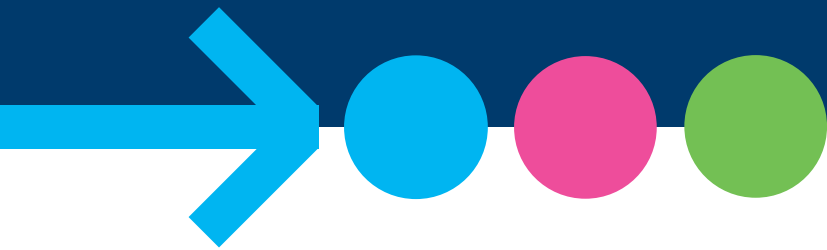


WORLD  
UNION FOR  
PROGRESSIVE  
JUDAISM



האגודה  
העולמית  
ליהדות  
מתקדמת

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



EVERY  
CONNECTION  
TELLS  
OUR STORY

# OUR MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE **WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (WUPJ)** IS TO STRENGTHEN JEWISH LIFE AND VALUES IN ISRAEL AND JEWISH COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO JEWISH TRADITION.

Established in London in 1926, the World Union has grown to represent 1.8 million Reform, Progressive and Liberal Jews across six continents, seven regions, 50 countries and 1,200 communities. We promote contemporary expressions of Jewish identity wherever Jews choose to live by:



## BUILDING COMMUNITIES

---

Growing Progressive and Reform congregations  
by strengthening Reform Jewish life



## NURTURING LEADERS

---

Enhancing leadership skills among  
congregational rabbis, community leaders and  
Jewish educators



## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

---

Engaging youth and young adults for a committed  
generation of Progressive and Reform leaders

Dear Friends,

Our story this year is about people. It is about Jews across the globe who share our values, beliefs and dreams. It is a story about our mutual responsibility to ensure that our Progressive movement continues to thrive and that all Progressive and Reform Jews can practice their Judaism however and wherever they choose. This year we traveled the world to meet our global family and to experience the reach of the World Union on the ground. We attended biennials and regional meetings, harmonized at Shabbat services, led travel missions and observed holiday celebrations with so many of you. In Israel, Australia, Asia, Europe, Eastern Europe, Russia, the United Kingdom, Latin America and North America, the scale and scope of our shared work was inspiring.

From Belarus to Perth and Jerusalem to Toronto, we were inspired by Reform rabbis and educators who are forging new congregations, schools and communities. We were awed by lay leaders who are committed to growing their communities, overcoming real and often frightening challenges. We were moved as we ushered in Shabbat and holidays with

communities whose traditions and perspectives are unique to their particular synagogue or region.

The stories we listened to – and the stories we told – reminded us how essential it is to take a dynamic approach towards growing and strengthening our movement. This year, we formalized the World Union’s three organizational pillars, refocusing our mission and vision toward: **building communities**, **nurturing leaders**, and **inspiring the next generation**.

In this 2016 Annual Report, we are proud to tell the stories that form our pillars – snapshots of the moments when Jewish identities were strengthened, when Israel was experienced, when leadership was honed, when rabbis were trained, and when young Jews connected with their own vibrant and inclusive Judaism.

Together we are writing the next chapter of our Jewish story. In these turbulent times, more than ever, we need to take responsibility for building the Jewish future, wherever Jews choose to live. We thank you for joining us in this sacred task.



Carole Sterling, Chair



Rabbi Daniel H. Frelander, President





# A TRULY GLOBAL MOVEMENT

## THE WORLD UNION IN 2016

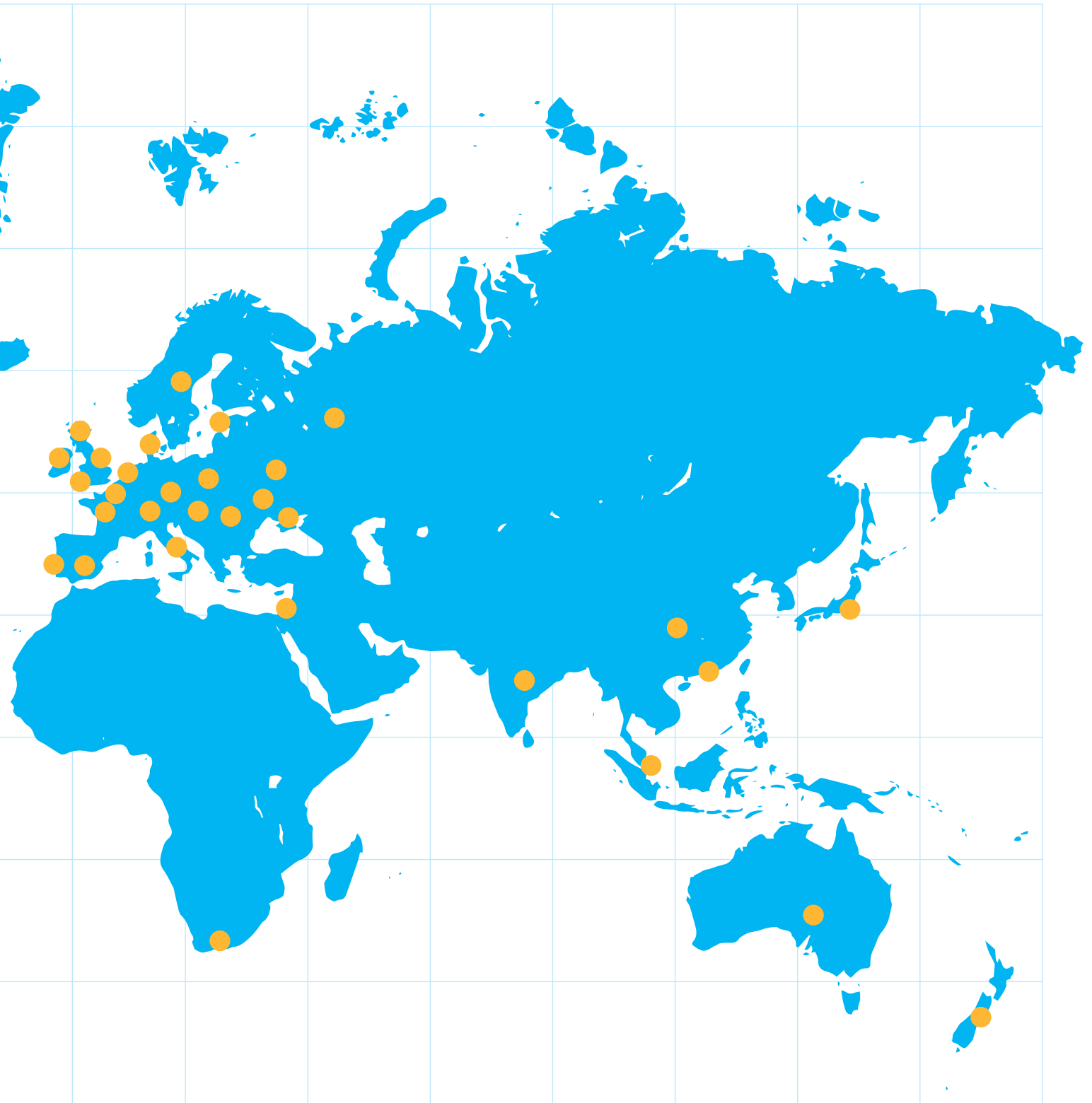
Argentina  
Aruba  
Australia  
Austria  
Belarus

Belgium  
Brazil  
Canada  
Chile  
China

Costa Rica  
Crimea  
Cuba  
Curacao  
Czech Republic

Denmark  
Ecuador  
El Salvador  
England  
France

Germany  
Guatemala  
Hong Kong  
Hungary  
India



Ireland  
 Israel  
 Italy  
 Jamaica  
 Japan

Luxembourg  
 Mexico  
 Netherlands  
 New Zealand  
 Panama

Peru  
 Poland  
 Portugal  
 Russia  
 Singapore

Scotland  
 South Africa  
 Spain  
 St. Thomas  
 Suriname

Sweden  
 Switzerland  
 Ukraine  
 USA  
 Wales

# BUILDING COMMUNITIES

WORLD UNION PROGRESSIVE AND REFORM COMMUNITIES ARE THRIVING IN 50 COUNTRIES THANKS TO DYNAMIC RABBINIC AND LAY LEADERSHIP, DEDICATED COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM OUR DONORS.

## EMERGING CONGREGATIONS

At any given moment, the World Union is working to develop ten new congregations around the globe. Every year, three to five emerging congregations are ready to launch as independent, self-sustaining members of the World Union. Our newest communities in 2016 were in Southern Europe and on the Iberian Peninsula, where Jewish life in the area is experiencing a dramatic revitalization. We continue to nurture communities in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe where 500,000 Jews make up one of the largest Diaspora communities in the world.



Madrid had a group of people who wanted a Reform Jewish community but didn't have the resources, and then we were receiving this centuries-old scroll on loan from West London Synagogue. The Torah will be loaned to other start-up congregations as well.

Our founding values were represented in this small scroll. We felt completed. We can now open our doors to people and continue our growth."

*Yael Cobano, President of the Reform Jewish Community of Madrid, Reformist Javurá*

## SHARING THE GIFT OF TORAH

For over 30 years, the World Union's Shomrei Torah program has ensured that new and emerging Progressive Jewish communities around the world have access to the most essential of Jewish spiritual objects – a Torah scroll. In 2016, we facilitated the transfer of four Torah scrolls to congregations in Israel, Spain, Guatemala and France. Over the course of two decades, we have provided more than 100 Torah scrolls to congregations around the world.



## RABBINIC SUPPORT

The World Union sends dozens of rabbinic emissaries each year - with help from the World Zionist Organization - to lead holiday services and monthly programs in emerging congregations and growing communities around the world.

*Left: Rabbi Joel Oseran, Vice President Emeritus of the World Union, with Lynn Magid Lazar, honored for thirty years of service building Reform congregations around the world.*

*Right: Shavuot celebrations in Lipetsk, Russia*



In **Lisbon, Portugal**, the World Union is helping to bring Judaism back to the country after more than 500 years. In **Southeast Asia**, Reform Jews in Bali held Yom Kippur services for the first time in its history. Over the past year, more than 250,000 Israelis have experienced Reform lifecycle ceremonies and events. In the **Former Soviet Union & Eastern Europe**, more than 4,500 people attended Passover Seders last year as part of a Reform Jewish renaissance in the region.



Congregation Rodef Shalom in Mumbai, India

The first resident rabbi for the United Hebrew Congregation (UHC) in Singapore is a British-born rabbi who read Classics at King’s College, Cambridge before spending time in Hungary playing chess. Having devoted much of the last decade to rebuilding Jewish life across Europe, **Rabbi Nathan Alfred** is now on his new challenge in Asia.

His new community in Singapore has strong ties to Progressive communities around the world - ex pats, travelers and far-flung family members. In our mobile society, we never know where we, or our children or grandchildren, will choose to live. It is important to maintain and nurture these intercontinental links.



Cantor Sofia Falkovich and Rabbi Nathan Alfred in Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg

My role is to awaken even the most dormant members of our community and encourage them to play their part in our fantastic story of Jewish life in Singapore.”

*Rabbi Nathan Alfred, Singapore*





*World Union board members touring Rio de Janeiro, Brazil as part of CONNECTIONS biennial convention*

**Dora Lucia Brenner** has never swayed from her commitment to Progressive Judaism. Defining the work of the World Union as the key to Judaism as a whole, Dora has made it her lifelong goal to strengthen and teach Progressive Judaism. From religious school teacher in Brazil, to a decade in Israel, Dora also led the largest Jewish welfare organization in São Paulo and served as President of Congregacao Israelita Paulista (CIP).

“This is the kind of Judaism that I believe in. We embrace everyone and everyone is welcomed. The goals and work of the WUPJ act as a guidepost for my work.”

“ My family engaged me in the community and now I try to strengthen communities for others. What we really want is to spread this movement to the rest of Brazil and Latin America. This is where the World Union comes in.”

*Dora Lucia Brenner, São Paulo, Brazil*



# NURTURING LEADERS

THE WORLD UNION IDENTIFIES AND HARNESSSES THE POWER OF CONGREGATIONAL, COMMUNAL AND RABBINIC LEADERSHIP TO TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING AND GROWING REFORM JEWISH COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD. THE IMPACT OF THEIR SKILLSET IS EVIDENT IN THE GROWTH AND VIBRANCY SEEN IN CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE.



Supporting leadership programs through the World Union means bringing the best congregational and communal leaders to Jerusalem to open their minds and hearts to our global movement and our global peoplehood.”

*Nani and Austin Beutel, Toronto, Canada*

## THE BEUTEL SEMINAR FOR PROGRESSIVE JEWISH LEADERSHIP

Our seminal leadership development seminar is designed for lay and professional leaders. Thanks to the vision and support of **Nani and Austin Beutel** from Toronto, Canada, the Beutel Seminar has singlehandedly shaped the growth of Progressive communities in North and South America, Australia, Europe and Asia.

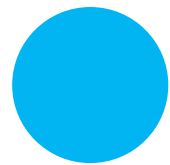
It was my dream to attend the Beutel Seminar. I longed for the opportunity to explore my own Judaism, discuss social issues and develop my leadership skills in a Progressive context. I finally went this year and I am forever grateful to the Beutel family and to the World Union for giving me this opportunity.”

*Berta Zylverstajn, São Paulo, Brazil, 2016 Beutel seminar participant*



“Preparing Jewish educators to teach our children and grandchildren is in the ranks of the noblest Jewish endeavours.”

*Leslie Bergman, London, England*

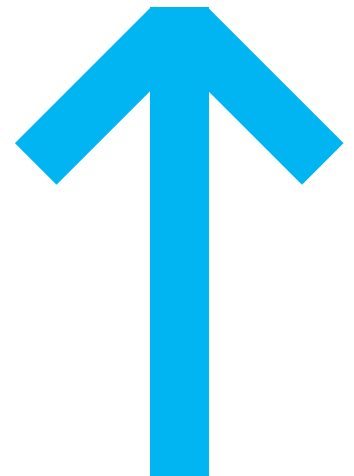


## THE BERGMAN SEMINAR FOR REFORM JEWISH EDUCATORS

Thanks to the generosity of **Leslie and Stanley Bergman and family from South Africa, London and New York**, Jewish Educators from South America, North America and Europe came together this year to explore new educational approaches as they toured Israel’s most innovative organizations and programs that exemplify our shared Reform Jewish values.

“As educators, we struggle to bring Israel education to the classroom and to create meaningful connections for our students. This seminar provided the context and the tools we need to bring Israel to life. Thank you for giving me the tools to enrich my classrooms with my personal Israel experiences.”

*Magda Reyes, New Jersey, USA, 2016 Bergman seminar participant*





## THE WILKENFELD INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

**Dolores Wilkenfeld**, honorary life member of the World Union from Houston, Texas, saw a need for a women's leadership seminar and immediately went about the business of making it happen. Thanks to Dolores' generous support in 2016, the World Union partnered with the Women for Reform Judaism (WRJ) to launch this inaugural seminar in London to empower Reform and Progressive Jewish women from around the world to become strong leaders. Over twenty women from 15 different countries came together to explore their Jewish identities, their congregational and communal roles, and their aspirations as women through workshops and with influential female rabbis and advocates.



**I grew up in the London Netzer youth movement with great leaders and fantastic teachers. I worked at Netzer Olami and am now in rabbinic school at Leo Baeck College in London. I was nominated to join the Roswell Klal Yisrael fellowship and have had a most amazing year. I feel prepared to create a sacred community with inclusive and meaningful spaces for everyone."**

*Anna Posner, London, England, 2015-16 Roswell Fellow*

## ROSWELL KLAL YISRAEL FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUNG ADULTS

**Betty and Arthur Roswell's** influence on Reform Jewry can be felt all over the world. We are especially grateful for Betty and Arthur's support for the innovative Roswell Klal Yisrael Fellowship for young Progressive Jewish leaders. Through a collaboration between the World Union and the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), this program brings 18 young adults together for a transformative year of leadership training and professional development through online courses and meetups in Israel, Europe and North America.



## TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RABBIS

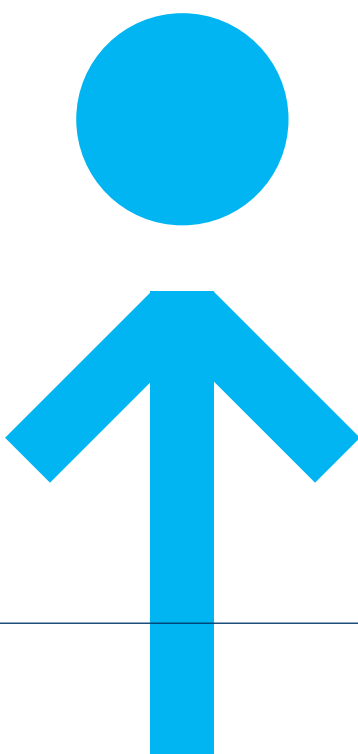
Now completing its second year of operation, applications have doubled at the [Institute for Modern Jewish Studies in Moscow](#) and 15 students are advancing in their training and studies for Russian-speaking rabbinic or congregational leadership for desperately-underserved Progressive communities in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. In partnership with Russian State University for the Humanities, Abraham Geiger Kolleg and the University of Potsdam, the Institute offers a BA followed by study in Germany and a year in Israel, towards a MA in Jewish Theology and Rabbinic Ordination for the most promising students. During their studies, all students travel to an underserved Russian community to lead services and teach during vacations and holidays.

Shared customs and Progressive Jewish faith are essential to every Jewish Progressive community around the world. It's the very life and vitality of our tradition."

*Rabbis Brenner and Elaine Rose Glickman, Florida, USA*



The Senior Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in Sarasota, Florida, **Rabbi Brenner Glickman** says that restoring Judaism in the Former Soviet Union and helping Progressive Jews around the world through the World Union is something he and his family are proud to be a part of. "My brother urged Elaine and me to help train leaders and rabbis for an area of the world with a serious lack of leadership and where we could have a real impact right away. The Soviets wanted an end to Judaism and we need to try to restore it as best we can." He is convinced that if Jews in the Former Soviet Union did not have the option of Progressive Judaism, they would leave Judaism altogether.



# INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION



THE WORLD UNION IS COMMITTED TO EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF REFORM LEADERS. FROM AN EARLY AGE, THROUGH SUMMER CAMPS AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES, NETZER OLAMI, OUR INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PLATFORM, INTERWEAVES REFORM JUDAISM WITH ZIONISM, *TIKKUN OLAM*, INCLUSIVENESS AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO ENSURE OUR FUTURE.

## INTERNATIONAL CAMPING

### FORMATIVE JEWISH EXPERIENCES

Our **Netzer Summer Camps** welcomed more than 2,500 youth and young adults from Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, Israel, South America and South Africa, including more than 1,100 youth from the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In the **Former Soviet Union**, 500 young people remained on waiting lists for camps due to lack of funding. In **France**, our camps experienced rapid growth in 2016 with 100 campers and 30 counselors participating in our program; in 2017, we expect an increase totaling 130 campers and 40 counselors.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

### ROOTS OF CHANGE IN ISRAEL

The flagship leadership program of Netzer Olami, the World Union's ten-month **Shnat Netzer** program, welcomed more than 30 emerging young leaders from Australia, South Africa, the UK, North America and Europe to tour Israel, learn about and integrate into Israeli society, and experience community leadership. Shnat graduates commit to two years of volunteering for Reform Jewish youth movements and community activities in their home countries.

### ADDRESSING ANTISEMITISM AROUND THE WORLD

**Shnat Netzer** graduates return to their communities with newfound confidence and leadership skills, and the knowledge and conviction needed to assert themselves assuredly against anti-Israel activists. Shnat participants develop real-life skills and knowledge over the course of the ten-month program that enable them to strengthen their home communities, fight anti-Semitism, share their Israel experiences, and pursue leadership roles in the Progressive movement.

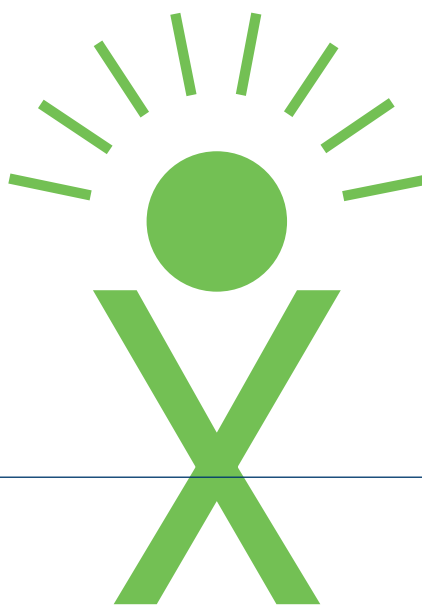


I was raised in a Soviet reality with no religion at all. As a young adult with a new degree in child psychology, I was approached by friends to work at the Netzer summer camp in Ukraine. It was there that I connected to Reform Judaism and applied to the Institute for Modern Jewish Studies in Moscow. Through my studies, and later through my work as Community Programs Director at Shaarei Shalom in St. Peterburg, I have come to understand how people seek religion but find community.”

*Alla Mitelman, St. Peterburg, Russia*



Established in 2003, Congregation Shaarei Shalom in St. Petersburg is the first and only Reform congregation in the city. Mitelman, as Director of the Congregation, joins the all-female leadership team with Rabbi Elena Rubinstein and Cantor Inna Ostrovskaya.





## KLAU YOUTH LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

### INSPIRING REFORM JEWISH YOUTH IN RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

Forty-three young and active Netzer participants from all over the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe kicked off 2016 at the Klau Youth Leadership Seminar in Minsk, supported by the generosity of [Susan and James Klau](#) of Greensboro, North Carolina. The seminar, currently in its third year, included study sessions with Jewish text and the history of the Reform Movement with intense discussions about issues facing Reform Jews and Jewish identity in their region. Shabbat services brought everyone together in prayer and song, and workshops explored their collective and individual Jewish journeys.

“Being here makes me realize that I am doing something important with my life and that gives me a sense of purpose to my Jewish identity. I want to thank the Klau family for supporting this young leadership seminar, and especially for the opportunity to help me understand that I am part of the Jewish people and our Jewish history.”

*Alexandra, Minsk, Belarus, 2016 Klau seminar participant*





**Millennials are global citizens with a 'start-up' mindset... They are literally 'leading' their own Jewish journeys and we are committed to partnering with them along the way as together we strengthen the bonds among active Jewish communities worldwide."**

*Rabbi Daniel H. Frelander, President of the World Union, New York, USA*

## **NEXT STEPS**

### **TAMAR YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT**

TaMaR Olami is mobilizing hundreds of young adults and creating communities in Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, Russia, Holland, Panama, Brazil, Chile and Argentina.

In February 2016, dozens of young adults from Europe, the USA, Eastern Europe, the Former Soviet Union, and the UK, came together in Jerusalem for the annual TaMar conference to network, learn and reconnect with young voices of the Reform movement and forge a vision for the coming year. Regional events, such as the 2016 TaMaR European Continental seminars in Budapest and invited local young adults to expand their community's outreach and impact.

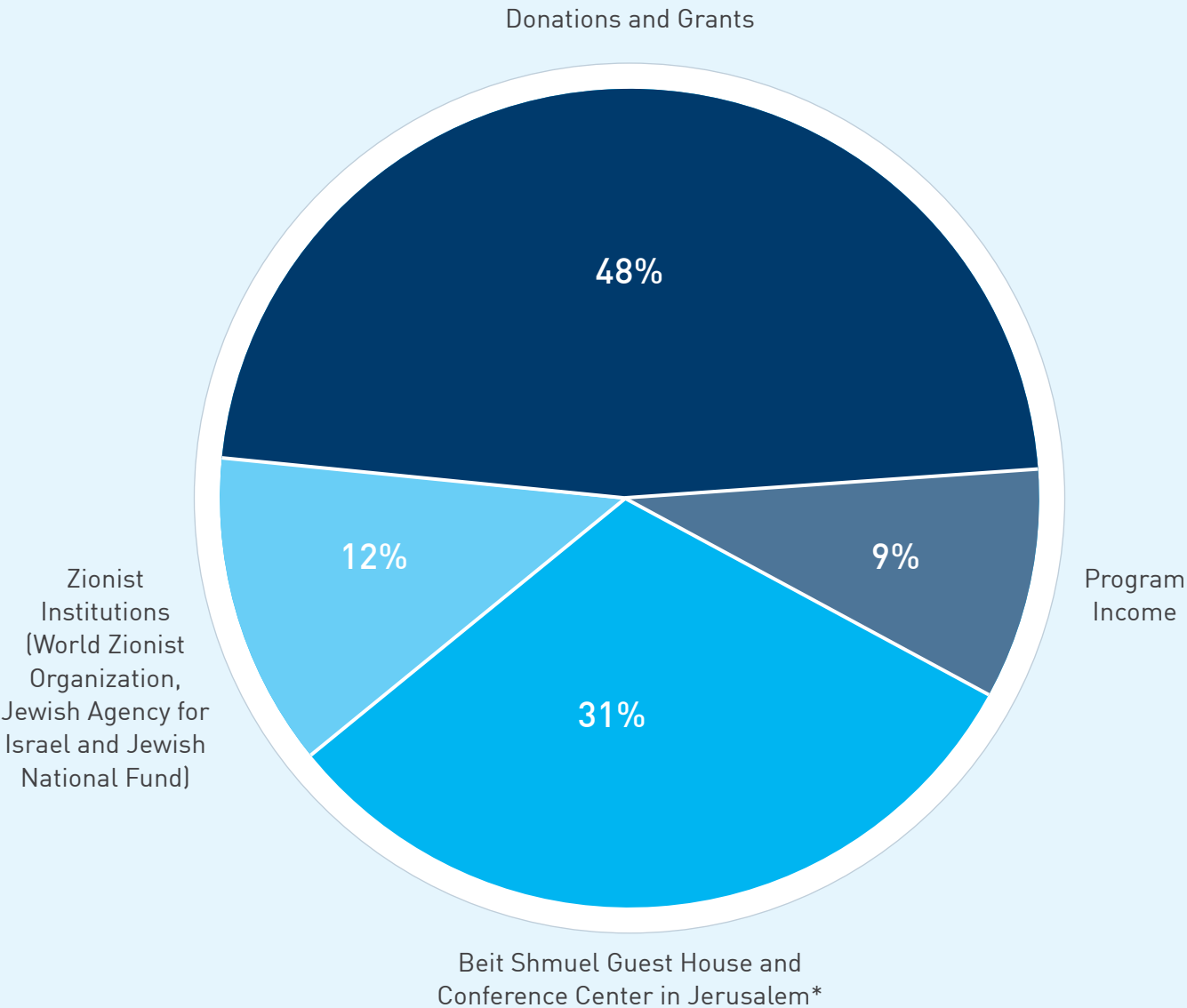


# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

During 2016, we saw growth in income from program participants, Zionist institutions, individual donors, federations, and foundations. All units operated within their budget targets.

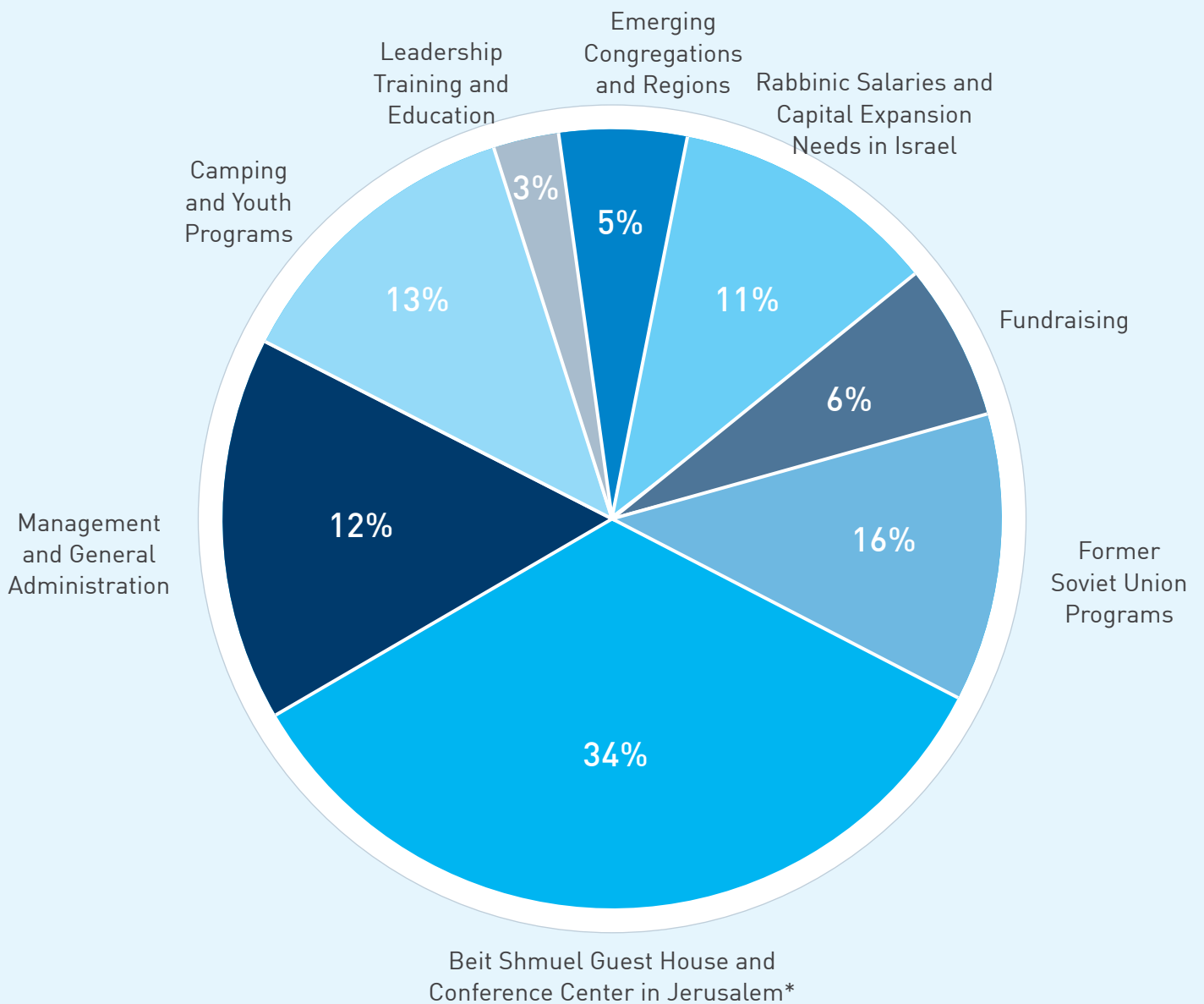
*\*The challenging security situation in Jerusalem resulted in a significant downturn in Beit Shmuel Guest House occupancy and events.*

## INCOME 2016



Total Income  
**\$7,570,459**

## EXPENSES 2016



Total Expense  
**\$7,827,320**

## VALUED FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

The World Union for Progressive Judaism gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, Federations, foundations and organizations whose pledges and gifts in 2016 made possible the achievements described in this report. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of our listings. Please notify us of any inaccuracies or omissions.

### \$50,000 +

Nani and Austin Beutel  
Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation  
Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York, NY  
Betty Golomb  
Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta  
FNZ Foundation, Inc.  
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Women of Reform Judaism

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Lindie and Kenneth Henderson  
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Janet Abrams and Steven R. Pruzan  
Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, PA  
Susan and Charles Rothschild

### \$10,000 - \$49,999

The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore  
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Susan and Andrew Goodman

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Nancy Solomon  
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B.J. Tanenbaum  
Stephanie Garry and Arthur Tatge  
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Singapore  
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Karen and Frank Wolf, OAM  
Miriam Daniel and Laurence Wolff  
Linda and Richard Zoll

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Rabbi Jonathan Blake  
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Michael Steinberg  
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Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough, NJ  
Temple Kol Ami, West Bloomfield, MI  
Temple Israel, Tulsa, OK  
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Karen F. and Rabbi Michael Zedek  
Catherine and David Zemans  
Rabbi Irwin Zeplovitz

### **Under \$999**

We are deeply grateful to all our friends who gave gifts in this category. With thousands of contributors, we are not able to list all donors.

# OUR 2016 LEADERSHIP

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Rabbi William A. Rosenthal z"l (1962-1972)

Rabbi Dr. Richard G. Hirsch, Honorary Life President (1972-1999)

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*\* Denotes members of  
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*The World Union thanks Dale Lazar for many of the wonderful photographs featured in this report.*



Find a cause that's  
larger than yourself and  
then give your life to it."

*Shimon Peres (1923-2016)*

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JUDAISM



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