



Linking the Silos: Reports from the Field

How Central Agencies Are Building Connections and Engaging Consumers

A Lippman Kanfer Institute Research Brief
March 2008

Background

In recent years, and especially since the publication of the report *Linking the Silos: How to Accelerate the Momentum in Jewish Education Today*, prepared by Dr. Jack Wertheimer and a distinguished research team and published by the Avi Chai Foundation, there has been growing interest in ways to create stronger connections between and among programs and settings in order to maximize participation in and the impact of Jewish education. JESNA's Lippman Kanfer Institute (LKI), as an outgrowth of its inaugural project, *Redesigning Jewish Education for the 21st Century*, is developing concrete strategies to advance this agenda.

In May 2007 JESNA and a large group of co-sponsors convened a day-long Consultation on the theme of "linking silos," with a particular focus on the roles of two key institutional actors: synagogues and central agencies for Jewish education. In preparation for this consultation, LKI staff interviewed professionals at ten central agencies to learn about how they understood and were implementing (or planning to implement) "silo linking" approaches in their work.¹ In those initial interviews, and at the Consultation itself, participants expressed an interest in learning more about what other communities are doing and in tracking progress in this area.

This follow-up research was undertaken to meet this request and also with an eye toward identifying one or two communities that will be the future subjects of detailed case studies. New interviews were conducted with professionals in the original ten central agencies. By revisiting these communities, we sought to explore how efforts to link the silos are evolving. Six additional communities were added to the original group, providing a good cross-section of agencies in various parts of the country, with different programmatic foci, and at different stages of the work.² (It should be noted that most of the agencies included are in large or large-intermediate communities; separate research would be needed to look at smaller communities and agencies.)

¹ The report on those interviews is appended to this report.

² Professionals from the following central agencies participated as interview subjects: Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Cleveland, OH; Colorado; Hartford, CT; Los Angeles, CA; Metrowest, NJ; Miami, FL; Milwaukee, WI; Orange County, CA; Palm Beach, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; Suffolk County, NY; San Francisco, CA; and Washington DC.

This report is primarily descriptive, cataloguing some of the types of activities underway and offering selected examples. A fuller summary of what each agency is doing is provided in the form of a chart appended to the report that lists activities in each community under several categories, primarily based on the domain of Jewish education involved (congregational education, teen education, etc.). A brief summary of “lessons learned” is also included. More extensive learnings about the challenges involved in linking silos were gathered in the first round of research; the current interviews confirmed their continuing relevance. Additional learnings should emerge from the detailed case studies that will be undertaken as the next phase of the ongoing research.

Types of Linkages

Communities are approaching the process of linking the silos with various foci. Some agencies are working toward inter-organizational silo linking by concentrating on synergy and team building among their own professionals. Staff members are modeling the collaborative approach they are promoting in their communities. Many agencies are focusing on creating and supporting inter-organizational partnerships by creating linkages across educational experiences targeting individuals at specific stages of the life cycle. For example, a number of communities are engaged in initiatives that foster collaborations between various organizations serving teens (e.g. camp, youth groups, and synagogue schools). Other agencies are convening professional networks and creating communities of practice. Still others are organizing community-wide programs. Finally, some agencies are focusing directly on the learners, creating strategies for shepherding involvement in an effort to engage individuals in Jewish learning throughout their lives. Those agencies are attempting to create a seamless continuum, linking organizations and programs so that learners can move easily from one educational experience to the next.

What follows are examples of activities currently underway in these categories.

Intra-Organizational Collaboration

At the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning in the Washington DC area, professionals’ work was previously organized around life-cycle stages, with staff members assigned exclusively to various populations (e.g. early childhood education, k-12, or camp). In an effort to create more synergy among staff members, individuals now focus on one of three action areas: professional development, evaluation, and programming. For example, staff members -- who previously worked in isolation focusing on specific age groups -- work together to strategize about professional development for educators who serve all of the various populations.

The Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston convened 35 day schools, JCCs, and congregations to discuss linking the silos internally. Facilitated by Jack Wertheimer and Jonathan Woocher, the organizations explored ways to connect their own education committees, recognizing that committees serving learners of all ages (i.e. early childhood, school, teens, families, adults, etc.) should be connected. Participants

also discussed ways to link silos around topical issues within their institutions like social action, Israel action, fundraising, long term planning and administration.

Inter-Organizational Partnerships

The Commission on Jewish Education in Hartford, which has a long and successful history of working with individual congregations on educational change (La'Atid), is facilitating a network of the 5 smallest synagogue schools in the area. Through lay and professional collaboration, these 5 synagogues are sharing resources and organizing joint events. They are undertaking a visioning process about how to create an alternative model of schooling that includes inter-community collaboration.

At SAJES in Suffolk County, NY, two key programs are being intertwined: the Jewish educators trip to Israel and the partnership program with schools in Israel. During their professional development trip to Israel, Jewish educators will visit the partner schools. The theme of the environment was chosen by participating lay and professional leaders in each group, and the individuals from the groups are working together to identify mutual needs and create a joint project.

In San Francisco, the Jewish Teen Alliance, coordinated by the BJE, serves as a convener and coordinator of area teen programs. A task force of program providers, lay leaders, teens and funders was created to strategize about community-wide plans to coordinate outreach to teens.

Professional Networks

In Baltimore, the Center for Jewish Education convened a day school council that includes schools from across the religious spectrum. Various working groups were formed around topics of interest to professionals and educators across schools. Through these working groups, networks of librarians, IT people, and guidance counselors have emerged.

All of the various professional councils in Washington (the board of rabbis, early childhood educators, and youth and adult educators) are being convened to strategize about working with interfaith families in the community.

Community-Wide Programs

In Orange County, CA an environmental awareness day was organized through a collaboration of 12 synagogues, the day school, and the Bureau of Jewish Education. To encourage attendance, synagogues cancelled school on the Sunday of the event. A community Shabbaton will also focus on the theme of the environment.

Individuals from across organizations and from all denominations collaborated in Milwaukee, under the leadership of Coalition for Jewish Learning (CJL), to create the Jewish Teen Day of Discovery. The day featured workshops on Jewish topics presented by community professionals and lay leaders and included entertainment. The event

exposed teens to the full spectrum of Jewish life available in the area. Jewish Teen Day of Discovery is an annual event and has just completed its fourth year. Additionally, CJL has presented a Jewish Teen Day of the Arts and will serve both the Jewish and local communities at its fourth annual Teen Day of Social Action this April. CJL has also recently received a Covenant Grant for the creation of mini-schools that will provide small groups of Jewish teens of all backgrounds and denominations with high interest, intensive Jewish experiences. Its Young Jewish Filmmakers' Project produced a film about the Jewish obligation to respond to the crisis in Darfur as a pilot project. “

Shepherding Involvement

The CJE in Hartford (as an outgrowth of their La'atid project) has created a program aimed at exposing families of toddlers and preschoolers in the JCC “Family Room” to day schools and synagogues. A Friday morning Shabbat program for parents and children is, at times, led by a congregational rabbi or a day school professional. A second initiative for toddlers and preschool families will take place at different educational settings throughout the Jewish community, exposing participants to various organizations by bringing them into the buildings. Initially, this family education “round robin” series is planned at the day schools and the JCC.

Professionals from different organizations who work with special needs children have been convened in Baltimore, Philadelphia and Miami. By knowing what programs are offered throughout the community, professionals from each organization are able to refer potential clients to the appropriate resources. By thinking strategically together and building relationships across organizations, they are creating a seamless network to more effectively serve this population.

In Los Angeles, the BJE has instituted a multi-pronged program aimed at helping families find and take advantage of educational settings and resources that are well-suited to their needs and interests. Two professionals work as community “concierges,” and a “customer relations management system” has been implemented using a specially modified version of salesforce.com. The concierges counsel individual clients and have also built relationships with Jewish educational organizations and professionals throughout the community. With awareness of communal offerings, the concierges can effectively act as a referral system, directing learners to the suitable educational programs.

Lessons Learned

This follow-up research confirmed the finding from 2007 that central agencies are responding to the current situation with a number of creative approaches that seek to forge closer connections between and among educational providers in order to better serve educational consumers. The research also supported a number of the lessons learned in the first round of interviews about the challenges involved in this work and ways of addressing these:

- *Building relationships*
At the most fundamental level, silos are linked through positive relationships among individuals. Trust building among key players, which is essential for fruitful collaboration, is a slow process.
- *Assuring buy-in*
Both professionals and lay-leaders should be included in the earliest visioning processes. Efforts require the full support of all key participants.
- *Taking responsibility*
There must be an individual, (or individuals) responsible for making the silo linking happen. Enduring linkages occur when someone is propelling the process forward.
- *Sharing the vision*
Successful collaboration between organizations is dependent on key players' shared visions. Frank communication about concerns, motives and goals is essential.
- *Understanding the landscape*
Organizations have unique histories and cultures: all are not compatible for collaboration. Understanding of the organizational landscape is important to determine promising sites of collaboration.

Conclusion

The vision of “linking silos” to expand participation, enrich educational experiences, leverage resources, and create “continua of learning” for students across settings and life-stages is a powerful one. Precisely because of its ambition, it may appear daunting. The work currently going on among the agencies interviewed demonstrates that there are multiple pathways toward realizing the vision of a “seamless” educational system, but also that the distance to traverse is vast. For many reasons, some agencies will be able to move forward more quickly than others (viz. the very real challenges to progress identified in the first research report). Their experiences, and the approaches they are developing, will hopefully serve as models and exemplars for other agencies.

The challenge for all of the agencies involved in this work will be to continue to expand and deepen their initiatives so that they do not become merely vehicles for new institutional or professional conversations (important as these are), but in fact affect the lives of learners in demonstrable ways. In many of the communities interviewed, solid “platforms” have been put in place to do precisely this; now the task is to build on these.

The Lippman Kanfer Institute will continue to monitor the efforts of central agencies to link silos in their communities and to share examples of this work. A number of communities, including some not interviewed in this round of research, have embarked on ambitious endeavors that have the potential to advance the state of the art in

substantial ways. We look forward to reporting further on these and to fostering linkages among the central agencies themselves around this vital work.

Prepared by Tobin Belzer

Lippman Kanfer Institute Research Briefs are reports on small-scale research projects conducted or commissioned by the Institute that are designed to illuminate and stimulate conversation and further research about issues relating to innovation and system redesign in Jewish education.

Appendix A – Central Agency Silo Linking in Key Areas of Activity

(See the attached chart)

Appendix B –

“Linking the Silos”: An Initial Report on Community Experiences

Lippman Kanfer Institute, JESNA – May 2007

*In recent years, and especially since the publication of the Report, **Linking the Silos: How to Accelerate the Momentum in Jewish Education Today**, prepared by Prof. Jack Wertheimer and a distinguished research team, there has been growing interest in ways to create stronger connections between and among programs and settings in order to maximize participation in and the impact of Jewish education. JESNA’s Lippman Kanfer Institute, as an outgrowth of its inaugural project, Redesigning Jewish Education for the 21st Century, is partnering with members of the study team to develop concrete strategies to advance this agenda.*

As one step in this process, the Institute’s Research Associate, Renee Rubin Ross, interviewed professionals at ten central agencies of Jewish education that had self-identified as agencies involved in “linking silos” in their local communities. (Parallel interviews were conducted by UJC staff with several federations.) Below are excerpts from these interviews, grouped according to a number of themes and issues that emerged in multiple communities. These represent initial observations and “food for thought” as the Lippman Kanfer Institute and its partners work on identifying strategic directions for promoting enhanced synergies and greater “customer responsiveness” throughout the Jewish educational system.

- 1. Promoting collaboration is seen as an important part of central Agency work; this takes a variety of forms.**

As a central agency, we've found that creating collaboration among different agencies works. So, we've made it our role to create institutional and programmatic links between different agencies. We had some community collaboration, such as a community high school, that has existed for 50 or 60 years. I've stressed creating an environment where collaborating is valued, rather than an attitude of "I don't get money when collaborating." - Community A

Efforts are made to embark on collaborative partnerships with agencies. In terms of informal Jewish education, we work with camps in order to provide them with curricular materials. In all cases, we break down artificial institutional boundaries that exist and relate to other organizations as partners. – Community B

We are a convener, so we will convene various aspects of the community around certain topics—such as special needs. My dream is a conference for people that work on adolescent education—school, camp, youth group. We also will focus on an area—then all the people connected to it work together to create something that can help the field. We have a council of camp people, youth group people, for adolescent educators. We have a conference and have convened these different groups. – Community C

Our guiding principle is collaboration. So there's a lot of cross-discussion, cross-learning, cross-planning. Everyone does have an area of expertise, but the more we do together, the more that the lines are blurring. When discussing challenges, it is done collaboratively. We restructured the way we do our day-to-day work here. Tuesdays are set aside for internal work and the staff learning together. There is so much going on that we need to have this time.

An example: the director of the early childhood department, family education, and professional development might work together for two hours on a trip to Israel. The family educator would work with an "Engage" (early childhood) program, such as an early childhood professional learning program.

We study together about how we can best serve as consultants for the community. What's helpful is that we understand what we're trying to do in terms of consultancy — to help people realize how to do it, not just tell them to do it. – Community D

Collaboration: An example would be the Florence Melton mini-school. We brought everyone together before we established the program. We are also a year into a major pre-school initiative that could cost \$3-4 million. We spent a year planning, got all the right stakeholders, included national collaboration. – Community E

We have been creating links between day school and preschool for a few years. – Community J

2. **Synagogues remains a focal point for central Agency activity with a growing emphasis on catalyzing and supporting change processes, not merely providing services. This often involves helping synagogues work more collaboratively internally and sometimes externally as well.**

We've worked on getting the synagogues involved in a visioning process. For example we had twenty-eight laypeople from one synagogue sitting in a room together. They talked about leadership qualities, inspiring others to get involved. We pushed them to tell us, at your synagogue, what's the vision? They couldn't do that. – Community A

We have been working for last few years on [a community-based congregational educational improvement initiative. This program helps synagogues in their intention to be the best they can be. We have moved into the area of board and leadership development, working in a systemically, integrated way with the whole congregation. We help them put together working committees of different departments of the congregation: they develop a vision, then low hanging fruit, and refine that further towards changes in the education program. For example, we will bring together a leadership group comprised of lay and professional leaders and help them work on the visioning piece—so that in three or four years, when it's time for them to do revisioning, can do that process without our facilitating—help them to develop the skills that will help them continue to work in that fashion. We help them to develop a more systemic approach

There are eight congregations in the area that have been part of this process. From what have learned, we focus on working with agencies in an integrated way. We began to work with lay leadership and professional leadership about how to begin talking with one another, be in same room, so they learn to communicate more directly. We also work on connecting organizations with each other, so that participating congregations come together, get to know each other and have begun to collaborate. – Community F

A challenge is that synagogues are weak at self-reflection and evaluating themselves. A big focus for us is trying to find resources for synagogues for strategic planning— we're working with Federation; we have some lay people involved. This has to do with the viability of synagogues over the next fifty years. - Community G

Programmatically, the first thing that we did came from the issue of how to work best with congregational education. We understood that this could be politically dangerous, because the congregational school is a severely limited and debilitating framework for Jewish education. But, congregational education is a very effective format to reach out to people and to strengthen synagogues themselves. For example there can be an education cabinet composed of the education director, rabbi, nursery school director, and executive director. This creates more face time, and can be expanded in parallel with lay leaders. We have sponsored initiatives in congregational education. We got funding to go to synagogue schools, either per capita grants or cluster grants. So, if they wanted a grant, the synagogue had to create communication among the congregational leadership as a grant requirement. In other words, we're working on getting congregations to link silos internally. – Community H

Those are the kinds of questions that we are asking forty-one schools to ask themselves. We will be working with four congregations on some kind of radical change discussion, possibly with the Experiment in Congregational Education or on our own. When the [local] public schools were in trouble, the superintendent had the money and power to close some high schools, and now is opening them again. We are the back office for Jewish education, but we are not funding these schools. So, we don't have the power to do anything other than

influence. Most synagogues are not trained for vision (as compared to business). We have spent two years with four schools, and are now working on change models. – Community E

3. Work with teens is perceived is also perceived as an area rich in opportunities for linking silos.

We are also building a whole new set of teen activities and trying to figure out how to work collaboratively across institutions. E.g., JCCs and congregations, service learning programs at the old-age home. – Community A

Another area where I see a lot happening is the teen area. We have a Hebrew high school, youth programs, and have set up a website called Jteen.org that showcases opportunities locally, nationally, internally. We're getting some good feedback on it. Our main mission is professional development. – Community D

We also have a teen initiative, which we're just beginning to develop. We have hired a full time teen educator, which we have never had before, and we're trying to link their interests. Our goal is to provide multiple opportunities for teens in [our community]—so teens can get “credit” for other programs. We're thinking about linking informal and formal learning—plus community service. So we're creating a community “diploma” covering four areas: formal learning, informal learning, social action or Jewish service learning, and ritual practice. - Community I

Our Hebrew high school is one of our most collaborative programs. It meets one night a week; that's the old model. We have begun to ask kids questions, hold focus groups. Our goal is to increase access points, e.g., more trips for teens, not just to Israel, but with other leadership foci, e.g., to Eastern Europe, Mexico with the American Jewish World Service. We're beginning with our first political symposium—Jewish lawyers will be speaking, and there will be 10-40 kids on the “teens and politics” track; there will also be a mentorship aspect to this. We hope to have a program like this for medicine, business, and a teen philanthropy initiative. So the idea is to have more access points. We hope to have 600-800 kids engaged in a variety of programs. We are currently in focus groups with teens talking about two dozen different initiatives, depending on what teens are interested in. – Community E

4. Agencies are thinking creatively about ways to better meet the needs and engage the participation of Jewish education's customers and consumers. A number are interested in concepts like “concierges” though not all are sure that the idea is practical..

This goes back to the history of why our central agency was restructured. We had a BJE and two other organizations, one for teens and our regional Hillel. Our plan was to combine all three entities into one new one. This was one of the founding philosophies of the agency—to create a structure that will project lifelong learning—birth through adult, including gaps, like

in the 20s & 30s. We imagined that we would start having an emphasis on clients rather than institutions. We also wanted to encourage dialogue among staff in teams to promote the handoff.

Now, the question is how to move forward to community consciousness. For example, at community events, we want people to talk about next steps. Should we use a personal trainer model? We're trying to figure out how to make this happen. Also, we're trying to resuscitate ideas in family life education. Our question is how to get to end users, so we came up with new community models about outreach and engagement. People talk about different models: e.g., one bus going from one station to the next. But in my mind the next step would be to build a subway system, with the idea that we're not going to reach out to every institution, but rather we have a set of institutions that create a subway system, and also transfer points where people switch. We're now working on resuscitating a dormant network of family educators, and to start working on the fact that part of their role is to be concierge. We need to train people to do this; it gives a different spin to what family education could be in their congregation. – Community H

Other central agencies see themselves as serving organizations, e.g., synagogues. We see ourselves as serving learners. So, if nothing appropriate exists, we'll find something else for the learner or create something else for the learner.

We love the concierge idea—without the kickbacks. It's customer focused. A young family moves in, we give them some guidance. Our concern is that this is staff intensive—but perhaps it could be a staff/volunteer partnership. We can encourage volunteers to be concierges. We need to find the right kind of volunteers who can recommend institutions that they're not directly involved with, or that may be viewed as “competing” with their own institution, but is better suited for the learner. – Community I

I like the concierge idea—it resonates deeply. Synagogues need tremendous resources, and are turning more and more to BJE. Also synagogues often do not have family-educators, so I am trying to spearhead the hiring of people who would be concierges within and outside of synagogues, and link to a particular synagogue. We need a “Moses” who will take people into the promised land. – Community G

My next idea would be to look at the whole system outside from anew: who is the customer? Some are not in schools. Who are the people that we would talk to and help? We're thinking about creating a library/media center which would engage a volunteer trainer, hand-select volunteers, and have them reach out as concierges—to have “caseloads,” help people feel networked and connected. We're also thinking about the establishment of virtual communities—e.g., people from a certain neighborhood who want to study Talmud. So the idea would be that people search for what they want, and that these options exist in a “virtual mall.” The question is how we as a community can empower consumers. – Community E

We have one third fewer kids 9-13 than 14-18. So, even to maintain current enrollment, we need to penetrate into other markets by providing families with a full spectrum of choice. We need to build relationships among all the different components of Jewish education. We're at the beginning of launching a program. We are doing market research. The idea is to have a concierge who understands all the different options. We are not waiting for the phone to ring, but are going to be pro-active in terms of two groups:

a) *influentials – obgyns, realtors, dentists, orthodontists, non-Jewish Mommy and Me groups, non-Jewish pre-schools*

b) *trying to identify who are the connector moms and dads out in the community, ones who are marginally affiliated, to engage them, take them on tours, build relationships to have them help spread the word. We're also launching a whole marketing approach to let people know, possibly creating postcards to put in synagogues or billboards along main streets where Jews live. We have an idea to link all schools through a web-based customer management system. We want to help move people from pre-school to day school, or to religious school. – Community J*

My question is where the concierge would be. Maybe at the synagogue? The question is who is going to guide them in this trip? We're a secondary service provider—but the synagogue isn't set up to do that so well either. I think the Jewish community should consider something like an "IJP"—IEP (individualized education plan) for Jewish families, based in the synagogue. It's not a bad analogy. The plan can identify certain needs, a helper can go with kid. They might make a plan that would spill over into different agencies. We might have an information and referral person forever—but if not, perhaps the system can help people not fall through the cracks. We have multiple entry points. All agencies need to be proactive about guiding people to the next place. – Community A

Yes, we want to connect our constituents. It sounds like we'd be an agency whose job it is to connect people to other people. But we focus on helping people be self-reliant, so we don't work with individual families as much. – Community F

The concierge model is not a task that my central agency has ever done. We don't work with individual people; it's not for us unless we have a lot more staffing. Mostly at this point we have specialists, who are not necessarily working on the bigger picture. I think it would be a challenge to support that, in terms of dollars, and we'd need to train all of these people as "Jewish life facilitators" (concierge isn't a good name.) Families need the opportunity to create strategic plan. I think it should be done with synagogues. Maybe we could support a pilot project, have people to go out to people's homes. – Community C

5. Several communities have already put various types of programs in place to try to "link Silos."

We have a program called "welcome to our world": Every time a baby is born, we hook the parents up with other couples and make sure that they feel part of the organized Jewish community. Note that this is not just about giving money, but rather is about engagement. Similarly, we reach out to newly arrived immigrants. – Community B

Here's an example: in terms of special needs, we brought people together to create a special needs resource guide, and we brought in laypeople to provide services, such as lectures, workshops, and conferences. – Community C

We also focus on outreach; our community needs it. We do things like celebrations, discovering Jewish life in the marketplace. For example, we'll partner with synagogues and home depot and Michael's crafts. This has worked well. We do outreach to affiliated and

unaffiliated, teens, adult learning. We have a program called “On the Same Page”—adults who may be affiliated or unaffiliated all read same book and then there are over 40 book groups at synagogues, in addition to poetry workshops, lectures, conversations. So we encourage discussions about the topic. We work bottom up and top down—trying to recognize needs. We are welcoming to young families, hope that will engage with our community. – Community D

We focus on early childhood through teenage years. For example, we are working with Jewish early childhood programs in the community to reach out to children who are affiliated with JCC or synagogue. Our strategy is to “Teach the child, reach the family.” Our focus is not on professional development or salary enhancements, but rather on recalibrating the way that early childhood center staff understand that every interaction with the child is an interaction with the family. So we emphasize linking the child and family. One of our measures of success will be the continuation of the child's Jewish journey beyond early childhood – that will only occur when the family values that next step.

Another initiative that we're considering is the PJ library, the Grinspoon Foundation program. Families with children from 6 months to 6 years receive a book or CD every month, together with a parenting guide. We hope to give this as a tool to early childhood programs and to train teachers how to engage parents in using these resources.

For older children, we have a Campership program. This is an incentive grant, regardless of ability to pay, geared toward first time attendees -- \$1,000/child. We work through the synagogues; our goal is to get synagogue to enroll ten kids every summer. And with that growing group of campers in the congregational school, we hope the students will create a climate change in the synagogue to foster more experiential education.

We believe that linking silos is not only for the individual child. We emphasize vertical and horizontal linkages, so that first, we want to help the same child through his or her Jewish educational journey, the hand-offs, if you will. Second, it's horizontal, over time, so our work will impact the youth group, the Hebrew school, every venue where that child learns. This is important because Jewish educational leaders don't necessarily talk to one another. We will try to get the camp directors to be in conversation with supplementary school directors, and youth leaders, and rabbis. How are we doing this? For many years we've had a professional development conference for religious school teachers. This year, we will open it up to all educators: youth group directors, camping professionals, etc. If nothing else it's an important symbolic step. – Community I

One thing that we have done is to launch myjewishresource.org just before Rosh Hashanah. It was a quick launch; we will make it more attractive and useful. It's a yellow pages, one for families, one for teens. Organizations are sending weekly updates. We get 250-300 new unique visits per month. We got all of rabbis to devote a small part of their high holiday sermons to mention this. We're now trying to make it more interactive. – Community J

6. Although the concept of “linking silos” is not new, having a language, research and outside validation for the concept is valuable.

Wertheimer's research validated what we do. It added a dimension to help us appreciate what we do. – Community B

By putting a framework around it, we've become more conscious of its importance. For example, teens—it's an easy time to drop out and get lost. What are the different experiences in learning that will help them? How should schools ultimately cluster—e.g., the possibility of magnet schools or a supplementary school that emphasizes the arts, Hebrew, and Israel education? We have to talk about linking silos. – Community D

When the article came out, it was a focus of our introductory board meeting. It helped get the board aligned with the idea that it is the role of the agency. The fact that “linking the silos” is backed up by statistics and solid recommendations is helpful to getting our point across. – Community G

We didn't need the report to provide a strategic vision. What it does is give our vision credibility.

And while it's true that $A+B+C+D$ is more powerful than any one of them separately, note that the links will only be as strong as the weakest silos. So our community needs compelling options. We would like to develop programs for teens in public schools. It's important that when we do that, synagogues understand that this will help them build community also. – Community I

7. There are a variety of factors that inhibit silo linking and that constrain Central Agencies from doing all that they might like to. Money is only one of these.

Turf

There's an irony to the fact that synagogues are having turf issues over teens. They all want to be the purveyor of experiences. – Community A

I don't see many institutions linking the silos—by and large. I have not seen this among schools or among congregations. There are significant turf issues; these issues are yet to be traversed. – Community B

Yes, there are turf issues, but if you work at it, people will come together. They have done it whenever we've tried, although we certainly could do more. – Community C

Everyone is protecting turf. – Community G

Turf issues, where people may perceive it as competition. – Community I

Different visions among institutions

Linking the silos is methodological; it involves linking different programs together. But those who are linking the silos are not necessarily cognizant that they may have different philosophies; philosophical vision is important. The Orthodox community is better that way;

there are a few different ideas that they all get and share. This allows for better and easier collaboration. – Community A

We need more shared vision. If institutions shared the vision of the central agency, we could get more buy in. – Community B

A long term obstacle in terms of how many customers we actually get is whether they are actually appropriate for the different institutions. This is about making the right match. We don't want to send the wrong person to an institution. – Community J

Leadership and people

Scarce financial resources, institutions concerned about their relevance, institutions not self-confident or able to trust that they're needed. In order to do this (link silos), an organization needs confidence, resources, culture. 98% relates to leadership and the need for strong leadership. – Community B

The obstacles are changing leadership in different institutions, and teaching people in each place how to sustain change. Often, as the players change, people come in who don't have the same kind of buy in. We have facilitators and consultants who help congregations think about how to integrate new people. Community F

Finding the right consulting personnel who can complement congregations. There's a leadership development piece. We need to make sure that the personnel and leaders in the agency as well as within congregations buy in. – Community F

Personnel needed is the GREATEST challenge. – Community G

Hiring the right person—someone who is very outgoing, but also able to listen to the family and find out about their needs. – Community J

I depend on my professional training—I am a community organizer by training—so I think about working in that way. Those with a background in education may think more in terms of just the individual classroom, which is silo-type work. If that's someone's training, it will be a natural reaction. Whereas in community organizing, we see the macro picture, systems, intertwining. So, the graduate programs in education need to be training people to look at things systematically. – Community J

Time

We need more time. For example, we would love to have a council across age groups. We have something that is philosophical and goal directed, but it is an issue of time. – Community C

Another issue is TIME—the time demands to create this type of system is unbelievable. Who will be willing to put in the time? We need the involvement of senior staff and senior laypeople. – Community G

People don't want to do the work of implementation

Also, people get excited about the visioning part, but they don't want to implement. So the challenge is to keep people actively involved in all phases. – Community F

Funding

Funding—it costs a significant amount of money for us to support new congregations, We have reached out to eight congregations, but we don't have funding for others. – Community F

The territorialism in our community is over the money. We have lots of organizations in the city. We're outside the immediate metro area, so it's sometimes harder to get funding. – Community D

More money, more staff! It's a huge job for two people in a city with half a million Jews and five thousand kids in each age cohort. Since it's so big, we will need to be very focused and strategic; we will start with kindergarten and first grade, those who are beginning to enter the educational system. – Community J

Central agencies are so under-funded that it is difficult to do. – Community H

We have found it far easier raising funds and getting grants for collaborative partnerships that engender linking of silos than those that just create a program. I think that this is a major wave of the future: Those that link silos will advance, those that don't will spin themselves out of relevance. Each organization must be a gateway to Jewish community, and link with other organizations and institutions.- Community B

Demographic and social factors

One of the challenges is demographic: the shrinking synagogue size in part of our community. – Community D

Competition—competing in a shrinking marketplace. This project is a way of penetrating families that aren't thinking about you—so it's a “win” opportunity. – Community J

Based on national discussions of Melton mini-school directors, we are seeing more spotty attendance—recruitment and registration is bizarre. Life is getting in the way; people want education “on demand.” So perhaps we need to look into a website or DVD so that they will plug in when they can. But people's needs are so random and haphazard that makes programming difficult. “Bowling alone” undercuts membership in general. People are not willing to travel—cities are so congested that once they get home, they don't want to leave again. – Community H

Marketing

We need to be savvy today and professional. We need resources to do better marketing. – Community D

Getting the word out that this is happening. – Community J

We are very far behind in understanding/engaging our market. This is a difficult topic, because it is difficult to serve institutions and provide data that threatens institutions. Jewish institutions are often concerned with paying bills and not offending, but my view is that these institutions may not survive with the current model. So the purpose of the seminar was to think about consumer needs.

- 1) Consumerism is not a dirty word in Jewish life—we need to embrace this.*
- 2) The consumer will tell us what he or she wants, and it's not our job to judge that.*
- 3) This doesn't mean that standards go out the window. – Community E*

8. Different communities have different needs and approaches.

There are best practices, but there can't be an integrated policy that's going to work. It depends on the structure of the community. We cannot create something that will work for everyone. I go back to the analogy of buses: we need different kinds of buses for different communities. - Community G

We are really a community of communities, and recognize that every community is different and will have different needs. – Community I

It varies community by community. People are so busy in the Jewish community that sometimes it's hard to see the forest through the trees. It's hard to see how doing things beyond the immediate arena will have an impact. – Community J

In other communities, we would develop programs where we thought that it would work. But, if we didn't have the buy in, these same programs might not work. I think we need to engage the community in developing the programming. – Community B

9. Despite local differences, many agencies would welcome information about what others are doing.

What are the initiatives that succeeded? What are the initiatives that failed? – Community B

Samples of the work that people are doing in the field. – Community C

Continued exposure to other learnings. JESNA holds an important place in being able to share knowledge. Communication has been better among central agencies. The more we talk, the more we have an opportunity to share. – Community D

We don't have standardization as BJE's, which hampers some. For others it's beneficial. But no one really knows who we are or what we do. One problem is that there is no clearinghouse of information; it seems that JESNA can help manage knowledge. – Community G

Learning what's working and not working in other communities. – Community I

We would love to see a shared list of the barriers and some type of blog where people can communicate safely without political repercussions to talk about these innovations. – Community H

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Baltimore, MD Center for Jewish Education	Diller Teen Fellows, a community wide leadership development program.		Synagogue school fair at the JCC to raise awareness about synagogue affiliation.	Convenes Day School Council.	Convenes staff members whose work focuses on children with special needs meet to share information.	Website/database of all adult education opportunities in the area.
Boston, MA Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston	Regional, and cross-denominational communally sponsored programs and interest groups for teens; exploring the concept that membership in one organization could mean membership in all. Community-wide Youth Council, with parallel group in Haifa.	Convened the 6 Directors of Congregational Learning (Heads of synagogue education responsible for entire ed program in a congregation) from around Boston to discuss their roles, training needs, and outcome measures. Planning a 3-4 site demonstration project on congregational silo linking.		Linking pre-schools with day schools (and synagogues) to promote seamless transitions from ECE to primary grades.	Establishing inclusive models in synagogues and day schools; community Shabbat service for children and young adults with disabilities.	Convened 35 day schools, JCCs, and congregations to discuss linking the silos internally. Convened diverse group of 40 organizations to explore synergistic possibilities for educational opportunities. Promoting & supporting "Renaissance Educators."

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Cleveland, OH Jewish Education Center of Cleveland	Youth Initiatives Program, a central address for community teen programming. Convenes Youth Professional Network. Youth Educator Professional Development Program, to complement and enhance the supervision and mentoring available to youth educators. Diller Teen Fellows, a community wide leadership development program.	Congregational change initiative. Regularly convene supplementary school directors, family educators, and youth professionals – as individual networks and jointly – to better link school, youth groups, and family education in the community.	Creating two new family educator positions in preschools to serve as “bus drivers” linking families to additional Jewish involvements during and following preschool.		Convenes Special Needs Day School Advisory Committee.	One of the key platforms of the new JECC Strategic Plan focuses on fostering linkages between educational opportunities.
Colorado Agency for Jewish Education	Innovations in Hebrew High School that include community members, like a “Teens and Politics” track.”	Synagogue school change initiative.	“Judaism Your Way” provides religious, spiritual, cultural and social programming for the community at large.			Currently undertaking a strategic planning process.

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Hartford, CT Commission on Jewish Education	Teen Working Group of Professionals of formal and informal educators coordinated by the Federation and staffed by Federation and CJE.	Network of 5 small synagogue schools meets to share resources. They are working to build bridges for collaboration including a series of joint family programming. La'atid: Synagogues for the Future, a community-based initiative that promotes lifelong Jewish learning and strengthens supplementary education. La'atid creates of strong collaborative professional and lay partnerships, leadership development and strategic planning opportunities within and between congregations and their schools	Weekly Shabbat program at JCC "Family Room", for Community and JCC toddlers and preschool families exposes participants to local congregational rabbis and day school leaders. Round robin style family programs - "Family Fun Days on Sundays" open to community toddler and preschool families brings community into the buildings of Day Schools and JCC. Forming an oversight committee at Commission on Jewish Education (CJE) for building new connections and partnerships "Linking Silos" within the community			Website of community adult education, professional education, youth and Israel opportunities. Jewish Educators Council of Principals and Family Educators, meet every other month to study together, share ideas for self growth and the growth of their communities. Courses connected to a university for congregations and community; e.g., professional development, lay leadership development, change and collaboration. <i>HaKesher- The Jewish Learning Connection-</i> Twice a year-Publication of courses, classes and exhibits that are held throughout the community, in congregations, JCC and universities. CJE oversees Israel initiatives: 1) Youth trips and Otzma, 2) Israel savings plans programs, and 3) Coordinates Young Emissaries.

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Los Angeles, CA Bureau of Jewish Education	Diller Teen Fellows, a community wide leadership development program. Youth professionals' development opportunities, brings together those who work with teens in schools and "beyond the classroom."	Re-imagine synagogue change initiative.	Two professionals are the community concierges. With awareness of communal offerings, they act as a referral system, directing learners to suitable educational programs.	ECE directors and Day School directors are visiting each other's educational institutions.	Partners in haMercaz, a consortium of Federation, BJE, Family Service and others, helping families access services and educational opportunities for children and youth with special needs;	Principals' councils meets regularly and plans activities for the advancement of individual schools as well as the collective. Sulam Center for Jewish Service Learning nurtures a culture of reflection & learning around community service."
Miami, FL Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education			Welcome to our World, a program to welcome parents of new babies to the organized Jewish community.	Convenes Day School Principals and Administrators Council (PAC) to encourage the sharing of resources and replication of best practices and innovative programming.	Convenes staff members whose work focuses on children with special needs meet to think strategically to provide a more coordinated specialized approach. Working with Special Education provider (KESHER) to develop a comprehensive, community-wide approach to providing services to special needs families.	Convenes Early Childhood Educators Association to encourage the sharing of resources and replication of best practices and innovative programming. Convenes and facilitates ISRAEL60 related educational activity for Greater Miami.

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Milwaukee, WI Coalition for Jewish Learning	Jewish Teen Day of Discovery, a community wide event designed to expose teens to local Jewish life. Young Jewish Filmmakers Project, open to community teens.					
New Jersey – Metrowest Partnership for Jewish Learning and Life	Diller Teen Fellows, a community wide leadership development program. Central Hebrew High School offers specialty programs, like digital film making with Avoda Arts, and Jewish Civics Initiative (JCI), open to all teens www.oybits.com, maintained by Teen Tech Team, posts all teen educational experiences. Central Hebrew High School e-newsletter promotes all local youth events. With JCC and Jewish Community Foundation created Teen Tzedakah Program to promote Jewish communal awareness and philanthropy Teen Educator is the Jewish content/program consultant to the JCC's day camp.	Campership Initiative program encourages children from synagogues to attend camp for the first time. Bar/bat mitzvah children engage in a yearlong mitzvah project. A Mitzvah Shuk exposes kids to organizations. Community principals are networked and meet every 6 weeks Early Childhood directors are networked and meet monthly. Providing grants to synagogue and other youth groups to participate in J-Serve, publicizing programs & providing tailor-made Jewish learning.	Director of Early Childhood Initiatives teaches parents of young children (Jewish family course) at the Melton Mini-School Director of Early Childhood Initiatives is the contact person (concierge) for all new MetroWest Jewish News subscribers with children in early childhood programs to learn more about Jewish experiences in MetroWest		Provide consultations to early childhood programs Recruit, train and provide shadows to early childhood programs Together with Jewish Family Service created new youth group for teens who have difficulty socializing with peers.	Created a community-wide conference for educators: congregational schools, camps, youth professionals "Jews, Guitars and DVRs" an informal education fair in June for youth professionals and other educators. Supervision of federation's Israel Program Center provides synergy and coordination in use of Israel as identity-building tool. The IPC uses young Israelis age 18 (Rishonim) as full-time staff at schools and synagogues. Positions are jointly funded by both schools and supervised by The Partnership.

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
New York Suffolk Association for Jewish Educational Services	Website showcases opportunities for teens.	On the Same Page, a community wide reading program that has 40 synagogue-based groups.	Coordinator of educational services and family education works to encourage cross-fertilization.			Two key programs are being intertwined: the Jewish educators trip to Israel and the partnership program with schools in Israel. Staff focus on collaboration. One day a week is set aside for internal work, and learning together.
Orange County, CA Bureau of Jewish Education	Complementary high school programming with synagogues: 9 th grade students come centrally; 10 th graders go to confirmation and continue central programming with three weekends spread throughout the year. Young philanthropists program	Convenes a synagogue and day school council to promote synagogue membership among day school families.	Day school and synagogue schools collaborated to create and jointly promote an environmental day. That event was complemented by a community wide weekend retreat about the environment.	Convenes Jewish Educators Association, a partnership of day schools, 12 synagogues, & BJE.		Newsletter disseminated community-wide adult education programs.

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Palm Beach Friedman Commission on Jewish Education	Administers community Hebrew high school used as confirmation experience for multiple area synagogues Oversees youth philanthropy project for all teens receiving bar/bat mitzvah Organizes community-wide volunteer experiences for teens	Synagogue school change initiative	Coordinates council of synagogue presidents to address challenges to Jewish education	Coordinates community Hebrew school for special needs children Coordinates mainstreaming of special needs students with synagogue schools	Coordinates networks of community educational leaders	Engaging in an agency wide strategic planning process with input from multiple sources. Oversees PJ Library
Philadelphia, PA Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education	Convenes heads of youth programs across the community.	NESS (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools), a community-based effort to address the need for synagogue school improvement. Helping synagogues link silos internally.	Convenes councils of professionals at every educational level. Brings together councils to work toward creating a “seamless continuum” of Jewish education throughout the lifecycles.		Staff members whose work focuses on children with special needs meet to share information. Created a special needs resource guide. Provides services (lectures, workshops and conferences) for lay people.	

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Pittsburgh, PA Agency for Jewish Learning	Revamping Community High School program. Planning an Israel experience for teens from camps, synagogues, and JCC. Teen Engagement Initiative bringing together all youth workers across community.	Engaging synagogues in a visioning process, along with professional development and lay leadership development..			Educational Directors and Building a collaborative model with synagogues. Working with Federation to convene agencies.	Building organizational bridges by bringing Melton Mini School to synagogues, JCC, and Federation.
San Francisco Bureau of Jewish Education	The Jewish Teen Alliance is central hub for teen events and resources. Diller Teen Fellows, a community wide leadership development program. Convenes a community-wide coalition of teen leaders.					

Linking the Silos: A Survey of 16 Central Agencies

	Teens	Synagogue	Shepherding Involvement	Day Schools	Special Needs	Other
Washington DC Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning	Convenes a network of teen educators.		All of the various professional councils (i.e. the board of rabbis, early childhood educators, and youth and adult educators) are being convened. Together, they are strategizing about working with interfaith families in the community.			Structural re-organization of staff to create more synergy. Instead of focusing on different age-related populations in isolation, now individuals work across populations on one of three action areas: professional development, evaluation, and programming.