



WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM



האיגוד העולמי ליהדות מתקדמת

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear friends,

It is with pride and great satisfaction that we present our 2024 Annual Report.

Since October 7, our lives have been forever changed worldwide. Yet, despite our many challenges, our conviction and commitment to advancing global Progressive Judaism remain steadfast and renewed. We are dedicated to the Progressive values rooted in our understanding of Torah, Mitzvot, Tikkun, Medinat Israel, and Jewish Peoplehood, fostering communities of practice that guide our spiritual development, deepen our study of tradition, and translate our values into actions. This allows us to connect our millennia-old Jewish roots with a forward-looking universal mission for a better world.

Our vision shapes our mission based on values supporting the diversity of the programs we present here. We aim to connect our communities through their varied practices, affirming the unity of our global movement around a shared agenda. We are committed to creating meaningful connections and strengthening our ties as we collectively address leadership development, create spaces for dialogue and collaboration, and establish a global agenda that guides our Progressive Judaism through local actions. We celebrate the Jewish richness of our unique cultures, languages, and practices.

This Jewish diversity affirms a unified vision that translates our Torah into Mitzvot, which, in the contemporary context, adds significant meaning and relevance to our time and place. We emphasize the practices of Tikkun Atzmi, our individual spiritual growth; Tikkun Am, in the construction and development of communities imbued with meaningful Jewish practice; and Tikkun Olam, as we strive to contribute to making the world a better place for ourselves and future generations, through our respectful efforts.

As the WUPJ prepares to celebrate its first centenary, we invite you and our global communities to plan events that honor this significant milestone in our history as a global movement. We look forward to participating in the leaders' meeting at Connections 25, scheduled for October 22-25, 2025, in Jerusalem. This event will mark the grand reopening of our home, featuring the newly renovated Beit Shmuel, Mercaz Shimshon, Blaustein Hall, and Hirsch Theater as part of our Global Hub for Progressive Judaism. This commitment underscores our mission to establish Jerusalem and Israel as our spiritual center—from which we can reaffirm Ki MiTzion Tetzeh Torah, proclaiming that our spiritual vision of Progressive Judaism is renewed from Jerusalem for all humanity.

We also strongly reaffirm our commitment to Medinat Israel and the prophetic vision expressed in its Declaration of Independence, which is the foundation of our Progressive Zionism. Despite the anguish felt by the entire Jewish people due to the gap between this enduring ideal and the policies of its government, we stand united in our call for the return of the hostages, still inhumanely imprisoned in Gaza, for the safe return of IDF soldiers, and for a prompt peace that ends the longest war in Israel's history.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

We will always condemn Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iranian terrorism without qualification. We will continue to advocate that only a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians, can uphold the values upon which Israel was founded, and that this vision must be revisited at the negotiating table, as Israel has successfully done with other nations in the region.

Despite no longer dominating the media narrative, we passionately remember our communities in Ukraine, who continue to endure a cruel and devastating war, and they daily remain in our hearts and our actions.

Finally, we wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who ensures the success of our endeavors. You are the foundation of our work, and we thank our donors for their generous financial support, each according to their means, as every contribution helps sustain our mission. We also appreciate the work of volunteers in our communities and regions and the leadership within the newly formed International Leadership Council, which incorporates the Governing Board. Our gratitude extends to the WUPJ staff and all our active communities within the WUPJ Network, whose collective efforts enable the development of the programs we present here.

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We seek Peace. *Sha'alu Shlom Yerushalayim*—may we ask and pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, where we will all ascend together. We hope and pray for peace, as we celebrate our strength, vitality and solidarity a century after the founding of the WUPJ, of which we are all an integral part

Yours,

Rabbi Sergio Bergman, President
Phyllis Dorey, Chair
World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ)



Rabbi Sergio Bergman



Phyllis Dorey OAM

OUR MISSION



The World Union for Progressive Judaism is the central hub that connects Reform, Liberal, Progressive, and Reconstructionist Judaism around the world while upholding the State of Israel as the center of the Jewish people and Jewish identity. The WUPJ provides support for communities, institutions and individuals for the continuity of Judaism and for tikkun olam. The WUPJ aims to provide innovative platforms and tools to advance Progressive Jewish values and to develop the global progressive lay and youth leadership of the Jewish people.

WHAT WE DO

WUPJ Center for Education and Leadership Development



The WUPJ Center for Education and Leadership Development serves as a global hub for Jewish education and leadership, supporting individuals at all life stages.

The Center actively seeks out, connects, and empowers educators, clergy, community professionals, and lay leaders who aim to deepen their knowledge and assume new roles in strengthening their communities, educational institutions, regions, and the global Jewish community. Additionally, it acts as a platform for innovative initiatives and emerging models of Jewish life. Guided by Progressive Jewish values and principles—rooted in tradition yet forward-looking—the Center envisions a dynamic future for Judaism worldwide. It collaborates with academic institutions and NGOs, both within and beyond the Progressive Movement, fostering strategic partnerships to amplify its mission.

2024 Programs and Initiatives

Educational and Leadership Development Consulting

This year, the Center developed and implemented guides for local community development including:

- Designing and managing educational programs
- Planning a leadership development seminar
- Planning a community event
- Work plan for local communities
- Checklist for establishing a new community
- Guide for a community hiring a rabbi

The Center staff provided consulting for a number of emerging communities around the world via Zoom in coordination with their answers to these guides.

Global Leadership Fellowship

The Global Leadership Fellowship (GLF) is designed to develop and enhance Progressive Jewish leadership skills by combining theoretical learning with practical application. The program enables participants to explore the theory of Global Progressive Jewish leadership, take action through personal project implementation, and embrace “glocal” leadership—bringing the global conversation to local activism and addressing local needs through global action.

The GLF began in September with the first of four webinars, followed by a weeklong seminar in Israel in November, and includes four months of mentoring sessions to support participants in implementing their personal projects.



Forum of Regional chairs

The forum of Regional Chairs was established to strengthen contact and support between regions and the WUPJ. To achieve this, 6 regional chairs and representatives of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia gathered in quarterly Zoom meetings. The chairs share best practices, challenges and impending projects, and receive updates on relevant WUPJ initiatives.

Forum of Clergy Councils

Representatives of fourteen clergy councils gathered twice this year over Zoom.

At the beginning of the year, the clergy councils received a comprehensive survey from the WUPJ detailing the activities and leadership of all councils. During the first gathering in May, we discussed Israel and antisemitism as topics of widespread mutual concern. In September, lawyer Nicole Maor, IRAC's Director of the Legal Aid Center for Olim, joined the forum, and we discussed issues of conversion and aliyah to Israel. This was followed by an information sheet for clergy, compiled in collaboration between LACO and the WUPJ.

The final meeting will take place in December.

Forum of Leaders of Shlichei Tzibor preparation programs

In quarterly Zoom meetings, leaders of six programs share best practices, discuss challenges and receive workshops for improving their programs.

Four workshops have been held in which participants have worked with Cantor Sheila Nesis on the covenant between participants-teachers-community, individual mentoring, evaluation and spiritual preparation for the High Holidays.

In addition to the webinars, the Center manages a clearinghouse of materials.





Havdalah service at Paris Square in Jerusalem with hostage families during the WUPJ/Arzenu Solidarity Mission to Israel.

Responses to the October 7 Tragedy and War in Israel

WUPJ-Arzenu Solidarity Mission to Israel

Twenty leaders, representing diverse regions, ages, and positions, responded to WUPJ-Arzenu's open call to join a five-day solidarity mission to Israel, visiting sites, engaging in dialogue, and demonstrating support for Israel. These participants now serve as ambassadors for Israel, Progressive Zionism, and the WUPJ in their home communities.



Tekes Zikaron – Global Ceremony of Commemoration of October 7

The WUPJ organized a ceremony that was broadcast twice on October 6 across all time zones to honor the memory of the victims, pray for the hostages, and offer support and hope to our communities around the globe. The ceremony featured WUPJ leaders in ten languages representing every region. Over four hundred people participated live in the ceremonies, including small communities that gathered together to watch the WUPJ ceremony and incorporate it into their observance.

Administration of Local Leadership Development Grants

The Center created an application and support process for a pilot program designed to support local leadership initiatives, including a matching grant and pedagogical support. This year's programs include:

- SAUPJ Shlichei Tzibor Training program
- UPJ Governance Course
- UPJ Emerging Leaders Project
- Beit Hillel Rome 10-year anniversary seminar and lecture series on Progressive Judaism
- KiwiPJ Governance Seminar
- Israeli Youth delegation to RSY and Liberal/Reform synagogues

Pedagogical Support for Belarus, Russia and Ukraine Shlichei Tzibor Training Programs and Israel Seminar

The Center staff meet regularly with the local staff to support the development and design of the local Shlichei Tzibor programs and to monitor the progress of the participants. We also assisted on the design of the Israel leadership seminar in May for 25 participants who completed the local courses, including practical training and deepening understanding of Israel after October 7th.

Shlichut Hub

The Center facilitates matching between shaliach/shelicha and community, preparation of shaliach/shelicha and community for the shlichut, ongoing support during the visit and evaluation of the experience.

Shlichut for Israelis

The Center worked to coordinate recruiting for long-term WUPJ shlichut opportunities through the Jewish Agency in partnership with the IMPJ. We also worked with RSY NeTzeR (UK) to prepare a plan for the orientation of three shinshinim that the WUPJ helps to support in UK Reform communities.

Shlichut for Clergy

We match rabbis, cantors and other spiritual leaders to communities around the world. We have created a form for spiritual leaders who are interested in short-term opportunities, and we now have about 30 people in our database.

This year we made placements in four communities for the High Holidays, and one placement for a long-term rabbinic shlichut in a community. We have protocols for the entire process, including ready-to-go questionnaires. Each match is accompanied by a process in which we meet the community leader and the clergy separately and then jointly for setting mutual expectations. We are available during the shlichut. Finally, we oversee an evaluation process with the conclusion of the shlichut.



HUC Pesach Project

The WUPJ collaborated with the HUC Year-In-Israel program to support the sending of first year rabbinic and cantorial students to serve emerging or underserved communities for Pesach seders and surrounding observances. Our goals are to educate students about world Progressive Jewry and to help strengthen their leadership skills.

In light of the war in Ukraine, the Center turned to Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz of Etz Chaim congregation in Warsaw, who connected the Center to emerging communities in Poland. The WUPJ also connected students to other communities in Europe based on request and availability. The WUPJ Center assisted with the preparation of the students as shlichim/ot, facilitating communication with the communities and in evaluating and integrating the experience.

This year reinstates the relationship between the WUPJ and HUC on this historic program and are already working on the 2025 program, including collaboration with the JDC on this project and other projects connecting HUC rabbinic and cantorial students to Progressive communities around the world.

Shlichut Hub

Global Rabbinic Placement

The Center has expanded its capacity this year to assist with long-term rabbinic placements. Congregations have sent their job listings to us, and we circulate them through the clergy councils. Based on needs expressed in the field, we are developing a template for congregations to advertise clergy positions, following consultations with leading Progressive/Reform partners and a study of best practices in our communities worldwide and in related fields.



Social Media

The Center works with Strauss Communications on content for social media, the newsletter, and website. We created specified social media plans for the major WUPJ programs.

WUPJ Rebranding

The Center is overseeing the WUPJ rebranding process which involves WUPJ lay leaders and staff. The goal of the process this year is to form a brand strategy to prioritize WUPJ's goals and audiences, draft position and personality to provide a framework for approaching communications strategically and strategy for visual system and messaging. This included interviews with a cross-section of WUPJ audiences, a series of intensive workshops, and the generating of a report and recommendations which will guide our rebranding. We look forward to implementing the strategy in the next year.

WUPJ Mentors

We believe that mentorship is a critical component of leadership development. This year, we created a pilot program for training and matching mentors for the Global Leadership Fellowship. We recruited WUPJ leaders and leadership program alumni as our opening cohort of mentors. The training program consisted of a series of three workshops in which mentors received information on WUPJ values, mission and vision as well as discussed the goals of the GLF program and mentoring techniques. The Center will support the mentors throughout the mentoring process by providing guidance and materials.

WHAT WE DO

NeTzeR- TaMaR



NeTzeR Olami and TaMaR Olami, the youth and young adult movements affiliated with the WUPJ, provide a framework for empowerment and engagement that fosters leadership, global community, and personal growth. NeTzeR, as a Zionist youth movement, empowers Progressive Jewish youth through transformative educational and leadership programs like Shnat NeTzeR, seminars, camps, and international conferences. In 2024, NeTzeR Olami continued to support its snifim (branches) worldwide through educational programs for global leadership and presence within local Jewish communities.

TaMaR Olami supports groups of young adults around the world, whose programming provides spaces for students and young professionals to experience meaningful Jewish learning and explore personal Jewish and Zionist identity. In 2024, TaMaR experienced significant growth, establishing 6 new groups while supporting 15 existing ones and building meaningful connections among young Progressive Jews.

NeTzeR and TaMaR together contribute to the WUPJ's mission through promoting Progressive Zionism, Jewish values, and social responsibility.

2024 Programs and Initiatives

Shnat NeTzeR



Shnat NeTzeR is the Reform and Progressive movement's gap year program in Israel that combines leadership development, personal growth, and social action. As an international program, it welcomes participants from Australia, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Europe, North America, and beyond.

This year presented significant challenges for Shnat in general, affecting all tnuot (youth movements) including NeTzeR. Despite these challenges, we decided to proceed with a group even though it was small. Throughout the year, we had four participants from Australia and the United Kingdom.

The Shnat program consisted of four stages: Machon Le Madrichim, volunteering at Kibbutz Revivim alongside a Hebrew Ulpan, Hadracha roles at URJ camps, and Project 10, focused on coexistence at Kibbutz Harduf. Unfortunately, during the final two weeks of the program, due to the situation in the north, we had to relocate, and the Chanichim returned to Kibbutz Revivim to continue their volunteer work.

In Shnat Shachar, we succeeded in cultivating a small yet dedicated group of future leaders. They had an enriching experience and are now prepared to return as exceptional leaders in their snifim and communities.



Shlichim Tnuatiim NeTzeR-TaMaR



As a Reform Zionist Jewish youth and young adult movement, we view the connection between our branches and communities with Israel as one of our core educational pillars. For many years, we have been part of the *shlichut* (emissary) network of youth movements within the Jewish Agency, which enables us to strengthen this bond.

Through this framework, we send *shlichim* (emissaries) to Australia in collaboration with the local community.

Additionally, over the past year, we partnered with two communities to send young *shlichim* participating in Shnat Sherut (service year).

All *shlichim* are supported by the NeTzeR-TaMaR Olami team, ensuring they are well-equipped to foster meaningful connections and promote our shared values.

Short Term Shlichut

Short-term *shlichut* plays a vital role in strengthening the connection between the WUPJ and local *sniffim*, fostering collaborative projects and initiatives, and gaining a deeper understanding of the on-the-ground activities within these communities.

One of the key strategies employed by the WUPJ team and NeTzeR-TaMaR is the implementation of short-term *shlichut*. This involves physically visiting Progressive Jewish communities and participating in specific NeTzeR and TaMaR programs, such as camps and seminars. The primary objectives of these visits are to build meaningful connections, understand the unique needs of each community, and support their growth and engagement. This hands-on approach is instrumental in effectively advancing the organization's vision and ensuring its initiatives align with the realities and aspirations of the communities it serves.

Throughout the year, the NeTzeR-TaMaR team visited several *sniffim*, including those in Italy (a seminar with TaMaR Germany, Italy, and Hungary), Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Prague, Budapest, France, and Australia. These visits provided valuable opportunities to connect, collaborate, and reinforce the shared mission of promoting Progressive Jewish values worldwide.



Open Call Snifim NeTzeR-TaMar

The Open Call program supports local NeTzeR and TaMaR initiatives by providing additional funding to bring innovative and impactful educational ideas to life. This year, 22 *sniffim* across NeTzeR and TaMaR benefitted from this support which allowed for numerous new initiatives, including Shabbat experiences, travel opportunities, local leadership development, musical events, and educational seminars focused on Reform Jewish history and rising global antisemitism, as well as meaningful social gatherings and holiday celebrations throughout the Jewish calendar. This funding is crucial for enhancing local programming which many *sniffim* would not have the resources to do otherwise, both in terms of financial and educational support.



NeTzeR Europe Leadership Seminar

The NeTzeR Europe Seminar took place in Madrid in February 2024, bringing together 25 representatives from all NeTzeR Europe branches. Additionally, we were honored to host two representatives from the WUPJ Ukrainian refugee group in Spain.

The seminar provided an invaluable opportunity to strengthen connections between the various NeTzeR Europe branches and to share experiences, strategies, and best practices.

Key topics discussed during the seminar included youth leadership, community responsibility, Jewish education in times of conflict, and combating

antisemitism. This gathering served as a vital platform for collaboration and learning, reinforcing the collective mission of NeTzeR Europe.



Kenes NeTzeR-TaMaR Latin America Leadership Seminar

In response to the challenges faced by young Jews in the diaspora, particularly in the aftermath of October 7th, we launched a project focused on the youth of Progressive Jewish communities in Latin America. The primary goal of this initiative was to strengthen Jewish and Reform Zionist identity among young people in the region, empowering them to become catalysts for positive change within their communities.



The centerpiece of the project was an in-person seminar held in Brazil, which brought together 40 young leaders from Progressive Jewish communities across Latin America. The seminar addressed a wide range of subjects, including the state of Israel and global Jewish communities post-October 7th, the meaning of Reform Zionism and connection to Israel, leadership and education, community responsibility, activism within and beyond Jewish communities, and practical tools for effective communication.

Kenes TaMaR Australia New Zealand Leadership Seminar

In early December, 24 young adults from across the Progressive Jewish communities of Australia and New Zealand gathered at a beautiful retreat center outside of Sydney, marking the inaugural TaMaR event for the region. The seminar included meaningful learning sessions, challenging discussions, productive workshopping for the next steps of establishing and growing TaMaR across Australia and New Zealand, and an opportunity for a unique celebration of Shabbat.

The group left the seminar with wonderful enthusiasm toward continuing to build TaMaR groups and activities in each of their cities, and feeling personally fulfilled by a music-filled, spiritually uplifting, and radically inclusive community that was built over the weekend. This seminar was the fourth and final throughout 2024 led by TaMaR Olami and WUPJ for local TaMaR leaders across the world, which has allowed for our staff to be on the ground to gain increased understanding of local realities and to continue to build our connections with local community leaders.



Kenes - TaMaR Europe Leadership Seminar

In September of this year, approaching the one-year mark since October 7th and in the face of increasing antisemitism across the world, twenty young adult leaders from TaMaR *sniffim* and Reform/Progressive communities across Europe convened in Prague for the Kenes - TaMaR Europe Leadership Seminar. This gathering provided a platform to share successes, address challenges, and strengthen regional and global connections in the fight against antisemitism in a post-October 7th world.

The seminar addressed topics like the situation of Israel and Jewish communities post-October 7th, the meaning and relevance of Zionism, education and leadership development, community responsibility, and practical communication strategies. Participants engaged in reflective discussions on their Jewish and Reform Zionist identities, empowering them to act as agents of positive change within their communities.

A key focus of the seminar was fostering collaboration among young leaders, encouraging the sharing of resources, and building a supportive network to collectively confront rising antisemitism and promote unity.

To sustain momentum, follow-up support will include resources and webinars designed to enhance their leadership skills and deepen their engagement on local, regional, and global levels.



Kenes TaMaR South Africa Leadership Seminar



At the beginning of the year, 15 members of TaMaR South Africa came together for a retreat seminar at Bodhi Khaya. The seminar included a range of activities to strengthen the group, foster connections with TaMaR's core values, and build a peer network to support future TaMaR initiatives and seminars throughout the year.

During the retreat, participants explored what Reform Judaism means to them personally, reflected on ways to improve and set intentions for the year ahead, and discussed opportunities for collaboration, drawing on each individual's unique background and contributions.

Na'ama Ronder, Coordinator of NeTzeR Olami, attended the seminar during her short Shlichut on behalf of NeTzeR and the WUPJ in South Africa. She led a Kabbalat Shabbat service inspired by Progressive Judaism, which deepened the participants' connection to the movement's values.

This seminar served as a powerful and inspiring launch for TaMaR South Africa's activities in the year ahead, leaving participants energized and motivated to continue their engagement.

TaMaR - Moishe House Partnership

Moishe House aims to support young adults in creating pluralistic communities and fostering leadership development. In collaboration with WUPJ-TaMaR and Moishe House, we've launched initiatives to empower young Jewish leaders worldwide.

A key element of this partnership is the Jewish Education Grant, created to support global Moishe House-TaMaR & NeTzer initiatives. This grant incentivizes collaborative events, enabling snifim to strengthen their local networks through meaningful programming. The pilot has already garnered significant interest and participation, and we aim to expand funding next year to amplify its impact further.



Additionally, we established a Moishe House-TaMaR in Buenos Aires, hosted by Fundación Judaica, which provides 3-4 young adults with a residence, financial support, and a budget for community activities. These programs include local collaborations with the Judaica community and TaMaR Olami, fostering cultural and pluralistic Jewish engagement.

NeTzeR Machanot (Camps)

Throughout the year, NeTzeR Olami supported *machanot* across its global movement. These camps engaged thousands of campers and hundreds of madrichim across Latin America, Europe, South Africa, and Australia. Each camp had distinct educational objectives that emphasized the development of Progressive Jewish identity, empowerment of youth leadership, and provided an environment for personal growth. A few notable camp highlights:

- This year, Netzer UPJ Germany's summer camp delved into Israeli history, Reform Zionism, and Progressive Judaism, continuing the learning journey initiated during last winter's *Machane*. The camp stood out as the first to feature international participation, welcoming new German participants alongside two special groups: Israelis from northern border communities and members of Beit Shalom Barcelona.
- The International *MachaNetzer* in France embraced the theme of Hagshama (Realization), emphasizing both personal and collective achievement. The camp inspired youth to transform their values and ideas into meaningful action by cultivating a spiritual and empowering environment that fosters thoughtful growth and meaningful development.
- The Netzer Negev camp focused on the theme of Tikkun Atzmi (Self-Care), offering participants from across Germany and Ukraine a nurturing space to recharge and find inspiration. Through creative workshops, spiritual sessions, and engaging Peulot (sessions) and Chugim (activities), the camp provided a joyful and supportive environment for young Jews to connect and thrive.
- This year also marked the launch of the NeTzeR Olami leadership's Madrichim Exchange project, enabling madrichim to travel and participate in camps hosted by other sniffim. This initiative has been a tremendous success, fostering international collaboration and strengthening Progressive Jewish connections worldwide.



NeTzeR TaMaR Taglit Mission

We had the incredible privilege of leading our first Taglit mission in partnership with Taglit-Birthright and Israel Experience (*Havaya Yisraelit*). Naama and Julia, coordinators of Netzer Olami and Tamar Olami, served as group leaders, creating a unique opportunity to engage leaders from Progressive communities and introduce young people unfamiliar with Netzer and Tamar to our values and ideals.



The mission brought together 14 participants from diverse communities worldwide, fostering meaningful connections and inspiring many to take on leadership roles within their home communities. This collaboration not only strengthened individual connections to our shared mission but also laid the foundation for expanding our global impact and reaching even more communities in the future.

Youth and Young Leadership Start-Up Program

This program, aimed at fostering youth leadership and entrepreneurship, featured two key components:

- **Conversation Centre:** weekly English conversation space for Arlene Fern primary school graduates. These sessions combined language improvement with leadership development, focusing on self-management, decision-making, and individual responsibility. Through discussions on cultural, academic, and everyday topics, participants honed their communication and leadership skills.
- **Start-Up Leadership Program:** Workshops on collaborative leadership, social entrepreneurship, and sustainability equipped participants with strategic planning and project management skills. The program also emphasized environmental education and climate governance, encouraging participants to identify areas for local community impact.



Zionist Leadership Development in Latin America

In the aftermath of the October 7, 2023, attack in Israel, this project became a vital platform for reflection, resilience, and action. It aimed to strengthen Jewish identity, cultivate leadership skills, and promote Zionist activism among young adults across Spanish-speaking Reform communities.

Key objectives included fostering a deep connection to Jerusalem's historical and cultural significance, creating support networks among Reform leaders, and empowering participants to advocate for Zionism and lead their communities. The project also facilitated the exchange of best practices, helping participants navigate the crises facing Jewish communities.

Through activities such as workshops, discussions, and reflective sessions, participants engaged with topics like social media advocacy, humanitarian efforts, and first-person accounts of the October 7 events. Highlights included:

- **Talks:** Conversations with journalists, survivors, and experts, including "Minute by Minute in Israel" with journalist Jonathan Meta and "Starting to Live Again" with Nova Festival survivor Eden Schmucl.
- **Workshops:** Sessions on effective advocacy, such as "How to Defend Yourself on Social Media."
- **Community Actions:** Activities like "Kneading for Peace" and a humanitarian bike ride honoring Tomer Shpirer.
- **Art and Storytelling:** Visual narratives like "Black October: From Darkness to Light," showcasing stories from the October 7 tragedy.

This program served as a critical space for resilience, empowering participants as leaders and advocates while fostering solidarity and a shared commitment to Jewish values and community strength.



WHAT WE DO

WUPJ Operations Department



The WUPJ Operations Department plays a vital role in supporting our programs in Israel and around the world by ensuring the efficient and effective management of logistical, administrative, and financial operations. Its core mission is to enable the WUPJ to achieve its objectives responsibly and on schedule.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, the department has focused on providing Rescue, Rebuilding, Relief, and Resettlement support for our communities in Ukraine, while continuing to assist congregants in Russia and Belarus.

Through meticulous logistical and financial oversight, the team ensures compliance with local legislation in every country where we operate. Above all, the department prioritizes the safety and security of participants in all programs and activities, maintaining the highest standards of care and responsibility.

Belarus

The Religious Union for Progressive Judaism in Belarus offers educational programs, Jewish life cycle events, and religious activities across our communities in Minsk, Grodno, Lida, Baranovichi, Vitebsk, Bobruisk, Mogilev, and Gomel.

Forty educators participated in the WUPJ Pedagogical Conference in Gomel, where they discussed the future of the city's Progressive Jewish school.

In Minsk, Jerusalem Day was celebrated in our synagogue with representatives from the three major religions. Participants enjoyed a virtual tour of Jerusalem and learned about its rich history.

The WUPJ communities in Belarus consistently participate in events and ceremonies honoring Jewish communities affected by Nazi atrocities during the Holocaust.

Many guests from the three major religions attended the WUPJ celebration in the Sukkah, coming together to bless the Etrog, Lulav, Haddas, and Aravah.



RUSSIA

Weekly Kabbalat Shabbat services, Shacharit Le Shabbat, learning weekly Haftarah and many other programs are taking place regularly in the WUPJ Progressive Center in Moscow.

Rachel Bat Aharon Shirokova celebrated her Bat Mitzvah with family and friends, enjoyed a concert showcasing Jewish musicians from various backgrounds, and participated in a Shlichei Tzibur workshop in Chelyabinsk. Many other programs and activities are taking place at the WUPJ Progressive Center in Moscow.

The Moscow Center community celebrated Tu BiShvat. Congregants acquired certificates for 130 trees planted in Israel.



Bat Mitzvah of Rachel Bat Aharon Shirokova in the Chelyabinsk Community, Russia



Students from St. Petersburg participated in the Biblical Hebrew program to explore Jewish heritage through Torah and Prophets texts.

31 MONTHS OF WAR IN UKRAINE

In February 2022, when the devastating war in Ukraine began, the WUPJ established the Ukraine Crisis Action Fund for Rescue, Rebuilding, Resettlement, and Relief.

During the initial months of the conflict, the focus was on providing aid, including food vouchers and packages, medical assistance, and heating support. As the war continued, the WUPJ recognized the need to offer psychological, spiritual, and emotional support through various programs and activities.



Ukraine

Jewish Holidays

The WUPJ communities in Ukraine continued to celebrate Jewish holidays, providing opportunities for congregants who could not attend in person to participate online. Examples of these celebrations include Yom Kippur in the Kyiv, Pesach in Odesa, and Succot in Lutsk, along with many other congregations across Ukraine that also participated in these Jewish holidays.

Summer camps and psychological support

The WUPJ hosted five summer camps, complemented by psychological support programs and Jewish educational activities, welcoming over 120 families. These camps offered a vital opportunity for families navigating the challenges of having men aged 18 to 60 called to military service, often for extended periods exceeding two years.

Understanding the critical need for emotional and psychological support during such times, the WUPJ integrated dedicated psychological assistance into the camp experience. This initiative aimed to address the families' needs, providing a sense of stability, connection, and community amidst uncertainty.



Support for Refugees

At the onset of the war, many families were forced to leave their homes in search of safety, both within Ukraine and abroad. The WUPJ stepped in to support these families by offering housing and providing educational programs for youth and young adults.

Chuppah and Conversion Ceremony

Progressive Jewish life cycle events continued to thrive in Ukraine, with Huppah ceremonies, Bat Mitzvahs, and conversion studies taking place. Upon completion, participants were warmly embraced by their congregations, celebrating these meaningful milestones together.

WHAT WE DO

Torah Exchange Program



Many Progressive and Reform congregations worldwide, particularly in re-emerging Jewish communities, face a profound challenge: the lack of Torah scrolls, a cornerstone of Jewish life and worship. To address this need, the World Union's Shomrei Torah program facilitates the donation or loan of Torah scrolls from established global synagogues to these developing and emerging congregations, enabling them to thrive and grow. We are also honored to partner with the Memorial Scrolls Trust in London, which safeguards over 1,500 Torah scrolls from Bohemia and Moravia that miraculously survived the Shoah. This heartfelt initiative exemplifies generosity and connection, embodying the sacred responsibility of ensuring that Judaism is preserved and passed on from generation to generation.

2024 WUPJ Torah exchanges

- Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue in London to Bnei Maskilim in Vilnius, Lithuania
- WUPJ to Thailand Progressive Jewish Community in Bangkok, Thailand, in partnership with the UPJ
- WUPJ to HaMakom in Porto, Portugal, in partnership with the Memorial Scrolls Trust
- WUPJ to the Jewish Community of Liberec, Czechia, in partnership with the Memorial Scrolls Trust
- WUPJ to the Reform Jewish Community of Mateh Asher Regional Council, Israel, in partnership with the Memorial Scrolls Trust



Esther Liebstein holding the Torah in memory of her son Ophir, Head of the Mateh Asher Regional Council.



WHAT WE DO

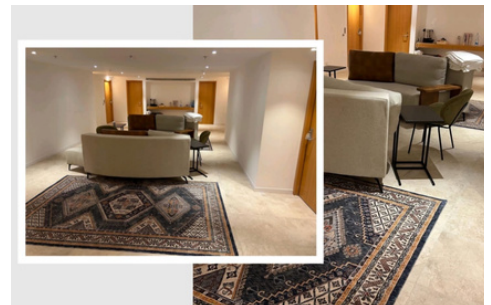
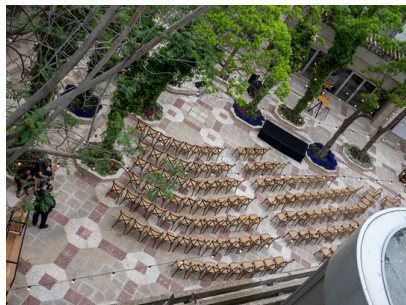
Other Activities

Beit Shmuel Capital Campaign

The ambitious renovation and reopening of the Beit Shmuel/Mercaz Shimshon complex—including Blaustein Hall, Hirsch Theater, and the Hostel Guest House—remains a cornerstone of our mission. To drive this effort, the Beit Shmuel Capital Campaign Cabinet was established to lead the first phase of fundraising.

Thanks to an extraordinary \$3 million anchor donation from Arthur Roswell, the initial phase of the project was successfully completed and inaugurated in 2023. This transformative gift has propelled us toward our broader goal of raising an additional \$7 million to finalize the renovation.

Our vision is to ensure that by Connections 2025, the hostel, conference spaces, studio areas, theater, and event halls will be fully operational, serving as the vibrant WUPJ Global Hub for Progressive Judaism.



WUPJ's New Governance Structure

The WUPJ has adopted a new governance structure aligned with its updated mission, vision, and values, as it approaches its centenary milestone. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the task force, new bylaws and leadership frameworks now steer the organization's global operations.

A key focus for 2025 will be the activation of the International Leadership Council (ILC). Members of the ILC will take on defined roles, contributing to both local initiatives and advancing the movement's global agenda. Each member will oversee specific project portfolios and is encouraged to support the WUPJ's fundraising goals through leadership contributions tailored to their capacity.

Regular work meetings will drive progress on these initiatives, with an emphasis on active engagement leading up to Connections 2025. Members will also play a pivotal role in mentoring emerging leaders, who will be nominated during the ILC's next renewal cycle, ensuring the cultivation of future leadership for the WUPJ.

Hub of French-Speaking Jewish Progressive Communities

The Geshet community in Paris hosted a gathering of Progressive French-speaking Jewish communities, organized in collaboration with the World Union for Progressive Judaism. The event aimed to strengthen connections, define shared goals, and explore opportunities for collaboration. Participants engaged in sessions featuring study, tefilah (prayer), and panel discussions, which facilitated the exchange of programs and initiatives from across French-speaking countries. The WUPJ reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing the visibility and growth of this network, supporting training programs and initiatives that integrate the distinctive perspectives of Progressive Judaism with the rich tradition of French liberal Judaism, contributing to the vitality of the global movement.



2024 WUPJ Asia Summit

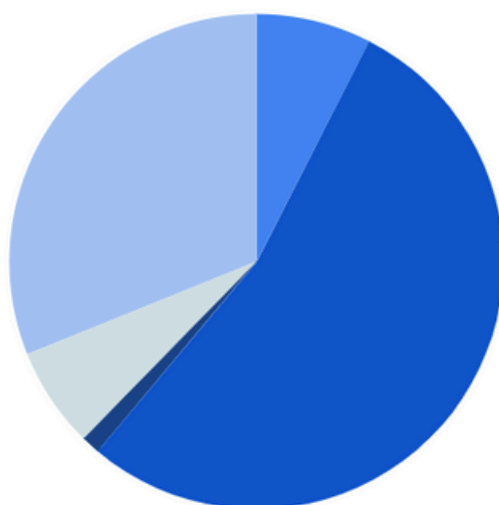
With the generous hospitality of the UJC of Hong Kong, representatives from Progressive Jewish communities across Asia convened to establish a platform for regional connection and collaboration, supporting the growth of emerging Jewish communities in the region. Delegates from Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, India, China (Shanghai, Beijing), and South Korea participated in workshops focused on setting priorities and developing a framework to address regional needs. Discussions centered on leadership training, program exchanges, conversion criteria, and opportunities for future regional coordination. This initiative, developed in partnership with the WUPJ and UPJ, will continue its momentum with the next gathering scheduled in Singapore in 2025.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

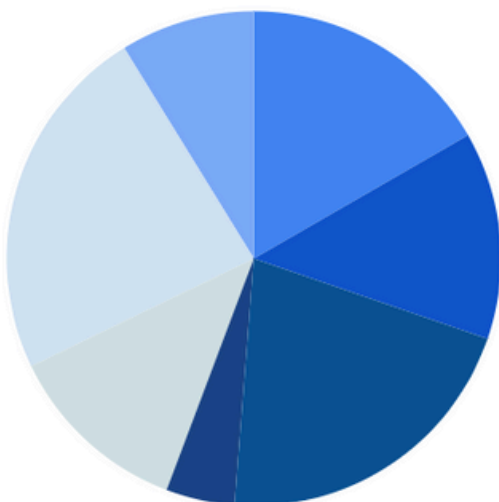
2024 Income

● Beit Shmuel Guest House and Conference Center
 ● Grants & Contributions
 ● Program Income
 ● Support from Restricted Funds & Reserves
 ● Zionist Institutions (World Zionist Organization, Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael - Jewish National Fund)



2024 Expenses

● Beit Shmuel Guest House and Conference Center
 ● Emerging Congregations and Regions
 ● Former Soviet Union Programs
 ● Fundraising
 ● Leadership Training and Education
 ● Management and General Administration
 ● Youth Programs and Empowerment





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