

Limmud International Newsletter

Issue 2—Tamuz 5768 / July 2008

From the Chair—Andrew Gilbert



Andrew Gilbert—Limmud International Chair

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With thanks to all our surfers!

Some organisations are like horses. They are led by horse-riders who control, box and tame their horses. They do vital work but are highly systematic and measured. Limmud is more like a wave that we try to surf; exciting, unique, ever changing, ever developing. No two Limmuds are the same, no two Limmud events by the same group are alike. There is no point to surfing yesterday's waves, we have to surf today's - and what great teams of surfers are around in the Limmud world!

You will read in this newsletter of new groups holding their first events in Colorado, Ashkelon and Buenos Aires.... The existing groups from Australia, Moscow (totally run by locals), Germany

(first residential event), that have held their latest groundbreaking events.

The next three months see the next exciting stage in Limmud FSU with two events in Ashkelon and the first full Limmud event in the Ukraine in Yalta. There will be new groups with their first events in Sweden and Durban.

We are now running a growing number of review-training deployments and in recent months this has taken our growing team of trainers to Poland, Hungary, Germany, Colorado, LA, Philadelphia and Toronto. In the coming months this process will be rolled out wider (please see article below). We have started working on

supporting new groups in Philadelphia, Chicago & Israel.

And all the time new ideas, initiatives and innovations beckon. We are coming to the final stages before launching the new LI branding and websites.

There are so many people that could be thanked for making all this happen, but if we mentioned you all there would be no space to play credit to all your wondrous achievements.

May the waves be great and the surf high....

Andrew

Limmud International launches the First Stage of the Support and Nurturing Programme Internationally

Limmud International's main field of work is supporting, mentoring and nurturing all international Limmud groups: from learning and understanding the Limmud core values, principles and ethos, to gestation and adaptation of the Limmud model, through to support, training and empowerment of the local volunteer team, and finally the provision of tools to evaluate their events and enable further growth for the long term.

Keeping the Limmud essence does not happen by

itself. The Limmud International Team, volunteers and staff, through continuous and careful support and nurturing, encourage international groups to follow the Limmud core principles and to apply them, replicating the key elements of the model which will directly empower these local teams to create the desired transformational impact.

The Limmud International team is committed to deploying volunteers along with professional educators around the world to work on the ground with local

groups. A first cadre of 45 of these most experienced Limmud volunteers have participated in an orientation and preparation programme, enabling them to facilitate training and development seminars for international groups.

At this first stage of the programme, support has begun to be provided to different groups around the Limmud world, allowing teams of 2-4 trainers to mentor and support as required by each group. Limmud International is proud to have recently

spent time with teams in Argentina, Germany, Netherlands, Hungary, Colorado, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Toronto, at events and/or team weekends.

During the summer, this programme is being extended for the Limmud teams in Bulgaria, Turkey, Washington, Boston, Atlanta, France, FSU, Baltics and Romania.

As a relevant part of this project, a number of overseas participants will participate as a Limmud International delegation at Limmudfest in the UK in August, where they will be undergoing training.



Where did we start? A few years ago a small group thought that we should approach how we think about Jewry in an unconventional way. After the political changes in 1989 many Jewish communities came to life and got stronger, however this initial dash came to a halt. Although numerous youth, religious and cultural organizations welcomed people interested in Judaism one way or another, or just simply wanting to be in good company, innovation was necessary.

This group took Limmud as an example when it came up with the idea of Keshet, which evolved into Limmud-Keshet by last year.

We are organising the third Limmud-in Hungary with more volunteer participation and growing enthusiasm, after two very successful events.

In this third year we are able to look beyond the preparation and learn from it. We have held two volunteer team weekends in recent months facilitated by Limmud International.

We dedicated much time to discuss our realities and how to make the event particularly relevant to our local community. We could think on different approaches in sessions facilitated by Uri Berkowitz, volunteer from Limmud international, who managed to translate his vast experience in Limmud into the Hungarian reality.

We discussed the concept of volunteerism with different quotes from personalities, from historians, actors.

We dived into Jewish sources and texts and enriched ourselves, discussed of things we do not usually talk about and at the end, we realised we are a team, and that even if from different backgrounds, we do all want the same for our community.

After working with Clive Lawton and Uri Berkowitz from Limmud International, we are working on the fine tuning of our wonderful forthcoming event.

Every event is built around four ideas, which for this year are : Taboo, Journey, Blood and Hero. These ideas lead six theme tracks: Tradition, Arts, Community, Creative Energy (which sets not only the soul and the mind but also the body into movement), Agora (where anybody can give a lecture, tell



or share a story) and last but not least an **English track**. **We decided to go Internationally, we want to welcome you at our event.** We find it especially important not only to get to know our closer environment better and through new ways, but also to get in touch with other foreign communities and introduce to them the unique Hungarian Jewry, as well as Budapest- for example taking you on a sightseeing tour by a night bus in the city. We are planning concerts, Israeli dances, bicycles ride to visit old synagogues, presentations on Israeli writers and more.

We feel that this year is a milestone, organizing Limmud Keshet by the third time setting new precedents, and we plan for the long run by growing our team. **We are eager to show that the picture becomes really beautiful if all add something to it.**

We Thank Limmud International and Diego Ornique, our local JDC representative for their continuous support.

Limmud-Keshet Team, Hungary

Information: www.keset.hu

Contact: info@keset.hu

Limmud International Core Principles

in each issue, we will highlight one of the values that make part of a Limmud event

Participation and Voluntarism: we believe that all have an important contribution to make, and that this is best done through voluntarism. Limmud is not for profit but for the benefit of the community. As far as possible, any excess resources should always be ploughed back into improving Jewish education

Limmud International Core Value

“You must give some time to your fellow man. Even if it's a little thing, do something for which you get not pay but the privilege of doing it.”

Albert Schweizer (Nobel Prize winner)

“It is not your obligation to complete the task, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it entirely”

Pirke Avot 2:16

So far in 2008, more than 2500 volunteers have been involved in a Limmud event internationally.

Join something meaningful—Become a Limmud Volunteer - all over the world

For more information, contact the Limmud International Project Coordinator at : mariano@limmud.org

Tastes of Limmud



Limmud NY held its second annual Spring Sampler Benefit on April 9, 2008 at Temple Emanu-El in New York City. The event

was a huge success with over 200 people in attendance. Participants had the opportunity to hear an address on "Israel: The Next 60 Years" by Gary Rosenblatt, editor of the Jewish Week while they enjoyed a sampler of international cuisines. After dinner,



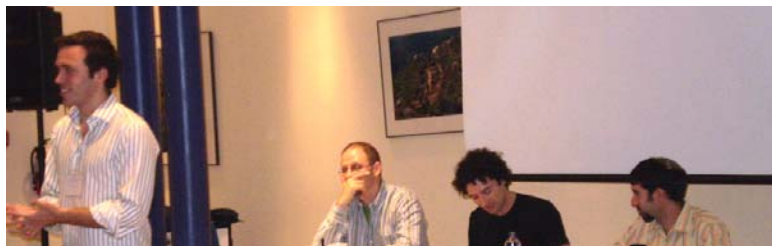
everyone had the opportunity to pick between five sessions, ranging in topic from Passover to "Tales of Passion in the Talmud". The evening concluded with a decadent dessert reception and music by Ramon Tasat.



Limmud Toronto



In a shameless bid to spread their excitement for their annual festival, Limmud Toronto's volunteers held a mini Taste of Limmud on June 11th. The Taste featured an introduction to Limmud and a panel discussion, "Israel as You've Never Seen or Heard Before,". Participants ate, learned, discussed and enjoyed the ambiance of University of Toronto's gorgeous Seeley Hall.



"Limmud is all about putting different perspectives on Jewish ideas in the same space," said Jonathan Moneta, Taste of Limmud Coordinator. "At our Taste of Limmud, we haven't confined the discussion to a narrow theme, rather we let the room guide the discussion around our speakers. We had Gregory Levey, a former speech writer for the Israeli government and now author of a hot new memoir; as well as Dan Mendelsohn Aviv with his sexualized take on Zionism, and Aaron Levy, rabbi of the new grassroots Annex Shul and Hillel of University of Toronto Campus. We're really very excited about the excellent positive feedback from the participants."

Tiyul-Limmud—Limmudfest in true Israeli Style



Five Limmud Galil activists who attended Limmudfest in the UK in 2006 and 2007 immediately became enthused about adapting this event to the Galilee. In November 2007 the first Tiyul-Limmud took place as a day event and on May 29-30, 2008 a two-day outdoor event was held at Mitzpe Abirim, incorporating study with hiking and overnight camping in this beautiful region. As with all Limmud Galil events, this was completely organized by volunteers. Herzl Habusha summarizes the experience:

After two days of enjoyment and fun I wish to say "Thank you"...

Between the seasons of winter and of

summer that stands at our door, between Pessach and Shavuot, between "planting with tears" and harvesting the first fruits, we set out on *Tiyul-Limmud*.

When nature is at its fullest strength and all around is growing and blooming, Our feet followed the paths of the Galilee, with its vast breathtaking views.

Beneath the "Big Allon" tree we studied about nature from our "Mekorot"

At the Ein Ziv Stream, surrounded by the joyous sound of children splashing in the water, we studied Hevruta.

We enjoyed a musical performance in the evening, singing, laughing and telling stories around an open fire far into the night.

We united with nature, with ourselves and with the friends who shared in this special experience.

We learned to observe nature, but also to look into ourselves and our environment.

Thank you for the heart and spirit put into the efforts that made *Tiyul-Limmud* a success: To Eyal for offering his wonderful facilities, to Ofer for all the organization and for skillful guiding on the hikes, to David for the Hevruta and enthusiasm, to Elana for her morning prayer service, to Ahuva, Heni, Irit and Mary. Without these Limmud Galil volunteers the event could not have taken place. In the true spirit of Limmud, Ido Beran and Oren Habusha – as second generation Limmudniks - volunteered their services as guards and medics on the hikes.

Herzl Habusha—Chair of Limmud Galil



What they say about us: Limmud in the media

Limmud FSU comes into its own – By Grant Slater—excerpt from the article published: 04/15/2008



MOSCOW (JTA) -- The night bus to Limmud Moscow navigates the Friday-night gridlock of Mercedes' and Range Rovers on Rublovskoye highway, the main thoroughfare to the chateaus of Russia's oligarchs.

Huddled in the back of the bus, a group of newly minted Limmudniks, as organizers call them, pass the time playing cards and trading the Hebrew phrases they picked up from Birthright Israel trips and Hillel retreats.

After three conferences here in two years Limmud -- the grassroots, volunteer-driven Jewish learning extravaganza that started in Britain and has spread to Jewish communities around the globe -- seems to be catching on in a country where the Jewish community is more accustomed to outside support than homegrown volunteerism and self-sustainability.

"This was completely foreign to them at first," said Alexander Pyatigorsky, a Limmud council member who recently started his own company in Moscow.

Most Jewish programs in Russia, he said, are "pushed from the top down. Limmud is the opposite; it's from the ground up."

Pyatigorsky said the attitude toward volunteerism already has started to shift. Whereas at first Limmud presenters wanted pay, now academics and experts in Jewish life show up at Limmud conferences here without expecting compensation.

Organizers proudly billed last weekend's conference as the first Limmud event conceived, organized and funded in large part on Russian soil.

Some 230 participants from Moscow paid more than \$100 -- a significant increase over past Limmuds .

Limmud "is not something that you sell to someone," he said. "It's something that you make yourself and take part in."

Founded 27 years ago in Britain, local Limmuds rely on volunteers for everything from organization to presentation in putting together gatherings that celebrate Jewish study,

fellowship, culture and pluralism.

A sprawling Limmud retreat with more than 700 attendees last October in a Moscow suburb drew dignitaries from every corner of the Russian Jewish community. In a rare show of unity, Rabbi Lazar of the Chabad-led Federation of Jewish Communities and Rabbi Shayevich of the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia both attended.

Attendees at last weekend's retreat -- one of a series of smaller conferences planned to supplement the bigger annual Limmud event -- drew many first-timers, according to conversations with dozens of participants.

Pavel Merchov, 20, a student at Moscow's Higher School of Economics, had never attended a Limmud event or observed any of the Jewish holidays. That changed this winter.

At his girlfriend's urging, Merchov traveled to Israel with Birthright Israel, which offers

18- to 26-year-old Diaspora Jews free trips to the Jewish state to boost their connections to Israel and bolster their Jewish identity.

"It's a small part of the community, and I know a lot of people here," Merchov said at Limmud. "Now I've met a lot more."

The young crowd mingled well into the wee hours each night over bottles of wine or role-playing games in the hotel's basement. Saturday night featured a jazz concert.

Successful in the Moscow area, Limmud now is spreading to elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

In October, a Limmud retreat will be held in the city of Yalta on Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

The Ukraine Limmud will be followed by a conference in Belarus . Plans to hold a conference for Russian-speaking Jews in Israel are also taking shape, Chaim Chesler, Co-Founder Limmud FSU said.

Noting that participants in last weekend's retreat paid their own way, Chesler said he has every intention of fashioning Limmud FSU into an indigenous organization. "

For the full article www.jta.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/article/200804150415limmudmoscow.html

The Making of a Limmud by Toby Axelrod—JTA—excerpt from the article

Berlin (JTA) -- **May 15:** Dear Limmud Diary: It's Thursday evening, the night before our first big Limmud conference in Germany. So quiet here at this former communist youth camp. We picked it because it's not too far from Berlin, but far enough that our guests won't be tempted by the distractions of the big city. Forest and fields sloping toward a clear lake where swans float, heads tucked

under wings.

That's how Limmud.de -- "the event" -- began. With a quiet evening among new friends, a walk through the moonlit campus of the venue, opening guest houses and dashing from room to room to drop candies on each pillow.

May 16: A few hundred feet away, in the "disco," Cantor Yalda Rebling is leading an egalitarian service, which is over-

flowing.

A thought occurs to me as I hear Shabbat niggunim -- melodies -- floating out from the two very different venues: This is like the shtetl where my father was born, Luboml, where there were lots of little "shtiblach," congregations, each doing their own thing. And there's a story about one family



where everyone had a beautiful voice. People would stroll past their house on Friday night, just to hear them singing at their Shabbat table.

Dear Limmud Diary: You ask why have we made this Limmud in Germany. The simple answer: It feels like a great way to contribute to the blossoming of Jewish life here.

A big step for me because for a long time, I have resisted being part of this world. I've lived in Germany since 1997, came here as a Fulbright scholar.

As a journalist, I cultivated a supposedly neutral, observer role. Perhaps I also did not want to truly adopt Germany as a home. And so I forged ties with parties who seldom meet: rabbis who would never talk to each other; Jews who stick to their Russian, German, Persian or Israeli cliques; secular Jews and Orthodox Jews; Zionists and "post-Zionists"; old and young Jews, Jewish professionals and the Jews who love to prod them; halachic Jews and those with a Jewish father only; converts to Judaism and wannabee Jews; and even anti-Semitic Jews.

I first heard about Limmud from friends who attended the original event, held annually in England for 27 years now. I finally went for the first time myself to Nottingham in 2005.

More than 2,000 people on a college campus over the winter vacation. Hundreds of competing workshops each day. Theology, politics, history, culture, literature, film, music and dance. You run from session to session, you grab a sandwich and eat it

while listening. And at the end of the day you collapse. It is a meditation: a total immersion.

I was quite amazed. And a bit afraid. Because I started to feel like I had slipped into Limmud like Alice into the rabbit hole: It's a topsy-turvy world where teachers become students, students become teachers. Boundaries fall away. You see something old in a fresh way and begin to see the timelessness of something "new."

It is addicting, but when you go home, you don't go through withdrawal. Instead you feel some unused muscles have been exercised. And you want to keep it going.

Limmud has become a phenomenon, with events around the world. It's a kind of "uber" movement that gently seeks to bring together Jews of different stripes, even for a few days. It appeals to me because I am an obsessive peacemaker: I don't like to see pointless arguing; I can't stand shouting or its partner -- the failure to hear. It may not yet be time for the lion to lay down with the lamb, but at least one can defuse some tensions and get down to constructive work.

So when Sophie Mahlo, a young attorney here, sent out an "all aboard" e-mail in 2005, I immediately responded. Half a year later, our small group of volunteers put on our first mini-Limmud in Berlin.

In two months we crafted a daylong program and then sweated while we waited to see who would sign up. Three hundred people came.

In the spring of 2007, Munich held its own mini-Limmud. Another success. We started raising funds.

Now we are about to see whether Limmud.de, the big event, really works. And we are all sweating. Will Jews from the former Soviet Union really mix with Jews descended from the survivors who settled here after World War II? Will secular and religious Jews mix?

It wasn't easy coming to this day. Anything that could go wrong did. So, Limmud Diary, when I lay on my camp cot the other night, I was wondering what would break down next. How could a small team of people really pull off such an event?

The big aha is this: Limmud runs itself.

We set up the framework, find the place, urge people to join us, organize a program, financing, food, transportation and security. The participants then make it work.

After all the guests were gone, a sense of euphoria buzzed around us. We toasted each other, and shared our worst and best moments.

But it's over; we can relax and be happy.

May 19: Dear Limmud Diary: They loved it! The letters have poured into my mailbox. People want to volunteer. I'm already talking about next time. **L'hitraot, Limmud.**

For full article www.jta.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/article/20080522limmudgerman05212008.html

THE JEWISH CHRONICLE RECOGNISES THE HUGE IMPACT OF LIMMUD ACROSS THE GLOBAL JEWISH COMMUNITY

We were excited to note that across the "The Jewish Chronicle's Power 100" and "The Ones to Watch" lists a staggering 50% of the people named are recognisable as recent/current presenters, supporters and/or funders of Limmud; with key Limmud activists hold 10 of the places. And of course, we were particularly proud that the entire Limmud volunteer community was acknowledged for all that we are achieving, through the decision to place Limmud's Chair - **Elliott Goldstein** - at position 21 on the list; making Limmud the highest ranked and most influential educational organisation in the UK. This is a fantastic recognition of **ALL** Limmud's volunteers, as reflected in the JC's paragraph on Elliott:

"It is a measure of the international impact of the cross-communal Limmud educational events that reader nominations for its twenty-something chairman included one from American historian Deborah Lipstadt. She wrote that Elliott "stands at the helm of one of the most creative, influential and copied organisations in the UK, if

not the Jewish world at large". Over 5,000 British Jews attend at least one Limmud function a year and Mr Goldstein has taken over the reins at a time when the organisation is working with 45 international groups who have incorporated the Limmud model into their own communities."

A huge **MAZELTOV** to Elliott and all Limmud volunteers for this achievement, as well as to the following Limmud volunteers who were also named and recognised in the lists for their influence across the UK Jewish community in their professional and volunteer capacities. Take note of these names as some are actively involved in the Limmud International Nurturing and Support Programme and may be facilitating sessions for your team over the coming year;

Amy Philip (past Co-Chair Limmudfest + Limmud Conference Families Programme; current Limmud Volunteer Mentor)

Dan Berelowitz (regular Limmudfest performer; current Co-Chair of Fest's TikkunTrek08)

Gila Sacks (past Chevruta Chair, Founding Chair of Taste of Limmud, Editor of "A Limmud Shabbat")

Helena Miller (has been involved as a key Limmud activist for over 25 years; currently amongst other things a Limmud Volunteer Mentor)

Josephine Burton (regular advisor and contributor to Limmud's arts/culture/performance areas)

Juliet Simmons (past Conference Chair + Limmud Exec member; current Co-Chair Limmud Organisational Comms team)

Raphael Zarum (long-time supporter, advisor, presenter and educator for Limmud)

Not forgetting entries on the lists for the rare beast that is the "Limmud professional":

Clive Lawton (one of Limmud's founders; currently Limmud's Senior Consultant)

Raymond Simonson (Limmud's Executive Director)

Recent Events....
2 months—4 Limmud Events—4 Continents

Limmud Colorado— Boulder, May 2008



Limmud FSU— Moscow, May 2008



Limmud.de— Werbellinsee, May 2008— pics by Judith Kessler



Limmud Argentina - Buenos Aires, June 2008



Upcoming events

After last year's successful conferences in Cape Town and Johannesburg, **Limmud South Africa** is back with an even more ambitious programme. From this year Limmud South Africa is extending their programme to a new city - Durban - meaning three Limmud events in three different cities, over one week; making Limmud South Africa an extremely unique member of the Limmud International community.



Cape Town - Friday 29 to Sunday 31 August 2008
Johannesburg - Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 August 2008
Durban - Tuesday 2nd and Wednesday 3rd September 2008

For more information contact Limmud South Africa's team at national@limmud.org.za

Limmudfest08

Bank Holiday weekend
Friday 22 – Monday 25 August 2008
Pre-Fest Tikkun Trek 21 August
Cliff College, Calver, Peak District National Park

For more info contact Amanda or Deborah at fest08-chairs@limmud.org



After last year's successful event, the Hungarian Limmud team is inviting to their third Limmud event, to be held 19-21 September 2008 in Budapest.

A parallel programme in English, will allow foreign visitors to join the event, who will be able not only to enjoy a great Limmud event, but also experience the Hungarian warm hosting and visiting the lovely Budapest.

For more information and to contact the Limmud Hungary team please visit www.keset.hu

Limmud volunteers are organising events all round the globe. You may be far away from a Limmud event, or there may be one happening only a few miles from your doorstep.

If you want to get involved with an existing event, contact us and we will help connect you

If you want to bring Limmud to your own community,

contact Andrew Gilbert at internationalchair@limmud.org and we will help you get started.

We are looking forward to hearing from you

Limmudfest08

Bank Holiday weekend
Friday 22 – Monday 25 August 2008

Pre-Fest Tikkun Trek 21 August
Cliff College, Calver, Peak District National Park



At **Limmudfest** we create a unique and participative Jewish communal experience that comes alive with music, learning, festivities, culture and friendship, and offers something for people of all ages.

Limmudfest08 will take place at Cliff College, nestled in the hills of the Peak District, a spectacular location for a spectacular programme, which includes:

Musicians and performers The Apples, Los Desterrados, Diwon, Smadar Levi, JCC Tribute Troupe and Y-Love

Inspirational educators, activists and campaigners

Dan Berelowitz, Breaking The Silence, Clive Lawton, Jacqueline Nicholls, Nigel Savage, Chaim Weiner and Raphael Zarum

Writers and storytellers, film, politics, philosophy, yoga, dance and many many more presenters will also be there.

There will also be many outdoor activities and an optional Tikkun Trek with an overnight stay under the stars planned for Thursday 21 – Friday 22 August.

For more information and to book visit
www.limmud.org/fest



LIMMUD International 2008 Events Calendar June—September

June

21-24 Limmud OZ—Melbourne
www.limmudoz.org

29 Limmud Keshet Argentina
www.limudkeshet.com.ar

July

13 South London Day Limmud
www.limmud.org/day/south-london/

August

22-26 Limmud Fest
www.limmud.org/fest

29-31 Limmud South Africa—Cape Town

30-31 Limmud South Africa—Johannesburg
www.limmud.org.za

September

2-3 Limmud South Africa—Durban
www.limmud.org.za

9-14 Limmud Keshet Bulgaria

14 Hackney Day Limmud
www.limmud.org/day/hackney

19-21 Limmud Keshet Hungary
www.keset.hu

24-26 Limmud FSU in Ashkelon
www.limmudfsu.org



Watch this space.....

Just 170 days
until
Conference 2008

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