



JOFEE Fellowship Impacts

Learnings from the First 2 Cohorts

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Prepared for
Hazon & the Jim Joseph
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Introduction

JOFEE FELLOWSHIP OVERVIEW

In 2015, Hazon and the Jim Joseph Foundation set out to strengthen the Jewish Outdoor Food, Farming, and Environmental Education (JOFEE) field through the JOFEE Fellowship. To date, 33 Fellows have completed the Fellowship across two cohorts, during which they designed and implemented JOFEE programming at their host institutions and received extensive professional training and support from Hazon and seasoned JOFEE mentors. The Fellowship aims to:

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

THE JOFEE FELLOWSHIP EVALUATION

Informing Change is conducting an evaluation of the Fellowship to explore the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the Fellowship, as well as the impact on Fellows, host institutions, and the wider community. We also examine how the Fellowship builds the capacity of the JOFEE field more broadly and actualizes its potential as a powerful tool for engaging the Jewish community. Now in year three of this evaluation, we have learned that the Fellowship has boosted the skills of two cohorts and increased capacity of host organizations for JOFEE programming. This report incorporates qualitative and quantitative data collected from both cohorts 1 and 2 (Exhibit 1).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

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

Informing Change conducts the following annual cycle of data collection for each cohort of Fellows.

Exhibit 1

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

NEED FOR THE FELLOWSHIP

Research from the 2014 *Seeds of Opportunity* report revealed that JOFEE is a burgeoning field and a compelling entry point into Jewish life, particularly for young people. As a direct outgrowth of this report, the JOFEE Fellowship’s goal is to build on the momentum of this emerging field by developing JOFEE educators and thereby a healthy and thriving JOFEE field. The 11-month paid Fellowship has the potential to positively affect both individuals and the organizations that host them. Young professionals who are interested in JOFEE have an opportunity to boost their skills. Host organizations gain staff whom they otherwise might not have been able to employ, thereby enhancing the organizations’ capacity to provide new and enhanced JOFEE experiences to their communities.

“We are five years away, maybe less, from exponentially catalyzing this movement across the country and firmly establishing JOFEE and its work as a core part of the Jewish educational landscape in the twenty-first century.”

– JOFEE organization

The application process for the Fellowship is proof that demand for these skills, individuals, and capacity for organizations is high. Organizations have the option to put forth an existing employee as a Fellow or to have Hazon place a Fellow within their organization from a larger pool of applicants. Over the first two cohorts, there were 101 applicants, and 71 additional people expressed interest in the limited number of Fellowship positions. Given that there are more applicants and organizations that want to participate than positions available each year, the Fellowship has accommodated the need for more Fellows and placements than originally anticipated by increasing the number of Fellows and placements in each cohort. **From the first and second cohorts, of those who applied and were placed, 33 out of 35 Fellows successfully completed their Fellowship, exceeding the original goal of 30 Fellows.**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Fellows come into the Fellowship with multiple and varied experiences in Jewish community and practice. The Fellowship enables them to channel that experience, as well as their interests and passion, into a meaningful professional pursuit. Having developed skills and experience as JOFEE educators delivering JOFEE programming, most Fellows now consider themselves JOFEE professionals and have continued in their roles at their host organizations after the Fellowship ended. As young professionals, however, many Fellows still indicate uncertainty about whether they will pursue long-term careers in OFEE, Jewish life, a combination of the two, or something else.

The group of host organizations is very diverse in terms of budget and staff size and prior experience with JOFEE programming. Accordingly, how Fellows spend their time and the levels of support they received from their

organizations varies. Purposefully, to add to this variation, some organizations are exclusively dedicated to JOFEE; others are Jewish community organizations (JCOs) looking to introduce JOFEE programming into their work. The Fellowship, therefore, affects JCOs and JOFEE organizations differently. For JCOs, the Fellowship can serve as an entry point into JOFEE programming. For JOFEE organizations, the Fellowship helps to deepen and increase the capacity to deliver existing JOFEE programming.

The Fellowship has made significant strides in bringing JOFEE programming into more aspects of Jewish communal life, deepening the capacity for JOFEE programming, and creating a pipeline of young leaders with the potential to continue to expand the field. A significant outstanding challenge, however, is that organizations lack the financial resources to fully support JOFEE programs in their optimal forms.

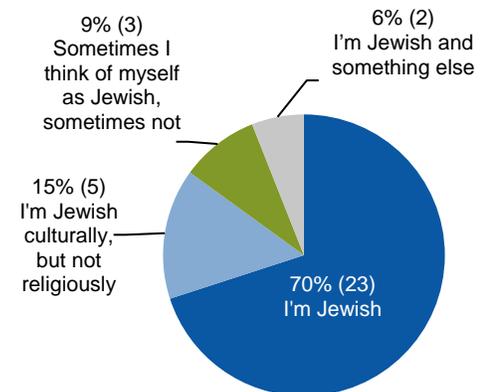
About the Fellows & Their Host Institutions

THE JOFEE FELLOWS' JOURNEY

The majority of Fellows have been Jewish white women (26 out of 33) in their mid- to late twenties who were engaged in Jewish life at some point in their youth. Fellows ranged in age from 23 to 38, with an average age of 27. While all Fellows identified as Jewish in some way (Exhibit 2), 85% self-identified as white and 70% self-identified as Ashkenazi, with only a few identifying as Sephardic (6%), Mizrahi (3%), and multi-racial or another race (6%). Although cohort 3 has recently begun and is not included in this report, it is notable that cohort 3 includes 7 out of 18 Fellows who identify as male and two non-Jewish Fellows, making it the most diverse cohort.

Fellows identify themselves as Jewish in diverse ways.

Exhibit 2 | N=33

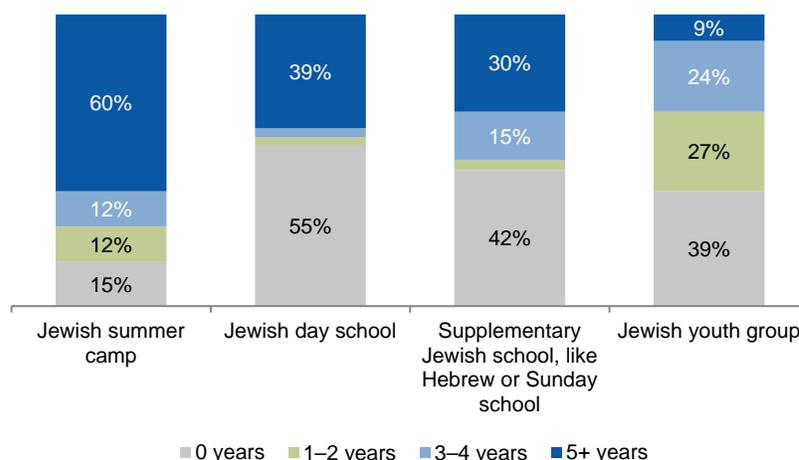


In terms of their participation in the Jewish community, most Fellows spent time in traditional Jewish institutions.

On average, Fellows had spent approximately four and a half years participating in Jewish summer camps and three years attending or working in Jewish Sunday, Hebrew, or supplementary schools (Exhibit 3). Four Fellows had never attended or worked in any of these Jewish environments, making the Fellowship a seminal Jewish work experience.

Many fellows have at least a few years of experience participating in Jewish institutions.

Exhibit 3 | N=33



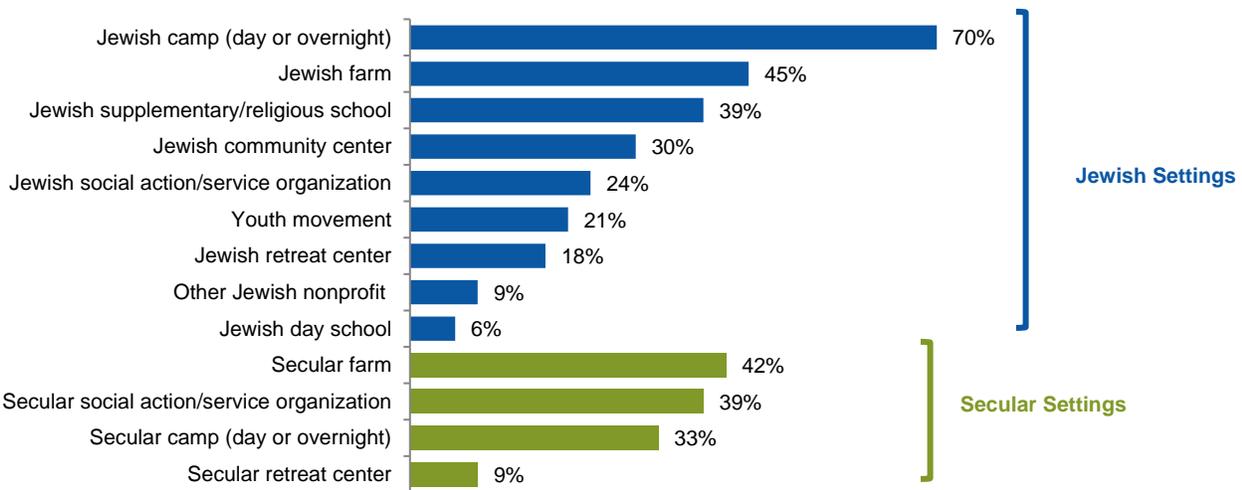
Most Fellows were new to the professional worlds of JOFEE and Jewish education. Half of the Fellows had worked in JOFEE for one year or less while another quarter had worked in the field for less than two years. Working in Jewish camp—one of the most longstanding and widespread JOFEE experiences in the American Jewish community—is a common professional experience among Fellows (Exhibit 4). The Fellowship, for many Fellows, seems to be a natural outgrowth of that prior experience, allowing Fellows to extend their camp experience to year-round professional work.

About half of the Fellows worked only briefly in the professional field of JOFEE or the broader field of Jewish Education prior to the Fellowship.

	JOFEE	Jewish Education
less than 1 year	51%	39%
1–2 years	27%	18%
3–5 years	18%	36%
6+ years	3%	7%

Fellows have worked in a variety of JOFEE, OFEE, and Jewish spaces

Exhibit 4 | N=33



Fellows are attracted to the Fellowship because it offers them a meaningful next career step that aligns with their interests and passions. A career in JOFEE allows people to work at the intersections of environmental sustainability, food security, social justice, and Jewish practice and spirituality. The multifaceted nature of these intersections is a unique and appealing opportunity to young adults.

“My passions lie in a connection to nature, Judaism, the arts, youth empowerment, and building community. I am hopeful the JOFEE Fellowship can be a platform to align and unite my interests, skills, and visions, as well as fulfill a need in this world...The JOFEE Fellowship will provide the educational training and certification, professional experience, concrete skills, and the financial means I need to initiate my life's work. I truly believe that returning Judaism back to the Earth will weave a new cultural fabric, the beginnings of a radically transformative global movement.”

– JOFEE Fellow

HOST INSTITUTIONS

In the first two cohorts, 35 Fellows were placed at 13 unique JOFEE organizations and 11 unique JCOs. Specifically, 10 of the JCOs were Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) and one JCO was a Jewish Federation. About half of host organizations have 2 to 16 staff members, and about a third of host organizations have over 100 staff members. The remaining organizations have between 17 and 99 staff members. The operating budgets for these organizations vary just as widely, with Fellows placed at organizations with annual budgets ranging from \$90,000 to \$35,000,000. JCOs, on average, tend to be larger organizations than JOFEE organizations. **Of the 11 JCOs, six had never offered JOFEE programming prior to the Fellowship.**

27 out of 35 Fellows remained employed at their host organizations after completing the Fellowship. While some of the Fellows were employed at their host organizations prior to the Fellowship, many were new staff members who became integral to their organizations within the year (Exhibit 5).

Fellows have been placed at a variety of JOFEE and Jewish Community Organizations, and many stayed on staff after the Fellowship

Exhibit 5

Cohort 1 (n=16 organizations)	Cohort 2 (n=14 organizations)
J4 Organizations (JOFEE organizations that collaborated to design this Fellowship)	
<p><i>Wilderness Torah</i></p> <p><i>Pearlstone Center (1.5)</i></p> <p><i>Urban Adamah</i></p> <p><i>Hazon (3: Teva, Sustainability & Community Engagement, Retreats)</i></p>	<p><i>Wilderness Torah</i></p> <p><i>Pearlstone Center (2)</i></p> <p>Urban Adamah*</p> <p><i>Hazon (3: Teva*, Retreats, Detroit)</i></p>
JOFEE Organizations	
<p>Eden Village Camp</p> <p>Jewish Farm School</p> <p>Congregation Bonai Shalom (0.5)</p> <p>Ramah in the Rockies (0.5)</p> <p>Pushing the Envelope Farm (0.5)</p>	<p><i>Eden Village Camp</i></p> <p><i>Jewish Farm School</i></p> <p><i>Camp Tawonga</i></p> <p><i>Coastal Roots Farm</i></p> <p><i>Abundance Farm</i></p> <p><i>Ekar Farm</i></p>
Jewish Community Organizations	
<p><i>Peninsula JCC</i></p> <p><i>Tamarack Camps</i></p> <p><i>JCC of Louisville</i></p> <p><i>Oshman Family JCC</i></p> <p><i>Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC</i></p> <p><i>The Mayerson JCC of Cincinnati</i></p> <p><i>JCC Chicago</i></p>	<p><i>JCC Greater Boston</i></p> <p><i>Etlavitch DCJCC</i></p> <p><i>Milk & Honey Farm at the Boulder JCC</i></p> <p><i>Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta (2)</i></p>

KEY

(x) = number of fellows placed at this organization if more than one, or a fellow who spent part of their placement at this organization (e.g. 0.5)

Italicized, bolded text denotes organizations that kept their Fellow as an employee after the Fellowship.

An asterisk (*) indicates the two Fellows who left the program before completing the fellowship requirements. In both cases, the Fellows cited shifting career interests and misalignment between their understanding of the job expectations and their role as a JOFEE Fellow in their placement. One Fellow has pursued full-time farming and the other is exploring environmental education pathways. These two Fellows are not included in our analysis, as we do not have a complete set of data on their experiences or journeys.

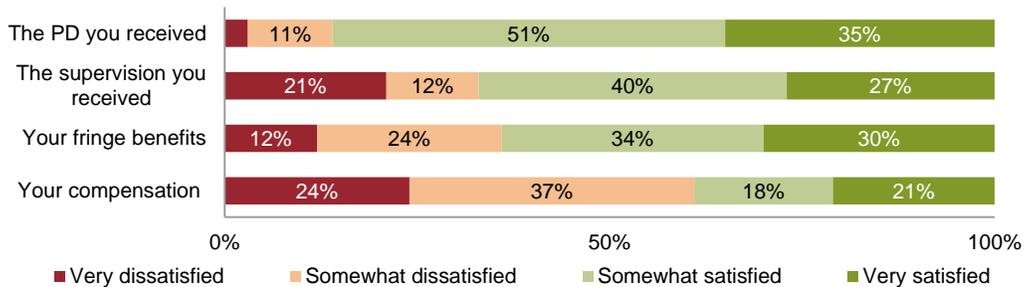
JOFEE FELLOWSHIP STRUCTURE & RESOURCES

The Fellowship placement experience varies greatly. While each Fellow receives the same training and professional development resources, their experiences within the Fellowship are diverse. On average, Fellows split their time evenly between working on direct JOFEE programming, JOFEE administrative tasks, and non-JOFEE administrative tasks. They spent a small portion of time on professional development. However, there was considerable variation from Fellow to Fellow.

Fellows and organizations alike identified Fellows' salaries as a structural challenge of the Fellowship (Exhibit 6). Fellows noted that they would like to see the compensation raised and for salaries to be more equitable across the different host organization placements. Fellows cited examples, including that existing employees were often given supplemental compensation, and some Fellows were offered free housing while others had to pay for housing in high-rent areas on the Fellowship salary. The Fellowship tried to mitigate these discrepancies by deducting free housing from the compensation package, though this cannot change or offset the disproportionate cost of living in different areas around the country. Similarly, host organizations would like higher subsidies so that they could pay their Fellows more. Another structural issue was that many host organizations found the timing of the Fellowship to be problematic, either because the Fellowship was too short, or because it started during the Jewish calendar, programmatic, or school year. As a result, Hazon adjusted the timing of cohort 2 to accommodate some of these needs.

Fellows were most satisfied with their professional development and least satisfied with their compensation.

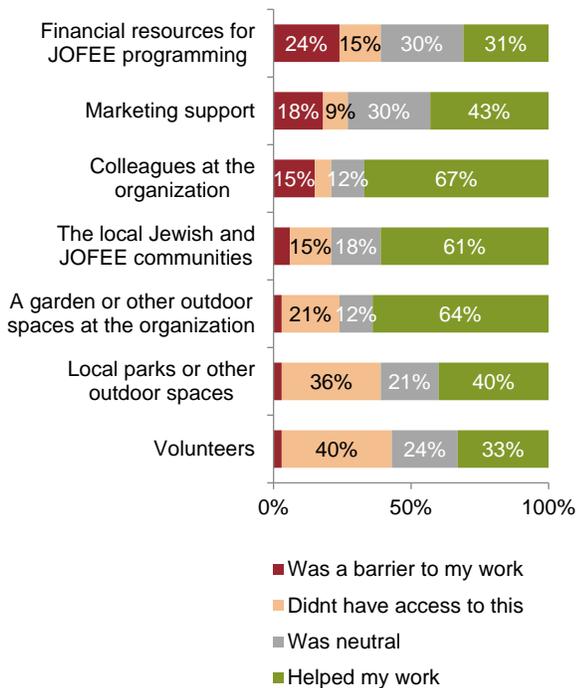
Exhibit 6 | N=33



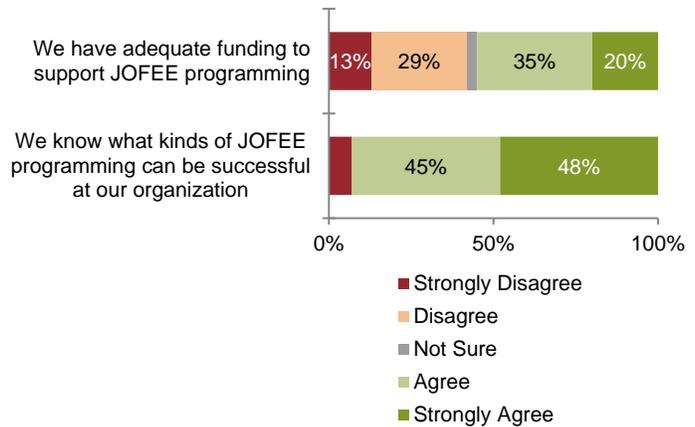
Access to a supportive team and community were the most helpful assets to Fellows. These include colleagues, cohort members, and local Jewish and JOFEE communities. Outdoor physical spaces were also critical. All Fellows had access to a garden or farm, indoor or outdoor spaces, a kitchen for holding classes on site, or a local park—and most had access to multiple spaces. Some, but not all, Fellows had access to volunteers, support from other staff, or a budget for JOFEE programs (Exhibit 7).

While only one resource among many, financial support for JOFEE programming is limited.

From the Fellows' perspectives: **Financial resources impeded Fellows' work more than any other factor.**
Exhibit 7 | N=33



From the organizations' perspectives: **Organizations know what successful JOFEE programming looks like, but may not have the financial resources to support it.**
Exhibit 8 | N=31

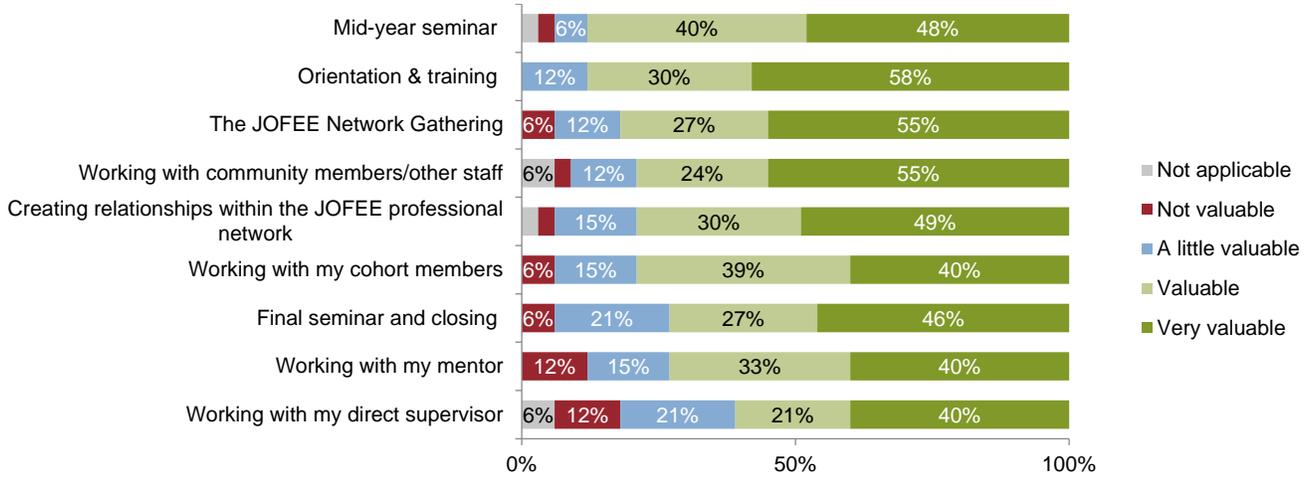


Fellows cited lack of financial resources for JOFEE programs as the largest barrier to their work (Exhibit 7). Many Fellows also reported that they had too many projects and responsibilities and not enough time to implement programs. Related, some host organizations mentioned that their Fellows did not have clearly defined roles, a sentiment Fellows also shared. This lack of role clarity may also connect to another constraint that Fellows identified—that their host institutions sometimes lacked organization and organizational structure, either in general or specifically related to how the Fellows' role fit into their organization overall. **Most host organizations understand what kinds of JOFEE programming will be successful, but fewer have adequate funding to support those programs (Exhibit 8).**

The orientation, training, and mid-year seminar are crucial components of the Fellowship (Exhibit 9). Fellows truly valued the time they spent learning together as a cohort and the opportunity to forge relationships with their cohort peers. While Fellows found these in-person learning sessions to be invaluable, a small number of Fellows did not find the webinar format useful. However, the online learning sessions are a way for Fellows to maintain connections throughout the year, as the logistics and costs of getting a cohort together prohibit additional in-person time. Admittedly, for Fellows who entered the Fellowship as existing employees, the orientation was a long period to be off-site. It is noteworthy that 80% of mentors also reported enjoying or loving their experience as a mentor. Notably, not every Fellow had a positive experience with their supervisor. Both Fellows and supervisors suggested that Hazon better orient and communicate with supervisors throughout the year in order to ensure that supervisors fully understand the Fellowship and its requirements. Hazon is adjusting these practices and policies with cohort 3 to address this issue.

The vast majority of Fellows found value in all components of the Fellowship.

Exhibit 9 | N=33



“From the Hazon staff to my mentor to my peers to the BEETLES educators to other professionals in JOFEE, I just feel so lucky to have been invited into this world. I feel as if I will always have a home in the JOFEE world because of this fellowship, whether or not I decide to pursue JOFEE explicitly. To have that sense of welcome extended to me (someone who barely considered herself Jewish until recently) is an amazing gift.”

– JOFEE Fellow

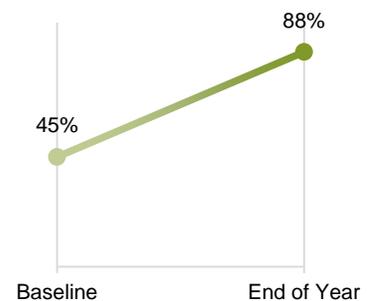
Impact of the Fellowship on Fellows

DEVELOPMENT AS LEADERS & EDUCATORS

Both Fellows and their supervisors agree that Fellows experienced a tremendous amount of professional growth during the Fellowship. By the end of the 11 months, Fellows were well-equipped with skills, and most considered themselves to be professionals in the nascent field of JOFEE (Exhibit 10), proving that the Fellowship offers a tremendous experience in a short amount of time. Fellows developed as JOFEE leaders during this one-year experience, and those who stayed employed at their placements took on additional leadership responsibilities during the subsequent year.

By the Fellowship's end, almost all Fellows considered themselves JOFEE professionals.

Exhibit 10 | N=33



***“The most substantial impact of the Fellowship is that I have a job that I wouldn’t otherwise, in a field that I probably wouldn’t otherwise be in.*”**

– JOFEE Fellow

Informing Change gathered data on three dimensions of the Fellowship’s impact on Fellows: 1) how **prepared** they feel carrying out certain aspects of a JOFEE position, 2) the types of **learning and experiences** they acquired during the Fellowship, and 3) their **proficiency** teaching various JOFEE subjects.

At the end of the Fellowship, Fellows feel prepared to carry out JOFEE work (Exhibit 11). There is close to unanimous agreement that all Fellows are prepared to directly implement and facilitate JOFEE programs.

“The JOFEE Fellowship and the entirety of the JOFEE space is a strategic investment in reaching Jewish youth and young adults in a way that allows them to see their personal passions through a Jewish lens and connects them with... Jewish communities and Jewish life.”

– Key stakeholder

Fellows and their supervisors report that the Fellowship prepared Fellows for many aspects of a JOFEE position.

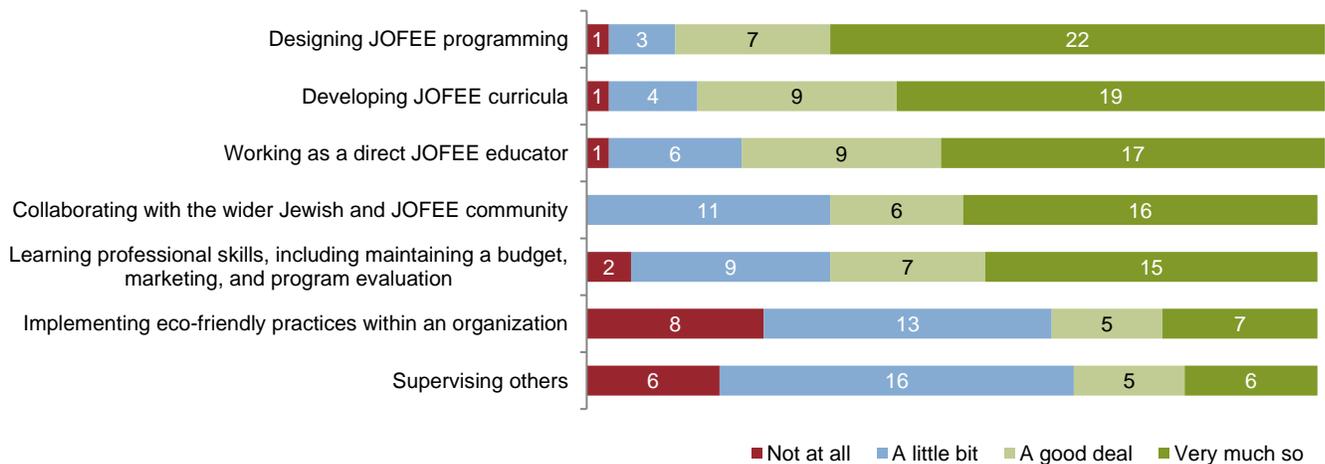
Exhibit 11

	Fellows (n=33)			Supervisors (n=31)
	Reporting “well prepared” or “extremely well prepared”		Reporting “well prepared” or “extremely well prepared”	Reporting “well prepared” or “extremely well prepared”
	Baseline		Follow-Up	Follow-Up
Design JOFEE programs that resonate with youth and young adults	39%	→	91%	81%
Directly implement/facilitate JOFEE programs	39%	→	94%	94%
Plan and coordinate logistical administration for JOFEE programs	42%	→	85%	83%
Utilize JOFEE to engage participants in exploring their Jewish journeys	27%	→	87%	84%
Adapt JOFEE teachings and curricula to make them relevant for different groups	21%	→	88%	84%
Raise awareness and interest in JOFEE programs in the wider Jewish community	30%	→	85%	90%

Over three-quarters of the Fellows feel that they experienced significant learning opportunities during the Fellowship. The areas where JOFEE Fellows were able to gain the most significant experiences were in designing JOFEE programming, developing JOFEE curricula, and working as a direct JOFEE educator (Exhibit 12). Amidst this predominant success, at least three Fellows reported they did not gain enough experience in each of these three main JOFEE areas, suggesting that not all placements structured Fellows’ roles or work responsibilities to align with the goals of the fellowship. Other professional skills, including supervising others, developing partnerships and collaborations, learning how to maintain a budget, or marketing or evaluating a program, were components of some—but not all—Fellowship experiences (Exhibit 12). It is unclear whether the Fellowship has the ability to mitigate some of these disparities.

Fellows feel they gained the most experience during the Fellowship designing and implementing JOFEE programming.

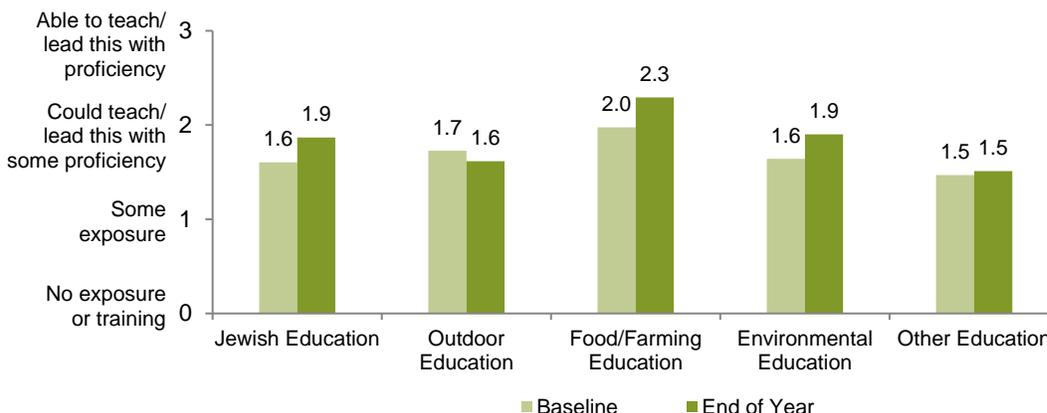
Exhibit 12 | N=33 | To what extent did you gain experience with the following this past year?



Fellows increased their proficiencies as JOFEE educators. Fellows self-reported on their ability to teach JOFEE subjects in their application to the Fellowship and then again upon completion of the experience. Jewish education, food education, and environmental education were the areas of greatest incremental growth. Food education topics¹ were more central to the Fellowship program than outdoor education. Fellows, especially those placed in JOFEE organizations, did not feel that they gained the ability to lead outdoor education activities² during their Fellowship experience. **The areas within the Jewish Education domain where Fellows experienced the greatest increase in proficiency were in informal Jewish learning and Jewish youth and early childhood education.** This demonstrates that the Fellows are gaining experience teaching JOFEE programs for children and youth, who are the intended audiences and beneficiaries of the Fellowship programs.

By the end of the Fellowship, Fellows felt more proficient in teaching JOFEE subjects.

Exhibit 13 | N=33



“This fellowship has validated my vision as an actualized JOFEE professional and educator in the JOFEE world. I have more confidence and range in my JOFEE skills and knowledge base and am energized to continue to grow and learn alongside this emerging field.”

– JOFEE Fellow

FELLOWS’ JOURNEY & FUTURE INTENTIONS

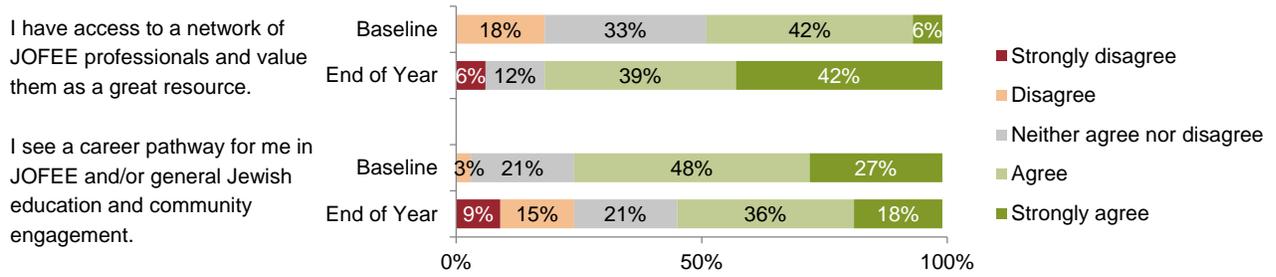
Given that many Fellows are unsure about their future career plans, the Fellowship offers an additional year of career stability for Fellows whose host organizations are able to keep them employed. As Fellows continue on their professional journeys, even if they are uncertain, they can draw upon their JOFEE network as they navigate through the professional world.

¹ Food education topics include cooking, nutrition education, food preservation, farm and garden education, farm-to-table programs, Jewish agricultural laws and traditions, food systems, and food justice education.

² Outdoor activity topics include wilderness and survival skills, navigating and orienteering, outdoor trip guiding, and outdoor leadership (i.e., backpacking).

Fellows emerged from the Fellowship with a valuable JOFEE network but with uncertainty about their futures.

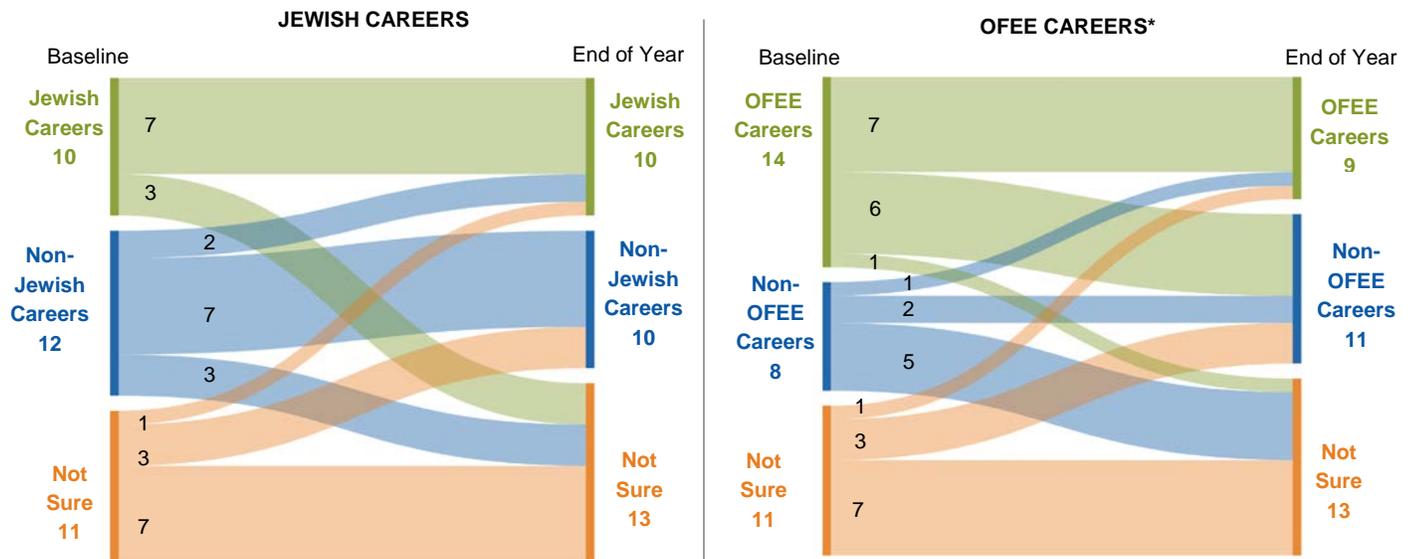
Exhibit 14 | N=33



Overall, there were no substantial shifts from the start to the end of the Fellowship in how Fellows envision their future, long-term career plans. Generally, the number of Fellows who see themselves in Jewish and non-Jewish careers remained about the same at the end of the Fellowship, compared to the beginning (Exhibit 15). Additionally, the number of Fellows who were not sure about what field they want to work in long-term also stayed about the same.

Fellows envision themselves in a variety of long-term career paths, though over a third remain unsure.

Exhibit 15 | N=33



* This includes OFEE in Jewish (JOFEE) or secular settings.

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

– JOFEE Fellow

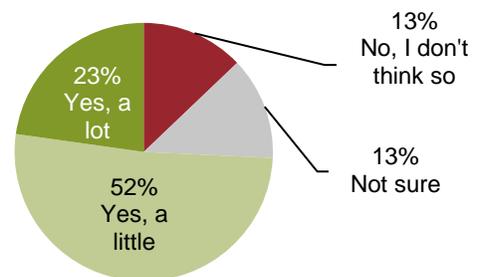
Impact on Host Organizations & Their Participants

JOFEE SKILLS & PROGRAMS

Organizations valued Fellows’ youthful energy, passion, and skillsets. According to some supervisors, soft skills in particular, such as interpersonal skills, focus, organization, and confidence, helped Fellows to be successful. Fellows applied these skills, as well as their energy and passion, in different ways. Some improved or built upon their organization’s approach to the “J” in JOFEE, introduced better quality programs, and helped overall with program sustainability. A few Fellows mentioned that their organization became “greener” as a result of their work. Others reported that they were able to demonstrate how JOFEE, justice, and Judaism can intersect, which prompted greater inclusion among their host organizations and their communities.

Most supervisors felt that Hazon’s professional development opportunities for Fellows helped their organizations in some way.

Exhibit 16 | N=31 | Did Hazon's professional development opportunities for Fellows help your organization?



Fellows were integral to expanding programming—and therefore reach—for host organizations. Fellows both created new programs and expanded existing programs for their host organizations. Over both cohort years, Fellows brought more than 1,000 activities and programs to approximately 58,000 community members. Of these, about 200 programs were considered “immersive” and lasted four or more hours. **On average, each Fellow reached approximately 2,000 community members through JOFEE programming (Exhibit 17).**

Fellows implemented over 1,000 JOFEE programs.³

Exhibit 17 | Aggregate n=29 | JOFEE Organization n=20 | JCO n=9

	Number of program activities	Number of new programs	Number of existing programs	Number of programs less than 4 hours	Number of programs 4 hours or more	Total number of participants in all programs
JOFEE Org Total	763	302	461	609	148	34,373
JOFEE Org Average	38	15	23	30	7	1,719
JCO Total	262	201	61	209	49	24,141
JCO Average	29	22	7	23	5	2,682
Aggregate Total	1,025	503	522	818	197	58,514
Aggregate Average	35	17	18	28	7	2,018

According to Fellows, programs had the greatest impact on participants by connecting them to Judaism and the earth in a hands-on way. Fellows at JOFEE organizations thought that programs with the most impact were immersive, engaged small groups, and allowed participants to give back to the community. These Fellows also mentioned that programs had the most impact when they empowered participants, were run by relatable and accessible facilitators, and deepened participants' connections to Judaism. For the Fellows at JCOs, the most successful programs were low-barrier programs that met the participants where they were at in terms of their knowledge and abilities. **Almost all host organizations gained new JOFEE programming due to the work of the Fellow (Exhibit 18).**

Half of the host organizations gained a considerable number of participants due to the work of the JOFEE Fellow.

Exhibit 18 | N=31



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JOFEE & JCO ORGANIZATIONS

The Fellowship impacted JOFEE and JCO organizations in different ways, deepening JOFEE organizations' work, while introducing JOFEE and making it visible in more parts of the organizations for JCOs.

At JOFEE organizations, Fellows increased their organization's bandwidth and capacity for JOFEE work as well as the quality. Supervisors reported that their Fellow improved their programming and curriculum, both by revising existing curriculum and by developing new curriculum. Fellows in JOFEE organizations talked about deepening their organization's capacity, connection, and approach to JOFEE. The JOFEE Fellows also brought participants high quality programs that were creative, interesting, and sensory-driven. The high caliber of these experiences may be due, in part, to Fellows' connections to the participants, as JOFEE organizations tend to be small. They also made an impact on participants by bringing in new curriculum that participants enjoyed, and guided participants in making new and deeper connections to Jewish traditions through their programming.

For JCOs, the Fellowship introduced JOFEE values and programs and demonstrated the importance of JOFEE as a component of Jewish education. Fellows helped participants at JCOs experience their organization through a different lens and a fresh perspective. Supervisors at JCOs noted that Fellows exposed their participants to new ways of thinking about the environment and to new skills, nestled within a Jewish values framework. While participants accessed new types of programs, including farm programs, the Fellows' supervisors also mentioned witnessing deeper programs and participant involvement. Supervisors at JCOs also reported that Fellows impacted their organization by providing opportunities to apply the JOFEE philosophy to organization-wide learning, building community, and developing an organizational approach to incorporating the environment into their work.

JOFEE programming at JCOs has staying power beyond the Fellowship. All but one JCO plans to continue or expand their JOFEE programming post-Fellowship, demonstrating the lasting impact on host organizations. JCOs now have the invaluable experience, thanks to the Fellowship, of learning about the types of JOFEE programs that are successful with their members.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The Fellowship has elevated both JOFEE programming and the skills needed to execute it for Fellows and their host organizations. A new generation of JOFEE leaders is beginning to emerge. While participating institutions recognize the value of JOFEE, the broader Jewish communal field has yet to adequately resource these burgeoning programs. Additional Fellowship cohorts would surely continue to boost the field by adding important financial resources while training up-and-coming leaders. As many Fellowship stakeholders have expressed, ensuring that host organizations can keep the Fellow employed at the end of the 11-month period if they so desire is critical for maximizing the impacts of the Fellowship. In addition, using the Fellowship as a mechanism to bridge the gap between the JOFEE world and traditional Jewish legacy institutions is also an important strategy for the years ahead. The Fellowship can support the spread JOFEE into new territories, benefiting the Jewish community and helping to ensure a vibrant Jewish future.

“This year has opened many doors for me in the realm of Jewish education with a JOFEE focus. More and more JOFEE organizations are popping up and I look forward to continuing my career path within this sect of the Jewish world.”

– JOFEE Fellow



Photo by Yoshi Silverstein

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