AFTER COVID:

The Future of Jewish Education in the UK

A COMMUNITY PROJECT 2022

LSJS

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LIST OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.1 This initiative has started a critical process which we hope we will build on to set a bold new agenda for Jewish Education.

1.2 Post-Covid-19 has given us a defining moment which the UK Jewish Community needs to grasp.

1.3 More than 70 people from across the educational sectors and denominational spectrum have been engaged during the past year to discuss how the Jewish education community can move forward and build back better for 0-25 year olds after Covid-19.

1.4 Findings from the five working groups include both distinct and overlapping principles, priorities and recommendations. This report has attempted to synthesise those findings. The 5 working group reports are printed in full in the appendices to this publication.

1.5 On the one hand, the community works in closely guarded silos. On the other hand, there is sometimes duplication of resources and programming.

1.6 Collaboration and partnership is pragmatic and occasional, although this initiative has been a model of how collaboration and partnership can work well.

1.7 A powerful and enabling vision for every organisation, which puts learners and young people at the centre, and creates a vibrant and culturally literate community, needs to be shared and understood by all in the community.

1.8 An inclusive community, which addresses the mental health and well-being of educators, learners, and their families, is vital for healthy growth.

1.9 Educators are highly valuable assets to our community. The challenge of recruitment and retention are key issues in every sector of the Jewish Education community.

1.10 Further research, as well as continuing evaluation should help the community to focus on the potential for growth and development for the future.

1.11 Recommendations related to all of the principles above have been separated into short/medium, and long-term within this report. They provide an agenda for evolution, not revolution, towards change and progression.

1.12 Drawing on excellent practice, we can guide change, leading to the UK Jewish community becoming a beacon for the global Jewish future.

Jewish education is at a critical juncture. The experience of Covid-19 has shaken and tested our schools, youth movements and our communal infrastructure. As a community, we have risen to the enormous challenges across the sector.

The question facing educational leaders is how do we 'build back better'? In June 2021, LSJS and UJIA convened an on-line symposium for Jewish educational leaders, providing a collaborative space to consider that question and develop long-term strategic solutions. Headed by Joanne Greenaway (Chief Executive, LSJS) and Mandie Winston (Chief Executive, UJIA), a steering group from across the Jewish educational sector led this project (see appendix one).

Drawing on current international research on post-pandemic recovery and opportunity, we shared ideas and emerging models of success, captured learning from our lived experiences and considered how to use them to drive change. We started a critical process which we have subsequently built on to set a new, bold agenda for Jewish education, which crucially, has brought together both the formal and informal education sectors working with up to 25 year-old Jewish young people.

We addressed the unique aspects of Jewish education, in which the interplay between home, school and community is so critical to success. We also needed to understand unique opportunities, like the potential role of our active youth movements and how best to harness it.

Our focus has been twofold. First, we have been considering what is the best Jewish educational response to the cost of Covid, with its psychological impact on our young people and learners. It has placed an enormous stress on teachers, informal educators and all who work with young people in our community. Meanwhile, we have also addressed the lost learning experiences, including two summers of limited engagement and no school Israel trips or Youth Movement Israel Tours.

Second, how do we create opportunity out of the crisis? How might we re-envision our educational organisations? How can we harness the opportunities afforded by new technology and what are its limitations? How have we been impacted by greater global connectedness? How have our young people's attitudes to learning shifted and what does that mean for the way in which we teach and engage them? How do the informal and formal education sectors complement or duplicate each other? Are we best supporting and valuing the teachers and educators we entrust with our children and what status do they have in our community?

How are we involving parents and families and what are the consequences of not doing so enough?

These are broad, multidimensional questions that no one organisation can answer alone. We needed to come together in the search for answers. Young people grow Jewishly in many ways and are influenced by a diverse range of teachers, Rabbis, youth leaders, their peers, social media and perhaps more than anything else, what is happening in their homes. We need to find ways of bringing all those influences together to produce engaged young Jews, ready, willing, and able to face the challenges of Jewish life in the 21st Century.

In 1988 in the L'eylah journal, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote that:

"education is the most potent guarantor of Jewish continuity, that Jewish education works best in close orchestrated harmony with the other key institutions of Jewish life – the home and the synagogue – and that there is not a short-cut to its proper resourcing. The question marks hanging over Diaspora Jewish survival are sufficiently strong to make a coherent, collective community wide educational strategy our most immediate priority." (Sacks, 1988)

Many things have changed since then, and much for the better, but this has been another defining moment which we needed to grasp with both hands.

We have provided a space to do that and to do so in a collaborative way which reaches across sector boundaries, including both formal and informal, drawing on best practice and ensuring a strategic approach informed by the whole field.

As part of the process, we have looked to current research and thinking internationally for models of both recovery and opportunity. We have heard from experts in the UK, Israel and the United States (Johnny Ariel, Dr. Rona Novick, Rabbi Dr. Rafi Zarum, Dr. Helena Miller), and we have spent many hours in facilitated groups, grappling with the key issues facing the UK Jewish community, and considering drivers for change. Our primary aims were to:

- Create a unique space to facilitate a cross-communal and cross-organisational conversation about Jewish education for forward thinking in preparation for a post- Covid world
- Look at models of recovery and opportunity within the Jewish education sector
- Draw attention to current research in the field
- Share ideas and emerging models of success and encourage collaborative thought
- Capture learning from experiences and consider how to use them to drive change
- Start the process of setting a new agenda, reappraising aims and methods of the Jewish education system

This is of course part of a much bigger conversation happening across the UK educational sector. The Times Education Commission has been set up to examine the future of education in light of the Covid-19 crisis, declining social mobility, new technology and the changing nature of work.

These issues are very much at the heart of this conversation. However, our Jewish context is unique and brings many important dimensions. Of course, each of our settings is also unique with its own needs and objectives. But we believe that we have much that we can share. It is also interesting that the Times commission highlights the education in the community and the importance of family and lifelong learning, which have long been key to success within our faith and community context.

We know that this is not the first time that these discussions have been had within the Jewish community. The principles proposed shortly after Jewish Continuity was launched in 1994 (Lawton 1996, quoted in Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012), have similarities to some of the narratives in this document. Whilst today's context is very different from that of three decades ago, we need to recognise that we are not writing in a vacuum. There are lessons from these past decades that inform our thinking today.

Our intended outcome has been to create an agenda for building back better, focussing on clear, concrete ways to address some of the most pressing issues that emerged from this project.

A second symposium took place, face to face, in November 2021. The key feature of that meeting, which was the first time many of the seventy participants had seen their colleagues in person for 20 months or more, was to begin to explore issues in five separate working groups. These were:

1. **Group 1** – Overarching Aims and Outcomes of Jewish Education
2. **Group 2** – Family Education
3. **Group 3** – 3 Bases - schools, synagogues and youth organisations
4. **Group 4** – Resourcing the Sector
5. **Group 5** - Experiential Education

The topics for each of the groups had been identified from the discussions that had taken place at the Symposium in June 2021. The one additional area which had been identified was mental health and well-being. We decided not to pursue that topic specifically because a) there is already a range of initiatives in this area taking place, and b) mental health and well-being comes into several of our identified topics above.

We asked all our participants (who had pre-chosen the group they wished to engage with) to have respect for all voices in the room and assume best intent. We were conscious of different approaches from different people and organisations, who are all working on Jewish engagement and education in different ways, but with the same ultimate goals. We tried to ensure a mix in each group so that all could learn from different perspectives in the sector and look for synergies/cross pollination of ideas. As such we asked participants to speak from their own experience and listen to those with experiences different from theirs. We wanted to ensure everyone was heard.

We asked each group to:

- Produce a short paper of recommendations, to include short/medium/long term actions
- Identify potential barriers for those actions
- Identify potential resources (human, organisational, financial) required for those actions

The working groups met four times within a six-month period and were tasked with relevant reading and enquiries in between the meetings. The facilitators met with the steering group in between each meeting to feedback, recalibrate and identify common themes and threads.

The groups shared their own experiences and best practice ideas and carefully considered their gaps in knowledge, bringing in outside expertise to inform the groups, including Brett Wigdortz, founder of Teach First, creating excellence in teaching, and Libby Dangoor, Chief of staff of Multiverse, creating leaders for the future through apprenticeships. The working groups were also informed by articles and texts to stimulate discussion, from Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984), to CASJE's (2022) working paper on the marketplace for Jewish educators, post-pandemic. Some additional work took place, for example the family education group conducted focus groups and interviews to understand a variety of parental views.

At the conclusion of the six-month working groups process, the facilitators each produced a report of their group's deliberations and findings, as well as recommendations for action. These reports are reproduced in full in the Appendices at the end of the report.

This report represents the serious deliberations of a large number of people. It is not exhaustive. Reading it, you may think that there is too little emphasis on one sector and too much emphasis on another. You may wonder why certain organisations are not mentioned, or others are mentioned more than once. We have tried faithfully to keep to the spirit of the conversations and the narratives of the five working groups.

What follows is an attempt to capture the key understandings, principles and recommendations from the deliberations that have taken place in the working groups.

The Jewish education landscape in the UK is complex. On the one hand the community operates in closely guarded silos, promoting its' unique features, often with little collaboration and sharing of ideas; on the other hand, there is sometimes duplication of objectives and programming which does not efficiently use the limited funding and resources available to the community. The lack of shared practice and resource across the education sector is a particular challenge. Collaboration within sectors does take place, for example networks of educators through LSJS, Reshet and PaJeS; through community wide organisations such as the JLC (Jewish Leadership Council), but too often collaboration between sectors and between denominations is pragmatic and occasional. This initiative in fact, is a "first" – a collaboration between LSJS – a modern orthodox education institution which transmits a love of learning and excellence in teaching to transform the UK Jewish community. - and UJIA – a cross-communal organisation whose role is to develop informed, confident Jews in the UK who are inspired by Israel. Whilst these aims are not in opposition to each other, it has been highly unusual in the UK Jewish community for two organisations such as these to work on a major project together.

Research (Graham, 2014; Wolfson, 2012) shows us that the family is the single most important and primary influence shaping Jewish identity development. We know that if Jewish learning and practice is not modelled at home, children rarely view it as relevant to, or functional in, their lives. Family education has typically happened at home, supported by charities and community organisations such as PJ Library, Project Seed and Limmud. Covid-19 meant that important Jewish experiences and rites of passage were missed – from extended family Friday night dinners to Bnei mitzvah celebrations and more. Schools and organisations made many opportunities for families to create home Jewish experiences during the past two years. But as the Jewish Lives Interrupted study showed (Miller and Pomson 2021), in families where there was already a high or secure internal Jewish resource, Jewish identity and engagement was strengthened. In families which had fewer internal Jewish resources, families engaged far less in Jewish activity in the past two years, and Jewish identity has lessened.

In the past 30 years, there has been a developing major shift whereby schools have become the primary Jewish community connection for many learners up to the age of 18. This has impacted every other sector of the community – family, synagogue and youth organisations. But youth organisations and synagogues provide qualitatively different and complementary programmes for schools. The potential for synergy exists in harmony where territoriality can be balanced and managed.

The perceived value of Jewish education and community roles as a credible career path is often both a barrier to entry and also a barrier to retention. The role of the educator is not always held in high esteem within the UK Jewish community. Teaching and informal education are not perceived as aspirational careers by a large sector of the community. For teachers and informal educators particularly, one of the biggest hurdles to recruitment is the relatively low level of pay, and the lack of educators in our community is seen as systemic, caused by under-funding. In all sectors of our education community, there is a lack of formal qualifications, although this is being addressed by LSJS teacher training courses and degrees for example. Education pathways are clearer in some sectors of the community, for example, in schools, than in others, for example in informal education. We do not want to lose excellent professionals because of lack of opportunity for career progression. The NFER (2022) confirmed that whilst educators are leaving the profession, they are more likely to do so for well-being reasons, than for financial reasons.

There is a sense that we do not yet know everything that we need to know to best develop Jewish education and Jewish educators. Some of the discussion in the working groups showed that information was sometimes anecdotal or partial. There is a definite sense that we "need to find out more".

5.1 Develop and maintain a shared vision

Without a guiding vision, any educational institution is ill-equipped to generate coherent effort, unable to grasp the possibilities of effective action and incapable of justifying itself to new generations of young people. This strong statement should lead to every organisation developing a powerful and enabling vision that is well thought-out, collaborative, realistic and responsive.

5.2 Put young people at the centre

Educators with the best of intentions and with professional backing have determined what is best for learners. Jewish education is something that has been "done to" young people – rarely "with" or "by" them. The peer-led youth movements and organisations have a particular expertise in learner-centred education but even they often have strong ideological traditions which are hard to change. If we wish to engage all of our learners from age 0-25 in ways which will create the deeply immersive and involving Jewish community of the future, we must put learners at the heart of the endeavour. This means developing a community that proactively identifies and responds to the needs of young people, their families, their educators and their communities and provides a variety of quality opportunities to learn and do Jewish things together. We know that approximately 60% of our young people are in full time education, and that at least 50% of our young people access Jewish education outside of a formal setting. Our programming must always take account of both those groups.

5.3 Understand the vital value of Jewish educators

Educators are highly valuable assets to our community and to the sustainability of it. We would like to ensure that we can improve the status of Jewish Educators, both formal and informal, so that the profession is seen as an honourable and worthwhile career that is valued by the whole community.

5.4 Create an inclusive community

Our institutions must recognise the value and enrichment that arises by becoming more inclusive and thus more diverse.

We need to recognise that people learn in different ways. One size does not fit all. We must ensure that people are not excluded because programmes are not designed well for them. We have also become more and more aware of the diverse identities that learners possess.

No one should be excluded through ignorance and misunderstanding of these rich identities.

We must ensure that people are not excluded who are not financially or socially well connected, as well as those who live outside the core geographical areas, or the traditional frameworks of Jewish life.

5.5 Recruitment and retention

The challenge of recruitment and retention is part of a wider ecosystem of the Jewish community and many of the key issues do not sit in isolation from the wider sector. The challenges of value, recruitment and retention are mirrored across the Jewish charity and education sector and there is investment to be done in nurturing a culture that enables more positive attitudes and cultural change to ensure the best talent is attracted. There was acknowledgment however that this issue is particularly acute in education and is thought to be more severe at present in both the formal and informal education sectors.

5.6 Address mental health and well-being

Amongst educators it was well known long before the pandemic came along that large numbers of children and young people, and also their educators, were suffering from diminished wellbeing. On the return to regular activities after the various lockdowns and restrictions of the pandemic, in public discourse, much emphasis was placed on 'making up' missed learning. But of far greater long-term importance is work to address the mental health and wellbeing of learners and educators. This work will take various forms but cannot be ignored. Jewish initiatives such as JAMI and the PaJeS Well-being project have already been working to address this issue, and we recognise that addressing mental health and well-being is a vital principle for the Jewish education community.

5.7 Create a vibrant, culturally literate, and year-round community

Jewish cultural literacy must be about knowing, doing, and feeling. We recognise that there are many initiatives which take place annually, for example, Israel Tour and Limmud. These provide "moments in time" for young people. The best initiatives have supporting, or follow-on, activities during the year. To get young people and families engaged or re-engaged in Jewish community life will require dynamic, emotive, safe and meaningful spaces and programmes. These cannot just be the intense experiential moments (camps and trips) but constant and all year round. We know that take-up can be low with year-round activity, regardless of the fact that many initiatives are of a high quality, and that needs understanding and addressing.

Our educators must be role models, focusing on connection and engagement with a vibrancy that is as important as an emphasis on content and knowledge; it is not enough to provide quantity or variety of experience.

5.8   Evaluation is vital

Evaluation establishes how individuals and organisations are progressing. It provides guidance for continual improvement. Evaluation helps organisations to understand how they are doing in relation to achieving their vision for the young people with whom they work.

5.9   Focus on the future

To create a positive professional environment, there should be a climate in every organisation for focusing on the potential for practical opportunities to be developed in the future. The community should not be afraid to experiment. Risk-taking is a vital element of development.

This approach prioritises

i)   Looking out for, and reacting to, the 'weak signals' or early warning indicators of change in the wider general and Jewish environment.
ii)   Empowering people (including, but not only, young people) who are not in conventional positions of authority.
iii)   Trialling ideas to be tested as low cost, low risk pilot projects.

This section highlights the main recommendations documented in the five working group reports. The ideas are not exhaustive; rather, they are a starting point for further conversation and action. The recommendations are divided into two sections: short and medium term – ideas which could be developed further and actioned within the next year or two, and long term – ideas which require a longer, or more strategic lead in time and development. Some of the headings are repeated in both sections. This is because we recognise that some initiatives can be developed relatively quickly, whilst others require strategic conversation, and significant community resources. We recognise that the division is not a precise science.

6.1.   Short and medium term

6.11   Training opportunities

Training programmes for informal educators and community professionals should be prioritised. For example, there should also be opportunities to add to what is currently offered by LSJS, Reshet, PaJeS, and TalentEducators for development of early and mid-career educators including leadership training, support with further learning and career progression, and mentoring.

There should be development of increased pathways into education, for example, the primary Jewish Studies route into teaching – possibly including more creative ways through early career development to make sure Jewish Studies at primary level is fully supported, looking at a route that fits into current structure rather than adding (there is potential for this through LSJS).

In all sectors of Jewish education, we would benefit from support for recruitment from comms or PR agencies that could support pitching of messaging when recruiting.

It will be important to ensure high quality mentoring is provided and framed well through training and development in order to become embedded in the culture of the community and profession.

Leadership programmes should identify and target a range of groups to work with, including groups of parents and grandparents, teachers, informal educators and youth leaders, rabbis and community leaders, post-university leaders.

6.12   Networking opportunities

more opportunities are needed for educators to meet each other on a regular basis. They will be able to hear what others are doing and would be well placed to discuss and to develop

ideas together, pilot new ideas, and put collaborative projects in place. These opportunities need to be open to new voices from young people and innovators who may not necessarily be found in the core institutions of the Community. Sharing and promoting best practice across the community through seminars, meetings and celebrations of success are vital.

6.13   Funding

Existing immersive programmes (e.g. camps and tours) can appear to be targeted only at a core or elite grouping who are already affiliated, and are certainly financially prohibitive. (Notwithstanding bursary schemes which not everyone is comfortable accessing.) The Jewish community must collaborate to put together lower cost, open and inclusive programmes. Funding for young people post-22 (after the University years) should be prioritised to encourage that age group to remain within the community.

The community should prioritise investing in educator development, for example for trainee teachers, especially in JS, as well as for informal Jewish educators. A Jewish family educator scheme for graduates could promote family education in the community with energy and skill. We need to make the case to the major philanthropic supporters of the community to be take risks with their funding. Education can only be judged a success based on its outcomes, and as such, the success cannot be known beforehand. The community has to have a level of tolerance for failure that does not "blame" good ideas.

6.14   Research and evaluation

There was a strong sense that the community needs to invest in research into attitudes and perceived value of those in the sector, and that this is also part of a wider Jewish communal professional need. There is scope to connect to organisations like Leading Edge in the USA to understand the mapping (and employee satisfaction surveys) of Jewish communal professional life in the UK. There is a need to understand the barriers to entry, motivations to stay or leave, as well as how we can add value to the attitudes that we need to change and nurture. We need data to understand how the JS/Education sector compares to the wider national sector. We know that starting salaries for teachers are in line with starting salaries in many other professions, for example social work, medical paths, (NFER 2022), but we have a sense that they quickly lag behind. We need to explore and understand the actual differences in pay structure through career progression.

We need to find out what the need/demand/supply is in the coming years (Number of educators retiring, training, needed to fill vacancies etc). We need evidence to help us

understand why people don't apply to train or take up positions in the sector. We need to develop a system to track alumni to understand pathways.

Further research needs to be undertaken to understand the needs of young people after the University years – 22-25.

In addition to formal research, people like to be asked about their experiences and to have their views taken seriously. What are the questions about young people that we wish to have answered? Asking young people as well as adults will help us to understand their perspectives and needs. If this is also linked to collaborative working, we can triangulate and compare responses from various settings.

6.15   Wellbeing offers

It is important that we work together with the specialist agencies working in this area. Mental Health First aid should be widely available and should be a core skill requirement across all educational settings, both for educators and learners. All educators should be offered a number of well-being sessions annually. For young people, we should set up localised endeavours, e.g. a playground befriending initiative, operating in a school or synagogue, delivered by youth movement madrichim.

6.16   Micro-grant schemes

Micro-grant schemes have been demonstrated to work. They promote innovation and catalyse partnerships. (The UJIA Cheder Challenge in 2008 fostered over 20 innovative projects with a total budget of £70,000.) Grants of up to £5,000 (but possibly as low as £500) could be offered to projects, who subscribe to the key principles and priorities across the following categories:

- Projects within a sector e.g. two schools working together on a project
- Collaborative projects across at least two different sectors (i.e. not just two synagogues)
- Experiential learning
- Family Education
- Workforce development

An example of where micro grant schemes have been happening successfully in the past two years is UJIA's summer engagement and winter engagement funding scheme. A micro-grant scheme is not just, or even primarily about money. It is about recognition and support including, for example, a mentor for each project.

6.17   National and International partnerships

The global world is available to all of us. We need to take advantage of all that is on offer in Jewish education – training and networking, learning and teaching. Covid has shown us that we can make meaningful connections with anyone, anywhere. These possibilities need to be explored and used to help strengthen the UK Jewish community.

The theme of connectivity is one that speaks powerfully to young people. Twinning is a well-established programme tool Twinning with another UK community can have benefits, particularly for small communities and small organisations. Twinned communities might be two similar communities in different parts of the country, or different kinds of communities. The programme might include some activities that are undertaken separately in parallel, and occasional activities that are undertaken together. We know that young people do not want to limit their horizons to the parochial and education should be a tool to help young people explore and connect. Teachers could undertake exchanges between schools to broaden their experience.

6.18   Community wide award schemes

The Duke of Edinburgh Scheme promoted and organised within the Jewish Community by JLGB is hugely successful but is very specific in its objectives and limited in reach. We recognise the value in working together to define a range of commonly agreed activities and topics which can be experienced by learners equally in formal or informal settings.

6.19   Roadshows

An educational roadshow could be established, comprising Youth Movement Educators, Synagogue Rabbis, Jewish Studies Teachers, speaking or running sessions in someone else's setting – with a common theme or goal tying them all together.

Youth Movement fairs could take place again post-Covid-19 at all Jewish schools, and in synagogues/community settings, interacting with all year groups to share what is on offer. There should be specific emphasis for Year 13 as school leavers, demonstrating collaboration between schools and Youth Movements regarding maintaining engagement with learners post-school, linking to UJS and beyond.

6.191   Addressing young people not in Jewish schools

Up to 50% of mainstream Jewish young people do not attend Jewish schools. Over the years some outstanding programmes and projects have been created that primarily target those not in Jewish schools. These include Jewish Activities in Mainstream Schools (JAMS), now run by UJIA, and the Association of Jewish Sixth Formers (AJ6) which no longer exists, as well as the Beit Limmud learning programme at LSJS for years 7-9. This target group cries out for organisational leadership and collaborative working in order to reach, and address the needs of, these young people.

6.192   Resources provision

In all areas of Jewish Education, we must ensure we have accessible, relevant and attractive good quality resources that enable high quality education to be delivered. This should include, but is not restricted to, state of the art digital, on-line provision.

Shared resources – whether this refers to people, spaces or funding would enhance experiences for all. Neutral spaces, where all are welcomed, must be expanded and developed.

Guides to best practice and resource portals/directories could be an outcome for sectors of the community, for example Jewish family educators, which could be helpful to organisations through the community.

6.193   Culture change/raising awareness

We need to re-develop marketing campaigns to shout about why "it's cool to work in a Jewish school", (a campaign that was developed with PaJeS some years ago), why Jewish Youth Movement work is an amazing opportunity, why "doing Jewish" with your family is the best part of the week, and so on.

The community must find ways to move educational establishments from being 'Competitive to Collaborative', enabling schools and youth movements to work together with synagogues and other institutions to join up thinking in Jewish learning. We should enable conversations to support the development of the sector and shared understanding of appreciation and value. Specifically, a much more powerful prospect is to develop a culture of promoting this shared culture rather than competing with each other. There is scope here for a conference or event to launch a "communities of practice" and related concepts.

6.2. Long term

6.21 Developing a shared vision

A vision that is well thought out, collaborative, realistic and responsive should be developed within different frameworks in the education sector, and also across the whole sector. The Jewish education community needs to be able to articulate a whole community response to explain what we are trying to achieve and why for Jewish Education in its entirety in the UK.

6.22 Buy-in from Communal leadership

Collaboration cannot just be driven by frontline professionals with high workloads and little power to influence communal priorities. Collaboration needs to be given explicit encouragement and support. If we wish collaboration to be built into our community structures, then clear signalling and 'buy in' by major communal organisations with significant vested interests is essential. Agencies and funders need to state that they will give support to collaborative projects that fulfil the core principles and priorities, and they will create the infrastructure to enable more collaboration to happen. A joint strategic planning group meeting regularly will help to embed and sustain this approach within the community.

We should find ways for personnel from one sector or denomination to visit another sector or denomination for a meeting, observation or activity. But, if host organisations limit these visits to those who are religiously "approved", the consequence may be that some learners will not see visible figures who they can identify with. Although this is a sensitive area, if we genuinely believe in putting the learner at the heart of our activity, then the root question is, "will this person enhance the learner's ability to engage with Jewish life, or improve their wellbeing"? If the answer is "Yes" then other considerations should have lower priority.

6.23 Research and evaluation

We should identify good practice from the UK and overseas and publish good practice. We need to place ourselves as national and international thought leaders in Jewish education. To do this, we need to know more about this sector, and how it relates to the sector in the wider UK community and around the world. We should invest in community wide research into the Jewish community sector. In addition, investment in research can leverage buy-in and funding from external sources, for example the government, specifically for Jewish education. Whilst the Jewish Lives Interrupted Study (Miller and Pomson 2021) gave us a powerful snapshot of

teenagers, and the Jewish Lives Longitudinal Study (Miller and Pomson 2011-present) has also moved beyond into student and young adult age groups, we need to understand other groups within our community, for example, families with young children, and those who experience marginalisation. Each cohort and generation exhibit different characteristics. Investing in understanding each generation, prevents us planning for the next generation based solely on what we know about the previous one.

6.24 Funding

The community needs to seriously invest further and deeper in Jewish education. This has to be a community priority in the coming decade.

For example, we need investment in alumni networks to talent spot and connect across the community – supporting the pathways/tracking piece – placed within settings, such as alumni stewards/ambassadors/connectors placed within secondary schools who work with organisations who subsequently connect with the alumni (UJS, Chaplaincy etc).

We need to give substantial financial help to educators and their families, for example to ensure that Key Worker Housing from Jewish Housing Associations is accessible for those working in formal, informal and experiential education.

6.25 Recruitment and retention

Recommendations in this section often link to funding initiatives. We need to consider the development of funds or paid sabbaticals to support development and meaningful training with the ambition that this would, in turn, support retention and attracting talent. Currently LSJS and TalentEducators both work to recruit teachers. Yesod also support development in this way currently. A financial incentive to attract people into positions within the sector could boost recruitment. Other initiatives, for example paying family synagogue membership, paying for educators' children to attend summer camps and Israel Tour, could be a very attractive incentive.

Creating an 'Excellent Teacher/Educator' programme would enable fast tracking of skills and career progression.

The community could consider an awards system or build on awards that exist already, such as the Jewish Schools Awards. A collaborative, community-wide initiative should take this further.

Viewing the Jewish community holistically could incorporate wider and more innovative training and development opportunities into the pathways to enable those in education to move into other educator roles in communal organisations, allowing teachers and educators to transfer their skills into other communal organisations.

We should also increase flexibility in training and working to allow recruitment and retention of those who would benefit from this.

6.26   Culture change, awareness and a sense of shared literacy

Educators need to be perceived as aspirational and inspirational role models for young people, and young people need to see a wide diversity of educators in a variety of settings.

There needs to be a sense of a shared literacy, where we can see across the whole community of informal, experiential and formal education what we mean by Jewish literacy and to understand how, when and where activities can take place that promote Jewish literacy.

We need to bridge the gap between communal organisations and schools – ensuring flexibility of working between or across both. We should work towards creating a global package of benefits across the JS space in order that the schools and other institutions are global leaders in employee welfare and wellbeing – knowing that these places are great places to work.

Consideration should be given to how we can we create a culture of signing up to something that creates a standard in order to bring some comparable salary scales in our sector. This would help to address the perception that Jewish education is not a "good" career due to poor pay. We also need to consider how we can change the culture of the parental voice in order to ensure that the pathway of Jewish education is highly valued as a career.

6.27   Focus on transitional periods

Families and individual learners engage with communal institutions at specific transitional points, for example:

- when children are at age 4/5 and ready to start school/cheder
- in the period leading up to Bar/Batmitzvah
- at age 16 on Israel Tour
- at commencement of higher education (although this is also a time when some actively move away from Jewish engagement)
- 22 + once young people have moved away from structured Jewish frameworks

But wider transitional periods may also offer important scope for engagement, particularly across a wider age range of young families. Many families, perhaps a majority, will adopt a 'pick and mix' approach to Jewish engagement – choosing activities that suit their lifestyle, budget and current Jewish and general social interests. Better co-ordination through the Jewish education sector will enable families to connect different opportunities together.

Young people post-GCSE are making adult choices for the first time (although in conjunction with their families). An offer for them, particularly for those who are not yet fully engaged in Jewish life, could draw them in to the community.

The young adult years, including transitions out of education and youth movement engagement, are very often the time when many people move away from Jewish life. The assumption is made that they will return at some point later. But this is not true for many and even for those who do return at a later point, the community may miss their involvement at a key stage of their creative, energetic lives. All Jewish institutions should co-ordinate their offer to this group.

The process of the past year of research, meetings and discussions has been a vital vehicle for joining up conversations that would not normally have happened in the UK Jewish community. As such, we have shown that change and progression in our community can happen.

We have shown that we have many basic Jewish education models in our community that do work well - initiatives in synagogues, our Jewish schools, Youth Movements, our extensive range of charities and institutions, Israel Tour, March of the Living, and so much more.

Jewish education is not linear, however. We have tried to show how important it will be going forward to provide a mosaic of opportunities, both for our learners (and their families) and our educators, through greater resourcing, and also the necessity to remove barriers. We have shown how and why we need to connect and collaborate, experiment, and innovate.

Underpinning all of this, it is essential that institutions develop a shared vision, which articulates the elements of Jewish literacy to which we strive. Our goal is to live in communities of practice, populated by enthusiastic, proud, knowledgeable, and engaged Jews.

This process is one of evolution, not revolution. We should draw on previous examples of excellent practice, of which there are many, to guide culture change. If we take this seriously, then the UK Jewish community will become a beacon for the global Jewish future.

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1. Introduction

In attempting to answer the overarching question of what Jewish education should look like for young people in our community at the age of 25, our group attempted to define our scope of focus. In the 1990s, UJIA and Jewish Continuity defined their goal as aiming to develop "proud, knowledgeable and engaged Jews". These three terms are helpful in thinking about what we mean when we speak about Jewish education but they are also multi-faceted and it is worth exploring what each term embraces.

I. **Proud** – at a basic level, pride means that young Jews should feel proud to be Jewish. But that pride can take several forms:
- **Cultural pride** - pride in being part of a people that has made important contributions in many fields including philosophy, politics, science and entertainment.
- **Religious pride** – pride in compelling Jewish writings and traditions and in membership of a cohesive faith community.
- **Nationalist pride** – pride in the re-establishment of an independent Jewish state after 2000 years and all of its achievements (Zionism) or pride in thriving Jewish life around the world (Peoplehood).

II. **Knowledgeable** – encompasses the vast, rich heritage of Jewish thought, practice, texts, history, culture and traditions that has developed over 3000 years. No individual could master all of this knowledge but there is a shared knowledge that lies at the foundation of all communities, including Jewish ones. This 'Cultural Literacy' binds communities together and gives members the language to communicate intimately with one other.

III. **Engaged** – describes the commitment of Jews to being actively Jewish. This can be divided into two areas:
- **Personal engagement** – which encompasses lifelong learning, tzedakah, a commitment to Jewish practice, and even a world view that incorporates a Jewish 'lens'.
- **Communal engagement** – which encompasses participation in synagogue and community activities, commitment to Jewish charities, volunteering and taking on leadership roles.

The discussion within the group was that Jewish education encompasses all of these areas but by its nature must make choices about what to prioritise. Different institutions will prioritise different areas depending on their function, outlook, resources, and leadership. We believe however that these three concepts of proud, knowledgeable, and engaged are over-arching.

2. Taking Stock: Where we are today

One critical factor when reflecting on education in the British Jewish community is the centrality of Jewish Day Schools. Since the 1990s the number of children in a Jewish school has doubled as has the number of schools. The current assessment[1] is that roughly 50% of Jewish young people attend a Jewish school. We recognise that this figure is higher for those in the Charedi parts of our community, and also in London and Manchester, whilst being lower in other regional communities.

As a consequence, Jewish Day Schools have been given a significant share of responsibility for Jewish education in the UK and many of the other institutions that shared this responsibility 2-3 decades ago have contracted or disappeared. There have been significant changes as a result although these changes cannot be ascribed exclusively to the rise of Jewish Day Schools:

- Some Jewish parents feel that they have 'done their duty' with regard to Jewish education by simply sending their children to a Jewish Day School.
- Engagement and attendance at synagogue services and Jewish youth movements have been weakened as young Jews see each other every day in school and do not feel the need to meet up at the weekends in other forums.
- Jewish Day Schools have become the primary focus of Jewish charities, educational programmes and outreach organisations that seek access to young Jewish students.
- Jewish Day Schools have had the benefit of external resources, but potentially these may come at the price of curriculum coherence and the development of individual creativity.

In the informal education sector as the focus has shifted to a greater emphasis on formal education settings, we have also seen a number of changes and challenges:

- Weekly engagement in activities has decreased significantly and whilst numbers at key summer programmes e.g. Israel Tour have largely stayed constant or even increased, participation in long-term programmes has halved over 15 years.
- Professionalisation and volunteering: many youth movements and organisations have been through a process of professionalisation, taking on more full-time paid senior staff and adopting and enforcing stricter policies and practices. At the same time, volunteers for junior and senior positions are becoming increasingly harder to recruit for. This may also be due to additional external factors, but the over-riding result is that more responsibility has been put into the hands of fewer people and fewer young people have the opportunity

[1] The rise and rise of Jewish schools in the United Kingdom

to develop experience with leadership. This is a direct challenge to the peer-led nature of Jewish informal education, and the longer-term impact in our community.

- The lack of shared practice and resource across the sector is a particular challenge. Whilst there are some examples of collaboration, there is no need to constantly reinvent the wheel, and many practitioners and organisations operate in their own silo, and continue to duplicate effort and resource.

In order to further understand where we are today it is worth further review of research material about the British Jewish community's level of Jewish education and the achievements of two types of communal institutions responsible for education:

- **Service providers** - schools, youth movements, synagogues, cheders, Limmud, outreach organisations, etc.
- **Facilitators and regulators** - PaJeS, Pikuach, the Board of Deputies, the United Synagogue, LSJS, etc.

Additionally, it will be beneficial to consult closely with young people (especially those in the 18–25-year-old bracket) and their parents across the community to understand their needs, barriers to engagement and aspiration for their own Jewish education.

3.   Taking Stock: looking back

Before we turn to our recommendations, it is worth pointing out that this is not the first time that the community has considered the issue of Jewish education.

The last time that the community thought deeply and collectively about it was in the 1990s when Rabbi Sacks came into office. He established Jewish Continuity which had the aim of ensuring that the British Jewish community would survive and thrive in the 21st century. (Education was not the exclusive focus of the organisation but it played a large part in its strategy.)

There is value in revisiting the approach and achievements of Jewish Continuity as we develop our own strategy for Jewish Education across the community. Clive Lawton, the CEO of Jewish Continuity, published an article in which he listed the achievements of Jewish Continuity in the two years following its establishment:

"Our intention has been to work as a lever, a catalytic agency, but the bigger we become, the more difficult it is to maintain the modest position. Despite these pressures, we have remained true to the original mandate set by the Chief Rabbi. Jewish Continuity has:

…Established a teacher training unit in consultation with the Melton Center at the Hebrew University, with integral research programs at the University of London; and is training teachers in Jewish schools across the country as well as helping several institutions to revise their curricula designs; brought together all the youth organizations and movements, and created a Youth Service Development Unit to support career level training for youth and community workers as well as curricula and resource development; devised a system for regionalizing the process of community development that has won the enthusiastic endorsement of international experts; increased by 40 percent the number of young people going on Israel trips this year, and improved their level of preparation; funded about a hundred new programs and projects; tripled the number of Jewish community workers in the country; drawn the various Jewish arts organizations in Britain together into consortia arrangements not previously possible; changed the focus of the Jewish student organization in the UK from political to primarily educational."

Extracted from Clive Lawton, *Great Britain Tackles "Jewish Continuity"* 1996

It is remarkable how similar the recommendations that we propose in this document are to the activities of Jewish Continuity nearly three decades ago. So, we should revisit these projects and the work of Jewish Continuity in order to explore which projects succeeded, which projects failed and what lessons might be learnt for us today.

We should pay particular attention to what we can take forward from that work into a world that feels very different 30 years later, where the pace of change continues to accelerate. In addition, societal and communal change means that the context in which we are operating is different, e.g. impact of technology/social media, role of women, the recognition of diversity in our community, but many of the underlying challenges remain the same.

4.   The Challenges

There are three critical and inter-linked Jewish educational challenges:

I.   What are we trying to achieve?
II.   Where does responsibility lie for delivery, resourcing, and regulating Jewish education?
III.   How will we know and measure the extent to which we are succeeding?

In relation to the first of these challenges, the answer remains unchanged since UJIA and Jewish Continuity defined it – the aim of Jewish education is to produce proud, knowledgeable and engaged Jews.

(It is important to note that the contributors to this paper do not see the role of Jewish education in the UK as being to specifically produce traditionally religious or practising Jews even though some Jewish organisations will see this as central to their mission.)

In relation to the other two challenges, we have five recommendations to make.

5.   Recommendations

We make five specific recommendations below in in relation to Jewish education. Our hope is that each education provider/facilitator thinks deeply about its aims, objectives, and measures of success and that this will guide them in every aspect of their work.

A.   Every educational organisation must define its vision and goals

Every Jewish organisation involved in Jewish education (service providers as well as facilitators and regulators) should go through a process to define the vision that drives the organisation. This vision must be 'held' and 'promoted' by its leadership.

Without a guiding vision, an educational institution is ill-equipped to generate coherent effort, unable to grasp the possibilities of effective action and incapable of justifying itself to new generations of young people.

There are four elements that make up a powerful and enabling vision:

- Well thought-out: It has a comprehensive understanding and guiding purpose
- Collaborative: It invites all stakeholders to engage, share, commit and own
- Realistic: It sets out an achievable itinerary of possible action
- Responsive: It can be modified in response to experiences it invokes

A vision that is well though-out, collaborative, realistic and responsive creates meaning, establishes excellence by transcending the status quo, attracts commitment by energising people, and bridges the present to the future of an institution. A vision must also clearly chart a path from the needs of the young people to the activities of the organisation, to the changes that happens as a result of these activities, to the impact or long-term effect of these activities on the young person, the community and the world around them.

An educational vision and theory of change must address three critical issues across knowledge, skills and values:

I.   What knowledge is most important for students to acquire so that they become literate, cultured and conversant with Judaism?

II.   What practices are the most important for students to demonstrate so that they are competent in the actions, behaviours and skills that are important in Jewish life?

III.   What values and attitudes are most important for students to acquire so that they develop a strong Jewish value system and a clear Jewish identity?

We strongly believe that the process and journey of exploring and tackling these questions, institution by institution, is as valuable as the output that is agreed. It is essential that key stakeholders (teachers, governors, informal educators, donors), leadership (professional and lay), parents, children/students are involved in the process, using independent, experienced facilitators to drive it.

In Appendix 1, we set out the seven steps of the vision process in more detail, that should be used or adapted for each educational setting.

B.   Define "Cultural Literacy", the knowledge, skills and values all British Jews should share.

There is a surprising degree of agreement among Jewish educators about what an 'Ideal Graduate' looks like and the fundamental Jewish knowledge that they should ideally master. We know that the practical need to prioritise day-to-day can lead to very different outcomes; small differences in emphasis can lead to radical differences in the content and experience of Jewish education in different settings.

That being said, we believe that it is possible to reach a broad agreement about the fundamental knowledge, skills, and values that our community would like young British Jews to master. Indeed, in the process of developing a vision (recommendation A) we anticipate that, whilst the emphasis may differ from place to place, there is an opportunity for a wider articulation on the shared goals of Jewish education for young British Jews. In Appendix 2, we have included an overview of Basic Jewish Literacy which we believe would be broadly accepted by the vast majority of Jewish Day Schools and other institutions, including youth movements, synagogues and Chedarim. The list has been compiled at a general, high level. We think it would be possible to probe at least one level deeper and list specific content without losing its widespread acceptability. We would expect each organisation to develop their own unique emphasis from the list.

We believe that cultural literacy must be about knowledge as a foundation, but also focussed on 'know how', making spiritual connections with one's Judaism and providing a future pathway to communal engagement. This relates to our final recommendation about all educators being role models and therefore focusing on engagement, connection and inspiration must be as important as the emphasis on content and knowledge.

C.   Evaluation is essential

Evaluation and measurement are essential to education. Evaluation establishes how individual young people are progressing and provides guidance for their continued advancement. It enables organisations to understand how they are doing in achieving their vision for the young people they work with.

When establishing any educational goals, defining a curriculum or designing peulot (activities), evaluation must be a central component in order to validate the outcomes and to guide organisations in developing their offering. This is likely to be about individual attainment, and also about the programmes, initiatives, and content of what young people are learning and its longer-term impact on community development, retention and engagement.

Without evaluation it is not possible to determine the success or failure of an organisation's vision or to help students and young people in their learning and development. It's an important step in assessing attitudes, motivation and engagement, as well as depth of knowledge. Any efforts in revitalising Jewish education has to encompass evaluation so that all stakeholders can answer the fundamental question: how well are we doing?

We want to see the introduction of wide-scale evaluation so that pupils, young adults, educators, governors, parents, and the community at large can assess the performance of the organisations they entrust with the education of their children. Whilst some evaluation does of course already occur, we believe that all institutions, and the wider community must take evaluation seriously as a fundamental educational benchmarking tool which will in turn reinforce the notion that Jewish education is central to the mission of their organisation.

D.   Invest in Jewish educators and professionals

The single most important factor in raising students' attainment is the quality of teaching. If we do not focus on recruiting, developing and valuing good educators, we ignore the most important factor affecting outcomes. We recognise that this topic is being addressed more comprehensively in another group, but believe it is sufficiently important to be touched on here too.

The role of the educator (in both formal and informal settings) goes beyond subject mastery and teaching ability. They should be a role model, the embodiment of the values that the school/organisation wishes to instil in its students and young people. There is currently a limited pool of Jewish educators on which to draw. Furthermore, some may not share the ethos of their school or organisation which makes it hard for them to be ideal role models even though they may be deeply committed to the education of the students.

It is essential that we address the issue of recruiting and developing high quality formal and informal educators who are role models for our young people. Addressing this issue may in fact be more important than identifying what we want our young adults to know by the time they reach the age of 25.

It is difficult to develop outstanding Jewish educators because the profession does not attract many ambitious people for a number of reasons. Here however are several suggestions for ways to improve teacher quality.

- **Pay/Incentives** – by supplementing the salaries of educators or offering other incentives it may be possible to make the position more attractive to individuals considering formal teaching or informal education as a profession.

- **Part time positions** – encouraging people to enter Jewish education in a part time role may make it possible to attract individuals who require job **flexibility**.

- **Professional development** - improve the quality of educators, introduce them to new resources and foster supportive peer networks. We should be making use of international resources, programmes and qualifications, together with local provision, such as that provided by LSJS and PAJES. This must encompass both formal teachers and those working in the informal sector.

E.   Cross-Sector Conversation and Collaboration

Throughout this process, we have found huge benefit in bringing together experts from across the community to discuss the question of what 25-year-olds in our community should know, feel and do. Resources and support need to be provided to enable these conversations to happen with a clear purpose/structure, and to encourage ongoing collaboration.

It is critically important that we provide everyone working professionally or in lay leadership positions, the opportunity to hear other voices and to develop a broad understanding of what

Jewish education looks like across and throughout the community. We can no longer afford to operate in silos, but need to build on the wisdom, experience and knowledge from across the community to tackle these challenging questions and generate solutions.

We believe that there are opportunities that will enable greater collaboration, sharing of resources and problem solving when we can work together.

Conclusion

- We have suggested five key recommendations to ensure that at the age of 25 our young people are knowledgeable, engaged and committed to their own Judaism and the Jewish community.

- The bringing together of experience and expertise across the field of Jewish education has been a positive, constructive and worthwhile endeavour that should be repeated on a regular basis. We should not under-estimate the benefit of cross-communal conversations where we look for similarity and can learn from each other.

- We believe that it is possible to develop a universally accepted 'cultural literacy' framework, recognising the need for different institutions to have the freedom to prioritise different areas.

- We believe more work needs to be done in researching how to ensure that this work has significant impact, can be measured, and consider the risks if we don't drive this forward.

- There is great value for each institution (formal and informal) to go through the process of developing their own vision and priorities, within the overall framework. For this to happen, financial and other support needs to be provided.

- Finally, 'the community' need to agree who owns this area of work – who is going to take responsibility for continuing this conversation and collaboration?

Introduction: the challenge

The ethos of your institution must be 'held' and 'promoted' by its leadership, but how do you ensure that your institution is vision-driven in a world of targets and on-going pressures? There are three key challenges to focusing on the educational vision of your institution.

Firstly, the urgent invariably 'the urgent' trumps 'the important' so you never have the time or headspace to really focus on vision. Of course, urgent is important. Finance, parents, recruitment, management, efficiency etc. are all vital issues that need constant attention, but they can cause an institution to be mostly reactive, rather than being proactive. Surviving rather than thriving.

Secondly, the focus on 'results' can also take you away from vision. Results in formal settings include exams, league tables and inspections, while results in informal settings are positive feedback, continued affiliation, and a great time being had by all. Again, all these are important, but can create culture that is about satisfying others as opposed to focusing on what the institution itself really wants to achieve.

Thirdly, there is often a reliance on achieving short term success rather than lasting impact, which can also detract from a considered vision. Regular changes in staff and lay leadership detract from ongoing, long-term, constantly reviewed processes being carried out.

These three challenges are interrelated and tend to encourage surface level processes rather than deep reflection. As a result, on the odd occasion an educational institution does go through some kind of vision process, it often ends up 'in a drawer' and fails to encourage change and growth. Without a guiding purpose, an educational system is bound to be scattered and incoherent, incapable of consecutive effort, unable either to grasp the possibilities of effective action or to avoid the obstacles in its path. Lacking a directive guide to the future, the system becomes repetitive and uninspired, prey to past habit, incapable of justifying itself to new generations of young people in the worlds they will inhabit.

Four essential elements of such a vision

I.   **Well thought-out**: It has a comprehensive understanding and guiding purpose
II.   **Collaborative**: It invites all stakeholders to engage, share, commit and own
III. **Realistic**: It sets out an achievable itinerary of possible action
IV.   **Responsive**: It can be modified in response to experiences it invokes

A vision that is well though-out, collaborative, realistic and responsive creates meaning, establishes excellence by transcending the status quo, attracts commitment by energising people, and practically bridges the present to the future of your institution.

A seven-step model for developing and maintaining a shared vision

Below is a suggested model for developing, sharing and implementing a shared vision… the process of going through this with key stakeholders will be as rewarding and beneficial, as the outcome generated. We believe it is essential the outcome is useful, meaningful and relevant to each institution.

1. Learn more about your institution
Look at key past documents, understand the finances and financial trends, look into the history of this ideology and culture, and how this has developed and changed over time. Maybe do some quantitative and qualitative research (surveys, interviews etc.) both of those working on the institution and those that benefit from its programme.

2. Involve critical individuals
A vision process should be collaborative. To lead the process, put together a team that will work well together and represents (either directly or indirectly) all the constituencies that are touched by the institution, in the widest sense. Make sure some people are deeply involved in the process and it is not relying on sporadic contributions of a half-informed collective. Everyone should be clearly informed of their roles and responsibilities. Consider which voices need to be present. Who are the key stakeholders? In what way might you include your students, their parents and your alumni?

3. Explore changes and trends
Consider your institution in the bigger picture. What economic, social, political, demographic and technological developments are impacting your institution? What is going on in other somewhat similar institutions in this country and the wider Jewish world. What is the latest thinking and what are the 'tried and tested' models that should not be ignored. New is not always better and old is not always dated; but sometimes they both are. Be discerning when you analyse and critique what you find.

4. Commit to a process
Gather and record all information and comments. Everything should be documented. Establish, together, a timetable for the vision process. It should include the above three steps and then a series of meetings to reflect on what has been learnt and possible structures for the vision. Bringing in outside expertise to facilitate the process is well-worth considering.

Ask yourselves: Is the focus on what you want to give your students/members? Or what you hope they become? Or how you seen in the community? Is too descriptive or overly aspirational? Does it weave together Jewish and general educational elements? Does it include knowledge, skills ('how to', practice), experiences and spiritual elements?
Don't let the process be short and half-hearted or overly long and unrealistically complicated. Typically, four to six months, with six to ten meetings and papers being written and reviewed in-between. Find people who can and will commit the time and thinking to this.

5. Test the waters
Create a create a clear and concise document that goes through a number of revisions. 'try it out' on some key stakeholders or external thought-leaders or educational bodies. Encourage critical feedback. Check to see if you've missed anything major or given an inappropriate framing, or unhelpful language. Give time for errors and mistakes to be found and corrected. Allow room for improvement.

6. Promote it repeatedly
Work out a process for disseminating and empowering everyone involved with the vision. Be creative in the method and formats you use. Make sure there is budget and resource for this. Build it into the heart of your institution.

7. Review it periodically
Think hard about the regularity and structuring of your review process. The above steps should be repeated regularly in some form or other.
Ask yourselves: When and how was it originally created? How do you disseminate and promote it? What major changes have happened since it was created? When was it last revisited?

Finally
You may very well encounter problems along the way. Be aware of setbacks and side-tracks such as: the non-professionals, many of whom are executives in their own work domains, being drawn into operational matters; power struggles emerging within the leadership; the professional or lay leadership teams not being open to challenge, and confidence is lost in each other; reports from the professionals to the lay leadership failing to provide sufficient or sufficiently high-quality information so that informed decisions can be made.

All in all, this process is a necessity. But it is a time-consuming and a constant challenge. Very rewarding too. Without it, those involved in the enterprise will drift in confusion or, worse, act at cross-purposes. "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." (George Harrison). Keep in mind a quote from the book of Proverbs: "When there is no vision, people get out of control; but those who heed instruction are cheered." (29:18).

Below are the key elements of Jewish cultural literacy, broken into the areas of Knowledge, Skills and Values. This is one example of what might be considered to be included. We also particularly recommend the 18x18 framework as another valuable contribution to this exercise.

To note there are some areas – for example Tikun Olam, conversational Hebrew or in-depth Talmud study – that we have omitted because we do not feel that they are universally recognised as part of Basic Jewish Literacy, no matter how strongly some feel that they are. We also believe it would be possible to probe this list at least one level deeper and identify specific content for every organisation, without losing its widespread acceptability.

Please note also that this does not make any prescription on how this content would be taught. This is an articulation of principle, not methodology.

Knowledge

- Knowledge of/Familiarity with stories of Torah
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with key stories in rest of Tenach
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with key works of Jewish canon and why they are important
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with Jewish calendar and events
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with Jewish lifecycle events – in particular Bat or Bar Mitzvah as a learning opportunity
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with Jewish ritual objects and their use – tallit, tefillin, mezuzah, Torah, chanukiah
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with Hebrew / Jewish songs
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with Jewish history from Biblical times until today
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with the Holocaust
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with history of Zionism until today
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with key Jewish personalities in Jewish and world history
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with great literary works of Jewish tradition
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with Hebrew – reading, key words and expressions.
- Knowledge of/Familiarity with the history of antisemitism

Skills

- Ability to conduct in-depth textual analysis of Torah (in English)
- Ability to do Jewish rituals – in particular those rituals which students might be called on such as Kiddush, motzi and birkat hamazon
- Ability to engage in Jewish spiritual practice e.g., prayer
- Be able to apply Jewish principles to modern day ethical dilemmas (e.g. You be the Judge)
- Ability to argue coherently in speech and in writing on moral issues with an understanding of Judaism's perspective

Values & Identity

- Sense of spirituality and connection to Judaism
- Sensitivity towards others
- Commitment to honesty
- Commitment to tzedakah
- Appreciation of the value of volunteering and contributing to the community
- Willingness and ability to speak out for justice
- Valuing the State of Israel (without promoting any particular political position)
- Pride in Jewish history, tradition and culture
- Pride in Jewish identity
- Commitment to lifelong learning

1. Introduction

As part of the LSJS-UJIA Building Back Better project, we were tasked with understanding the post-covid opportunities for Jewish Family Education (JFE) and making recommendations to enable the development of this essential mechanism of intergenerational Jewish transmission which is key to a Jewish future. The group consisted mainly of professionals working in Jewish schools and communal organisations. Conscious of the need for a parent voice, a focus group was also consulted and individual conversations took place to understand a variety of parent views. This report outlines the journey of understanding taken by the group and concludes with a series of recommendations that take account JFE opportunities and build on covid learning to help support families in their vital role as the primary transmitters of Jewish values, knowledge and skills to the next generation.

2. Understanding Jewish Family Education in a Post Covid world

2a)   What is Jewish Family Education?

Jewish Family Education is educational activity that impacts on the entire family unit. The purpose of family education is for families to help children and adults with their Jewish learning to enable them all to live a meaningful, living Judaism in action.

The family is the single most important and primary influence shaping Jewish identity development for all family members (JESNA). Indeed there is no greater immersive experience than the home (Ron Wolfson). If Jewish learning and practice is not modelled in the home, children will rarely view it as relevant or functional in their lives. There is the feeling that modern parents are tending to outsource their children's Jewish education to schools, and that there may be a post-Covid opportunity to address this.

Jewish family education mostly takes place in the home, supported by a variety of institutions including schools, synagogues, early years education, Jewish charities and community organisations such as PJ Library, Limmud and Project Seed as well as via online resources. It has several unique features such as being multigenerational with every family and extended family member both a learner and a teacher, it is broad and diverse, encompassing both structure and unstructured opportunities, and may be spontaneous or opportunistic and take place within or outside the home.

2b)   Stocktake – Where are we now?

Family education is a well-known concept adopted by Jewish schools, synagogues and other communal organisations. Unfortunately, Covid meant that important Jewish experiences and rites of passage were missed, such as bat/barmitzvah celebrations and tours, and traditional times of family Jewish celebrations were severely curtailed such as sedarim and family shabbat meals. However, Covid did enable time and opportunity to create other home Jewish experiences that involved the family with remote Jewish learning at home, often supported by schools. Online Jewish opportunities increased and there was an increased parental understanding and appreciation of Jewish education and educators.

Whilst some parents have always felt empowered to take their role as Jewish educators in the home, with parents and children learning together, lockdown meant that others either took this on for the first time or strengthened their homebased Jewish activities. Much of the material that formed the basis for this was provided by schools and community organisations. Many schools upped their game in terms of bringing families into their Jewish programmes which opens up opportunities to build on getting parents on board (as well as them better understanding the importance of paying the voluntary contributions needed to support this work). However Covid has meant that there has been a serious lack of Jewish connection with other Jewish people and organisations for some families, in particular those with new/young children.

2c)   Key Challenges

The group identified 3 key challenges that need to be addressed if Jewish Family Education is to thrive.

- How can we address the gap between families' and schools' and other communal organisations' Jewish aspirations?
- How can we help build families' Jewish knowledge and skills and develop parents' confidence and motivation to be active providers of their families' Jewish learning?
- How can we create meaningful Jewish routines, experiences, touchpoints and milestones / celebrations that engage all generations of families in their Judaism?

3. The Future of Jewish Family Education

3a) General principles to adopt:

- **Work in True Partnership**
Effective family education needs to start from parents and families, not from institutions. A true partnership involves finding out what people want, and what they already find useful and then helping them without getting in the way. To achieve this, face-to-face interactions are key, recognising the power of word of mouth, i.e. parents driving parents or parent advocates/champions. This may be especially important in reaching less engaged families.

- **Genuinely Reimagine Jewish Family Education**

Post Covid provides a welcome opportunity to completely reimagine Jewish Family Education and in particular make it fun – a concept that was substantially reduced during Covid. Many Jewish families have experienced a depletion not only in Jewish activities but also in their wellbeing and there is an opportunity for Jewish Family Education to support improvements in both of these.

- **'Jewify' things going on in home already**

There are opportunities in starting family education "where people are" and from there finding experiences and activities with regularity and continuity i.e. not one offs, to support the reintroduction of Jewish routines.

- **Create communities**

The concept of community is an important part of Jewish supportive infrastructure to help and connect families e.g. to schools, synagogues, youth movements and each other. Schools and other Jewish institutions can create communities of families, and perhaps such communities can also be created independently of institutions. It is also important to bring families back into pre-existing communities and perhaps replacing lost affiliations such as to synagogues, and strengthening the connections between schools, synagogues and families.

- **Utilise Jewish Touchpoints & celebrations**

Covid meant many of the normal celebration experiences and rites of passage were missed or radically reduced. Whilst they will be reintroduced post covid, there is an opportunity to identify smaller more frequent milestones i.e. in between Brit & Bnei mitzvah - and finding ways to make the Jewish part more meaningful for families as touchpoints for everyday Judaism.

3b) Learning from Good Practice

What can we learn from good practice in our community and elsewhere, particularly during covid?

- **Addressing the gap between the families' and schools' and other communal organisations' Jewish activities and aspirations**

Schools report greatest engagement when involving families in accessible, fun events such as Purim and Chanukah celebrations and when they utilise secular studies opportunities and make them more 'Jewish'. The Covid home school experience also offered opportunities for encouraging more JFE activities in the home. Examples of successful school extension activities include:

- Eden School Tree of Knowledge – Four evening adult Jewish learning offering including options relevant to JFE
- Wolfson Hillel – Reception Parents Reading evening included support your child's Hebrew reading with internally provided Hebrew Reading Crash Course opportunity
- Mathilda Marks Year 6 family Friday night dinner
- Etz Chaim provided school's Jewish resource materials (videos, stories, songs) to families to use in the home
- JCoSS – Families invited to inspiring Y12 post Poland trip assembly

- **Helping build families' Jewish knowledge and skills and develop parents' confidence and motivation to be active providers of their families' Jewish learning**

Accessible, non-judgemental and attractive resources and opportunities have proved effective in supporting families' Jewish skill development such as:

- PJ Library – providing children's books directly to the child at home with supporting information for parents on the book flap and other creative Jewishly relevant resources are also sent e.g. growth charts, cooking aprons, scratch & sniff Havdalah set etc
- Yellow Candle Project – home based activity as opportunity for conversation + social media component
- Project Seed young informal educator placement in primary schools e.g. Matilda Marks School
- Parent led Eden School family camping trip

- **Creating meaningful Jewish routines, experiences, touchpoints and milestones/celebrations that engage all generations of families in their Judaism**

Programmes and projects that utilise Jewish routines or specific touchpoints in family life can be very successful in developing all generations of a family's Jewish life, such as:

- Shabbat UK – combines home based resources & activities with wider community – involved in something 'bigger'
- UJIA and a coalition of Scottish Organisations – Matana Club – providing chagim resources & activities for the home – including social media engagement
- New North London Synagogue parenting book club - Blessings of a skinned knee by Wendy Mogel
- Leeds Brodetsky School – Tu Bishvat tree planting with grandparents
- Project Seed – Family weekends away with a building a Jewish home focus

4. Recommendations

A model for Jewish Family Education

Motivated, Jewishly knowledgeable and skilled parents, together with Jewishly enthusiastic children who take ownership of their Jewish identity, are the key to effective Jewish Family Education that enables every family member to live a meaningful, living Judaism in action. This requires three key areas of support:

- empowered professionals,
- relevant community provision and
- quality supportive resources, as shown below.

Recommendations are grouped under these 3 areas, although some may crossover. They also connect to the key challenges outlined above, again with some crossover (see appendix 1). They are a mix of strategic and practical actions, some of which are community wide initiatives and others are more focussed at the individual organisation level, recognising the role that all have to play in developing the field of Jewish Family Education. The implementation of each recommendation needs to consider the relevant principles outlined above, namely work in genuine partnership with families, creatively reimagine Jewish Family Education, work to 'Jewify' things going on in home already, take every opportunity to create community and utilise Jewish Touchpoints & celebrations.
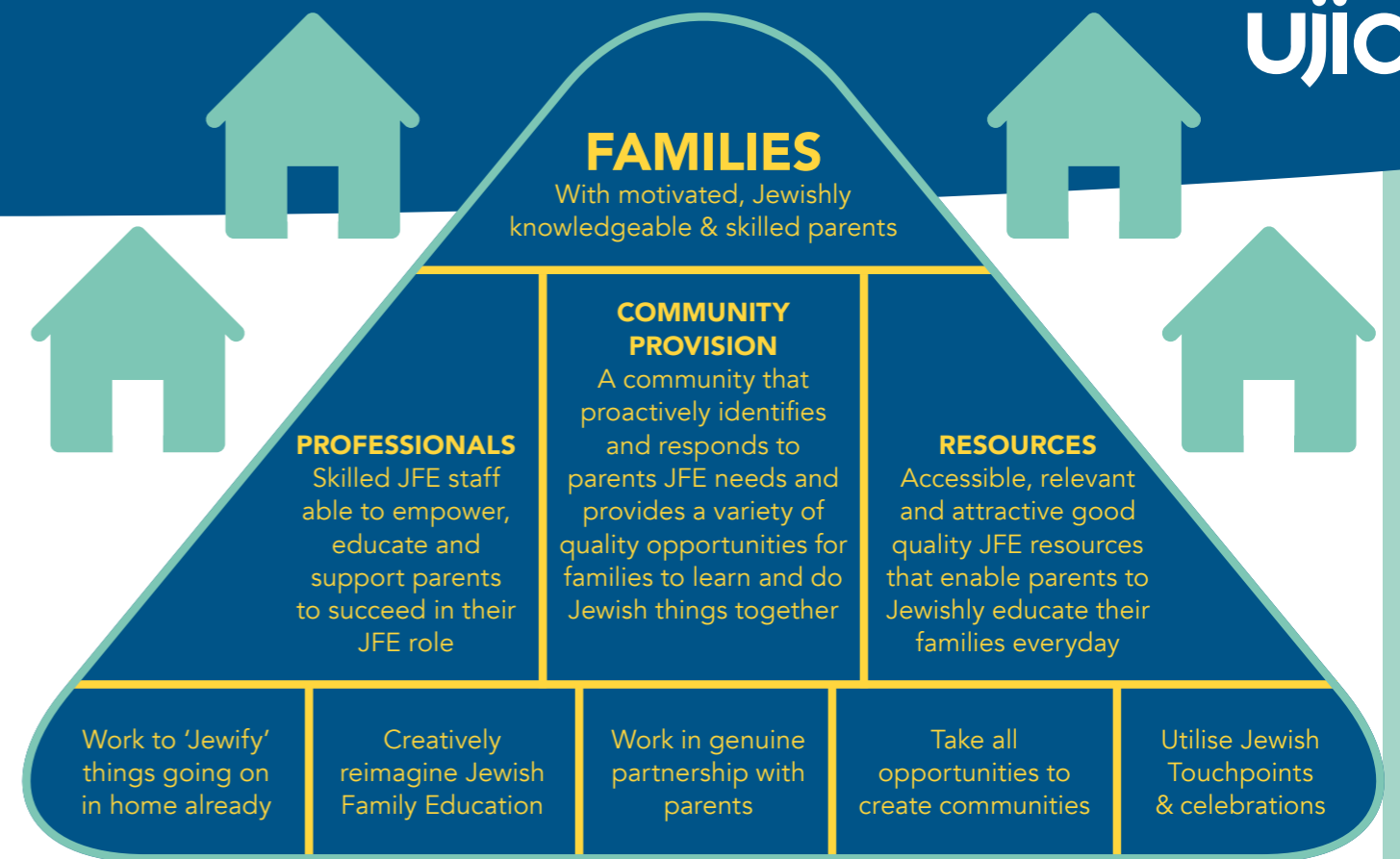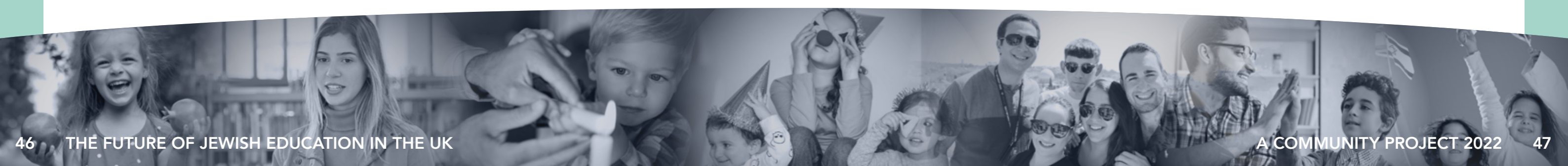

FAMILIES
With motivated, Jewishly knowledgeable & skilled parents

PROFESSIONALS
Skilled JFE staff able to empower, educate and support parents to succeed in their JFE role

COMMUNITY PROVISION
A community that proactively identifies and responds to parents JFE needs and provides a variety of quality opportunities for families to learn and do Jewish things together

RESOURCES
Accessible, relevant and attractive good quality JFE resources that enable parents to Jewishly educate their families everyday

Work to 'Jewify' things going on in home already | Creatively reimagine Jewish Family Education | Work in genuine partnership with parents | Take all opportunities to create communities | Utilise Jewish Touchpoints & celebrations

Figure 1: Key principles and support areas needed to effectively support families' Jewish education

4a) PROFESSIONALS - Skilled JFE staff able to empower, educate and support families to succeed in their JFE role

There are many dedicated professionals working in fields with JFE involvement in schools, synagogues and Jewish education organisations and charities. Improving the number and skill level of these professionals to support parents as the primary provider of JFE is key in developing the field and in particular to develop the implementation of best practice and the 5 principles outlined above.

- **JFE Module in Jewish Studies Teacher Training**

The community has really developed Jewish Studies teacher training providing a skilled, knowledgeable cohort of teachers available to schools and the community. These staff are in prime position to instigate cultural change. Current teacher training does not cover the JFE specialism. A short module could be included in Jewish Studies teacher training, the BA and/or MA Jewish Education programmes to cover best practice in Jewish Family Education including important aspect of accessibility, parent engagement and understanding how crucial it is to have whole family learning and support of the child. A greater appreciation of where families are coming from and therefore how to engage and work with them in partnership, could help bridge the gap between schools and families' Jewish aspirations.

- **JFE 'Teach First'/Movement Worker model**

The professionals working in schools and community have full and busy workloads. Expanding the cadre of professionals to support families will help revitalise JFE, especially if their focus is more on Jewish life than formal Jewish Studies. A JFE Teach First/Movement Worker equivalent scheme for graduates could be established whereby knowledgeable and enthusiastic graduates work for a couple of years in JFE with training, networking opportunities, exposure to excellence, support and placements in schools, synagogues and communal organisations. The benefits of such a scheme are the development of a cadre of JFE enthusiasts who get to know and engage families, a transfer of energy, skills and ideas to the placement organisations and many more families, including those whose children are not in Jewish schools, being supported in JFE. They can be strategically placed through the community depending on where their impact will be greatest, either as a no-cost benefit or organisations could bid for and fund/part-fund the placements.

- **Jewish Family Education Seminar**

To identify and promote JFE, and raise its profile as a key offering for all involved in Jewish education and continuity, an annual JFE Seminar could be run for institutions, professionals, lay leaders and others who are interested to learn from best JFE practice internationally, share resources and inspire action. This would facilitate creativity, networking and raise standards in JFE and put it on the map.

4b) COMMUNITY PROVISION - A community that proactively identifies and responds to families' JFE needs and provides a variety of quality opportunities for families to learn and do Jewish things together

- **Consensus building activity with key community leaders such as rabbis, professionals and lay leaders to get buy in for a new approach to JFE**

As part of changing the culture of JFE buy-in is needed from leaders, particularly influential leaders who can promote and champion the importance of doing JFE well and supporting families from where they are. The politics around some JFE issues can be complex so support will be essential for these to be well navigated. Where possible, this work should be done by 'doing not talking' and consortia working to be a showcase for cross communal working whereby all learn good practice from one another. It could be in the form of a large JFE event that models the principles outlined above and could be delivered as part of the JFE Leadership programme below.

- **Parent/Grandparent/Family Jewish Educational Leadership Programme**

In many households young people are taking ownership of their Jewish identity and learning journey, and sharing this with their families. We recognise parents and grandparents can be key educators in JFE, both supporting their young people in this journey, and also providing knowledge, skills and the prioritising of JFE in their homes. As such they can be powerful champions and advocates to their peers, perhaps especially where JFE is a lesser priority. We recommend the establishment of a JFE Leadership Programme run by a cross communal organisation that can share and promote best practice and unleash creativity in JFE, that recruits a diverse range of Jewishly committed parents/grandparents to take on the challenge of driving JFE in their communities. This would create a regular cohort of JFE leaders who are then equipped and supported to run the events and programmes that they want to see with their peers.

- **Develop and share guidelines for excellence in JFE with communal organisations such as schools, synagogues, charities and education organisations.**

An accessible JFE guide to best practice would enable individual organisations to self-audit and develop their JFE engagement and offering. This could cover areas such as:

- Centring families' needs – The use of Parent Focus Groups could be effective in this, and guidelines and questions for individual organisations to use to facilitate effective parent feedback could be developed. An understanding of how parents see their role as their children's Jewish educators, what works, what does not, and what they would like to have available to support them in this is key for all organisations that have an interest in JFE.
- Intergenerational involvement – Creative ways of involving the extended family and accessing the knowledge and experience of grandparents for example, would help organisations think more broadly about what a family is and thereby what JFE could be.
- Making milestones more Jewish – By developing a timeline of 'educable moments' and building on excellent current practice in touchpoints such as barmitzvah and marriage, organisations can identify further opportunities for developing a holistic understanding of being Jewish such as school transitions, leaving home, milestone birthdays etc.

- **Jewish Family Education Milestone / Transition Time Courses and Activities**

There are untapped opportunities to use transition times when families are often looking for additional guidance and support and are particularly open to doing things differently. This could include antenatally, starting nursery, primary, secondary school and university, leaving home,

engagement, times of bereavement etc. We therefore recommend working with institutions like Jewish schools, nurseries and synagogues who are involved with family key life stages, to devise new activities and courses on JFE relevant issues such as how to build a Jewish home, Jewish values such as hospitality and community, and new Jewish practices in relation to death and mourning, and tikkun olam. For example, the opportunity for a family to honour a loved one's memory, through tzedakah, social action or volunteering, has the potential to bring families together through a "living Judaism in action". This could be especially powerful if the activities are explicitly acknowledged as an expression of Jewish values, and organisations such as JVN, Charity Extra and others could be well-placed to create such opportunities centrally for the community.

- **Use Certificate of Religious Practice (CRP) Process for JFE**

The CRP process is a real opportunity to engage with families, including those seen as otherwise harder to reach, as it is an essential part of the school entry process. The school admission authorities could be encouraged to use the CRP process more creatively to engage families in JFE, for example by running accredited JFE courses for all the family for which attendance grants CRP points.

4c)   RESOURCES - Accessible, relevant and attractive good quality JFE resources that enable parents to Jewishly educate their families everyday

- **Review current available resources and consider if and how they can be further applied**

There are a number of high-quality resources that are already produced and distributed to Jewish families across the UK. These resources could be audited and reviewed to identify ways that synagogues and community organisations could be connecting with families in a more effective way, to take full advantage of pre-existing high-quality materials. For example, the monthly PJ Library book, children's siddur/Chumash that students bring home from their school, the annual kosher Nosh Guide etc.

- **Jewish Family Education Resource Portal**

Technology allows the easy online linking and sharing of both production and use of educational materials. A JFE Resource Portal would support the development and dissemination of quality JFE resources using online technology. Jewish educational organisations including, but not limited to schools, could be encouraged to have their own JFE Resource page (some already do) which would then link to the Community JFE Portal, and which could also be accessed via the portal. In addition the portal would also have a curated section highlighting the best & most timely of what is on offer. This would easily utilise resources already developed by schools and elsewhere including festival

celebrations and resources specifically for Jewish moments e.g. bereavement where families may be particularly receptive to JFE support resources and linking to timeless Jewish aspects of general life e.g. how to do a multi-generational family history project aimed at grandparents. By centralising resources in this way they will be easily accessible – a one stop shop – for families, and any gaps such as materials for teens can be identified and developed. Learning what people view via online tracking can be shared with resource developers to improve what is provided.

- **Family Volunteering Directory**

Jewish charities are usually extremely good at providing opportunities for adults to volunteer and some are pioneering the way for under 16s and for families to volunteer together. This is of particular interest to families undertaking barmitzvah projects but the concept can be extended to other lifecycle events too such as marriage or milestone birthdays. Family volunteering can be a very powerful Jewish experiential learning opportunity which can strongly impact on the individuals within the family and the family unit as a whole. These opportunities can be difficult to find. An online directory, building on the work of JVN, Mitzvah Day or GIFT who do highlight such opportunities when they arise, could be part of the community effort to encourage more organisations to offer these opportunities.

5.   Conclusion

The working group has looked at the key challenges and opportunities for JFE post covid, considered good practice in the sector and learnt from some of the pandemic discoveries in terms of Jewish learning and practice becoming almost entirely home centred. Important principles for excellence in JFE have been outlined above and these can apply to more situations than are outlined in this paper. The recommendations outlined above represent steps rather than a leap forward, as this is an exciting field with huge potential for development. The group offered many creative and interesting ideas for JFE projects and programmes, however for this paper we tried to limit ourselves to more strategic recommendations that will provide fertile soil from which to develop those ideas, and enable the seeds of many others to be planted, take root and flourish.

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Jewish Family Education Recommendations: Meeting the Key Challenges

Key Challenges: Families with motivated Jewishly knowledgeable & skilled parents/children need:	How can we address the gap between families' and schools' / communal organisations' Jewish aspirations?	Helping build families' Jewish knowledge and skills and develop parents' confidence and motivation to be active providers of their families' Jewish learning	Can we create meaningful Jewish routines, experiences, touchpoints and milestones / celebrations that engage all generations of families in their Judaism?
PROFESSIONALS - Skilled JFE staff able to empower, educate and support parents to succeed in their JFE role	• JFE Module in Jewish Studies teacher training • JFE Annual Seminar • Use CRP Process for JFE	• JFE Teach First/Movement Worker Model	• Sharing JFE Guide to good practice
COMMUNITY PROVISION - A community that proactively identifies and responds to parents JFE needs and provides a variety of quality opportunities for families to learn and do Jewish things together	• Consensus building activity with key communal leaders to get buy in for a new approach	• Parent/Grandparent/Family Jewish Educational Leadership Programme • Use CRP Process for JFE	• Parent/Grandparent/Family Jewish Educational Leadership Programme • Sharing JFE Guide to good practice • JFE Milestone / Transition Time Courses • Family Volunteering Opportunities
RESOURCES - Accessible, relevant and attractive good quality JFE resources that enable parents to Jewishly educate their families everyday	• JFE Annual Seminar	• Review current available resources • JFE Resource Portal & Sharing JFE Resources	• Sharing JFE Resources • Family Volunteering Opportunities

NB: Where recommendations touch more than one area they are shown in both on this table.
In the report they are only mentioned in the most relevant section.

Glossary

Bases, institutions and organisations. We use the term 'base' to include the entirety of each sector we are exploring in this group i.e. schools, synagogues and youth organisations. It may not be the best term as it is unlikely to be understood by those outside this discussion, and other terms, such as 'hub' or 'setting', also have some validity, but it is a useful shorthand. We use the term institution(s) or organisation(s) to denote a single body or group within each sector.

Learner. This word has been used as a catch-all term for the many kinds of children, families, young people and young adults in many diverse settings that exist in the Jewish Community. Where a distinctive group or setting is meant that will be made clear.

Educator. Another catch-all term which is intended to include professional educators of varying backgrounds, volunteers as well as professionals, and also those whose primary role may not be education but who have an educational aspect to their work.

A.   Understanding the landscape, the issues and the case for collaboration

1.   Each of the three bases, and every individual group within the three bases, has its own history, professional culture, networks and attachments, and financing.

2.   Every institution has a natural desire to extend its reach and its particular approach to Jewish tradition and learning. To do this each institution promotes its unique features. Collaboration builds on the idea that these unique features need not be mutually exclusive and, in fact, working together not only builds a larger community of learners overall, but also increases the reach of individual organisations.

3.   In the major Jewish population centres, in the past, collaboration has been an occasional and pragmatic response to improve the 'offer' to learners but has rarely been an ideological imperative. On the other hand, in the smaller communities, collaboration has, of necessity, been an essential building block of community life and we can learn from the successful elements of this work.

4.   There is wide variation in the level and type of engagement with and connectivity to Jewish community life amongst learners. Some are connected to all three bases and some are connected to none. This group has worked on the assumption that one key strategic aim for the Jewish community is to engage a much wider section of the community in the future.

5.   Well before the pandemic struck, there have been major structural shifts between the three bases. Schools have become the primary community connection for many learners, and this has impacted youth organisations and synagogues. But youth organisations and synagogues provide qualitatively different and complementary programmes to schools, so the potential for synergy is there as long as territoriality can be balanced and managed.

6.   All research indicates that above all of the institutional bases, the biggest impact on future Jewish life choices is the experience by learners in their family. Engaging families, particularly young families, by all the bases understanding each other and working collaboratively will repay huge benefits. Awareness of and addressing family diversity is essential to achieving long term engagement in Jewish life. (Working Group 2 will have addressed this topic in more detail.)

7.   Where collaboration works well, it recognises what each base has to offer to each other, to educators and, ultimately, to the learners. There will be occasions where collaboration is desirable and other occasions where distinctiveness and separation is desirable.

8.   Informal and experiential education is not restricted to any one particular setting or arena (see Working Group 5) but different approaches may work better in some bases rather than others. Schools introduced informal education primarily because of perceived shortcomings in the formal education offering and this has strengthened their overall offer to learners. But, the perception by some educators operating in other bases is that this has created mixed messages. Schools, by their nature, are formal institutions, and informal education may have greatest impact outside of that setting, increasing the case for partnerships and collaborations.

9.   Collaboration can take many forms. Partnerships do not have to be three-way; they can be two-way partnerships. Moreover they do not have to be permanent frameworks; they can be short term, project based and occasional opportunities for coming together.

10.   The three bases are not the only potential institutional partners. There are many other institutions in the Jewish community who can and do work with and across the three base institutions. These include welfare agencies, social justice organisations, arts and cultural organisations, and other community educational organisations.

11. 'Silo thinking' is built in to our structures and delivery. Some educators and organisations have, through inertia or choice, limited their scope to their own boundaries. Nevertheless, there are many educators working in institutional bases who would like to establish links and collaborative working with other bases but have not been successful in finding partners. Some organisations or educators may have the desire to work with others but simply do not have the capacity to do so.

12. Our Working Group reached a consensus that good education would encourage learners to be independent and empowered thinkers and provide a route from chanichim/ot to madrichim/ot to mazkirut and from youth organisations to student organisations and on to other communal organisations. The pandemic has had a direct effect on this pipeline of leadership as previous routes have been disrupted.

13. The expectations of learners change and evolve. One area in which this is evident is the recognition that learners and their families are now seeking and expecting a high quality delivery of education which is manifested in two ways. First, learners expect a greater coherence in the 'curriculum' and content of Jewish education. Secondly, learners expect high quality delivery whether this is by professional educators or well trained volunteers. No one organisation can cover all areas of educational provision therefore collaboration enables organisations to build on each-others' strengths, to the benefit of learners.

14. While funding is not the main focus of this working group, members repeatedly emphasised that any significant innovation or shift in current ways of working will require financial support.

15. Inevitably, philanthropists and foundations favour some areas more than others; education is not always at the top of their priorities but a more co-ordinated and strategic approach by educational providers will make the educational 'offer' to funders more compelling.

16. One of the great lessons of the pandemic in other areas of provision has been the benefit of institutional funders engaging more actively with providers in order to understand needs more effectively, particularly listening to the smaller and less prominent providers. A collaborative educational eco-system should involve funders actively in discussions about priorities and programmes. They will find that they gain a much more thorough understanding of projects than just relying on formal applications.

17. All three bases are challenged financially. Schools are dependent on voluntary contributions, youth organisations are dependent on the big events (camp, tour) which did not happen during the pandemic, and synagogues are dependent on maintaining member numbers. All of these are affected by the personal financial stress suffered by many in the community during the pandemic.

18. The case for collaboration - In addition to points already made, collaboration should be encouraged for the reasons below:
- Reach - Even where there are impressive statistics regarding reach (schools reaching 60% of Jewish young people; Israel Tour reaching 40%) there are still a very large minority who are not being reached by these successful programmes. Effective collaboration could contribute to improving the reach – see also note on Inclusion below.
- Duplication of offerings and programmes are wasteful of the intense planning and input by educators in separate organisations. Duplication is also confusing and potentially costly to learners – Should they participate in one or two similar programmes? How might they choose? How might they pay?
- Resourcing - Forced rationalisation always has negative consequences but choices about allocation of resources will always play a part in individual and Jewish community decisions. Evidence of partnerships and collaborations will be a positive part of those decisions.
- Complementarity - Effective liaison and collaboration between organisations will lead to creating programmes which complement each other rather than duplicating.
- Learning from each other's expertise - Effective liaison and collaboration will improve our ability to build and evolve together rather than 'reinventing the wheel'.

B.   Key principles and priorities

1.   Putting learners at the centre of everything we do
For years, and probably millennia, educators, with the best of intentions and professional backing have determined what is best for learners. Jewish Education is something that has been done 'to' learners, sometimes 'for' them, but rarely 'with' them or 'by' them. The peer-led youth organisations have a particular expertise in learner-centred education but even they have strong ideological traditions which are hard to evolve or change. If we wish to engage all of our learners in ways which will create the deeply immersive and involving Jewish community of the future we must put learners at the heart of all our endeavours.

2. Inclusion and diversity

How do we ensure we are an inclusive community? For example:

- From a socio-economic perspective. How do we ensure people are not excluded financially?
- From a special needs perspective. Learners learn in different ways. One size does not fit all. How do we ensure that people are not excluded because programmes are not designed well for them? Equally, how do we set a boundary and admit when we cannot meet the specific needs of a learner? How can we extend the Inclusion Fund and ensure we have adequately trained leadership?
- From a relational/social perspective. How do we (as core institutions of the Jewish Community) ensure that people are not excluded who are not well connected or active in any of our institutions? (For example, provision of high quality experiences for those who are not attending Jewish schools) At the moment there is a threatening divide between those who are inside the connected community and those who perceive themselves as 'outside'.
- From a regional perspective. How do we ensure that people are not excluded who live outside the metropolitan core areas of the Jewish Community and may be living in quite remote (Jewishly) areas?
- From an identity perspective - In recent years we have become more and more aware of the diverse identities that learners possess; the characteristics that make them who they are. But the educational offering from our institutions has lagged behind this awareness which means that many people feel marginalised. How do we ensure that people are not excluded through ignorance and misunderstanding of these rich identities?
- Overall, how do we ensure that by aspiring to meet the needs of all who wish to participate, by being more inclusive and more diverse, our institutions and the experience of all learners will be enriched?

3. Support the range of educational providers, groups and organisations

This initiative celebrates the desire across the Community to build good practice and learn from experience. But, it is not the role of this initiative to replace individual organisational and local creativity and priorities. Other Working Groups (e.g. 1 and 5) will develop this further but within this Working Group, in the discussion about the relationship between prioritising content or process, knowledge or emotion, explicit or implicit curriculum, the consensus is that they are false dichotomies. What is important is that each group or organisation goes through a process of clarifying their own objectives while paying attention to commonly agreed core principles. What will be valued through effective collaboration is a sharing across the bases of both the explicit and implicit content of their programmes and the opportunity to build something new to enhance learning in our communities.

4. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Amongst educators it was well known long before the pandemic came along that large numbers of children and young people, and also their educators, were suffering from diminished wellbeing. On the return to regular activities after the various lockdowns and restrictions of the pandemic, in public discourse, much emphasis was placed on 'making up' missed learning. But of far greater long term importance is work to address the mental health and wellbeing of learners and educators. This work will take various forms but cannot be ignored.

5. A creative year-round offer

The intense experiential moments (camps and trips) engage large numbers but year round offerings do not attract as many learners. On the one hand creating more inclusive, dynamic, emotive, safe and meaningful spaces and programmes may connect with more people. On the other hand we need to recognise that even where these excellent programmes exist they may be under-utilised by the community so we need to understand and address the reasons for this.

6. Power and competition

The three bases are not equal partners. Any future collaboration needs to recognise this and support the weaker partner(s). As has already been noted all organisations have an understandable desire and tendency to emphasise their unique and special characteristics and to grow their numbers and impact. But this competitiveness also has negative impacts. At a time of limited resources it is draining and wasteful for educators to devote their energies to competing, and for larger organisations to 'take over' areas of delivery that they have little expertise in when they could collaborate with smaller, more specialist organisations. Perhaps even more decisively, many research studies show that learners are put off by perceived competition amongst Jewish communal institutions. This is not the community that many wish to belong to. As the educators we need to create programmes together which look, and are, coherent and transparent, where it is clear where we come together and when we are distinct.

7. A focus on the future

In order to create a professional environment that is positive towards collaboration we have focused on the potential for practical opportunities to be developed in the future. This approach prioritises a) Looking out for the 'weak signals' or early warning indicators of change in the wider general and Jewish environment. b) Empowering people (including, but not only, young people) who are not in conventional positions of authority. c) Trialling ideas to be tested as low cost, low risk pilot projects.

C.   Recommendations: longer term & strategic

1.   Buy-in from communal leadership – a collaboration charter

Leadership emerges from various settings – from frontline educators, from learners, from institutions, from central agencies and from funders. Whatever the outcome of this process, collaboration will continue to happen on an informal and ad hoc basis. But collaboration cannot just be driven by frontline professionals with high workloads and little power to influence communal priorities. Collaboration needs to be given explicit encouragement and support. If we wish collaboration to be built in to our community structures then clear signalling and 'buy in' by major communal organisations with significant vested interests is essential. Agencies and funders need to state that they will give support to collaborative projects that fulfil the core principles and priorities, and they will create the infrastructure and professional expertise (in the form of expert facilitators) to enable more collaboration to happen. A joint strategic planning group meeting regularly will help to embed and sustain this approach within the community. If we do enable this to happen then the benefits of collaboration will begin to accrue and the UK Jewish community will become a beacon for the global Jewish future.

2.   Incentives and signposting

It follows that, if core communal agencies and funders support the idea of collaboration, then effective incentives for the bases and local groups, and effective signposting for learners, needs to be part of any strategic package.

3.   Understanding our learners

The Jewish Lives Interrupted study gave us a powerful snapshot of teenagers during Covid, and the Jewish Lives cohort study has now moved into the student and young adult age groups. But these studies need to be supplemented by additional research to help us understand other learners, particularly families with younger children, and those who experience marginalisation. Each cohort and generation of learners exhibits different characteristics and, unless we invest in understanding each generation in 'real time' we run the risk of planning for the next generation based on what we know about the last generation.

4.   Listening to our learners

It may be true that educators often understand what may have great impact on our learners but they do not have a monopoly of this understanding and, at least as important, is listening to the learners themselves. Power and influence on priorities is directly related to whose voice is heard in communal discussions. The issue of hearing the voice of learners has been at the forefront of the discussions of this Working Group – but the importance goes much deeper to every arena in Jewish communal life. We should always be asking whose voices are heard and whose voices are missing?

5.   Identify good practice

There are some excellent examples of good practice of collaboration within the UK and overseas and these should be identified for others to learn from. These examples include:
- Banot Sherut/Tzofim/Shinsinut: A model of neutral engagement with all three bases.
- Close relationship between youth movement and synagogues e.g. Masorti/Noam.
- Mizrachi Schools/Torah MiTzion in the USA, Canada and Australia.
- Matana Club in Scotland reaching out to remote families.

Many are already included in publications like E-Jewish Philanthropy but this has low reach to frontline educators.

6.   Publish and disseminate good practice

The educational eco-system depends on effective knowledge exchange. There are some excellent opportunities for educators to learn and develop; these exist in the UK, across Europe, and globally. But the opportunity to participate in these opportunities is very unequally spread, whether because of logistical issues or lack of knowledge. Where educators do participate in these opportunities the impact will be multiplied if they are supported and encouraged to share their knowledge with other educators.

7.   Workforce Development (see also Working Group 4)

A strategic plan for workforce development is needed which will address the points below:
- The first essential requirement is that educators are perceived as aspirational and inspirational role models for young people, and the corollary of that is that young people see a wide diversity of educators in various settings.
- Raising the status – and inevitably the reward levels – of both formal and informal Jewish educators will help in recruiting and retaining exceptional educators. A good starting salary and progression is essential. Funders should consider funding salaries rather than specific projects; we need good people to deliver the projects.
- Young people are choosing experiences such as internships instead of being madrichim for skills development, experiences. They are seeking higher quality (or different) experiences, so the Jewish communal path must become more attractive.
- Accredited qualifications and career pathways should be flexible and enable educators to move across the different bases as their career develops.
- Innovative INSET for teachers has challenges. It is difficult to persuade schools to pay for cover, and hybrid opportunities may not be seen as 'serious' enough to take time over or to pay for.
- Professional-level training and development opportunities are needed for those who are working part-time and voluntarily.
- Accredited training is expensive but we need to encourage educators to take it up. Working in the community is not seen as valuable – this could be improved by accredited training and investing in people.

8.   Shared resourcing

Shared resourcing is not just about saving money, although that may be a positive consequence, but it is about enhancing the quality of the experience for learners. Shared resourcing could be about shared appointments such as Rabbis and educators. It may also be about shared spaces which may mean changing the nature of schools and their purpose within the community, or re-imagining the role of the synagogue as a community hub. It may be that we also need to create more 'neutral' spaces where all learners are included and welcome, and all educators can deliver activities. Smaller communities where this is a necessity may have something to teach the larger communities in this respect. (See also Working Group 4.)

9.   Focus on transitional periods

It is well known that families and individual learners engage with communal institutions at specific transitional points – e.g.

- when children are at age 4/5 and ready to start school/cheder
- in the period leading up to Bar/Batmitzvah
- at age 16 on Israel Tour
- at commencement of higher education (although this is also a time when some actively move away from Jewish engagement)
- But wider transitional periods may also offer important scope for engagement, particularly:
- Across a wider age range of young families - Many families, perhaps a majority, will adopt a 'pick and mix' approach to Jewish engagement – choosing activities that suit their lifestyle, budget and current Jewish and general social interests. Better co-ordination amongst the bases will enable families to connect different opportunities together.
- The period from post GCSE to choices leaving school which may or may not include commencing higher education - These young people are making adult choices for the first time (although in conjunction with their families). An offer for them (independent but with wide communal support), particularly for those who are not yet fully engaged in any of the three bases could draw in many who are currently on the margins of Jewish life.
- The young adult transition from higher education and/or youth movement leadership into continued Jewish engagement - This is very often the moment many people move away from Jewish life and the assumption is made that they will return at some point later. But this is not true for many and even for those who do return at a later point, the community may miss their involvement at a key stage of their creative, energetic lives. All agencies, including the three bases but also many other agencies should co-ordinate the offer to this group.

10.   Visible and Diverse Figures

One key form of partnership is the potential for personnel from one organisation to attend another organisation for a visit, talk or activity. But, if host organisations limit these visits to those who are approved, the consequence may be that some learners will not see visible figures who they can identify with. Although this is a sensitive area, if we genuinely believe in putting the learner at the heart of our activity, then the root question is, "will this person enhance the learner's ability to engage with Jewish life, or improve their wellbeing"? If the answer is "Yes" then other considerations should have lower priority.

D.   Recommendations: short to medium term opportunities for practical action

1.   Micro-grant scheme

No single group can have all the answers to immediate and strategic communal challenges. Indeed it would actually be wrong to expect them to. While there are dozens of organisations involved in the Jewish Education Building Back Better process, there are hundreds of other organisations and educators, not involved in this process, who have excellent knowledge of their own circumstance and, given the opportunity, can develop innovative responses. Micro-grant schemes have been demonstrated to work. (The UJIA Cheder Challenge fostered over 20 innovative projects with a total budget of £70,000.) A Micro-grant scheme is not just for collaborative projects but a recommendation across the various strands of this process. The scheme would offer grants of up to £5,000 (but possibly as low as £500) to projects who subscribe to the key principles and priorities, and across the following categories.

- Collaborative projects across at least two different sectors (i.e. not just two schools)
- Experiential learning
- Family Education
- Workforce development

A micro-grant scheme is not just, or even primarily about money. It is about recognition and support including, for example, a mentor for each project.

2.   A wellbeing offer

There are outstanding specialist agencies working in this space. As educational institutions we do not wish to duplicate or replace their offer but there may be many possibilities of enhancing all our work by working together. Psychological First Aid (also known through some providers as Mental Health First Aid) training should be widely available and should be a core skill requirement across all educational settings. One proposal has been advanced that collaborative working could enhance. That is a 'playground befriending' service operating in primary schools and chedarim and delivered by madrichim drawn from secondary schools and youth organisations who have all undertaken a common training programme.

3. Maintain educator contacts

Many of our educators participate in informal conversations and meetings with colleagues across sectors. There are some more formal groupings. But there was a clear consensus that more opportunities are needed for educators from the three bases (and others) to meet each other on a regular basis. They will be able to hear what others are doing and would be well placed to discuss what the roles should be of each of these bases, and to develop ideas together, pilot new ideas, and put collaborative projects in place. These opportunities need to be open to new voices from young people and innovators who may not necessarily be found in the core institutions of the community.

4. Simply asking can pay dividends

How do we know what our learners may be seeking from our institutions? Particularly in the era of social media (carefully used) "research" does not have to be resource-intensive and academically-based. People like to be asked about their experiences and to have their views taken seriously. What are the questions about learners that we wish to have answered? Asking people will help us to understand their perspectives and needs. If this is also linked to collaborative working we can triangulate and compare responses from various settings.

5. Community twinning scheme

Twinning is a well-established programme tool – most often related to Israel education (but also the Ghana twining project). The suggestion here is that, particularly for smaller communities twinning with another UK community can have benefits. Twinned communities might be two similar communities in different parts of the country, or different kinds of communities. The programme might include some activities that are undertaken separately in parallel, and occasional activities that are undertaken together.

6. Localised collaborative initiatives

In the densely populated Jewish 'heartlands' there are multiple offers of schools, synagogues and youth organisations. But one does not need to travel far to find, for example, synagogues with no local schools. Links with other bases can be tenuous. Creating localised programmes in which synagogues, for example, invite schools and youth organisations to jointly organise will increase the reach and impact on learners. These programmes do not need to be over complicated to have an impact.

7. Offerings for learners not in Jewish schools

Over the years some outstanding programmes and groups have been created that primarily target those not in Jewish schools. These include Jewish Activities in Mainstream Schools (JAMS), now run by UJIA, and the Association of Jewish Sixth Formers (AJ6) which no longer exists. This target group cries out for organisational leadership and collaborative working in order to reach these learners.

8. Low cost, easily accessible immersive programmes

Existing immersive programmes (e.g. camps and tours) can appear to be targeted only at a core or elite grouping who are already affiliated, and are certainly financially prohibitive (notwithstanding bursary schemes which not everyone is comfortable accessing). We recommend that our bases (and others) collaborate in putting together lower cost, open, more diverse and inclusive programmes.

9. A community wide award scheme or syllabus

The Duke of Edinburgh Scheme promoted and organised within the Jewish Community by JLGB is hugely successful but is very specific in its objectives and limited in reach. We have already stressed the importance of independent institutions setting their own aims and objectives but we also recognise the value in working together to define a range of commonly agreed activities and topics which can be experienced by learners equally in formal or informal settings. Another take on this idea would be to ensure every learner is 'officially' affiliated with an appropriate Youth Organisation. This would enable organisations to fully schedule and timetable a life journey for ages 11-18(+) to include provision of (pre-determined) knowledge, skills and experiences. Synagogues could be used as a vehicle to put these into to practice in the community.

10. Visiting panels of educators

An educational roadshow with a common theme/goal tying it together - E.g. a rabbi going into a school, a teacher going to a youth movement, youth movement going into shul and so on. Youth Movement Educators, Shul Rabbis and Jewish Studies Teachers already speak and run sessions in other settings. This recommendation is to make this practice more widely known, and to build or re-build on existing good practice.

11. Yearly Youth Movement fairs

This is another programme that has taken place successfully in the past (including virtually during the pandemic) so this recommendation is to enhance existing good practice; to take place at all Jewish schools, interacting with all year groups to share what is on offer. Additional emphasis should be placed on Year 13 as school leavers, demonstrating collaboration between schools and Youth Movements regarding maintaining engagement with learners post school.

12. A community service year

The options and trajectories for young adults post-school or post higher education are far more fluid and uncertain now than even just a few years ago. This can be seen as an opportunity by communal leaders to creative a year (or part year) of service for young adults. This might be across all bases (and other institutions) or within one base or another – but always with some common programming for the whole cohort.

Methodologies and scope of our group

We began this journey by considering the bridges we wanted to build. We tried to understand the current position and where we wanted to be (our vision). We began from a place of understanding the position within the group we were (appreciating that this was limited to the roles and experiences we each had) as well as trying to open our eyes and ears to other experiences and perspectives.

We brought people into the space to endeavour to understand through the methodology of Appreciative Inquiry, how we might solve the problems we saw, and we gained new perspectives on our issues/challenges.

We were tasked with considering the formal and informal sector of Jewish Educators and how this might be resourced over the coming years.

We approached the work to try and be aspirational in our vision. In summary, our initial bridges looked to build an educational sector that had alumni of schools and youth movements passionate about the future of Jewish Education in the community in the UK, seeing this career as a credible, valued option. Our vision is that in 5 years' time there would be a ready pool of enthusiastic, passionate, high-quality educators bursting to inspire the community. These educators would be able to take advantage of solid career prospects, a wealth of personal and professional development, as well as fair remuneration and respect for their roles.

1. Understanding the landscape

We considered collectively what we know and what we don't yet know as a framework to really understand the landscape. We were a group with mixed experiences from both formal and informal educational backgrounds, though we were heavily weighted to the formal sector. We welcomed Libby Dangoor and Brett Wigdortz to our second session to support our enquiries.

The following points in this section represent the views of the group and are not based on extensive research (which is one of our key recommendations to test the hypothesis of our thinking).

What we know about the landscape

School specific issues
Schools are designated as primary, secondary and special schools, all with specific issues/challenges. There are issues with recruitment and retention in Jewish Schools that mirror the national picture with percentages comparable of those leaving the sector.

There are gaps in training provision for Jewish Studies (JS) specifically in the primary sector. This is due to government restrictions which mean that primary trainees are not able to be trained as subject specific teachers. JS secondary school teachers have good current routes available through programmes like 'Teach to Lead' at LSJS. There was successful training for early years practitioners in the 80s/90s, many of whom went on to train as teachers.

There is an opinion that some schools do not help the positive reputation of working in JS as they take on untrained people in roles that breeds a level of reduced value in the subject. There is also thought that some schools are easier to move to/from than others due to the Jewish ethos/culture/observance and alignment within the community. There is thought that the culture of schools can affect the prospect of progression as well as the ability to move between schools in JS departments, specifically in the secondary sector where there are fewer schools.

The group discussed in some depth the fact that incentives can be both positive and negative influences on the culture of JS departments in schools. It was understood to be a fine balance between incentivising teachers to remain whilst also balancing progression prospects. Progression was seen to include changing schools in order to gain a wider understanding and appreciation of the pedagogy and difference in school systems and culture – allowing both personal and professional growth.

Pay is not thought to be good enough, specifically in early years. This issue is connected to the lack of formal qualifications for some teachers. Research from national teaching organisations had highlighted that pay is not the reason people train or not as teachers but that those who leave teaching often do so due to workload pressures and leave to prioritise wellbeing and personal lives.

General Educator issues
Not all educators (including teachers) want to take on management responsibilities and this can affect potential pathways for development. Experience outside of education is really important to successful educators. This could include experience in other sectors that brings different perspectives as well as experience in leadership and management that will benefit individuals and departments.

One of the biggest hurdles to recruitment is pay and the lack of educators is seen as a systemic issue caused by under-funding, and we need to be careful not to try and put a band aid on a gaping wound.

Anecdotal thought is that many who begin their career in informal education move to formal education. This issue would benefit from more research to understand push/pull factors.

Attitudes
- There are lots of people within our community who like working with young people and children and many people interested in Jewish studies and educating, with mixed opinions of the appetite for primary or secondary level education roles.
- People need to, or like to, do things that motivate them and continually develop them and there are fewer opportunities for progression the more experienced you are.
- Numbers of those engaging with youth movements has declined but are now stable.
- There is a strong feeling that the role of an educator is not held in high status within the community, and it's not seen as a job to aspire to. Schools in low-income areas appear to have higher levels of respect for teachers and we do not always see that in Jewish Schools.

Pathways
The two years of programmes like 'Teach First' supported not only the pathway of learning for the individual, but also building a community for the participants. Some of the success seen in programmes like 'Teach First' was not about holding people to lifelong jobs, but acknowledging that people will give time and then look to leave or develop further their careers in different ways.

What we don't yet know about the landscape

When considering the culture in schools, there were observations on the culture of teaching generally as well as those who taught JS. Those involved in the Primary sector discussed the fact that they are bringing teachers into the schools who are bought in to the ethos and values of the school and may in some cases have a good understanding of the Jewish Community and Jewish Learning. There was consideration of the dual challenge of sourcing excellent teachers who are also JS or Ivrit specialists and this led to a culture of trying to encourage those with a positive attitude and understanding of the school ethos, as well as sound pedagogical knowledge, who may not have specialised in this area of training to try and move into it.

Pay/Working Conditions
Although this is not seen in a positive light, we need to find out more about how pay within our sector compares to State schools (we know there will be some comparisons for teachers with QTS but does this align for others including unqualified and more informal workers to the wider sector?) There is also a lack of understanding on how current staff feel about their value and culture of their value as well as what schools or working environments offer in terms of development opportunities.

Pathways/Recruitment/Retention
- There is more research to be done on how we understand what will attract those coming into the profession of Jewish Education including incentives, development opportunities, culture and value. We do not understand enough about how we capture and funnel those seeking second or third careers in the sector as well as what the barriers to entering the profession may be. We also need to find out more about the current state of demand/supply of educators and how much of a gap there is – how big is the problem? This may be understood in terms of current issues as well as those anticipated in 5,10 or even 20 years' time in conjunction with what we know about trends and data at the moment.
- We do not yet know how different schools/organisations vary in terms of alumni engagement and how successful this is into attracting people into the sector. This could include the use of the apprenticeship levy or corporate partners but we do not know enough about what might be going on in this area.
- What are the levels of aspiration within current educators to develop their skills and are they leaving the career because there is a lack of opportunity? How can we retain/develop those who do not want to move into management? What are the models of flexibility to allow people to remain/join the sector?

Attitudes and connections

- Do people value communal professional working and see it as a credible career path? Do we see education valued as a pathway/career? Is this level of value a barrier to entry? What other things might be a barrier?
- We have limited networks of educators in existence but there is feeling that more could be possible in terms of connecting these current networks to create bigger networks or forums to nurture respect in the profession. It would be interesting to understand what works in different communities/countries/sectors and how we could model this. One example of this is Prizmah in the US.

2. Key principles and priorities

Value is vital
Educators are a highly valuable asset to our community and to the sustainability of it. We would like to ensure that we can improve the status of Jewish Educators so that the profession is seen as an honourable and worthwhile career that is valued by the whole community. This needs to extend to ensure that educators outside of school settings are seen with equal value.

Change happens
Nothing is forever – there is a point around the culture of educators and how they move within/ outside of the community space as well as the informal/formal education space and this being seen as a positive attribute. There is so much unknown about what attracts/retains those in the sector as well as the demands on the sector for the coming years that still needs to be understood (how big is the problem?)

Relationships bring strength
Communities of Practice have been demonstrated to be a key part of the success of programmes like Teach First and Teach Now. We need to understand more as a community what is already in place and how we can develop these to support development and retention, in turn raising value.

Pathways are vital
There is no one size fits all for educators. We need to understand entry and exit points, increase flexibility and ensure investment in development. There is also work to be done to better understand what we seek in Jewish Educators and to communicate better the profession and the opportunities within. There are huge areas of potential in this space that will require resource to tap into.

Part of an ecosystem
The challenge of recruitment and retention is part of a wider ecosystem of the Jewish Community and many of the key issues do not sit in isolation aside from the wider sector. The challenges of value, recruitment and retention are mirrored across the Jewish Charity sector and there is investment to be done in nurturing a culture that enables more positive attitudes and cultural change to ensure the best talent is attracted. There was acknowledgment however that this issue sits on the sharp end of the scale in education and the challenge is thought to be more severe or magnified at the moment in this sector – both formal and informal.

We can understand more – we still have questions

3. Recommendations

We acknowledge as a group this challenge sits within a wider sector of professionals in the community. The short/medium term are those we would seek to action within 1-3 years. The longer-term recommendations are those we would seek to action within 3-5 years. The recommendations fell into 4 broad categories which are given below. There are connections between threads and also between our group and other groups in this project.

Short/Medium Term opportunities for practical action

Research
- Research into attitudes and value of those in the sector – this is also part of a wider Jewish Communal Professional need. There is scope to connect to organisations like Leading Edge in the USA to understand the mapping (and employee satisfaction surveys) of Jewish Communal Professional life. There is a need to understand the barriers to entry, motivations to stay or leave, as well as how we can influence the attitudes that we need to change and nurture.
- We need data to understand how the JS/Education sector compares to the wider national sector.
- We need to understand what the need/demand/supply is in the coming years – how big is the problem? (Number of educators retiring, training, needed to fill vacancies etc) – There was research on this in previous years that may need updating.
- We do not yet know why people do not apply to train for or take up educator positions. This need for data is mirrored in the non-Jewish Education sector as well.
- What is available at the moment to retain? How are schools/workplaces different in their offering? We need to increase our understanding of what is common practice at this point in time.

Funding

- Funding provision set up for training in JS - Schools, synagogues and institutions are often not able to afford the time off to pay staff to train or the training costs themselves. Is this linked to a culture of not investing in this area or a wider systemic issue about funding development in education?
- Ensuring time for training is included in paid hours/contracts for staff including mentoring – this is connected to the culture and value placed on development.
- We need to raise our investment in Informal Jewish Educators
- Recruitment/Training/Mentoring
- We need more and better-defined opportunities for development including leadership training, support with career progression and mentoring.
- Support for recruitment from comms or PR agencies could lead to better pitching of messaging when recruiting.
- Development of the primary JS route is required – possibly including more creative ways through early career development to make sure JS at primary level in early career fits into our current structures.
- We need to develop systems of mentoring within education (including formal and informal as well as Teacher Training). This will support the development of the education ecosystem. It will be important to ensure high quality mentoring is provided and framed well through training and development, in order to become embedded in the culture of the community and profession. This could extend to mentoring outside of the school or education sector and into the wider community, allowing more permeability in the barriers to entry into education and hopefully increased value in the sector.

Culture Change/Awareness Raising/Value nurturing

- We could revisit the 'Why it's cool to work in a Jewish school' campaign that was developed with PaJeS a few years ago.
- Community organisations need to develop better systems to track alumni so we can understand their pathways.
- Linked to the research proposed – after understanding the methods of validation that are appreciated and welcomed by educators, we should work to boost this and grow value. Initial ideas include growing appreciation though sought-after fellowship models.
- We must also raise awareness of increased pathways into education including the new track offered by LSJS.
- We should find ways to move educational establishments from being 'Competitive to Collaborative', enabling schools and youth movements to work together with synagogues and other institutions to join up thinking in JS. We should also enable conversations to support the development of the Ecosystem and shared understanding of appreciation and value.

Specifically, it was thought to be a much more powerful prospect to have systems joined up and promoting this shared culture, rather than competing with each other. There is scope here for a conference or event to launch the communities of practice and ignite the initiative.
- This process has been a vital vehicle for joining up conversations that would not normally have happened. Creating communities of practice will be part of the future success of this area of education.

Longer Term Strategic Options

Research

- We need to know more about what people value about working in the sector – initial research conducted could guide this and hopefully be part of community wide research into Jewish Communal Professional sector, assisting the permeability of the sector.
- We need to draw out further ways to create more value in the profession – this will come after data on the sector is understood.
- We should invest in research that can be shared across the community to understand how funding from government can more effectively be accessed and utilised – specifically for education.

Funding

- We should increase investment in alumni networks to talent spot and connect across the community. Alumni stewards/ambassadors/connectors could be placed within secondary schools and could work with organisations who subsequently connect with the alumni (UJS, Chaplaincy etc).
- We should ensure that Key Worker Housing from Jewish Housing Associations is accessible for those working in education and increase awareness of the organisations providing this in and out of the community.

Recruitment/Training/ Mentoring

- We should consider CPD Funds and/or paid sabbaticals to support development and meaningful CPD with the ambition that this would, in turn, support retention and attracting talent. Yesod have a current example of this.
- We could implement Teacher/Educator exchanges to learn from others within and outside of our community.
- Creating an 'Excellent Teacher/Educator' programme would enable fast tracking of skills and career progression.
- We should consider an awards system or build on awards that exist already, such as the PaJeS teacher awards.
- We should also incorporate wider training and development opportunities and pathways to enable those in education to move into other educator roles in communal organisations. This would allow teachers and educators to transfer their skills into other communal organisations.
- We should increase flexibility in training and working to allow recruitment and retention of those who would benefit from this. This is an element of recruitment that has been mirrored from national teaching organisations.
- We could introduce 'golden handshakes' or incentives to attract people into positions.
- We should also draw on previous recruitment and retention policies from institutions like PaJeS to guide culture change.
- Leadership development opportunities within schools must be of high enough quality to ensure leadership in future years is secure.
- We should consider recruitment from Israel – we currently have 12 Israeli Scout leaders (Shinshinim) working in the UK under the auspices of the Jewish Agency. We could look to expand this programme with more scouts or qualified teachers.
- There is scope to invest in education for non-Jewish teachers to support their knowledge and develop their understanding of the Jewish community, enabling them to better contribute to the school community.
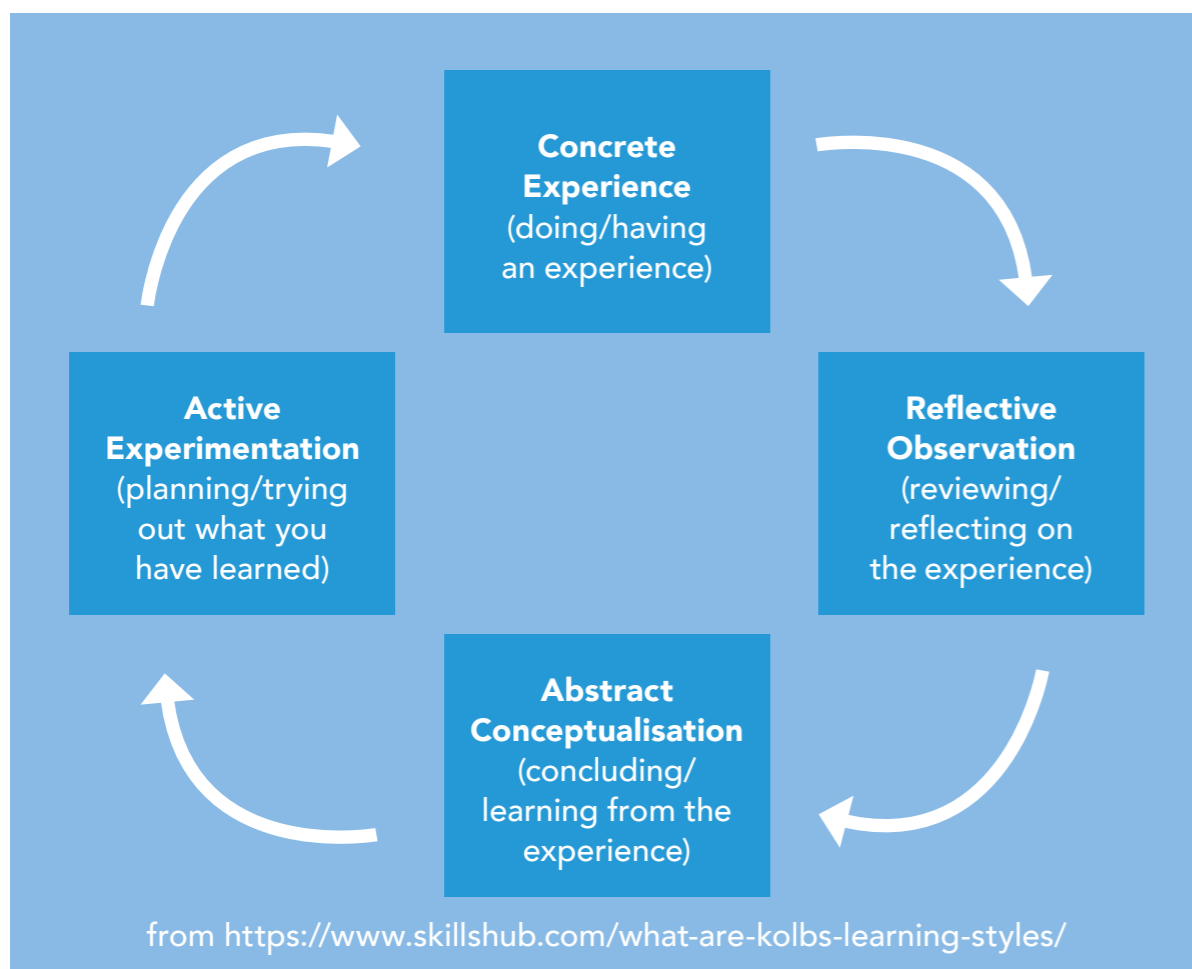
Culture Change/Awareness Raising/Value nurturing

- Bridging the gap between communal organisations and schools would ensure flexibility of working between/across both.
- We should identify best practice models which will make the workplace within the sector more attractive, including models of Jewish Collegial pathways and Jewish Community Civil service models.
- Retention and recruitment could also be improved by creating a global package of benefits across the Jewish education sector in order that schools and institutions are global leaders in employee welfare and wellbeing – ensuring that these places are great places to work.
- As schools become academies they can set their own pay scales. Consideration should be given to how we can we create a culture of signing up to something that is like the 'living wage' or a standard in order to bring some comparable salary scales in an area that often utilised educators who are not qualified teachers. There was a feeling that there was not always transparency in recruitment/progression and that some are losing out on opportunities or not taking new roles due to poor pay. This issue is also important in retention and potential to 'move up' scales.
- Awareness should be raised that not all educators want to take on management responsibility or formal teaching qualifications and they should be able to develop their skill and experience through different pathways – consideration can be given to how this is supported.
- Finally, it is important to change the culture and attitudes in our community, so that Jewish parents consider pathways into teaching and educating as worthwhile, fulfilling, and valued career choices for their children.

Understanding "experiential education"

"Experiential education" has a specific meaning in the context of education. The two key sources for our understanding of experiential education from the broader literature are: 1) John Dewey *"Experience and Education"* (1938); and 2) David Kolb *"Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development"* (1984). These give the basic definition of experiential education as i) about experience, experimentation and self-reflection; ii) as learner-centred; iii) as a facilitated, rather than directed, process.

Concrete Experience
(doing/having an experience)

Reflective Observation
(reviewing/ reflecting on the experience)

Abstract Conceptualisation
(concluding/ learning from the experience)

Active Experimentation
(planning/trying out what you have learned)

from https://www.skillshub.com/what-are-kolbs-learning-styles/

Experiential education was systematically analysed in a Jewish context by Barry Chazan in a series of articles in the 1980s/1990s, and the term became interchangeable with another, namely "Informal Jewish Education". Chazan says that it is a mistake to think that experiential education/informal Jewish education is about arena – some formal education spaces offer rich informal/experiential education (e.g. school model seders or Israel trips) and some informal education spaces have elements that are in effect formal (e.g. shiurim)[2].

Therefore, for our purposes we are defining experiential education as **those activities that intentionally utilise experiential approaches to develop identity in a learner-centred way through a Kolb-esque process of activity, reflection and meaning-making.**

The paradigmatic example of this is the informal educational trip (to Israel, Poland etc) organised by Jewish schools, youth movements, communal organisations etc, and our agenda/ recommendations are focused on these, but we believe that they are in many cases more widely applicable to the sector and its varied experiential educational activities (for example, shorter events such as Shabbatonim and more ritual-based engagement such as a model seder).

Setting an Agenda and Making Recommendations for the Field going forward

Experiential education was dramatically affected by the pandemic. Many activities, including major "tent poles" of the communal educational journey, were cancelled outright for one or two years; others were dramatically scaled back, or radically altered methodologically. As the pandemic wanes and increasingly ceases to curb our ability to practically run experiential activities, we nonetheless believe that there are four key lessons that everyone in the Field should consider as part of their thinking going forward:

- *Creativity and rethinking both the content ("what") and methodology ("how") of experiential educational activities* – the pandemic necessitated an incredible amount of programmatic innovation and change in a short amount of time, and even if many of those changes (e.g. online as opposed to in-person programming; asynchronous programming) might no longer be required, some might still be valuable and more broadly the spirit of constant innovation is something that should remain.

[2] There are some who have argued that fundamental to informal Jewish education is its voluntary nature, which would exclude some schools-based programmes (though not all). For this paper, we have not taken this approach.

- *The (re-)engagement of some families (who play a vital role in reinforcing, or disconnecting, the experiential activity from the wider context of identity formation)* – the high barriers that have traditionally separated young people (who participate in the experiences) from parents (who, in many cases, were perceived merely as the funders of and drivers to and from those experiences) came down in the context of lockdown. Again, even if some of those barriers are re-erected, it is worth considering if others should be more permanently removed or reduced.
- *The ability of experiential education to create shared/collective experiences – moments of true connection/meaning/transcendence* - should not be underestimated – time and time again in our research, we heard that the thing that people missed most about in-person experiential education, and that is so hard to replicate online, was a sense of being part of the collective. "The group" has always been a powerful influence within the world of informal Jewish education and the power of the shared experience cannot be overestimated.
- *The resilience, recovery and re-energisation of the Field* – contrary to some predictions at the start of the pandemic, few organisations collapsed and as restrictions have lifted, most have sprung back into action with remarkable vibrancy. Whilst serious concerns remain about the leadership pipeline (especially for those organisations where one or two "peak experiences" provide the major training ground for their leaders), in terms of participation and enthusiasm, the pandemic thankfully does not seem to have caused long-term scarring. Yet this should not be taken to be an excuse for the Field to rest on its laurels.

We also learnt much from the experience of RootOne, the North American umbrella framework for teen Israel travel, who were able to run trips in summer 2021. Our three key takeaways from them were:

- The trips fundamentally *work* – they continue to inspire, educate, socialise and generate high levels of satisfaction and (at least short-term) enthusiasm.
- With a couple of notable exceptions, the less "curated" the activity, the more the young people self-reported enjoying and engaging with it. So, for instance, *pizzur* and unfacilitated exploration were critical elements of a tochnit. Self-discovery is often worth more than traditional "tour guiding".
- Gen Z, with their tendencies towards universalism, mistrust of authority, access to near-infinite information etc, are naturally inclined towards experiential education *but* the big challenge is how to square this with them not wanting to be "told what to think" (i.e. funnelled down one or a narrow set of expected outcomes), whilst still maintaining the integrity of the programme (e.g. it is reasonable to want to transmit a certain body of knowledge/values – but what if these are not what the young people want to hear/receive?)

Finally, we also took lessons from March of the Living UK, whose April 2022 Poland trip was the first[3] truly large-scale experiential education overseas trip to be successfully executed. We learnt two things from this:

- Demand was incredibly high, there was little need to change the tochnit from what it had been before the pandemic and overall trip satisfaction was high. As with RootOne, it does seem that the basic model works.

- There is a specific challenge with student-age participants around money. It seems that the "price of free" (i.e., the feeling of entitlement that comes from having so much Jewish activity provided for free or heavily-subsidised) may be coming home to roost. More research is needed into this, but there may be here implications for donor relations and funding prioritisation.

Therefore, bearing all this in mind, some key priorities for the sector going forward are:

1. **Evolution, not revolution** – Israel and Poland programmes still "work", but the model needs to evolve. We need a renewed commitment to true experiential education, more emphasis on self-discovery and, in the case of Israel, to modernise the programming to showcase a modern

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[3] There have been some smaller-scale programmes before April 2022, but as far as we could tell, March of the Living 2022 was the first truly large-scale overseas programme.

Israel. Techniques such as journaling, more time set aside for group reflection, pre- and post-experience sessions that focus on how this experience will/has impacted the young person's identity, a better balance within programmes between the didactic and the self-exploratory, project-based learning methodologies, etc. should all be prioritised.

2.   **Re-centring young people at the heart of programme design** – this might involve more research with and by young people, getting them to tell us what to start/stop/continue and giving them a meaningful voice around the agenda-setting table. This will require both training for and courage from educators and programme planners to, in effect, "give up" some control. We should also recognise that "Gen Z", the current participants on the programmes, will soon be replaced by "Gen Alpha", who will likely think/feel/act differently again. Fundamentally, we need to create experiences that feel both valuable and meaningful for young people to really want to engage with them, and this means starting from where young people are at, rather than where the community imagines/wishes them to be.

3.   **We need to create simple models of evaluation that can be applied across the community and between different programmes.** This is not to "rank" or "compare" programmes, so much as it provides a wellspring of material with which to encourage best practice-sharing, discussion of new directions, suggestions of what pedagogies might work better in which settings etc. There is an open question here as to which agency is given the "permission" of the Field to lead on this. Within the Israel Tour space, UJIA already does this to some extent; but outside of that, there is currently no true cross-sectoral evaluation.

4.   **We need to break down the silos between the different programme providers.** There are now many touchpoints that can be considered communal "rites of passage" – youth movement summer camps and Israel Tour, school Year 9 Israel and Year 12 Poland trips, etc. Too often, these experiences are not linked properly and exist in isolation. The sector as a whole, and each organisation individually, should reflect on whether 1) the current "roster" of trips is the right one[4]; 2) if there are other locations, and other narratives, that we should be offering to our young people (eg we tend to tell a strongly Ashkonormative story. Should we be offering Morocco trips? Should we engage much more intensely with Mizrahi Jews when in Israel?); 3) if the right trips are taking place at the right age (e.g. the long-standing question of whether there should be a minimum age for visiting the death camps); and 4) if we can think strategically and holistically about the journey of a young person in our community via these experiences. These are not new questions, but they take on an added urgency in the context of the Gen Z sociology of young people entering "the system" today.

[4] Israel and Poland – representing respectively Zionism and the Shoah – dominate the experiential education space currently. Whilst both are powerful-resonant locations and concepts, the question of what other anchors of emerging Jewish identity the Field wishes to cultivate, and hence what places we might want to take young Jews, is one that our group would urge the Field to take seriously.

5.   **We need to move on from thinking of a linear "path" that our young people go down and towards a more pluralistic "mosaic" of opportunities** that, both individually and collectively, deepen young Jews' connection to the Jewish people and to their own Jewish identities. Trying new locations, considering ideas such as exchange programmes, considering alternative expressions of Jewish life and values (such as Jewish social responsibility programming), expanding and diversifying Jewish leadership programmes, bringing in new methodologies (e.g. hackathons) and running programming in partnerships (two- or three-way) with other communities are all ways to freshen up and differentiate the community's experiential education offer. In particular, across Europe there are a network of Jewish schools that are basically empty each summer that could provide bases for a whole range of experiential programming (camps, tours, home hospitality, shared interest programmes such as debating, music, drama, etc); these could be an exciting evolution on the traditional UK-based summer camp.

6.   **We should rethink the opportunities for and the content of educator training** – both for madrichim (or the equivalent within formal settings) and for tour guides (or equivalent). There are new models emerging - e.g. LSJS's track for informal educators on their MA, the iCenter Birthright Israel Fellows and M2's dynamic programmes – that should be expanded or brought to the UK. More broadly, closer collaboration between programme providers both within the UK and globally could create impactful synergies and the sharing of new and exciting ways of thinking and pedagogy. Traditionally, the Machon provided a central hub that generated educational training for future madrichim/tour guides etc; now that the Machon plays a lesser role (with many fewer British Jews attending) other alternatives need to be explored. And throughout educator training, the principles and practices of experiential education should be taught and its power and impact emphasised, through exposure to the very best trainers and the most up-to-date methodologies.

7.   **A model of innovation, based on Hindu principles and popularised by Vijay Govindarajan in his book "The Three-Box Solution", could be a useful tool.** The first box ("the past") is where you innovate by doubling down on what works/what you already know. The third box ("the future") is where you innovate by creating something totally new – by ideation and brainstorming. But it is the second box ("the present") where the real action is - this is where you make the crucial and clear-sighted decisions about what to stop doing because one is only doing it for the sake of nostalgia, the whim of a specific funder, etc. All organisations should be strongly encouraged to do the second box exercise.

8.   **The theme of connectivity is one that might speak powerfully to young people** – connecting to other Jews (both Israeli Jews and Jews from communities around the world), connecting to the Jewish past, connecting to Jewish values and, through Jewish social responsibility or interfaith programming, connecting to non-Jews as well. We know that Gen Z does not want to limit its horizons to the parochial and experiential education should be a tool to help young people explore and connect.

9.   **Finally, the community should experiment and back success.** The Field is diverse today and increasingly becoming more so – there are lots of new ideas, new itineraries and renewed commitments to (for instance) improve Bar/Bat Mitzvah-age experiential programming or embrace project-based learning perspectives. Experiential education has a real chance to embrace change - or it could revert back to its pre-pandemic state. We would encourage the Field to embrace the new, accept that some things won't work out and "double down" on ideas when they do seem to be successful. Our group is also of the view that in terms of funding, there is an inherent risk-aversion to many communal organisations and educational providers - they are accountable to a base of donors and a story of "we tried five things this year and only one worked" is a hard fundraising sell. Therefore, **we need to make the case to some of the major philanthropic supporters of the community to be risk-taking with their funding.** If we truly trust our young people, some of the new ideas will bear fruit, but having a tolerance for failure is essential.

Resources and Barriers

Our group is aware that the agenda and recommendations outlined above come with a requirement for proper resourcing, and that they could be stymied by a range of organisational barriers. We list them here both for transparency and to encourage the Field to consider ways to find the resources needed and to overcome the barriers to success.

Resources Needed	Barriers to Success
<u>Money</u> - as we stated above, we would see risk-taking philanthropy as key to making true programmatic innovation a reality	<u>Time</u> - professionals and lay leaders are all extremely busy, and they will need to carve out substantial time to innovate
<u>Organisational wherewithal</u> - a true commitment from the key organisations in the field to innovate and to devote proper time to programmatic development	<u>Inertia</u> - the pre-pandemic "stable" of experiential education opportunities were on their own terms valuable, and there will be a temptation to just return to what we had before
<u>Tolerance for failure</u> - experiential education by its nature can only be judged a success based on outcomes, and as such this success cannot be known beforehand	<u>Capacity and leadership</u> – does the field have both the ambition and the organisational drive to actually take on this agenda? What are the catalysts and the strategy for making change?