

Education Track – Insights

Educators, Informal vs. Formal, and a Prioritized Peoplehood Education Agenda

Three Focus Areas:

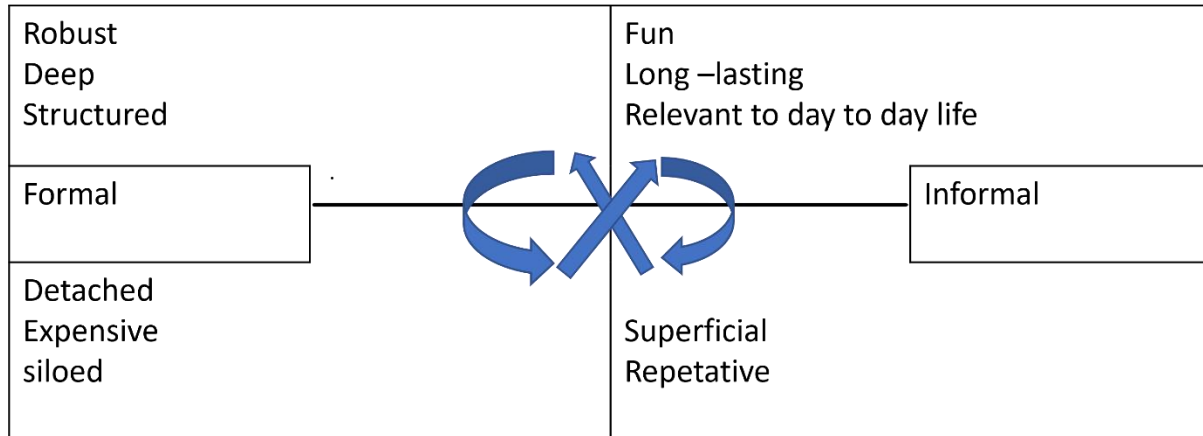
1. On Jewish Educators: Building Up the People, Not the Tools:

- **Jewish educators need support on a personal level** and not on the level of content, tools, or knowledge: Educators are often underpaid and do not feel appreciated – raising the status and prestige of the profession is more important than more tools, knowledge, or job opportunities.
- **From Jewish Educator by Chance to by Intent:** “We all got to Jewish education by chance”. Every participant in the working group got to Jewish education by some (very interesting!) accident. None of them planned to have a career in this field. It means that (1) new Jewish educators can be found in unlikely places and (2) there is a potential need to generate “accidents” that will nurture the next generation of Jewish educators.
- **Targeting Personality:** A strong core personality is the main thing that Jewish educators need to be successful. Screening processes for camps, schools etc. often miss that by focusing too much on content and knowledge. The need that is expressed here is to develop creative new ways of assessing people “core educational personality” and nurture it.
- **Owning Jewish Education** — There is a lacking sense of ownership within the world of education - elevating, professionalizing, and empowering educators in the field can change this reality.

2. On Formal vs. Informal Education: Swapping Strengths:

- **Both the informal and formal education fields have what to learn from the other.**
- **Informal education has the advantage of being a generally positive, joyful experience that can stretch across a lifetime:** Camp culture and traditions, community initiatives and even holiday gatherings all have the advantage of being highly scalable and ongoing. On the other hand, informal education tends to be superficial and often doesn’t provide deep enough knowledge.
- **Formal education has the advantage of being “serious”, elaborate, and deep** but tends to be perceived as detached from day-to-day life, boring, mandatory and expensive.
- How can we better understand this gap and create a solution that has the best features of both? **The challenge lies in creating a full picture Jewish educational experience** that is fun, scalable and long lasting while also deep and “serious”. Possible polarity management¹ draft model to develop from this point:

¹ Based on Barry Johnson, “Polarity Management”. See also Mali 2013 “Global and local Jewish peoplehood.”



3. On Prioritizing Peoplehood Education within the Jewish-Educational Field

- **“Peoplehood” as a leading educational concept is not a priority in Israel or the global Jewish educational network.** As a result, there is no shared global (i.e. both inside and outside of Israel) definition, vision, and workplace.
- **Moving “Peoplehood” from a set of local to global commitments:** The context of peoplehood education is to a large extent local. ANU/Koret have an advantage of being able to bring to one place knowledge about the context of peoplehood education in diverse places around the world to help educators create a more relevant meaning of this term.
 - **Bringing all the tribes with us:** Haredi education is usually not a part of the Peoplehood discourse.

Potential Opportunities and Next Steps to address above challenges:

1. On Jewish Education: Koret as a Center for Jewish educators.

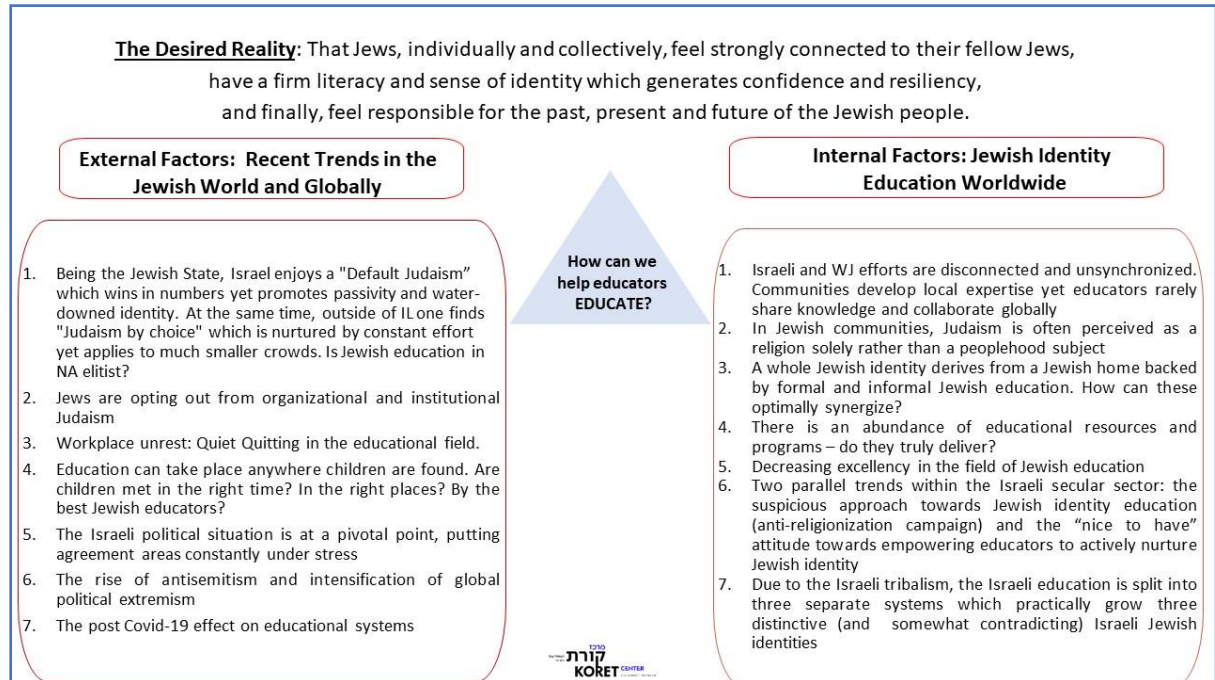
- **Create a center for Jewish educators** – seminars that nurture the status, personality, wellbeing and networking of educators world wide – not content or tools based but context based.
- **Re-define the Jewish educator’s eco-system and find surprising allies** (ex. Single mothers in Jersey, loan educators in a school in Minnesota etc.)
- **Develop a Jewish educator fellowship** — send “fellows” to Jewish communities around the world
- **Break down the concept of “educator”** into educational skills, moments or personality traits that are accessible to anyone. Then, invite people to develop those. Not only by learning new content but by finding and strengthening their unique voice on one hand and giving them the connections they need to find the knowledge they want on their own terms.
- **Create Inter-organizational networking** — Map out the organizations starting from those that attended the gathering and build on from there.

2. On Swapping Strengths: Informal vs. Formal Education:

- Develop knowledge-sharing, insights, and subsequent interventions which will allow for the formal and informal educational network to learn from the other, and address the others weakness.

3. Koret: Leading the Global Jewish Peoplehood Educational Agenda

- **The Koret Center has the ability to take the lead in organizing a shared definition, vision and work plan regarding what is “Peoplehood Education” with a joint agenda — inside and outside of Israel, in both formal and informal education.**
- In the same way that Koret can transfer best practices between the formal and informal education field, **Koret can translate strengths and compensate for weaknesses between the peoplehood field inside and outside of Israel —** where two distinct yet intertwined agendas must be formed.
- **ANU’s Fourth Floor — The Jewish Future** — ANU currently tells the story of the Jewish past and present. Koret has a role in focusing a conversation on imagining and then instigating the Jewish future.



End.

Academy Track at the Koret Center Annual Conference April 27-28 2023, Anu, Tel Aviv

Caveat

The participants emphasized that the primary objective of Jewish studies is academic in nature, and any ancillary benefits to the Jewish community should be regarded as secondary. The paramount consideration is academic credibility, and any involvement by the Koret Center must be approached with prudence to preclude any perception of politicization.

The Gap

- There is a shortage of qualified teachers, limited opportunities for growth, and a lack of prestige for the academic field, which have resulted in limited academic careers within Jewish studies.
- Additionally, there is a decline in student interest and a decrease in the perceived value of Jewish studies.
- The politicization of the academy and the rise of cancel culture have further complicated matters.
- In comparison to applied sciences, Jewish ideas and history often receive less funding.
- Finally, there is a lack of shared understanding of key concepts in Judaism, which can impede the progress of research in the field.

The Response:

- It is important to encourage collaboration and engagement between educators and academics from Israel and around the world. The Koret Center can play a key role in facilitating such activities.
- Additionally, there is a need to increase funding for Jewish studies by engaging new potential sources.
- - Developing and incentivizing a strategic list for academic research, through the engagement of contributors in this track, can help prioritize important areas of inquiry.
- Complementary academic training, including training in media and social media, can help academics and researchers effectively communicate their findings to a broader audience.
- Establishing a new model of learning, such as Beit Midrash, can provide a more immersive and interactive learning experience.
- Finally, creating exchange programs to ensure that students spend a year in Israel can provide a valuable opportunity for cultural immersion and academic enrichment.

The Mission:

- Increasing funding for can be achieved through initiatives such as the "Jewish corporate responsibility" initiative (engaging hi-tech sector and corporates in Israel) and the creation of scholarships for Jewish and Israel studies.
- To make research accessible to the general public, it is important to establish a media and communication team that utilizes mass social and traditional media.
- A multidisciplinary engagement can be fostered by creating an informal complimentary academic experience such as history on the bar and more popular science textbooks.
- Developing new models of learning, such as Beit Midrash, can provide a more immersive and interactive learning experience.
- Finally, increasing community engagement can be accomplished by connecting local communities with Jewish and Israel studies students and scholars from around the world.

Additional Insights and Relevant Information:

- Jewish studies can play a crucial role in strengthening identity, providing insight into Jewish culture and identity, contributing to a renewed connection to Judaism, and producing the next generation of Israeli thinkers.
- Multiperspective and career development are essential components of Jewish studies, as they promote a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, as well as provide students with a path towards professional development.
- To remain relevant in the current social and political climate, it is important to address the gaps mentioned earlier and adapt Jewish studies to reflect the changing needs and concerns of students, scholars, and society as a whole.

Leadership Development Track

Summary of Main Insights*

Defining the field of Leadership Development

- There are many programs, initiatives, and organizations dedicated to *leadership development* throughout the Jewish world. However, these programs and organizations do not necessarily see themselves as part of an ecosystem working for common goals. Leadership Development in the Jewish World has not yet been defined as a field.
- The term Leadership Development currently serves as an 'umbrella' term. In other words, there are different definitions of what leadership development means and what/who it is supposed to serve. Many people understand the words "leadership" and "development" to mean very different things.
- One of the key questions we are asking in this conversation is: *What would it look like if the organizations focused on leadership development represented in this room (and those that are not in this room) started to see themselves as a system?*
- For the sake of our discussions, we will use the following working definition: **the field of Leadership Development refers to organizations and activities dedicated to increasing, developing, nurturing, and empowering, Leaders who are devoted to strengthening Jewish Peoplehood and dealing with the current challenges facing World Jewry.**

The Gap: What are the main challenges in the field of Leadership Development:

- The Koret Center – represented by Naama Klar – put forward a draft diagnosis of the relevancy gap that currently exists in the field of Leadership Development (see below).



- The main challenge that was introduced is that: *Not enough people are trained, together, in the right way, to face the current and future challenges of the Jewish people.*

Refining the gap – Key comments and questions from participants included:

- The main question that Leadership Development programs need to be asking is: **To what ends?** What are we training leaders for?
- There is currently no collective frame around the **global** field of leadership development. Can we/should we even be aspiring to a global leadership development field?
- Local-Global tension - What is the relationship between the local context and the global aspiration?
- Not everyone has the privilege to participate (time, money), how should Leadership Development organizations address these populations?
- What's Jewish about Jewish leadership development? Are we trying to solve Jewish problems, or are we trying to solve problems Jewishly?
- Is leadership development the how or the what? Many Leadership development programs/organizations see themselves as if they are the end and not the means.
- Lack of diversity: A significant portion of Jewish leadership (and by default, participants in leadership programs) do not reflect the diversity that the Jewish people aspire to encompass. This trend is only becoming more apparent due to rising polarization and the erosion of shared Jewish spaces.
- Elite programs are only part of the puzzle, other people on the ground need to be trained for different purposes and building other capacities. These other programs currently don't appear in the frame.
- Because every foundation desires their own leadership program, collaboration and diversity in leadership programs are stunted. The current funding structure of current leadership programs contributes to the above identified gaps in the leadership field by creating unnecessary competition and scarcity.

The Vision: What is an aspired vision for the field of Leadership Development?

Participants brainstormed what is the aspired vision for the field of Leadership Development, below is a summary of the main points raised:

We aspire for a Leadership Development field that is:

- **Focused on the Ends** (not the means) – i.e. - on grooming proud leaders who are active in articulating the greatest challenges facing the Jewish people [and the world], and are active in making progress on those challenges.
- **Diverse** – in participants and perspectives. A field that grooms leaders who are representative of the public that they serve.
- **Collaborative** – a field that is strategic and collaborative between organizations and programs. That sees leadership development as a continuum and creates “hand offs” between programs.
- Addresses the **Long Tail of Leadership** – i.e. – on creating multiple gateways to leadership development experiences and grooming people who go beyond the top 1% of organizations.
- **Prioritizes teaching Jewish knowledge and values.**
- Focuses on fostering a **sense of belonging to the Jewish people** in its participants.
- **A learning field** – that has built in mechanisms for assessing and renewing itself.
- **Leave room for unexpected leadership**, and incentivize neutral leadership that flourishes naturally within the Jewish people.
- Aspires to groom leaders who revere the value of **chesbon nefesh** (self critique).
- Leaders who are **motivated** not from fear, but from an **aspired vision** for the future.

The Response: What can be done to close the gap between the reality and the aspired vision? (Projects, initiatives, conversations)

Participants brainstormed initiatives that could address the challenges and the gap, as defined in the previous section. Below is a list of some of those recommendations:

- **Commission new and more sophisticated data/research/mapping of the field**– There is currently a lack of knowledge and shared comprehension as to what is even happening in the field. What are the programs? what are their purposes? Who are the participants? In this realm, recommendations included commissioning studies to gather more information about what is currently taking place and using sophisticated AI systems to compile ‘smart’ analysis and recommendations based on that data.
- **Foster active collaboration between programs and organizations:** Incentivize collaboration between programs, in particular recommendations included creating a **continuum of programs** – where one program works actively to ‘hand off’ participants to other programs.
- **Prioritize inclusion and diversity of participants:** To achieve this, recommendations included: (1) Nameless application process (2) lottery for selecting participants (3) Commission research to understand which groups are systematically being left out (4) using AI for the selection process.
- **Search for and incentivize new business models for the field:** A main concern raised was that the current funding model perpetuates the current structure (which includes competition, working in silos, etc). As such, new business models are needed in order to create a structural shift in the field. Recommendations included: looking at the system of Chabad Shlichim, studying best practices from the world, and leaning on alumni for significant financing of future cohorts.
- **Convene a "Funders consortium" to think systemically about the field: as noted, within the current system, funders have the ability to create structural change by working together to identify opportunities in the field and incentivize collaboration and innovation.**
- **Foster the Long Tail of Leadership** – In order to reach the ‘long tail of leadership’ – those who go beyond the top 1% (ex: number 2s and 3s in organizations) – it is important to actively reach out and make programs accessible to those populations. Recommendations included: creating more entry points, less difficult screening processes, actively targeting and seeking out these populations, starting young.
- **Develop the *Mifgash* as a key methodology for leadership development:** in order to foster a sense of Jewish Peoplehood amongst participants, foster sophisticated *mifgash* models as a key modality in these programs.
- **Establish a platform/forum for sharing resources and best practices:** In order to build the field, create a shared platform for people working in the field to share resources, best practices, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Develop Train the Trainers programs:** There is currently a lack of specific and relevant professional development opportunities for those who are specializing in the field of leadership development. Recommendations included developing Train the Trainers cohorts and actively targeting participants from a multitude of organizations in order to break down silos and encourage collaboration.

* This document is a summary of key insights and recommendations from a conversation held among 18 Jewish professionals at a track dedicated to Leadership Development at the 2023 Koret Ideation Gathering. The content of the document does not represent the group as a whole.