

CROSS-COMMUNITY EVALUATION FINDINGS 2017

for the Jewish Teen Education
and Engagement Funder
Collaborative

SEPTEMBER 2018



JEWISH TEEN
Education & Engagement
FUNDER COLLABORATIVE

Rosov
CONSULTING

10
YEARS OF IMPACT
2008-2018

INTRODUCTION

In the pages that follow, the reader will find a set of 18 findings stemming from an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gathered by evaluators working in eight of 10 communities constituting the Jewish Teen Education and Engagement Funder Collaborative during 2017. This is the second interim report of the Funder Collaborative's Cross-Community Evaluation team (CCE), the [first of which was released in July 2017](#) and included data from the first four communities “out of the gate.” As noted there, at the heart of the matter lie three central learning questions:

- 1. How and to what extent are the community-based Jewish teen education and engagement initiatives collectively achieving the goals outlined in the Shared Measures of Success?**
- 2. What best practices and learnings emerging from the work of these initiatives (both anticipated and unanticipated) can be applied across the communities and to other Jewish education and engagement settings?**
- 3. How does variability across communities influence the design, implementation, and outcomes of the local community-based Jewish teen education and engagement initiatives?**

Evaluators working in each of the 10 communities utilize several common instruments (surveys and interview guides) designed to speak to these questions and, importantly, assess progress toward the Collaborative's Shared Measures of Success (see next page).

Additional qualitative questions are used in interview and focus group guides — all of which allows us to begin to tell the story of the Collaborative's work in a more cohesive and nuanced way.

In addition to these surveys and interview questions put into use by the community-based evaluators, the CCE has developed two “taxonomies” allowing Collaborative evaluators to classify and then “control for” teens' Jewish experiences and engagements before and during high school. These taxonomies are the basis for understanding the unique contributions of the Funder Collaborative's work in each community and, increasingly as more data become available, across the communities.

In the coming year, we anticipate aggregating data coming from all 10 communities, including an emphasis on learning more about the attitudes and behaviors of parents of teens who are (and are not) participating in these community-based efforts.

We hope you enjoy these learnings. For more information about the Jewish Teen Education and Engagement Funder Collaborative and work happening in these 10 communities, please check out teenfundercollaborative.com or write directly to Sara Allen, Director, at sara@teenfundercollaborative.com.

SHARED MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Early in its work, the Funder Collaborative developed a set of Shared Measures of Success, a common practice used to help steward the formation of effective collaborations:

1

NUMBERS OF ENGAGED TEENS



Dramatically increase the number of teens in targeted geographic areas engaged in Jewish learning during their high school years.

2

DIVERSITY OF ENGAGED TEENS



Involve Jewish teens who come from diverse Jewish backgrounds.

3

TEEN LEARNING AND GROWTH AS JEWS



Provide Jewish teens with experiences that will contribute to their Jewish learning and growth during their high school years.

4

SUSTAINABLE MODELS



Build models for Jewish teen education and engagement that are sustainable.

5

TEEN EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT A PRIORITY FOR LEADERS AND PARENTS



Establish Jewish teen education and engagement as a priority for local Jewish community leaders and parents.

6

SUPPORTING YOUTH PROFESSIONALS



Ensure youth professionals feel well-prepared with appropriate skills and knowledge, and feel valued as professionals.

DATA SOURCES

TEENS

Data compiled from 7 communities: Surveys only in Cincinnati, Denver/Boulder, Chicago, and Boston; Surveys and interviews in Baltimore and San Diego; Surveys, interviews, and focus groups in New York.



YOUTH PROFESSIONALS

Data collected from 8 communities: Surveys only in New York, Los Angeles, Boston, and Baltimore; Surveys and interviews in Chicago, Cincinnati, San Diego, and Denver/Boulder.



PARENTS

Data collected from 5 communities: Surveys only in Baltimore and Chicago; Surveys and interviews in Cincinnati and New York; Interviews in Denver/Boulder.

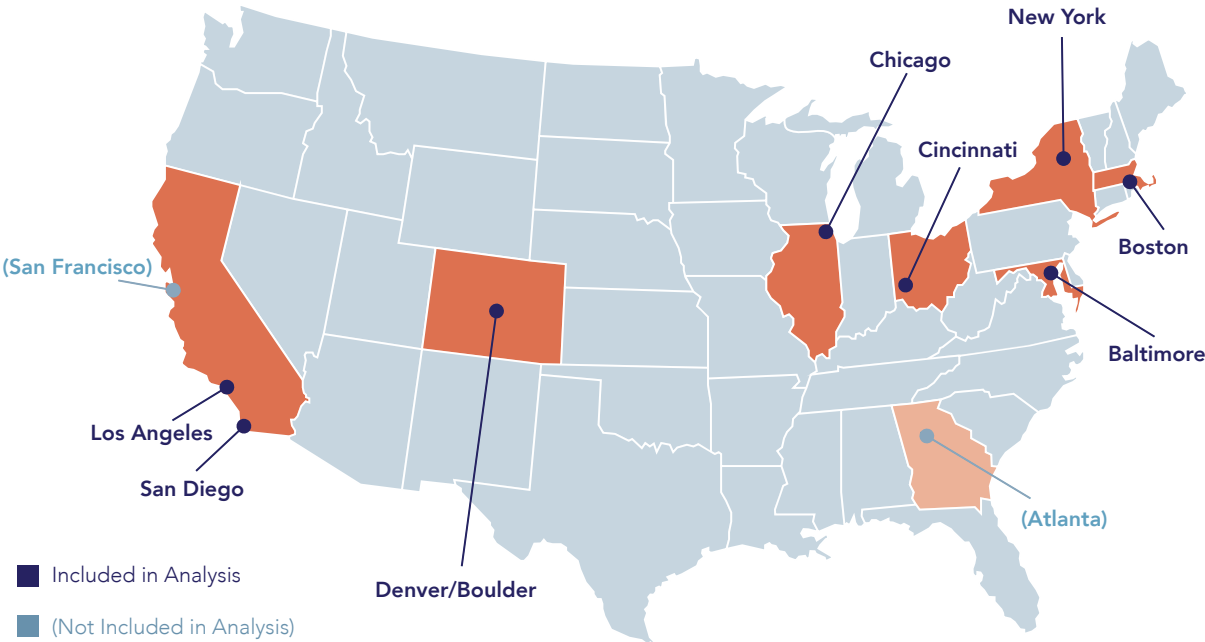


COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS 9

 Quantitative Data (Surveys)
1655 total

 Qualitative Data (Interviews & Focus Groups)
144 total

ACROSS 8 COMMUNITIES



KEY FINDINGS

CHANGES FROM 2018

01. The story on teen outcomes overall is yet to be told
02. Initial engagement yields results
03. Increasing teen engagement pays off
04. Jewish experiences prior to teenage years are important
05. Most Youth Professionals have the same background in terms of their prior Jewish education and experiences
06. Youth Professionals feel more prepared in some domains but not in promoting teen wellness
07. Youth Professionals see a small uptick in collaboration but value their network of peers less
08. More parents are prioritizing a Jewish social network for their teens
09. Paradoxically, parents value Jewish heritage and rituals, while explicit Jewish content is lower on the list
10. Parents value Jewish heritage and rituals; Youth Professionals not so much
11. Youth Professionals' knowledge is increasing in certain areas

CONSISTENT WITH 2018

12. Youth Professionals' motivations for working with Jewish teens are mission driven
13. Regardless of age and stage in career, most Youth Professionals have similar goals for the teens they work with; notably, social-emotional goals don't top the list
14. On the whole, younger Youth Professionals feel more prepared to use technology and media than do their seasoned colleagues and feel less so regarding infusing Jewish content
15. Professional Development is still not yielding desired results
16. Many parents are still not aware of new opportunities; advocacy for teen education and engagement has not improved
17. Well over half the parents report that the range and quality of teen programming in the community has not improved in the last 12 months
18. Parents notice a positive change in their teens



CHANGES FROM 2016

01

The story on teen outcomes overall is yet to be told

When looking across all 14 outcomes, mean scores remain the same on 10 of 14 outcomes. However, there is one outcome where teens assessed themselves higher in 2017 than in 2016: they have **learned things that enable them to be more active participants in the Jewish community**. The top two outcomes in 2017 are the same as the top two in 2016 — namely **developing strong friendships** and being **inspired to make a positive difference**.

Exhibit 1: Generation Now outcomes mean scores 2017 vs. 2016

	2017 (N=902)	2016 (N=791)
Jewish teens establish strong friendships	4.33	4.39
Jewish teens are inspired and empowered to make a positive difference in the various communities and world in which they live	4.17	4.13
Jewish teens have a stronger sense of self	4.02	4.05
Jewish teens have learned things that enable them to be more active participants	3.99	3.96
Jewish teens are able to express their values and ethics in relation to Jewish principles and wisdom	3.99	4.04
Jewish teens have experienced learning that has been both challenging and valuable	3.97	4.02
Jewish teens feel connected to their various communities	3.93	4.03
Jewish teens develop a positive relationship to the land, people, and State of Israel	3.91	3.95
Jewish teens develop significant relationships with mentors, role models, and educators	3.88	3.92
Jewish teens develop the desire and commitment to be part of the Jewish people now and in the future	3.85	3.87
Jewish teens feel a sense of pride about being Jewish	3.75	3.85
Jewish teens develop strong and healthy relationships with their families	3.74	3.97
Jewish teens develop the capacity (skills and language) that allows them to grapple with and express their spiritual journeys	3.7	3.73
Jewish teens learn about and positively experience Jewish holidays and Shabbat	3.3	3.38

Note: There are three outcomes which are lower in 2017 than in 2016: Jewish teens feel connected to their community; develop healthy relationships with their families; and feel a sense of pride in being Jewish. We are not sure of what is driving the difference on these three outcomes. There are fewer nominally engaged teens in the 2017 teen respondent pool so this is not likely a driver. We do not have the ability to create comparable Current Engagement categories between the 2016 and the 2017 data and cannot speculate about that impact of current engagement on the results.

02

Initial engagement yields results

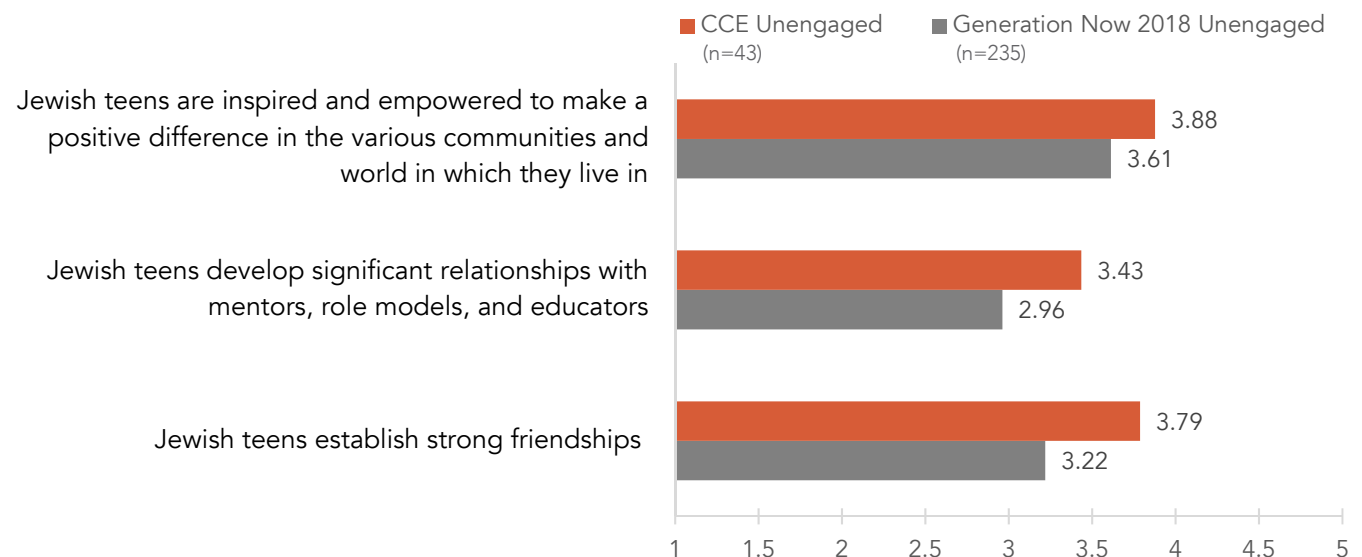
¹The Generation Now 2018 Study included 362 teens that, according to the Current Engagement Taxonomy, are completely unengaged (have not participated in Jewish extracurricular activities, nor have they attended Jewish day school, in the last 12 months). In addition, these teens have never been involved in youth-serving organizations. We used these teens as a baseline for what the TJLES scores might be for such teens.

The sub-group of teens who participated in the Funder Collaborative community initiatives yet otherwise were not engaged in Jewish life demonstrated higher scores on three of the outcomes when compared to a larger sample of unengaged teens from the recently completed large-scale study of Jewish teens in youth-serving organizations (Generation Now 2018 Study).¹ These three outcomes were:

- Jewish teens establish strong friendships
- Jewish teens develop significant relationships with mentors, role models, and educators
- Jewish teens are inspired and empowered to make a positive difference in the various communities and world in which they live in

The significant differences between teens in Funder Collaborative communities who are otherwise not engaged and the unengaged Generation Now teens point to the potential direct benefits of participation in Jewish teen programming: close relationships that teens form with peers and adult role models, in addition to more favorable attitudes towards volunteerism. In sum, getting teens in the door — i.e. getting them involved in some form of Jewish teen programming — can result in improved outcomes.

Exhibit 2: Improved outcomes from initial engagement

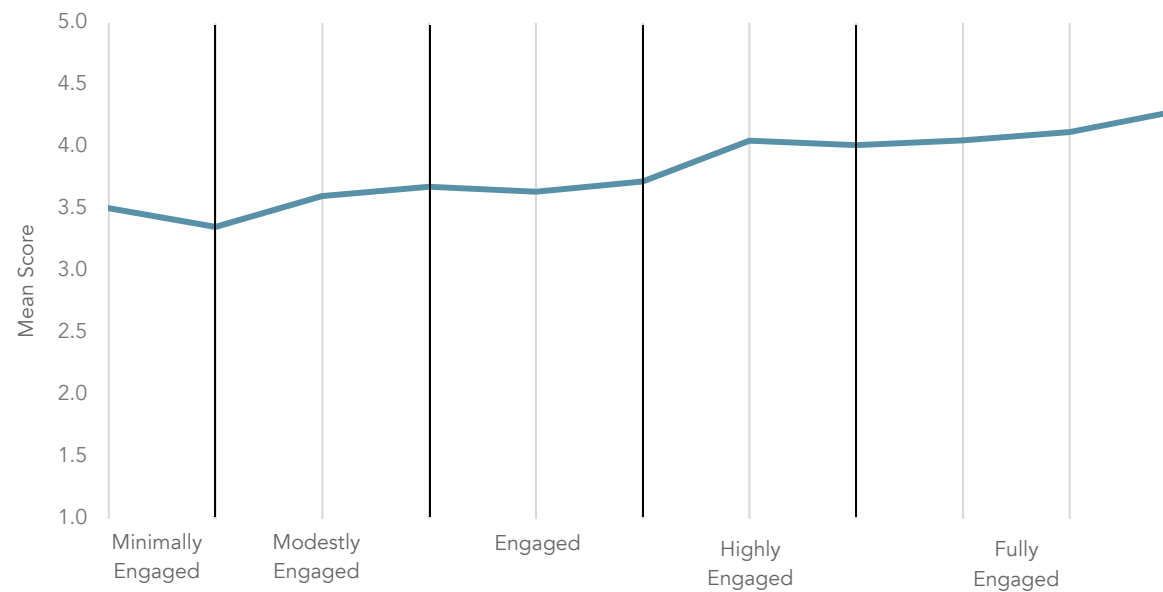


03

Increasing teen engagement pays off

Teens' engagement levels are positively related to all outcomes – as engagement increases, the average outcomes score also increases.

Exhibit 3: Engagement levels and outcomes scores



04

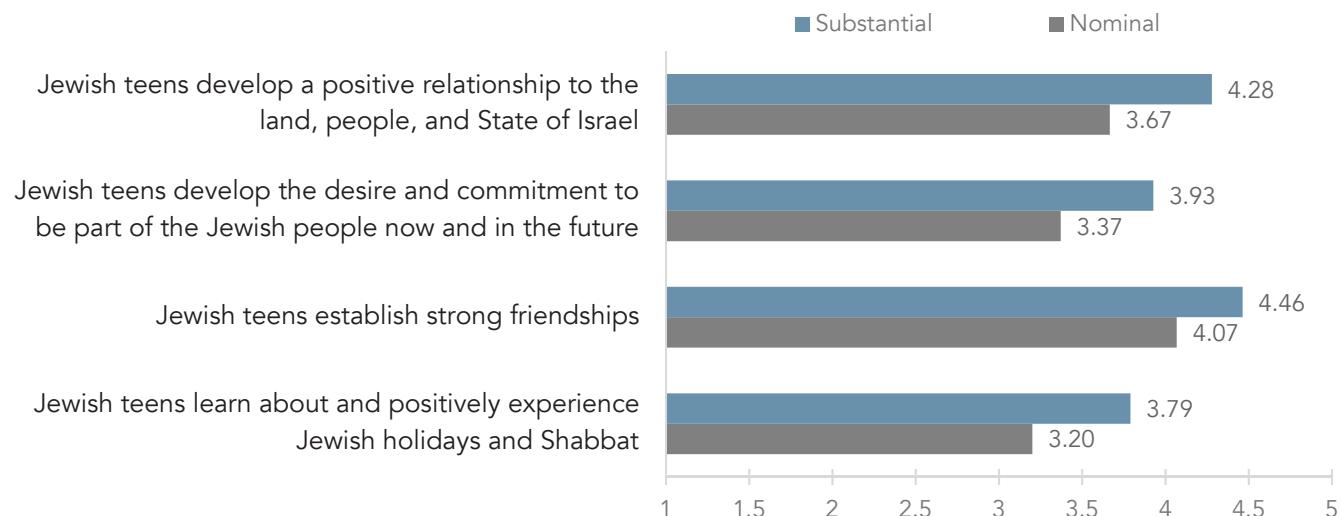
Jewish experiences prior to teenage years are important

Controlling for current engagement levels as measured by self-report of activity during the prior 12-month period, Jewish education and experiences before high school matter. Ratings for four outcomes were higher for those with more substantial Jewish education and experiences prior to high school (based on Background Classification):

- Jewish teens learn about and positively experience Jewish holidays and Shabbat
- Jewish teens establish strong friendships
- Jewish teens develop the desire and commitment to be part of the Jewish people now and in the future
- Jewish teens develop a positive relationship to the land, people, and State of Israel

Given that earlier experiences have a positive effect on these outcomes, this suggests that it would be important to provide innovative opportunities not only to High School-aged teens, but also when they are in the “pipeline” — late Elementary to Middle School.

Exhibit 4: Pre-Teen years matter (n=887)

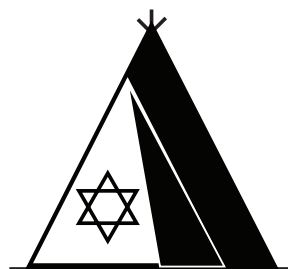


05

Most Youth Professionals have the same background in terms of their prior Jewish education and experiences

A third of the sample are Early Career Professionals (n=100) — between the ages of 21 and 30 with a few years of experience in the field (age and years of experience in the field strongly correlate).²

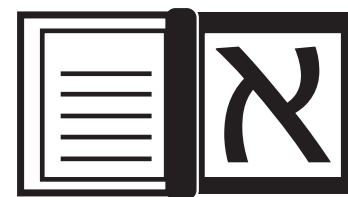
These Early Career Professionals had similar Jewish educational experiences growing up as the older, more seasoned professionals had.



One-third
in each group attended
7 or more years of camp.



One-quarter
in each group attended
7 or more years of
Jewish day school.



About **two-thirds**
of each group (59%) attended
7 or more years
of supplementary school.

Implications: These venues are fertile ground for tapping and recruiting new professionals to the field.

² Some of this year's youth professional respondents may have also responded to last year's survey (in those communities who collected data both years). Given that no identifying data were collected, we cannot remove from analysis those respondents who had already taken the survey in the past.



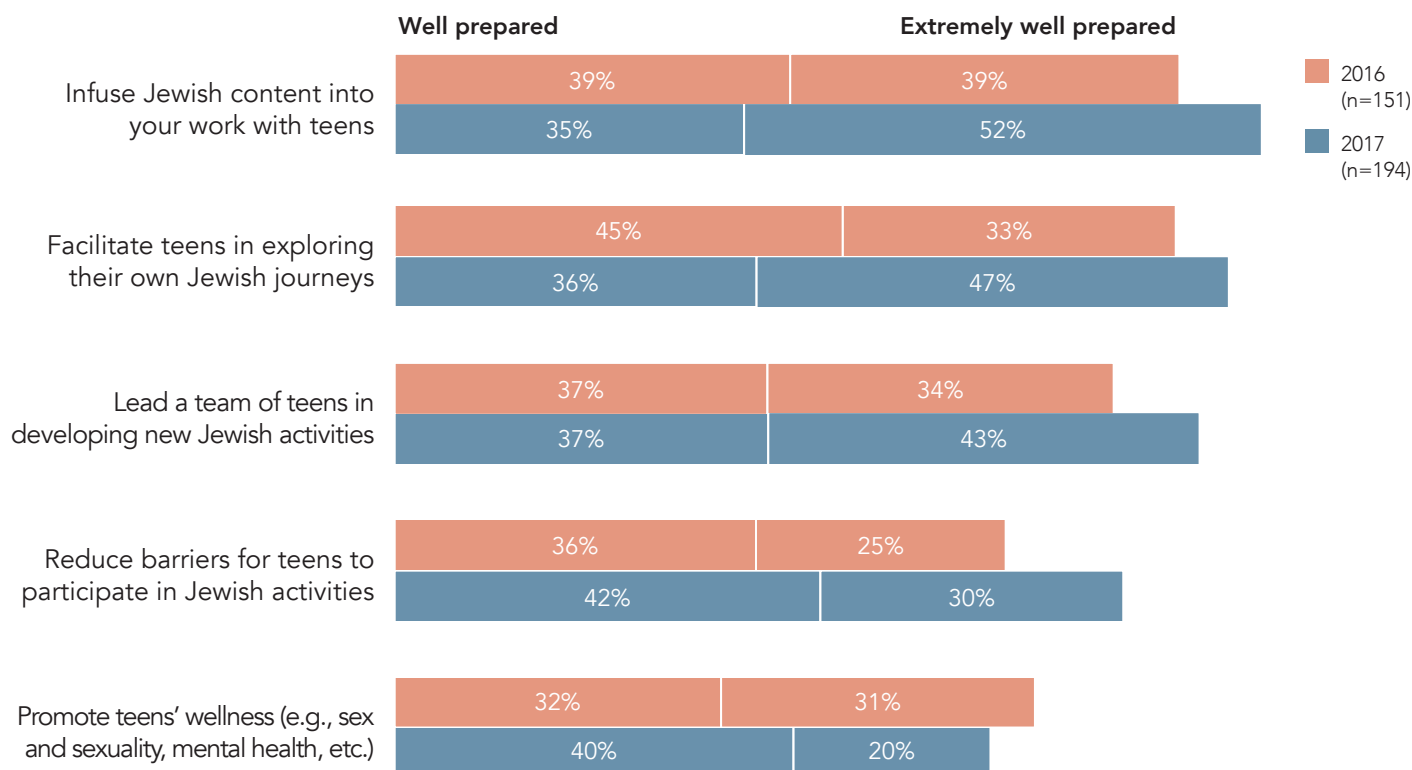
06

Youth Professionals feel more prepared in some domains but not in promoting teen wellness



The areas in which youth professionals feel most prepared in 2017, as they did in 2016, is in their **ability to serve as a mentor to teens**. There are some areas where youth professionals are feeling more prepared in 2017 than they did in 2016. These include, **leading teens to develop new Jewish activities, facilitating teens to explore their own Jewish journeys, reducing barriers to teen participation**, and, finally, **infusing Jewish content**. When it comes to promoting teen wellness, there are significantly fewer youth professionals who feel extremely well prepared compared to 2016.

Exhibit 5: Youth Professional preparation - 2017 vs. 2016



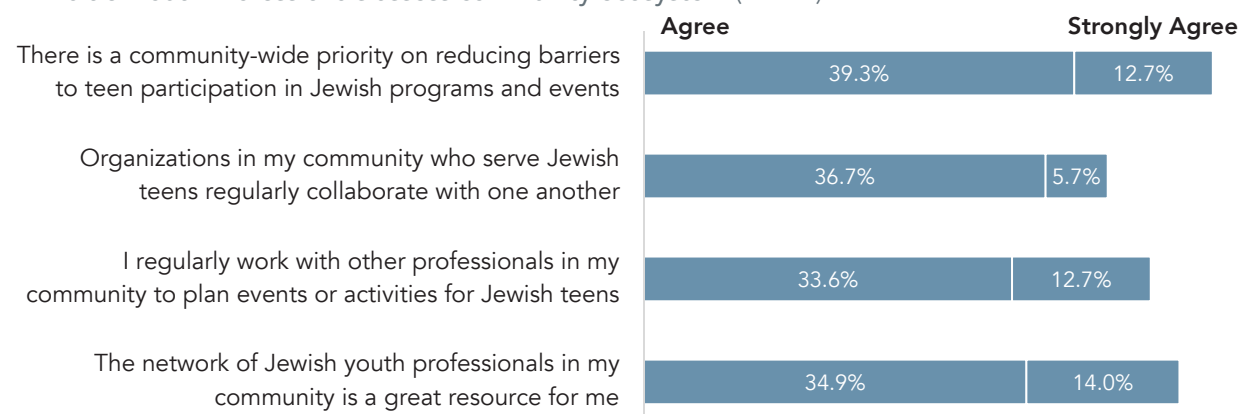
07

Youth Professionals see a small uptick in collaboration but value their network of peers less



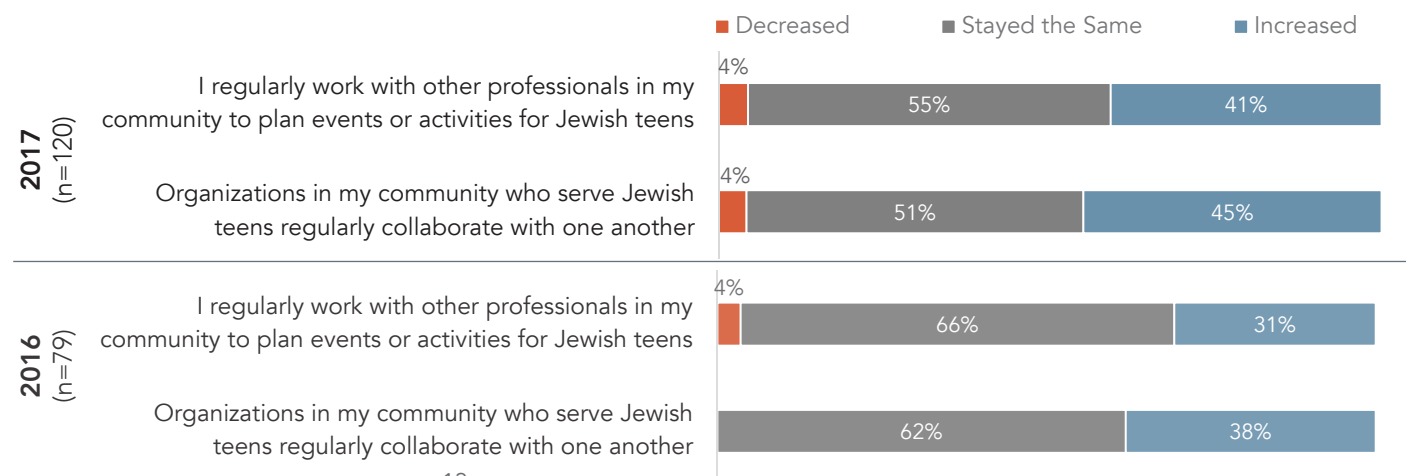
Youth professionals were asked to assess the extent to which they agree or disagree with four statements that comprise a referendum on the current state of the communal ecosystem with respect to collaboration and community prioritization of teen programs. On three out of four measures, the data are consistent from 2016 to 2017. However, youth professionals are less likely to say in 2017 (49%) that their network of peers is a great resource to them in contrast to 2016 (60%).

Exhibit 6: Youth Professionals assess community ecosystem (n=229)



In 2017, two of the six communities also asked their youth professionals to reflect on whether they have seen any change in the most recent twelve months in this regard. Interestingly, in 2017 a higher percentage of youth professionals report an increase in collaboration on both the professional-to-professional and organization-to-organization levels.

Exhibit 7: Changes in community ecosystem in past year

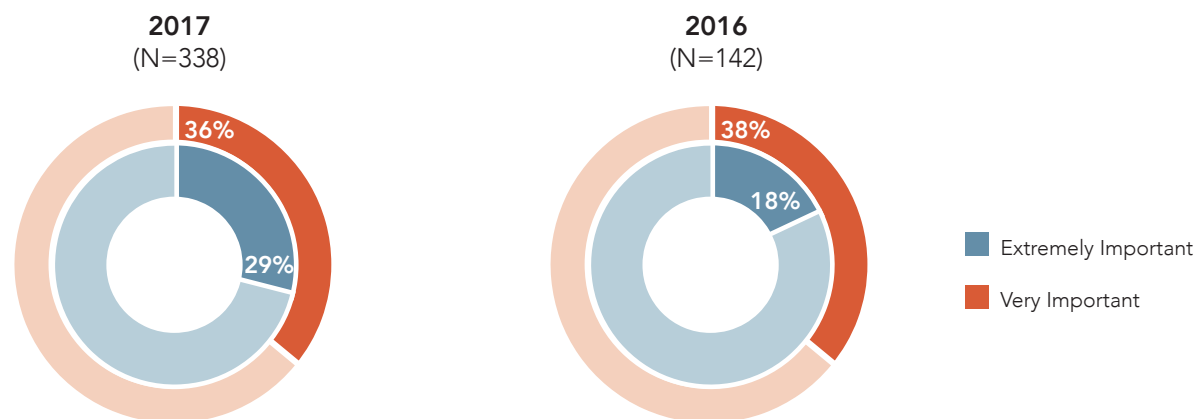


08

More parents are prioritizing a Jewish social network for their teens

When asked to indicate how important various outcomes for their teens were, on a five-point scale from ‘not at all important’ to ‘extremely important,’ more parents in 2017 (65%) compared to 2016 (56%) indicated that it was very important or extremely important to them that their teen seeks to grow his/her social network.

Exhibit 8: Importance of actively seeking to grow Jewish social network



“Social opportunities have given him an importance connection that religious observance has not been able to provide him”

— Parent

“Even if we’re not doing something particularly Jewish, being with Jewish people and Jewish friends makes it feel Jewish because we can all relate in a way that we can’t with other people.”

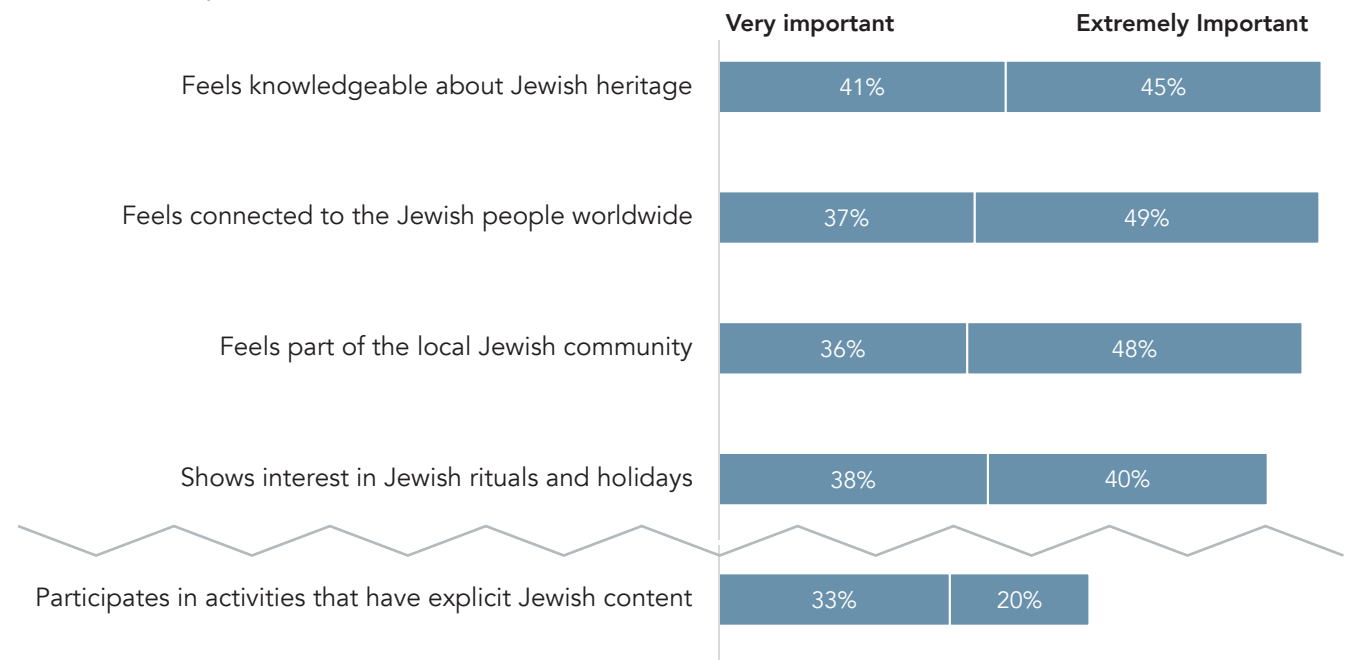
— Teen

09

Paradoxically, parents value Jewish heritage and rituals, while explicit Jewish content is lower on the list

The top four outcomes that parents rate as most important are that their teens feel **knowledgeable about Jewish heritage** (86% very or extremely), feel **connected to the Jewish people worldwide** (86% very or extremely), feel **part of the local Jewish community** (83% very or extremely), and **show interest in Jewish rituals** (79% very or extremely). Lower on their priority list is the incorporation of “explicit Jewish content” (53% very or extremely) into their teens’ programs. While we need to probe further to understand what “explicit Jewish content” means to parents, there seems to be a disconnect here. On the one hand, outcomes that seem to imply Jewish content top the list, but on the other hand, explicitly targeting Jewish content in programs is not as desired. We know, from the Generation Now 2018 Study mentioned above, that Jewish content in extracurricular activities contributes to increases in all outcomes, including those on the top of parents’ lists.

Exhibit 9: What parents value (n=336)

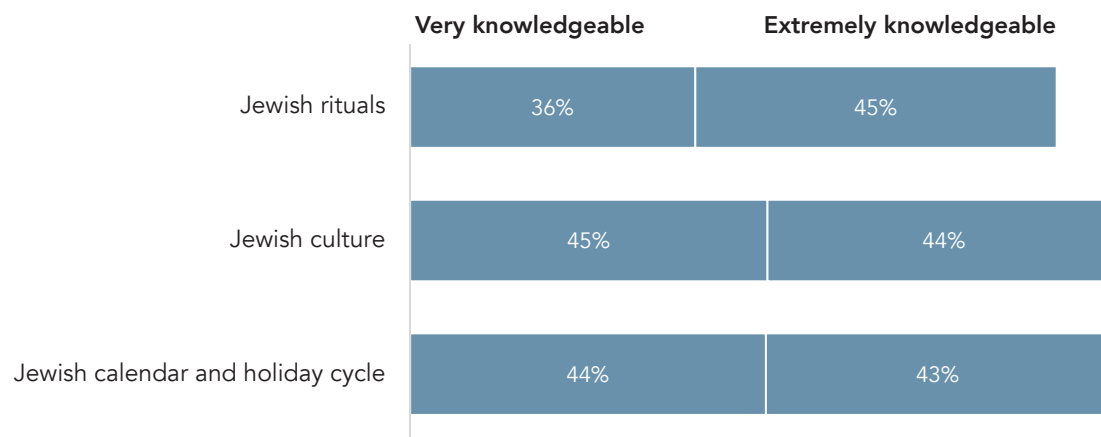


10

Parents value Jewish heritage and rituals; Youth Professionals not so much

Interestingly, parents and youth professionals don't prioritize the same goals. When asked to identify their top three goals for the Jewish teens with whom they work, only 14% of youth professionals chose "teens feel knowledgeable about Jewish heritage," and only 3% chose "teens show interest in Jewish rituals and holidays" (see Exhibit 13). Ironically, when asked to rate their level of knowledge regarding various components of their work, the vast majority of youth professionals rate themselves very or extremely knowledgeable about "things Jewish."

Exhibit 10: Strong Jewish knowledge (n=200)



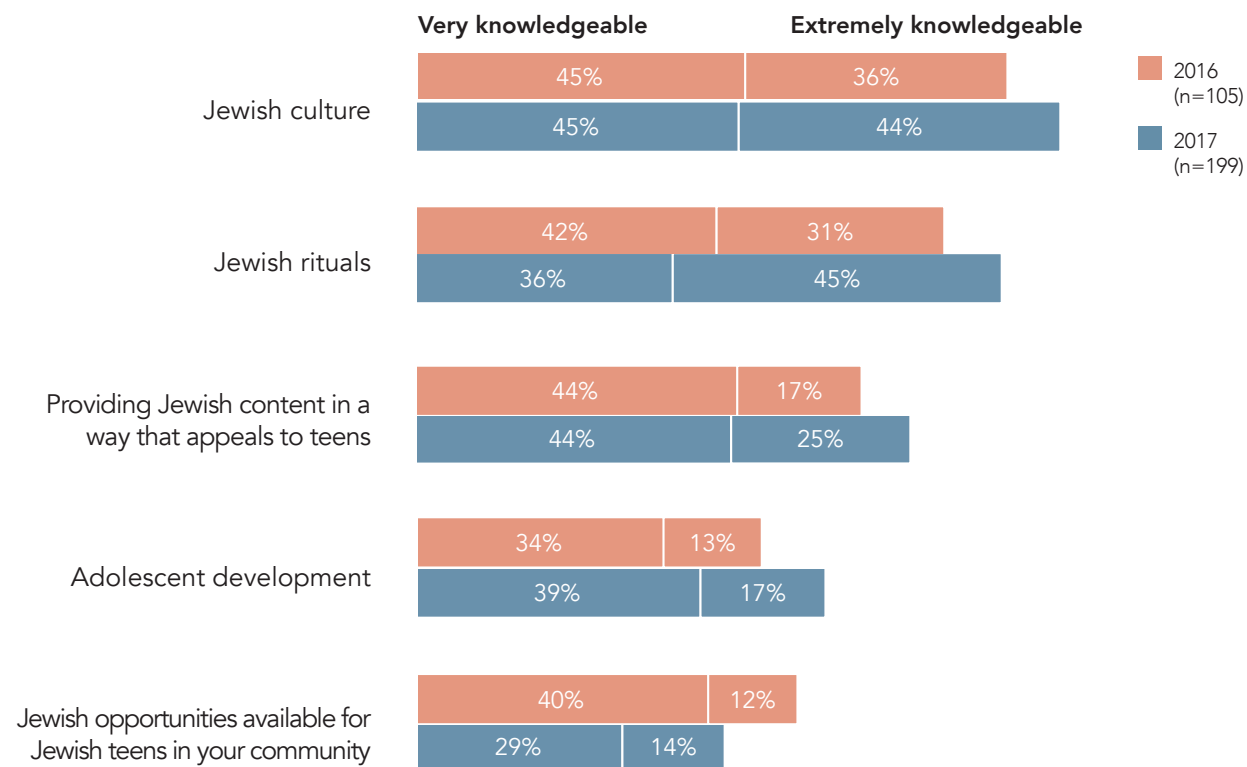
11

Youth Professionals' knowledge is increasing in certain areas

When asked to rate their level of knowledge relating to various aspects of their work with Jewish teens, ratings were higher in five areas in 2017 than 2016, with a predominance of items related to “things Jewish”:

- Jewish rituals
- Jewish culture
- Providing Jewish content in a way that appeals to teens
- Jewish opportunities available to Jewish teens in your community
- Adolescent development

Exhibit 11: Increases in knowledge





CONSISTENT WITH 2016

12

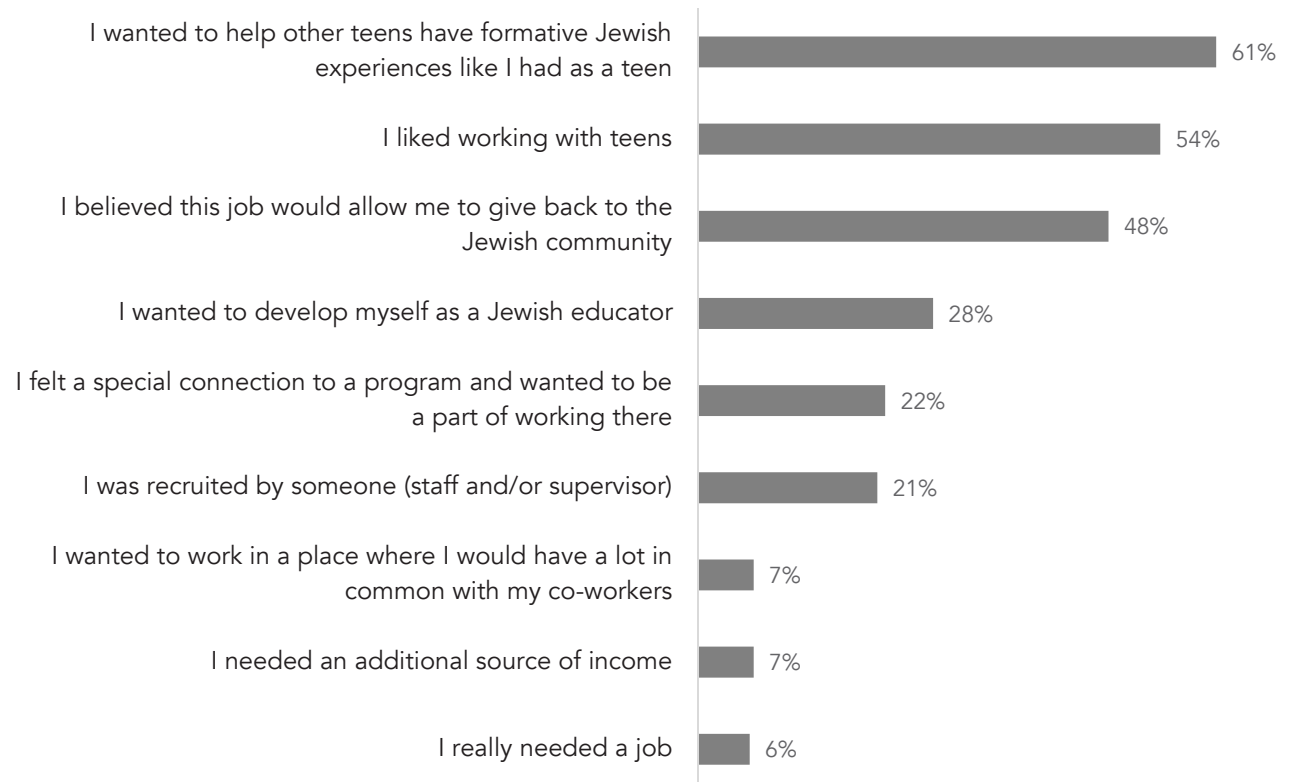
Youth Professionals' motivations for working with Jewish teens are mission driven



Similar to last year's results, regardless of age and years of experience in the field, youth professionals across the board cite the following top three motivations for working with Jewish teens:

1. I wanted to help other teens have formative Jewish experiences like I had as a teen.
2. I liked working with teens.
3. I believed this job would allow me to give back to the Jewish community.

Exhibit 12: Youth Professionals' Motivations (n=215)



13

Regardless of age and stage in career, most Youth Professionals have similar goals for the teens they work with; notably, social-emotional goals don't top the list

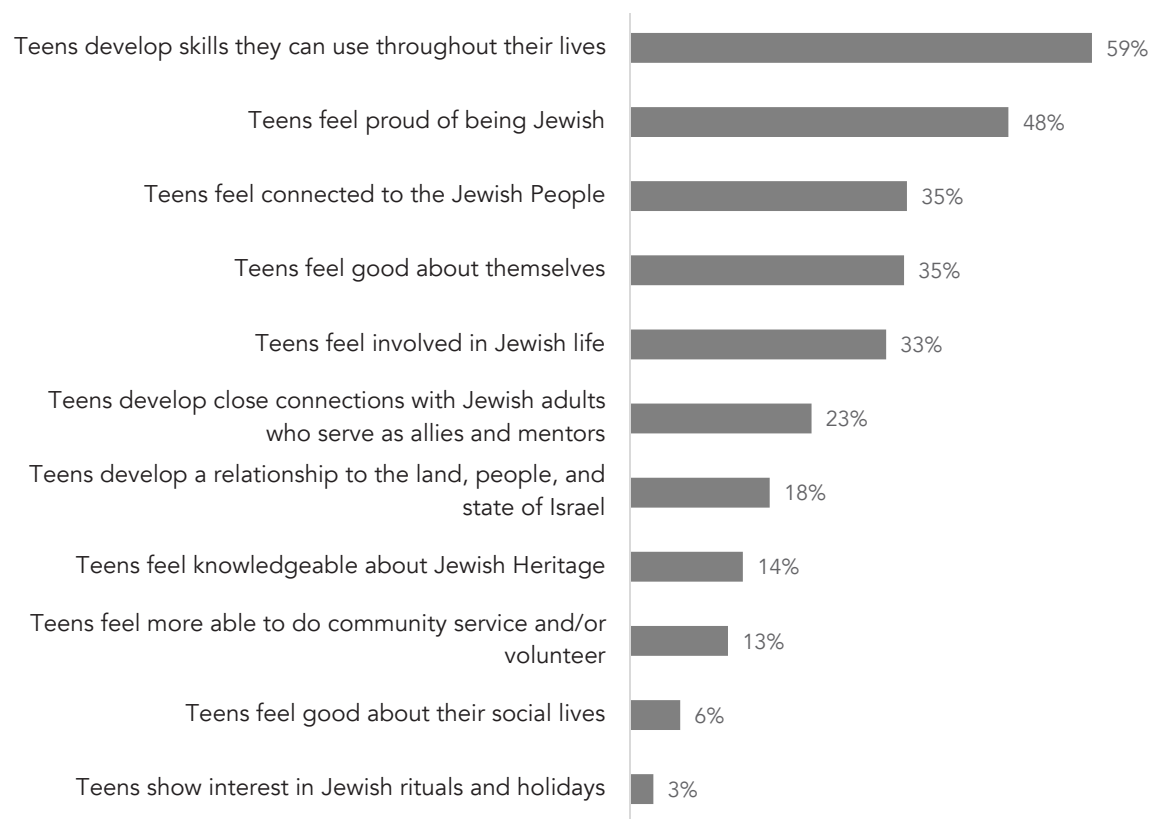


As we found last year, youth professionals also share similar goals, regardless of age and stage in career. Their top goals are:

- Teens develop skills they can use throughout their lives.
- Teens feel proud of being Jewish.
- Teens feel connected to the Jewish people worldwide.
- Teens feel good about themselves.

Aside from “Teens feel good about themselves,” other items related to social-emotional growth are much less important in terms of youth professionals’ goals for the teens with whom they work. For example, 23% chose “Teens feel close connections with adult allies and mentors” among their top three goals, while only 6% chose “Teens feel good about their social lives” as one of their top three.

Exhibit 13: Youth Professionals’ goals for teens (n=265)



14

On the whole, younger Youth Professionals feel more prepared to use technology and media than do their seasoned colleagues and feel less so regarding infusing Jewish content



With regards to preparation for certain aspects of their work, we see evidence in the data to support conventional intuition, namely that the younger youth professionals (21–30) feel significantly more prepared than their more veteran colleagues (31+) to **use technology and new media effectively in their work with teens**.

Exhibit 14: Age and stage in career linked to differences in job preparedness (n=204)

Item	% Extremely well prepared	
	21-30	31+
Communicate with parents of teens about sensitive issues	23%	44%
Infuse Jewish content into your work with teens	35%	58%
Use technology and new media effectively	33%	15%

On the flip side, seasoned youth professionals feel significantly more prepared than their younger colleagues to **communicate with parents of teens about sensitive issues**. In addition, the more seasoned professionals report being more prepared to **infuse Jewish content into their work** with teens.³

A key finding of the Generation Now 2018 Study is that Jewish content in extracurricular activities is a significant positive predictor of all outcomes: as the percentage of activities with Jewish content that teens attend increases, so do their outcomes scores. Thus, it is important to consider investing in professional development opportunities that support the less-experienced youth professionals in this regard, and as a result would yield positive benefits for teen growth across the board (not just in Jewish areas).

³It is unclear how youth professionals interpreted the statement about infusing Jewish content. It is possible that the younger professionals are simply not prepared to infuse Jewish content in a traditional way, but feel more prepared when it comes to creative and informal forms of engagement with Jewish content.

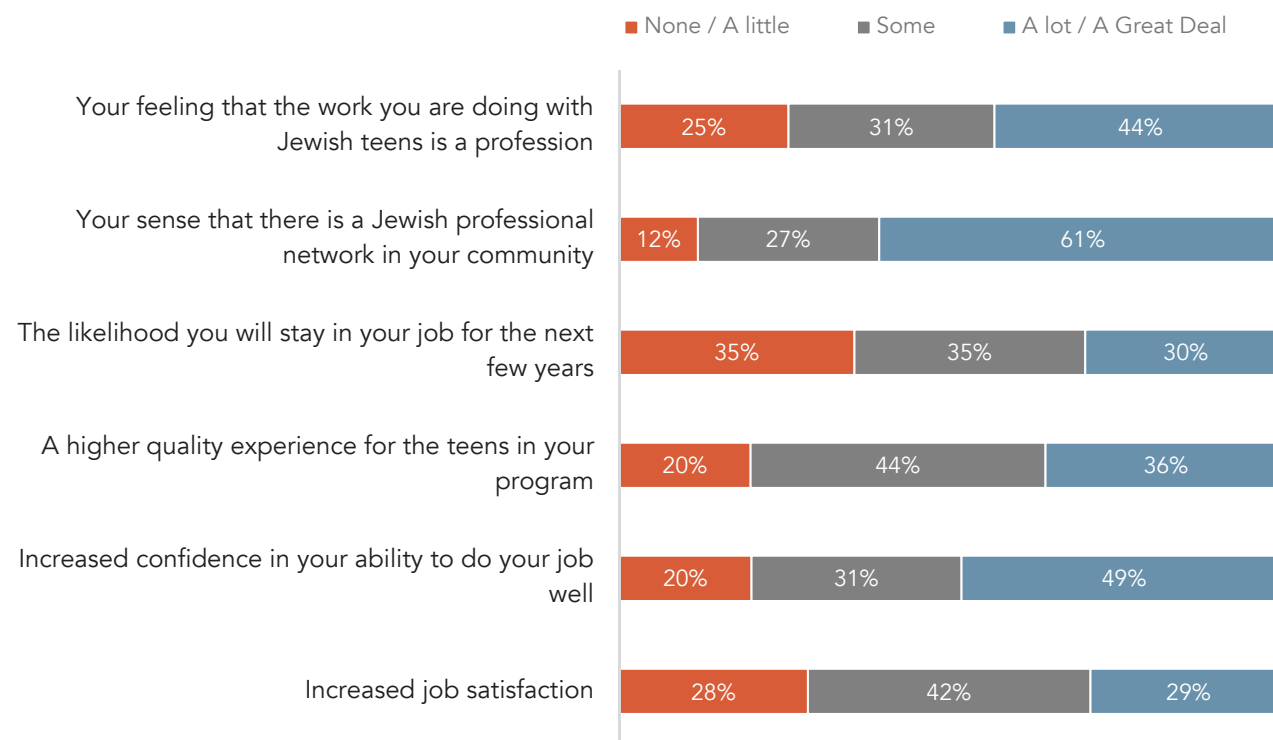
15

Professional Development is still not yielding desired results



Professional development opportunities are still not a strong level for increasing commitment to teen work as a profession. Youth professionals who attended professional development opportunities in the last 12 months (79% of respondents) are still not seeing professional development as a contributing factor to viewing teen work as a profession, to their job satisfaction, or to their commitment to stay in the field. This is troubling in light of the prioritization of professional development across the communities and the financial resources invested in this effort. Importantly, youth professionals do not report that their professional development experiences impact their ability to do their jobs well or create a high quality experience for their teens.

Exhibit 15: Contribution of Professional Development (n=162)



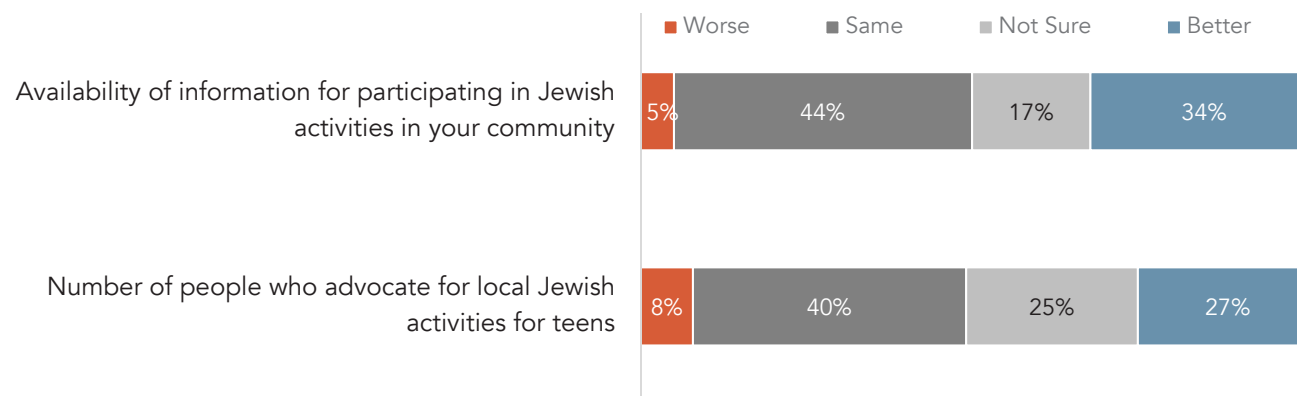
16

Many parents are still not aware of new opportunities; advocacy for teen education and engagement has not improved



While just over half of the parents feel they are stronger advocates for teen engagement, only half feel they know more about Jewish activities available to teens in the Jewish community. Given the serious investment among many Funder Collaborative communities in portals, websites, branding, marketing, etc., evidence of positive change in this regard is not manifest.

Exhibit 16: Parent perceptions of communal change (n=300)



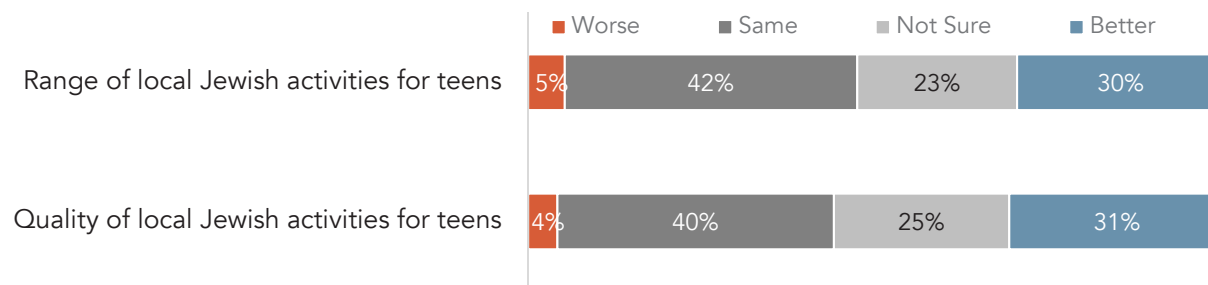
17

Well over half the parents report that the range and quality of teen programming in the community has not improved in the last 12 months



When taking into account the roughly 25% of parent respondents who report being uncertain as to whether the range and quality of Jewish teen programming in the community as a whole has improved in the past year, less than a third of parents over the past two years report a positive change in this regard.

Exhibit 17: Parent perceptions of range and quality of activities (n=305)



“I would have loved for there to be stronger teen programs available in our community”

— Parent

Parents notice a positive change in their teens



Similar to our findings from data collected in 2016, half of the parents surveyed (n=313) observed that their teen has grown Jewishly “a lot” (32%) or a “great deal” (19%) from participating in teen programs in Funder Collaborative communities.

Among those who report this positive growth (51%), parents point to growth in confidence and other social-emotional benefits, as well as knowledge gains and improved leadership skills, following participation in Jewish teen activities. Overall, these gains are consistent with some of the top goals that youth professionals report having for their work with Jewish teens (see Exhibit 13).

“Her leadership skills grew, her pride in herself, her learning about having abilities she didn’t know she had.”

— Parent

“She came back feeling much more capable and independent, empowered... She grew up.”

— Parent

“... their self-confidence really grew – they tried something new, they practiced it, they revert to it when they are stressed...”

— Parent

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

They say it takes a village....

We want to extend our appreciation and gratitude to the professionals at Informing Change and Rosov Consulting serving on the evaluation teams in each of the ten communities of the Jewish Teen Education and Engagement Funder Collaborative. Their passion for and commitment to the specific work of the communities on the ground and the broader field of Jewish teen education and engagement is truly remarkable. Their willingness to work in concert with the Cross-Community Evaluation team allows us to speak to a whole that is even greater than the sum of its parts.

We are blessed to work with an amazing group of local and national funders comprising this Funder Collaborative. They ask us hard questions and engage us in top flight conversations. They are fierce and dedicated and, together, are raising the bar of the field of Jewish teen education and engagement to new heights. Their data-driven approach is setting a new standard for the sector — focusing on shared measures of success and shared systems of measurement. Not easy business, for sure.

We particularly want to give a shout out to members of the Funder Collaborative's Operating Committee and members of the Evaluation Advisory Group who are always there to lend their perspectives and offer important insights.

Finally, we want to thank our fearless leader, Sara Allen, who with her humor, tenacity, and positive can-do attitude supports and advocates for our work every day.

—The Cross-Community Evaluation Team at Rosov Consulting (Wendy Rosov, Pearl Mattenson, Liat Sayfan, Shai Weener)



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