

2:00 - 3:00

**Advocacy for Continuing Rabbinic Education
Introduction - Rabbi Marc Wolf**

Prior to the Conference, the members of this Working Group met and concluded that there are four key constituencies whose support is needed to help to further the strengthening of the field of Continuing Rabbinic Education. They are funders, lay leaders, rabbis in the field and continuing rabbinic education program providers. The Working Group structured the session at the Conference to have participants begin to develop strategies to best advocate for Continuing Rabbinic Education with these four different constituencies, or others that group members thought were missing from the list. Representatives of each of these four constituencies were then asked to comment on how effective the suggested strategies were and to add their own personal viewpoints.

World Café Discussion and Reporting

Advocacy for Continuing Rabbinic Education-Introduction



- The Working Group posits that there are four target constituency groups for advocacy for continuing rabbinic education. Each group would require a different advocacy approach. The constituencies are:
 - 1) Funders
 - 2) Lay Leaders
 - 3) Rabbis in the field
 - 4) Continuing Rabbinic Education Providers



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Are there any others that need to be added?

- Communal organizations
- Rabbinical students
- Denominational organizations
- Reps of the major rabbinical associations and seminaries
- Families
- Congregational boards (who hire, write contracts, ensure sustainability of rabbis)
- Employees and other professionals
- Joint programs
- Faculty

Advocacy for Continuing Rabbinic Education - Questions



- 1) Do you agree that these are the right constituencies?
- 2) Are there any others that need to be added?
- 3) Create a list of questions and answers that would address the concerns of each of the constituencies and could form the basis for the beginning of an advocacy program (Role playing is encouraged).



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For All:

- Why do we need this?
- What will it accomplish?
- Purpose and goals?
- Why should it become mandatory?

Prioritize the constituencies:

1. Rabbis - if they buy in, the task will be much easier
2. Lay people within community -
3. Congregations/Community - needs to be educated on CRE - need to trust the rabbis need CRE
4. Advocacy will be helped by evaluation - benchmarks/standards

- **THE CASE TO FUNDERS**

- Rabbis are gateway to Jewish community/Jewish life. Address skepticism about rabbis and value in community
 - Already invested social capital in J leadership - way to build on it. 90% come in - this gives skills to make them come back.
- Some Funders have ADD (give seed money and move on). So need to design strategies to keep long term commitment.
 - Evaluations to mark progress; make accountable - resulting in renewed commitment
 - Measurable goals that are realistic

How to evaluate cost effectiveness compared to other professional ed?

What are benefits of cross-denominational programs?

Who shares how much responsibility of costs?

The significant of the micro-level to affect the macro

Create Language for CRE

Overarching benefit to Jewish community

Not a charity but a means to transform Jewish community

Not a business, not an investment, but an intergenerational education process

Will offer external evaluation to support claims

Looking for long-term process + net "business" model

Stories of impact/Testimonials - Capitalize

Will help to solve the problem of burnout and other personnel issues

Rabbis are avenue to Jewish people - strengthening their skills will strengthen vitality of people and Jewish community

Continuing Education will help rabbis retool for next generation.

Target funders within the synagogue

Challenge is to navigate funders' expectations with reality of what is achievable

Need Benchmarks for funders

Share what happens at conventions

Hear from experts of other communities

PR for rabbis

Can provide CRE through Vouchers

Subsidies are needed for rabbis who cannot afford CRE

Rabbis will become better by learning new things - times change (i.e. technology)

Analogies to other fields

Recognizing accomplishments of accumulating CRE

90% of Jews access a synagogue

We all need to be more self-reflective

Resistance to idea of rabbi as employ

There can be a global fund which finances CRE

Joint statement from rabbis/congregations across denominations about value

Mandate for rabbinate of the future

Federation Funding needs a coalition

- LAY LEADERS

- Advocacy statement from august body
- Face-to-face confrontation to lay people who need to see what is in it for them
- Organizations of the congregations (e.g., URJ, JRF, OU, etc.) - we expect you to do this (enlist lay leadership to advocate back to congregation)
- In contract: expectation on part of congregation and rabbi
- How will this measurably improve rabbinic performance?
- What are the direct and indirect costs?
- How does this fit into time allocations?
- What are long-term benefits of continuing ed?
- How do we determine most effective use of PD financial resources?
- Why aren't rabbinic conferences enough?
- In contracts: sabbatical, benefits, study
- Lay Leader Education

- RABBIS

- In contract: expectation on part of congregation and rabbi
- Concrete responses in addition to advocacy (e.g., Spouses track and child care)
- Sense of exclusivity/panache
- WOM
- Will this be a good investment for me?
- How do I free the time?
- How do I add this to other forms of training & conferences?
- Goals of the institution? And what is the role of the rabbi.
- **What skills does the rabbi need? What are the expectations?**
- Mutual assessment
- Raising expectations of the community - but also making them realistic helping them value the work of the rabbi
- Overcoming territoriality - relationships between rabbis and congregations: Sharing resources
- Denominations: How much should they work together? Pluralism can cause more fragmentation - Can CRE bring people together but let denominations play to their strengths?
- How can laity set expectations and get behind this if they have the myth of the learned rabbi?
- Should pay part of the cost of PD courses

- Set standard
- Gives competitive edge
- Students leave with 2-5 year plan
- PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING THIS WORK
 - [Where do the decades of CRE done in past fit in - as well as Jews whose lives are enhanced by being part of denominational framework?]
 - Where do the rabbinical schools fit in?
- DIANE:
 - Using Harold as example
 - He needs to understand the problem. Critical. (e.g., Hillel, DSs). Charismatic professional leader and lay leader (one cell of focused energy)
 - Harold puts his money on people.
 - What would grab his attention: if he knew his money could change selection process
 - His way of doing things is challenge grants to individual communities. Loves to leverage his funds.
 - Economy of scale. (e.g., movements working together)
 - Must be some skin in the game for him.
 - He is very involved in camps right now. Getting right people on boards and giving them fundraising skills.
 - Getting more yiddishkeit into camps. So if rabbis learned to advocate for camping
- MICHAEL LAUFER (LAY LEADER)
 - Need to be educated that rabbis need CRE (assume rabbis know everything and continue to)
 - How CRE will benefit their cong in short and long term
 - Benefit is worth the time and money
 - Challenge model: what other forms and models would accomplish goals (other than 2weeks off)
 - Why their support of their of their rabbis attending conf is not sufficient
- RABBI JONATHAN SCHNITZER
 - Fascinating experience. Honored to participate. Own consciousness raised about so many arms focused
 - Rabbinate is incredibly eclectic - more than in past. Therefore, needs for CRE vary enormously. No one formula to fit everyone or make it all come together for everyone. Need to be as open-minded and global in thinking in possible to accommodate.

- Rabbis need incentivization. Tough to carve out time. May respond if receive voucher for usage for CRE. Takes some stress away from negotiating with boards, less outlay for rabbis - one step closer to experience.
- Impressed by range of CRE opportunities already available. Problem: need for index of what is there. Pummeled by promotions. Difficult to integrate it all and see what options are. Especially on a transdenominational level - overview of what is available and accessible. Then challenge them to where might fit in.
- RABBI ALFREDO BORODOWSKI (Provider)
 - To get to next level, need to share info, work on sharing ideas, creating processes to evaluate programs, to advocate for each other as a group (greater effect if seen as a group)
 - Challenge: has his funders and clients, niche - will take some work to create openness - by sharing exposing weaknesses, strengths, supporters. Need safe place.
 - Maybe initial steps = sharing program info, benchmarks
 - Going back with business cards to hear and continue dialogue. Will report back.