Now that Limmud FSU is well into its second decade, we are once again, proud to present this report on our activities in 2017. Over 9,000 people attended our ten events. The first was in London (for the whole of Western Europe – a Limmud FSU festival that will change its venue to various locations in the coming years); followed by Toronto, Moscow, New York, Chişinău (perhaps better known in Jewish history as Kishinev), Odessa, San Francisco, St. Petersburg, and Eilat.

In addition we mounted a special event dedicated to the memory of the late Elie Wiesel in his birth place, Sighet in Romania. Details of each of these festivals and celebrations will be found in the following pages.

Limmud FSU has established itself as the leading educational, cultural and social meeting place for young Jews with Russian-speaking origins from around the world and as such, each annual event in the various locations is a major and eagerly awaited event and celebration of Jewish life and identity. We look forward to its continued and growing success in the years to come.
Our Events in 2017

The growth of Limmud FSU, from the spark of an idea for a unique program of informal Jewish education for Russian-speaking Jewry, has evolved into a lively locally driven volunteer organization with individual events in ten locations in 2017.
# Limmud FSU in Numbers 2009 - 2017

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<td><strong>EVENTS</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td><strong>COUNTRIES</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PARTICIPANTS</strong></td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>4,271</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>3,684</td>
<td>4,025</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>9,375</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENTERS</strong></td>
<td>390</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,250</td>
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<td><strong>VOLUNTEERS</strong></td>
<td>185</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>790</td>
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<td><strong>STAFF POSITIONS</strong>*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$1,104,250</td>
<td>$1,857,206</td>
<td>$1,291,646</td>
<td>$1,662,506</td>
<td>$1,991,620</td>
<td>$2,768,000</td>
<td>$2,372,000</td>
<td>$3,211,000</td>
<td>$3,874,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Permanent year-round staff including independent contractors (part-time and full-time)
One hundred years after Great Britain declared its support for the Balfour Declaration, the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, 725 Russian-speaking Jews from more than 20 European countries gathered in Windsor, near London, for the first-ever Limmud FSU Europe. This gathering marked the first time in its decade-long history that Limmud FSU was not geared toward Russian-speaking Jews of a specific region. More than 250,000 Russian-speaking Jews currently reside in Western Europe, making it one of the world’s largest Russian-speaking Jewish communities.

The event was held in partnership with the Genesis Philanthropy Group and was organized by Limmud FSU Europe Chairman Semyon Dovzhik and Project Manager Tatiana Pashaeva. The Limmud FSU Europe volunteer team consisted of 30 UK based members and 20 “ambassadors” from European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The conference featured more than 100 lectures, workshops, presentations and discussions by leading figures, including members of the British Parliament; members of Knesset; the Ambassador of Israel to the U.K. Mark Regev; former Ambassador of Israel to the United Nations, Ron Prosor; American historian Deborah Lipstadt; Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar; World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder; Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations Executive Vice-Chairman Malcolm Hoenlein; Genesis Philanthropy Group President and CEO Ilia Salita; Matthew Bronfman, chairman of Limmud FSU’s international steering committee; Limmud FSU President Aaron Frenkel; Russian actor and playwright Veniamin Smekhov; French artist and co-founder of the Soviet Pop (Sots) Art movement Erik Bulatov; Russian TV presenter and journalist, Vladimir Pozner; Grigory Tshatirshvili, the Russian writer who uses the pseudonym Boris Akunin and based in France; and many others.
Some 700 people attended the fourth annual Limmud FSU conference to be held in Canada, the biggest event geared towards the Russian-speaking community in the country. The event took place at the Blue Mountain Resort, an alpine ski resort near Collingwood, Ontario, northwest of Toronto. There are an estimated 330,000 Jews presently living in Canada, of these some 137,500 are Russian speakers. Limmud FSU Canada is supported by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Genesis Philanthropy Group.

The weekend program featured over 50 speakers and 80 panels, workshops and discussions on subjects ranging from art, to Jewish culture and tradition, history, politics, academia, business and lifestyles; on a diverse array of topics including Jewish views of astrology and superstition, how to discuss Israel with Canadians, raising children in a diverse world, Israel in the era of Donald Trump, demystifying Shabbat and religious Zionism.

Among the presenters were popular Canadian television host Adrienne Gold; Israel Bonds Canada CEO Raquel Benzacar Savatti; Chief Scientist of the Israeli Ministry of Immigrant Absorption Zeev Khanin; the Russian writer Victor Shenderovich; President of York Entrepreneurship Development Institute Marat Ressin; and principal of Yeshivat Or Chaim Rabbi Yair Spitz.

A special guest speaker was Israel’s Minister of Social Equality, Gila Gamliel, who opened a Limmud FSU exhibition on the life and accomplishments of Nobel Prize laureate for peace and noted Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel. “Although this is only the fourth year of Limmud FSU in Canada, we have seen it grown tremendously. The weekend was completely sold out and there was a waiting list of more than 100" said Boris Varshavsky, Chair of the Limmud FSU Canada organizing committee.
Moscow was the venue of the first Limmud FSU festival back in 2006 and is still the annual flagship event. This year 2,100 members of Moscow's Jewish community gathered for the largest-ever festival for Russian-speaking Jews to be held in the former Soviet Union.

Limmud FSU Moscow was made possible by its team of local leaders and volunteers, including Limmud FSU Moscow Project Manager Anna Adamskaya, Mikhail Libkin, Alexandra Livergant, Alexander Piatigorskiy, among many others.

Keynote guest speakers included the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Rabbi Berel Lazar and Israel's Minister of Justice, Ayelet Shaked. The event comprised more than 250 workshops, debates, discussions, round-table panels and activities for children of different ages. Each hour there were no less than 12 lectures on a vast array of topics ranging from Jewish history, politics, literature, theater, language, cooking, and more.

Presenters at the conference included the Israeli Ambassador to Russia, Gary Koren; and former Ambassador, Dorit Golender, who is currently vice president of the Genesis Philanthropy Group, a major Limmud FSU supporter; American musician Joshua Nelson; film director Kirill Serebrennikov, artistic director of the Gogol Center in Moscow; Kabbalah teacher Eliyahu Yardeni and Nazi hunter and historian, Ephraim Zuroff.

During the festival, the centennial of Habimah, Israel's national theater, which had its origins in Moscow in 1917, was celebrated. Participating in the anniversary was director of the Israeli theater company Yiddishshpiel, Shmuel Atzmon-Wircer, theater and film composer Avi Benjamin, and the noted-Israeli Habimah actress, Evgenia Dodina, herself originally from Belarus.
The eighth Limmud FSU conference in the greater New York area, took place at the Hilton Hotel, Westchester, with the participation of 1,000 people. Under the overall title “Legacy,” a team of over 100 presenters from the US, Canada, Ukraine, Russia and Israel presented nearly 100 sessions, with as many as eight taking place simultaneously, dealing with history meeting religion, science meeting innovation, mind meeting soul and legacy encountering present-day counterparts.

Among prominent personalities were guest speakers, Dani Dayan, Israel’s Consul-General in New York and Yariv Levin Israel’s Minister of Tourism. A team of some 40 volunteers, led by Chair Ilya Bratman and Co-chairs Valerie Khmelnitsky and Roman Sidler, organized and carried out the program.

Among popular topics covered were; Modernizing Judaism: Rabbi Kook’s concepts and how they play out in reality; the Jewish family - love, sex and divorce; the Jews of Burma – a vanished tribe; the global refugee crisis seen through Jewish eyes; a panel discussion of the Israeli start-up nation; mystical roots of modern anti-Semitism; how does the media cover transgender and Hassidic issues; A Moslem’s journey to Judaism; feminism and redemption; the future of the Russian-speaking Jewish community in the USA.

Lighter fare was provided by the celebrated cookbook writer and journalist, Joan Nathan, on King Solomon’s table: a culinary exploration of Jewish cooking from around the world. Workshops were held on pickling dill beans and sauerkraut, sculpting the human head, and making a mezuzah.

A special exhibit on the life and work of Elie Wiesel was shown, with an introductory lecture by Dr. Joel Rappel, founder and former director of the Wiesel Archives at Boston University. Anat Zalman Kuznetsov showed her film: “Operation Wedding” on the famous but unsuccessful hijacking of a Soviet plane in Leningrad in 1970, by a group of refuseniks, led by her father, Edvard Kuznetsov. The highlight of Saturday evening was a gala musical performance featuring Israel superstar Ninet Tayeb.
With one of the smallest Jewish populations in Eastern Europe, over 300 young Jewish Moldovans gathered in Chişinău (better known in Jewish history as Kishinev,) for a one- day Limmud FSU festival. This festival was made possible by a team of local leaders and volunteers, including Marina Shuster, Kolea Railean, Julia Sheinman, led by Project manager, Galina Rybnikova.

Limmud FSU Moldova, proved to be one of the largest local Jewish gatherings in the country in recent years. The gathering, which took place at the Jewish Community Center “Kedem,” included over 60 sessions and 50 speakers from around the world, with workshops and discussions on subjects ranging from art to Jewish culture and tradition, history, politics, academics, business and lifestyle. Limmud FSU Moldova, was sponsored by the Conference for Jewish Material Claims against Germany, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Nativ, and the Jewish Community of Moldova.

Among the presenters were the Minister of Culture of Moldova, Monika Babuk; Chairman of the Board of the Jewish Museum and Center of Tolerance in Moscow, Rabbi Boruch Gorin; and the popular Russian-Israeli comedian, Ilya Axelrod.

Among the proceedings was a special commemoration of the life of Elie Wiesel. The events in his honor took place in the Chişinău Chabad Lubavitch Synagogue, the only congregation that remains active today in a city that before the Holocaust housed more than 70 synagogues. The event included a special Kaddish memorial prayer by Rabbi Zusha Abelsky (son of the former Chief Rabbi of Moldova, Zalman Abelsky), with Rabbi Mandy Axelrod; President of the Jewish Community of Moldova; the Honorary Chair of Limmud FSU Moldova Alexander Bilinkis; and the founder of the Wiesel Archive at Boston University, Dr. Joel Rappel, who delivered a keynote speech.

*Limmud FSU is a tradition that unites people who are close to each other in spirit. It's a celebration of intellect, and the place of gathering for the most interesting, bright and educated audience. said Alexander Bilinkis.
In May, 1944, in Sighet, (today Sighetu Marmației), a remote town in the Carpathian mountains of Transylvania, some 1,500 Jews were rounded up in the town square and marched through the deserted streets to the local railway station. Among the deportees were the 14 year-old Elie Wiesel and his family, who were then forced into cattle cars, for a three-day journey to an unknown destination, later to be revealed as Auschwitz-Birkenau.

And now: the same town and the identical route. But this time, 73 years later, another 1,500 citizens of the town, have assembled for a torchlight procession to honor the memory of Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Prize laureate for peace and fighter for human rights, to mark the first anniversary of his death.

The march, beginning at the childhood home of Wiesel, was the culmination of a three-day event organized by Limmud FSU, the Conference for Jewish Material Claims against Germany, “International March of the Living,” the World Zionist Organization, the Sighet municipality and the Romanian Jewish community.

Among speakers was MK Yair Lapid who said, “Wiesel’s private memory has become the collective memory of an entire people. We have gathered here to honor him for his contribution to the memory of the Holocaust and the struggle against anti-Semitism.”

Gila Gamliel, the Israeli Minister for Social Equality who is also responsible for Holocaust issues, said, “Elie Wiesel with his gentle voice and powerful pen fought against bigotry, hatred, fanaticism and the evil demons of the past. From this place I vow on behalf of the government of Israel that we will never forget.”

The weekend started in the Western Romanian town of Oradea, another town with a rich Jewish past and where Wiesel attended high school. Among the speakers were Greg Schneider, executive vice-president of the Claims Conference, Aharon Tamir, Deputy World Chair of “March of the Living;” Prof. Steven Katz, the Director of the Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies at Boston University; former Deputy Chief Justice of the Israel Supreme Court, Elyakim Rubinstein, Rabbi Yitzhak (Yitz) Greenberg, and Rabbi Menachem Hacohen, a former MK and Chief Rabbi of Romania.
Nearly 1,000 people attended Limmud FSU Ukraine, which is the biggest annual event for the Ukrainian Jewish community. It was the third to be held on Odessa, one of the most important cities in Jewish and Zionist history in the Russian Empire and later in the former Soviet Union. Today there are about 400,000 Jews living in Ukraine, some 45,000 of them in Odessa.

Limmud FSU Odessa featured more than 180 speakers from around the world on subjects ranging from art, to Jewish culture and tradition, literature, music, theater, history, politics, business and lifestyle. The event featured a special concert celebrating Bob Dylan, one of the most prominent composers and musicians of our time. Dylan’s paternal mother, Anna, together with her husband Zigman Zimmerman, emigrated from Odessa to the US in 1910. An exhibition illustrating Dylan’s life and career was mounted: “Forever young: behind Dylan’s revolution and legacy”, created by Beit Hatefutsot - the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv, and presented by its curator, Amitai Achiman.

The event also commemorated the 120th anniversary of the First Zionist Congress held in 1897, including a concert and several activities relating to the World Zionist Organization.

A commemorative plaque was unveiled on the house in Odessa where the distinguished Hebrew poet, Shaul Tchernichovsky, lived. Among the presenters were Israel’s ambassador to Ukraine Eliav Belotserkovsky; former Israeli Ambassador to Russia, Dorit Golender; Executive Director of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, Haim Ben Yakov; Nativ’s director for Ukraine, Gennady Polischuk; Director of the Ukrainian Institute for the Study of the Holocaust Tkuma, Igor Shchupak; Board Member of Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter Adrian Karatnycky, popular Russian satirist and writer, Victor Shenderovich, and many more.
After ten years of annual events on the East Coast of the United States, more than 800 people gathered for the second Limmud FSU West Coast and first-ever in Sand Francisco area. The event took place at the Marriott City Center Oakland, and featured an array of more than 100 sessions and speakers from around the world, speaking on a wide variety of subjects, with a special focus on innovation and technology.

Among the presenters were "WhatsApp" founder Jan Koum; the American astronaut Garrett Reisman; historian Prof. Deborah Lipstadt; CEO of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, Danny Grossman; and the musicians Hemi Rodner, Josh Nelson and the Russian Undervud band.

The event took place with the support of the Koret Foundation, the Jim Joseph Foundation, the Fookman Family Charitable Fund, the Genesis Philanthropy Group, the World Jewish Congress, the Claims Conference, the Jewish Community Foundation of East Bay, Ukrainian Jewish Encounter and several other donors.

A highlight of the event was the launch of a special exhibition “Shimon Peres – Vision and Innovation.” The exhibition was produced by Limmud FSU, working in close collaboration with the family of the late president and the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation. Prof. Tsvia Walden, the daughter of Shimon Peres, curated the exhibition with the assistance of Asher Weill of Limmud FSU and she opened the exhibition on behalf of the Peres’ family.

Another special event was an award ceremony, honoring former American Secretary of State George P. Shultz, who was deeply involved in the struggle of Soviet Jewry during the 1980's and 1990's, when immigration from USSR was denied. Chairman of the Jewish Agency Natan Sharansky, who himself spent nine years in Soviet prisons, together with Ofir Akunis, Israeli Minister of Science, Technology and Space, and Claims Conference President Rabbi Julius Berman, presented Mr Schultz with an award during a luncheon held on November 17.
This sixth Limmud FSU in St. Petersburg and the second in Russia this year (after Moscow), took place at the Crowne Plaza Pulkovo Hotel near the city. 750 people took part – the largest Limmud FSU St. Petersburg festival ever.

The top line-up of presenters included Marat Gelman, founder of the Perm Museum of Contemporary Art; Linor Goralik, a noted author, poet and essayist; Aleksei German, Russian film director, Ehuanan Nir, Israeli poet and recipient of the Prime Minister’s Prize in 2011; the historian Lev Lurie, and Olga Slov, Israeli Consul-General in St. Petersburg. Popular topics discussed included; Fifth column and charges of double loyalty; judging God: problems of accepting the tragedy of the Holocaust; what is humor and how to use it; Leningrad in the 1960s; Russian cultural politics; doping, anti-Semitism and betrayal in sport; “Speed-friending;” Judaism in modern literature – and plenty of lighter subjects such as: choosing a wedding dress, learning to dance bachata and salsa; a yoga session – as well as an open midrash, a photographic exhibition on eternal love, a film on Russian Jews by Leonid Parfenov and rich program of special sessions for the younger Limmudniks.

Limmud FSU St. Petersburg was made possible thanks to a 30-strong team of volunteers, led by Yulia Karasik, Natalia Emelyanova, Regina Pritula and Iulia Anokhina. The festival was supported by the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, Genesis Philanthropy Group, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the local Jewish religious community, Nativ, the Jewish Culture House ESOD, the Russian Jewish Congress and the Community of Progressive Judaism “Sha’arei Shalom.”
Limmud FSU Israel celebrated a decade of educational work with young Russian-speaking Jews in Israel with a three-day festival of learning in Israel’s southernmost city of Eilat. The event attracted a record-breaking 2,000 participants.

The festival featured some one hundred lectures, workshops, presentations and discussions, with the participation of several leading Israeli personalities, including Knesset members Yair Lapid and Avi Gabbay; Chief Rabbi of Israel David Lau; former IDF Chief of Staff, Lieut. Gen. Benny Ganz; former minister Gideon Saar, and Robert Singer, CEO of the World Jewish Congress. Other prominent presenters included Prof. Zeev Khanin, writer Gadi Taub, Holocaust survivor Shlomo Perel, theater director Mark Rozovsky from Moscow and many others. Performing artists included the singers and musicians, Shlomi Shaban and Marina Maximilian Blumin.

Robert Singer noted, “The World Jewish Congress, which represents 100 Jewish communities worldwide, is proud to share with Limmud FSU this critical mission of strengthening Jewish identity, community, historical memory, and engagement, both in the Diaspora and the State of Israel. Just think: 30 years ago, a gathering like this of Jewish activists would have been impossible. We are one global Jewish community, and we are strongest when we work together and empower one another. The future of the Jewish world depends on us all.”

Conference supporters and partners included the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the Genesis Philanthropy Group, the Claims Conference for Jewish Material Claims against Germany, the World Jewish Congress and the Sapir Center for Jewish Culture and Education. The festival was made possible thanks to a team of volunteers led by Rina Zaslavsky, Chair of the program committee, Inna Byshevskaya, Chair of the volunteers committee and Limmud FSU Israel Project Manager, Yan Birbraer.
Limmud FSU
ONLINE

Limmud FSU International : 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
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www.jcm.md

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Volga - Urals
http://2015.limmudvu.ru/

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Without the following friends, partners and donors, Limmud FSU events could not take place. They all deserve our deepest thanks and gratitude.

Matthew Bronfman
Aaron Frenkel
Ronald Lauder
Conference for Jewish Material Claims against Germany
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
Diane Wohl
Yuriy Zelvenskiy
Jewish National Fund (KKL)
Genesis Philanthropy Group
Prime Minister’s Office – Nativ
Euro-Asian Jewish Congress
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Wilf Family Foundations
World Jewish Congress
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 and partners

**Australia:** ZFA (Zionist Federation of Australia), Harry Triguboff Fund

**New York:** UJA – Jewish Federation of New York, Investors Bank, Michael Zurakhinsky, Advanced Specialty Group, Inc., COJECO, Edith and Carl Marks Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst, Hillel at Baruch College, Hillel at Queens College, JCC of Manhattan

**Moscow:** CAF Russia (Charity Aid Fund), STMEGI Fund, Tkiya Educational Centre, Federation of Jewish communities of Russia, Russian Jewish Congress, Jewish Cultural Center at Nikitskaya, Jewish museum and Tolerance center, ORT Russia, Hillel Russia, Expert Service company, J-Camp

**Moldova:** Jewish Community of Moldova

**Volga - Ural:** Limmud International European Presenters Fund, Mikhail Skoblionok and the Jewish Community of Kazan, Alifton Jewish Youth Center.

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

**Canada:** Schwartz/Reisman Centre (SRC), Harry Rosenbaum, 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:** Michael Philip, Sapir Center for Jewish Culture and Education, Israel Way company, The Shimon Peres Center for Peace and Innovation

**Belarus:** Union of Belarusian Jewish Public Associations and Communities, Exclusive

**West Coast:** Koret Foundation, Jim Joseph Foundation, Fooksman Family Charitable Fund, Jewish Family and Children's Services - San Francisco, Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, NCSY, RAYMN: Russian American Jews in Minnesota, Israeli Consulate General of the Pacific Northwest, Jewish Community Foundation of East Bay, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco

**Europe:** Jewish Community Centre London - JW3, Limmud UK, Arbuz Project, World ORT, UJIA, Leumi Bank, Chabad Belgravia, Zelman Mikhail and Roman, Dovzhik Elena & Semyon

**St. Petersburg:** Skandin, Russian Jewish Congress, Adain Lo family center, JCC Yesod, Religious Jewish Community, Jewish Federation in Russia.

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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

Natasha Chechik, Director, Public Affairs and Communications

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Yan Birbraer, Project Manager, Israel

Mila Voilansky, Country Director, Canada

Anna Maylis, Project Managers, Australia

Tatyana Pashaeva, Project Manager, St. Petersburg, Volga-Urals, Europe

Galina Murakhovskaya, Project Manager, Moscow

Limmud FSU affiliated organizations – Leadership

Osik Akselrud, Chair, Limmud FSU in Ukraine

Raffi Heltzer, Chair, Limmud Russian-speakers, Israel
NEW FACES

Anna Maylis, Project Director for Limmud FSU Australia
Anna Maylis was born in Ukraine in 1973, made aliya at 17 and now lives in Sydney, Australia. Anna has been working as a Hebrew teacher for 20 years, as well as the founder and the Director of the Kids Theatre “JeSTAR”. In 2015 she became an event coordinator for the Russian speaking Jewish community in Sydney and later became a Project Manager of Limmud FSU Aust. Anna believes that Limmud FSU is an exciting and unique opportunity for the Sydney community to meet amazing local and international presenters, learn from the world known intellectuals and professionals and celebrate the fascinating history and heritage of Jewish people from Former Soviet union.

Boris Varshavsky, chair of the org. com. Limmud FSU Canada 2017
Boris was born in Uzbekistan in 1991, and shortly after, his family moved to Israel. Boris moved to Canada 17 years ago. He’s been active in the Jewish community in Toronto since his time in Alpha Epsilon Pi, the Jewish fraternity. He went on a Russian speaking Birthright-Taglit trip in the summer of 2013, where he met his wife, Dina, and became strongly connected to the RSJ community. Boris has been involved with Limmud FSU Canada since the first conference in 2014. Boris works for Questrade Inc., Canada’s largest independant discount brokerage, and is looking to continue assisting the RSJ community in Toronto.

Leo Hmelnitsky, chair of the org. com. Limmud FSU West Coast in San Francisco 2017
Leo Hmelnitsky is an experienced Limmudnik and serves as 2017 conference chair. He is passionate about learning and is active in the Jewish community of the East Bay volunteering his time at Contra Costa Jewish Day School, Jewish Community Foundation and Chabad of Contra Costa. Leo is focusing on adult and teens programs and on fund-raising efforts to create an exciting and entertaining program and an affordable event for a wide range of participants.

Julia Anokhina, Limmud FSu St Petersburg org. com. coordinator
Julia has been connected with St Petersburg Jewish Community for many years, worked as an office manager in Progressive Jewish Community “Shaarei Shalom” for several years. She initiated many charitable projects in Saint-Petersburg, such as “Psychological help for volunteers working with the elderly”, “Warm market”, “Rosh ha-Shana party for people with special needs”, and many more. Julia is married and has two sons.

William Hess, Treasurer, Limmud FSU International Foundation, Inc.
From 2007 to 2012 William D. Hess (Bill) served as President of the American Zionist Movement, the umbrella organization representing the World Zionist Organization in the United States. Mr. Hess also serves as a member of the Executive of ARZA, the Zionist arm of Reform Judaism and a member of the board of trustees of the Union for Reform Judaism. Since retiring from active business life, Mr. Hess has been involved with numerous volunteer activities and organizations beginning with Israel Bonds, New Orleans Jewish Federation, Congregation Temple Sinai of New Orleans, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the World Zionist Organization and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.