

## Rabbi Lea Mühlstein

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### United Kingdom

My own story truly shows the power and impact of the World Union for Progressive Judaism: born and raised in the then just developing progressive Jewish community in Germany, my passion for institutional Judaism was kindled by my involvement with the young adult movement Tamar. The WUPJ conference in Moscow was formative and led to my decision to enroll as a rabbinic student at Leo Back College in London. After concluding my terms on the WUPJ board as the young adult representative, my global Jewish journey took me to Arzenu, which I now have the privilege to chair - a role that I find time for thanks to the generous support of my congregation Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue in London UK, where I am a full-time pulpit rabbi.



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# Julia Ullman

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## China

My name is Julia Ullman, and I am proud to serve Kehilat Shanghai as their Community Coordinator. After growing up extremely involved in the Cleveland, Ohio Jewish community and NFTY NEL, I majored in Jewish Studies the University of Chicago, with eyes on rabbinical school. Through attending URJ Biennial twice as a college student, and the WUPJ Connections conference in Jerusalem during my study abroad, I realized that I wanted to explore the global Jewish world even more. During my year in Israel, I learned of the opportunity to serve as the Community Coordinator of Kehilat Shanghai. It had become my dream to serve a Jewish community abroad as an educator and community organizer, as I realize the impact such communities have on the Jewish future, and the need for those with a strong Jewish communal background to become an expat and support such communities.



Kehilat Shanghai was founded 8 years ago by Jewish families living in Shanghai who desired a community that better matched their ideology and family structures. Through its 8 years, it has grown to hold regular Shabbat services, holiday celebrations, an Education Program, youth group, multiple social and professional networks, and employ a staff member to facilitate.

My work with Kehilat Shanghai includes event planning, marketing and communications, developing our education program and youth group opportunities, and developing regional projects with our partners around Asia, and connecting with our regional and global affiliates. As we do not yet have a permanent home, we travel around the expansive city of Shanghai to multiple venues for Shabbat, holidays, and events. Our Torah, by the way, had escaped Europe and made its way through the open port of Shanghai to spend a few years in the post-war Shanghai Jewish ghetto, before immigrating to Brazil with its then-community. With help of the WUPJ, the community in Brazil transferred the Torah to us at CONNECTIONS in Rio in 2015. It's my honor to serve Kehilat Shanghai, as well as with our regional partner communities, to continue to build and strengthen progressive Judaism globally.

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# Hernán Rustein

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## Argentina

My name is Hernán Rustein, CEO, Chazzan and Student Rabbi at Templo Libertad, Argentina's most historical congregation. Student at the Iberoamerican Institute for Reform Rabbinical Training and I've also been the first latinamerican to have been a part of Roswell's Klal Yisrael fellowship, last year. Since the 1960's conservative Judaism has been the main Branch in our southamerican region associated with progressive Judaism. We owe that to the charisma, honest and important work of a masorti American rabbi that worked at my synagogue and since then spread the word to the rest of our countries. We want to claim back a spot for reform Judaism, but this time from the honest, coherent and important work of people from all of latinamerica, Spain and Portugal. We need rabbis that speak our languages, and that are a part themselves of our realities: who know our needs, problems and virtues. We can only do it together, we can only do it online, twice a year on planes to get together. We need to get Judaism to places where it has never been, to people that have always been left behind. We need to make Judaism the best excuse to live our life's again, and not an excuse to leave people out, one more time.



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# Alla Mitelman

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## Russia

My name is Alla Mitelman and for last 12 years I have worked as the educational programs director of "Shaarei Shalom" reform congregation in St-Petersburg, Russia. I was born into a Soviet Jewish secular family in Ukraine and had no religious or Jewish cultural experience until I joined the Reform movement at the age of 23 years old.



Like main character of the fairy tale "Alice in Wonderland" I unexpectedly found myself in a magical land, received unforgettable experience of Jewish programs, leadership seminars, camps. I had the honor to participate in a Wilkenfeld Seminar organized by Women of Reform Judaism and WUPJ in 2016 in London. The impact of this seminar is not only the exchange of experiences of women leaders and professionals, but the main thing is the building of human relations that support each other through years and distance - in word and deed.

For the last couple of years, our synagogue has been working without a fulltime rabbi position, and I have been privileged to taste the functions of a rabbi, leading services and teaching. But the brightest point in my Jewish journey was to become a student of the Moscow Rabbinical Institute. Besides the fact that this is an incredibly interesting experience in itself, studying at the institute gives me the opportunity to improve my professional skills as a community worker. Our community had a unique opportunity to meet with other students of the Moscow Rabbinical Institute, who come for community practice.

I am grateful to all organizers and donors who dreamed of a local Rabbinical Institute in this region. Thank you for the opportunity to grow and develop, to study and give back to the community. Thanks to you, the world of Russian-speaking Jewry is getting better day by day.

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## Nicki Braun

### Australia/Israel

When I was 12, I was introduced to Netzer, the global youth movement of the World Union. My first interaction with Netzer was a holiday camp and it changed my life. Until about 3 months ago, I went to meetings every week and camps during every holiday.



Netzer, which stands for 'Noar Tzioni Reformi – Reform Zionist Youth', teaches about Progressive Judaism, Reform Zionism, Tikkun Olam and more, but above any of that, it teaches life skills. I gained confidence, developed my own personal beliefs and identity, and became a leader in my community. All of this was further solidified during my gap year, participating in Shnat Netzer in 2015 in Israel.

Back in Sydney, during my undergrad studies, I volunteered for Netzer. This experience opened many doors. I worked for my synagogue and sat on the Board of Progressive Jewish Education.

3 months ago, I made Aliyah from Australia, I now live in Jerusalem, and am the elected chair of Netzer worldwide. I lead our 16 branches around the world, including NFTY. I create educational materials for them that reflect our values and I am planning our annual our leadership summit in Jerusalem in January, called Veida.

I am excited for a generation of young and confident Progressive Netzer leaders.

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## David Maxa

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### Czech Republic

My name is David Maxa. I grew up in Prague, the Czech capital – the city of one hundred spires, the Golem, and Franz Kafka. For me, the son of a Shoah survivor, Judaism was a stigma, something surrounded by unbreakable silence and belonging to the past. After my father passed away, I decided to explore this legacy and I began attending various Jewish activities. This journey, which brought me to WUPJ Connections 2013 in Jerusalem and also to Kutz Camp, eventually led me to pursue a career in the rabbinate. So, in 2014, I enrolled in the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam.



During my rabbinic studies, I have enjoyed learning from most inspiring teachers and spent an incredible year in Israel, during which I had the privilege to attend the amazing Bergman seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators.

In a few months, I will be ordained and take up rabbinical tasks in the Czech Republic. My mission is to teach, inspire, stimulate, break the silence, help to renew Progressive Judaism in the Czech Republic, so that my son and others of his generations don't understand being Jewish as something belonging to the past but to the present and future.

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# Andrea Kulikovsky

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## Brazil

I was born in a family deeply connected with community service and raised as part of several tnuot of São Paulo. Choosing to be part of the education department of my synagogue as a lay leader was natural for me, but it's been life changing in a way I could have never imagined.



I attended WUPJ Beutel Seminar in 2018. It was amazing: realizing that we are part of a bigger system, developing tools to build bigger projects beyond the borders of our communities, connecting with other views of Israel, making friends to share the tsures that can come with Jewish lay leadership work, recharging our deeper batteries and bringing back the energy of that magical time.

Those connections were vital to the affiliation of our youth movements to Netzer. We established with South Africa a madrichim interchange program and learned what is to be Netzer Olami. Working together with other snifim, exchanging ideas and peulot, participating on almost every program that Netzer has to offer has proved to be the best way of strengthening the Reform Movement in Brazil.

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