form.

USA - President of WZO, US Region, Mr Kayomارش Mehta, 6943 Fieldstone Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527-5295. Please make your checks payable to **"WZO, US Region"**.
If you are a US Tax payer, then your donation is tax deductible.

Pakistan - Mrs Toxy Cowasjee, 2 A Mary Road, Bath Island, Karachi 75530. Please make your cheques payable to **"W.Z.O."**.

New Zealand - Mr Darius Mistry, 13A Partai Drive, Orakei, Auckland. Please make your cheque payable to **"World Zoroastrian Organisation"**.

India - Mr Dadi E Mistry, A-214 Defence Colony, New Delhi.110 024. Please make your cheque payable to **"The World Zoroastrian Organisation Foundation"**



AGM NOTICE

3rd September 2015

NOTICE is hereby given that an **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of **The World Zoroastrian Organisation** will be held on Sunday 27th September 2015 at the Nash Room at the International Students House at 229 Gt. Portland Street, London W1W 5PN (nearest Underground station: Gt. Portland Street). at 4pm precisely, to transact the following business.

1. To receive and adopt the Committee's report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 2014.
2. To elect members of the Managing Committee in place of the following, who retire in accordance with Article 21 of the Articles of Association, and being eligible offer themselves for re-election, except as stated.

UK Committee Members

Mr. Darayus S. Motivala
Dr (Mrs) Godafreed Irani

Overseas Committee Members

Mrs. Mani J. Clubwala (India)
Mr. Rostam Yeganegi (Canada)
Mr. Dadi Mistry (India)
Dr. Jehan Bagli (Canada)
Mrs Meher Amersey (India)
Mr Homi Khusrokhan (India)

If you wish to nominate some other members of the Organisation for the Managing Committee, please send in your nomination, together with the written consent of your nominee, to reach the Honorary Secretary not later than 72 hours before the time arranged for the meeting. Nominations received thereafter will not be accepted.

3. To elect the Chairman from amongst the members of the Committee for the year 2015/2016.
4. To re-appoint the Honorary Auditors, Nash Harvey LLP, for the year 2015/2016.
5. To transact the other usual business of an Annual General Meeting.

If you informed us previously that you will be downloading the Annual Accounts and Report from our website, they are not included with this Notice. If you would like a printed copy in Abbreviated or Full format from next year, you can do so by writing to me at the above address or emailing us at membership@w-z-o.org.

According to the Constitution, non-members may not be admitted to the meeting; however, interested Zoroastrians will be welcome but not entitled to vote.

A personalised proxy form is enclosed for your use if you are not able to attend the meeting.

Yours faithfully,



Mr. Darayus S Motivala
(Jt. Hon. Secretary)

**THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION LIMITED
ANNUAL REPORT for the Year Ended 31st December 2014**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Board of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) has great pleasure in placing before you the Annual Report of the 34th successful year of its operation.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2014 Annual General Meeting of WZO was held on Sunday 14th September 2014 at All Saints' Church Hall, Waltham Drive, Edgware HA8 5PQ at 4pm.

The Chairman, Mr Shahpur F Captain, welcomed all the members and guests from the UK and abroad. He reviewed the salient events of the year and thanked the various donors, individuals and institutes for their help and support throughout the year.

The annual report and audited accounts for the year ended 31st December 2013 were presented to the meeting and these were approved unanimously. The President, Mr Sammy H Bhiwandiwalla, and the Treasurer, Mr Dinyar Modi were thanked for their efficient hard work on behalf of WZO in preparing the annual report and the financial statements respectively.

Election of Committee Members

Four UK and five overseas Committee members were due to retire.

All the outgoing Committee Members offered themselves for re-election except as stated below.

UK Committee Members

Mr. Shahpur F. Captain
Mr. Dinyar J. Modi
Miss Benafsha Engineer
Mr Filli Vapiwala

Overseas Committee Members

Dr. Kersey Antia (USA)
Dr. Meherwan P. Boyce (USA)
Mrs. Hutoxy C. Cowasjee (Pakistan)
Mr Abtin Sassanfar (France)
Mr Kersi Shroff (USA)

After a show of hands by those attending, the Chairman welcomed the new committee members for offering their services to the WZO and the community.

The meeting proceeded harmoniously, with a vote of confidence being granted to the on-going Committee.

The Secretary Mr Darayus S Motivala read out the names of all the Committee members elected for the ensuing year.

Election of Chairman

Mr Shahpur Captain temporarily vacated the Chair during the procedure for the election of a Chairman. Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, having replaced him read out the names of the new committee. There was a single nomination for Chairman, that of Shahpur Captain. Sammy Bhiwandiwalla enquired if there were any further nominations from the floor. There were none. Shahpur Captain was unanimously elected Chairman for the year 2014 – 2015.

Election of Auditors

The Treasurer Dinyar Modi thanked the Auditors Nash Harvey LLP for their services to WZO. After being proposed for re-election as Auditors by Armaity Engineer and seconded by Ruby Contractor, those present unanimously supported the motion with a show of hands.

Any other Business of the Meeting

The Chairman enquired if anyone present had any matters they wished to raise. As there was no response the meeting was declared closed at 5.00 p.m. with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Election of Office Bearers at committee meeting held on 18th January 2015

President	Mr Sammy H Bhiwandiwalla
Vice-President	Mr Kersey Antia
Treasurer	Mr Dinyar J Modi
Jt. Hon. Secretary	Ms Shahin Bekhradnia
Jt. Hon. Secretary	Mr Darayus S Motivala (Company Secretary)
Membership Secretary	Mrs Monaz M Patel
Social Secretary	Mrs Armaity R Engineer
Social Secretary	Ms Benafsha R Engineer
Youth Co-Ordinator	Ervad Jimmy Madon
Religious Co-Ordinator	Ms Shahin Bekhradnia
Grants Co-Ordinator	Dr Godafreed Irani

PERSONALITIES AND EVENTS

Dadi Mistry

We are delighted to inform you that in March 2014 Dadi Mistry was nominated as Member (Parsi) National Commission for Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, for a tenure of three years, giving him the much needed platform to address the several issues faced by the community in India, be it reservation of seats for Parsi students in the Parsi endowed Institutions, specifically medical and engineering colleges, protection of land and property of the Parsis in different parts of India, dwindling population, and several other matters where government help is needed.

Dadi is a founder member of the World Zoroastrian Organisation London, and contributed in the setting up of the World Zoroastrian Organisation in India. He was also very closely associated with the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce and saw his vision fulfilled when he opened the first chapter in Delhi of the WZCC which has now spread all over.

Another laudable programme, the Parzor Project which is active in recording and rejuvenating the Parsi community has also received unstinted support from the Mistry's who are keen on the proposal for setting up a special Zoroastrian Museum in the capital.

Known for his diplomatic skills, he enjoys excellent rapport with the Indian Government, and has successfully liaised with government organisations, both at the Centre and State.

To his credit Dadi has several years of honorary services such as: Patron - Delhi Parsi Anjuman (served from 1965 to 2012) : Founder & Member of Federation of Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Founder & Vice President World Zoroastrian Organisation, London : Founder & Director World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce : Trustee – World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation : Donor & Voting Member of Bombay Parsi Panchayat.

Lord Karan F Bilimoria of Chelsea CBE, DL

WZO is pleased to inform membership that our Grand Patron Member Lord Karan Bilimoria was appointed the seventh Chancellor of the University of Birmingham on 17th July 2014.

Announcing the appointment, vice Chancellor of the University, Professor David Eastwood stated:

“I am delighted to announce that Lord Karan Bilimoria of Chelsea CBE has been appointed our seventh Chancellor.

Lord Bilimoria follows in the footsteps of our enormously distinguished Chancellors including the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain, the Right Honorable Sir Anthony Eden, and Sir Dominic Cadbury, who, as you know, stepped down last December after 11 years in the role.

As the Indian-born founder of Cobra Beer, Lord Bilimoria is a highly respected global businessman and one of the UK's leading international entrepreneurs. He is also a Crossbench Peer who is active in Parliament across a wide range of matters including commerce, entrepreneurship, education, diplomacy, minorities' contributions, and academia.

Lord Bilimoria has a long association with the University of Birmingham; his mother, uncle and maternal grandfather all studied here, and he has been a member of the Business School Advisory Board since 2005. As well as his significant business achievements, Lord Bilimoria has also been acknowledged as an ambassador for Britain, India and the Parsi Community.

Having received a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Osmania University in Hyderabad, India, in 1981, Lord Bilimoria moved to London where he qualified as a Chartered Accountant. He went on

to read Law at Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge. In 2004 he was appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for services to business and entrepreneurship, and in 2006 he was made an Independent Crossbench Peer in the House of Lords and created Baron Bilimoria of Chelsea in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, making him the first ever Zoroastrian Parsi to sit in the House of Lords. In 2013, he established the Zoroastrian All-Party Parliamentary Group, which is intended to provide an official forum for parliamentarians, to increase their awareness of this ancient religion.

The new Chancellor will officially take up his role on 17th July following his Installation Ceremony. The Chancellor will be featured in the September edition of Old Joe magazine and will meet many members of our alumni community at future events.

I know you will join me in congratulating Lord Bilimoria and in welcoming him to our wonderful university.”

Resolution passed in respect of of Lord Karan F Bilimoria CBE,DL

At the committee meeting of the World Zoroastrian Organisation held on 20th July 2014 it was “Resolved that the committee unanimously congratulate our Grand Patron, Lord Karan F Bilimoria CBE,DL on being appointed the 7th Chancellor of the University of Birmingham.

We wish you great success and we are confident that you will execute your office as Chancellor of the University with professionalism and motivate our young men and women to achieve academic excellence.”

The Resolution signed by the Chairman Mr Shahpur F Captain was sent to Lord Karan Bilimoria of Chelsea CBE, DL

Zoroastrian Return to Roots Programme managed by UNESCO PARZOR

The programme was conceived by **UNESCO PARZOR** to expose young Zoroastrians with minimal experience and knowledge of their historical and religious roots in India. The first trip coincided with the World Zoroastrian Congress to be held in Mumbai in December 2013. WZO agreed to sponsor a young Zoroastrian from UK in the sum of US\$ 3000 this time.

Rustom Kapadia, (the candidate sponsored by WZO) and Shahyan Dastur attended a meeting in February 2014 to present their experiences of the trip to India during the WZO congress and subsequent visit to various Zoroastrian sites and organisations. As Rustom had lived abroad for many years and had previously had very little exposure to the Parsi community or its history and culture in India he was pleased to have gained first-hand experience during his trip and thanked WZO for it.

Book Launch. Parsis: A People of the Book

This unique book was first published in Calcutta in 1928. The author S.M.Taher Rezwi came from a background of the Indian intellectual elite, a graduate from Presidency College, Calcutta University, a Muslim scholar of Iranian descent and a Gold Medallist in the Humanities. Taher Rezvi became closely acquainted with the Zoroastrian religion of the Parsis and was aware of the indifference and disinformation then prevailing among his Muslim co-religionists on the pre-Islamic faith of Ancient Iran. At the young age of 19, Taher Rezwi commenced his treatise on the Parsis. He was determined to write a book to dispel the extant confusion and even suspicion of that older religion.

Taher Rezwi's fine character and high moral principles based on his Shia faith and modest life-style were widely praised by his mentors and contemporaries. The Rezvis retain affectionate memories of a noble souled family man, and the reappearance of this book is his lasting testament for the sponsors and readers alike.

In May 2010 Jamal Rezwi, S M Taher Rezwi's son contacted Darayus Motivala to discuss jointly re-printing his father's book. Over a number of meetings with the Rezvi family and the collaboration and involvement of Farrokh Vajifdar this project began to take shape. This book would not have been printed without Farrokh's enthusiasm for it and the diligent manner over many months to edit the book.

On Sunday 1st June 2014 the book **Parsis: A People of the Book** was launched at Asia House in London in the presence of the Rezvi family and an enthusiastic group of attendees.

Our sincere thanks to the Rezvi Family for having the confidence to assign this project to WZO and for making a generous donation for WZO's participation in the reprinting of the book.

We also offer our deep appreciation to Farrokh Vajifdar, Darayus Motivala and Shahin Bekhradnia in devoting their time and effort in this collaboration.

"Parsis: The People of the Book" is available for sale through the WZO website, www.w-z-o.org, USA Ms Azra Rezwi Priced \$ 12.00 + PP Email: rezwi@aol.com
Helping Hands International 815 Park Avenue, Apt 7A, New York. NY 10021.

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A presentation by Kerssie Kabraji: Gathas of Zarathushtra

Kerssie Kabraji an octogenarian from Pune, India, delivered a presentation on the Gathas of Zarathushtra prior to the 2014 AGM in September 2014. Though not a scholar, Kerssie was self-taught and had devoted a lifetime in his pursuit of comprehending the pristine message of Zarathushtra. Furthermore he financed this trip to the UK and various regions of the USA entirely from his own resources. In simple lay man's terms, Kerssie dispelled the many misconceptions in the practice of the faith to the audience. Our sincere thanks to Kerssie for a very professional and enlightening presentation.

Advancement of the Zoroastrian Faith

WZO Seminar on Zoroastrian Religion, History and Culture. 8th June 2014

Speaker: Mr. Arash Zeini

Chairperson: Ms Shahin Bekhradnia



Arash Zeini is a research fellow at the School of History, University of St Andrews. His research interests broadly include the study of ancient Iran, Zoroastrianism, particularly the late antique exegesis of the Avesta, and digital humanities. For his dissertation he produced a critical edition of the Middle Persian version of the Yasna Haptañhāiti, a liturgical text originally composed in the Old Iranian language of Avestan. His dissertation challenges the view that considers the study of the Middle Persian translations an auxiliary science to Avestan studies, framing the

text instead within the exegetical and historical context from which it emerged.

Arash spoke on 'Aspects of Zoroastrian exegesis in the late antique era'.



Dr Irving Finkel is the Assistant Keeper of Ancient Mesopotamian (i.e. Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian) script, languages and cultures in the Middle East department at the British Museum. Dr Finkel is the curator in charge of cuneiform inscriptions on tablets of clay from some 130,000 pieces – of any modern museum. This work involves reading and translating all sorts of inscriptions, sometimes working on ancient archives to identify manuscripts that belong together, or even join to one another. His museum work also includes working with children and adults to promote greater familiarity with the ancient Middle East, by

means of lectures, workshops and media activity. Dr Finkel specializes in ancient Mesopotamian medicine and magic, and is also interested in literature, religion and the history of ideas in this part of the world.

Dr Irving Finkel's talk addressed two main issues: The story behind the recent new translation, the discovery of two fragmentary new sources, and the confusing problem of the mysterious faked bones from China. His talk then considered how we today should best interpret the Cyrus Cylinder, and distinguish between what the inscription itself tells us, and what has sometimes been made of it.



Nazneen Rumi Engineer considers herself a world citizen. Born in Mumbai, India, she grew up in Dubai, UAE. Nazneen holds an Undergraduate Degree in International Business and Tourism from the Auckland University of Technology (in Auckland, NZ), and has lived and worked in Brisbane, Australia before moving to London 5 years ago to fulfil a dream of studying Zoroastrianism. She holds a Masters Degree in the Study of Religions (majoring in Zoroastrianism) from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), U.K. She is now

completing her PhD (also at SOAS) on historical community discourse of the issues of conversion in Zoroastrianism under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Stewart and Dr. Almut Hintze.

Nazneen spoke on "Conversion in Zoroastrianism".

In this presentation, Nazneen discussed the idea of religious conversion in Zoroastrianism. Giving a broad historical narrative, she aimed to explore how this concept has made its impact on the religious, political and socio-economic practices of the Zoroastrian community, later focusing on its significance on the Parsis of today.

Hamazor

Now in its 13th year under her stewardship, single handed, with dedication and never flagging commitment, Toxy Cowasjee produces a professional publication that gives its readers many hours of enjoyable insights into the Zoroastrian diaspora. Aware of the sensitivities of its readership Hamazor possesses a balanced outlook on many contentious issues, but she is never afraid to speak her mind when it really matters.

Our thanks also to all those who contribute their knowledge and wisdom in the enlightening articles on Zoroastrian religion, history and contemporary issues.



Ms Tannaz Minwalla and her team, at Creative Unit (Pvt) Ltd, never fail to delight us with their striking covers for Hamazor and Ms Rovena Sethna, a graphic artist & designer also from Karachi, provides her expertise to design the cover of our much sought after Zoroastrian annual calendar.

Rovena came forward at short notice to design WZO's message in the programme book of the XVII North American Zoroastrian Congress in December 2014. We sincerely thank both Tannaz and Rovena for their professionalism given gratis to WZO.

We are immensely grateful to the ladies of various colonies in Karachi, who hand deliver the Hamazor in Karachi to our members since 2002, saving considerable postage expenses and insuring safe delivery.

Though, not connected directly with Hamazor, we take this opportunity of offering our sincere thanks to Ms Farzana Cooper another professional graphic artist but this time from Mumbai who has designed our messages of goodwill over the last few years free of cost for various publications in India.

Hamazor Issue 1, 2014 was generously sponsored by Abtin and Mehrafzoon Sassanfar. Abtin serves on the WZO International Board and is passionate about the propagation of the Zoroastrian faith.

Hamazor Issue 2, 2014 was kindly sponsored by the trustees of the Firuz Madon Foundation. The Foundation provides ongoing support for all of WZO's activities.

The publication of Hamazor Issue 3, 2014 was made possible through the immense kindness and generosity of Hilda and Rumi Sethna.

Hamazor Issue 4, 2014 was generously sponsored by Behram Baxter of San Diego, California who is an avid reader of Hamazor. Behram has throughout the years supported WZO in many of its charitable activities at home and abroad.

WZO thanks and acknowledges the generosity of all the above benefactors without whose financial support WZO would not have managed to produce Hamazor in 2014.

We request our friends and supporters to come forward and help us print further issues of Hamazor as the costs of printing and postage are truly daunting. It need not be an individual donor, a group of like-minded persons can join together to make up the sum of IRs 200,000, or US\$ 5,000 or UK£ 3,000 which includes postage. However any donation towards Hamazor will be gladly accepted, as pennies do become pounds.

Membership & Communication:

Revised WZO Articles of Association endorsed on 23rd September 2012 at the SGM. By an overwhelming vote in favour, the membership endorsed the proposal; *that it was no longer an obligation to be born into the faith, but those who could show an understanding and commitment to the principles of Zoroastrianism and who professed the Zoroastrian faith could become members of WZO.*



Last year we took an initiative, the brainchild of our committee member, Mr Mino Mistry to incentivise all our Ordinary Members to upgrade to Life Membership with special one off rates. We had a good response and a total of 26 members upgraded their memberships accordingly. Please do get in touch with the WZO representatives in USA, Canada, Pakistan, New Zealand and India if you do wish to upgrade your membership to Life.

In the UK and other areas, please contact Mrs Monaz Patel at membership@w-z-o.org about this offer or any other membership issues.

In 2013 we requested our ordinary members to change their standing orders from NatWest to HSBC. However last year HSBC discontinued their retail banking services, which was open to organisations like WZO in the past and we again requested our members to change their standing orders from HSBC to NatWest. As Membership Secretary I appreciate and thank all our members who promptly changed their standing orders accordingly.

We had a tremendous response with regards to the WZO website last year as the majority of our membership applications were through the website. Please do share your views, ideas and feedback with Jimmy at youth@w-z-o.org so we can improve and maintain the website. Your suggestions and feedback are always welcome. We also had membership requests through the facebook page last year. We would like to thank Ms Shahin Bekhradnia for promptly replying to queries on the message section of the facebook page with regards to queries posted in Farsi.

At the time of writing this report the WZO facebook page had a total of 3003 'likes' and an addition of 898 members since the last year. Posts on Chaharshanbeh Soori and Nowruz were the most liked on the WZO facebook page this year.

Benafsha Engineer, our youngest and charming committee member has through her hard work and dedication made her presence felt participating in all the various WZO activities, especially in arranging all of WZO's fund raising functions. Her presence amongst us always adds a more youthful perspective in all we do and is an incentive for more young men and women to come forward and play their part. Benafsha is also a core committee member of the European Interfaith Youth Network. WZO is proud of her achievements.



The WZO Website: www.w-z-o.org

The website continues to enjoy popularity with nearly 50% of the visitors to the site coming from USA. Visitors are using the website to correspond with the directors of WZO and particularly the Chairman. They are both Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians.

It is becoming the go-to resource for information on upcoming events organised not only by the WZO but also by all Zoroastrians across the globe. We would like our visitors to further use this platform to share their opinions and submit their feedback, additional articles, news stories and information on local events to the webmaster (webmaster@w-z-o.org).

Articles on the site frequently appear in search results on Google and have helped many people seeking information on the Zoroastrian Religion, its history and culture. Links to many other helpful websites have been put up to gather material on Zoroastrianism from all over the Internet. Additionally, an online shop selling books, DVDs and other traditional products has been setup. Majority of the membership application requests are now through the website.

The website contains back issues of the Hamazor from Issue 4 in 2004. Very soon, the website will contain even earlier back issues of Hamazor. Hundreds of members are now using the website to download their Hamazor from the website rather than receive it by post which helps lower the cost of publication.

We wish to introduce new features to make the website more attractive to our visitors. We shall gladly welcome your valuable feedback and suggestions to improve the website and its content. You can do so by sending an email to webmaster@w-z-o.org

Supporting Zoroastrian Communities Worldwide

WZO carries out charitable works worldwide, in partnership with other, mainly Zoroastrian charitable organisations and through our own Trust Funds.

World Zoroastrian Organization Trust (established 1991); WZO Trust for Women & Children (established 1993); WZO Trust Funds (established 1995) are registered as Public Charitable Trusts under Bombay Public Trust Act, and continue to serve the community in India through their multifarious welfare activities. Mr Rustamji Gai an eminent lawyer from Delhi visited and witnessed the work done in the villages of Gujarat and realising the legal difficulties faced by the WZO in establishing an organisation in India suggested setting up the above named Trusts. This suggestion was enthusiastically taken up by Mr Shahpur Captain during his tenure as President of WZO and diligently followed up by Mr Dinshaw Tamboly who along with his wife Bachi and other trustees administered these Trusts with real zeal and dedication.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all our donors, big and small, for their munificent support and co-operation without which very little would be possible. We especially acknowledge with immense gratitude the continuous and extremely generous support received for our multifarious activities from:

1. World Zarathushtrian Trust Fund, UK towards general charitable donations and publications.
2. The Dasturji Dr. S. H. Kutar Benevolent Fund for relief of poverty, medical cases and higher education.
3. Noshirwan F. Cowasjee Medical Benevolent Fund, UK.
4. The Firuz Madon Foundation for their ongoing commitment towards the furtherance and study of Zoroastrianism through lectures and seminars held worldwide.
5. Mr Rumi and Mrs Hilda Sethna, not only for their generous financial contributions throughout the years, but also for their on-going dedication and personal involvement.

The Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation

Up to 2014, projects valued over £369,500 had been channelled through WZO towards Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian charitable applications. In particular charities in India and Pakistan were supported and grants were made to deserving students from India pursuing higher studies at home and abroad.

WZO offers its sincere thanks to the Trustees of The Erach and Roshan Sadri Foundation for their magnanimous support for various charitable projects since 2006.

News from the WZO Regional Offices

India. We have to report that WZO has set up 'WZO Foundation' as a charitable organisation in Delhi with Mr Dadi Mistry, Mrs Meher Amersey and Dinyar Modi as Trustees. We hope to obtain FCRA status in order to facilitate remittances from outside India for charitable purposes within India. In addition, we print for our members a report from India by WZO Committee Member Homi Khusrokhan.

"The Government has agreed to support a programme called "**Jiyo Parsi**" by providing funding of Rs. 10 Cr. over 5 years. The programme which is made up of two components, 'Advocacy' & 'Medical', commenced with a release of a series of humorous press advertisements conceived by Sam Balsara's Madison Advertising (the firm that handled the PM's successful election campaign). Although generally well received, the Jiyo Parsi Campaign has not been without controversy. Some felt that certain advertisements were in poor taste and should be withdrawn.

The new BJP Government has shown a lot of sympathy towards the Parsi community and Dasturji Khurshed Dastur of Udvada and Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly were called to meet Mr. Narendra Modi within a few days of his taking office. A letter of congratulations was sent by the Chairman Shahpur F Captain to the Mr Narendra Modi on being elected as Prime Minister of India.

Mr. Rohinton Nariman was directly appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court, without having served as the Chief Justice of a High Court as is the normal practice. His 123 page erudite Judgment in the “Freedom of Speech” case, where the controversial S 66A of the Constitution, which had overly harsh penalties for views expressed in posts on the net, has been struck down. It has been widely hailed as a fearless and landmark decision.

The other long-standing dispute regarding the prohibition of entry of Zoroastrian ladies who marry non-Parsis, into places of worship (the Goolrokh Gupta Case) has yet to be heard in the Supreme Court. This case has very far-reaching consequences because 2 of the 3 Judges of the Division Bench of the Gujarat High Court opined that, unless there is evidence to the contrary, a person marrying outside the community under the Special Marriages Act, assumes the religion of the spouse.

The schism within the BPP which went public in September 2013, and threatened to disrupt the World Zoroastrian Congress in December, has continued to grow and this has severely curtailed the activities of this once august body. One hopes the fresh elections in 2015 will create a more cohesive group.

Certain community leaders have suggested a ‘code of conduct’ to the Trustees during the next election and has found favour among the majority of the present trustees. For it to be enforceable it would have to form part of the Court-approved Scheme for elections. It is unlikely, therefore, that this can be done prior to the elections to be held later this year.

The long-standing dispute over the Ban on Priests case has been finally settled between parties, almost 4 years after the historic judgment of the Division Bench of the Bombay High Court in April 2011. The settlement was reached under the guidance of Mrs. Justice Sujata Manohar, a former judge of the Supreme Court. The full judgement was sent out with Hamazor Issue 2 with a clarification issued jointly by Jamsheed Kanga and Homi Khusrokhhan.”

You can also download this from the WZO website www.w-z-o.org

WZO US Region

Throughout the year 2014, WZO US Region received substantial donations from individuals and Associations which were transmitted to the various beneficiaries listed below.

Athornan Mandal, Mumbai for the Drs. Mehroo and Minu Patel Athornan Mandal Educational Endowment/Corpus Fund. This grant is made possible by the generosity of Drs. Mehroo & Minu Patel.

WZO Trust Funds India, Navsari Senior Citizen Center and Gujarat Farmers Rural Housing Project.
WZO Hamazor publication
WZO Noshirwan F Cowasjee Medical Benevolent Fund

The B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital Mumbai

In addition WZO US Region administers the Hormazdiar Damkevala Humanitarian Endowment Fund. We are grateful to the donors William and Yasmin Cumming of Santa Rosa, California for this generous endowment.

The committee unanimously recorded its thanks to all the donors throughout the year and our sincere thanks to Kayomarsh Mehta, President WZO US Region for his commitment to WZO and efficient management and administration of all donations.

We continue to make donations of US\$3000 each year through WZO U.S. Region to **The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust USA** in support of scholarships for deserving Zoroastrians in North America.

WZO Canada hope to generate a Scholarship Endowment Fund to the sum of Can \$100,000.00 to enable annual disbursements of scholarships to Zoroastrian students, for Undergraduate and Graduate studies in Canada and/or United States. They hope to administer this Scholarship Program through the Scholarship Committee of FEZANA which will identify applicants and the Board of Directors of WZO Canada will ratify the selection of the candidates. They are in the process of organizing that project and already have a donation of Can \$84,000.00 for this project.

WZO Canada has been unable to take on any significant activity as the CRA (Canada Customs and Revenue Agency) has been taking a long time to ratify their objectives. Recently they received an affirmative response from CRA to start their Scholarship program.

The other objectives of WZO Canada are, to alleviate poverty among Zoroastrians, to provide support to deserving for Medical treatment and support to people who have suffered from natural disaster. According to CRA "Further communication will follow pending the final analysis and determination related to additional proposed objects and activities". We hope this will be granted soon and wish the Trustees all the success for the future.

WZO New Zealand has been in existence as a local Non-Profit Organisation for over 10 years. The local Trustees have purposefully played a low profile role in the local Zoroastrian community, only to step in and assist when there is a genuine community need.

The WZO NZ chapter has over the years contributed to the local Zoroastrian community in times of need by funding hospital bills for the deserving Zoroastrians, one off financial assistance in hardships, Sponsored international Zoroastrian Scholars for lectures in New Zealand, student scholarship funds, and off late by being a very generous contributor to the World Youth Zoroastrian Congress going to be hosted in New Zealand in Dec. 2015. Below is a synopsis of the WZO's involvement in the Youth Congress.

WZO's involvement with World Zoroastrian Youth Congress 2015

The World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) has come on board as a Silver Sponsor for the 6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress (WZYC). Their funds have been put towards the flights & accommodation for the 2 Keynote Speakers – valued at approx. NZD\$10,000 – who are WZO representatives.

After due research on the shortlist of candidates, together, WZO & the 6th WZYC Organising Committee have selected the youth Keynotes: Jimmy Madon & Jimmy Antia, both of whom are priests and highly-educated young men.

Jimmy Madon aims to address the modern 'young' Zoroastrian, with a presentation on how to adopt a practical use of Zoroastrianism, whereas Jimmy Antia will be addressing the connection between ecology, the mind and how they are rooted in Zoroastrian philosophy.

The 6th WZYC Organising Committee is honoured to have such a prestigious Organisation like WZO associated with their Congress and they are extremely thankful for WZO's support.

Fundraising for WZO Projects.

Fund-raising is the life-blood of our organisation in supporting the community's needs. We made substantial disbursements towards medical assistance, education, relief of poverty, self-employment etc. thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, all over the world, to finance activities that promote WZO's objectives. We list below the various funds held within WZO to support communities worldwide.

Noshirwan F. Cowasjee Medical Benevolent Fund supports applications for assistance where family resources cannot meet the escalating costs of medical treatment. We request donors to continue supporting this very worthy and humanitarian cause for the benefit of our community.

Roshan A. Dehnugara Benevolent Fund was set up in loving memory of Roshan, a popular and respected member of the UK community. The income from the corpus is utilised for the relief of poverty in our community.

Aloo Vatcha Education Fund: generously started with the guidance of the Vatcha family continues to grow through donations and our fund raising activities. Students seeking to achieve their academic ambitions face escalating fees towards higher education. We welcome further support from our well-wishers.

Ervad Framroze Edulji Gazi and Allan Framroze Gazi Education Fund was endowed with a donation of £10,000 from Miss Thrity Framroze Gazi in loving memory of her dear departed parents. Our sincere thanks to Miss Gazi for this generous donation.

The WZO General Fund serves a plethora of applications be they administrative or charitable, thus giving us the freedom to apply resources where urgently needed. Support towards the implementation of any of our activities is essential for the effective working of the organisation and we would request our donors not to overlook the benefits of supporting the general fund.

Individual Donors: We wish to record our sincere thanks to all our donors large and small with whose support and encouragement WZO has managed to serve the community's needs in economic and social upliftment. The community faces new challenges of social change and perspectives and WZO will continue to be in the forefront of shaping our future as we move into new frontiers.

Our thanks are also due to the members of our community who have placed their confidence in WZO for the legacies endowed from the estates of deceased members of our community and for putting their trust in the Board Members of WZO to act as executors of their estate.

THE ZOROASTRIANS OF SOUTH GUJARAT – Team WZO Trust is pleased to present an overview of the progress made in their project to rehabilitate poor Zoroastrians residing in the rural areas of South Gujarat.



The project revolves around 4 main issues: a) Rehabilitate poor Zoroastrian farmers who have land available to pursue agriculture viably. Alternatively to make use of land available towards dairy & poultry farming,



setting up brick kilns and so on. b) For those who do not have any land, to provide support towards their self-employment.

c) Replacing huts in which the poor Zoroastrians live into decent cottages made from bricks & mortar.

d) Providing adequate quantities of food grains to economically challenged Zoroastrian families residing in villages that would last them for a few months thereby providing relief. Given below is a short treatise on how our journey began and how it has unfolded so far.

1988: Dr. Cashmera Bhaya submits her report on the sample (not census) survey that she undertook at the behest of The World Zoroastrian Organisation, London and Surat Parsi Punchayet on the Socio-Economic conditions of Zoroastrians residing in the rural areas of South Gujarat. Her conclusions: she identified 687 Zoroastrian families in 209 villages living below the poverty line.

1991: The World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust was established, primarily to rehabilitate these poor Zoroastrians. During the course of WZO committee members journey they found that there were many more Zoroastrians living in abject poverty in many villages than covered in the report (which was a sample and not a census survey).

Rehabilitation process begins, comprising of providing inputs to agrarians, providing self-employment to the landless or those where agricultural efforts could not be economically viable, replacing the huts in which the poor Zoroastrians lived into cottages, providing medical relief, supporting their children to receive a good education, distributing food grains and so on.

What has been done so far (Financial year 2013-2014):



450 Zoroastrian farmers in 179 villages have been extended support in their farming activities.

215 huts in which Zoroastrians lived have been replaced into cottages.

253 individuals in 93 different rural locations have been provided opportunities and financial support to be self-employed in vocations of their choice, such as plying taxis, auto-rickshaws, grocery shops, motor garages etc.

Food grains are distributed periodically every year to economically challenged Zoroastrians residing in the villages.



Bartad village - in fields of beneficiary: sugarcane cultivation

Collaborations & Partnerships:

It is not possible for any single institution to undertake work on this scale without the active cooperation support from other likeminded individuals and institutions through collaborations and partnerships.

World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust is fortunate to have received generous support from all continents on which Zoroastrians reside and are extremely grateful to those who have contributed towards this massive ongoing exercise. We acknowledge that whatever has been achieved has been due to the unstinted support of donors and well-wishers who have participated by way of donations and also by creating awareness of our work. Partnerships such as these have enabled World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust to change the lives of many. Whilst much has been done, even more yet remains to be done. Many are still experiencing the throes of poverty, and looking forward to helping hands bringing them back into the mainstream of society.

Our thanks are due to Bachi and Dinshaw Tamboly for the above work as well as Farrokh Kasad, who has been associated with the Rehabilitation Programme since its inception.

Fundraising Events

Over the years WZO has struggled with finding suitable venues in London for holding its social and fund raising events. The community is spread across the Greater London area with inadequate transport links but in spite of such short comings we have managed to hold successful events through the year.



The Jamshedi Nowruz Persian Evening was held on Saturday 15th March when both Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrians attended a fun filled and joyous celebration. This was followed by the Summer BBQ held on Sunday 13th July at the Staines and Laleham Sports Centre. On Saturday 16th August 2014, WZO held its Shahenshahi Navroze Dinner and Dance. Total net receipts for the three events was £4583



It goes without saying that our thanks for organising and managing all these events each year rests predominantly on Armaity and Benafsha Engineer's shoulders and we offer our sincere thanks to them both.

A Special Event for Fund raising was held this year on Saturday 15th November at the Marriott Hotel Marble Arch and it was a stunning success. The event raised £6,865. Our sincere thanks for all the hard work to Armaity and Benafsha Engineer, Shahin Bekhradnia and Darayus Motivala for a very successful evening.

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It would not have been possible for us to undertake such extensive welfare programmes without support from our donors, and also our band of dedicated volunteers. We have always followed a policy of being open and transparent in all that we do, with full accountability being provided to all our donors at all times. This policy has endeared our trusts to donors, who have willingly given generous donations on a regular basis.

To those of our beneficiaries, whose lives have been touched by the generosity of our donors, we can happily say that our promise of providing better days has been fulfilled. Whilst we are proud of what we have done, we recognise the fact that very much more needs to be done. It is for this reason that we seek the continued support of our donors from all over the world to enable us to sustain and enhance our welfare activities.