



# Exploring the UK Jewish Community

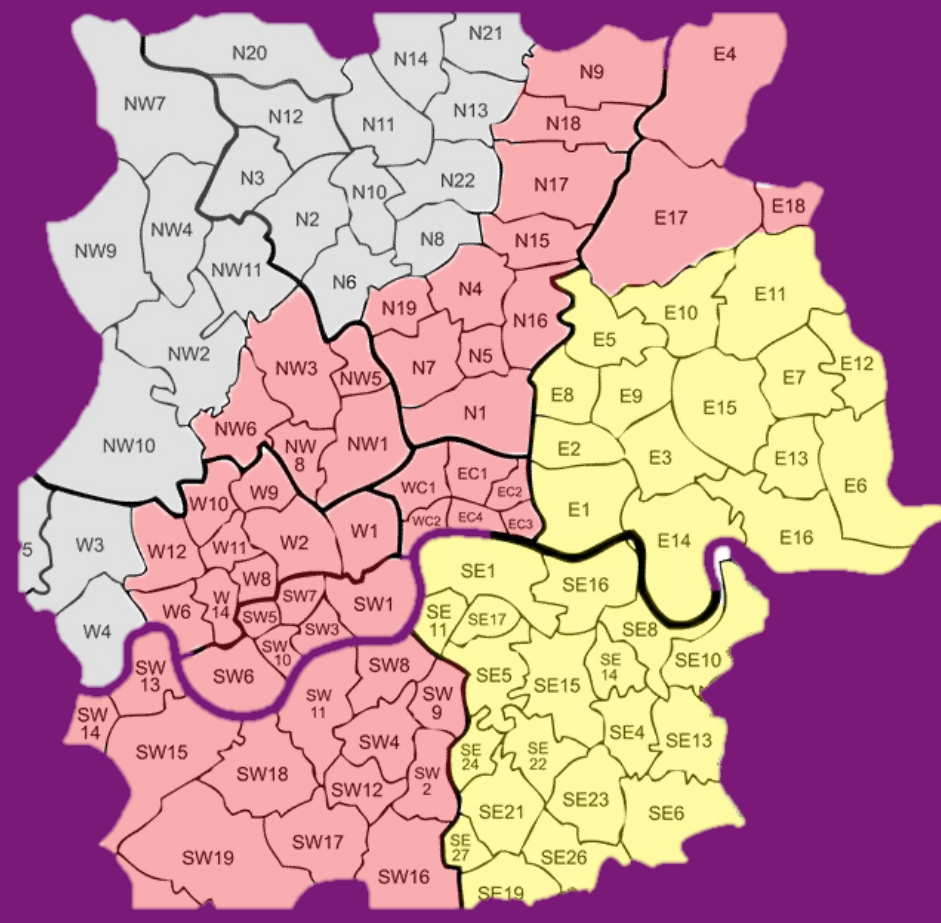
Genna Miller

University of Michigan School of Social Work



## London, England

London is the capital of England and located in the southeastern part of the country on the River Thames. It is one of the most popular destinations chosen by people from all over. London is comprised of 32 boroughs and two cities. They have a parliamentary constitutional monarchy and are currently a part of the European Union (EU) but will be exiting the EU in March 2019. Although English is the main language spoken in London, there are over 300 other languages spoken throughout the capital.



## UK Jewish Community

- There are over 260,000 Jews living in Greater London and 30,000 living in Manchester (2011 census)
- The UK Jewish community is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest Jewish population worldwide
- The different sects of Judaism include Haredi (similar to American Orthodox), Masorti (similar to American Conservative), Reform, and Liberal
- 66% of British Jews live in the boroughs of Barnet and Hertsmere
  - Areas in those boroughs with higher concentrations of Jews include Hendon, Golders Green, Edgware, Pinner, and Borehamwood



## Project Information

I went to London this past summer to learn about the Jewish community in the UK. As a way to enter the community, I connected with and interned for the Jewish Volunteering Network. Besides my internship, I attended other Jewish community events to gain a better understanding and meet Jews from all different religious backgrounds.

### Special Events/Awards Ceremony Intern

- Collected and organized award nomination applications for distribution to the judges
- Solicited article contributors and sponsors for the Awards brochure
- Assisted with the coordination of the photographic exhibit for the Awards
- Co-led an "Introduction to Volunteering" workshop with fellow JVN staff

### Other Jewish Community Events

- Attended two different synagogues for Shabbat services, including a special LGBTQ Pride Shabbat
- Volunteered at the Maccabi GB Community Fun Run, the largest UK Jewish community event
- Participated in different Jewish Young Professional events to learn what Judaism is like for UK Jews in their 20s and 30s and make connections

## Community Partner

The Jewish Volunteering Network (JVN) aims to provide volunteer opportunities in the UK Jewish community and non-Jewish community. They do this through their online database where charity organizations are able to share volunteer opportunities and people can search and apply to positions that fit their desires and skill sets. JVN also provides trainings to volunteers and charity organizations on a plethora of topics relevant to volunteerism and charities.

## Outcomes

1. Developed an understanding of the UK Jewish Community
2. Gained a better insight of volunteerism and the charity sector in the UK
3. Built connections internationally within the Jewish community and outside of the Jewish community

## Skills Developed

Through my global experience I was able to further develop my skills in active listening, cultural humility, and writing in a concise and professional manner.

## Classroom Connections

### SW663: Grantgetting, Contracting, and Fundraising

✦ This course provided me with a foundation, the knowledge, and skill set to help JVN with donor solicitation and donor stewardship. It also allowed me to share products, such as a fundraising plan, created in the course with the organization to aid them in future endeavors

### SW648: Issues in Global Social Work Practice

✦ This course gave a safe space to explore my personal biases and assumptions prior to leaving for my Global Independent Study and provided resources to make my time abroad smoother. I also created close relationships with other classmates and was able to lean on them for support during our global experiences through a private class blog and other social networks

## Career Connections

This project helped me gain knowledge and experience working with the global Jewish community that will be beneficial as I begin my career in the United States in the Jewish communal sector. I will use my new understanding of the differences and similarities of the two Jewish communities to share and educate my fellow peers and others I work with in the Jewish community currently and in the future.



## Lessons Learned

- Judaism comes in all different forms and levels of observance between the US and the UK
- Working for an organization with a smaller staff and learning how they adapt in order to still be able to make a large impact on the UK Jewish community and charity sector
- Personally, I discovered that I am able to adapt to new environments and assimilate even in a short period of time. Many times throughout the summer I had moments of self-realization that I am able to succeed in new and unknown territory and what supports I need in place to cope with any stressors or negative emotions that may arise while in a new environment



## Advice

- Be flexible and open-minded with your global experience and know that it may change from your initial idea
- Triple check all the necessary documentation needed to enter the country (ie. Visas, letters of sponsorship, etc.)
- Submerge yourself as much as possible into the country's culture (as long as it is safe to do so)
- Keep a journal (online or hand written)
- Most of all, HAVE FUN! Don't get so caught up in the studies part and allow yourself down time to meet people and have new experiences

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Office of Global Activities for financially supporting me, as well as helping to navigate issues that arose prior to leaving the country.

I would also like to thank my advisor Dr. Karla Goldman, Mike Silverstone and the amazing staff at JVN, Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue Young Adults, West London Synagogue Young Adults, as well as my family and friends for supporting my dreams of studying abroad.