



## Limmud FSU, a worthy winner of JPost survey

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The top Jewish World story of 2011, according to 'Jerusalem Post' readers.

The results are in: Over 65 percent of readers voted Limmud FSU's successful outreach to the Russian Jewish community as the biggest Jewish World story of 2011. In second place was Efraim Zuroff's claims that Lithuania needs to acknowledge its role in the Holocaust, with almost 15% of the vote.

Over 2,300 people thirsty for knowledge descended on Coventry's Warwick University this week to take part in Limmud UK. The colorful crowd of Jews who came from throughout Britain and beyond was a testament to the success of the Jewish educational conference and the Limmud franchise as a whole. But had the format stayed in Albion, where it originated, it would hardly have had the impact on the Jewish world that it has had. Limmud's bigger contribution is that it has been exported and Limmud FSU, this year's winner of The Jerusalem Post's most important Jewish world story of the year survey, is a prime example.

Let's face it: The reason that it beat the other worthy candidates is because Limmud FSU participants voted for it. But the fact that so many people feel passionate enough to do so speaks volumes.

Jewish communities in the former Soviet Union were dormant for decades. Limmud FSU, which holds conferences around the world catering to Russian-speaking Jews, from Moscow to Minsk, New York to Jerusalem, has created something from virtually nothing in a relatively short time.

It is not without flaws. The overall number of people who participated out of the sum total of Russian-speaking Jews is tiny. Its funding relies too heavily on donations rather than on fees. But over time, as it continues to grow, this will change.

Limmud FSU, Limmud UK, Limmud US, Limmud whatever, is not new but it is helping renew what it means to be Jewish and keeps doing so on a yearly basis. It is a positive form of Judaism based on what binds Jews together by will rather than by necessity, the way anti-Semitism does, for instance.

And for those reasons it is a worthy winner of The Jerusalem Post's poll of Jewish story of the year.

