

# Learnings from the JOFEE Fellowship

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*Year 2 Evaluation Report*



*Prepared for*  
Hazon & the Jim Joseph Foundation

*Prepared by*  
Informing Change

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# Introduction

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## JOFEE FELLOWSHIP OVERVIEW

The Jewish Outdoor, Food, Farming, and Environmental Education (JOFEE) Fellowship began in 2015 with the goal of placing three cohorts of Fellows at host institutions nationwide. To date, the Fellowship is halfway to this goal—the 17 Fellows of the first cohort have fully completed their Fellowship, and the 18 Fellows of the second cohort are well under way with theirs. Through the JOFEE Fellowship, Hazon, which designed and is implementing the Fellowship, and the Jim Joseph Foundation, which is funding the Fellowship, aim to:

1. Develop a training program that integrates Jewish and JOFEE learning and **develops the Fellows as JOFEE educators**;
2. **Implement JOFEE programs across host institutions** to help them sustain and invest in JOFEE programming; and
3. **Create partnerships and resources for the JOFEE world.**

The main focus of the Fellows' work is to design and implement JOFEE programming at their placements. To support them, Fellows also receive training throughout the Fellowship, along with mentorship from a seasoned JOFEE professional.

JOFEE as a field is a relatively new concept for those involved in Jewish education. However, as revealed in research conducted in 2014 for the *Seeds of Opportunity* report—which evaluated the state of JOFEE overall—it is a powerful tool for targeting and engaging members of the Jewish community, particularly younger members. The Fellowship is a direct offshoot of the 2014 report, created with the primary goal to build the capacity of JOFEE educators, leading to a broader, more robust field.

## THE JOFEE FELLOWSHIP EVALUATION

The Jim Joseph Foundation and Hazon engaged Informing Change to conduct a four-year evaluation of the Fellowship. Rooted in the expected outcomes for the JOFEE Fellowship, this evaluation is designed to examine the components of the Fellowship within the framework of five evaluation questions.

1. What are the **strengths, challenges, and opportunities** found within the JOFEE Fellowship program?
2. What was the impact of the Fellowship on the **Fellows**, including Jewish experiential learning, training seminars, mentorship, site placement, and cohort experience?
3. What was the impact of the Fellowship on **host institutions**?
4. What was the impact of the Fellowship on the **wider community**?
5. To what extent has the JOFEE Fellowship been a mechanism that recruits, trains, deploys, networks, supports, and integrates a cadre of **JOFEE professionals into the wider Jewish community** and builds the capacity for JOFEE to reach its **full potential** as recommended in *Seeds of Opportunity*?

These questions also relate to the Fellowship’s theory of change, created collaboratively among Hazon, the Jim Joseph Foundation, and Informing Change at the onset of the Fellowship. (Please see Appendix A for the theory of change.) To answer the evaluation questions, we utilize a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods with multiple sources at the beginning, midway through, and at the end of each cohort experience (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

### Data Collection Methods Overview

|                          | Baseline   | Mid-Year   | End-of-Year   |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Fellows</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Application review</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative reflection</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Program tracking data</li> </ul> |
| <b>Mentors</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative reflection</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> </ul>                                  |
| <b>Host Institutions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative reflection</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> </ul>                                  |
| <b>Key Stakeholders</b>  |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>                |

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report marks the second year of evaluation activities. At this point, we have completed the entire data collection cycle from baseline to end-of-year for cohort 1 and baseline data collection for cohort 2. Cohort 1 Fellows began their Fellowship in May 2016 and ended in May 2017; cohort 2 launched in February 2017 and will culminate by January 2018.

The findings contained in this report relate to both cohort 1 and cohort 2. Except where noted, the data are based on self-reported assessments, which may present some bias. The initial section of the report describes the baseline data from cohort 2. This analysis includes, when noteworthy,

### Terms Used in This Report

For this report, when we refer to **Jewish Community Organizations**, we call them **JCOs**.

- In cohort 1, all of the JCOs were Jewish Community Centers (JCCs).
- In cohort 2, three JCOs are JCCs and one is a Jewish Federation.

We refer to other host sites as **JOFEE Organizations** since these organizations have a JOFEE focus.

**The J4** are the JOFEE organizations that collaborated to design this Fellowship:

- Hazon
- Pearlstone Center
- Urban Adamah
- Wilderness Torah

similarities and differences between cohort 1 and cohort 2. The second part of the report examines the cohort 1 experience, comparing pre-Fellowship data to post-Fellowship data to look at the impact that the Fellowship has had thus far on the Fellows, the host organizations, and the wider community as a whole. The third part of the report provides a summary of strengths, limitations, and opportunities, as well as recommendations for the Fellowship moving forward.

# Emerging Findings from Cohort 2

## WHO ARE THE COHORT 2 FELLOWS?

### Background & Experience

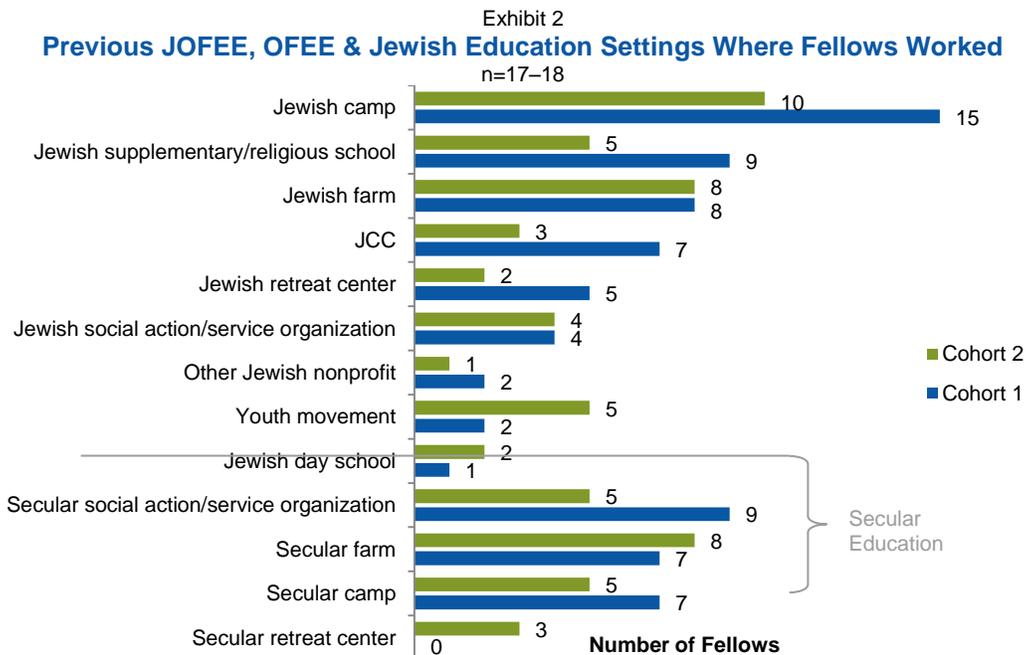
**Almost all cohort 2 Fellows (16) are white, female Jewish young adults who engaged in Jewish life during their youth.** Overall, these Fellows are very similar to cohort 1 Fellows, with minor differences. About half went to Jewish summer camp (10) or Jewish day school (6) for more than five years. In terms of Jewish identity, 12 out of the 18 Fellows consider themselves Jewish, 2 describe themselves as Jewish and something else, while 3 feel Jewish culturally but not religiously, and 1 feels Jewish sometimes. While most Fellows are primarily English speaking, 4 know Hebrew, and 2 are fluent in Spanish.

### Select Demographic Stats

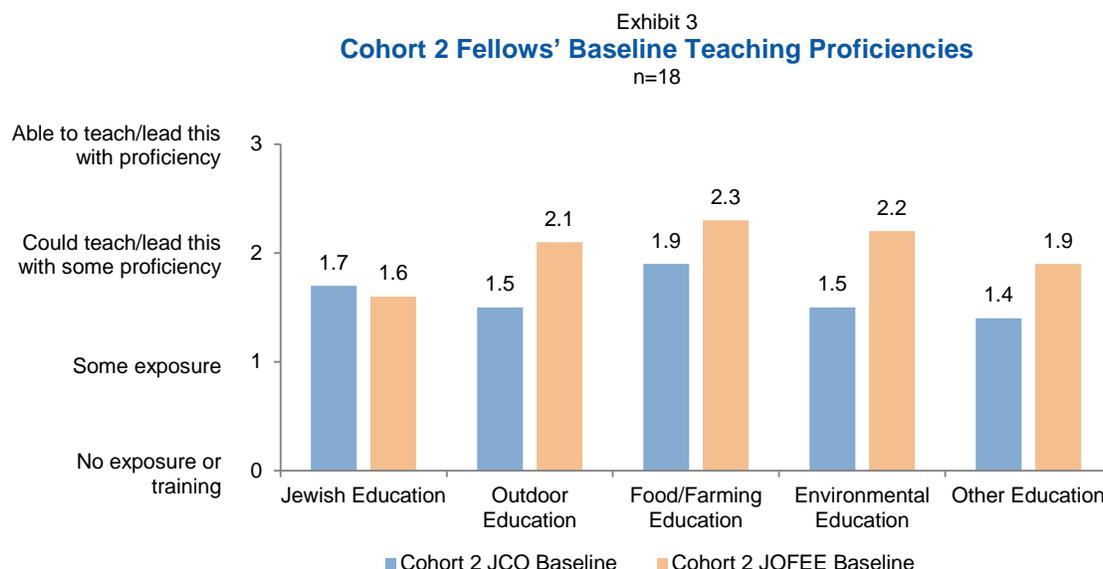
Cohort 2 Fellows range in age from 24 to 31, whereas cohort 1 had a few slightly older and younger Fellows.

Of cohort 2 Fellows, 60% identify as Ashkenazi, and 100% identify as white/non-Hispanic.

**Cohort 2 Fellows come with less work experience in JOFEE and Jewish education than cohort 1 Fellows (Exhibit 2).** Most of these emerging JOFEE professionals have young careers in the Jewish world. Prior to the Fellowship, 12 worked in Jewish education for two years or less, and 10 had experience with JOFEE for one year or less. Two Fellows had more extensive careers in the Jewish community, having worked in JOFEE or Jewish education for more than six years.



In comparing placement settings—JOFEE organizations versus JCOs—cohort 2 Fellows in JOFEE organizations report greater teaching proficiencies in outdoor, food, farming, environmental, and “other” education than cohort 2 Fellows in JCOs. Fellows in both placement settings generally report similar proficiencies in teaching Jewish education subjects (Exhibit 3).



For the most part, coming into the Fellowship, cohort 2 Fellows feel as proficient in teaching JOFEE subjects as cohort 1 Fellows. One key difference is that cohort 2 Fellows are more proficient in teaching environmental education than cohort 1 Fellows. In addition, cohort 2 Fellows working in JCOs report higher average baseline proficiencies in teaching Jewish, food, farming, environmental, and “other” education than their JCO counterparts in cohort 1 (cohort 1 data shown in Year 1 JOFEE Fellowship Report).

Seven cohort 2 Fellows already consider themselves JOFEE professionals at the start of the Fellowship. These Fellows feel more prepared to carry out the Fellowship work, while the less experienced Fellows have significant opportunities for growth (see box below). Prior to the Fellowship’s opening training, only half of the Fellows feel well prepared to plan and coordinate logistics and administration for JOFEE programs.

*“I am looking forward to gaining some concrete knowledge of curriculum content, coupled with guidance on curriculum planning theory and pedagogy. I think a challenging part of the training will be trying to learn as much of the content as I can, and also be discerning what will be most relevant to my specific placement and their needs in the year to come.”*

– Cohort 2 Fellow

### Fellows’ Professional Growth Opportunities in JOFEE

Fewer than half of cohort 2 Fellows felt prepared to:

- **design** JOFEE programs
- **implement and facilitate** JOFEE programs for diverse youth and young adult audiences
- **utilize JOFEE** to engage participants in exploring and deepening their Jewish journeys
- **adapt JOFEE teachings and curricula** to different groups
- **raise awareness and interest in JOFEE** programs in the wider Jewish community

## Expectations for the Fellowship

The Fellows are excited about all they hope to accomplish during the Fellowship, coupled with a healthy dose of skepticism about their ability to meet all of their goals within the time frame. While four of the Fellows could not think of any potential barriers to having a successful Fellowship, another four were concerned about their lack of experience and confidence. Three Fellows were not sure that they would have time to do everything they wanted or needed to do, and two mentioned the time it takes to develop relationships at a new organization as a potential barrier.

At the onset, all Fellows believe that all the different components of the Fellowship will contribute to their ability to meet their goals, including the orientation and training intensive, mid-year seminar, JOFEE Network Gathering, Final Seminar, and Closing; working with their mentor, supervisor, community members, and other staff; and creating relationships.

*“I am hoping to demonstrate that JOFEE can be a part of the JCC's work in any of our departments. I would also like to engage families with JOFEE programs.”*

– Cohort 2 Fellow

*“I am most looking forward to learning and practicing the skills necessary to design and implement JOFEE programs. I am also looking forward to making connections with the other people participating in the Fellowship so that I can connect with them/bounce ideas off of them throughout the year.”*

– Cohort 2 Fellow

## Career Intentions

The Fellowship is providing professional opportunities in JOFEE for people who otherwise would not have been working in this field at this time. Only one Fellow believes she would be working in JOFEE right now if she had not been selected for this Fellowship. Furthermore, 75% say they would not be working in the Jewish community at all (Exhibit 4).

Fellows don't necessarily see a career path for themselves in JOFEE in the future. Prior to starting the Fellowship, only about one-quarter express commitment to working in JOFEE or the Jewish community long-term and another quarter express long-term commitment to OFEE (Exhibits 5 and 6 on the following page). Interestingly, five Fellows hope to remain in their host institutions after the Fellowship.

Of these five Fellows, three worked at their placement site prior to the Fellowship, one was placed in a JOFEE organization, and the other was placed in a JCO that is a new Fellowship host site in Cohort 2. Compared to Cohort 1, Cohort 2 Fellows feel more committed to staying in JOFEE, OFFE, or education long-term; only three of them (rather than eight) report that they were not sure of their expected career at the onset of the Fellowship.

Exhibit 4  
Where Fellows Would Be Working If They Weren't in the Fellowship

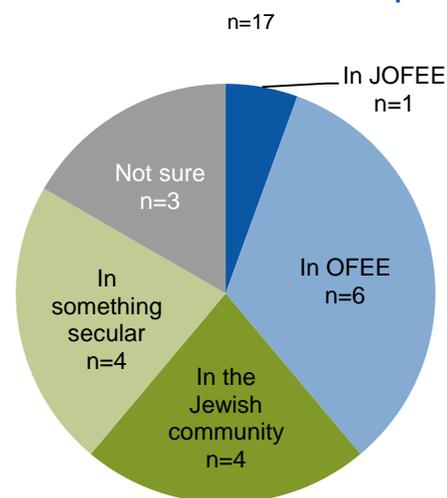


Exhibit 5  
**Fellows' Expected Career in Three Years**  
 n=18

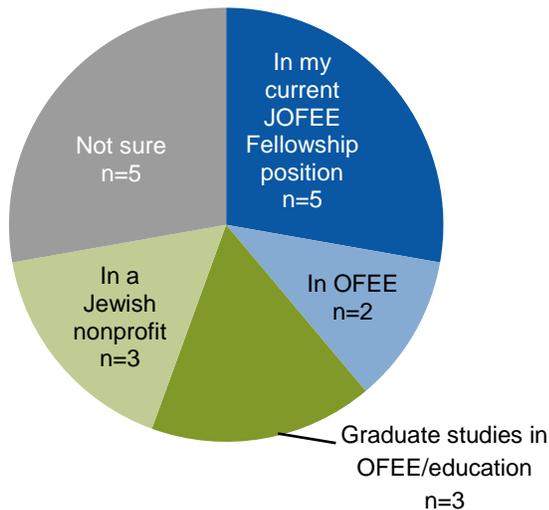
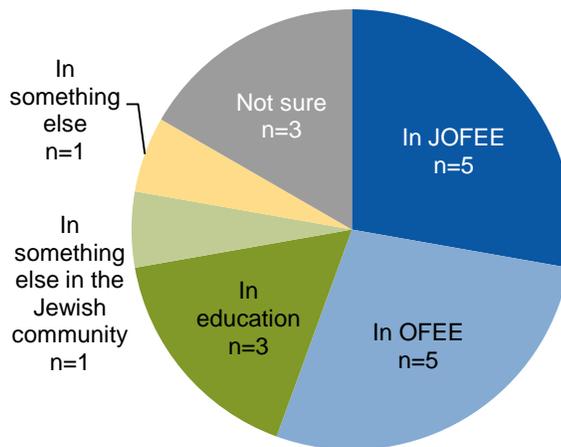


Exhibit 6  
**Fellows' Expected Career Later in Life**  
 n=18



## WHO ARE THE COHORT 2 HOST ORGANIZATIONS?

### Type of Placements

**JOFEE organizations outnumber Jewish Community Organizations (JCOs) 3 to 1 as Fellowship host sites.**

The 18 cohort 2 Fellows have been placed in 16 organizations: 12 JOFEE organizations and 4 JCOs—in this case, Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) or the Jewish Federation of Atlanta. Similar to cohort 1, about half of the cohort 2 Fellows have already been employed or volunteered in their host organization, while the other half are new to the terrain and operations of the organization (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7  
**Types of Fellowship Placements**

|              | New to Organization  | Worked/Volunteered at Organization Previously   |
|--------------|--|---|
| <b>JOFEE</b> | <b>6 Fellows</b><br>Abundance Farm, Coastal Roots Farm, Jewish Farm School, Pearlstone, Wilderness Torah | <b>7 Fellows</b><br>Eden Village, Ekar, Hazon – Detroit, Hazon – IF, Hazon – Teva, Camp Tawonga, Urban Adamah |
| <b>JCO</b>   | <b>2 Fellows</b><br>The Jewish Federation of Atlanta, Boulder JCC  | <b>3 Fellows</b><br>The Jewish Federation of Atlanta, DC JCC, Boston JCC                                      |

**A number of cohort 2 host organizations will benefit from the experience of cohort 1, since almost half also participated in cohort 1.** Seven of the 16 cohort 2 host organizations are returning JOFEE host organizations, including all of the J4 organizations. The remaining 5 JOFEE organizations and 4 JCOs are new to the Fellowship in cohort 2. Two JCOs—the Jewish Federation of Atlanta and the Boston JCC—have not run JOFEE programs previously. The DC JCC and the Boulder JCC have been engaging with JOFEE programming

ranging from CSA pick-up, Tu B'shvat programs, volunteer farm programs, adult cooking classes, and adult gardening classes.

**Almost all host organizations want their Fellows to both grow existing programs and create new ones.** In two of the host organizations (Wilderness Torah and Abundance Farm), the Fellows are only expected to grow existing programs. As each host organization is unique, its programs are specific to that host organization’s mission. For example, some host organizations envision more outdoor programs, such as garden expansion (Tawonga) or field trip programs (Coastal Roots Farm). Others want to see many programs expanded—for example, the Boulder JCC wants to see expanded preschool, camp, cooking, and volunteer programs.

**Many host organizations’ staff are excited about the insight and innovation they hope Fellows will bring to bear.** Some even mentioned their enthusiasm about being able to bounce ideas off of a thought partner and collaborator. Host organizations appreciate that many Fellows come with enhanced knowledge and skills pertinent to the organization’s mission. One host organization staff member said, “It’s a blessing to have a dedicated program staff who is well versed in Jewish environmental learning,” and another said the Fellow placed there “is bringing a unique set of skills and experiences.” **Supervisors in both types of organizations expect to engage with their Fellow with high frequency, an indication that Fellows will receive the support they need to be successful.**

**Supervisors’ expectations of how Fellows will spend their time varies greatly. While some variation is to be expected because of the different needs of organizations, the plans don’t consistently align with the Fellowship’s intentions.** It is interesting that two JCOs expect their Fellows to spend the majority of their time in direct JOFEE programming, while the other two expect that the majority of time will be spent in non-JOFEE work. One JOFEE organization expects that the Fellow will spend half of his or her time in non-JOFEE work. In general, JOFEE organizations expect their Fellows will spend more of their time on JOFEE administrative tasks than JCOs expect them to (Exhibit 8). All supervisors expect the Fellow to spend less than 20% of his or her time in professional development and training.

Exhibit 8

**Percentage of Time Supervisors Expect Cohort 2 Fellows to Work on JOFEE & Non-JOFEE Activities**

|   | Organization Type | 0–20% | 21–40% | 41–60% | 61–80% |
|---|-------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Direct JOFEE programming                              | JOFEE             | 0     | 4      | 6      | 2      |
|   | JCO               | 1     | 1      | 0      | 2      |
| JOFEE administration and operations                   | JOFEE             | 4     | 6      | 2      | 0      |
|   | JCO               | 4     | 0      | 0      | 0      |
| Non-JOFEE programming, administration, and operations | JOFEE             | 10    | 1      | 1      | 0      |
|   | JCO               | 2     | 0      | 0      | 2      |

Less than ideal

Above and beyond expectations

# Learnings from Cohort 1

## IMPACT ON FELLOWS

**All 17 cohort 1 Fellows completed the Fellowship.** Only one Fellow did not get the right fit for an initial placement and then found a home at another JOFEE organization and completed the Fellowship at that site.

### Growing Knowledge & Skills

**Cohort 1 Fellows became stronger JOFEE implementers and educators through the Fellowship.** This is corroborated by both the Fellows’ self-assessments and the assessment from their supervisors (Exhibit 9). It is interesting that all Fellows in JCOs feel either well prepared or extremely well prepared in their skills compared to a few Fellows in JOFEE organizations who report feeling “not well prepared” or “somewhat prepared.” This may be because of the exposure and proximity to experienced JOFEE educators within JOFEE organizations, and the self-realization that there is still a tremendous amount to learn.

Exhibit 9

### Cohort 1 Fellows’ Preparedness Before and After the Fellowship<sup>1</sup>

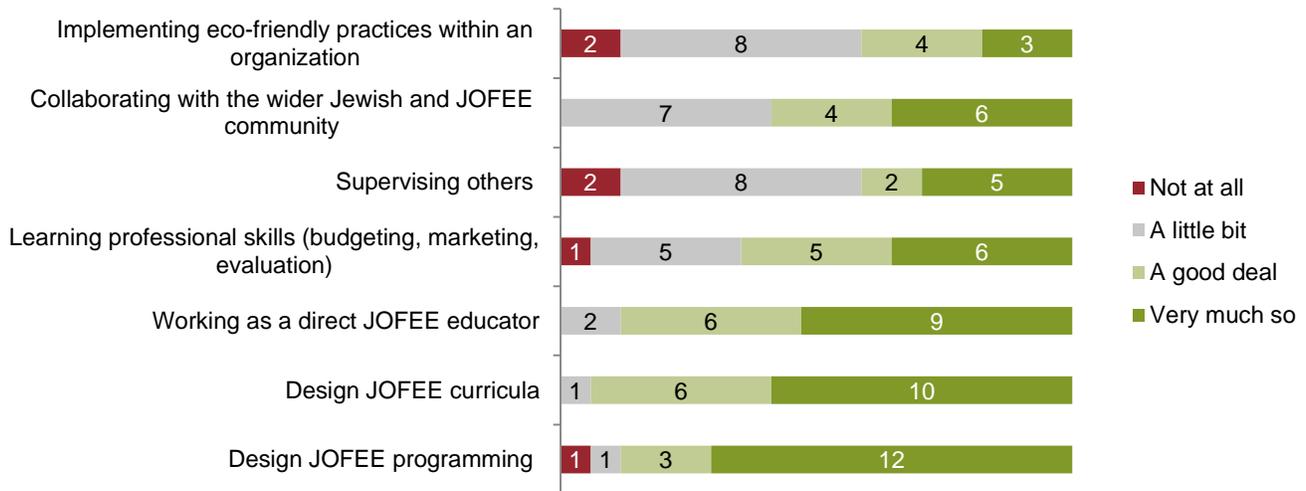
|  | Fellows<br>n=17 |           | Supervisors<br>Follow Up<br>n=17 |
|--|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
|  | Baseline        | Follow Up |                                  |
| Design JOFEE programs that resonate with youth and young adults                | 41%             | → 94%     | 76%                              |
| Directly implement/facilitate JOFEE programs                                   | 47%             | → 100%    | 100%                             |
| Plan and coordinate logistical administration for JOFEE programs               | 35%             | → 82%     | 88%                              |
| Utilize JOFEE to engage participants in exploring their Jewish journeys        | 23%             | → 100%    | 94%                              |
| Adapt JOFEE teachings and curricula to make them relevant for different groups | 23%             | → 100%    | 88%                              |
| Raise awareness and interest in JOFEE programs in the wider Jewish community   | 35%             | → 94%     | 94%                              |

**The Fellowship is most successful in helping Fellows gain hard skills and JOFEE-specific skills,** such as designing JOFEE programs, and not as successful in enhancing Fellows’ soft skills in supervision, communication,

<sup>1</sup> Percentages reflect those who said they were well prepared or very well prepared.

and collaboration (Exhibit 10). The reason may be that Hazon and host organizations are not as focused on developing these skills for Fellows. However, compared to Fellows in JCOs, Fellows in JOFEE organizations are more likely to report large gains in experience in professional skills, supervising others, and collaborating with the community. Most cohort 1 Fellows did not get many opportunities to implement eco-friendly practices within their host organizations; however, this aspect is highly dependent on dynamics within the host organization and may be out of the purview of the role. Supervisors were likely to concur that at the end of the Fellowship, Fellows were least prepared to supervise others and utilize professional and nonprofit skills needed to run a JOFEE program.

Exhibit 10  
**Number of Cohort 1 Fellows Who Report Gaining Experience During the Fellowship**  
 n=17

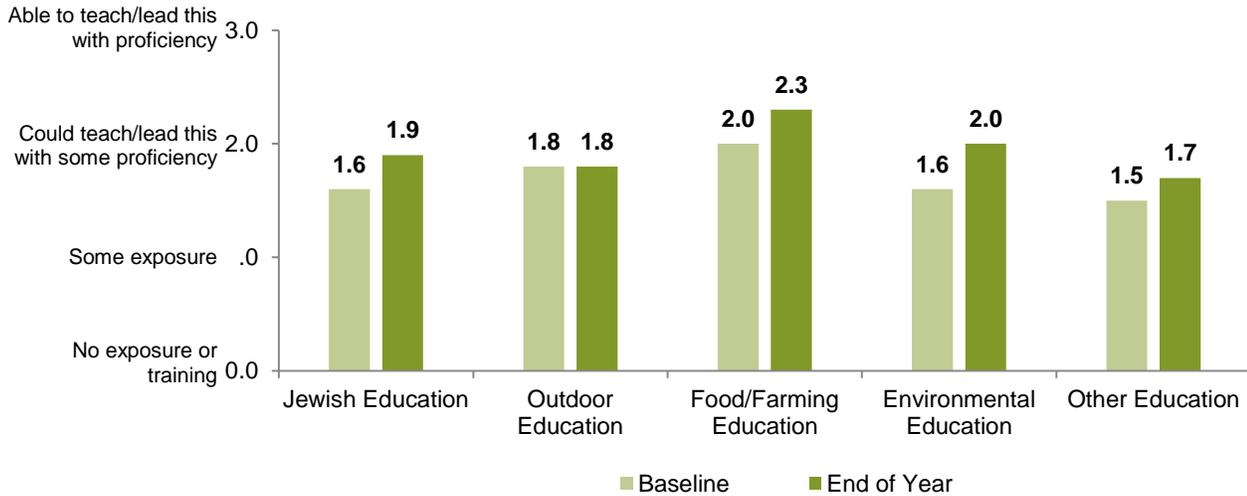


**Between the start and end of the Fellowship, cohort 1 Fellows reported an increase in their teaching proficiencies across almost all education areas—except for outdoor education, which remained the same** (see Exhibit 11 on the following page). Cohort 1 Fellows reported the greatest increase in their ability to teach subjects related to environmental education. By the end of the Fellowship, Fellows in JCOs report greater gains and changes in proficiencies related to teaching environmental, food/farming, and Jewish education than those in JOFEE organizations, despite reporting lower proficiencies than Fellows in JOFEE organizations at both the start and end of the Fellowship.

***“Despite currently working in OFEE and seeing myself, realistically, in the OFFE world for at least a little while, I absolutely consider myself a JOFEE professional because I have learned about how my Jewish community and identity is deeply linked to the work that I do as an environmental educator. That link cannot be unlearned or undone.”***

– Cohort 1 Fellow

Exhibit 11  
**Cohort 1 Fellows' Baseline and End-of-Year Teaching Proficiencies**  
 n=17



### Factors Influencing Fellows' Experiences

**Fellows spend less time than expected on direct JOFEE programming.** Although JOFEE supervisors initially expected a majority of Fellows to spend about half of their time on direct JOFEE programming, a majority of Fellows do not wind up spending that much time on it (Exhibit 12). Two Fellows in JOFEE organizations spent less than 20% of their time on direct JOFEE programming. When Fellows discuss obstacles to achieving impact and barriers to doing JOFEE work, these include being asked to work on projects that are not JOFEE-related but take a lot of time and energy, not having access to opportunities, and discovering that personal goals and the host organization's needs do not always line up.

**Overall, the actual amount of time spent on JOFEE-related tasks is similar between Fellows in JOFEE organizations and Fellows in JCOs.** Although Fellows spend a lot of time on administration and operations related to programming, some supervisors still feel that Fellows need to develop stronger general nonprofit skills that are useful to the host organizations, including program administration, budgeting, outreach, marketing, customer service, and professionalism.

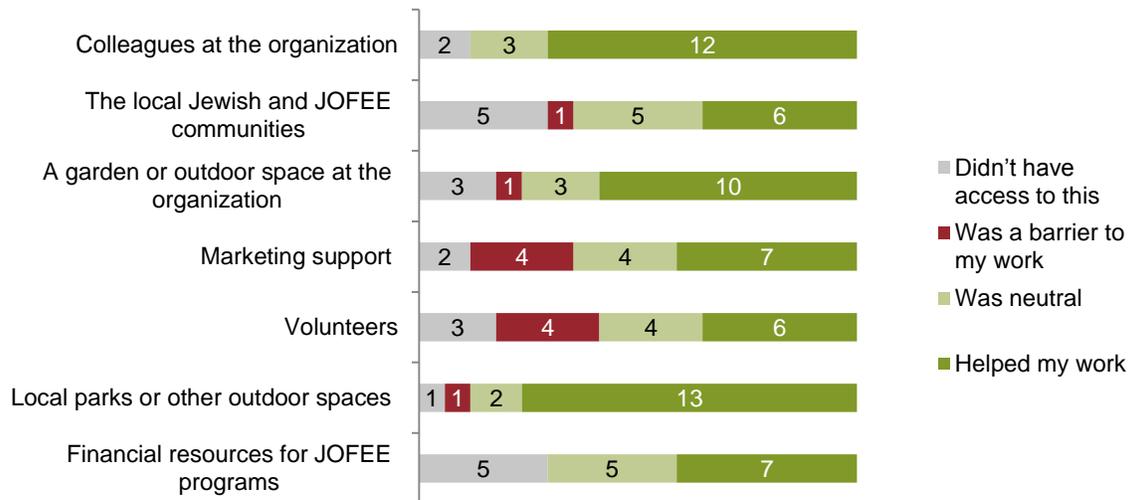
Exhibit 12  
**Percentage of Time Cohort 1 Fellows Reported Working on JOFEE & Non-JOFEE Activities in JOFEE & JCO Organizations**  
 n=17

|   | 0–20% | 21–40% | 41–60% | 61–80% |
|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Direct JOFEE programming                              | 5     | 8      | 3      | 1      |
| JOFEE administration and operations                   | 6     | 7      | 3      | 1      |
| Non-JOFEE programming, administration, and operations | 10    | 5      | 1      | 1      |
| Professional development/training                     | 15    | 2      | 0      | 0      |

Less than ideal

**Most Fellows need and receive a range of human, financial, and other resources throughout their Fellowships**, though not everyone has access to the same or as many of these types of resources due to organizational differences. Three quarters of the Fellows (76%) say colleagues at their organization helped their work, and many say access to a garden or other outdoor space (59%) and the local Jewish and JOFEE communities (71%) helped their work (Exhibit 13). Some Fellows note that the lack of financial resources for JOFEE programming and marketing support are actually barriers to their work. Fellows at JOFEE organizations are more likely to say that a resource helped their work compared with Fellows at JCOs. There are three Fellows at JOFEE organizations, however, who report that they didn't have access to most resources.

Exhibit 13  
**Number of Fellows Reporting Access to Resources During the Fellowship**  
 n=17

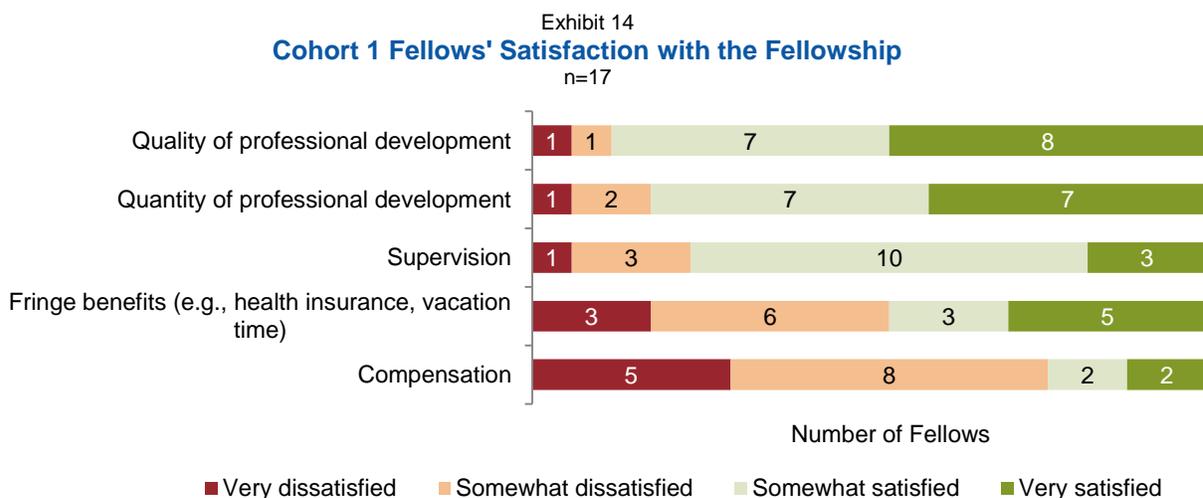


**From supervisors' perspectives, a Fellow's skill set and support from staff at the organization play a key role in helping Fellows to be successful.** A few supervisors also mention that the Fellow's mentor and the Fellow's personality are also factors that contributed to the success of the Fellow. As each host organization is different, there are no specific similarities between the barriers. However, it appears that there could be better initial communication between the organization and the Fellow to set clear expectations of responsibilities. As one supervisor notes, "it was a new program, so there are always 'bumps in the road'"—given the novelty of these programs, barriers and challenges are to be expected.

**From the Fellows' perspectives, support from their supervisor and other Fellows within the Fellowship, and a supportive team and community within the host organizations, are critical to achieving success in the Fellowship.** Some Fellows note that partnerships with other organizations helped their organization succeed. **Conversely, Fellows say inadequate time and financial resources hinder their ability to achieve their intended impact.** In addition to budget constraints, Fellows say they had too many projects and responsibilities outside their main role as Fellows, or not enough time to implement programs. Fellows in JOFEE organizations are more likely to mention having too many projects and responsibilities; as one Fellow notes, "running many short programs at the same time makes it difficult to achieve impact." Fellows at JCOs are also more likely to mention the struggle with figuring out how to fit JOFEE into the community or organization: "my community did not know what JOFEE was originally, so it took time to gain traction."

## Satisfaction with the Fellowship

On the whole, Fellows are satisfied with their Fellowship experience, though not with their compensation (Exhibit 14). This is true for Fellows in both JCOs and JOFEE organizations, whether or not the Fellows worked in their organization prior to the Fellowship. In particular, Fellows are very satisfied with the quality and quantity of the professional development offered during the Fellowship. However, when comparing baseline to follow-up, more Fellows are very dissatisfied with compensation in the Fellowship compared to their compensation at their last job in JOFEE or the Jewish community. Mentors also heard Fellows complain about compensation levels and disparities between Fellows, given that some Fellows (especially those who were former employees at their host institutions) received additional levels of funding from their host organizations. Many mentors also feel that Fellows' salaries and benefits could be improved.



**Fellows had unique challenges that mentors could not help Fellows fully resolve.** While mentors are able to provide a listening ear, advice, practical skills and knowledge, and a safe space to support the Fellow, mentors are not positioned to fully solve these challenges. Issues include how to cope with difficult staff dynamics—whether having multiple people to report to, dealing with staff turnover and transitions, attending to discrepancies with pay, or gender imbalances in the field—as well as uncertainty about career goals after the Fellowship and other internal work patterns out of the Fellow's control.

*“My Fellow has a place to reflect on their experience, share challenges, ask for advice, and explore their vision for the JOFEE field and their place in it.”*

– Mentor

## Future Intentions

**At the Fellowship's end, Fellows declare themselves JOFEE professionals.** This is a huge gain from baseline. At the start of the Fellowship, only 9 Fellows considered themselves JOFEE professionals, compared with 16 at the end.

The Fellowship has contributed to Fellows' values and sense of community, both professional and Jewish, which could pave the way for a sustained connection to JOFEE and Jewish life. More Fellows strongly agree that they have access to a network of JOFEE professionals after the Fellowship than at baseline.

*“It helped me go through a spiritual journey and greatly deepened my Jewish knowledge and experience.”*

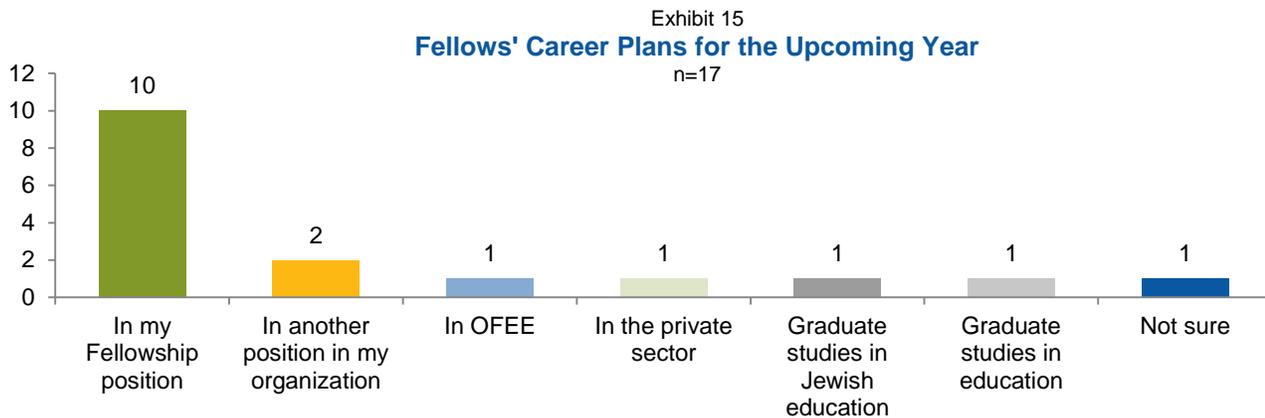
– Cohort 1 Fellow

Although long-term plans are still unclear, some Fellows feel that the Fellowship deepened their connection to Judaism. While all Fellows are enthusiastic about how much the Fellowship has expanded their networks and enhanced their skills, some note that it has also taught them how to integrate Judaism into their future work.

JCOs are more likely to keep the Fellow after the Fellowship than JOFEE organizations (Exhibit 15). Six of the 7 Fellows in JCOs are staying in their current position, while only 6 of the 10 Fellows at JOFEE organizations are doing the same. Part of the reason could be that more Fellows placed at JCOs were existing employees. It is also positive and noteworthy that at the beginning of the Fellowship, only 5 Fellows expected to stay at their organization beyond the duration of the Fellowship, and by the end of the first Fellowship year, 12 planned to stay employed at their host organization.

*“I think that it has potential to help to keep talented staff in the Jewish field, and if those Fellows choose to move on to other fields, they’ll bring with them this core component into their professional history that will impact the work that they’ll do moving forward.”*

– Host Organization



Fellows' longer-term career plans are not meaningfully altered by the Fellowship. Similar to baseline, about half are still unsure about where they will be in their career in three years (Exhibit 16), and this is not surprising, as it is common for young adults to not have a clear picture of their future. The number of Fellows who believe they will be at their current organization—either in a new role or the same Fellowship position role—did not change from baseline. Fellows in JOFEE organizations are more unsure about their careers in the next three years compared with Fellows in JCOs, who are likely to maintain their role within the JCO.

A majority of Fellows are also unsure about their future long-term career plans, which is also very consistent with those responses at baseline. There are no distinct, systematic differences between the long-term plans of Fellows in JOFEE organizations and Fellows in JCOs. It appears that the Fellowship is more effective in impacting Fellows' short-term plans (Exhibit 17 on the following page).

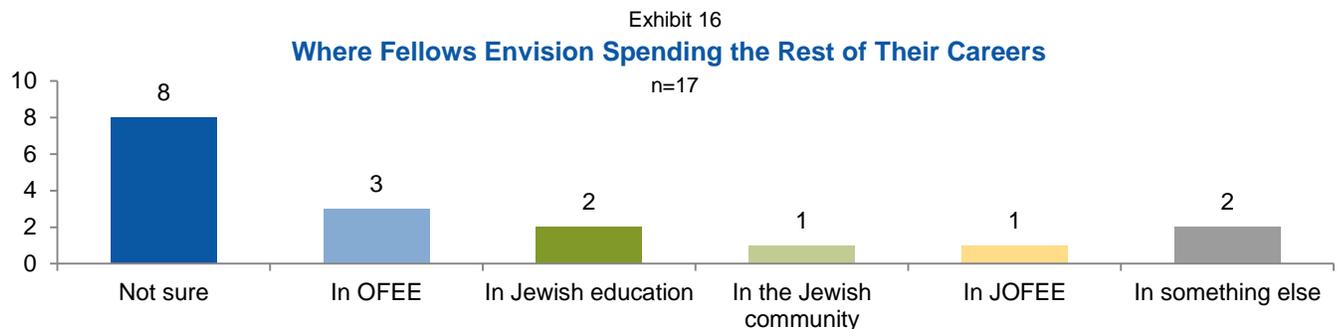
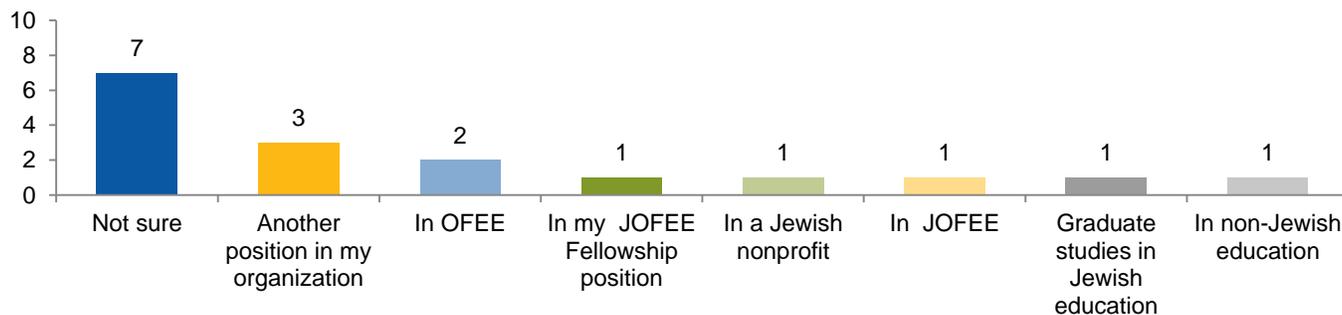


Exhibit 17

**Where Fellows Are Most Likely To Be Working or Studying Three Years from Now**

n=17



*“It is hard to say because I am not supporting myself through JOFEE, but I am writing a JOFEE thesis proposal right now on how farming can resolve intercultural conflict between Jews and Muslims.”*

– Cohort 1 Fellow

**IMPACT ON THE HOST ORGANIZATIONS**

**The Fellows increase the capacity of their host organizations to lead, expand, create, and sustain JOFEE programming.** According to the 18

supervisors, the Fellows’ energy, passion, and skills are important characteristics that further Fellows’ impact on their organizations. Fellows at JOFEE organizations are more likely than Fellows at JCOs to talk about how they helped the host organization increase program capacity, whether through new programs or better-quality programs, due to the addition of a staff member. On the other hand, Fellows at JCOs talk with pride about being the first to introduce JOFEE programming to their host organization and generate enthusiasm for JOFEE programming. One JCO supervisor noted that “the other program staff are starting to think of JOFEE as just something that we do, that is part of who we are,” highlighting that Fellows placed at JCOs are also able to integrate JOFEE programming into their organizations.

*“The Fellow has allowed us to dramatically expand our youth and family educational programs. The department would look totally different if we didn’t have the Fellow. She runs the bulk of those programs and has created new programs.”*

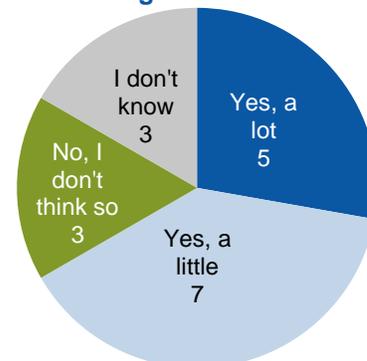
– Host Organization

**The Fellowship’s trainings benefit not only the Fellows themselves but also their organizations (Exhibit 18).** Supervisors say the trainings empowered Fellows and helped them to grow, while also helping them to engage other staff with JOFEE and integrate JOFEE into existing

programs. For example, one JCC supervisor noticed that the Fellow instigated a shift across the agency to working and living green, engaging lay leaders and staff in ways they hadn’t been engaged before. However, many supervisors are unfamiliar with the training the Fellows receive and would like more transparency in order to better understand what training their Fellow receives.

Exhibit 18

**Did the Trainings Help Your Organization?**



**Cohort 1 JCOs all plan to continue or expand upon their JOFEE programming after their experience with the Fellowship.** At the conclusion of the Fellowship, all host organizations but one feel that they know what kinds of JOFEE programs can be successful for them. However, although all cohort 1 host organizations want to continue or expand their programming, only half feel that they have the financial resources to do so. This skepticism about financial strength is true for both JOFEE organizations and JCOs.

**JOFEE organizations were more likely than JCOs to seek out and receive a cohort 2 Fellow** (Exhibit 19). Many organizations would have liked a second Fellow but lacked the financial resources. Other reasons may be that many of the JCOs hired Fellows who were already on staff and are more likely to retain that staff member at the end of the Fellowship rather than take on a new Fellow. However, the Louisville JCC is a noteworthy success story as told by one stakeholder: “The Fellow was placed at the JCC through our application process. He was the best candidate for what they were looking for. He had a very successful year and they were able to hire him to stay on after the Fellowship ended.”

Exhibit 19

**Landscape of Host Organizations Post-Fellowship**

n=18

|              | Participating in cohort 2  |   | Interested in participating in the future, contingent upon funding | Will not participate again   |
|--------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>JOFEE</b> | Eden Village Camp<br>Hazon<br>Hazon/Teva<br>Hazon/Transformative Experiences | Jewish Farm School<br>Pearlstone Center<br>Urban Adamah<br>Wilderness Torah | Bonai Shalom<br>Pushing the Envelope                               | Ramah Outdoors<br><i>(doesn't work with camp schedule)</i>               |
| <b>JCO</b>   |  |   | Peninsula JCC<br>Oshman Family JCC<br>JCC Chicago                  | Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC<br>JCC of Louisville<br>Tamarack Camps      |
|              |  |   |  | Mayerson JCC of Cincinatti <i>(kept the first Fellow as an employee)</i> |

**IMPACT ON THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

**Fellows provide a different lens and fresh perspectives that help community members to engage with the host organization.** Supervisors for Fellows placed at JCOs were more likely to note that Fellows exposed organization participants to the environment than supervisors for JOFEE organizations, which already emphasize the environment in their programming. On the other hand, JOFEE supervisors were more likely to discuss Fellows’ positive connections to participants, as many JOFEE organizations are smaller in size where Fellows work more directly with participants. **While JCO organizations report the greatest gains to participants in terms of exposing participants to new ideas and a new lens by which to view Judaism, all host organizations feel that participants have benefited from the new programs that Fellows helped to create.**

*“Participants interacted with the environment through a completely new lens and in connection with Jewish values. They were exposed to new foods and new ways to view and access them. The way they interacted with the outdoors also shifted and demonstrated a greater appreciation.”*

– Host Organization

**Fellows note that programs with specific characteristics have had the largest positive impact on participants.** These characteristics (Exhibit 20 on the following page) have helped enhance participants’ connection to Judaism and Jewish life and deepen participants’ commitment to the outdoors, food, farming, and the environment.

### Types of Programs That Have Had the Most Impact on Participants

n=18

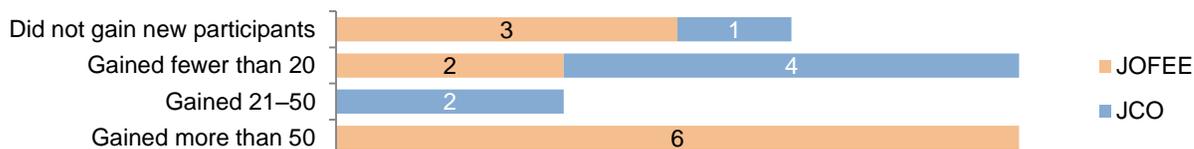
| Program Characteristics   | JOFEE Program Example                                      |
|---|--|
| Allows participants to connect with Judaism in immersive, hands-on ways   | Chesapeake TEVA<br>Hazon Food Conference                   |
| Provides a low-barrier point of entry for participants to learn about the program topic (i.e., does not require a lot of prior knowledge) | Philly Farm Crew<br>Fresh Stop Market<br>Tu B'Shevat Seder |
| Has a strong program structure that is thoroughly prepared  | Becoming Shomrei Adamah                                    |
| Connects participants to either their surroundings (i.e., nature and environment) or their identity or both                               | Tiyul Outdoor Day Adventure<br>Passover in the Desert      |
| Casts a wide net in terms of audience type  | Food Conscious Series                                      |

**JOFEE organizations are more likely than JCOs to gain more youth, teen, or young adult participants or members due to the Fellow’s work.** About half of the host organizations report gaining fewer than 20 new participants, while a third of the organizations gained more than 50 new participants (Exhibit 21).

Exhibit 21

### Number of New Participants for Host Organization Due to the Work of the Fellow

n=18



**Fellows were involved in more than 467 JOFEE activities, and half of these were new activities that Fellows helped to create.** JCOs had a higher number of new activities/programs than JOFEE organizations. According to the Fellows’ reports, almost all of these activities included Jewish, environmental, food, farming, and outdoor content. About 15% of activities lasted for more than four hours. The majority of the programs/activities that lasted longer than four hours came from four host organizations in particular. The Fellows at three of the four J4 organizations were involved in a large number of activities (40–89), while most other Fellows were involved in 13–30 activities. Fellows from two organizations were involved in only six activities throughout their entire Fellowship.

#### Activities by the Numbers

Total number of participants: 38,527<sup>2</sup>  
Total number of activities: 467

Number of **new** activities: 238  
Number of **existing** activities: 229

Number of activities **4 hours or more**: 72  
Number of activities **less than 4 hours**: 385

*“Our Fellow has run probably over 100 educational programs for people in the community, and the ripple effects of that work are unknowable. She is amazing at what she does, and I know that people are blown away by their interactions with her as an educator.”*

– Host Organization

<sup>2</sup> One Fellow reported reaching more than 10,000 participants at one event, an estimate that was based on event attendance.

## Reflections & Recommendations

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Looking across the evaluation findings to date, on the whole, the JOFEE Fellowship is proving to be a beneficial experience for both the Fellows and their host organizations. This 11-month paid position boosts the skills and experience of young professionals who are interested in JOFEE. At the same time, host organizations gain someone whom they otherwise might not have been able to employ and who—both directly and indirectly in enhancing the organization’s capacity—provides new and enhanced JOFEE experiences to their communities. The Fellowship’s structural shifts between cohorts 1 and 2 have strengthened the program and demonstrate the Fellowship’s orientation to learning. Shortening the Fellowship training, changing the time of year for launching the cohort, and changes to the mentorship training are welcome improvements.

From this evaluation, we have identified some issues for consideration as the JOFEE Fellowship enters its third year. These reflections and associated recommendations focus on two distinct areas: (1) the structure of the Fellowship itself, and (2) how the Fellowship can make an impact on the JOFEE landscape. In addition, we have specified when recommendations take the form of short-term adjustments and those that what we would designate as longer-term structural changes.

### FELLOWSHIP STRUCTURE

#### Short-Term Adjustments

**Cohort experience.** Fellows highly value their connections to the other Fellows in their cohort, which they made through the orientation and training intensive. Bringing the Fellows together is an important part of the experience of the Fellowship. Given that some Fellows mentioned that they would enjoy more peer-to-peer mentorship during the Fellowship, enhancing peer-to-peer communication opportunities throughout the Fellowship may be valuable. One Fellow said, *“Being in a cohort with other peers was so valuable. Those relationships I have no doubt will last a long time.”*

*“This Fellowship grounded me as a JOFEE professional. I feel confident, resourced, skilled, well-networked, seen as part of the first cohort, and tied into the greater JOFEE movement.”*

–Cohort 1 Fellow

**Communication with host organizations.** Host organizations that are new to the Fellowship can feel isolated from the others in the Fellowship and not feel properly welcomed into the experience or the network. Several strategies could address this issue and serve to deepen the host organizations’ understanding of the Fellowship, thereby enabling them to build community support for the JOFEE work:

- Provide supervisors at host organizations who are new to the Fellowship with more information prior to applying for the Fellowship
- Conduct a deeper initial orientation for new host organizations
- Create opportunities for new host organizations to connect at the onset, as well as continued opportunities to collaborate with other host organizations and share best practices
- Instill a greater connection throughout the year between new host organizations and Hazon
- Cultivate a better understanding among host organizations of the training and professional development provided to the Fellow

**Supervision.** Although many Fellows had productive supervisory relationships, several rated “working with the direct supervisor” as being only a little valuable. This result suggests that the Fellowship could examine what makes for a successful supervisory relationship for these types of Fellows and support supervisors around these issues, including ensuring common expectations.

**Mentorship.** While some Fellows received a tremendous amount of support from their mentors, others did not find this experience to be very meaningful and seek clarity around what mentorship entails. From the mentors’ perspectives, overall, they are looking for more direction, including templates and suggestions for how to structure the mentor/mentee relationship so that both parties can get the most out of it. Mentors also want clear communication about expectations and timeline, as well as further guidance in helping Fellows to gain more soft professional skills. There are many possible reasons why this aspect of the Fellowship had an uneven impact on Fellows: lack of face-to-face time between Fellow and mentor, and limited time for mentors to come together and get on the same page about how to mentor, among other reasons. We recommend that Hazon provide more guidance to the mentors and nurture a community of practice in order to strengthen this aspect of the Fellowship.

## Longer-Term Structural Changes

**Length of the Fellowship.** An 11-month Fellowship is a brief period in which to make an impact on an organization. Fellows are leaving their posts having made useful contributions yet there is still much work to be done within their organizations. In addition, host organizations—especially small JOFEE organizations—need support once the Fellowship ends to ensure that their investments continue to thrive. If the Fellowship is to continue, other models should be considered, including a two-year Fellowship or a bridge year for Fellows after the first year. We recommend considering a model in which host organizations that hire Fellows who are not previous employees create a financial sustainability plan to employ the Fellow for a second year. A mini-grant could also provide bridge funding to support the Fellow’s second year of employment. Ideally, these Fellows would be employed at the organization not only for a second year but also for more years to come, perhaps with the position itself becoming a permanent fixture in the organization. Host organizations may need some help in creating a financial sustainability plan (see the related recommendation on creating financially strong JOFEE organizations below). Given that many Fellows want to continue working at their host organization, the more the Fellowship can do to prepare host organizations for this actuality, the better.

**Fellow diversity.** Currently, there is a lack of diversity among the Fellows, with the majority being white and female. One could argue that the Fellowship is providing an opportunity to deepen the female Jewish leadership that is lacking in the JOFEE world. At the same time, other racial and ethnic diversities within the Jewish community could be reflected in the next cohort of Fellows, and this shift would also infuse more diversity into the larger JOFEE field. We recommend evaluating and perhaps broadening the current methods used to recruit Fellows. If the pool of applicants is not diverse then the Fellowship might benefit from using a formal or informal nomination system and/or using a recruiter to achieve a more diverse group of Fellows.

**Trainings.** The Fellows valued their training experiences and the opportunity to learn together about the JOFEE field in general. However, these learnings are not always relevant to the work that Fellows carry out at their placements. Rather than invest in a standalone orientation/training on JOFEE curriculum, pedagogy, and content, it may be just as or more beneficial to offer Fellows professional development that is already taking place in existing JOFEE organizations. Also, it is important to note that many of the Fellows spent a good deal of their time in JOFEE administration and operations, which was dictated by the needs of the organizations, and yet the training and professional development did not focus on these types of needed skills. There is a tension in the field right now, given that organizations need people who are not just JOFEE educators but also have nonprofit management skills. If core training and curriculum are being developed, it is best if these are relevant and tied to the work Fellows will be doing in their organizations.

*“For our organization to hire the Fellows long-term, we would benefit from the Fellowship being focused not only on education but on nonprofit management (admin, budget, outreach, customer service, professionalism) in general.”*

– Host Organization

*“JOFEE Fellows are ambassadors. They are a youthful passionate voice for a group of young adults who are a challenge to engage. They are respected by their peers and incredibly passionate about what they do.”*

– Key Stakeholder

**Alumni engagement.** Although some resources are available to Fellows post-Fellowship, including Cohort listserves, Facebook groups, two professional webinars per year, and scholarships to attend the JOFEE Network Gathering, there is a unanimous call among Fellows and Fellowship stakeholders for alumni support post-Fellowship in order to help Fellows find jobs and next career steps. An ongoing community of practice for Fellows could also include help with job matching and continued mentorship based on alumni’s current positions and needs.

## MAKING AN IMPACT ON THE JOFEE LANDSCAPE

**Expanding JOFEE’s reach.** At this time, some consider the JOFEE Fellowship to have some insular qualities, with a cadre of JOFEE programs and professionals along the coasts or in select pockets of the country. While these JOFEE communities have developed in mutually supportive ways, reserving them to particular organizations and geographies will limit the Fellowship from expanding its reach.

*“What would it look like to bring JOFEE to congregational education and to revolutionize it? I think these are the areas that are the most ripe synagogues, day schools and JCCs.”*

– Key Stakeholder

There is potential to spread JOFEE into more uncharted geographic areas, including areas that view JOFEE as primarily a “fringe” movement, in addition to host organizations that are not traditionally oriented toward OFEE or JOFEE work. In addition, there are also unexplored pathways for the Fellowship to potentially collaborate with relevant groups outside of the Jewish world, including movements in food and social justice, environmental education, climate change and renewable energy. Some of this expansion will require increased publicity about the

tangible impact JOFEE can make—publicity the Fellowship is well situated to conduct. Sharing JOFEE successes and developing deeper partnerships could help grow the Fellowship and the field in innovative ways and garner new energy, new organizations, and new people to sustain the field.

**Connecting JOFEE to traditional Jewish organizations.** We recommend continuing to place Fellows in Jewish community organizations in order to grow the field and bridge the divide between JOFEE and traditional Jewish institutions. Day schools, rabbinical schools, and synagogues are areas of untapped growth for the Fellowship that can broaden the base for JOFEE and make room for new jobs post-Fellowship. These organizations could benefit from the ways JOFEE values complement and enhance traditional Jewish values, and Fellows in JOFEE organizations could benefit from learning the ins and outs of traditional Jewish institutions, stimulating culture change among both traditional Jewish institutions and JOFEE educators toward a more synergistic and inclusive Jewish environment.

**Creating financially strong JOFEE organizations.** Given that this Fellowship is designed to take young people with an interest in JOFEE and root them in this field in order to retain and grow talent that otherwise might have left for another opportunity, the question remains: Do these young people have JOFEE jobs to go to after the end of the Fellowship? While the Fellowship is a positive source of support for JOFEE organizations, JOFEE organizations need additional fundraising support. The field is growing very fast, despite not having the financial support, resources, and pay scales that many nonprofits and other Jewish institutions have. There are limited mid-management and leadership positions within JOFEE, and not all JOFEE organizations have financially sustainable growth models that will allow them to employ additional JOFEE staff. JOFEE organizations need guidance on best practices in fundraising and JOFEE fundraiser models that work—for example, Farm to Table Meals or Bike Rides—in addition to skills in business planning to ensure that the field is not solely dependent on grants. Financial sustainability means that JOFEE organizations have diversified funding streams, increased earned revenue percentages, individual giving, local funding, Federation funding, and national funding. Crucial to this sustainability is publicizing the JOFEE field; if these JOFEE organizations are seen as a key component of growing Jewish life, then JOFEE will be a viable field that people can, and want to, stay involved in for a lifetime.

*“We’re not running membership organizations, none of us are using the synagogue model, we’re all fee for service or philanthropy based, and people aren’t willing to pay the true value of our program. I think they’re also high-value experiences that people aren’t willing to pay for, so scaling them doesn’t necessarily provide economic benefit.”*

– Key Stakeholder

*“I think the main opportunity is that the work we do generally is one of the fastest growing, most exciting things in the Jewish world, and I think the foundations are starting to see that.”*

– Key Stakeholder

*“We’re all having a similar issue, which is that the community loves our programming, our programming is tremendously impactful, there’s huge acknowledgement for all the various sectors of the Jewish community that we’re doing something great, and yet it’s really hard to get ongoing funding.”*

– Key Stakeholder

**Career trajectories.** Most of the Fellows enter the Fellowship fairly early in their careers. Deepening one's passion and experience for JOFEE may not lead to a career in this field or in Jewish education, but the JOFEE Fellowship will have a lasting impact on the individual no matter what their future choices are.

*“I am not 100% sure that I see myself working primarily within the Jewish community in any career-long sense. While I deeply value my JOFEE experience and my Jewish community, I also am deeply committed to other passions of mine that lie in connecting a wider audience to the natural world. Additionally, because I am not planning on moving across the country any time soon, my access to JOFEE jobs is somewhat limited.”*

– Cohort 1 Fellow

*“This is my community and I have deep passion for this work. But it's confusing and uncertain, and I think my life's work may not be in JOFEE. I'm not sure if my career path is just one thing, but perhaps many things that piece together.”*

– Cohort 1 Fellow

## CONCLUSION

**The JOFEE field continues to be an exciting, growing, and important part of Judaism that needs to stay at the forefront.** While some traditional aspects of Jewish institutions are struggling, more and more people are gravitating toward JOFEE, and the sector continues to explode with growth. Many traditional Jewish institutions could benefit from JOFEE. This represents an enormous opportunity for the leadership in the American Jewish community. At this time in history, when funders are turning toward civically aligned causes, they still need to continue to come together to fund and nourish the JOFEE space.

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2040 Bancroft Way, Suite 400  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
tel 510.665.6100  
fax 510.665.6129

[informingchange.com](http://informingchange.com)