

YOUNG, JEWISH AND WORKING FOR CHANGE

Jewish Service Learning

**An Analysis of Participant Jewish Identity
and
Program Characteristics**

Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

Tikkun olam, the historic Hebrew phrase for ‘repairing’ or ‘perfecting’ the world lies at the heart of the Jewish service movement.

Understood as much as a concept of social justice as an imperative to serve, the tradition extends beyond the obligations to the Jewish community to the world at large. This fundamental value permeates the Jewish ethos lending itself to a host of social action programs and volunteer initiatives.

The call to social action is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the recent growth of Jewish immersion service programs over the last 13 years. Five programs in 1995 have grown to more than 30 programs just over a decade later with many groups reporting more applicants than available service slots. In spite of this rapid program expansion, the 2007-2008 cohort of 3,000 young American Jews engaged in service represents less than 1% of eligible Jews aged 18 to 24 (Saxe et.al., 2007; BTW informing change, 2008).

As the menu of service offerings expands, many within the Jewish community wanted to better understand these programs.

Who participates in these programs? What is the nature of their experience? Is there a relationship between program participation and Jewish identity and if there is a relationship, what is the nature of that relationship? Does the location of the service program affect its outcome, and if so, in what ways? What are the characteristics of short term programs verse long term programs? Do these differing characteristics change the nature of the impact of these programs upon the participants?

These and other questions guided the development of this comprehensive analysis commissioned by the Jewish Peoplehood and Identity Division of United Jewish Communities (UJC) and performed by researchers at the University of Texas at Austin’s RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service. The research team at the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service was led by Dr. Sarah Jane Rehnberg. Sociology doctoral students Jinwoo Lee and Jennifer Abzug Zalgison were critical in all phases of the research project. Public Affairs master’s student Rachel Veron provided invaluable research support and assistance with report development.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Over a 13-month period from September 2007 to October 2008, researchers developed, administered, and analyzed pre-service and post-service surveys of participants attending 12 Jewish service programs sponsored by eight organizations. Although program schedules varied widely, every effort was made to survey participants and a comparison population approximately three weeks prior to participating in a service project. The pre-service survey instrument gathered information about the respondents age, service history, family history and a series of questions designed to capture information about Jewish identity. (See Appendix A, Pre-Service Survey Instrument)

Approximately six weeks following the service experience, a post-service online survey instrument was administered to program participants and to the comparison population for that particular service program. The post-service survey asked questions pertaining to the service experience, and queried the participants about any changes that may have emerged relative to their Jewish identity utilizing the same questions that were first asked on the pre-service survey instruments (See Appendix B, Post-Service Survey Instrument). Both the pre and post service survey instruments contained a few open-ended qualitative questions asking

about Jewish identity. Additional data was gathered from seven focus group discussions convened in New York City, the Midwest and Los Angeles, to capture perceptions and nuanced insights into service programs and the affects of program participation.

Organizational participation in the study was entirely voluntary and involved the willingness of each organization to share with the research team lists of program participants and comparisons, (individuals who applied to attend these programs, but whose application for participation was either not accepted or for whom attendance became impossible). Contact with the participating programs and, in many cases, the coordinators of the specific service ventures occurred first in September of 2007 when the research team traveled to New York City to meet with members of the UJC staff. Small group meetings were scheduled with representatives of most of the participating organizations at which times the study was described and input was gathered from the various collaborators. While the programs were unified by their emphasis on service immersion experiences, great variation existed in terms of program administration, project time lines, and length and location of service.

Each organization managed its program according to its own internal organizational guidelines.

The collection of email addresses for the participants and the controls was managed on a program-by-program basis as well. Participant recruitment varied among the programs and their sponsoring organizations. In some cases such as Hillel, JDC or AJWS Alternative Breaks, local colleges and universities actually recruit program participants for the various alternative break programs. Consequently, the sponsoring organization would receive the names and contact information for program participants but not

receive information about persons who either applied and were not accepted into these initiatives, or later found they could not participate. This, and other variations by program, account in large part for the small number of comparison subjects involved in the study.

Survey respondents ranged in age from 18 to 31 and served in the US, in Israel and other international service locations. A total of 1,979 online surveys (1,366 participants and 613 comparisons, or applicants not accepted or not able to attend service programs) were distributed to the research subjects. Survey response rates were as follows:

49.9% (681) of participants responded to the pretest survey

38.8% (238) of comparisons responded to the pretest survey

65.2% (422) of participants returned the post-test survey

67.8% (139) of comparisons returned the post-test survey

65.8% (561) total response rate among post-service respondents¹

¹ Note that the number who responded in the pre-test survey is not necessarily the same as the number of surveys sent out in the post-survey. This discrepancy is primarily attributable to the lack of pos-service surveys for AJWS Volunteer Summer group and to those that opted out during the survey administration.

This endeavor produced a total of 839 partially completed surveys². Of this number, 630 surveys were returned by program participants and 209 surveys were responded to by individuals that applied to participate but either were not selected to participate or ultimately could not or chose not to participate. This dataset was used to describe general characteristics of young Jews in our study including both participant and non-participant. In all 48 men and women also shared their impressions of their service experiences in the small regional focus group discussions.

Assessing the impact of service on Jewish identity formation served as a primary goal of this study. Ideally, the researchers would have preferred to employ an experimental design in which participants and non-participant groups would have been randomly generated from the population of Jewish young people. Jewish identity would then be measured before service and after the completion of service based on a uniform timeline accommodating the extant schedules of programs. The control population would be assessed utilizing the time line generated for the experimental population.

² This dataset (N=839) was used to describe general population. Missing cases for socio-demographic variables including class standing, relationship status, and primary geographical residence, were treated with list-wise deletion. This leads to have some missing cases in Table 5, 6 and 7 but the disparity is largely negligible.

Unfortunately, applied research projects such as this are not afforded the luxury of such carefully controlled, randomized experimental designs. Rather, the schedule afforded the project combined with the absence of a broad participant/control population data set required considerable design adjustments. As noted previously, the populations studied in this project represent a self-selected group of young persons who became known to the collaborating partner organizations. The researchers were fully dependent upon the collaborating partners to provide us with data sets of participants and non-participants.

The non-participant group was considerably smaller than the participant population. In many cases the collaborating partners either would not share or did not have the names and contact information of non-participants. Because so much was either not known or could not be consistently assumed to be true about the non-participant population, the researchers selected to view this as a comparison population rather than a true 'control' population. Furthermore, in the case of the long term programs, the research schedule did not mesh with the program schedule meaning that the programs were already in progress at some level when the pre-service surveys were administered to this population and several of the programs had not fully concluded when the post-service

surveys were administered. All of these factors required considerable adjustments to the parameters of and methodology employed by the study. [See the footnote below for additional details³]

³ The quality of control group is more than essential in an experimental design study. However, the non-participant group encountered several critical limitations. First the number of non participant group who responded in both pre-post survey are small relative to participant group (422 participant, 139 non participants). Second, the distribution of non-participants by program does not match that of participants. That is, only certain program provided email list of non-participant. [Short term: among 7 different programs, only two provided list (Hillel Israel 69, Hillel Gulf coast 19), Long term: among 5 different programs, only two provided list (Avodah 42, Otzma 5)]. Third, preliminary analysis confirmed that we have a highly identified group in terms of pre-service Jewish identity. That is, roughly a half of respondent are already reached maximum level of Jewish identity, items measured in our study (e.g., scored 8 out of 8). And finally, half of the non-participants (64/128) in post survey responded that they had taken part in an immersion service program or volunteered with a Jewish organization. This level of service participation violates the essential role of a comparison group. These limitations combined to work against a true comparison between participants and non participants in the post test. Thus, the research team has utilized the capacity of our non participants in a very limited manner; that of describing general characteristics with comparison to participants.

This limited use of non-participants forced us to find an alternative way to measure the impact of service. That is, we are now only allowed to make comparison among participants with two different timing, pre and post service. This limits the spirit of randomization between participant and non-participants. This series of methodological challenges and the subsequent decision making processes required us to choose among alternatives that were less than perfect. First, we decided to use pre service characteristics to capture the association of participants' general characteristics and their Jewish identity by employing regression analyses. Note, that by using pre service characteristics, we can take advantage of more observations (313 vs 549), given the very marginal impact of service in terms of differences among Jewish identity scores on pre and post surveys. In order to capture the marginal differences between pre and post service in terms of assessing the impact of service, we employed a series of T tests to compare Jewish identity between pre service and post service.

To adjust for these factors the team conducted extensive and comprehensive exploratory analyses of the participant and comparison populations. The analysis of the responses to these initial surveys revealed the general characteristics of and the extent of Jewish identity of Jewish service program applicants. Further, multiple regression analysis was used to determine what demographic, individual and experiential factors contributed to the formation of pre-service Jewish identities. It was essential to establish these effects before turning to the key research questions.

The surveys completed by applicants that ultimately did not participate in a service program were separated out and later used as a comparison to those that were actual participants in a Jewish service program. The responses of participants and non-participants were compared to find out whether or not the Jewish identity of these two groups differed. A series of t-tests were employed to identify whether the Jewish identity of those who participated in a Jewish service program differed that those who did not participate.

Once post-service surveys were completed and returned, the responses to these surveys were analyzed to determine the impact participation

in Jewish service programs had on Jewish identity. Multiple regression was utilized to determine the impact of program characteristics (e.g. length and location of the program) on Jewish identity of program participants.

Statistical analysis confirmed that both the self-selected group of program participants and the self-selected comparison were highly identified with their Jewish heritage, or more simply put, had high levels of Jewish identity.

Our extensive exploratory analyses demonstrate, due in large part to the existence of high entry levels of Jewish identity within the population studied, that immersion service programs had

very marginal impact on Jewish identity for this cohort. Thus by utilizing conventional ANOVA tests there was very little we could do to show the differences between pre and post period.

Given the marginal impact, we could still attempt to use only the post test dataset but this decision would force us to use less than 400 observations, a sample size which is usually regarded as minimal. Given the very marginal impact of service on Jewish identity due to the extant high levels of Jewish identity among both the participant and comparison population, we selected to utilize the larger sample size available with the pre service dataset.

SERVICE TERMINOLOGY

Numerous service programs populate the landscape of opportunities available to young Jews. Programs vary in length, number of participants, location and mission, yet all are united by their desire to make the world a better place to live through giving of one's self and one's time.

Terminology within the service community is complex. Volunteering, or giving of one's time in "recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one's basic obligations" (Ellis & Noyes, 1990) represents a powerful force for social good. On any given day, more than 15 million American's are engaged in some sort of volunteer action (Nonprofit Almanac, 2008).

And yet, not all service opportunities are the same, nor are they referenced in the same way. Professionals often speak of *pro bono publico* work when they contribute their professional abilities to others at no cost or very reduced rates. **Activism** and **advocacy** frequently references service provided in a political context with a focus on systems change or social reform. **Community organizing** and **self-help** are terms often used when people come together, either of their own volition or with the encouragement of others to address issues

germane to their neighborhood or a personal concern or cause. And a quick 'google' of the term community service suggests that this term can reference volunteer work, national service initiatives such as AmeriCorps, or court ordered restitution mandated of certain non-violent offenders.

Service-learning represents yet another variation on the theme. In their text linking service to the American's Schools Act Program (1997) Billig and Kraft answer the question "What is service-learning?" with this answer: **"Service-learning provides thoughtfully organized experiences that integrate students' academic learning with service that meets actual community needs. As such it blends service and learning in ways that serve to reinforce and enrich one another (1-1)."** Conceptualized as an educational method, service-learning intentionally links academic and learning opportunities with service opportunities which provide students with "opportunities to learn new roles, think more analytically, and apply knowledge and skills in a systematic way. (1-4)."

A three-legged stool, service-learning combines preparation, service and reflection to generate outcomes beneficial to both the person and/or cause served as well as the person or group providing the service.

Within the Jewish context, BTW informing change (2008) define Jewish service-learning as “direct service that responds to real community needs with structured learning and time for reflection, all of which are placed in a rich context of Jewish education and values (p. 2).” It should be noted that this description in no way conflicts with the definition of the volunteer put forth by Billig and Kraft. As such, the person engaged in service-learning in either a Jewish or secular context, is generally considered to be a volunteer who engages in a particular type of activity designed to benefit *both* the person doing the service and the recipient of the service.

An additional characteristic of the service programs examined in this study and an organizing principle of the Jewish Service Online Network (JSoN) is the duration and location of the program. JSoN segments the service opportunities listed on its website as volunteer intensive/full-time; volunteer ongoing/local; and finally as jobs and internship opportunities. **Perhaps it is the *immersion* aspect of service – the full-time, intensive volunteering that removes a person from his or her home community and places the**

individual in a new environment – that is one of the most significant distinguishing features these initiatives.

The programs in this study all provide service immersion experiences. In addition, each of the programs engages in some degree of preparation and offers reflective opportunities within the context of service. The financial dimension of the programs investigated in this project all carry costs for participation. In some instances these costs are borne largely by the sponsoring agency. In other instances, the participants raise money to help underwrite expenses related to service. Several of the long term programs provide a stipend for the participants to cover basic expenses of living, but none of the programs provides a market-value wage in exchange for service. **As such each of the program engages young persons as volunteers in service immersions experiences characterized by some level of preparation, service and reflection.** For the purposes of this study, the participants are volunteers. The programs they engage in are immersion service-learning experiences. The terms ‘immersion programs’ or ‘service learning programs’ will be used interchangeably.

JEWISH SERVICE PROGRAMS

At the request of the Jewish Peoplehood and Identity Division of United Jewish Community, the following organizations listed in Table 1 agreed to participate in this study:

Table 1: Description of Jewish Service Programs

Program	Description
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)	<p><i>Alternative Break</i> is a seven-day, international service trip for groups of 15-25 Jewish college students. The program is designed to connect participants with Jewish peers abroad and to encourage discussion of the pressing needs of the international Jewish community.</p> <p><i>Jewish Service Corps</i> is a 12-month, international service trip for young Jewish adult (or small groups of 2-3) with strong Jewish backgrounds. Volunteers are offered roles that match their personal strengths to help restore and strengthen Jewish community life.</p>
American Jewish World Service (AJWS)	<p><i>Alternative Breaks (Winter, Spring)</i> are one-week, international service trips for college students (aged 18-23). The program partners with NGOs in developing nations for project work and emphasizes the connections between social justice, service, and Judaism.</p> <p><i>AJWS Volunteer Summer</i> is a seven-week, international service trips for groups of Jewish young adults aged 18 to 24. The program balances physical labor, structured discussion, and cross-cultural exchange in a developing country setting.</p> <p><i>World Partners Fellowship</i> is a 10-month, international service opportunity for college graduates and young professionals to volunteer independently at an NGO in India or Central America. Volunteers also participate in personal reflection, educational seminars, and skill-building workshops.</p>
AVODAH	<p><i>AVODAH Jewish Service Corps</i> is a 12-month, domestic service trip for Jewish individuals in their 20s requiring full-time employment in nonprofits serving low-income communities in Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. and a new site in New Orleans. The program promotes group study and living arrangements that foster a small Jewish community engaged in social activism and Jewish life.</p>
Hillel	<p><i>Gulf Coast Alternative Breaks (Winter, Spring)</i> are 7-day service trips to the Gulf Coast Region for college students operated by Hillel, the world's largest Jewish student organization. The trip focuses on hands-on service, community interaction, and the core Jewish value of Tzedakah (righteousness and righteous action) in the context of Gulf Coast recovery and rebuilding.</p> <p><i>Israel Alternative Break</i> is a 10-day Israel service trip designed for college students who have previously visited the country. The program focuses on small, group-based, and hands-on service emphasizing the core Jewish value of Tzedakah.</p>
Jewish Funds for Justice (JFsJ)	<p><i>Alternative Break</i> is a 7-day domestic service trips for groups in a variety of U.S. cities (e.g., Los Angeles, Gulf Coast) which examine critical issues facing the U.S. including housing, environment, immigration, and economic justice.</p>
Jewish National Fund (JNF)	<p><i>Israel Alternative Break</i> is an 8-day Israel service trip for young adults (ages 18-30). Most volunteer work takes place in the Negev area, where participants engage in physical and social activities in community; a half-day visit to Jerusalem is also offered.</p>
Keshet	<p><i>Gulf Coast Alternative Break</i> is a 6-day service trip to the Gulf Coast for college students operated by Keshet, a Reform-affiliated Jewish student organization, with the support of United Jewish Communities and the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. The program focuses on Judaism's commitment to <i>tikkun olam</i>, hands-on service, and interaction with the Jewish and secular community of New Orleans.</p>
OTZMA	<p><i>OTZMA</i> is a 10-month, service-based leadership development program for groups of Jewish adults ages 20-26 who live and volunteer in Israel in a variety of settings.</p>

Table 2 captures the schedule of the general service programs involved in this survey.

Table 2: Service Program Scheduling

Service program	2007					2008							
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
JDC Alternative Break - Argentina													
JDC Alternative Break - Ukraine													
JDC Jewish Service Corps													
AJWS Alternative Breaks - Winter													
AJWS Alternative Breaks - Spring													
AJWS Volunteer Summer													
AJWS World Partners Fellowship - India													
AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps													
Hillel Gulf Coast Alternative Breaks - Winter													
Hillel Gulf Coast Alternative Breaks - Spring													
Hillel Israel Alternative Break													
JFsJ Alternative Break													
JNF Israel Alternative Break													
Kesher Gulf Coast Alternative Break													
OTZMA													

Table 3: Short Term Jewish Service Programs

Program	Duration (days)	Location
AJWS Alternative Breaks	7	United States (Gulf Coast) and International
Hillel Gulf Coast Alternative Breaks	7	United States (Gulf Coast)
Hillel Israel Alternative Breaks	10	International (Israel)
JDC Alternative Breaks	7	International (Argentina, Ukraine)
JFsJ Alternative Breaks	7	United States (Baltimore, Gulf Coast, Los Angeles)
JNF Israel Alternative Break	8	International (Israel)
Kesher Alternative Break	6	United States (Gulf Coast)

Table 4: Long Term Jewish Service Programs

Program	Duration (months)	Location
AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps	12	Domestic (Chicago, New York, D.C.)
AJWS Volunteer Summer *	2.5**	International (Ghana, India, Nicaragua)
AJWS World Partners Fellowship	8	International (India)
JDC Jewish Service Corps	12	International (8 countries)
OTZMA	10	International (Israel)

* Program scheduling limited data collection to pre-test survey instrument only

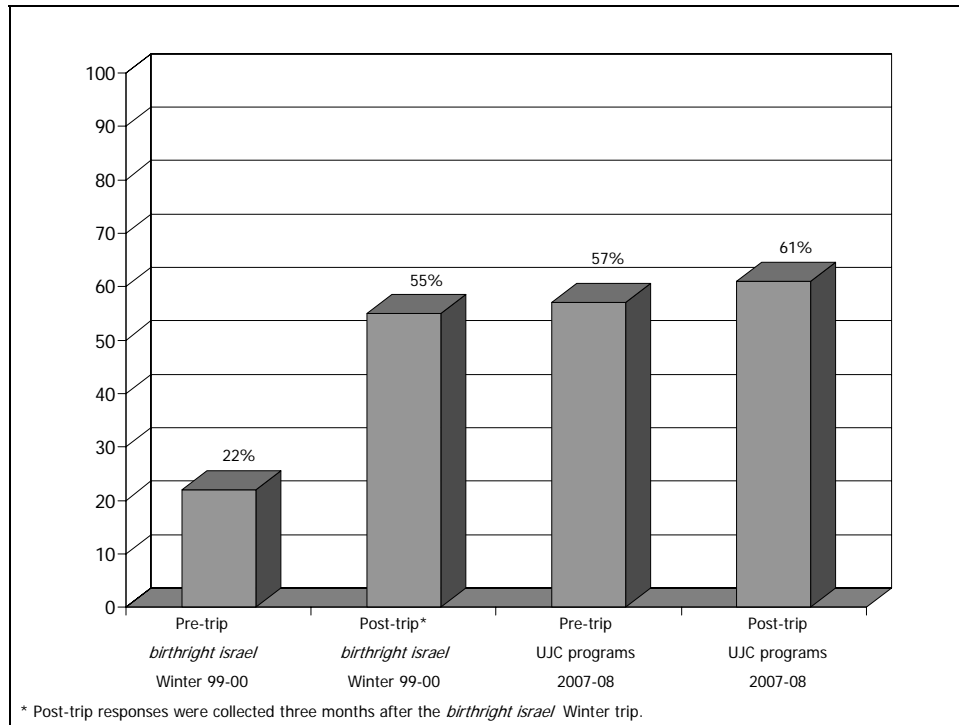
** AJWS Volunteer Summer, a mid-length program, was treated as long term program

COHORT COMPARISON OF JEWISH IDENTITY

Information in *The Impact of birthright israel*² (Saxe, et.al., 2001) and *Beyond Distancing* (Cohen & Kelman, 2007) – allow a comparison of Jewish identity among several different cohorts of young Jews. The *birthright israel* study asked participants both before and after participation

how intensely they felt “connected to Israel.” The same question was replicated in this study. A comparison of the pre-service and post-service responses to that question are presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Connection to Israel among *birthright israel* and UJC Service Study Program populations
 Percentage of program participants who felt “very much” connected to Israel



Before their trip, 22% of Taglit- *Birthright Israel* (BRI) participants indicated they felt “very much” connected to Israel. By contrast, the cohort of young Jews in the UJC study appear to be more highly identified with Israel, with

over twice as many (57%) feeling “very much” connected to Israel. After service, BRI participants demonstrated considerable gain (+33%) while the already highly identified UJC cohort evidenced mild positive gain (+4%). This suggests that the *Taglit: Birthright Israel*

program is quite effective in building attachment to Israel among less-identified young Jews, while UJC service study programs sustain young Jews who have already established feelings of connectivity to Israel. **Chart 2 illustrates that 43% of UJC Service Study**

program participants who reported they felt “very much” connected to Israel had some form of previous Jewish service, 12% had gone on a *BRI* trip only, and 30% had both previous Jewish service and *BRI* experience prior to their UJC-captured service.

Chart 2: Past Experiences of Israel Connected UJC Service Study Program Participants

Percentage of program participants “very much” connected who reported Jewish service or Taglit-*Birthing Israel* experiences

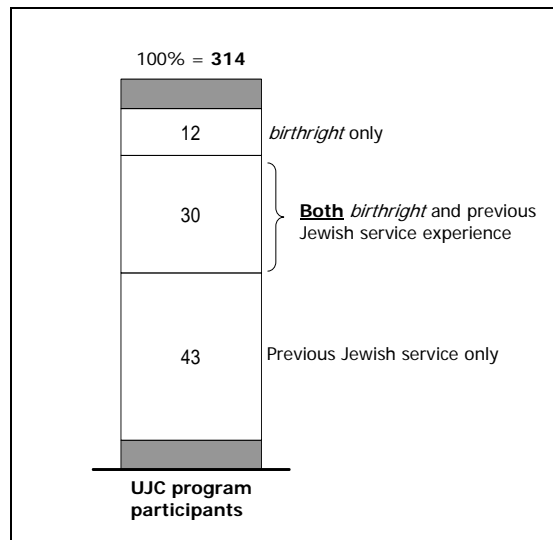
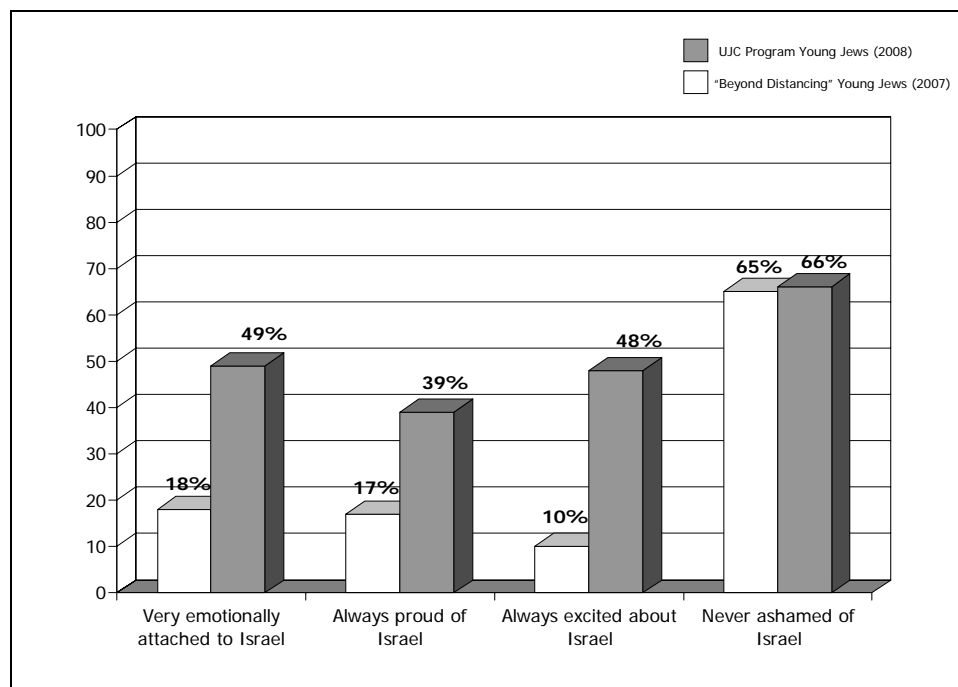


Chart 3 examines the relationship of how connection to Israel varies between the broadly-defined young Jewish cohort examined in *Beyond Distancing* (Cohen & Kelman, 2007) and the narrow subset of UJC Service Study Program participants considered in this study. When Cohen & Kelman surveyed the population of non-Orthodox young Jewish adults in America,

they asked young adult Jews under the age of 35 whether they felt very “emotionally attached to Israel,” “always proud of Israel,” “always excited about Israel,” and/or “never ashamed about Israel.” These questions were replicated in this study of UJC Service Study program participants. A comparison of survey responses in the two studies is found in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Connection to Israel among *birthright israel* and UJC Service Study Program populations
 Percentage of survey respondents in Cohen & Kelmans "Beyond Distancing" (2007) and UJC Service Study Programs⁴



For three of the four questions, UJC service study program participants' far-exceeded the responses of the broader young Jewish adult population, suggesting that the subset of UJC program participants is one that has connected with Israel more intensely or earlier in their life cycles than other young adult Jews. The broader *Beyond Distancing* population and the UJC cohort's indication that they were "never ashamed about Israel" was similar, suggesting a baseline consensus and acceptance of Israel as a precept of Jewish identity among most young Jews.

An analysis of responses within the three cohorts examined in the *Beyond Distancing*, *birthright israel*, and UJC studies may help us to infer a general story about how young Jews connect to Israel in America today. *Beyond Distancing* may represent a larger young Jewish population who develops a Jewish identity that is relatively distanced from Israel. **As interest is piqued in their own Judaism, some of these young people may choose to engage in the next level of self-discovery through a *birthright* trip. After this introduction to Israel, Jews may choose to further self-actualize through more integrated service activities in Israel and other places through UJC Service Study programs.**

⁴ Surveyed age cohort in "Beyond Distancing" were non-Orthodox Jewish young adults aged 35 or younger; UJC cohort included Jewish youth aged 18-31, figure includes non-Orthodox respondents only.

FINDINGS

JEWISH IDENTITY

“We need to become more aware of how rapidly the definitions of what it means to be Jewish are changing. The philanthropic community must not shy away from confronting the difficult issues of identity and continuity these transformations raise.”

- Mark Charendoff, President, Jewish Funders Network

Jewish identity is often best defined in its absence. At any given time in the life of a Jew, Jewish identity represents a snap shot in time of the person’s accumulation of Jewish knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Most studies approach the topic by choosing specific, commonly accepted dimensions of a complex construct. For this study, Jewish identity is represented by a series of dependent variables designed to capture the participant’s perception of these issues. **The variables used in this study are attachment to Israel, tradition, historical context, social justice, community, and general behavior.**

Attachment to Israel

Usually associated with the individual’s emotional attachment to Israel, the concept conveys a Jew’s connection to Israel – the nation, the state and the Jewish Diaspora (Cohen & Kotler-Berkowitz, 2004; Rebhun, 2004). Other studies have refined the definition to include an individual’s particular political attitudes, fears, and concerns regarding the state

of Israel; their association between caring about Israel and being a good Jew; the variety and level of emotions associated with Israel; and how frequently Israel is discussed in the home and the community (Cohen & Kelman, 2007).

Tradition

Jewish religiosity, one of the strongest elements of Jewish tradition, is closely examined and applied in community life through Jewish congregations. For this reason, synagogue membership and attendance has been pinpointed as an important element of Jewish traditional identity. Jewish rituals and observances are two additional elements of Jewish tradition. Specific observances such as celebrating Shabbat dinner with family and fasting during Yom Kippur are universally practiced among many American Jews, including denomination-affiliated Jews, ethnic Jews and converts to Judaism (Rebun, 2004).

Historical Context

American Jews continue to share a sense of solidarity with oppressed Jews around the world. Remembering ages of Jewish persecution, including the perseverance of the Jewish people through relatively recent historical events such as the Holocaust, is another way that Jews relate to one another. In a 1971 study, 29% of all Jewish adults highly identified with a concern for the fate of Jews in difficult circumstances in the rest of the world, with Conservative and Reform congregations members identifying most highly, (Lazerwitz & Harrison). More recently, 85% of adult Jews under the age of 35 either agreed or strongly agreed that the Holocaust deeply affected them (Cohen & Kelman, 2007).

Social Justice

Social justice has gained traction as a dimension of Jewish identity in recent decades (Legge, 1995; Gottesman, 2004; Cohen & Kelman, 2007; Rebhun, 2004; Schwarz, 2006) and has become central to contemporary study of Jewish identity, especially studies involving Jewish youth. Jewish social justice emphasizes action in the spirit of tikkun olam, to repair the world. In recent studies, social justice emerged as a strong indicator of Jewish identity, particularly among young American Jews (Gottesman, 2004; Cohen & Kelman, 2007).

Community

The community dimension captures Jews' feelings of connectedness to other Jewish people. Though the root of such feelings in young Jews is uncertain, they have been significantly and strongly related in the past to religious commitments such as celebrating major Jewish holidays and lesser Jewish holidays, keeping kosher, comfort with synagogue worship, religious service attendance, and Zionism (Winter, 1992).

Jewish Behavior

As the aforementioned dimensions of Jewish identity suggest, Jews take part in their culture in a broad variety of ways, and the avenues available for expressing Jewish interests continue to expand. This is especially true in today's information age where Jewish material is dispersed throughout the world. The Jewish behavior dimension considers the integration of Jewish information, entertainment, and culture into daily Jewish life. Working in collaboration with The Jewish Peoplehood and Identity Division of United Jewish Communities, and other participating programs the researchers hypothesize that cross-cultural, enrichment-seeking behavior- for example, listening to Jewish or Israeli music, reading a Jewish-themed blog, or attending an Israeli film festival - may be important indicator of Jewish identity.

Federation Mission

Because the audience targeted for this study, young Jews applying to or participating in service learning projects potentially represents the next generation of Jewish leadership, the sponsor of this research study expressed interest in determining the degree to which the mission of the Federation resonates with young Jews

between the ages of 18 and 35, the target population of this study. To accommodate this request, the researchers imbedded three questions into the survey based on the mission of the Federation. These questions are considered within the general behavior context.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF JEWISH SERVICE APPLICANTS

*Short Term Jewish Service Program
Participants*

The average young Jew participating in a short term (7 to 10 day) service immersion program is a non-married, 20-year old, sophomore co-ed from the northeast. Born to Jewish parents, and raised within either the Conservative or Reform traditions, as a child she participated in Jewish overnight camping and Hebrew or Sunday school. Although her activity level within the tradition decreased somewhat in high school, she still had a 50/50 chance of engaging in a Jewish youth group. In college however, she returned to her roots participating in Hillel or another Jewish college organizations.

Like other members of her family, she is an active volunteer for both Jewish and secular organizations participating in short term service-oriented projects as well as social justice

initiatives. Volunteering matters to her because it is important to help others, to give back to the community and to make a difference. Volunteering also provides a new perspective on life and addresses important community needs. **She regards service as an ethical imperative and justifies her actions in part because it is important as a Jew to serve.** Her philanthropy is not limited only to the giving of time. She has donated to and raised money for Jewish causes.

Judaism permeates her daily life. She enjoys listening to Jewish or Israeli music and has attended Jewish social events. **While she continues to feel a strong connection to Jewish people and views her Judaism as a significant part of her identity, she is slightly less likely to retain the denominational affiliation of her family as**

she moves through these early stages of adulthood.

Long Term Jewish Service Program

Participants

Participants in long term service programs (10 month to a year of service) look a great deal like the short term participants. **The young woman attending these programs was born a Jew, is single and from the northeast.**

Unlike her short term counter part, she is 22 years old and now out of college. She is more likely to have been raised within the Reform tradition although many of her cohorts were raised within the Conservative tradition too. **She was active in Jewish youth groups and summer camps from her elementary school days through college.**

Comparison Population

When comparing the characteristics of the participant population with that of the comparison population, we find very homogeneous, largely female groups. The comparison population for both short and long term programs are slightly older (three months for both groups) than the participants. The education level and class standing, however, are highly similar when compared with their respective participant cohorts.

The comparison group evidences some modest distinctions from the participants in denominational affiliation. **As a young adult, the short term comparison group member is somewhat more likely to have been raised within Orthodox tradition.** As the comparison group moves into adulthood, there is a fairly even divide between affiliations with either the Conservative or Orthodox traditions. On average, the young woman in the comparison group feels very connected to Jewish people, to Jewish history and Israel, and regards being Jewish as a very important part of the way she sees herself. **She expresses strong interest in the values of social justice and human rights and would very likely participate in a Jewish organization dedicated to continuing the traditions of education, leadership, advocacy and responsibility.**

Our representative of the comparison population has a strong history of service. While she has been an active volunteer on an episodic basis, she is more likely than a participant to have taken on a regular, ongoing volunteer commitment. She desires to help others, give back to the community, make a difference and gain new experiences through service. Like her participant colleagues, volunteering is an important thing to do as a Jew. In all likelihood, she has donated to and

raised money for Jewish causes. Judaism is deeply integrated into her daily life; she is likely to listen to Jewish or Israeli music, and read Jewish literature. Jewish social events and entertainment are critical components of her life.

Socio-Demographics

As reflected in Tables 5, 6 and 7, the characteristics of the “average” respondent in either the short term or long term groups omits some very important information. Although all the groups are heavily weighed toward female participation, young men make up nearly 29% of the service participants and a slightly smaller percentage of the comparison groups. A larger percentage of Orthodox youth fall within the short term comparison group, but this finding is not mirrored in the long term program comparison group. The comparison group also has a slightly higher incidence of being born to a Jewish parent. As noted in Table 6, the aggregated comparison group data indicates that that this population has a higher incidence of previous volunteer experience within the Jewish tradition.

Prior experience with Jewish service programs is reasonably similar among the short term participant and comparison groups but differ markedly in the long term

service participant and comparison groups. Survey data indicates that a considerably larger number of the long term comparison population had previous service experience within the Jewish community through the organizations represented in this study, perhaps suggesting that prior experience leads to an increased interest in long term opportunities.

College and post-college activities within the Jewish community are generally similar across the participant and comparison groups. It should be noted that participation in Hebrew or Jewish themed courses, in aggregate, are weighed towards the comparison population. The predominant college connection to Judaism for both groups, however, is participation in Hillel or similar types of Jewish college groups.

Additional information can be gleaned from Table 5: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Jewish Service Program Applicants.

Table 5: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Jewish Service Program Applicants

Question	Question number	Short Term		Long Term		Total		
		Participant	Comparison	Participant	Comparison	Participant	Comparison	Total
Mean age, years	38	20.2	20.5	22.0	22.3	20.5	21.3	20.7
Sex *	39	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Female		70.9	70.9	72.5	83.2	71.1	75.6	72.2
Male		29.1	29.1	27.5	16.8	28.9	24.4	27.8
Relationship status	40	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Single		92.2	90.3	87.9	84.2	91.6	87.6	90.6
Partnered		6.3	9.7	9.9	12.6	6.8	11.0	7.9
Married		1.3	0.0	2.2	2.1	1.4	1.0	1.3
Class standing	43	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Freshman		24.1	13.2	0.0	2.1	20.6	8.1	17.5
Sophomore		28.8	23.7	6.6	3.2	25.6	14.4	22.8
Junior		18.9	18.4	9.9	5.3	17.6	12.4	16.3
Senior		17.3	32.5	1.1	5.3	14.9	20.1	16.2
Graduate student		3.7	6.1	4.4	15.8	3.8	10.5	5.5
Not applicable		7.2	6.1	78.0	68.4	17.5	34.5	21.2
Primary geographic residence **	41	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Northeast		40.6	49.1	39.6	46.3	40.5	47.9	42.3
South		14.5	14.0	18.7	10.5	15.1	12.4	14.4
Midwest		22.6	19.3	13.2	23.2	21.3	21.1	21.2
West		19.3	13.2	23.1	16.8	19.8	14.8	18.6
Canada		3.0	4.4	5.5	3.2	3.3	3.8	3.5
People in your family born Jewish	13	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
You		94.3	97.4	100.0	95.8	95.1	96.7	95.4
Spouse/partner		88.8	88.4	84.7	79.1	88.2	84.2	87.2
Mother		83.2	92.0	90.0	83.2	84.2	88.0	84.5
Father		85.6	89.3	86.7	91.6	85.8	90.3	86.3
Respondent's childhood religion	14	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Secular Jewish		5.0	2.6	3.3	6.3	4.8	4.3	4.7
Jewish (no denominational affiliation)		7.2	5.3	2.2	6.3	6.5	5.7	6.3
Reform Jewish		32.5	14.0	38.5	31.6	33.3	22.0	30.5
Reconstructionist Jewish		2.4	1.8	2.2	2.1	2.4	1.9	2.3
Conservative Jewish		36.7	42.1	33.0	35.8	36.2	39.2	37.0
Orthodox Jewish		8.0	26.3	15.4	9.5	9.1	18.7	11.4
Interfaith Jewish		1.3	1.8	2.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4
Not Jewish		4.1	2.6	0.0	2.1	3.5	2.4	3.2
Other		2.8	3.5	3.3	5.3	2.9	4.3	3.2
<i>N</i> =		539	114	91	95	630	209	839

* Transgender respondents not included.
** Based on 2000/01 National Jewish Population Survey geographic regions. South region includes Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., accounting for the high percentage in this category. For example, in the first column, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Virginia account for 32% of the respondents in the southern region, and a trip specifically for Jews in Texas accounts for another 50% of the respondents. Stated another way, after subtracting Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Texas, only 7% of respondents in the first column were from the southern region.
Note: Response rates varied for individual pre-test questions; however, the disparity among response rates for individual questions was negligible.

This table presents the gender, age, relationship status and class standing of participants. All survey participants were asked to identify the geographic location of their primary residence utilizing the boundaries established in the National Jewish Population Survey. This table also captures the respondents' relationship to the Jewish tradition and notes the childhood

religious affiliation as well as the relationship of key family members to their Jewish heritage. At the conclusion of each table, the number of cases within each cohort (N) is recorded. The marginal differences noted between and among cohorts lead to the decision to tabulate a combined analysis of all survey respondents in the column headed "Total."

Volunteer and Service History

Table 6 presents the volunteer history of all respondents. Because of the religious nature of the service immersion programs studied here, the researcher queried the religious affiliation of other volunteer service. **Although secular service predominates (74.6% of all**

respondents), there is significant involvement in Jewish-based or Jewish-sponsored service initiatives (69.2%). The implications of this affiliation are discussed further in the psychometric findings section of this report.

Table 6: Volunteer History of Jewish Service Program Applicants

Question	Question number	Short Term		Long Term		Total		
		Participant	Comparison	Participant	Comparison	Participant	Comparison	Total
Type of previous volunteering experience	3	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Jewish		66.7	82.9	75.6	60.9	68.1	73.2	69.2
Faith-based		19.1	17.5	12.5	12.3	18.2	15.4	17.5
Secular		75.0	69.4	73.8	80.8	74.8	74.1	74.6
Structure of volunteer/service in the past year	7	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Short-term or episodic service		82.2	90.3	81.3	76.8	82.0	84.1	82.6
Regular or ongoing service	8	46.9	52.6	63.7	47.4	49.4	50.2	49.6
Has participated before in any form of social justice, social change or social action activities without being paid	9	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Previous experience in Jewish service	10	56.8	73.4	78.4	71.4	59.9	72.5	63.0
AJWS Alternative Breaks		6.7	3.5	8.8	2.1	7.0	2.9	6.0
AJWS World Partners Fellowship		0.2	0.9	6.6	0.0	1.1	0.5	0.9
AJWS Volunteer Summer		0.7	1.8	8.8	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.9
AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps		0.4	0.0	28.6	2.1	4.4	1.0	3.6
Hillel Alternative Breaks		23.4	28.9	12.1	9.5	21.7	20.1	21.3
JDC Jewish Service Corps		0.7	0.0	7.7	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.3
JDC Alternative Breaks		1.3	0.0	1.1	3.2	1.3	1.4	1.3
Jewish Funds for Justice		0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.2
JNF Israel Alternative Break		1.3	1.8	3.2	6.3	1.6	3.8	2.9
Keshet/URJ Alternative Break		0.1	0.0	14.0	1.0	2.2	0.5	0.7
Livnot		4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	2.1
OTZMA		1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.8
Other		26.5	40.4	31.9	39.0	27.3	39.7	30.1
None of the above		43.4	38.6	16.5	53.7	39.5	45.5	41.0
Appeal of most recent Jewish service	11	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Participating in a Jewish program or working with other Jews		9.1	16.8	4.6	7.1	8.5	12.6	9.5
Participating in a volunteer/service program		28.8	15.0	40.9	30.6	30.5	21.7	28.4
Both volunteering and working with a Jewish program were equally appealing to me		62.1	68.1	54.6	62.4	61.0	65.7	62.1
Volunteer Reason	12	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
There is a need for the work		64.9	59.6	78.0	75.8	66.8	67.0	66.9
Because it is important to do as a Jew		55.5	66.7	57.1	66.3	55.7	66.5	58.4
Because it is important to the people I respect		26.0	31.6	20.9	30.5	25.2	31.1	26.7
Service is a part of leading an ethical life		66.4	68.4	70.3	80.0	67.0	73.7	68.7
To fulfill my responsibility as a global citizen		59.2	65.8	72.5	74.7	61.1	69.9	63.3
To give back		83.9	76.3	79.1	80.0	83.2	78.0	81.9
To help others		92.0	89.5	89.0	85.3	91.6	87.6	90.6
To make a difference		87.9	79.8	89.0	87.4	88.1	83.3	86.9
Because I was asked to volunteer		11.9	12.3	4.4	12.6	10.8	12.4	11.2
Because my family was involved		5.0	8.8	1.1	6.3	4.4	7.7	5.2
To be a part of the group		27.6	31.6	15.4	27.4	25.9	29.7	26.8
To meet new people		68.5	65.8	58.2	56.8	67.0	61.7	65.7
To establish contacts or establish career connections		21.5	20.2	49.5	41.1	25.6	29.7	26.6
To gain a new perspective or experience		87.0	83.3	90.1	82.1	87.5	82.8	86.3
Not applicable; no service experience in the past		0.0	0.9	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.0	0.2
<i>N</i> =		539	114	91	95	630	209	839

Note: Response rates varied for individual pre-test questions; however, the disparity among response rates for individual questions was negligible.

The recent trend towards short term episodic service in the world of volunteerism prompted additional questions about the duration of service commitments. Examples of short term service included participating in a day of service, walking for a fundraiser, helping to build a playground or clear a trail. **Nearly 83% of all respondents indicated short term episodic volunteer work.** Regular or ongoing service included ongoing commitments to visit a home-bound senior, tutoring or regular periodic assistance at a soup kitchen. Approximately 50% of all respondents indicated such commitments over the last year. Much like the larger US population, the respondents to this survey also trend towards short term service experiences.

At the request of our collaborating partners, the researchers added a question defining service within a social justice, social change or social action context as well. Examples of service within this definition included voter registration drives, or advocacy on behalf of a cause.

Nearly 63% of all respondents acknowledged social advocacy volunteerism, a figure slightly higher than the response to regular ongoing service (50.4%) and lower than the episodic service rate of 82.1% of all pre-service survey respondents. The questions were not mutually

exclusive, meaning that respondents could answer in the affirmative to all three categories of service.

In addition to ongoing volunteerism, the researchers also attempted to determine the involvement of the respondents with a variety of Jewish service organizations. In response to the question, “please check all organizations in which you have previously participated,” respondents provided the information that appears in question number 10 of Table 6. It should be noted that the respondents participating in long term programs were generally already engaged in service by the time the pre-service survey instrument was distributed online. We surmise that the many of the current members of AVODAH, for example, noted their *current* service involvement in the ‘past-tense’ when responding to this question. Given the popularity and frequency of alternative break programs sponsored by Hillel, however, we anticipate that the high showing within this category may well represent prior rather than current involvement.

Responding to the requests of the collaborating partners, the research team searched for the reasons why Jews participated in service immersion by asking respondents what appealed most to them about the Jewish service program

to which the individual most recently applied. Response options included: participating in a Jewish program or working with other Jews; participating in a volunteer/service program; both volunteering and working with a Jewish program were equally appealing to me. **As the table notes, a majority of respondents (62.1%) wanted to serve and work within a Jewish context.**

This section provided an overview of the socio-demographic and service history from a purely descriptive perspective. Much of this data is also used to construct a variety of models designed to explain the factors that may contribute to Jewish identity and how that identity is affected by immersion service programs.

Early Jewish Activities

Early Jewish Activities of Jewish Service Program Applicants is the focus of Table 7. Although the table speaks for itself, and additional analysis of the findings appears in the psychometric analysis section of this report, the respondents to the survey have generally been very active within the Jewish community throughout their lives. Perhaps the most telling statistic is not the participation in any given program as much as it is the “none of the above” response category. **The aggregated data tells us that these young men and**

women are more involved in Jewish activities in college and post college (6.4% uninvolved translates to 93.6% involvement) than they were in early childhood (7.5% uninvolved translates to 92.5% involvement). There was some drop-off during the high school years when 16.9% were not engaged in any of the activities or “other” Jewish involvement.

Early Jewish activities remained relatively uniform throughout elementary and high school, with youth group becoming more popular as young Jews matured. Jewish college groups such as Hillel, appear to provide a natural transition into the college setting for this cohort. **In elementary and junior high school, Jewish service program applicants were most likely to take part in Hebrew school or Sunday school (64.6%), Jewish overnight camp (51.7%), Jewish day camp (44.3%), or Jewish youth group (42.0%).** In high school, Jewish youth group was the most popular activity among all respondents (51%), followed by Hebrew school or Sunday school (39.9%) and Jewish overnight camp (39.5%). **The scope of activities available to young Jews expanded in college, and Hillel and other Jewish college groups (76.9%) and Hebrew or Jewish-themed coursework (44.5%) were the most popular options for college involvement.**

Table 7: Early Jewish Activities of Jewish Service Program Applicants

Question	Question number	Short Term		Long Term		Total		
		Participant	Comparison	Participant	Comparison	Participant	Comparison	Total
Jewish Elementary/Junior High Activities	16	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Jewish day camp		40.4	57.9	51.6	43.2	42.1	51.2	44.3
Jewish overnight camp		50.0	54.4	56.0	52.6	51.1	53.6	51.7
Jewish youth group		39.1	55.3	40.7	43.2	39.4	49.8	42.0
Jewish day school		32.0	42.1	36.3	38.9	32.5	40.7	34.6
Hebrew school/Sunday school		65.5	54.4	71.4	65.3	66.3	59.3	64.6
Other Jewish experience		24.8	28.9	26.4	26.3	25.1	27.8	25.7
None of the above		9.6	4.4	1.1	5.3	8.4	4.8	7.5
Jewish High School Activities	17	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Jewish overnight camp		39.1	46.5	36.3	35.8	38.7	41.6	39.5
Jewish youth group		50.0	61.4	47.3	44.2	50.2	53.6	51.0
Jewish domestic summer travel program		15.2	22.8	13.2	13.7	14.9	18.7	15.8
Organized Israel trip		31.3	40.4	24.2	29.5	30.3	35.4	31.6
Hebrew or Jewish-themed course		19.5	33.3	19.8	20.0	19.5	27.3	21.5
Jewish high school		16.5	30.7	25.3	21.1	17.8	26.3	19.9
High school semester/year in Israel		8.9	14.0	12.1	10.5	9.4	12.4	10.1
Yeshiva		4.8	12.3	4.4	7.4	4.8	10.0	6.1
Hebrew school/Sunday school		41.2	34.2	36.3	43.2	40.5	38.3	39.9
Other Jewish experience		24.5	24.6	37.4	28.4	26.3	26.3	26.3
None of the above		18.9	9.6	13.2	17.9	18.1	13.4	16.9
College/Post-College Activities	18	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Taglit-birthright Israel		39.1	43.0	36.3	41.1	38.7	42.1	39.6
Organized Israel trip (not Taglit-birthright)		17.6	38.6	22.0	23.2	18.3	31.6	21.6
Jewish fraternity or sorority		16.6	8.8	4.4	6.3	14.9	7.7	13.1
Hillel/other Jewish college groups		77.7	83.3	71.4	69.5	76.8	77.0	76.9
Hebrew or Jewish-themed course		38.2	58.8	48.4	58.9	39.7	58.9	44.5
Jewish university (e.g., Yeshiva Univ.)		1.1	5.3	4.4	6.3	1.6	5.7	2.6
College courses/degree at an Israeli univ.		7.6	14.9	6.6	15.8	7.5	15.3	9.4
Other Jewish experience		28.3	41.2	37.4	46.3	29.7	43.5	33.1
None of the above/not applicable		7.2	3.5	4.4	7.4	6.8	5.3	6.4
<i>N</i> =		539	114	97	95	630	209	839

Note: Response rates varied for individual pre-test questions; however, the disparity among response rates for individual questions was negligible

PRE-SERVICE JEWISH IDENTITY

The Findings in this section are based on multiple regressions of Jewish identity, one for each aspect of Jewish identity (or for each dependent variable). Model 1, the baseline model, includes demographic and social background variables as predictors of Jewish identity. Model 2 includes demographic, social background, and a previous service experience variables as predictors of Jewish identity. Model 3 includes demographic, social background, and motivation for application and

reasons for volunteering variables as predictors of Jewish identity. Model 4 includes demographic and social characteristics as well as program characteristics such as length of program and location. It is important to keep in mind that all findings are in the aggregate meaning that if a significant difference is found it is a difference that is found on average among our applicants controlling for all other variables included in the regression model being discussed.

Attachment to Israel

Model 1 indicates that there are no significant differences in attachment to Israel among upper and lower division college students, nor are there any gender differences in attachment to Israel. The biggest differences lie in denominational affiliation. While there are no differences between Conservative and Orthodox Jews, Reconstruction and Reform Jews on average have significantly less attachment to Israel than Conservative Jews in the sample. Those who have parents that are not both Jewish are on average significantly less attached to Israel. Those that had no Jewish youth education also demonstrate less attachment to Israel. **Interestingly, the lack of Jewish youth education in high school is slightly more detrimental for attachment to Israel than lack of similar education experiences in elementary school.** Finally, those that identify as graduate students or ‘other’ have less attachment to Israel, a finding that suggests that perhaps we can infer that the post college-age applicants have less attachment to Israel. These demographic and background characteristics explain approximately 30% of the variation in attachment to Israel among our sample. Model 2 was not a better fit to the data than Model 1. Previous service experience has no significant impact on attachment to Israel among the applicants.

In Model 3 service application motivation and reasons for volunteering are included in the

regression. In this model the absence of Jewish youth education before high school no longer has a significant effect on attachment to Israel. All other relationships present in Models 1 and 2 remain.

Applicants who applied to Jewish service programs largely because it was a Jewish program are more attached to Israel than those who were most interested in the program because of its service dimension. Those who were motivated to apply equally because of its Jewish and service components are also more attached to Israel than those who were primarily motivated by the service aspect, however, they are not as attached as those primarily motivated by the Jewish aspect of the program.

Reasons provided for volunteering also influence attachment to Israel. **Those who volunteer because they believe it is good to do so as a Jew, and those who volunteer “to give back” are more attached to Israel than those that do not have those individual motivations for volunteering.** Further, Model 3 explains approximately 39% of the variation in attachment to Israel among applicants. That is a 10% increase over Models 1 and 2 underscoring the importance of applicant motivation and reasons for volunteering on attachment to Israel. Model 4 represents another regression predicting attachment to Israel with the type of service program the applicant applied to in terms of length and location, controlling for the demographic and

background characteristics included in Model 1. **Those that applied to short term programs were significantly higher in their level of attachment to Israel than those who applied to long term programs. Those who applied to programs located in Israel and other international locations were more attached to Israel than those who applied to U.S. programs.** This model explains 36% of the variation in attachment to Israel among the applicants.

Tradition

Our baseline model (see Model 1, Table 9) shows no significant difference in observing Jewish tradition among different levels of undergraduate students or by gender, however, graduate students and others are significantly less likely to observe Jewish traditions. Those with only one Jewish parent and those that did not have Jewish education during high school are less likely to observe Jewish traditions. The baseline demographic and background characteristics explain approximately 33.5% of the variation in observation of Jewish traditions. Previous service experience has no significant impact on observing Jewish traditions.

Model 3 reveals that application motivation and reasons for volunteering influence Jewish identity. Applicants who applied to Jewish service programs mostly because it was a Jewish program as well

those who felt the Jewish and service aspects are equally appealing, observe more Jewish traditions than those applicants who were most interested in the program they applied to because of its service dimension alone. **Those that volunteer because they believe it is good to do so as a Jew observe more Jewish traditions than those that do not share this view.** All relationships present in Models 1 and 2 remain in Model 3 with the exception that the significance of the negative relationship present between both parents not being Jewish and observing Jewish tradition disappears in Model 3. This suggests that having only one Jewish parent influences the Jewish tradition variable through individuals' reported appeal of service programs and individuals' reasons for volunteering. Model 3 explains almost 40% of the variation in observation of Jewish traditions. This is a good 5% more of the variation explained than the baseline model, giving support to the notion that motivation to apply for a Jewish service program and the reasons why people volunteer are important in determining the degree of participation in Jewish traditions.

In Model 4 a separate regression was estimated predicting observation of Jewish tradition with the type of service program the applicant applied to in terms of length and location, controlling for demographic and background characteristics. No significant difference was found relative to observing Jewish traditions between those that

applied to short term programs and those that applied to longterm programs. Those who applied to programs located in Israel and other international locations had a higher level of observance of Jewish tradition and were more attached to Israel than those who applied to U.S. programs. This model explains 36% of the variation in observation of Jewish tradition among the applicants.

Historical Context

We find, in this study, those who lack Jewish youth education in elementary school are less mindful of Jewish history, or less likely to think acknowledging Jewish history is an important part of being Jewish. Those that are non-religious are less likely to be mindful of Jewish history than Conservative Jews, while the other Jewish denominations are no more or less mindful of the Jewish history than Conservative Jews. There is some evidence that only having one Jewish parent leads to less mindfulness of Jewish history but this finding is marginally significant at $p = .51$. The baseline model explains about 12% of the variation in mindfulness of Jewish history.

Model 2 shows that previous service experience influences mindfulness of Jewish history. Those that have participated in only Jewish service programs or only secular service programs are significantly less mindful of Jewish history than those that have participated in both secular and

Jewish service programs. However, there is no significant difference in mindfulness of Jewish history between those with both Jewish and secular service experience and those that do not have any previous service experience. This may be due to a small number of applicants who have never had service experience. In addition to the significant effect of previous service experience on acknowledgement of Jewish history, the inclusion of this experience in the model makes those with only one Jewish parent less likely to acknowledge Jewish history. Graduate students appear to be less mindful of Jewish history than those that are university age, but this is marginally significant at $p = .50$. In accordance with the baseline model, the absence of Jewish education in elementary school implies less mindfulness of Jewish history even when controlling for previous service experience. Despite the significant findings for previous service experience on acknowledgement of Jewish history, Model 2 does negligibly better than the baseline in explaining the variation in this dependent variable, explaining approximately 13% of the variation in mindfulness of Jewish identity.

Model 3 displays mostly the same results as Models 1 and 2 except that those who indicated volunteering is good to do as a Jew are more likely to acknowledge Jewish history than those that indicated that they volunteer to give back. This model also has a better fit than the other two,

explaining 18.75% of the variation in mindfulness of Jewish history.

The regression analysis in Model 4 was estimated to predict mindfulness of Jewish history with the type of service program applied to in terms of length and location, controlling for demographic and background characteristics. No significant difference was found between those that applied to short term programs and those that applied to long term programs for mindfulness of Jewish history. Only those that applied to service programs located in Israel were found to be more mindful of Jewish history than those that applied for service programs located in the U.S. There was no difference in mindfulness of Jewish history found between those that applied to U.S. programs and those that applied to international programs. Those who applied to programs located in Israel and other international locations had a higher level of observation of Jewish tradition and were more attached to Israel than those who applied to U.S. programs. This model explains 15% of the variation in observation of Jewish tradition among the applicants.

Social Justice

It is evident from Model 1 that those who have only one Jewish parent have less of a commitment to social justice. **Also, those that lacked pre-high school Jewish education have less of a commitment to social justice.** Further, those

that consider themselves non-religious were found to have less of a commitment to social justice than Conservative Jews while no difference was found between Conservative Jews and all other denominations in their level of commitment to social justice. Likewise no gender or educational differences were found in commitment to social justice. This baseline model explains approximately 10% of the variation in commitment to social justice found in our sample.

Model 2 shows that those that have had only previous service experience with Jewish programs are not significantly different than those with both Jewish and secular service. However, those that engaged only in secular service and those with no service experience are lower in commitment to social justice than those with both Jewish and secular service experience. With the addition of previous service experience in Model 2, the difference between non-religious Jews and Conservative Jews in commitment to social justice is no longer significant. This suggests that denomination works through previous service experience in its influence on commitment to social justice. The significant findings pertaining to parents' intermarriage and lack of Jewish education before high school remain when previous service experience is added to the model. Model 2 explains approximately 12% of the variation in commitment to social justice, making it a slightly better fit to the data than the baseline model.

All of the findings from Model 2 on the predictors of commitment to social justice remain the same when motivation to apply to the Jewish service program and reason for volunteering are added to the regression model (Model 3). **No significant differences in commitment to social justice due to application motivations were found, but those that volunteer because they believe it is good to do as a Jew are significantly more committed to social justice.** This factor has a more powerful effect than any of the other relationships found. This model explains about 20% of the variation in commitment to social justice, double the explanatory power of our baseline model. **This underscores how participants' believing that "it is good to do as a Jew" is important in explaining the variation in commitment to social justice.** The Model 4 regression was estimated to predict commitment to social justice with service program characteristics such as length and location while controlling for demographics and social background. It was found that those who applied to short term programs are less committed to social justice, however this finding was marginally significant at $p = .053$. In addition, those that apply to programs in Israel and other international locations are significantly more committed to social justice than those that apply to U.S. programs. This set of variables explains approximately 12% of the variation in commitment to social justice present among the applicants.

Community

The baseline model reveals that there are no significant effects in the sense of Jewish community between males and females or for education level. However, those that have only one Jewish parent have a significantly lower sense of Jewish community. **Those that lacked Jewish youth education pre-high school as well as those that lacked Jewish youth education during high school have significantly diminished sense of Jewish community.** Those that consider themselves nonreligious or Reform Jews have significantly less of a sense of community than those that identify as Conservative Jews, while Reconstruction Jews and Reform Jews show no significant differences in sense of community from Conservative Jews. These demographic and social background characteristics account for approximately 28% of the variation in sense of community.

The findings found in the baseline remain the same in Model 2 when previous service experience is factored in, however, **those that have had experience only with secular service programs have significantly less of a sense of Jewish community than those that have experience with both secular and Jewish service programs.**

Once motivation for application to the Jewish service program and reasons for volunteering are

added to Model 2, Reform Jews and Conservative Jews no longer differ significantly in their level of sense of community. The motivation for applying to participate in service does make a difference. Those motivated by the Jewish aspect of the program or motivated by the program's Jewish and service aspects have a higher sense of Jewish community than those who were more motivated by the service aspect of the program. In addition, those that volunteer because they believe it is good to do as a Jew have a significantly higher sense of Jewish community. Model 3 explains 38% of the variation in sense of Jewish community, approximately a 10% increase from the baseline model.

The fourth regression model predicts sense of Jewish community with service program characteristics such as length and location controlling for demographic and social background. No significant differences were found in terms of length of program. **However, those that apply to programs in Israel, or programs in other international locations, have a greater sense of community than those that apply to U.S. programs.** The baseline variables, and program characteristics of length and location explain 31% of the variation in sense of Jewish community among the applicants.

Jewish Behavior

Model 1 indicates that there are no significant differences between college upperclassmen and lowerclassmen in level of participation in Jewish-related behaviors or activities; however graduate students and 'others' engage in significantly more Jewish-related behaviors than college upperclassmen. There are no gender differences in level of participation in Jewish-related activities. Those that only have one Jewish parent as well as those that lacked Jewish education in high school participate in fewer Jewish-related activities. Nonreligious Jews participate in fewer Jewish-related activities than Conservative Jews. Reconstruction and Reform Jews engage in similar levels of Jewish-related activities as Conservative Jews while Orthodox Jews engage in more Jewish-related activities than Conservatives. These factors explain approximately 11% of the variation in participation in Jewish-related activities.

The above findings remain when previous service experience is added to Model 1. Model 2 also finds that those that only have experience in secular service engage in less Jewish-related activities than those that have both Jewish and secular service experience. Previous service experience, and the baseline demographic and social background factors, explains approximately 13% of the variation in participants' Jewish behaviors among the applicants.

The addition of motivation for application and reasons for volunteering change the above findings and add new ones. According to Model 3, those that lacked Jewish youth education in elementary school and junior high are significantly more likely to engage in Jewish-related activities. In this model nonreligious Jews are no different from Conservative Jews in participation in Jewish behaviors. Further, for those whom the Jewish aspect of the service program was a more important motivation for applying, and for those whom the Jewish aspect of the service program and service aspect of the service program were equal motivators, participate in more Jewish-related behaviors. Also, those that indicated that they volunteer because it is good to do as a Jew engage in significantly more Jewish-related behavior. Model 3 accounts for 20% of the variance in participation in Jewish behaviors among the applicants. This is a respectable increase over the baseline and second model.

Model 4 reveals that after controlling for demographics, Jewish youth education and denomination, those that apply to short-term service programs engage in significantly less Jewish behaviors than those that apply to long term programs. Those that apply to service programs in Israel engage in more Jewish related behaviors than those that apply to service programs in the U.S. There is no significant difference between those that apply to U.S. programs and international

programs in terms of participation in Jewish-related activities. Model 4 explains approximately 13% of the variation level of participation in the Jewish behaviors examined.

Federation Mission

Model 1 shows that females are significantly more in agreement with the Federation mission than males. It also shows that those with only one Jewish parent are significantly less in agreement with the Federation mission than those that have parents that are both Jewish. **Lack of Jewish youth education during the pre-high school years also influences agreement with the Federation mission.** Those without pre-high school Jewish education are less in agreement with the federation mission. Further those that are non-religious are significantly less likely to be in agreement with the Federation mission than Conservative Jews while there is no significant difference in level of agreement with the Federation mission between Conservative Jews and Reconstruction, Reform, and Orthodox Jews. The baseline model explains approximately 14% of the variation in agreement with the Federation mission among the applicants. Model 2 shows no significant differences in agreement with the Federation mission due to previous service experience.

Model 3 reveals significant differences in agreement with the Federation mission due to

application motivation and reasons given for volunteering. **Those who were motivated to apply to service programs mostly due to the Jewish aspect of the initiative program and those that were motivated equally by the Jewish and service aspects of their program had a significantly higher level of agreement with the Federation mission than those who were primarily motivated by the service aspect of their program.** Standardized regression coefficients indicate that these effects were stronger than both the gender and denomination effects.

Those that indicated they volunteer because it is good to do as a Jew and those that indicated they volunteer to give back are significantly more in agreement with the Federation mission than those who do not subscribe to either of these reasons for volunteering. This effect is particularly strong for those who indicated they volunteer because it is good to do as a Jew. Model 3 explains approximately 28% of the variation in agreement with the Federation mission, double the explanatory power of the baseline model. This underscores the importance of application motivation and reasons for volunteering on agreement with the Federation mission. Model 4 reveals no difference in agreement in Federation mission among those who applied to service programs of different lengths. **However, those that applied to programs active in Israel and**

other International countries were significantly more in agreement with the Federation mission. This effect was particularly strong among those that applied to international programs.

POST-SERVICE JEWISH IDENTITY

The final goal of this report was to ascertain whether or not Jewish identity increases due to participation in a Jewish service program. Several t-tests were conducted to compare the mean scores on each aspect of Jewish identity and determine whether any changes in occurred in any aspect of Jewish identity. Table 11 presents the pre-service and post-service Jewish identity scores for all participants and participants with no previous service experience for five main aspects of Jewish identity: attachment to Israel, observation of Jewish tradition, acknowledgment of Jewish history, commitment to social justice, and sense of community. Data is further broken down by program length. Changes in mean identity scores and whether or not these changes were significant (indicated by a “+” if identity scores increases post-service and by a “-“ if decreases) are indicated in the last column of the tables ('+' as increase, '-' as decrease, and '*' or 'dagger' as a statistical positive increase).

When mean differences are examined for all participants, at first glance it appears as though, over all, Jewish identity decreases post the service experience. However, none of these decreases are statistically significant. Commitment to social justice is the only aspect of Jewish identity that exhibited significant positive change post-service

experience. This difference was only evident for those that participated in short-term programs.

More significant differences reveal themselves when only participants with no previous service experience were selected. **Positive and statistically significant growth ($p < .05$) occurred for all participants with no previous service experience for observation of Jewish traditions and commitment to social justice.**

The other three dimensions of Jewish identity also increase, albeit statistically not significant. T-test analysis by program length reveals the grounds of this general growth for the cohort with no previous service experience. The increase in attachment to Israel is primarily due to the relatively large increase found among long term participants (6.5 to 7.1 with $N=9$) although a minor decrease is exhibited in short term participants (6.2 to 6.18 with $N=95$). This is impressive given that the sample size for this group is nine individuals who lack service experience. For the short term program participants, the statistically significant positive impact takes place in the tradition index and social justice aspects of Jewish identity.

The change in Jewish identity found among participants with no prior service experience is a most interesting finding. **This suggests the**

positive value of immersion service for a particular subset of the Jewish young adult population. This also suggests the power of all forms of service (more traditional forms of volunteer service as well as service learning initiatives) in the development of Jewish

identity. While immersion service programs bring particular attributes to the world of service, all forms of service, particularly those conducted within a religious context have value in the development of Jewish identity.

Table 16: Pre- and Post-Service Comparison of 5 Jewish Identity Dependent Variables

All							No Previous Service Experience					
Sample	Dependent variable	Pre Mean	Std. E	Post Mean	Std. E	Mean difference	Sample	Pre Mean	Std. E	Post Mean	Std. E	Mean difference
All (N=313)	Attchisrael	6.613	0.086	6.601	0.095	-	(N=104)	6.231	0.167	6.260	0.186	+
	Jewtraditions	7.930	0.149	7.923	0.151	-		7.317	0.270	7.635	0.274	*
	Jewishhistory	6.933	0.083	6.933	0.086	0		6.587	0.178	6.683	0.174	+
	Socialjustice	6.696	0.089	6.808	0.091	-		6.125	0.174	6.365	0.187	*
	Community	7.192	0.066	7.198	0.068	+		6.760	0.144	6.856	0.146	+
Long term program participants (N= 38)	Attchisrael	5.658	0.307	5.631	0.265	+	(N=9)	6.556	0.338	7.111	0.351	†
	Jewtraditions	6.947	0.395	6.500	0.379	-		5.889	0.309	6.000	0.471	+
	Jewishhistory	6.368	0.276	6.316	0.267	-		6.333	0.624	6.222	0.547	-
	Socialjustice	7.000	0.256	6.737	0.279	-		5.778	0.596	5.556	0.603	-
Community	6.868	0.200	6.737	0.232	-	6.556	0.444	6.222	0.465	-		
Short term program participants STP (N= 295)	Attchisrael	6.749	0.087	6.731	0.097	-	(N=95)	6.200	0.181	6.179	0.200	-
	Jewtraditions	8.065	0.159	8.120	0.160	-		7.453	0.291	7.789	0.292	*
	Jewishhistory	7.011	0.086	7.018	0.090	+		6.611	0.186	6.726	0.183	+
	Socialjustice	6.655	0.095	6.818	0.097	*		6.158	0.183	6.442	0.196	*
Community	7.236	0.070	7.262	0.070	+	6.779	0.153	6.916	0.152	+		

Note: One-tailed test, positive impact on Jewish identity is shown by †<0.1 and * if p<0.05.

SERVICE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Eight different organizations shared mailing lists of the participants selected to attend one of 12 distinct service-learning programs (see Table 1). Several of these programs, such as the Hillel Gulf Coast Alternative Breaks program took multiple groups of students to the Gulf Coast region at designated intervals during both the spring and winter academic vacations.

Participants attending these service immersion programs completed pre-service and post-service surveys. The post-service survey contained questions designed to shed light on the structure and organization of these programs as well as the participant’s perception of their experience. The researchers collected information from 346 participants of short term

service initiatives and 52 participants of long term service programs. In addition, the seven focus groups held in the spring of 2008 added depth and nuance to the information gleaned from the post-service online survey. This section of the report provides an overview of both the qualitative and quantitative information gathered about these service experiences.

The section is divided into the three signature components of a service-learning initiative: preparation for service; the service experience itself; and the reflective component of the service-learning program.

Preparation

More than 80 percent of both short and long term Jewish service participants took part in some form of orientation or formal service preparation. According to both sets of participants, preparation activities were most effective in helping participants to sufficiently understand the context for service, to see the social justice implications of the project, and to more fully understand the significance of the service performed. Of particular significance was the role of orientation in preparing participants for the geographic destination of the project. Eighty-four percent of short term and nearly 74% of long term participants

confirmed that this topic was covered during their preparation experience.

Most short term program preparation sessions were conducted in participants' city of residence or by conference call. These calls allowed participants to discuss the geographic area that would be visited, the reasons the service program was tackling a particular situation, and the issues that the service program would address. Long term participants were more evenly divided as to the location of the preparation experience. While most long term participants (47.8%) attended orientation in their city or metro area, 37% attended program outside of their metro area and 30.4% engaged in conference calls to assist with preparation efforts.

Total preparation activities required between 1 and 10 hours of time for 67% of short term participants and less than 1 hour for 23.7%. Preparation for long term service required a more substantial time commitment, with 43.5% of participants engaging in 40 or more hours of preparation and training for service. Both groups confirm that the relationship between the service experience and Judaism was one of the topics covered in orientation (71.7% for short term and 70.7% for long term). The relationship between service and social justice received nearly equal attention (68.9% for the short term group and 73.9% for the long term group). Not surprisingly, the long term participants were almost twice as likely short term participants to devote attention to living in a communal situation and language instruction.

On average, participants rated their overall preparation experience as slightly less than “somewhat satisfactory.” The aggregate satisfaction scale for long term participants was 2.58 on a four-point scale. Short term participants were slightly more satisfied with an aggregate score of 2.72 across the five measures on the survey instrument. Focus group discussions mirrored this finding. One young woman discussing her experience in preparation

for a short term international experience explained:

We had mandatory meetings two or three times before [service], and because we were also going to a developing country we had a lot of preparation and a lot of lists and things like that because we had vaccinations we had to get; and our packing list was very important and it was gone over a million times.

It was apparent from others that the pre-service information for another short term international trip left participants feeling somewhat lost and ill-informed as this young woman mentions:

I actually didn't know what I was doing before I left or when I was supposed to be where or... I hardly knew anything about the trip. I just had my plane ticket. Not even [that]. I had where I should be at the airport and when and that is basically it.

For 32% of the short term participants and for 10.6% of the long term participants, raising money was a requirement for service program participation. Of those required to raise funds, 80% of the long term participants and 93.6 % of the short term participants felt that the sponsoring organization gave them sufficient information to successfully undertake this work. Eighty percent of long term program participants raised between \$901 and \$1,200 to attend their service trip, while the remaining 20% were required to raise more than \$1,200. Although 63.9% of short term program participants raised over \$901, a large portion raised below \$600 (32.4%).

Although many of the service-learning programs are heavily subsidized, there are out-of-pocket expenses for all participants. **For 51.1% of long term participants, out-of-pocket expenses were less than \$1,000, while 58.3% of short term program participants reported less than \$500 out-of-pocket.** Focus group participants also acknowledged affordability as a program attraction; however, that was *not* a universal assessment. A student considering an international service experience in South American shared this hesitation:

The price point for a week in the middle of your spring quarter in Brazil is a lot of money. You're going to be over \$2,000. So I think that the service aspect was

really essential, because to go for a week to Brazil for \$2,000 is expensive, when you would usually spend the same for two weeks without service.

Generally, however, program participants balanced their location preferences with price in selecting a service program.

I got an email and it was advertising, 'Alternative Spring Break, go to Israel for a week, do service.' I love Israel. I said, 'That sounds like fun, I'd love to do service in Israel'... You fundraise a certain amount of money for the organization for the project, and then all expenses are paid. So I thought, what a great thing to do with my spring break.

Additional details about program preparation can be found in Table 17.

Table 17: Preparation Experience of Jewish Service Program Participants

Post service survey response by length of service and total participants

Question	Question number	Short Term Participant	Long Term Participant	All Participant
Participated in an orientation or formal preparation, %	4	80.8	92.0	82.2
Participated in formal preparation activities	5	%	%	%
Orientation meeting(s) in my city/metro area		70.3	47.8	67.1
Orientation meeting(s) outside of my city/metro area		4.8	37.0	9.4
A conference call		31.5	30.4	31.3
An intensive preparation program (40 or more hours) of training and/or orientation		1.1	43.5	7.2
Topics covered during formal preparation experiences	6	%	%	%
The geographic area we would be visiting		84.2	73.9	82.8
The people with whom we would be working		74.4	58.7	72.1
The reasons why we were helping with this particular situation		82.1	58.7	78.7
The culture and the concerns of the people with whom we would be interacting		61.9	56.5	61.1
The issue(s) that our service experience would address		75.5	65.2	74.0
The relationship between the service experience and Judaism		70.7	71.7	70.8
The relationship between service and the Jewish concept of social justice		68.9	73.9	69.6
Living in a communal situation		32.6	69.6	37.9
Language instruction		6.6	13.0	7.5
Time spent in orientation sessions preparing for service	7	%	%	%
< 1 hour		23.7	0.0	20.5
1 - 10 hours		67.0	18.6	60.4
11 - 20 hours		6.3	16.3	7.7
21 - 30 hours		1.9	18.6	4.2
31 - 40 hours		0.4	9.3	1.6
> 40 hours		0.7	37.2	5.8
Reflections on orientation and preparation session experiences <i>4=Very much, 3=Somewhat, 2=A little, 1=Not at all</i>	8	Avg. response	Avg. response	Avg. response
Helped me to understand the relationship between service and my Jewish beliefs		2.47	2.26	2.44
Were purely social and helped me to meet others in my group		2.52	2.67	2.54
Provided sufficient context for the service project so that I was able to understand what we would be doing		2.97	2.53	2.91
Helped me to see the social justice implications of the project		2.85	2.79	2.84
The preparation we received for the service trip helped us to understand more fully the significance of the work that we performed		2.81	2.65	2.78
General assessment of overall orientation/preparation experience <i>5=Very satisfactory, 4=Somewhat satisfactory, 3=Neutral, 2=Somewhat unsatisfactory, 1=Very unsatisfactory</i>	9	Avg. response	Avg. response	Avg. response
		3.81	3.81	3.81
Funding		%	%	%
Raising money was a requirement for service program participation	10	32.0	10.6	29.35
Sponsoring organization gave me sufficient information to successfully undertake personal fundraising activities	11	93.6	80.0	93.0
Amount of money you were required to raise	12	%	%	%
< \$300		13.0	0.0	12.4
\$301 - \$600		19.4	0.0	18.6
\$601 - \$900		3.7	0.0	3.5
\$901 - \$1200		50.9	80.0	52.2
> \$1201		13.0	20.0	13.3
Estimated cost of service program to participant including registration and all out-of-pocket expenses	13	%	%	%
< \$100		8.9	27.7	11.2
\$101 - \$500		49.4	8.5	44.4
\$501 - \$1000		34.2	14.9	31.9
\$1001 - \$1500		4.8	8.5	5.2
\$1501 - \$2000		1.2	6.4	1.8
> \$2001		1.5	34.0	5.5
<i>N =</i>		346	52	398

Note: Response rates varied for individual post-test questions; however, the disparity among response rates for individual questions was negligible.

Service

The location of the immersion service programs was a very important determinate of program participation. **On a scale of 1-to-4 with 4 representing very important, short term participants ranked location 3.52 and long term participants ranked location 3.57 on the same four-point scale.** For the purposes of this study, service locations options included Israel, other international destinations, as well as domestic trips. Short term participants divided their destinations as follows: 45.2% serving in the US; 31.6% serving in Israel and 23.2% serving in other international locations. For long term participants the distribution was fairly evenly divided between US (45.2%) and international opportunities (Israel 25.5% and other international 23.4%). During focus group sessions, the researchers also learned of a Cuba trip organized locally by one campus Hillel as well as an Appalachian trip.

The experience differed between long and short term service programs on three important dimensions: the types of activities performed; the hours worked per day; and the portion of work performed with members of the community served.

The activities most frequently performed by long term program participants included general education and tutoring, advocacy

for individuals, and youth programming. In contrast, short term program participants' service focused primarily on construction and renovation projects and agricultural work.

Long term service participants averaged 8 to 10 hours of work daily (69.6%) while short term programs tended to engage participants in 5 to 7 hours of work daily (71.9%).

Additionally, long term program participants indicated they conducted three quarters (17.4%) or almost all (45.7%) of their work with members of the community served, while short term program participants were more mixed in the percentage of time spent working with the local community.

Both sets of service participants worked either outside of the Jewish community or with communities characterized by a mixture of Jews and non-Jews.

When reflecting on her service experience, one focus group participant who had served in an international, short term program noted that her involvement with the local community was a high point of the experience.

One of the most incredible things on our trip...was... staying in a village with the people that lived there and ... working with them. A lot of times the frustration I have with service trips are that you go in and you do this work for people and then you leave... We were working side by side with these people and it was something that was directly going to affect them.

The local community was a critical component of the experience for an Israeli short term program participant as well.

We were supposed to renovate a couple of rooms into classrooms, and I think it really became meaningful when the kids came home from school (the Ethiopian kids staying at this kibbutz), and we couldn't do any more work because we had to go play soccer with the kids and hang out... Then all their parents started to come out... They told us they were so happy to have us there to make an education space for them, and that's really when [my service] became more meaningful.

Generally speaking, the participants in both the short and long term programs rated the internal organization and the general service experience of their programs highly. **On a four-point scale, participants gave an average rating of 3.82 to the statement that “overall, I felt this was a worthwhile service experience.”**

Respondents noted that supplies were available to do the work required, they received adequate instructions to complete the assigned tasks and were satisfied with their ability to voice their own opinions and help resolve problems.

Participants note that they were thanked for the work performed and given adequate free time.

The survey also queried the participants about their service experience from a Jewish immersion perspective. Working and living with other young Jews was considered a ‘somewhat’ important aspect of the program for both short and long participants (3.25 aggregate score). Long term participants rated the statement “My own experience of Judaism was enriched by the experience of living and working with young Jews from different traditions and backgrounds” a 2.77 while short term participants gave the same statement a 3.15 ranking. Short term participants rated more highly the value of other service-group participants in making the experience worthwhile (3.58) than did long term participants (3.02). It should be noted however, that not all long term programs are group oriented with some young people being sent solo or with only a partner to some international locations.

Noting the value of a service program comprised entirely of a Jewish cohort, one focus group participant engaged in an international short term program noted the pride that emerged from the experience.

It helps reaffirm my personal beliefs in Judaism when people from the outside are coming in and saying, “Wow, you

guys really have a good thing going here. Look at your community. Look at what you're doing. Look at your culture." Having somebody who was not Jewish who got immersed in it for a week [saying] to me 'I really, really enjoyed being a part of this' makes me feel really good. And it's much stronger than being in a room with a bunch of Jews saying, "Yay, Jews."

An alternative perspective emerged as well. During one focus group, the researchers learned of a locally organized service program to Cuba that engaged both Jews and non-Jews as participants. A participant in this experience commented on the value of this diversity when he said:

I think religious diversity was very beneficial. Sometimes people who are Jewish think you're supposed to know everything about Judaism, and because of non-Jews in the program, I feel like a lot of people were much more open to asking questions if they didn't know. It kind of leveled-out the playing field.

This young man indicated that he felt more empowered to speak about being a Jew as a result of this diversity. Nonetheless, most participants saw minimal advantage or interest in including non-Jews in the service experience.

The focus group sessions garnered another important dimension of the service programs not specifically captured in the online survey, that of the desire to stay longer in the service

location. Speaking of her short term Israeli service experience, one focus group member noted:

I would have really liked my trip to be longer. I think it was such a positive experience- I just made a lot of good friends on the trip and was having such a good time. It's hard because we all have to go back to school, but just knowing how much we did in the week we were there, we could've done so much.

This sentiment was echoed by another international short term participant when he noted,

"I think I would have liked our trip to be a little bit longer. I think a week is a good amount of time, but once we got down there it was like, oh, it's time to leave."

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the information captured in Table 18: Service Experiences of Jewish Service Program Participants is the dearth of negative findings. **Both short and long term participants gave high marks to their service experience, to the management of these opportunities and to the opportunity to serve both domestically and internationally.** The only shortcoming noted with any regularity is the desire to continue serving – to delay the return to home and school.

Table 18: Service Experiences of Jewish Service Program Participants
 Post service survey response by length of service and total participants

Question	Question number	Short Term Participant	Long Term Participant	All Participant
Location of service program	14	%	%	%
United States		45.2	51.1	46.0
Israel		31.6	25.5	30.8
International (not including Israel)		23.2	23.4	23.2
Importance of location of service program to participant's service decision <i>4=Very much, 3=Somewhat, 2=A little, 1=Not at all</i>	15	Avg. response 3.52	Avg. response 3.57	Avg. response 3.53
Days of service performed	16	%	%	%
< 7 days		65.6	0.0	57.8
7 - 10 days		32.9	0.0	29.0
11 - 14 days		1.5	0.0	1.3
15 - 42 days (2 to 6 weeks)		0.0	0.0	0.0
> 6 weeks (8, 10, or 12 months, etc.)		0.0	100.0	11.9
Hours worked per day	17	%	%	%
< 2 hours		0.3	0.0	0.3
2 - 4 hours		9.9	4.4	9.2
5 - 7 hours		71.9	21.7	65.8
8 - 10 hours		17.7	69.6	24.0
> 11 hours		0.3	4.4	0.8
Community/communities served	18	%	%	%
I worked in Jewish communities		27.2	27.7	27.2
I worked in non-Jewish communities		60.3	48.9	58.9
I worked in communities with a mixture of Jews and non-Jews		12.5	23.4	13.9
Portion of work performed with members of community served	19	%	%	%
Almost none		28.7	10.9	26.6
A quarter		18.0	8.7	16.8
Half		15.9	17.4	16.1
Three quarters		11.1	17.4	11.8
Almost all		26.4	45.7	28.7
Activities participants reported as spending "bulk" of their time performing during service	20	%	%	%
Construction/Renovation (of homes, school buildings, etc.)		77.5	0.0	4.2
Cleaning (of parks, bodies of water, etc.)		5.7	2.2	68.1
Agricultural work (cultivating fields, planting trees, etc.)		12.3	0.0	5.3
General education and tutoring		0.3	26.1	10.8
Jewish education and tutoring		0.3	4.4	3.4
Youth programming (secular or religious)		1.5	17.4	0.8
Adult programming (secular or religious)		0.3	10.9	3.4
Advocacy for individuals		0.0	19.6	1.6
Discussing issues with lawmakers		0.0	0.0	2.4
Other		2.1	19.6	0.0
Perceptions of service experience <i>I agree 4=Very much, 3=Somewhat, 2=A little, 1=Not at all</i>		Avg. response	Avg. response	Avg. response
The supplies needed to do our job were available to us	21	3.54	3.39	3.53
We received adequate instruction to complete the assigned tasks	21	3.53	3.07	3.47
When problems arose we were able to voice our opinions and help resolve the situation	21	3.55	3.11	3.49
We were thanked for the work we performed	21	3.86	3.37	3.80
We were given adequate free time	21	3.45	3.33	3.44
Overall, I felt this was a worthwhile service experience	21	3.84	3.72	3.82
Working and living with other young Jews was a very important part of the service experience	22	3.27	3.02	3.25
The experience would have been more beneficial if our group included non-Jews	22	1.97	1.83	1.96
My own experience of Judaism was enriched by the experience of living and working with young Jews from different traditions and backgrounds	22	3.15	2.77	3.10
The other participants made the experience worthwhile for me	22	3.58	3.02	3.52
<i>N =</i>		346	52	398
Note: Response rates varied for individual post-test questions; however, the disparity among response rates for individual questions was negligible.				

Reflection

Reflection is one of the critical dimensions of service learning programs. Through reflection, participants come to understand the impact of the work, the relationship of the project to larger social issues, and the significance of the experience within the life of the community being served, and the individual doing the service.

The Jewish service programs studied engaged in a variety of reflective experiences. For the vast majority of participants reflection occurred through discussions guided by a group leader and augmented by interaction with fellow participants and community members in the service area. Speaking of the reflective experience, one young man participating in a short term domestic service project noted:

The group leader who was leading my discussion was wonderful. She was really respectful and also she had the ability, she had the facilitation experience, to go off the script a little bit so that if someone brings up an interesting point, she's not going to say, 'Okay, that's interesting' and go [back to the previous topic].

Because of the facilitated nature of the discussions, the group leader's ability affected participants' perceived quality of the reflection experience. Survey respondents in short term programs agreed relatively strongly (3.41 on a scale of 1-4 where 4=very much agree) that the

reflection leaders asked good questions that made them think critically about what they were doing. This finding was supported by anecdotal evidence that emerged from a focus group participant who attended a short term international program: **"There were two group leaders, and one of them I thought was excellent. She had nightly discussions even after the formal meetings, and she really opened my mind to a lot of new things."**

In addition to guided conversations, participants also engaged in discussions of selected Jewish texts, and negotiated religious observances that bridged the needs of the multi-denominational group of participants.

I was one of two Orthodox kids on the trip and for whatever reason I felt, 'I don't know if anybody else is going to even care about this.' Little did I know that most of the trip did, but we said, 'Let's take it upon ourselves. We'll read the Magilla for everybody and we'll see what happens. Who knows? Maybe it will work out.' We really didn't have such high hopes. And as we started thinking about it and planning it, people started having conversations about how they celebrate this holiday...just sitting around after reading the Magilla and to hear people from various communities, their reactions to what we just did and why we did it, the first time that some people had actually read through the text and seen what was inside was just, I thought, really symbolized everything that we'd been working towards on that trip which was bringing people closer.

The young man quoted above was a participant of a short term international trip. His

experience was not universal however, as noted by a participant in a domestic short term program.

We felt [the program] reached really to people who were observant, like really observant and Shabbat. So we were stuck on this camp in [Southern State], and if we disagreed with what they said and what the program said, I got targeted because I questioned what they were. It felt like they were trying to install things into our heads, like make us all think the same thing and if you questioned it you got in trouble.

The content of the reflective experiences included policy issues related to service, the meaning of service within a Jewish context, the significance of the service to the people being served, and for long term participants, discussion about how to live with fellow participants in a communal setting. Long term participants were also more likely to discuss problem-solving skills for both living arrangement issues and service project concerns, than were short term participants.

During and after service, participants' chose to remember their service time in a number of ways such as engaging in further conversations about the implications of service with others; journaling; and uploading pictures and/or text to on-line social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace).

The appropriate duration and intensity of reflection during service was debated in focus groups, with some participants enjoying the depth and intensity of discussion, and others feeling that reflection of some topics were overdone or even predictable in some cases. One short term participant in an Israeli program noted the various approaches to incorporating reflection into an otherwise packed schedule.

We were on their busses so we had bus meetings every night, and they were actually one of the most meaningful parts of the trip. We talked a lot about why we came on the trip, and every day there was such a big impact of what we did... whether we were painting an apartment building and people came down and were thanking us, or when we did three months of work on that guy's farm and he was crying when we left... so we had really intense sessions every night, but they were great.

Although recognized as important, reflection was also considered hard as this international, short term focus group member notes:

I think it was hard, one because we had just worked all day in the sun, so we were physically tired. And two, I agree it was unexpected the amount of studying we did, and I think everything we did was very interesting. I really liked the articles we did even if I wasn't so much in the mood. I think it was kind of crammed in.

A participant in a long term Israeli-based program noted what she considered to be an American bias in the reflective experience.

For the first three months we were all living together in the Center... so every

Sunday we would have day-long seminars. They were great and they were facilitated well. But there was a lot of ... talking about Jewish identity; and I think talking about it once is fine, but having to talk about it over and over again is really just boring and not transformational in any way. It's not informative... What I did find out [from] talking to Israelis is that they don't talk about [Jewish identity] at all.

As evidenced in Table 19, long term participants were somewhat more critical of the reflective experience than were their short term cohorts.

Long term participants were less satisfied with the balance between work and reflection and were less willing to positively assess the use the use of text references and exercises than were short term participants.

Table 19: Reflection Experience of Jewish Service Program Participants
 Post service survey response by length of service and total participants

Question	Question number	Short Term Participant	Long Term Participant	All Participant
Group-based service reflection questions only				
Ways in which service group reflected on service experience	24	%	%	%
By participating in conversations led by a group leader		96.3	82.9	95.0
By engaging in conversations with other participants		94.2	91.4	93.9
Through journaling such as writing blogs, group or individual journals, etc.		36.3	40.0	36.7
By talking with the people from the local area that we were working with		84.9	42.9	80.8
Through lectures or other presentations that were followed by class discussions		71.7	77.1	72.2
Through religious services and/or other observances		49.8	45.7	49.4
Through discussions of Jewish texts		69.8	74.3	70.3
Topics included in reflection content	25	%	%	%
Perceptions of the service experience		87.7	71.4	86.1
Public policy issues related to the service experience		60.3	68.6	61.1
The meaning of the service experience within a Jewish context		87.7	82.9	87.2
The significance of the experience to the community where the service was taking place		84.6	57.1	81.9
How to live with my fellow participants in a communal Jewish setting		20.6	68.6	25.3
Problem-solving skills as they pertained to the service project		33.2	48.6	34.7
Problem-solving skills as they pertained to our living arrangements with other service participants		15.1	62.9	19.7
Individual and group-based service reflection questions				
Activities participants engaged in during or after service trip	26	%	%	%
I wrote in a journal		35.8	23.1	34.2
I engaged in conversations about the implications of the service experience with other people		83.5	75.0	82.4
I wrote blogs or other online journaling		8.4	21.2	10.1
I wrote poems or other creative pursuits		6.6	9.6	7.0
I wrote an article for a newsletter or newspaper		12.1	17.3	12.8
I uploaded pictures and/or text to Facebook, Myspace, or other online communities		65.0	51.9	63.3
I participated in religious services and/or other observances		52.6	50.0	52.3
Perceptions of reflective component of service experience <i>I agree 4=Very much, 3=Somewhat, 2=A little, 1=Not at all</i>	27	Avg. response	Avg. response	Avg. response
The leaders that facilitated the reflection experience asked good questions that made us think critically about what we were doing		3.41	2.78	3.34
These opportunities to dialogue helped me to understand more fully the roots of the problems and the global nature of the issues we were working with		3.21	2.74	3.15
Everyone's comments were valued and each participant was made to feel part of a larger group		3.52	3.08	3.47
There was a good balance between the work that I performed and the opportunity to reflect on the experience		3.39	2.61	3.30
Through reflective conversations, applicable text references, and exercises I learned a great deal about what it means to serve within the Jewish context		3.07	2.51	3.01
The reflective experience was critically important to the overall value of the service experience		3.10	2.76	3.06
<i>N =</i>		346	52	398
Note: Response rates varied for individual post-test questions; however, the disparity among response rates for individual questions was negligible.				

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data generated from the survey instrument tells us about the respondents formative life experiences as Jews; service history and motivations for immersion program involvement; general volunteer service background; identification with certain constructs associated with Judaism; and information about the service experience. The focus group sessions provided more nuanced insights into the perceptions of immersion service experiences and the meaning of these experiences within both a Jewish and secular context. To the degree possible, we have also taken findings from this study and attempted to compare the data with other cohorts in the Jewish community. The discussion and recommendations presented in this section of the report are limited by these parameters, nonetheless, they do point to associations and recommendations emerging from our analysis.

Two main themes are discussed herein:

- **Jewish identity is a complex phenomenon.** While influenced by service immersion programs, neither a week nor even of a year of service account for the development of a complex cultural and theological expression of identity; yet there are

some interesting findings associated with those who select to participate in service programs and constructs associated with Jewish identity.

- **There is a service ‘brand’ within the Jewish community.** This brand captures the imagination and interest of a highly committed group of young adults clearly eager to both explore and repair the world, and to express their Judaism through service. The ‘brand’ is an asset to the Jewish community and deserves thoughtful, coordinated development. This development of the brand could well lead to useful and explicit programmatic distinctions. Such differentiation has the potential to assist UJC as it works with the larger Jewish community to consciously employ service as a tool facilitating the development of the next generation of Jewish leaders. Such an effort would also require a new level of coordination and collaboration within and among the various sponsoring organizations.

JEWISH IDENTITY AMONG JEWISH SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

The young Jews applying to participate in the service learning programs examined in this

study come to those experiences with high levels of Jewish identity. Through the models constructed to gain greater insight into the factors contributing to this identity several findings emerged that are categorized and summarized below.

Service History and Program Selection

- Application motivation is consistently related to Jewish identity. Those mostly motivated by the Jewish component of a service program or motivated by both Jewish and service aspects of a program have a higher level of Jewish identity than those mostly motivated by the service aspect of their programs. There is one exception to this. Application motivation does not seem to be associated with commitment to social justice aspects of Jewish identity.
- The length of service program (short term verse long term) that applicants applied to has no significant relationship to Jewish identity in four aspects of Jewish identity. For social justice and Jewish-related behavior, short-term programs are negatively related to Jewish identity. However, the relationship between social justice and length of service program is marginally significant.

- Location of the service program is associated with Jewish identity. **Those that apply to Israel and other international destinations to do their service generally have higher levels of Jewish identity.** This is particularly true for those that apply to programs in Israel.
- There are diverse findings for previous service experience and Jewish identity. Previous service experience makes no significant difference in Jewish identity for attachment to Israel and observing Jewish traditions. Previous experience with only Jewish service programs, or only secular service programs is associated with lower levels of Jewish identity for mindfulness of history and agreement with the Federation mission. **Those with only secular service experience tend to have a lower Jewish identity in terms of social justice, sense of community and Jewish-related behaviors.**

These findings largely provide insight into who applies for service learning programs. **Contrary to assumptions that permeated the conversations leading to this research contract, most participants in service learning programs are identified with Judaism (many quite highly) and often see**

service as a way to live out their understanding of what it means to be a Jew.

A great deal could be learned through a more intensive longitudinal study of immersion service participants. In the next section, the researchers suggest some possible implications of these findings when applied to program design and the Jewish brand of service.

THE JEWISH BRAND OF SERVICE

There's a reason why everyone here chose a Jewish service learning project as opposed to just going on Habitat for Humanity. The reason is because they have a connection towards Judaism or toward Israel. But there is the initial connection of why they chose the Jewish service learning project. So I think that that is something that no matter what, that connection is going to continue forever.

- Long-term service participant in an Israeli program

While likely not the most authoritative source, Wikipedia defines a brand as a

Collection of images and ideas representing...a producer; more specifically, it refers to the descriptive verbal attributes and concrete symbols such as a name, logo, slogan, and design scheme that convey the essence of... service. Brand recognition and other reactions are created by the accumulation of experiences with the specific product or service...
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand>, accessed 10-08).

Collectively, the information gleaned from the online surveys and gathered through the focus

groups suggests that there is indeed a “Jewish-brand” of service learning programs that drives participation and appears to generate brand loyalty. **Critical programmatic characteristics of the Jewish brand of service include cost, location, connection with other Jews in a safe, comfortable, observant environment, the opportunity to give back through service. We suggest that the brand be expanded to consciously focus on service as an opportunity to develop the next generation of Jewish leaders.**

Location

As one young man noted, “I wanted a cheap way back to Israel, but I didn’t want it to be a tour, so service was my option.” Others concurred. “I just wanted to go back to Israel,” or, “I had gone on *birthright* in the past...I was looking for a cheap way back.” Another said: “I wanted to find a volunteer trip for Israel and (program name) was the longest trip that I found that wasn’t part of education or it wasn’t religious in any way.” Factor analysis confirmed that for Jews interested in returning to Israel, location was an important program determinant.

Attention to location extended beyond the horizons of Israel, however: “Basically I wanted to go to New Orleans anyway to see it and they offered a trip through Hillel.” Assessments of the Gulf coast location was somewhat mixed as

one participant noted, “a lot of people went for the wrong reasons. It’s really weird; New Orleans has become like a weird tourist attraction for the participants.”

The desire to travel, to be part of the ‘spring break’ crowd also drew applicants.

I just kind of wanted to go somewhere for spring break. I wasn’t really specifically looking for service, although it ended up being a really positive experience. I just kind of wanted to go somewhere and a Jewish trip sounded like something that was very interesting.

As noted previously, there are important social justice and Jewish identity implications associated with location as well. While participants have the right to apply to any number of service learning programs, it may be beneficial to guide applicants to a variety of geographic experiences in order to maximize the developmental aspects of service program participation.

Cost

Low participant cost was another factor drawing applicants. “My choice...had to do with cost...I knew the cost of the trip would definitely be helped out and supported (by my parents) if it was an alternative break kind of thing.” While the vast majority of trips involved some out-of-pocket expenses, fund development expectations did not appear to be

an insurmountable obstacle for participants, however, it should be noted that the absence of a meaningful control population negates a definitive assessment of this aspect of the Jewish service.

Connections with Other Jews in a Safe, Comfortable, Observant Environment

Meeting other Jews, along with the expectation that many would know members of their service group, “was a big part of the positive experience.” A participant on a short term Israel trip commented “I just knew that (the service trip to Israel) was with other college kids, and I was happy that it was ages 18-30 because I knew that it would be a lot of older, interesting kinds of people.” **Another young woman noted, “...I wanted a more tight-knit Jewish community. I was really looking to meet other Jews at my school and people of various backgrounds that aren’t just from the same background as me.”**

Actually knowing some of the participants was an influencing factor as well: “Once I signed up, I saw all these other people were going to be there. Friends of mine. That was a big pushing factor.” An experienced alternative break participant reflecting on several international trips summarized the **‘friendship factor – “It’s such a big part of the positive experience, traveling, meeting new people and forming**

relationships with them. I think that was the main motivating factor for me to go.”

Similar to the comfort and familiarity of being with other young Jews, participants were also influenced by the accommodation to variety of religious practices. Speaking of her experience with a short term Israeli trip, a focus group member said:

On my ASB (alternative spring break) there were over 100 and there was definitely a mix. Like it was predominantly Conservative kids I would say, but there was a whole group of Orthodox kids from Brooklyn, and there were other Orthodox kids, and there were some really, really Reform kids. The services on Shabbat were optional, but people went; and they had lots of activities ranging from discussions to praying, a spectrum.

This accommodation to various forms of observance was noted by a young man, “For the most part, we were relatively like a similar denomination, but there were definitely a couple of people that had a little bit different views, just a little more religious... [but] it was not an issue at all.” Another participant compared her service experience with a previous *birthright* trip. This young woman felt as if the *birthright* trip was not very accommodating to religious needs and observances. She went on to say that “they claimed to be pluralistic, non-denomination, but it wasn’t that. So it was very important to me

that this trip was accommodating and it actually happened to be very accommodating.”

From a Jewish brand of service perspective, accommodation to the variety of religious practices while an important distinguishing brand attribute requires additional attention on the part of the program organizers and groups leaders. Participants noted the complexity of meeting the various denominational expectations in foreign countries as well as the challenges associated with transportation when observance conflicted with the local geography and the plurality of plans that emerged from within a diverse service group. Speaking of a trip to the beach, one young man, in telling the story of the Shabbat observance, said:

The next day we were planning to go to the beach and once again they (Orthodox participants) didn’t want us using the bus because we had several options for that day. So we paid the cabs. It’s something we should have worked out in advance better.

Program sponsors need to determine denominational expectations and in so doing, prepare group leaders to handle the ensuing complexity. Numerous focus group participants noted the importance of serious thoughtful conversations that emerged when observance practices varied. There appeared to be universal agreement that the opportunity to share approaches and to question cherished assumptions was growth producing, yet the quotes shared above also suggest that such

discussions require thoughtful facilitation if they are to be maximally beneficial.

The Opportunity to Give Back through Service

Giving back through service emerged as an important motivator through both the quantitative data and the qualitative findings. Simply put participants want to help others. Ninety-one point six percent of Jewish service program applicants who later became program participants indicated that helping others was a reason for volunteering, while 88.1% want to make a difference and 83.2% desire to give back (see Table 6).

These findings are reflected in the thoughts of a young woman involved in domestic service:

I wanted to go on the trip because of the community service part of it. I felt really distant from the hurricane Katrina tragedy because I didn't know anyone affected by it. But it was obvious that they still needed help.

Giving back through service takes on additional and highly important significance as noted in the various regression models when volunteering is motivated by being good to do as a Jew. Participants that apply to service learning programs and participate in volunteering as a result of this orientation are significantly more committed to social justice and possess a higher sense of community. These

same participants are significantly more in agreement with the Federation mission as well. The relationship is even more striking among the participants in international programs. There are several implications of this finding for service programs. First, however, it is important to acknowledge that motivation is a personal, intrinsic factor influencing service. As such exposure to the rationale for service can contribute to motivation, but in and of itself cannot assure adoption of new or dissonant values for any given young person. **That said programs promoting service at all stages along the educational continuum can articulate the value of volunteering to young Jews and consciously tie service to *tikkun olam* strengthening the connection between volunteering and essential Jewish values.**

Preparatory programs for immersion service programs can raise the awareness of the value of service, both to society and to Jewish values as a precursor to travel. And finally during reflection exercises, the essential value of service can be integrated into text readings, journaling and discussion. A values-based orientation to service within a Jewish context appears to exist already, but given the known impact of this motivator, it could be strengthened as a key component of the Jewish brand of service.

Although data demonstrates that preparation is already a component of the Jewish brand of

service, evidence suggests a certain amount of unevenness in the preparatory phase of some programs. As noted previously, some participants reported arriving at airports with little information about the trip ahead. Some suggested that other than an airport meeting time, they knew very little about the work they would be performing, and some did not even know the exact time that their flights would depart. While acknowledging that some of the unevenness may be directly related to the attention span of the participant, there were a sufficient number of similar and related stories to suggest a need for improved attention to details and more thoughtful program administration. Focus group members reported saying that while they knew little about the program before going, other friends who had participated in similarly disorganized ventures assured them that all would go well and they would have fun. Although a larger study would be necessary to fully verify the implications of disorganization, it is fair to assume that some young people, and perhaps most especially those with weaker connections to the Jewish community, may not select to participate because they can't get their questions answered well in advance. This weakness should not be over-emphasized however, as there were also accounts of highly detailed preparation experiences.

The Jewish brand of service also includes an important reflective component carefully structured and orchestrated during the course of the service venture. Again, reports about these reflective sessions are accounted elsewhere in this study, but it should again be noted that some unevenness exists leaving room for program improvement. Several focus group participants who had attended more than one immersion service program noted the similarity of the reflection curriculum across programs. A few focus group members admonished the 'reflection-bible' for its repetition. Others noted the "push" to reflect. They suggested that they were being asked to examine deep and important questions before they even knew the members of their group or before they begun to perform the work associated with their trip. While no one specifically disparaged reflection, some refinement and variation in the process may enhance the experience, particularly for those with strong histories of service immersion participation. **Establishing protocols and sharing reflection curriculum between sponsoring organizations may help to rectify some of the problems uncovered in this study.**

The accounts of the service work performed were generally positive. Participants believed that the work they were doing was important and made a difference. They felt thanked for

their assistance and appreciated the opportunity to get to know the people they were serving. From a brand perspective, the work performed in immersion service programs matters and makes a difference, key attributes not always present in secular alternative spring or winter break programs.

Service Brand Enhancement: Service as a Stepping Stone to Leadership

This study clearly found that young Jews applying to service learning programs generally come to these experiences with high levels of Jewish identity. We also learned that applicants to Israeli and international programs appear to have stronger social justice orientations, greater attachment to Israel and in some circumstances more historical attachment. In short Jewish identity is multi-dimensional with differential levels of attachment among the participants as they self-select to various programs.

Recognizing the voluntary nature of participation does not preclude differential promotion, nor does it rule out the development of a plan to utilize service as a way to expand and build upon the multi-dimensional aspects of Jewish identity.

Based on our exchanges with program sponsors at the beginning of the research project and our interaction with participants, there is great

creative energy driving these immersion experiences.

Mobilizing this energy to create a series of service opportunities that build upon each other and meet a variety of developmental objectives would not only help to sustain interest in immersion service but also meet broader objectives within the Jewish community.

Such action would build upon the observations and reflections of service participants as captured in the focus groups. The remarkable experience noted by a short term program participants drives home this message.

I kind of came out of high school not really knowing what it meant to be Jewish. I really was more of a cultural Jew. I don't know if I believe in God.... One of the beauties of that trip was they didn't every really make us come out of our bubble of this amazing experience and come down to earth and apply it to our lives. So at the end you really got to think about it and what does it mean to you. And for me, that was, okay, this is being Jewish? Cool. I love this. I never really made that connection to Judaism, and after the trip I did.

We heard a similar message from a young woman reflecting on the combination of international travel and summer camp experiences.

My summer at [camp]... was a place where I could establish my Jewish identity separate from my family and from that whole community that was tied up into my parents' Jewishness... And I think my Israel experiences have

been really important for establishing my Jewish identity and also camp... and I'm still on staff there. I think this summer will be my last summer. But I continue to go back because of the Jewish environment that it's created for me.

snap inside in a good way, [regarding] a sense of where I stood on a number of issues, where I stood in relation to some of my friends who had other institutions, where I felt myself as part of the Orthodox community.

This young woman went on to contrast service learning with the 'mission-trips' sometimes orchestrated by Christian groups. She noted the intrinsic value of Jewish immersion service as a mechanism for the personal development of her religious and cultural beliefs. She contrasted this with what she perceived to be the more evangelical/recruitment aspects of one of the Christian trips operating in the international area where she was serving.

An Orthodox young man also noted the personal growth value of his international service experience when he said:

Some of the things I've been thinking about finally hit home by somebody who didn't know at all [what I had been thinking about the last several months] and said some things that were very similar to things people had been talking about for the last couple of months. [The trip] made something

These quotes represent only a few of the observations made by participants. Service was not simply about 'finding' Judaism, it was about becoming a Jew in a more thoughtful, independent, mature fashion – all important foundations for leaders. We strongly recommend building upon this asset of service in a conscious deliberative fashion.

The Federation and collaborating organizations may want to refine and maximize the impact of the Jewish brand of service, based in part of the findings of this study. Refinement may enable the sponsors to more effectively utilize service to attract a broader base of participants and to consciously orchestrate service programs to facilitate the development of the next generation of leadership within the Jewish community.

CONCLUSION

I felt the trip was worth any amount of money that I could have been asked to pay. It was priceless because of the experience that I got out of it. And because of what it taught and what it is going to inspire me to do in the future.

Short term international trip participant

Without question, the overwhelming assessment from program participants echoes the sentiments of this young man. Service learning programs inspire gratitude, affect change in the communities served and among those serving, deepen commitment to Judaism and forge new and lasting friendships. It has been a privilege to delve into the personal feelings and stated outcomes of those who have served; it has been a challenge to capture the range of findings and report them in ways that edify those that deliver these programs and those that fund these initiatives.

Although a lot has been discovered through this exploration, there are nonetheless limitations to our capacity to generalize from these findings. The sample of participants was relatively small, self-selected and lacked a credible control population. While the outcomes appear to be highly positive, we do not know about the long term impact of service. Many of these shortcomings can, and should be addressed through further study.

We do know however, that the participants were remarkably identified with Judaism; clearly active in multiple volunteer capacities and many had participated in other service learning programs. Most valued the experience highly. There is a Jewish brand of service. These programs offer great promise as tools to develop a new generation of leadership in the Jewish community, particularly if steps are taken to differentiate among experiences, and build upon them incrementally. In an increasingly interconnected world service allows young people to explore their roots, to re-define community and develop deep and abiding connections to Judaism.

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