



Limmud FSU - A 2019 Retrospective

Over the past 12 months, as we have started to implement the recommendations of the strategic plan – from internalizing and disseminating a new mission statement to working to develop a new, more sustainable economic model that will ensure the long-term viability of our activities and rebuilding our governance structure – we successfully mounted seven festivals in six countries that together impacted over 5,200 Russian-speaking Jews, primarily young families.

Our mission statement clearly defines who we are: “a network of volunteer-led local groups with a global support structure” that nurtures “open, pluralistic, dynamic learning platforms across the world for Jews of all ages and backgrounds with roots in the Former Soviet Union” while embracing “Jewish intellectual, cultural and religious traditions grounded in this shared experience.”

Each festival was developed and led by a team of volunteers; they participated in leadership training seminars before the festivals, that often included special Jewish literacy study opportunities.

A key development in 2019 has been the introduction of Limmud Labs, a program that seeks to ensure that the unique Limmud pluralist learning opportunities are available around the year, by offering small grants to grassroots activists to mount lecture series, communal gatherings to learn about and mark festivals, and other outreach activities. No less, these programs will help nurture the future leadership of Limmud FSU, Russian-speaking Jewish communities – and the wider Jewish world.

Limmud FSU remains the leading organization that engages Russian-speaking Jews on the simplest grass-roots level and encourages and nurtures them to grow into local leaders and community change agents. We have a proven track record of 13 years of activity, during which we have effected a profound qualitative and quantitative change in the engagement of Russian-speaking Jews, their level of Jewish literacy and sense of Jewish identification and affiliation with Israel. As we move beyond our bar-mitzva, we remain as committed as ever to our mission, our target audience, and the Jewish learning opportunities we work to offer them, and we remain deeply grateful to our supporters and sponsors who help make all this possible.



Aaron G. Frenkel
President



Sandra F. Cahn
Chair, Fundraising
Committee



Chaim Chesler
Founder and Chair, Executive
Committee



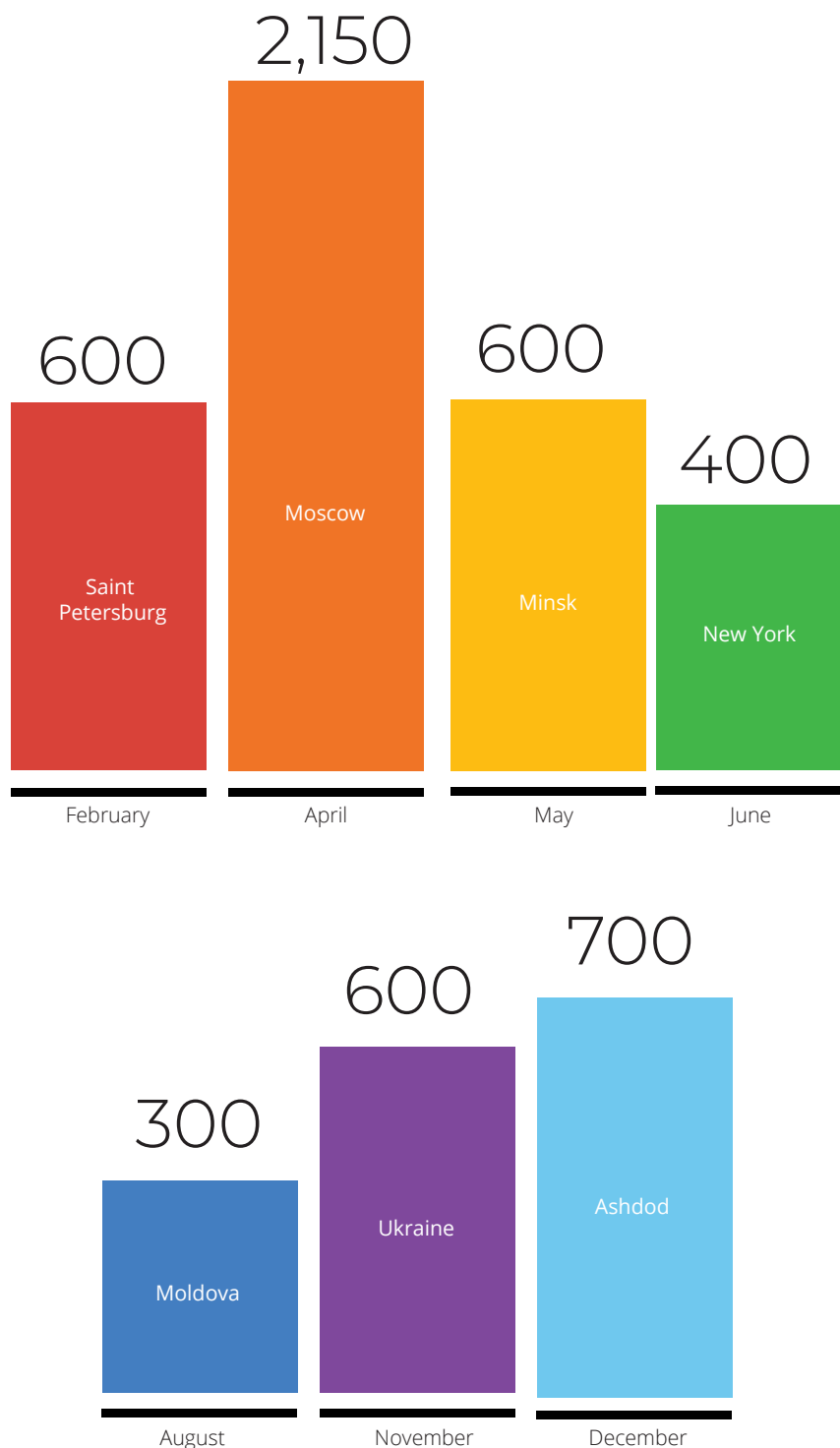
Roman Kogan
Executive Director



Matthew Bronfman
Chair, International
Steering Committee

Our Events in 2019

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 seven locations in 2019.



LIMMUD FSU 2019 EVENT BY EVENT

Limmud FSU St. Petersburg featured over the long weekend more than 100 lectures, workshops, and discussions in the pluralistic spirit of Limmud. The top presenters this year included the economist Evgeny Kogan, the acclaimed animation director Garry Bardin, famous educator Dima Zicer, Director of the Religious Community of Saint Petersburg Rabbi Shaul Brook, Russian-Israeli Jewish-religious philosopher Pinchas Polonsky, Former Israeli Member of Knesset and head of Jewish Agency's representative office in St Petersburg and North-west Russia Orit Zuretz and many more.

"We take pride in playing a central role in one of the most dynamic Jewish communities in Russia" said Chaim Chesler, founder of Limmud FSU, during the festival. "This project truly has it all – a wonderful atmosphere, high quality program and presenters, enthusiastic spirit and a very engaged audience hungry for a Jewish learning experience. This is our seventh event in St. Petersburg, and we look forward to continue the tradition for many years to come."

Alex Mershon, the Director of the Department of Culture and Education of Nativ in the Israel Prime-Minister's office said: "We have supported Limmud FSU's activity for many years. This wonderful platform enables young adults to conduct discussions and take part in lectures and sessions relating to the State of Israel, the Jewish world, education, culture and more in a great atmosphere. Nativ recommends Limmud FSU, because of the great importance and impact it has on the community."

1-3 February

Limmud FSU

Saint Petersburg

"This is my second time at Limmud," said Masha Kagan (25) from St. Petersburg, "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 St. Petersburg was made possible thanks to a devoted team of volunteers, led by Executive Director Roman Kogan, together with Iulia Anokhina, Yulia Karasik, Faina Rokhlina, Irina Fatyanova, Regina Pritula and Alla Lemlekh among others. The Conference was made possible through the support of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the Genesis Philanthropy Group, JDC, the St. Petersburg Jewish Religious Community, Nativ - Israel Prime-Minister's office, Jewish Culture House ESOD, the Russian Jewish Congress, the Jewish Agency, Joel Passick and others.



11-14 April

Limmud FSU Moscow

A record number of 2,150 Jewish participants took part in the biggest Jewish event in Moscow in April. The program of the flagship annual festival included more than 250 sessions on wide range of topics, with a great selection of activities each hour, for 2 different age groups. In total, the conference included more than 350 different lectures, sessions, panels and performances, and also a special children program, that was structured as Limmud with many options and run by the volunteers-teenagers—an innovative approach.

Keynote speakers at the conference included Russia's chief rabbi, Berel Lazar, Israel's Minister of Jerusalem Affairs and Minister of Environmental Protection Zeev Elkin, Limmud FSU President Aaron G. Frenkel, Israeli Ambassador to Russia Gary Koren, President and CEO of Genesis Philanthropy Group Ilia Salita, Regional director of "Nativ" in Russia and Belarus Yana Agmon, Philanthropist Harold Grinspoon, lawyer Mikhail Barshevsky, author Lyudmila Ulitskaya, Vice President of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress Moshe Shvets, Director of the Russian-speaking programs of the Steinsaltz Center Lia Shvets, curator of the exhibit Uri Gershovich, coach and psychologist Nesia Ferdman and more.

Founder of Limmud FSU, Chaim Chesler: "It's truly unbelievable that we reached our 13th milestone in Moscow, the very place where Limmud FSU was born, and we're honored to continue serving an important part in the life of the local Jewish community". Sandy Cahn, Limmud FSU co-founder added that "it is our hope to continue to flourish and strengthen our wonderful community in Moscow, it's truly inspiring and unprecedented."

One of the highlights of the event was the inauguration of a new exhibition based on the life's work and heritage of the noted Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz. Rabbi Steinsaltz was one of the first spiritual leaders of Limmud FSU and took part in its inaugural event in Moscow in 2006. The exhibit was produced especially for the event by Limmud FSU and the Steinsaltz Center in Jerusalem. At the festive opening, a round-table discussion took place on the philosophy and heritage of the rabbi with the participation of distinguished guests from Israel and elsewhere.

Regional director of "Nativ" in Russia and Belarus, Yana Agmon: "The preservation of an Independent Jewish identity is the shared motive of Nativ and Limmud FSU. We don't presume to impose from above but study together as to how to strengthen the Jewish ethical core that binds our people together. We are even more delighted that we were partners in preparing the Israel content for the Moscow Limmud FSU festival.

Supporters of the event included Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG), Nativ, Claims Conference, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and more.

In the best tradition of Limmud, the event was made possible by its team of local leaders and volunteers, led by Limmud FSU Executive Director Roman Kogan and the Project Manager Elena Zakharova, volunteers Mikhail Libkin, Alexandra Livergant, Alexander Piatigorskiy, Anna Tseplyaeva and others.



2 May

Honoring Chiune Sugihara in Mir

On Holocaust Memorial Day, an official celebratory event organized by Limmud FSU was held in honor of Chiune Sugihara (1900-1986), the Japanese consul in Kovno during the war. The event was a central feature of the Limmud FSU annual festival in Belarus, attended by some 600 young Jewish participants. The guest of honor at the event was Nobuki Sugihara, the son of the noted Righteous Among the Nations.

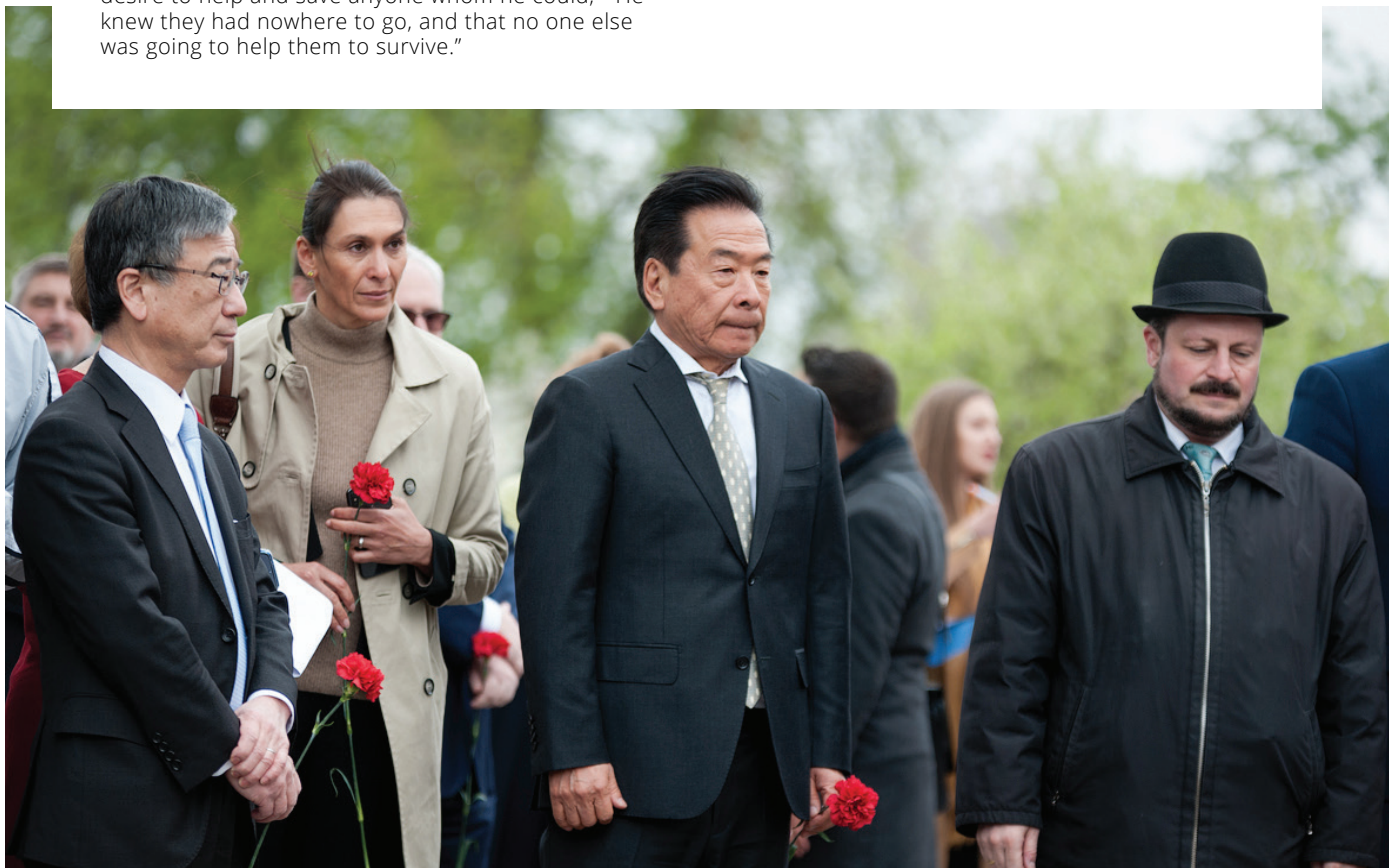
Despite the great personal dangers involved, Sugihara issued thousands of entry permits to Japan to Jews in Poland and Lithuania, including most of the students and teaching staff at the famed Mir Yeshiva. Following the war, thanks to Sugihara's actions, his rescuers founded a new Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem and in New York.

The central feature of the event was the dedication of a memorial plaque to Sugihara who, after the war, was granted by Yad Vashem, the title of "Righteous of the Nations." The plaque was installed on the historic building of the Yeshiva with the participation of Nobuki Sugihara, the son of Chiune Sugihara. He said during the ceremony that when he asked his father why he had chosen to save the Jews, and if he known them previously, he replied that he had not. "My father told me that the only thing that guided him was a deep desire to help and save anyone whom he could," "He knew they had nowhere to go, and that no one else was going to help them to survive."

Among the participants were Israel's ambassador to Belarus, Alon Shoham; Japan's ambassador to Belarus, Hiroki Tokunga; the city's chief rabbi, Rabbi Shneur Deutsch; founder of Limmud FSU Chaim Chesler; the head of the Jewish community in Belarus, Vladimir Chernitsky; the ambassadors of Austria, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the European Union as well as the Deputy Ambassador of the United States, Head of Nativ for the Russian Federation, Belarus and the Baltic countries, Yana Agmon; and Mir district Deputy Governor, Ruslan Abramchik.

Local residents who wanted to participate in the event received special permission to be absent from work, as did many of the students from the schools in the area who came especially to take part in the ceremony. The event was made possible thanks to the support of the Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG) and the Jewish businessman Leonid Tomchin.

Rabbi Deutsch said: "At this difficult time, when there are manifestations of anti-Semitism across the world, such as the recent terrible shooting incident in San Diego, the message that emerges this morning from Mir is one of hope and peace. We should spread the message of the Righteous Among the Nations Sugihara and his heroic actions to serve us as a beacon in these difficult times."





3 - 5 May

Limmud FSU Belarus, Minsk

A record number of 600 Jewish participants took part in the biggest Jewish event ever to take place in Belarus. The pluralistic volunteer-driven conference included more than 150 sessions on a wide range of topics with a multiple selection of activities each hour.

Keynote presenters at the conference included Andrey Makarevich, a famous rock musician from Moscow; Alon Shoham, Israel's Ambassador to Belarus; Hadas Kalderon, the noted Israeli actress and granddaughter of Abraham Sutzkever, the acclaimed Yiddish poet and Israel Prize laureate; Rabbis Shneur Deutsch, Grigory Abramovich; Yana Agmon, the regional director of "Nativ" in Russia and Belarus; Chaim Chesler, Limmud FSU founder; Dorit Golender, vice-president of community relations in Genesis Philanthropy Group; Zeev Khanin, chief scientist of Israeli Ministry of Absorption; Efraim Zuroff, historian and Nazi hunter, director of the Israel office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and others.

Founder of Limmud FSU, Chaim Chesler said: "It is the second time we have held Limmud FSU in Minsk, and we are truly excited to be a part of this vibrant community with its rich Jewish history."

A central feature of the event was the dedication of a memorial plaque to Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese consul in Kovno during the war, who saved thousands of Jews during the Holocaust, including the students of the Mir Yeshiva, and after the war was granted the title of "Righteous of the Nations." The plaque was installed on the former building of the Yeshiva on Holocaust day with the participation of Nobuki Sugihara, his son, who also gave a lecture on his father in the framework of Limmud.

Another highlight of the event was the opening of an exhibition on the life and work of Yitzhak Shamir the seventh Prime Minister of the State of Israel, who was born in Belarus. Taking part were his children, former Israeli Minister of agriculture Yair Shamir, and daughter, Gilada Diamant, as well as Herzl Makov, Shamir's former director of the office and chair of Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem – Limmud FSU's partner in this initiative.

Regional director of "Nativ" in Russia and Belarus, Yana Agmon: "Nativ is happy to support Israeli content in the programs of Limmud FSU events and together, to instill values incorporating Zionism, Jewish identity and a recognition of the Land of Israel in all its aspects. Here in Belarus, Nativ is proud to present children's leadership as developed in Nativ Cultural Center's youth club in Minsk, in its intergenerational aspects and with reference to Nobel Prize winners."

Alon Shoham, Israel's Ambassador to Belarus spoke during the opening event and said: "I'm so delighted to see here at Limmud FSU so many young Jewish adults. They are truly the future of the Jewish community in Belarus."

Supporters of the event included Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG), American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, Claims Conference, Nativ, Leonid Tomchin - Chairman of the Board of Directors of the pharmaceutical holding "Apteka group", Jewish Agency in Belarus and more. In the best tradition of Limmud, the event was made possible by its team of local leaders and volunteers, led by Limmud FSU Executive Director Roman Kogan and the Project Manager Galina Rybnikova, volunteers Viktoria Brumina (chair of the organizing committee), Yelena Kulevnich, Irina Fridman, Tatyana Shteinbuk, Alexander Furs and others.



16 July

Limmud FSU New York

Several hundred Jewish young adults from the Russian-speaking community attended Limmud FSU's conference in New York, taking place for the second time in a row in the center of Manhattan – this time at the UJA Federation of New York conference center.

During the annual conference packed with high-quality lectures and activities in the very spirit of Limmud, an emotional commemoration event in memory of the victims of recent anti-Semitic attacks on US Jewish institutions and synagogues took place. It was led by Chabad Rabbi Avi Bukiet, from Center for Jewish Life in Arlington-Belmont, that was set on fire in May twice in the framework of a hate crime. The Rabbi told the participants about the horrific incidents and said that "We, as a Jewish people, have to show we are united, and we not going anywhere".

The program of the annual conference included dozens of activities on wide range of topics by noted speakers and lecturers, among them the noted Canadian author and filmmaker David Bezmozgis; prominent American historian Deborah Lipstadt; a popular Australian broadcast and TV personality Rabbi Mordechai Becher; Writer and teacher Rachel Sharansky Danziger; Writer, literary critic, and radio broadcaster Alexander Genis; Israeli Actress and granddaughter of the famed Yiddish writer Avraham Sutzkever, Hadas Kalderon; The Operations Officer in an Israeli special commando unit under the command of Yoni Netanyahu Rami Sherman, Limmud International chief executive Eli Ovits, and many more.

The packed event also featured an interactive children's program for ages 3-13, and also a special teen program, "Discovery Day – Israel" in partnership with ClubZ.

Founder of Limmud FSU, Chaim Chesler said: "We couldn't feel more blessed - the program of Limmud FSU NY this year is extremely rich, high-quality and packed with the best speakers from so many different fields of work." Sandra Cahn, co-founder of Limmud FSU added that "We're excited to continue to take an active part in the vibrant and ever-evolving life of the Russian-speaking Jewish community of New York, and the amazing program this year is a great example". "It's a great experience to be here, one day which is so packed with different activities, learning, sharing" said Marina Kagan (28) from New York who attended the conference for the second time, "It's a truly unique event, and it never disappoints."

Supporters of the event included UJA - Jewish Federation of NY, Genesis Philanthropy Group, World Zionist Organization, Jonathan Leader, Mark Tsesarsky, The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Tom Blumberg and others. In the best tradition of Limmud FSU, the event was made possible by its team of local leaders and volunteers led by Limmud FSU Executive Director Roman Kogan and Project Manager Noam Shumakh – Khaimov, co-chairs Alina Bitel and Roman Sidler, as well as Yuliya Mazur, Inna Penek, Nina Faynberg and many others.

25-26 August

Limmud FSU Moldova, Chişinău

More than 300 young Jewish adults gathered this Sunday in Chişinău, the capital of Moldova, for a 2 days-long Limmud FSU Moldova festival. The packed event, which is geared towards Russian-speaking Jews, featured an array of world-class programs and international speakers, with more than 60 lectures, activities, master classes, performances and many more.

The exciting event also included a special ceremony of inauguration of a new synagogue in JCC KEDEM, taking place Sunday evening. Alexander Bilinkis, president of the Jewish Community of the Republic of Moldova, along with Alexander Weinstein and Emmanuil Grinshpun, donated the funds for the reopening of the original "Wooden" Synagogue, which was established in 1835 and nationalized in 1940.

The Speaker of the Parliament Zinaida Greceanii attended the official opening and addressed the Limmud FSU participants with a special greeting: "Our task is to preserve and amplify this tradition. It is difficult to correct what happened during the most terrible tragedy of the twentieth century - the Holocaust. However, at present new cultural centers are being built, synagogues restored." Greceanii added that "The fact that the historical building of the "Woodcutters" synagogue is returning is an eloquent demonstration that the new generation is ready to revive the glory of the ancestors, the glory of the Jewish Moldovan community."

The event, which took place at the JCC KEDEM featured well-known presenters as the Vice President of community relations in the Genesis Philanthropy Group and former ambassador of Israel to Russia Dorit Golender, IDF major general (res.) and head of the Institute for National Security Research at Tel Aviv University Amos Yadlin, Rabbi of the Jewish community of Moldova Shimshon (Daniel) Isakson,

Chief scientist of the Ministry of Aliya and Absorption in Israel Ze'ev Khanin, Jewish comedian and actress from Russia Klara Novikova, a well-known writer and television presenter Boris Burda from Ukraine, historian Mark Tkachuk (Moldova), leading architect Maxim Kalyuzak, and the musician Konstantin Moskovici.

Vice President of community relations in the Genesis Philanthropy Group Dorit Golender: "Genesis Philanthropy Group's mission is to develop and enhance a sense of Jewish identity among Russian-speaking Jews worldwide by supporting initiatives that ensure preservation of Jewish culture, heritage, and values in Russians-speaking Jewish communities across the globe. Since its inauguration, Limmud FSU has proven itself to be one of the leading global Russian-speaking Jewish projects, and we are happy to be partners in this commendable enterprise."

Limmud FSU Moldova was sponsored by the Jewish Community of Moldova, Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG), The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Euro - Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC), Claims Conference, Nativ, Joel Passick and more.

The event was made possible by a team of local leaders and volunteers, led by Limmud FSU Executive Director Roman Kogan and Project Manager Galina Rybnikova including Julia Sheinman (Chair), Egor Yertagayev, Riva Koksharova and others.



Special memorial for Aharon Appelfeld and Nava Semel

As part of the launch at the university a symposium on the life of the two writers was held with the participation of leading local officials, including the mayor of Chernivtsi, Oleksii Kaspruk, Vice - Governor of the Chernivtsi region, Vasili Gostyuk, Chairman of the Jewish community of Chernivtsi, Ilya Hoch, the Chief Rabbi of the Chernivtsi region Menachem-Mendel Glitsenstein, the Vice-Rector of Chernivtsi State University, Tamara Marusik, among others.

The preparatory seminar in Chernivtsi took place with the generous support of the Pincus Fund for Jewish Education, and the Hesed - Shushan charitable fund.



November 1-4

Limmud FSU Ukraine, Odessa

More than 600 members of the Jewish community of Ukraine gathered for the 13th annual volunteer-driven festival of Jewish learning organized by Limmud FSU. The event took place once again and for the fifth time in Odessa, one of the most important cities of Jewish and Zionist movement's history, after a highly successful 2017's event.

Moreover, this year marks 100 years since the departure of the "Ruslan" ship from Odessa, on board of which there were dozens of Jewish cultural figures of that time - those who were destined to determine the intellectual life of Israel. A special exhibition on the event was presented at the conference, as well as some lectures on the topic.

Among keynote speakers were Justice Elyakim Rubinstein, former Deputy President of the Supreme Court of Israel and Attorney General; Dorit Golender, Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG) Vice-President for External Relations and former Israeli Ambassador to Russia; Felix Gurvich, Advisor to the Embassy of the State in Ukraine, Director of the Representative offices of Nativ in Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Central Asia and the Caucasus region; Gary Aidekman, JDC Board member from the United States; and many more.

Osik Akselrud, Limmud FSU Ukraine Chair and Director of Hillel in Ukraine added: "Limmud FSU is all about the people, knowledge, communication and a vivid example of community life. In Odessa, more than 600 people from 14 countries of the world took part in our annual event, including many of young adults, which is extremely important to Hillel, and our whole community as well."

Dorit Golender: "It is highly symbolic and appropriate that Limmud FSU comes to Odessa - the historical center of Jewish national and intellectual revival, the city from which the pioneering spirit of Russian Jewry came all the way to the Land of Israel. Genesis Philanthropy Group, whose main mission is to develop and enhance the Jewish identity of Russian-speaking Jews, is happy to support Limmud FSU - one of the leading initiatives of Russian-speaking Jews worldwide."

The Deputy Mayor of Odessa Pavel Vugelman told the participants during the opening event on Thursday night: "We are pleased that such distinguished guests visit us, thereby glorifying our long Jewish history, strengthening our ties with the state of Israel, with the Israeli cultural center "Nativ", which is one of the landmark projects in the city."

Limmud FSU Ukraine was made possible thanks to the team of local leaders and volunteers, led by Project Manager Galina Rybnikova and Limmud FSU executive director Roman Kogan, together with the volunteers' committee chair, Dasha Yefimenko from Rovno; program committee chair, Valeria Ogorodnik from Uzhgorod; public relations and marketing committee chair, Zhenya Khorzhevskiy from Odessa; the participants' experience committee chair, Olena Kolpakova from Dnepri; and others.

The festival enjoyed the generous support of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG), All-Ukrainian Jewish congress headed by Vadim Rabinovich, Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - JDC, Nativ - Israel Prime-minister's office, the Claims Conference, Joel Passick, and other Limmud FSU International funders.





12-14 December

Limmud FSU Israel, Ashdod

Limmud FSU celebrated its bat-mitzva – 12 years of educational activities in Israel with a three-day festival which this year took place for the first time in the city of Ashdod which has a large population of Russian-speakers. The pluralistic conference, run entirely by volunteers, attracted more than 700 young Russian-speaking Israelis, most of them between the ages of 20-45.

The high-quality program encompassed more than 150 lectures, workshops, round-table discussions, master classes and artistic performances given by 100 presenters, on a wide range of subjects of Jewish interest, as well as a special program for children.

The festival, held in partnership with Ashdod Municipality, took place in the Leonardo Plaza hotel and hosted some noted public figures, including Justice Elyakim Rubinstein, the former Deputy-President of the Supreme Court; MK Avigdor Liberman, former defense minister; Limmud FSU Chair of the International Steering Committee Matthew Bronfman; Limmud FSU President and EAJC Chairman Aaron Frenkel; Dorit Golender, Vice-President for Community Relations at the Genesis Philanthropy Group; Isaac Herzog, Chair of the Jewish Agency Executive; Shimon Katznelson, deputy mayor of Ashdod; Sofa Landver, former Minister for Immigration; Limmud FSU co-founder Sandra F. Cahn; Prof. Zeev Khanin, chief scientist of the Ministry of Immigration; Prof. Dina Porat, chief historian of Yad Vashem; Ambassador Uri Palti; Sar-Shalom Jerbi, director of the Education and Community Division of the Jewish National Fund (KKL); musicians Leonid Ptashka, Gil Shochat and Roy Young and many more.

Among the festival's highlights was the inauguration of an exhibition in honor of Justice Rubinstein, curated by Prof. Aviad HaCohen, Dean of the Sha'arei Hamishpat College of Law. Among dignitaries attending the event were former Supreme Court judges, Yoram Danziger and Ayala Procaccia; Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad and former head of the Mossad, Ephraim Halevy.

The festival also featured a memorial to the late Russian cosmonaut, Alexei Leonov, the first man to walk in space who died in October. The event featured a message from the American astronaut Garrett Reisman, who was a guest of honor together with Leonov at Limmud FSU 2011 in Beersheba. Igor Martynov, the advisor to the Russian Embassy in Israel said that during the 2011 event, Leonov had noted the cosmic character of the Israelis, striving to survive in any circumstances. "It is indeed symbolic that these words were said in the city built in the desert, thanks solely to the efforts of the Jewish people" said Martynov.

Limmud FSU President Aaron Frenkel: "Unity is a much needed today more than ever, and Limmud FSU has been

uniting people for many, many years now. The Diaspora cries out for Limmud, and unfortunately, we are currently losing parts of our humane reserve and support of the Jews worldwide. Therefore, it is crucial that each and every one of us do his and her best to be together, to volunteer, to deepen and strengthen Jewish identity, and to be involved in the life of the Jewish people."

Chair of the International Steering Committee Matthew Bronfman said: "At Limmud we strive to represent the widest possible range of Jews around the world. It is not important if you are on the left or right or center: we only care for your Jewish soul and that is what Limmud is all about – connection to the Jewish soul in each person who walks through our doors."

Deputy Mayor of Ashdod Shimon Katznelson said: "I am grateful to Limmud FSU for choosing Ashdod to host this wonderful festival of knowledge this year. It is very special and symbolic for us, and we are grateful for this opportunity to welcome everyone to our city."

Dorit Golender, Vice-President for Community Relations at the Genesis Philanthropy Group: "The future of the Jewish people belongs to the young generation, and the impact of such projects as Limmud FSU is especially important for children and teenagers. This is why I was so impressed by the sophistication and popularity of the youth program here at Limmud FSU in Ashdod. We are proud that, with the support of the Genesis Philanthropy Group, the youngest participants of Limmud could connect with the history of their nation and their state, and strengthen ties with their peers from all over the country."

Chair of the Jewish Agency Executive Isaac Herzog said during the closing event: "We cannot bury our heads in the sand: it is our duty to give an answer to the many challenges that confront us, some of which are similar to those in the past - antisemitism, hatred of Jews, hatred of Israel, as well as rifts within Jewish society itself. The Jewish Agency is committed to help in strengthening Jewish communities in the face of antisemitism which is again raising its head."

The event was supported by the Municipality of Ashdod, the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the Genesis Philanthropy Group, Mifal Hapayis, KKL, the Conference for Jewish Material Claims against Germany, and others. It was mounted by a devoted group of volunteers under the direction of the project manager Ira Zdanovych, chair of the Participant Care Committee, Alex Agranov; chair of the Marketing Committee, Pavel Pivovarov; co-chairs of Volunteers committee, Anna Karpuhina and Daniel Zhezmer; co-chairs of the Logistics Committee, Angelina Dementyeva and Max Rusinov, Programming committee members and others.



New joint project with the Ministry of Diaspora

Limmud Labs, a joint new project by Limmud FSU and the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs will provide a golden opportunity for the continued development, connection and strengthening of the Jewish identity of Russian-speaking Jews. The activities of Limmud FSU will expand beyond its present confines. In addition to the annual conferences and festivals taking place in eight countries (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, as well as the Russian-speaking Jewish communities in the US, Canada, Australia and Western and Central Europe), the activities will expand to provide an ongoing process, bearing in mind the changing Jewish world and hopefully to create meaningful and stable bridges between Russian-speaking Jews and the world Jewish community at large and Israel in general.

During September, the project published a tender for initiatives at the Russian-speaking Jewish communities around the globe, among young people aged 17-45, with an emphasis on those defined as "unaffiliated" - that is, taking part in a local Jewish event no more than once a year, or not at all. More than 150 initiatives were received already. After a process of selection and guidance by a local team, a continuous series of year-round educational and cultural activities will take place - all in accordance with the needs and special characteristics of the local Jewish community.

The ultimate goal of the project is to enhance the connection and partnership of the local communities wherever Limmud FSU events are already taking place, and where there is a real desire to deepen learning, so as to create a meaningful and lasting network of community members extending beyond the annual meetings.

Since the success of Limmud FSU relies heavily on active involvement and volunteering, the new project's activities will be based on the same principles. The monetary scope of the project - 2.2 million \$ for 3 years, 50% of the Israeli government budget, and 50% of Limmud FSU budget, which comes entirely from donations and grants.

The uniqueness of Limmud Labs is that it is an organic outcome of a need that has emanated directly from Limmud FSU participants and volunteers, who, over the years, have desired, extended and ongoing activities providing an opportunity for self-expression of various initiatives and projects coming from within the community.

President of Limmud FSU, Aaron G. Frenkel, "This joint initiative between Limmud and the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs provides a rare opportunity for the Russian-speaking Jews around the globe. The potential of this innovative project is to expand and deepen the connection of young Jews to Judaism and Israel is tremendous and bears phenomenal implications for the future of the Jewish people worldwide. For Limmud, the recognition by the government of Israel of our activities is an important milestone and allows us to achieve a really meaningful change in the level of our work."



Gabi Farberov

Project Manager, Limmud FSU Labs

Gabi Farberov is the Project Manager of Limmud FSU Community Labs. She was born in Latvia and made Aliyah in 1994. Gabi has a B.A. in History and an M.A. in Educational System Development. For the last 12 years, Gabi has worked in the Oranim College of Education, developing and directing international programs for teenagers, students, young adults and families from Israel, FSU, Germany, South America and the United States. In addition, she has led educational workshops and courses on topics such as Jewish Communities in the World, Jewish Peoplehood, and many more.



Ministry of Diaspora Affairs
Creating a common Jewish future



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The project has been made possible with the generous support of Genesis Philanthropy Group

Limmud FSU

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Ukraine

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(English: en.limmud.org.ua)

Belarus

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<http://2015.limmudvu.ru/>

Limmud FSU Official Blog

<https://www.limmudsublog.org/>

Limmud LABS:

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Ukraine: Hillel Ukraine, Tkuma, Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter, Dutch Humanitarian Fund, All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress (headed by Vadim Rabinovich).

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