



Limmud
INTERNATIONAL

newsletter

ISSUE 17 TEVET 5773 / DECEMBER 2012

Choose to learn, develop, or network?

Choose sessions that have it all!

With a choice of sessions every day at Limmud Conference, volunteers from the global Limmud community will be able to share experiences with their peers on a range of issues.

Make the most of this unique opportunity to learn from each others' successes and failures. Do you have a dilemma that's troubling you or an initiative you'd like to take forward? Ask 100 people who understand what you're doing and what you want to achieve how they can help.

SUNDAY 23

WELCOME TO LIMMUD CONFERENCE

Clinic: Young and Teen Limmud

Hannah Minsky
13.40 Lib 2

Taking Limmud Home: What do we value?

Clive Lawton
16.50 Lib 2

MONDAY 24TH

Clinic: Maximising the press opportunities for your Limmud event

Dan Brown
14.00 SU Terrace Bar

Taking Limmud Home: Limmud decision making – how and why?

Steve Miller
17.00 Lib 1

Marketing Limmud – the whole picture

Oliver Marcus & Richard Verber
17.00 Lib 2

TUESDAY 25

Clinic: But what do you actually do? Roles and responsibilities on your team

Helena Miller
14.00 SU Terrace Bar

Taking Limmud Home: Are we missing a chair at the table?

Uri Berkowitz &
David Bilchitz
17.00 Lib 1

Avoiding the black-hole: how to make a Limmud event financially sustainable

Sam Brandman
17.00 Lib 2

WEDNESDAY 26

Clinic: Case study lightning round

Dani Serlin
14.00 SU Terrace Bar

Taking Limmud Home: We're all different ... we're all the same ... models of Limmud around the world

Helena Miller
17.00 Lib 1

The joys of Limmud programming

Amanda Lee &
Judith Offman
17.00 Lib 2

THURSDAY 27

Clinic: Final Questions

Limmud International Team
11.30 SU Terrace Bar

STAYING CONNECTED AFTER CONFERENCE

Join the [Online Forum](https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/limmud-international-forum):
groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/limmud-international-forum

Like us and share activities and
photos on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/LimmudInternational):
[facebook.com/LimmudInternational](https://www.facebook.com/LimmudInternational)

Tweet your news on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/limmud_int):
twitter.com/limmud_int

Check event dates, locations and
news articles on our [Website](http://www.limmudinternational.org):
www.limmudinternational.org

Message from the Chairs: Endings



All endings are also beginnings. Mitch Albom, in his 2003 book, *"The Five People you Meet in Heaven"*, makes this observation and also says that we often don't recognise the potential of endings. In Jewish terms, we are very comfortable with the connection between endings and beginnings. As soon as we finish reading the Torah, on Simchat Torah, on that very same day, we begin again. From Haazinu to Bereshit, with barely a pause for breath.

At Limmud International, we have been pre-occupied with endings and beginnings over the past few months. We two are ending as Limmud International Co-chairs, and David Hoffman will be replacing us. David will be joining Kevin Sefton, who will replace Carolyn Bogush as Chair of Limmud, and take an active role in fundraising and training across Limmud and Limmud International. The Executive Director of Limmud, Raymond Simonson, has left for a new role at the JCC for London, and a new Executive Director, Shelley Marsh, has recently taken up her position in the Limmud office.

Endings are an opportunity to look back at our successes. We hope that we took the amazing legacy that Andrew Gilbert handed to us when he stepped down as Chair of Limmud International and developed it responsibly and creatively. We have supported many new Limmud groups in the past three years and worked with many established groups.

We created the Training on Tour programme and developed an increasingly strong training programme for Limmud International delegates at Limmud Conference in the UK in December each year. We conducted robust research leading to the Limmud International Study (2012) and we vastly enhanced our profile in the world, thanks to the efforts of our media initiatives. Communication has developed – this newsletter and the Limmud International Online Forum are just two examples of how we have been able to keep in contact.

Endings are an opportunity to think about the challenges we faced. We have not always been able to help every group through its difficulties. We hope our support has helped you, but we know that we haven't been able to solve every issue presented to us. There are also projects we have not been able to take forward to launch but we hope will be a foundation for development in the future.

"We often don't recognise the potential of endings"

Endings are an opportunity to say thank you. To our steering group, whose members over the years have worked to ensure our success, to the Limmud professionals with whom we have worked, to our friends and supporters worldwide, to our funders. Whilst co-chairing, Limmud International has given each of us a mutual support system in each other, we fully recognise that we could not have achieved anything without each of these people.

Thank you to all of you too. Without the drive and energy of Limmud International group members, we would not have *"developed into an amazing international movement of study and friendship, and mainly of Jewish identity and identification"* as Haaretz wrote some years ago.

Endings are beginnings. We two will go on to accomplish new things, and Limmud International will go from strength to strength under its new leadership. We look forward to keeping in touch with many of you both personally and through our continued commitment to Limmud. We wish you all well, and much success, as you take your Limmud community into 2013.

"Endings are an opportunity to look back at our successes...[and] to think about the challenges we faced"

**By Helena Miller and Uri Berkowitz,
Co-chairs Limmud International**



AN INTERVIEW WITH

Fernando Rubín, President, and Patricia Kahane, Board Member, Limmud Buenos Aires www.limudba.org (English adaptation by Dani Serlin)

In a series of interviews with Limmud activists around the world, we hear from pioneers of Limmud in Latin America.

Why is Limmud a good model for engagement?

Buenos Aires es una ciudad con una intensa y múltiple vida institucional judía. Hay instituciones socio deportivas (JCCS) con una variadísima propuesta, comunidades de todos tipos de denominaciones y adscripciones religiosas, instituciones culturales, etc. Sin embargo, hay bastante dificultad para generar espacios de encuentro que permitan albergar y hacer dialogar, bajo un mismo techo, todas estas diferencias. Creemos que la excelente respuesta que Limmud encuentra en la gente es justamente porque Limmud potencia esta fortaleza de la comunidad argentina, brindando un espacio inclusivo, horizontal y voluntario.

Buenos Aires is a city with many Jewish institutions. Sports clubs (JCCS) have varied programmes; there are communities of all kinds of denominations and religious affiliations; and cultural institutions, etc. However, there is considerable difficulty in creating spaces in which to meet that accommodate all these differences and make dialogue possible under one roof. We believe that the excellent response Limmud has found here reflects the strength of the Argentinian community and the need for an inclusive space that is egalitarian and led by volunteers.

What challenges has Limmud Buenos Aires experienced?

El primer desafío fue la instalación misma del proyecto. La comunidad judía local no está acostumbrada a proyectos voluntarios que no dependan de ninguna de las organizaciones comunitarias existentes, lo cual generaba cierto resquemor en relación a "quién está detrás de esto?". El otro desafío, pasado actual y futuro, es la sustentabilidad humana del proyecto: la renovación e incorporación de nuevos voluntarios, consustanciados con los valores Limmud y con deseo de compromiso con el proyecto, es una tarea central, continua y desafiante.

The first challenge was the installation of the project itself. The local Jewish community is not used to volunteer projects that are not subject to existing community organizations, which generated some apprehension regarding "who is behind this?". The other challenge, past present and future, is the human sustainability of the project: refreshing and adding new volunteers who are imbued with the values of Limmud and the desire to commit to the project are a central, continuous and challenging task.

What are your proudest achievements?

Estamos orgullosos de haber creado un espacio auténticamente plural. Estamos orgullosos de haberle propiciado voz a muchos judíos con ganas de compartir saberes y sin espacio donde hacerlo. Estamos orgullosos de haberle dado lugar a muchas voces jóvenes, que gracias a Limmud comenzaron a hacerse visibles. Nos enorgullece el crecimiento, la gente que se hace "fan de Limmud" y responde a

todas las propuestas, el haber desarrollado en 2012 un exitosísimo Limmud Express. Nos encanta tener voluntarios de todas las edades.



We are proud to have created a truly cross-communal space for the many Jewish voices eager to share knowledge, but who are without space to do so. We are proud of the growth, that people have become "fans of Limmud" and respond positively to all our programmes and having developed in 2012 a highly successful Limmud Express event. We love to have volunteers of all ages.

How would you like to see Limmud Buenos Aires develop in the next 5 years?

Nos gustaría tener un proyecto que pueda convocar a más personas y que se consolide como sinónimo de diversidad, respeto, independencia y juventud. Nos imaginamos un Limmud con una actividad central anual, con eventos más pequeños durante el año, aprovechando la potencia de la web para generar espacios de conversación y aprendizaje continuos, contando con producción de materiales que puedan ir realimentando la cadena de estudio e intercambio más allá de los encuentros presenciales.

We would like to have a project that will reach more people and to consolidate Limmud as a synonym for diversity, respect, independence and youth. We imagine a Limmud year with a core activity, with smaller events throughout the year, leveraging the power of the web to create spaces for conversation and continuous learning, with production of materials that can feed into the learning journey and exchanges outside of meeting in person.

What is the most important advice you would give to other Limmud groups?

Es muy importante mantener la chispa de entusiasmo en los distintos grupos de voluntarios. Para lograrlo es vital impulsar a los voluntarios en el liderazgo de nuevos proyectos que renueven la motivación y crear espacios de comunicación para que todos se involucren y se sientan partícipes. Pero creemos que el consejo más importante es no perder nunca el foco en los valores. Los valores no son sólo un puntapié inicial, son básicamente aquello que nos ayuda a resolver diariamente los dilemas y problemáticas que el crecimiento trae consigo.

It is very important to keep the spark of enthusiasm alive amongst the volunteers. To achieve this it is vital to encourage volunteers to lead new projects, to renew motivation and create opportunities for communication for everyone involved and to feel part of a team. But we think the most important tip is to never lose the focus on values. Values are not just a kick start, they help us to solve the daily dilemmas and problems that growth brings.

WHY WE KEEP COMING BACK FOR MORE

Hagai M. Segal

When I first heard about Limmud some years ago, I wondered why people would go away for days on end to study together! When you haven't experienced Limmud you don't quite get it, but from my first visit as an invited presenter it made perfect sense. Once you've gone, you're aware of what it is, and its unique nature and atmosphere.

Since my first Limmud Conference I have had a number of fascinating and enjoyable experiences within the UK at Day Limmuds in Scotland, South London, Manchester and Leeds and as far afield as Los Angeles and as a Scholar-in-Residence at Limmud-Oz Sydney.

A huge appeal for presenters, who spend their lives involved in education, is the passion of Limmud participants who come to learn and exchange information. We get to present to highly intelligent, well-informed individuals who contribute to the learning process. I believe that great education is a collaborative process, with everyone learning including the educator!

My area of expertise is the Middle East, involving issues that are often divisive, and it is admirable that my sessions at Limmud very rarely become adversarial. This

is not usually the case in the 'Jewish community'! We're all here to learn and share in this environment, and this is tremendously appealing as an educator.

I value the opportunity at Limmud to be an equal participant whether I'm presenting or not. If I do come as a presenter there are many other great sessions to attend. Everyone is a participant no matter who you are. We all have the same name badges with our first name in large print and our last name set smaller below. I remember at my first Limmud Conference in the UK, someone came up to me after a session I had presented and asked very well informed questions. I was intrigued and looked their name up afterwards and discovered they were a prominent politician from another country.

To me, Limmud is a wonderfully egalitarian learning environment that is unique to both the Jewish and non-Jewish world.

Hagai M. Segal is an internationally renowned lecturer and advisor on Middle Eastern affairs and modern terrorism.



Naomi Less

Colorado, LA, UK, NY, Atlanta, Sydney, Boston, Philadelphia... each an experiment in community-building, collaboration and tolerance. I am fresh off the plane from Australia, glowing with excitement for new, budding relationships, new learnings about love, Torah, niggunim, Israel - and grateful for the wonderful volunteers and staff who were so welcoming to us Yankees!

I feel very privileged to have been asked to participate multiple times in sharing music, prayer, education and Torah at Limmuds across the globe. As an artist, it is an amazing opportunity to be given exposure to such a wide slice of the Jewish community. I always leave with the feeling that I have received much more than I have been given - memories, connections, collaborations and of course LEARNING! It fills my creative well and re-energizes me personally with a deep love for Jewish community. It's one of the first places, as well, that my partner/producer, Glenn Grossman, felt re-connected to Jewish community (thanks Limmud UK peeps - you know who you are!). So for that I am deeply grateful for our new shared language!

Participating as an artist in Limmud is not without its challenges, though. It's important to keep this in consideration when thinking about how we engage our artistic providers in the Jewish community. A bit of perspective: I know the artists reading this will nod their heads when they read my reference to the countless times we are asked to serve the community and offer our art for free - "it's great for exposure!" "You'll get gigs out of it" "... and often, we happily

comply - because we feel passionate about enriching the Jewish community.

For example, if someone is a solo artist/presenter, we are grateful for the generous registration and transportation waiver. But when Limmud is interested in an ensemble - theater, dance or a band - then it becomes more complicated. In order to deliver the professional product Limmud is interested in presenting, we artists end up bringing and paying our musicians or company members from our own pockets, losing a great deal of money at each Limmud we participate in. Artists come to Limmud to volunteer and build community; our support players come to support the professional product. If we come by ourselves, we are not able to deliver the product Limmuds may have wanted. It becomes a financial issue for us.

So, is there a way to enable the artistic community to *give* back to Limmud without actually *setting us* back financially? I pose this question for us to consider as many may not realize this is an issue. I welcome and look forward to a community discourse!

Songwriter. Activist. Rocker. Worship leader. Educator. Naomi Less engages, enlightens and empowers worldwide audiences through concerts, worship and workshops. designed to open hearts, minds and hands.



WHY WE KEEP COMING BACK FOR MORE

Yaffa Epstein

In the last five years, I have had the privilege of participating in Limmud gatherings in the UK, NY, Germany, the Galil and Jerusalem. While I met many different kinds of Jews, from different denominations, backgrounds, orientations, affiliations with Judaism, and perspectives on the Jewish community, by far the most fascinating character I met at Limmud was God. Imagine that, God attending a Limmud conference! Now, don't be concerned, I'm not delusional nor am I a prophet. Allow me to explain.

The Talmud in Tractate Brachot teaches that when one sees a large crowd of Jews one should make the blessing: "*Blessed is the One who knows secrets*". The Talmud explains that the reason we say this blessing is that since "*their minds are not similar to each other, and their faces are not similar to each other*" only God really knows their secrets. In other words, each person is an individual, with singular physical and mental qualities.

There is something deeply beautiful about this, that just by being created, each person has something unique and special to bring to the world, and this expression of uniqueness is in fact an expression of God's creation. At the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, we try to cultivate this value in our students, and it is a core value at Limmud as well. Each person is created by the divine, and is in essence inherently divine, and thus has something to add to the divine conversation. At Limmud, each participant is encouraged to bring out their divine voice by acting as both teacher and student. For me, one of the most precious elements of

Limmud is that I too am invited to be a student. I often give several sessions, choosing subjects that are the dearest to my heart, or at times, teaching topics in Judaism with which I am struggling. Sometimes, I'll explore topics that are controversial, and even painful to me. Limmud allows me this freedom - the freedom to share my joy in the texts and the freedom to share my critique of the texts. What makes this possible? My fellow learners, and my fellow teachers. The brilliant minds in the room who ask sharp questions, make insightful comments, and perhaps most of all, join together in the communal project that is Limmud.

This is the great fact: Limmudniks suspend disbelief, suspend sarcasm, suspend negativity and bring love and respect into the room. Love and respect for Judaism, Jewish texts, and the people around them, even if they are different. That love enables the Torah, culture, politics, art, dance, and music of the Jewish people to grow just one more inch, to enhance us, and to lift us up to a place of beauty. This is only possible in an environment where we recognize that learning itself is a divine revelation of the secrets we each hold, and are charged to bring to the world.



Yaffa Epstein teaches Talmud and Jewish Liturgy, and serves as the Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

CHAVRUTA STUDY

Generosity and justice

In many countries and cultures, this time of year is referred to as the 'season of giving.' Via direct mail and internet, as well as on airwaves and street corners, we are frequently asked to 'give generously.'

But what does it mean to give 'generously'? How does generosity differ from justice? And what does our Jewish tradition say about all of this? Over latkes or lattes, we invite you to reflect on these issues, using the text and questions that follow as an aid to discussion...

Generosity is the granting of good to one who has no claim or entitlement from the person who gives. To pay a worker their wages or a creditor their debt is not generosity, but justice [tzedeck] and fairness. In contrast, giving charity [tzedakah] to the poor, inviting guests home, and giving gifts are acts of generosity.

Source: Abraham ben Moses ben Maimon,
The Guide to Serving God, 5:1

For discussion:

- What is the difference between generosity and justice?
- Is it incumbent upon us to be generous, or only to be just?

The material above is excerpted from the international Limmud 2012 Chavruta Project, *Money*, which will debut at Limmud Conference. If you enjoyed this short preview, please join us each morning from 09:10-10:20 in Rootes Panorama for additional texts and discussion. To purchase copies of *Money* or to get involved in the 2013 International Chavruta Project, please contact dani@limmud.org



By Karen Radkowsky,
Limmud NY,
Chavruta Team Leader

LIMMUD GROUP EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Limmud FSU St. Petersburg

28-30 September 2012 www.limmud.spb.ru

About 350 people of various ages and backgrounds, but all sharing an interest either in Jewish knowledge or in Jewishly hanging out, or both, spent the weekend in "Raivola" – an attractive holiday resort 70 kilometers away from St. Petersburg.



The wide range of topics, from a deep Talmudic discussion on property dealings, to staff management, with some Jewish academic topics in the middle, attracted listeners away from the beckoning autumn forest outside. The weather was on our side – chilly and drizzling during the day but warm and dry in the pleasant lecture halls.

Guests from Moscow, Novgorod, Baltic countries, Great Britain, USA, Germany, Finland, Ukraine and Israel attended the Festival. The team of volunteers enthusiastically took care of our every need. People were learning, listening, chatting in the halls and dining room, rejoicing in the opportunity to make new friends and to catch exciting lectures and meet the charismatic presenters.

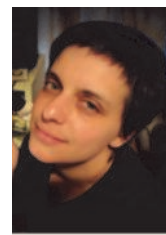
It was wonderful to meet in person some of the key Limmud veterans like Clive Lawton, one of the original founders of Limmud over 30 years ago in the UK, and Chaim Chesler, Sandra Cahn and Mikhail Chlenov, founders of Limmud FSU for Russian-speakers, now in its sixth year. The young Limmud participants added their energy and voices to the unique Festival atmosphere.

Experienced Limmudniks say that every Limmud is different. Ours is more academic, with a higher intellectual level than the others,

they say. But it is worthwhile to emphasize that in St. Petersburg we also love to dance and sing and listen to good music despite all the serious content available with the other options. "Optional" is the key word; the idea of making your own choice as to what sessions to attend. This key principle of Limmud was very new for us in our first Festival, but this year it was clear that participants had got used to it and were able to manage their schedules accordingly.

Planning for Limmud FSU St. Petersburg 2013 will get underway shortly. We invite you to follow our website <http://limmud.spb.ru/> and as soon as we announce the Festival dates, to make a note in your diary and be sure to join us.

**By Raya Burshtein,
Member of the
Organizing
Committee,
Limmud FSU
St. Petersburg**



Limmud Montreal

14 October 2012 www.lemood.ca

This year's *Le Mood* festival yielded nearly 1,000 participants coming from Montreal and surrounding cities, such as New York, Toronto, and as far as Poland. With over 115 innovative sessions throughout the day and a concert and comedy show in the evening, this event had something for everyone and kept people interested from morning to night.

My role was to help arrange *Le Food*, an event in and of itself that invited Montreal's most popular food vendors to provide samples of their signature dishes prepared for one-night only as kosher meals. By offering this unique experience to the community at large, *Le Food* aimed to redefine the Jewish food scene in Montreal.

This was certainly a challenge to plan as we needed to teach these



restaurants to "kosherize" their recipes and set them up in kosher kitchens to prepare their dishes. However, in the end, with hard work from the team of chefs, restaurateurs and volunteers in the community, *Le Food* was a great success. A friend of mine kept saying how excited he was to finally try the famous hamburgers which he had heard so much about but could never try following kashrut. He assured me afterwards that all of the hype was well deserved.

Le Food provided another facet to the *Le Mood* festival that enabled young adults to interact with Jewish life in ways that were innovative and unexpected. I look forward to continuing my role as *Le Food* team leader and growing the program to introduce more entry points for traditionally less connected Jewish young adults to explore Jewish culture and traditions in ways that are meaningful to them.

**By Tamara
Rozansky,
Le Food
Team Leader,
Limmud Montreal**



LIMMUD GROUP EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Limmud Netherlands

21 October 2012 www.limmoed.nl

In good harmony, a group of only 19 volunteers prepared the one-day Limmud event in Amsterdam. It took place in a charming old school building with atmosphere.

In the central court some 30 Jewish organisations, both local as well as international, built a great shuk with stands promoting ideas and selling their products.

This year the tzedakah project was paying attention to *ETROG*, a home for 12 Jewish mentally handicapped people. They live and work under supervision of a team of dedicated professionals. The Jewish calendar is well observed.

The residents sold home made candles and pottery. The tikun olam project was fund raising for Medicine sans Frontiers. Both projects also delivered sessions that were well attended.

Approximately 70 sessions were presented to a gathering of some



500 participants from all over the country and abroad. A special moment was the lunch break. Hundreds of participants found a place to eat, to chat, meet old friends and make new acquaintances in the inner court of this lovely, historic school building.

By Ahoevah
van Praag,
Chair Limmoed
2012,
Limmud
Netherlands



Limmud Mexico

28 October 2012 www.limudmexico.com

Everything started at an ROI Latin American gathering in Buenos Aires. Something new had to be brought to the Mexican Jewish community. Although our Chair Renato Huarte had heard about Limmud LA, inspiration finally came with colleagues attending the ROI gathering and his talk with Patricia Kahane, a founder of Limmud Buenos Aires.



For many Jews in Mexico it was quite complicated to get the idea about what Limmud is all about. But, we finally got together to start this new project. Most of the core values of Limmud were discussed in detail and adapted to the Mexican reality. We worked with the wide net of Jewish day schools in Mexico and the Colegio Israelita de México-ORT was kind enough to open its doors as our first venue.

The six members of the organising committee had to do almost everything. With no office but cafés in Mexico City, we worked very hard. Making decisions, designing the logo, dealing with different institutions, writing articles for the local and international media, and much more were part of this exciting project. We received a great amount of support from many local institutions little by little, and financial support from the ROI community and the Metta Saade Foundation - a local Jewish Mexican foundation for innovative projects like Limmud México.

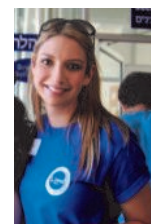
Finally the big day came. Young Jewish volunteers made history by organizing the first ever Limmud México. 230 participants and volunteers took part in more than 50 sessions on offer. Limmud México truly provided a space for everyone. It was amazing to witness students, families, prominent philanthropists, rabbis and community leaders from each stream of Judaism and major Jewish organizations come together for a day of learning and sharing.

We tackled tough subjects that are still considered taboo amongst Mexican Jews and we ventured out of our comfort zones to create a

brand new way to experience community. We had a panel with different rabbis - conservative, reconstructionist, orthodox and secular - dealing with questions from the participants. We also had a session on the Jewish Gay Association in Mexico and on conversions. Rock Sefaradí was the main attraction at the closure, getting into the new Ladino mood.

People are still very enthusiastic about Limmud and are even suggesting having Limmud México twice a year. We had over 50 volunteers mainly from the 13 Zionist youth movements, and people that started to love the project. We can say that Limmud México is no longer a project of six people but an event that has been embraced by the Mexican Jewish community as its own. The event was so well received and such a success that we've already started planning the second Limmud México with lots of eager volunteers!

By Mirelle Leider
Schlesinger,
Cultural Program &
Logistics Coordinator
and Renato Huarte
Cuéllar, Chair
Limmud Mexico



LIMMUD EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Limmud Keshet ExYu

1-4 November 2012 www.limmud-keshet-exyu.org

In November 2012, the Macedonian Jewish community had the honor to host the 6th Limmud Keshet ExYu conference in the small city of Struga on the famous Ohrid lake.

Despite the long distances most participants had to travel, a good mood and smiles on everyone's faces radiated until the very end of the conference. We gathered 490 participants from more than 20 Jewish communities in the Former Yugoslavian region (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia), as well as from Israel, Bulgaria and the UK.



This year among participants there were 20 presenters and 26 volunteers, and they are to be "blamed" for such a fantastic and colorful program that covered various topics from tradition, culture, arts to philosophy, politics and history. Adults could choose from one of three to five options every hour. One of the sessions that caused great interest was a Jewish cooking project in which

participants prepared delicious Sephardic dishes, and, of course, everybody had an opportunity to taste them.

For our young participants, our volunteers prepared an interesting and exciting program that lasted all day long. There were various activities such as Jewish learning whilst with and making puppets, a Maccabiah, Jewish ethical debates and parties.

As this was the biggest Limmud Keshet EXYU conference it was hard to gather everyone in one place, however, we succeeded in creating magical and heart warming moments before Kabbalat Shabbat when we all sang and danced to well known Jewish tunes. With this special feeling of community and togetherness, we welcomed Shabbat. In the same way, on Havdalah with a nice story and a play performed by children, we said good bye to Shabbat, and wished everyone to keep this magical feeling from the conference with them.

For the first time our Limmud Keshet officially ended on Saturday night, however on Sunday our



participants had small tour of Macedonian capital, with an organized visit of Holocaust Memorial Museum in Skopje.

Every year more and more people are interested to participate in the Limmud Keshet ExYu conference and, more importantly, the value of volunteering from year to year is higher. It is very important that each year we have more participants wishing to present a Jewish topic of their interest. One of the main success indicators is that a main issue among the participants was a great difficulty to choose what session to attend.

By **Dina Sosberger**,
Chair,
Limmud Keshet
ExYu



Leeds Day Limmud

4 November 2012 www.limmud.org/leeds

Erev Bonfire night in Leeds and a crowd of more than 300 Limmudniks enjoyed a programme full of firecrackers in the superb surroundings of Weetwood Hall Hotel. Timing is everything and the newly crowned Channel 4 Jewish Mum of the Year and Leeds Day



Limmud Committee member, Sandi Firth, was on hand to welcome everyone at Limmud Reception.

44 sessions, beginning at 10 o'clock, were on offer during the day, with a huge variety of topics. These included a Klezmer workshop, the Berlin 1936 Olympics and the Jewish contribution to the right to ramble in the UK.

Presenters from all over the UK were in evidence. The Brawer family, alone, provided three, including Rabbi Brawer, the JC columnist, his wife Dina, a Jewish educator, and their 15 year old son, Asher, whose subject was Kafka, Proust and the marginalised Jew. Asher drew a large and enthusiastic

audience, all of whom were amazed at his intellect and maturity. "What will he be like when he's 18?" was a frequently heard remark. The day ended at 5.30pm, after an inspirational session on Isaac from the ever popular Clive Lawton.

Another unique advantage was the provision of a 5 star lunch from the local Jewish Community Centre, always a major part of Leeds Day Limmud.

By **Robert Bartfield**,
Co-Chair,
Leeds Day Limmud



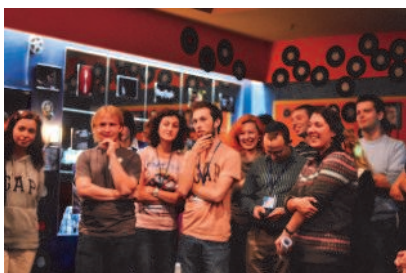
LIMMUD EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Limmud FSU Uzhgorod

1-4 November 2012 www.limmudfsu.org

A sixth Limmud FSU Ukraine conference of Jewish learning took place in Uzhgorod, the westernmost city of Ukraine, over four days.

The central theme was tolerance and inter-cultural dialogue. This theme was chosen by the organizers because there has never been an ethnic or religious conflict of any consequence in Uzhgorod. The city of Uzhgorod, in the region of Trans-Carpathia on the border with Hungary, is home to many national and ethnic groups speaking different languages, with different customs, traditions, cultures and religions, and yet all of them dwell in peace and harmony. As such this old and beautiful city is a living example of coexistence and tolerance, qualities which are all too often missing in the world today.



Some 600 participants from all over Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, Slovakia, Israel, Hungary and USA took part in the Conference, making it a significant event for the local Jewish community. As always, Limmud FSU's diversity, rich program and sense of unity created a unique atmosphere for learning, networking and communication between the - mostly young - participants.

The local volunteer organizing committee had invited some 80 presenters from the FSU, Israel, United States and Europe, who between them conducted over 150 lectures, master-classes, training sessions, workshops, discussions, tours and cultural events.

Among the presenters were Lev Novozhenov, a well-known Russian television presenter and writer of a series of television programs; Vladimir Vishnevsky, entertainer, television host, popular Russian poet and one of the most quoted writers in the FSU today; Yacov Livne, Director of the Euro-Asian Department of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Igor Pehovich, an actor at the Moscow Taganka

Theater, and Yelena Smehova, a Russian writer and journalist.

Conference participants also met with Yuri Pogorelov, the mayor of Uzhgorod, who took part in one of the round-table discussions on Israel – Ukraine relations. The participants, presenters and organizers also enjoyed two tours: a tour of the city of Uzhgorod and a coach trip to Mukachevo – the famous center of Jewish life in the past (also known as Munkach).

A traditional Gala opening was held with the participation of the Budapest Kleizmer Band; popular Jewish-Ukrainian singer, Iryna Rosenfeld, the Uzhgorod Folklore Ensemble, Michael Milmeister, Founder of *Zhest* ("Gesture") Pantomime Theater Studio from Germany and the Trans-Carpathian Regional Music and Drama Theater. The Gala event was held in the local Philharmonic Hall which, until 1947, housed the city's Choral synagogue.

By **Olga Tovkach**,
Chair of PR
Committee,
Limmud FSU
Ukraine



Limmud Stockholm

17-18 November 2012 www.limmud.se

This year in a new location, the Norra Real High School, in central Stockholm, Limmud Stockholm celebrated its five-year jubilee.

On Saturday evening hundreds of excited Stockholm Jews pour into the historical venue of one of Stockholm's oldest schools. The auditorium quickly fills for Havdalah, led by Simon Livson – Finland's new chief rabbi, making his first appearance in Sweden.

This year the programming committee outdid themselves, booking great presenters both foreign and domestic, whilst leaving lots of room for local talents to lead and facilitate

Jewish learning. Avrum Burg was booked to present, but due to Pillar of Defence he felt compelled to stay in Israel. Even so the response from the participants was to rush from session to session, stopping only for coffee (if that).

We had a great volunteer team this year, spanning all ages and Jewish walks of life. The two-day volunteer community that is established every November is one of the most exciting and vibrant in Stockholm,



defined by hard work and an inclusive atmosphere.

As is fitting for a five year celebration we had a record breaking 700 participants, volunteers and presenters included. Limmud Stockholm has become one of the most important forums in Jewish life in Sweden, where scholars, politicians, clergy and artists come to debate and discuss the most important topics concerning Jewish life today. And in the Limmud fashion, the most exciting discussions take place in the bar.

By **Marc Harris**,
Co-chair,
Limmud Stockholm 2012

LIMMUD EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Limmud-Oz Sydney Fest

23-25 November 2012 www.limmud-oz.com.au

Seniors, babies and everyone in-between enjoyed the recent Limmud-Oz Fest held just outside of Sydney, Australia. Over 100 participants spent two days relaxing, volunteering, listening, laughing, singing, questioning and of course, eating.

The second biennial Limmud-Oz Sydney Fest was co-chaired for the first time by volunteers (Nomi Blum and Ben Berger) backed by a great committee. With great support from the dedicated Shalom Institute staff, they worked with multiple committees to create a diverse program and an enjoyable Shabbat for a varied mix of ages and religious affiliations.

In addition to many local and interstate presenters, participants particularly enjoyed the opportunity to hear international guests, including singer, songwriter, educator and chick-rocker Naomi Less and journalist, author and commentator Gershom Gorenberg. Local word artist and standup comedian, Tami Sussman, also kept the crowds entertained on Saturday night.

All participants were "volunteered" for a shift in the kitchen or kids program helping to distribute the workload, so everyone had a chance to participate in sessions over the 48 hours of programming.



Accommodation options included private and dorm rooms, as well as camping. As the rooms were all booked out Limmud-Oz Fest may have to find a larger site with more accommodation for November 2014.

By Sharon Berger,
Volunteer,
Limmud-Oz Sydney



LIMMUD IN THE MEDIA

Selected edited extracts of news articles and blogs about Limmud

Full articles can be found at Limmud International's '[In the Media](#)' page and at the links below

JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND – TOWARDS A SENSE OF JOY AND WONDER

By Katka Reszke, Jewishjournal.com,
2 November 2012 - <http://tinyurl.com/czpjdfn>

"We were over 1000 this year" - said someone on the bus as soon as we left the venue of the fifth edition of Limmud Poland.

The first Limmud in Poland was organized in 2008. About 350 participants enrolled. Five years later, Limmud is unquestionably the largest Jewish event in the country. It is not the numbers that count though. The idea of the conference is that everyone is a student and anyone can be a teacher. Limmud is the Hebrew word for 'learning'. And learning, we might say, has been perhaps one of the essential components of the contemporary Polish Jewish experience.

In defiance of the persisting conviction of many foreign Jews that Jewish life in Poland ended with the Holocaust or with the communist antisemitic purge of 1968, Jews in today's Poland come together and share their knowledge and experience during this unique event. For one weekend in a year, participants of all ages from all over the country – singles, couples and families – gather in a large conference hotel complex in a suburb of Warsaw.

Limmud is the perfect illustration of what being Jewish in Poland is about - it gives ear to the plurality of voices which exist in the Polish Jewish community. 'Learning' itself is in fact the Polish Jewish *modus vivendi*. Since the fall of communism in 1989, the number of Jews in Poland has been a growing one. Jews are deassimilating, or 'coming out of the closet', if you like, and it is an unprecedented phenomenon in that part of Europe.

For some, participating in Limmud will be the first Jewish 'thing' they do. Limmud Poland is a site of many narratives – the ones in the lecture rooms and the many more which reverberate in the hallways.

The more and the less religious outlooks are visible throughout the weekend and account for some of the most interesting points of discussion. On Shabbat morning, Jonathan Ornstein, executive director of the Krakow JCC, set out to break down the Ten Commandments and offer an alternative set of commandments as put forth by the world's most famous atheist, Richard Dawkins. Both religious and secular participants were in attendance.

Limmud is the perfect form of expression for Polish Jewish identities. The very nonessential "essence" of post-transition Polish Jewish identity is in being-in-discussion – in a changing configuration of specific situations we find ourselves in and distinct others we interact with. To be a Jew in Poland today is to participate in a dialogue.

LIMMUD IN THE MEDIA

LIMMUD INTERNATIONAL: CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL JEWISH CONVERSATION

By **Helena Miller**, Ejewishphilanthropy.com,
15 November 2012 - <http://tinyurl.com/8ne8sh3>

[This essay is from The Peoplehood Papers, volume 9 -The Collective Jewish Conversation: Its Role, Purpose and Place in the 21st Century - published by the Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education.]

"It's a wonderful environment for feeling part of the larger Jewish people." This was one of many comments articulated in response to a study that took place within the past year, to evaluate the outcome of Limmud on the individuals and local communities who are engaged in Limmud events.

The Limmud mission – emphasizing learning, diversity, community, empowerment, expanding Jewish horizons, creating opportunities to connect, and a commitment to respect each other – has proved to be a compelling set of values both beyond Limmud and the UK. In 1998, a group of Israelis from the Galil attended Limmud Conference and were inspired to create their own Limmud Conference back in the Galil. The following year, Limmud Oz took place for the first time in Sydney. Limmud was beginning to inspire communities far and wide. Today, it is an international movement comprising annual events in more than 50 locations worldwide, reaching over 30,000 people per year.

In 2011, Steven M Cohen and Ezra Kopelowitz were commissioned by Limmud to work with researchers in the UK to collect and analyse data to explore the outcome of Limmud worldwide. An internet survey, sent to around 20,000 individuals, asked for demographic and personal details; exposure to and engagement with Limmud; personal and community Jewish journeys. Data was collected from more than 3,000 Limmud participants from 49 Limmud groups around the world.

We learnt that Limmud values are central to international groups: the uniqueness of a volunteer and participant culture is evident throughout the world. Limmud in Mexico has many elements that are recognisable in France and South Africa, for example. The Limmud values of cross-communalism and diversity are also universally shared throughout the Limmud International community: A participant could attend Limmud in Turkey, Argentina or Poland and find Jews of all denominations and none, who study and learn within and beyond their usual Jewish boundaries.

From the perspective of Limmud, this shows undoubted success. The Limmud values are successfully migrating around the world. It is a form of externally imposed success focusing on Limmud as an organisation, and is a form of global corporate identity. In the same way that a visitor to Starbucks instantly recognises where he or she is, whether the cafe happens to be located in London or Louisiana, so Limmud participants recognise the Limmud brand wherever they are in the world. A second aspect of Limmud as a values based global

framework focuses on the participants. One out of every six of Limmudniks worldwide have attended a Limmud event outside their home country. Israelis are the most likely to have attended outside their home country, closely followed by Europeans. Australians are the least likely, which given their geographical location is not surprising. When we further probed, Israelis are most likely to have attended as a presenter outside their home country. This challenges the perception of Israelis as uninterested in Diaspora Jewry, rather they are strong bridge builders.

The European finding interests us as it indicates that Jews in their 20s and 30s (the European predominant demographic who engage with Limmud) do not see expression of Jewish life as something which is bounded by geographical borders. This resonates with recent research on Jewish identity in five European countries (JDC 2011) which found that Jewish identity is not only a choice of culture and values, but that very few of the twelve hundred interviewees talked of *national* links to their Jewish identity. Young Europeans do indeed see themselves as members of *global Jewry*.

Thirdly, the study gave us many examples of how Limmud groups and their participants recognise that they are part of a global community. They are able to articulate a sense of peoplehood, understanding that the global aspect connects to the personal: "*Limmud has been a way for me to explore and connect to my Judaism, with people from all over the world.*" Renowned Jewish educator Avraham Infeld, speaking in London (July 2012) acknowledges that Limmud is the fulfilment of the Jewish peoplehood dream. He suggests that Limmud deals "*head on*" with the question of how we can remain a unified people when we are a people who lack uniformity.

Limmud enables people to feel part of an international community. But that is not enough. How can being a member of that community help us strengthen the Jewish people? This is where the core value of learning together is important. Mittelberg (2011) emphasizes the centrality of learning as a component of the individual's connection to the Jewish people. Limmud is not just about bringing people together, it is about opportunities to develop our Jewish values; deepen our Jewish knowledge. Data from our study showed that, for the majority of country groupings, motivation to learn with others is cited as the primary reason for getting involved with Limmud.

Coming back to an aspect of the Starbucks analogy, you return time after time, and the coffee is always the same. In fact in every Starbucks everywhere, the coffee should *always* be the same. Limmud must ensure that in content it is not like Starbucks. Whilst the core values should be the same at every Limmud event, we must pay attention to what it means to be a learning people. The content of the learning at Limmud should continue to give opportunities for individuals to explore, struggle and debate, in different ways, and at different levels. Participants should also be able to return time after time to deepen that learning in meaningful ways. It should be possible to have a depth of developing experience as a participant goes from Limmud experience to Limmud experience, throughout the world.

Limmud International news

The Limmud International community wishes mazel tov to David Wolkin, Executive Director of Limmud NY, on his engagement to Keeli Sorensen; and to David Bilchitz of the Limmud International Steering Group and Limmud South Africa on becoming Professor of Human Rights Law and Constitutional Law at University of Johannesburg.

Thank you to Uri Berkowitz and Karen Radkowsky for their guidance and editing of the Limmud International newsletter over the past three years.

Thank you to the 2012 Limmud International Steering Group: Amanda Lee, Claire Mandel, Clive Lawton, David Bilchitz, Judy Trotter, Karen Radkowsky, Oren Kaplan, Paul Turner and Ruthie Rotenberg. We especially thank Helena Miller and Uri Berkowitz for their leadership as Co-chairs over the past three years and welcome new Chair David Hoffman.

We also wish farewell to Carolyn Bogush, Chair of Limmud, and welcome to Kevin Sefton who will replace her.

We offer condolences to David Biton, valued member of the Limmud Galil team and international Chavruta project, on the passing of his father z"l.



Limmud
INTERNATIONAL

Calendar of upcoming events

FEBRUARY 2013

- 3 Manchester Day Limmud - www.limmud.org/manchester
- 9/10 Limmud Colorado - www.limmudcolorado.org
- 14/15 Limmud Arava - www.limmud.arava.gonegev.co.il
- 15-18 Limmud NY - www.limmudny.org
- 15-18 Limmud France - www.limoud.org
- 16-18 Limmud Bay Area - www.limmudba.org
- 17 Limmud Chicago - www.limmudchicago.org

MARCH 2013

- 2/3 Limmud Winnipeg - www.limmudwinnipeg.org
- 3 Harrow Day Limmud - www.limmud.org/harrow
- 10 Limmud Oresund - www.oresundslimmud.wordpress.com
- 15-17 Limmud FSU Princeton - www.limmudfsu.org
- 17 Limmud Hungary - www.limmud.hu
- 17 Limmud Tag Hamburg - www.limmud-tag.de

APRIL 2013

- 4/5 Limmud China - www.limmudchina.org
- 11-14 Limmud FSU Moscow - www.limmud.ru
- 21 Limmud Baltimore - www.limmudbaltimore.com
- 26-28 Limmud Philly - www.limmudphilly.org

TO GET THE MOST UPDATED CALENDAR OF LIMMUD EVENTS AROUND THE GLOBE PLEASE VISIT www.limmudinternational.org

As the voice of our Limmud International community, we would like to spread the news of significant life events for people in our group. If a Limmud activist in your local community experiences a special life event you'd like to share, please send your news to the Limmud Office by emailing: dani@limmud.org

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