Dear friends,

It is a privilege to share with you the 2019 report on Limmud's global activities. Everything you will read here is the result of the passion and commitment of volunteers and the support we receive from our small, impactful professional team.

We are grateful to our wider Limmud family of partner organisations, Foundations, philanthropists and friends who have supported us with their generosity and wisdom.

During 2019, we became truly global when we held our first Limmud in Antarctica – Limmud has now taken place on every single continent! Closer to Limmud’s UK home, Limmud impacted communities across the UK from Scotland to Harrow, from Manchester to Leeds and the Midlands, with other teams planning events for the following year. Wherever we find ourselves in the world, Limmud inspires connections, creating vital spaces for learning and horizon-expanding encounters in Jewish communities.

However, Limmud is not just about the 78 events that took place in 2019. We develop Jewish leaders for this generation and beyond. In Mexico, our powerful Limmud Elements leadership gathering brought together volunteers from across the Americas, while we held another leadership gathering in Bulgaria for Europeans and close neighbours. We were thrilled to be joined at both gatherings by many volunteers from Limmud FSU, bringing our global family even closer. These leadership gatherings led to the formation of new teams dedicated to creating webinars; exploring social justice and human rights; designing a new Limmud Connect experience; and finding new ways to offer peer support across global Limmuds. 2019 closed with an incredible international Festival, taking place in the UK.

Festival also incorporated the Limmud Elements @ Festival programme – our annual leadership development opportunity for volunteers from around the world. The programme empowered a diverse group to connect, create and learn with and from each other.

All of these leadership development opportunities were made possible with the support and leadership of the Limmud Connections Team – a group of experienced volunteers representing regions around the world.

There are many people without whom Limmud would not happen. I would like to highlight just a few here.

The friendship, support and wisdom of my Global Board has been a vital part of my first few months as Limmud’s Global Chair. Thank you to Shana Boltin, Miriam Edelman, Mike Gladstone, Yszi Hawkings, Danielle Nagler, Robert Owen, Shep Rosenman, Debbie Staniland, Sivie Twersky and Jeremy Smilg.

Thank you for the support and dedication of our Office Team: Michael Frankfurt, Jon Freedman, Alanna Lewis, Jenny Lewis, Suzy Margulies, Max Naar, Peter Neumann, Eli Ovits, Adi Rothman Berman, Magda Rubenfeld Koralewska and Yael Tischler; David Singer, the first Limmud North America Executive Director; and our consultants, Ruthie Rotenberg, Ellen Flax, Renanit Levy, Sara Averick and Rebecca Lewis.

This has also been a year of transitions and I want to pay particular respect to my predecessor, David Hoffman, the outgoing Global Chair and Eli Ovits, Limmud’s outgoing CEO. As both of them move into new roles, I thank them for all they have given to Limmud so far and for being friends and role models to me and so many others.

A final thank you is to YOU. You are one of over 38,000 people who have participated in 78 Limmuds across 42 countries around the world in 2019. You may be one of the 3,900 volunteers who made this happen. The numbers are big but we appreciate the part that every one of you has played in building a remarkable global Limmud community that started in the UK forty years ago.

As 2020 began, none of us could have predicted the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on our ways of life. Our talented teams have responded to lockdowns with creativity and dedication – the hallmark of Limmud volunteering. For now, online events have replaced physical gatherings. We continue to provide vital opportunities for connections and encounters, and may we all soon have the chance to meet together again in person.

Limmud’s unique model of volunteer-led, cross-communal, multi-generational and transformational Jewish experiences is truly global. We invite you to experience Limmud events near, far and online – whichever you choose, you will feel right at home.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone who has played a part – as a volunteer, presenter, participant and friend. If you want to be part of taking Limmud one step further on its Jewish journey, I’d love to hear from you!

Shoshana Bloom, Global Chair, Limmud
TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY FOR FORTY YEARS

A place for learning
Across tens of thousands of sessions, Limmud’s gatherings have remained a pivotal space for hundreds of thousands of Jews to learn together.

A source of leadership
Limmud has taken tens of thousands of volunteers further on their Jewish journeys, giving a generation of Limmud leaders the tools and opportunities to transform the wider Jewish world.

Building cohesive community
Limmud acts as an antidote to polarisation, building thousands of cohesive Jewish communities, providing spaces for respectful dialogue and encounters with diverse views.

JOIN OUR MOVEMENT FOR DIALOGUE AND POSITIVE CHANGE
2019: THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

In 2019:

- 78 Limmud events
- 38,150 participants,
- 3,900 volunteers
- and there are now 97 Limmud communities across the world.

and there are now 97 Limmud communities across the world.
2019 Highlights

AFRICA

Limmud Durban
Limmud Durban punches beyond its weight and we are proud of that. We are a small community, we have a devoted core of Limmudniks and we managed to attract a few new people as well.

Limmud Cape Town

“Limmud was an opportunity to interact with a whole range of Cape Town Jewish people that one simply does not see or interact with anywhere else!”

The food was at the next level – from the abundant vegan options, to the biodegradable paper plates. All in all, this was Limmud and all its concomitant values at its finest.

ASIA

Limmud India
Café Dilemma was the highlight, invoking discussions on topical issues faced by our community ranging from Aliyah, preservation of cemeteries and antisemitism in India.

Limmud Melbourne

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Limmud Sydney
We started a track called Taboo Topics which was very successful.

Limmud Perth

“We held our first event at a local university rather than at the Jewish school which was a fantastic move for us.”
Around 2,500 participants hailing from 33 countries convened in Birmingham, UK, to revel in Jewish learning and culture at Limmud Festival, December 2019.

Limmud Festival brought people together across the lines which divide us, through our common passion for Jewish culture and learning. Over the week, we encouraged every participant to take the opportunity to discover something new, take the chance to venture outside of their comfort zone, break down barriers and broaden their horizons.

Festival was gloriously intergenerational, with the youngest participant just 5 months old, and the oldest at 98; the largest age cohort was in their 20s.

A grassroots undertaking, the Festival steering committee was comprised of 30 volunteers, supported by 650 participants who put in over 4,400 hours of on-site volunteering to ensure a seamless, joy-filled gathering.
What the people said

Our survey of participants reflected the overwhelmingly positive impact of Limmud Festival 2019. In addition, the Festival was featured in multiple national and international publications. Articles focused on the uniquely welcoming, diverse Jewish spaces that Limmud creates, as well as the opportunities Limmud offers to engage with the most pressing political issues of the day.

“I always enjoy making my choices and then discovering new presenters and changing my choices, especially when the new choices are wonderful.”

“As always, Festival was absolutely fantastic, I’m very glad I have been able to come this year and hope to be able to come back in 2020!”

“My eldest child’s [school year 1] highlight was making a friend at Young Limmud and my youngest had fun at nursery.”

“My daughter had the opportunity to present on a young person’s panel organised by Teen Limmud in the main Limmud programme.”

“My favourite part was the diversity of topics – having the opportunity to be exposed to issues that I would have not known to look for myself.”
Limmud Elements is the engine behind Limmud’s thriving global movement, a series of training events that take place at Festival and across the world, that empower Limmud leaders to create, energize and develop their local communities of learning.

Limmud Elements at Festival LE@F

43 Limmud leaders from 27 communities around the globe took part in the December 2019 LE@F training. A diverse set of Limmud groups and Jewish communities were represented, providing opportunities for learning and sharing of experiences. Representatives of new initiatives and established Limmud communities, resurging and growing Limmud groups collaborated and learned together. Limmud communities represented included Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Haifa, Mallorca, Marseille, Mexico, New Zealand, Ottawa, Poland, Scotland, Seattle, Strasburg, and Winnipeg.

LE@F was a space to begin developing ideas for a cross border Limmud between France, Germany and Switzerland.

...a fantastic learning and experience that I can transfer to my own community.

It was good to see first hand that you are a part of something bigger; sharing ideas; realizing that we are not alone in some of the challenges we face; meeting everyone.

The biggest outcome of the LE@F program was the creation of the community of Limmud leaders.

Amongst international organisations represented at Limmud Festival 2019 were:

- Claims Conference
- Commonwealth Jewish Council
- EcoPeace Middle East
- ejewishPhilanthropy
- European Union of Jewish Students
- Hebrew College
- Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Institute for Polish Jewish studies
- IsraAID
- Israel Knesset
- JDC Junction
- Jewish Agency for Israel
- Judaism Unbound
- Leo Baeck Education Center, Haifa
- Masa Israel
- Mayyim Hayyim
- New York University
- Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies
- Society for advancement of Education
- SpaceIL
- The Covenant Foundation
- The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles
- The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel
- The Times of Israel
- World Zionist Organisation
- Yad Vashem
- Yashrut
- Yesod
2019 Highlights

NORTH AMERICA

Limmud NOLA
All of the congregations in the area hold services at Limmudfest. So, orthodox, conservative, reform and reconstructionist/renewal services are all held in different rooms under the same roof for one weekend each year.

Limmud Ottawa
From inception, Limmud Ottawa made great efforts to reach out to non-affiliated Jewish individuals and families. Some are now part of our core team.

Limmud Boca
Our first Limmud separate from Miami was one that really had participation from all parts of the community. We built upon the unity that is already available in Boca. We were able to have a diverse selection of presenters, both from our local area and internationally.

LATIN AMERICA

Limud Chile
Limud Chile has become a strong brand in the community, associated with high value content delivery and social gathering. Our leadership team has strived to become the “go-to place” for all Jewish cultural related things.

Limmud Buenos Aires
In 2019, Limud Buenos Aires became an audiovisual producer generating its own content. Thanks to FOMECA-ENACOM, the series “Inheritance or Legacy” was produced, featuring interviews about Argentine Jewish culture. In 2020, with the same organisation, we will release the series of programs “A Big Shtetl” about the Jewish footprint in Buenos Aires.

Limmud Mexico
Our biggest achievement was to get a volunteer team that was diverse in the Limmud sense of the word: different levels of observance, different ages, backgrounds, political views. It was very hard to work among us but we kept reminding ourselves that this is what Limmud is all about: Diversity, Respect, and learning from others. We created an incredible event.
This weekend-long development and networking training seminar in September 2019 was the seventh Limmud Elements training in Europe, taking place in Sofia, with 20 European volunteers representing 15 countries.

The training comprised five programming layers:

- Practical skills and troubleshooting
- Jewish learning
- Limmud values
- Participation
- Organising an event

Five months after the training was completed, we have seen the impact across the region. Highlights of projects and ideas that emerged in Sofia include:

- A Tu B’Shevat event organised by the Barcelona team that helped restart the team.
- A new global working group was established, whose mission is to create thought-provoking Jewish conversations around human rights and social justice that are relevant inside and outside our Jewish communities.
- A new Webinars team was formed by Sofia participants.

"It was truly a great experience because this was my first encounter with the international Limmud community, and I felt that I have a place here and I belong. I could establish meaningful connections, and I believe I will maintain them. I enjoyed listening to other groups’ challenges, programs and ideas, and I feel honoured that I could be part of it."

"Jewish learning is one of the most important components of Limmud, so it was very useful to discuss."

"I believe the Values session was an eye-opening experience to see the real meaning behind each value and the different significance each person gives to it."

Limmud Elements Europe – Sofia

VOLUNTEER TRAINING
Limmud Elements Americas took place in Mexico City in June 2019. It piloted a training model that brought together English, Portuguese and Spanish-speaking volunteers from across the American continents. Some 45 volunteers and a diverse and experienced facilitation team participated – representing 21 Limmud communities, including representatives from two new Limmud groups in Sao Paolo and London, Ontario.

The weekend-long programme included senior volunteers from Latin American Limmud communities who gathered for a parallel series of tailored meetings. The delegates explored topics such as group sustainability and future planning; what makes a successful partnership with another organization; and using Limmud as a model for community engagement on a year-round basis.

“The programme was uplifting, educational, emotional and spiritual. It will help me to become a better leader and more proficient at planning and running events. I also have a better understanding of why aspects of Limmud events are conducted according to the specific Limmud values.”

“I gained a clear sense of Limmud’s power as a movement through the content and the people. I have new friends in new countries. Pleasantly surprised to discover that all the other young folks were ex-youth movement kids like myself for whom Limmud filled the gap that aging out of summer camps left in our lives.”

“The training was enlightening on many levels. I learned an immeasurable amount about Limmud and how our Limmud fits into the equation. I made unique connections with Limmudniks around the world that will serve as an invaluable network.”

“I gained a clear sense of Limmud’s power as a movement through the content and the people. I have new friends in new countries. Pleasantly surprised to discover that all the other young folks were ex-youth movement kids like myself for whom Limmud filled the gap that aging out of summer camps left in our lives.”
2019 Highlights

EUROPE

Limmud Italia
We were able to move from the centre of Italy to Parma in the north, a small Jewish community with fewer opportunities for Jewish learning.

Limmud Baltics
As a volunteer, I joined a team of Limmud enthusiasts driven by accuracy, precision, flexibility, commitment and dedication. Together we managed to put our Limmud dreams into practice. I have only positive memories of Limmud Baltics 2019 and even more positive hopes about Limmud Baltics in 2020.

Limmud Leeds
Our Leeds team works hard and passionately to ensure our event really is “something for everyone” and we couldn’t have reached our 15th Leeds Day Limmud this year, without the incredible dedication of our volunteers. We are proud to be part of a national organisation which has been bringing Jewish culture, religion, art, history, music and much more to communities right across the UK for 40 years. We are excited to start planning for our 16th event!

Limmud Keshet Bulgaria
15 years ago, Limmud was just a conference/seminar, or even a holiday opportunity for the community. This year we had around 100 people who refused to apply until we shared the program and the different Limmud initiatives. That is showing us that Limmud is becoming a provider of Jewish life and meaning and raising the bar for us even higher.

Limmud Czech Republic and Slovakia
Limmud was set in an open and democratic environment where people of different approaches to Judaism were given space to present sessions. We had 15 young leaders helping us with the children’s programme while having their own learning experience throughout the mornings.

Limmud Scotland
Great turnout, great atmosphere and excellently run. It was a great boost for Scottish Jewry and will hopefully further encourage the setting up of a JCC in Edinburgh.

Limmud Barcelona
We are proud that after 4 years of inactivity, we are getting Limmud off the ground again. There are more and more people interested, and we feel that we can fill a huge gap in community life in Barcelona.

Limmud Mallorca
2019 Highlights

RUSSIAN SPEAKING COMMUNITIES/LIMMUD FSU

**Limmud FSU Ukraine**
It’s my first time at Limmud FSU, and I’m simply amazed by the energy, the quality of the programme and the atmosphere. It really makes you proud of your Jewishness.

**Limmud Moldova**
It’s my third time at Limmud FSU in Chisinau, and I just can’t get enough of it. It feels like the best things in our community come together in this beautiful orchestra of Jewish learning, culture and networking with great people.

**Limmud FSU St. Petersburg**
This is my second time at Limmud. I was so excited after my first one in 2017 that this time I brought along my parents and my best friend. It is such an amazing and unique experience; every member of the Jewish community here should experience it at least once. Next year I also plan to be a volunteer.

**Limmud FSU USA East Coast**
Thank you so much. My children and I had a really wonderful time yesterday. The children’s program was simply outstanding. It is hard to surprise my children, but they are both in total ecstasy!
The Global Limmud Connections Team (LCT) is a community of experienced Limmudniks who act as a forum for communication between regions and groups for the purpose of strengthening Limmud, locally and globally.

We currently have a team of active LCT representatives who support the 7 Limmud regions. The LCT is chaired by Debbie Staniland who sits on the Global Board and liaises between the LCT and the Global Board.

This team of experienced Limmud volunteers has supported regional gatherings, participating in Limmud Elements training seminars, and also providing regional leadership during the very successful Limmud Connect forum in Israel in 2018.

The Team supports all of our groups around the world. Please do contact the member for your region should you need any training, mentorship or information on how to start a Limmud event in your community.

**Regional hubs**

**THE LIMMUD CONNECTIONS TEAM**

Current representatives:

**North America**
Gail Chalew  
Suzanne Swift  
Adam Moscoe

**Latin America**
Jack Goldstein  
Abraham Yudelevich (Vice Chair)

**Africa, Australia and Asia**
Mandi Katz  
Amanda Stein

**Eastern and Central Europe**
Sonja Vilicic  
Natalia Czarkowska

**Western Europe**
Jonathan Marcus  
Rebecca Lillian  
Dani Rotstein

**United Kingdom**
Marion Kinshuck

**Israel**
Ilana Abu-Golan  
Hersel Havousha

**Limmud FSU**
Roman Kogan
Regional hubs

**LIMMUD NORTH AMERICA**

In recognition of the large presence of Limmud in North America, Limmud leadership decided to invest in the development of Limmud North America to provide support to the local communities and grow the Limmud brand in North America.

With a presence in 18 communities across the United States and Canada, Limmud North America engages more than 7,000 people - young and old, religious and secular, Jewish and “Jew-ish” – in their immersive programs each year. Their platform is driven by a board of directors and 120 lay leaders throughout the Continent who empower a grassroots movement of more than 1,000 volunteers.

**LIMMUD ISRAEL**

Limmud groups in Israel strive to bridge the divides among Jewish communities and religious streams, by creating spaces that enable connections, encourage Jewish learning and expand the meaning of Jewish learning for Israelis. The 7 communities throughout Israel are made possible by over 170 volunteers and the events they create involve more than 2,100 participants from all walks of Israeli life.
Something for Everyone (SFE), is an exciting initiative that exposes new audiences to innovative Jewish learning by increasing involvement of families, young adults as well as other under-served demographics with a particular emphasis on developing volunteer leadership.

Initiated in North America, SFE was piloted in Europe in 2019. In a Jewish world that is increasingly post- and non-denominational and growing numbers of unaffiliated Jews of all ages, SFE is intended to attract all families, including non-traditional families; young adults; and individuals of all ages not engaging fully in traditionally structured Jewish life. Limmud events provide a non-judgmental, diverse and welcoming point of entry.

In 2019 SFE projects were organised by Limmud communities in North America, the Baltics, Bulgaria, Hungary and Former Yugoslavia.
In November 2019, the SFE initiative in Europe evolved into Limmud Activate. This programme activates European Limmud communities to increase Jewish learning throughout the year, at events in addition to the main Limmud gatherings.

For more information about available microgrants in Europe please contact magda@limmud.org

For more information about available microgrants in North America, please contact david@limmudna.org

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE HIGHLIGHTS

Baltics
A first of its kind in the Baltic states, the event’s primary goal was to motivate and engage volunteers. Existing and prospective Limmud volunteers gathered for a full day to listen, discuss, raise problems and search for their solutions. Volunteers learned how much each individual participant can bring in, and that each idea and action can bring about important changes. As a result of our SFE event we saw a larger, more engaged team involved in the planning and implementation of a very successful Limmud Baltics Festival in 2019.

Hungary
20 new Limmud volunteers trained, brainstormed ideas for next year’s programme and developed marketing and outreach strategies.

Bulgaria
Lag B’Omer brought people from different communities within Bulgaria to celebrate together. The celebration was hosted in Plovdiv in southern Bulgaria and welcomed some 150 participants from three different communities, aged from nine months to 93 years. It took place in the Plovdiv synagogue yard and offered a variety of programmes, together with a traditional ‘LagBarbecue’.
LIMMUD EVENTS SO FAR IN 2020

Limmud groups around the globe had planned over 40 events for 2020. Unfortunately as the COVID-19 pandemic spread, only a small number of these could be held in person. Limmuds in all five continents adapted quickly to the new situation and increased needs of their communities and pivoted to organise online learning events.

In-person events in that took place in 2020 before the pandemic:

- 9 February 2020
  **Limmud AZ**
  www.limmudaz.org

- 28 February – 1 March 2020
  **Limmud FSU Europe**
  www.limmudfsu.org/comm/europe

- 29 February – 1 March 2020
  **Limmud Vancouver**

- 15 March 2020
  **Limmud Ottawa**
  www.limmudottawa.ca

- 8 March 2020
  **Limmud Øresund**
  www.oresundslimmud.org

Limmud quickly realised that the pandemic did not mean that our community couldn’t still come together and learn. We immediately started to plan virtual events. Online Limmud events and programming up to August:

- 22 March 2020
  **Limmud Berlin: Taste of Pesach**

- 29 March 2020
  **Limmud North America eLimmud Festival**
  The first eLimmud Festival had a stellar lineup of sessions featuring the most interesting, inspiring and important Jewish ideas today.

  "Some of the hardest choices I ever had to make between session blocks!"

- 3 May 2020
  **Limmud Boston Limmud FSU NY**

- 17 April 2020
  **Limmud Israel ILimmud**

- 26 April 2020
  **Limmud Buenos Aires Limmud Seattle Taste of Limmud Strasbourg**

- 1–5 May 2020
  **Limmud China**

- 27 May 2020
  **Revelations: A Tikkun Leil Shavuot experience in partnership with JW3**
  300 participants
  20 volunteers
  20 presenters and 16 sessions
  Best quality cultural Jewish programme I’ve seen in years, bar none. Rabbi Dr Raphael Zarum, Dean of London School of Jewish Studies.

- 8 May 2020
  **Limmud Hungary Shavuot**

- 10 May 2020
  **Limmud FSU: eLimmud**

- 17 May 2020
  **Limmud South Africa: eLimmud**

- 24 May 2020
  **Limmud North America: eFestival**

- 28 May 2020
  **Limmud Hungary Shavout**

- 31 May 2020
  **Limmud South Africa: eLimmud**

- 6–14 June 2020
  **Limmud OZ+NZ**

- 9 June 2020
  **Limmud Manchester Together**

- 28 June 2020
  **Øresundslimmud: Taste of Limmud Online**

- 12 July 2020
  **Limmud New Mexico**

- 2 August 2020
  **Limmud Together UK 2**

- 30 August 2020
  **Limmud North America eFestival Limmud India: Taste of Limmud**

Thousands of Jews across the globe have come together in Limmud communities to learn in lockdown. For the many people who feel isolated as Jews or isolated during Covid, it has been a cherished and valuable opportunity.

"To explore with my mind whilst my body is trapped indoors. In a time when almost everything is inaccessible, this was quite the opposite. My thanks to all who organised and contributed."

"My first Limmud. Glad to feel more connected to my Judaism after many years of disconnect. Such a varied day of workshops and so much hard work has been put into this. Thank you to everyone."
LIMMUD MISSION

Wherever you find yourself, Limmud will take you one step further on your Jewish journey.

LIMMUD VALUES

- Arguments for the Sake of Heaven
- Community and Mutual Responsibility
- Diversity
- Enabling Connections
- Empowerment
- Expanding Jewish Horizons
- Learning
- Participation
- Religious Observance
- Respect

To explore how Limmud values shape our work, please see our website. https://limmud.org/mission-values/

Thanks

Limmud acknowledges the generous support of individuals and Jewish foundations and organisations who support our international volunteer development and connection activities, including Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, UJA-Federation of New York, the Morris & Rosalind Goodman Family Foundation, Dangoor Education, The Pincus Fund for Jewish Education, the Natan Fund, The Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund (JHF), the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Pears Foundation, The Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation, the Jewish Youth Fund, the Shores Charitable Trust, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, UJIA, UIA Canada, the Edith and Ferdinand Porjes Charitable Trust, Metta Saade Foundation, Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund, The Davis Foundation, Genesis Philanthropy Group and anonymous donors.
CONTACTS / RESOURCES

To learn more, or to find a Limmud anywhere around the globe, visit: www.limmud.org/network-of-communities
or email international@limmud.org

For an up-to-date list of global Limmud events in 2020 visit: www.limmud.org/events

To join the International Online Forum: groups.google.com/d/forum/limmud-international-forum

twitter.com/limmud
facebook.com/Limmud.org
youtube.com/user/LIMMUD

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