

IMPACT REPORT 2020-21

Masorti Judaism: Connecting People



The last year has felt at many points like an endurance test. We've all faced lockdowns, health scares, cancelled plans and, most of all, lots of uncertainty. Yet through it all, the creativity, compassion and resilience of our rabbinic team, professional staff and lay leaders have helped our community stay connected.

Our communities have learned together how to emerge safely from lockdown and have kept their members connected to Jewish life. The Masorti Judaism team has worked hard to give them the advice, training and support they needed. Our youth movement, Noam, gave hundreds of young people a life-changing, face-to-face, residential summer camp experience after over a year of online-only contact. And we've continued to launch new initiatives, for example an LGBT+ inclusion project, funded by the National Lottery, designed to help our communities become more inclusive than ever.

We are entering the new year with a redesigned strategic plan to help us face life after lockdown and achieve our core purpose: to develop flourishing communities, rooted in traditional practice and modern values, where people can find meaning by connecting to Judaism and to each other. None of our achievements would be possible without your support. Thank you.

Matt Plen
Chief Executive, Masorti Judaism



2,500 people
returned to safe
in-person services
at our communities

Noam - Masorti Youth
ran in-person, Covid
safe summer camps
for 330 young people

We welcomed Ohel
Moed, a new community
founded by Noam
alumni, to the Masorti
movement

Connecting Young people

This summer, against all odds, we gave over 300 young people the transformative experience of a face-to-face, residential summer camp, led by a team of committed madrichim (volunteer youth leaders). But Noam – Masorti Youth – and Marom – Masorti Students – have been busy all year. Here are some of the ways they've been keeping young people connected:

Mind the Gap

A course addressing the Jewish educational gender gap, with teaching from Masorti rabbis

Kelim

Our intensive Jewish learning programme for university students in partnership with the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. In this year's UK-based seminar, participants spent a week studying Talmud, exploring Jewish texts and learning how to lead prayer

Veida – Noam Conference

80 young people spent three days learning, debating and making democratic decisions about Noam's activities and policies for the year. When Covid-19 restrictions changed the night before Winter Veida began, the conference moved online, making sure everyone could participate even during lockdown

Kaytana

Noam's exciting day camp gave 4-10 year-olds a full programme of fun, Jewish activities every school holiday and half-term

Alumni Network

We launched a Noam alumni network and connected with 300 people online, creating a connection with the Jewish community for the 20-30 age group

Home Holy Days

Noam created family packs full of entertaining resources, discussion prompts and activities for the family table during each festival

Bidud B'Yachad, Isolation Together

a cross communal buddying system launched by Marom linked participants with other Jewish students from across their campus

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“It felt like a camp filled with amazing madrichim, happy children and a warm and nurturing atmosphere. Plus some sunshine, fresh air and a beach! Thank you for all the extra measures you put in to make this work.”

Wendy Cohen

Three Mind the Gap students leyned – read Torah – on pre-camp for the first time after attending a session taught by Rabbi Natasha Mann

“Mind the Gap gave me space to explore Judaism in a way that I don't have time for during my day-to-day life and taught me to lead prayer services confidently. I feel more ownership over prayer and have now led prayer services on camp.

After Mind the Gap, I enrolled in Kelim to put my new knowledge to use. I studied topics I would never have thought to explore. I learned about mysticism, monsters and giants with Rabbi Roni Tabick. We learned how to ask questions that get you to the heart of the text. You don't stop at the 'what' - you ask 'why'. I'm also now part of an LGBT+ working group in Noam, where we talk about the intersection of a queer identity and Judaism. Having people at Noam who look at the world in the same way I do has brought me huge comfort during a difficult couple of years.”

Gabrielle Alexander is a member of Edgware Masorti Synagogue, is the Board of Deputies under 30 observer for Noam and was leader on Ananim camp, this year's alternative to Israel tour for 16 year-olds.

“A superb set of camps run in challenging circumstances by an incredible team. Kol HaKavod – well done Noam!”

Sara Levan

Noam at a glance

80

graduates of Merkaz Noam, our weekly youth leadership training course, went on to lead summer camp

77

university students took part in regular online support groups during lockdown

34

year 11 students went on Ananim, our UK-based residential alternative to Israel tour

153

children spent school holidays at our Kaytana day camps

Our new rabbis

Our rabbis are Masorti Judaism's most important asset. We invest heavily in recruiting and training rabbinical students, then placing them in our communities. Since 2015 we have supported six student rabbis, and we continue to nurture future candidates through Jewish study programmes like the 6th form Bet Midrash, Kelim and study programmes at the Conservative Yeshiva. Meet some of the recent additions to our rabbinic team.

Student Rabbi Jessica Spencer



is a Masorti student rabbi who is beginning her second year of rabbinical training at Hebrew College in Massachusetts.

Student Rabbi Anthony Lazarus Magrill



is entering his final year at Leo Baeck College in London. Anthony led High Holyday services last year for 50 local people in Cricklewood and has taught this year at New London and New North London Synagogue. He will soon begin a placement with Mosaic Masorti.

Rabbi Oliver Joseph



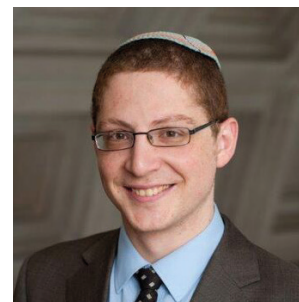
is a former Noam movement worker. He completed his training at the Ziegler Rabbinical School in Los Angeles in 2015. He has worked with Elstree and Borehamwood Masorti community, Leeds Masorti, New North London Synagogue and the Havurah.

Rabbi Natasha Mann



was ordained in 2019 at the Ziegler School. She works with Mosaic Masorti, New London Synagogue, and Noam Masorti Youth. This summer she served as a senior educator and camp rabbi at Noam summer camps.

Rabbi Roni Tabick



was ordained in 2015 at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. He has led on Jewish educational programming for Masorti Judaism, worked at New North London Synagogue, and now leads New Stoke Newington Shul.

Rabbi Zahavit Shalev



completed her studies at Leo Baeck College in 2019 and is now part of the rabbinic team at New North London Synagogue and New Essex Masorti Synagogue.

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“I believe that Masorti has a right-headed approach to Judaism, the world, building Jewish communities and relationships and it's a privilege to be involved in that personally and professionally. Masorti has given me a space to work with ideological integrity. As a part of Masorti I feel motivated and directed. I feel like I've found my people.”

Student Rabbi Anthony Lazarus Magrill

Connecting our leaders



Our communities depend on having committed, hard-working and highly skilled volunteer leaders. One of our most important roles at Masorti Judaism is to nurture the next generation of leaders through training, coaching and mentoring. This year, 17 emerging leaders from eight communities took part in our Jewish Community Organising leadership training course, led by Masorti's deputy chief executive, Rachel Sklan.

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“I've been working with my community, the Oxford Jewish Congregation, for a long time but I didn't feel there was a structure to my work.

One of the things we learnt was how to make our work align with Masorti values. The value that came through most prominently was inclusion. We talked about the variety of people that make up a community and how to make every single individual feel welcomed, valued and respected. The course has brought a framework to what we do as leaders of the community.

Now I have others in my community's leadership team coming to me for advice. I'm using what I learnt on the course to develop plans for emerging from lockdown. I'm also creating a succession plan to ensure our community remains stable when leadership changes occur. I would not have been able to do these things before enrolling on the course.

We're now being supported to take these ideas back into our communities. We know that Masorti is at the other end of the phone whenever we need support. We have a group and meetings scheduled to keep each other updated on our progress and learn from each other. If I'm stuck with something I know where to go.

I'm excited to get back to my community and put the principles of community organising into practice. Instead of waiting for someone to lead, I now feel able to bring about change myself. I have the tools to achieve my goals and help my community flourish.”

Caroline Goldstein chairs the Oxford Masorti Group



Sign up for this year's JCO course!
Visit masorti.org.uk to learn more

Supporting communities

How we've supported our smaller communities this year:

1. Gave expert advice and mentoring to four communities on membership development, improving pastoral support, financial planning and rabbinic recruitment
2. Ran specialised training sessions on pastoral care and rebuilding community relationships, giving lay leaders the skills to meet their members' needs
3. Developed safeguarding and child protection guidelines and gave advice to small community leaders
4. The Masorti Chairs' Forum met throughout the year, providing a space for our leaders to share ideas, support each other and learn together
5. Liaised with government, Public Health England and other synagogue bodies to provide safety guidelines for communities returning to post-lockdown in-person services

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“The Chairs' Forum was a lifeline during lockdown. We were able to support each other with advice and share experiences. At times when the situation was in constant flux and when the emotional toll of shul leadership, whether in the face of unprecedented loss or community need, was at its height, the forum helped. We were in this together! I am thankful that Rachel Sklan and the Chairs made the weekly, fortnightly and monthly sessions meaningful. We needed them.”

Gill Ross co-chairs Mosaic Masorti Synagogue

6,000 people explored the new Masorti Judaism website, a new home for Jewish learning with 800 articles and videos, in its first three months

170 people joined our Israeli Dilemmas: Contemporary Voices series, highlighting voices from across the political spectrum in Israeli society together with New North London Synagogue

Masorti Thinks, our online series with Masorti rabbis discussing Masorti values, was attended by over 150 people

300 people attended Masorti Together, a community-wide day of learning, celebration and fundraising

Over 1500 Masorti members received a Masorti Judaism Omer Counter designed by Rabbis Adam Zagoria-Moffet and Zahavit Shalev to mark the 49 days of the Omer

In the coming year we will:

- Support two student rabbis and two potential candidates in pre-rabbinic study programmes
- Roll out our LGBT+ inclusion programme to two Masorti communities and to young people in Noam
- Expand the Noam alumni network to engage in-person with young adults who grew up in Masorti communities
- Run safeguarding and child protection training for all our community leaders
- Expand Noam programming in every Masorti community and relaunch Israel tour
- Fund this work by raising £350,000 in grants and donations



masorti.org.uk

Thanks to those people who made our achievements possible:

- Our inspiring and talented rabbis and chazanim
- Our dedicated community lay leaders
- Our committed trustees and committee members
- Our generous donors and funders



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