This report marks the first decade of Limmud FSU – ten years of packed schedules of festivals, conferences, events and exhibitions. We take great pride in having reached this milestone and we are glad to present in the following pages, an account of some of the highlights of the year that has just finished.

We held eight festivals in seven different countries – two of them in first-time locations, which were attended by over 6,000 Russian-speaking Jews, mostly young adults aged from 25-40, but with a good proportion of the parent and grandparent generation, as well as families with young children in tow. Unique in the worldwide Limmud community, we continue to bring Jewish culture in its widest sense to a people who were deprived for so many years of exposure to Jewish life, culture and education. We have pledged ourselves to impart to a new generation a spirit of national identity and a sense of belonging wherever they may be, whether in the countries of the former Soviet Union, and throughout the world, in the hope and belief that in so doing, we are helping to raise and nurture a new cadre of Jewish communal leaders.

As always, our programs and events could not have taken place without the support and backing of many devoted partners, donors and friends, both private and institutional who we list on page 14 of this report. Their devotion and hopes are shared by us and they have our heartfelt appreciation and thanks.
It is with an overwhelming sense of pride that we look back on the previous year’s activities as we embark on the tenth year since the founding of Limmud FSU in 2006. Some 35,000 young Russian speaking people, overwhelmingly in their 20s to 40s, have been exposed through Limmud FSU, for the first time, to their Jewish heritage, which, under 70 years of Communist rule in the USSR, was suppressed or expressly forbidden.

We have been witness to a radically changed world since then – and the Jewish world especially. With free immigration from the USSR beginning in the late 1980’s, Russian-speaking Jews have spread across the world (over one million to Israel alone). Others have chosen to remain in their countries of origin and are rebuilding a world of Jewish involvement in their own communities.

We at Limmud FSU are conscious of the fact that we play a key role in this. Our conferences, festivals and events bring a spirit of intellectual freedom and enquiry to young Russian-speakers in a pluralistic, egalitarian, non-demanding atmosphere of study (“Limmud”) in the broadest sense.

None of this would be possible without the active involvement of the volunteers who take upon themselves, the planning, programming, recruitment and administration of each event. It is this spirit of volunteerism, which was a guiding principle of the first Limmud in the UK over 35 years ago, that motivates and drives Limmud FSU which is a proud part of the now worldwide Limmud international movement.

Nor of course would there be a Limmud FSU without the enthusiastic and devoted support of our donors and sponsors. From the outset they have appreciated the importance of the challenge and rose to it nobly. 35,000 Russian-speaking Jews owe them an enormous vote of appreciation.

We have already enthusiastically embarked on our program for 2016 – details can be found on page 13 – and plans for 2017 are already beginning to shape up.
### LIMMUD FSU EVENTS IN 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>PRESENTERS</th>
<th>VOLUNTEERS</th>
<th>STAFF POSITIONS*</th>
<th>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</th>
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<td>960</td>
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* Permanent year-round staff including independent contractors (part-time and full-time)

### LIMMUD FSU IN NUMBERS 2009-2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>EVENTS</th>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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After more than a year of preliminary planning, the first Limmud FSU event ever in Australia took place; first in a one-day event in Sydney held in cooperation with the Zionist Federation of Australia, and then the main, three-day event near Melbourne. Some 400 participants took part in the festival and enjoyed some 50 presentations, lectures, workshops and cultural sessions in Russian and English. An organizing committee led by Alexandra Klyachkina and project manager Tania Shvartsman, together with a team of volunteers, prepared the program and carried out all the administration and logistics, including three programs for children of different ages called respectively, Pupsik, Cheburashka and Elektronik. The Melbourne event was opened by David Southwick, a member of the Victorian State Parliament who said, “We are extremely proud of the first Limmud FSU festival to take place in Australia which will enrich the Jewish community of Victoria and will strengthen the ties between the Australian Jewish community and Israel.” Following the success of the event, the next Limmud FSU Australia will be held in Sydney in September 2016 and it is planned that this will become an annual event, perhaps adding Perth and Brisbane as additional potential venues. Organizing Committee member Jemima Meltser said, “It was great to spend time with so many like-minded people, meet new friends, learn about Judaism and celebrate being Jewish. Now all I want to know is when the next Limmud FSU festival will be held!”
The sixth Limmud FSU event for Russian-speakers to be held in the United States took place once again at the Sheraton Parsippany Hotel, New Jersey and was attended by a record 900 participants, mainly from the greater New York and New Jersey areas. The theme of this year’s event was “Intellect” and many of the nearly 100 sessions, covered a wide range of literature, politics, philosophy, religion, theater, musical performances, cookery workshops, and more, and included a specially designed program for children aged three to 12. Among well-known presenters of Russian origin were the poets Vladimir Druk and Igor Irtenyev, comedian Ilya Akselrod, filmmakers Dmitry Khavin and George Itzhak, writers Michael Dorfman and Olga Gilburd, singer Iryna Rosenfeld, DJ Budulai, columnist Boris Fishman and the prominent and award winning journalist, Victor Shenderovich. Presenters from Israel included the journalists Mordechai Haimovitch of Ma’ariv, Ilan Eyyatar, editor of the Jerusalem Report, Chemi Shalev of Ha’aretz, Charlotte Hallé, editor of the English edition of Ha’aretz, as well as Gideon Meir, former Israeli ambassador to Italy, and the distinguished historian, Fanya Oz-Salzberger. A highlight was a presentation by Abraham Foxman, director of the Anti-Defamation League. Participant Anna Gusel, who came with her husband and three children said, “This was a wonderful opportunity to kick back, hang out with dear friends and do some learning while allowing the kids to have a great time. What you see here is an expression of Russian-American Jewish community and its trajectory and growth.”
Moscow was the venue of the first Limmud FSU conference ten years ago in 2006 and is still the flagship and largest annual event. This year, for the ninth conference, a record 1,500 participants could choose between 230 sessions, with nine taking place simultaneously, delivered by 160 presenters on every conceivable topic of Jewish interest, including mass-marketing in Russia, money laundering, tattooing from a Jewish perspective, Muslim-Jewish relations, the Holocaust, masks in Jewish history, the Arab-Israel conflict, terror in the 21st century, mixed marriages, songs of Jewish partisans, Tevye the Milkman, and workshops in yoga, digital photography, knitting, bookbinding and book repair, home décor and much more. There were film screenings and Hanan Yovel, Dorit Reuveny and friends gave a concert in memory of the composer and song writer Sasha Argov. There were sessions on Israeli dance, the Internet, censorship in the Israeli media, people of the Bible and Orthodox and Reform Kabbalot Shabbat. While overwhelmingly most sessions were in Russian, there were others in Hebrew and English with simultaneous translations in Russian. Participant Larisa Popovskaya said, “With so many parallel sessions it is very hard to decide where to go. Some who wanted more lectures could go, others preferred intellectual games. Some listened to concerts - klezmer, war-time music, contemporary, folk. It is already a Limmud Moscow tradition to join a sing-song in the hotel lobby, which ended at six in the morning.”
The third Limmud FSU to take place in Moldova was held in partnership with the Jewish Community of Moldova led by its chair, Dr Alexander Bilinkis. With one of the smallest Jewish communities in Europe, the conference was nevertheless attended by some 350 people who could choose between 80 different sessions with four or five taking place simultaneously. Participants heard lectures and presentations from over 80 academics, journalists, writers and poets, musicians, and business people from Moldova, Russia, USA and Israel, on a wide variety of subjects including anti-Semitism, Yiddish history, literature and poetry, the stetl in song, Hasidic parables, the Crusades and the Jews, the Jewish history of Moldova and more. Films were screened and special workshops were given on batik work, Jewish folk dancing and the wines of Moldova. Participants could share in morning aerobics, intellectual games for adults and games for children of different ages. Matthew Bronfman, accompanied by his daughter Sasha, told the story of his family who originated in Ataki, the small stetl in Moldova (then Bessarabia) from which the family emigrated to Canada. The virtuoso musicians, Leonid Ptashka and Sanya Kroyter, were joined by singer Iryna Rosenfeld in concert, among several cultural and artistic presentations. The Russian star of cinema and television, Veniamin Smekhov spoke about his work. During the event, an exhibit of the works of the painter Nachum Gutman was shown for the first time and his son, Prof. Chemi Gutman, gave a talk.
For the first time, a Limmud FSU conference was held in the city of Kazan, thus joining the other Russian Limmud FSU locations in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Kazan is the capital of the Tatarstan Republic and the small Jewish community dwells peacefully with the local Muslim and Christian communities. The city is known for its multicultural and tolerant environment and Limmud FSU delegates, including Rabbi David Rosen, Rabbi Menachem Hacohen and Limmud FSU founder Chaim Chesler, took part in a one-day conference on interfaith relations, together with Muslim, Orthodox Christian and Catholic representatives, the day before the Limmud event. 480 people from all over the area participated in the festival and enjoyed over 100 sessions, including lectures, training, performances, seminars, exhibitions and concerts. Among popular speakers was Rabbi Yosef Mendelevitch, the refusenik who, in June 1970, attempted, with a group of 16 other dissidents, to hijack a plane from Leningrad and fly it to freedom. At any one time, participants could select from between two and six parallel sessions. The festival took place together with three other major Jewish events: the first marking 100 years of the Great Kazan Synagogue and its renovation and return to the Jewish community, a meeting of Chabad rabbis in Russia and an annual festival of Jewish music. The music festival include a performance by Limmud guests Hanan Yovel and his band, presenting “A Musical Journey to Israel,” and the songs of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach celebrating 90 years since his birth.
To mark 25 years since the opening of the gates of the Soviet Union to free emigration, Limmud FSU, in partnership with the Knesset, arranged a special event hosted by Knesset Speaker, Yuri Edelstein and with the participation of Natan Sharansky, Chair of the Jewish Agency. Edelstein and Sharansky were joined by other prominent dissidents and refuseniks active in the struggle for Soviet Jews, including Yosef Mendelevitch, Sylva Zalmanson, Ephraim Kholmiansky and others. The large invited audience visited a special Limmud FSU exhibition curated by Asher Weill, called “Let my People Go!” consisting of 54 photographs marking some of the highlights of the long struggle for freedom by the Jews of the USSR.

The exhibition had previously been shown at the UJA Federation in New York and at the Jerusalem Post Annual Conference also in New York, where more than 500 diplomats, politicians, senior journalists, business executives and invited guests participated. The exhibit was then shown by Sandra Cahn in Baltimore in honor of Shoshana Cardin. Later on the exhibit was also shown at the Jerusalem Post Diplomatic Conference at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, Jerusalem, attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Chaim Chesler, founder of Limmud FSU showed the guests, including the Prime Minister, round the exhibit. The exhibit will now be displayed at Limmud FSU festivals and events around the world.
A record 750 participants from across Ukraine came to Lviv (Lvov) and filled the city's Dnister Hotel and two other hotels from wall to wall. The local team had arranged a packed program of 150 sessions. The opening was addressed by the Mayor of Lviv, Andrei Sudovey, who welcomed the participants to the historically important Jewish city. During the three-day conference, the participants had the choice of more than 150 lectures, presentations, discussions, master-classes, workshops and study groups on many different subjects, from Jewish history, prose and poetry, theater and dance, the Yiddish and Hebrew languages, the Middle East and the Israel-Arab conflict, musical performances and more. A talk was given by Eitan Haber, the chief of staff of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on “The Effect of the Murder of Rabin on the Political and Social Life of Israel,” and another by historian Yoel Rappel on the Jewish history of Lviv. David Yonatan Greenberg, the son of the noted Israeli poet, Uri Zvi Greenberg, spoke about his father. Other speakers included Prisoner of Zion, Rabbi Yosef Mendelevitch and Zeev Hanin, the Chief Scientist in the Israel Ministry of Absorption. The closing gala event featured a performance of Yiddish jazz with the Russian star Andrei Makarevich. Limmud volunteer Tanya Abovich came to Israel on a Birthright visit. When she returned, she was contacted by Osik Akselrud the chairman of Limmud in Ukraine and was appointed director of Hillel in Kiev. She says about Limmud, “We want to create a unique environment where every person can negotiate his or her own Jewish path.”
Following the success of the first ever Limmud FSU Conference in Canada last year, the second conference, held in partnership with the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and co-sponsored by Israel Bonds and the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter, took place under the title “Connections.” Toronto has a large Russian speaking Jewish population numbering some 70,000 people and Limmud FSU Connections was attended by nearly 500 participants. The event was planned and executed by a team of local volunteers led by chairperson Leon Martynenko, and Limmud FSU Country Director, Mila Voihanski. Prominent Canadian speakers included Rabbi Tina Grimer of the Darchei Noam Congregation in Toronto, radio host Alla Kadysh, photographer Rita Leistner, Prof. Matthew Light, chess coach Roman Pelts, lawyer Valeria Buzaker, businessman Igor Sorokin, stand-up comic Ronen Geisler and Judy Zelikovitz of the Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs. From Israel came the former Soviet Prisoner of Zion Yosef Mendelevitch, Gidi Grinstein, a founder of “Birthright”; Jewish educationalist Vadim Blumin and leading journalist Anshel Pfeffer of Ha’aretz. From the US, Russia and elsewhere came writer and journalist Menachem Kaiser, the noted Russian blogger Anton Nossik and Limmud FSU co-founder and philanthropist Sandra Cahn, among many others.
You could be forgiven for thinking you are spending time out at a pleasant resort on the Black Sea, surrounded by hundreds of young Russian-speaking people, many with their families. But no, you are actually at Kibbutz Ginosar on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. The occasion is the annual meet in Israel of Limmud FSU. This festival is perhaps the largest gathering ever in Israel of Russian-speaking Jews. More than 1,300 people – overwhelmingly in their 20s to 40s, have assembled for a three day fiesta of Jewish culture and identity. A central part of the event was devoted to the poet and songwriter Naomi Shemer, with a special performance of her music presented by the Beit Zvi School of the Dramatic Arts, Tel Aviv. During the packed weekend, prominent speakers included former Israel ambassador to Washington, MK Michael Oren; head of Mifal Hapayis and former Deputy Chief of Staff of the IDF and head of the National Security Council, Uzi Dayan; former military spokesman, Avi Benahayu; Rabbi David Stav, head of the Tsorah rabbinical group; Prof. David Bilchitz of the University of Johannesburg and current Chairman of Limmud International and popular media figures and entertainers, Gil Hovav, Leonid Ptashka the virtuoso jazz musician together with Iryna Rosenfeld, a new immigrant and star of the Ukrainian edition of “A Star is Born.” Founder Chaim Chesler said, “This is our biggest event yet in Israel and reflects the exponential growth in our activities. The Festival was over-subscribed eight hours after registration. This proves that our formula of education, culture, entertainment and the opportunity for dialogue and debate is just what our young Russian-speaking participants are looking for.”
Limmud FSU Across the Globe, 2016

1. West Coast, Los Angeles area, USA, 29-31 January
2. New York area, Parsippany, NJ, USA, 1-3 April
3. Moscow, Russia, 14-17 April
4. Minsk, Belarus, 13-15 May
5. London, UK, July. Leadership Development Conference for the first Limmud FSU Europe in 2017, 8-10 July
6. Volga-Urals, Kazan, Russia, 2-4 September
7. Sydney, Australia, 17-18 September
8. Canada, to be determined
9. Lviv, Ukraine, 3-6 November
10. St. Petersburg, Russia, 11-13 November
11. Eilat, Israel, 15-17 December

Limmud FSU Online

www.limmudfsu.org
Israel
www.limmudfsu.co.il
Moscow
www.limmud.ru
St. Petersburg
www.limmud.spb.ru
Ukraine
www.limmud.org.ua (English: en.limmud.org.ua)
Belarus
www.limmud.by (English: www.limmud.by/en)
Moldova
www.jcm.md
USA New York
www.limmudfsuus.org
USA West Coast
westcoast.limmudfsuus.org
Canada
www.limmudfsucanada.org
Australia
www.limmudfsu.org.au
Europe
www.limmudfsu.eu
Without the following friends, partners and donors, Limmud FSU events could not take place. They all have our deepest thanks.

Matthew Bronfman
Aaron Frenkel
Ronald Lauder
Conference for Jewish Material Claims against Germany
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
Diane Wohl
Israel Ministry of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs
Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Israel Ministry of Immigrant Absorption
Jerry Levin
Jewish Agency for Israel
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David Kislin
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Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Israel Ministry of Immigrant Absorption
Jerry Levin
Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto - UJA
Joe Cooper
Keren Hayesod (United Israel Appeal)
Michal Grayevsky
Mikhail Mirilashvili
Richard Maidman
Ruben Landsberger
Ruth Salomy
Salarc Foundation
Samuel Bronfman Foundation
Sandra and Stewart Cahn
Shulem Fisher
UJA – Jewish Federation of New York
UJE – Ukrainian Jewish Encounter
Will Family Foundations
World Zionist Organization

Limmud FSU operates in the USA and throughout the world through the Limmud FSU International Foundation, inc., a US registered charitable organization. If you would like to join us or know more about our activities, please contact Sandra Cahn: sandycahn@aol.com.
We would like to thank our local sponsors

**Australia:** ZFA (Zionist Federation of Australia)

**New York:** UJA – Jewish Federation of New York, Investors Bank, Michael Zurakhinsky, Advanced Specialty Group, Inc.

**Moscow:** CAF Russia (Charity Aid Fund), Alexander Pyatigorskiy, STMEGI Fund, Ofra and Zvi Metar Family Foundation

**Moldova:** Jewish Community of Moldova

**Volga - Urals:** Limmud International European Presenters Fund, Mikhail Skoblionok and the Jewish Community of Kazan

**Ukraine:** Hillel Ukraine, Tkuma, Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter, Dutch Humanitarian Fund, Limmud International European Presenters Fund

**Canada:** UJA – Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto, Nathan and Lily Silver Family Foundation, Apotex Foundation, Israel Koschitzky Family Charitable Foundation, Air Canada, UJE Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter, Jewish Legacy Charitable Foundation, Silver Fund Mortgage Investments, Riviera Parque Dining Banquet and Convention Centre, Meir Kosher Affair, INNumbers - Integrated Accounting Services, Nlb3 - Neurological Institute of Brain, Body and Being

**Israel:** Jordan Valley Regional Council, Jewish National Fund (KKL)

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**Limmud FSU Leadership and Staff**

Matthew Bronfman, Chair, International Steering Committee

Aaron Frenkel, President

Chaim Chesler, Founder, Chair, Executive Committee

Sandra F. Cahn, Co-founder, Chair, Fundraising Committee

Roman Kogan, Executive Director

Chaim Nagus, Finance and Management Consultant

Yan Birbraer, Logistics Director

Asher Weil, English Consultant and Editor

Katya Dymshits, Information and Resources Development

Noa Lavie, Website Administrator, Social Media, Public Relations, Russian

Merav Parsi Zadok and Natasha Chechik, Public Relations

**Regional Management**

Galina Rybnikova, Project Manager, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus

Noam Shumak-Khaimov, Project Manager, USA

Yan Birbraer, Project Manager, Israel

Mila Voihansky, Country Director, Canada

Tania Shvartsman, Project Manager, Australia

Tatyana Pashaeva, Project Manager, Russian Federation

**Limmud FSU affiliated organizations – Leadership**

Osik Akselrud, Chair, Limmud in Ukraine

Raffi Heltzer, Chair, Limmud Russian-speakers, Israel
Ronald Lauder, Philanthropist
International philanthropist, industrialist, investor, art collector, and former US ambassador to Austria. Ronald S. Lauder has been President of the World Jewish Congress since June 2007. He has demonstrated his deep commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people through a wide range of philanthropic endeavors throughout the world. In 1987, he established the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, a philanthropic organization dedicated to rebuilding Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe. The Foundation also supports student exchange programs between New York and various cities in Central and Eastern Europe. Ronald Lauder is actively involved in numerous civic organizations, including the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Jewish National Fund, the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Brandeis University and the Abraham Fund. We are delighted and honored that Mr Lauder has now agreed to join the leadership of Limmud FSU.

Sasha Shteyn, Chair, Limmud FSU West Coast
Alexandra (Sasha) Shteyn was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia. She immigrated to the US in 1998 and works in finance. She writes, “In 2000 I was invited to go on a Birthright trip to Israel, where my Jewish journey started. Later initiatives with Hillel and AIPAC helped to form me as a Jewish leader. I was first inspired when I attended a Limmud FSU conference in New York in 2012 and later when I participated in a Leadership Summit in Israel where met FSU activists from all over the world who passionately shared their enthusiasm for the project. With nearly 80,000 Russian-speaking Jews in California, I saw a tremendous opportunity to host a project that could bring the community together through education, fun, building friendships and establishing Jewish connections, not only on the local level but worldwide.”

Polina Galitskaya, Chair, Limmud FSU Volga-Urals
Polina heads the laboratory at the Kazan Federal University, Russia. Her professional interests are in the field of environmental microbiology, biotechnology and biological waste treatment. Since high school, she has been active in the Kazan Jewish community. She has volunteered in projects for the elderly and has worked as a councillor in Sunday school. She edited the local Jewish newspaper, and organized Shabbat retreats, camps and seminars. After visiting Limmud in Moscow, Polina dreamed about organizing a similar event in her home community and in 2015 her dream came true.

Semyon Dovzhik, Chair, Limmud FSU Europe
Semyon was born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), and moved to Israel in 1991. He graduated in political science from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem and worked in public relations for various organizations in Israel. He was a spokesperson of the Jewish Agency for the Russian-speaking press and JAFI representative in Moscow. He was head of public affair of World ORT and is a journalist writing for Jewish.ru portal, Lechaim magazine and other Jewish media. He currently lives in London. He says, “As a journalist, I have often been approached by Russian-speaking Jews with the question: “where can we find a Jewish activity suitable for our background?” Since there wasn’t much to recommend I decided to help create an event, which will meet the needs of Russian-speaking Jews in Europe in their cultural and spiritual Jewish education. Limmud FSU unites Jewish people from diverse backgrounds without setting limits and boundaries. We have a group of 50 amazing volunteers, all of whom are different in many ways but all very much committed to the idea. Limmud is a platform, which allows everyone to find their own place within it and to contribute in their own way.”

Katya Dymshits, Information and Resources Development
Katya Dymshits (née Minakova) was born in Moscow in 1981 and studied at the Moscow City Pedagogic University. She immigrated to Israel in 2009. She is a fundraiser with several years of experience in donor relations, mission coordination, marketing, writing, planning and executing events for non-profit organizations. She has worked on various non-governmental projects in the FSU, Israel and the USA. She has a PhD in social psychology. Katya says, “I was at the very first Limmud FSU in Moscow in 2006 and since then I have missed just one as my son was born on the day of the Limmud opening! I really love the project, the ideas behind it, the people who participate and make Limmud FSU events better year after year!”