

## Evaluation – Summary of Survey Responses

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CONTINUING RABBINIC EDUCATION

### **Fast Feedback Form Summary**

(30 Respondents)

Have you ever participated in “The World Café” methodology prior to this conference?

YES: 5

NO: 23

How effective was “The World Café” as a methodology for:

*(The rating system ranged from 1 coffee cup meaning “not effective” to 4 coffee cups being “highly effective”)*

a) Surfacing critical issues?

2 coffee cups: 2

3 coffee cups: 9

4 coffee cups: 18

b) Sharing Information?

2 coffee cups: 1

3 coffee cups: 8

4 coffee cups: 19

c) Generating new ideas?

2 coffee cups: 1

3 coffee cups: 10

4 coffee cups: 18

d) Fostering collegial interaction?

1 coffee cup: 1

2 coffee cups: 2

3 coffee cups: 6

4 coffee cups: 20

e) Bringing different people together in conversations

1 coffee cup: 1

2 coffee cups: 1

3 coffee cups: 3

4 coffee cups: 26

2) Your level of support for an "Alliance" for CRE

2 coffee cups: 3

3 coffee cups: 7

4 coffee cups: 19

3) Your level of optimism about the feasibility of establishing an "Alliance" for Rabbinic Education

1 coffee cup: 1

2 coffee cups: 6

3 coffee cups: 10

4 coffee cups: 12

## Survey Monkey Summary

(23 Respondents- 10 Steering Committee Members, 13 Non-Steering Committee Members)

Analysis of Responses by filtering based on membership in Steering Committee or not, shows no significant differences.

Responses to Quantitative Questions:

Did you access the Conference blog (<http://acre.typepad.com/>) before the conference?

Yes- 17

No - 6

Are you interested in continuing involvement with the emergent Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education?

Yes- 18

No - 2

No Response - 3

Note: The two people who responded "no" were both not members of the Steering Committee and saw that others from their organizations would be involved in next steps.

Responses to Open Ended Questions:

1) What new ideas, insights and/or knowledge did you take home from the conference?

Summary of Responses:

*There are a great many individuals and organizations in the broad Jewish community that are interested in moving a continuing rabbinic education agenda forward. A diverse group of rabbis and leaders came together with no sense of tension or territorial issues. Having a consortium could be helpful to all of us. It was striking to see the variety of different roles an Alliance could play and the practicality of many of the ideas produced was impressive.*

*We need to mobilize the Jewish community to expect and support the continuing education of rabbis. Other religious traditions are ahead of*

*us in this area. Larry Goleman's presentation was very interesting as a backdrop for the World Café conversations. We now have a better idea about "how the Christians" do it and I appreciated learning the Christian approach to professional learning. Some Christian denominations contractually pay for and allow time off that is not vacation time for continuing education. Larry Goleman's presentation about the four pedagogies of clergy education was fabulous! These categories can really help us better define and refine what we offer. Also, the insight that lawyers and doctors have ongoing interaction with colleagues and, therefore, need to keep up with the field was important because rabbis often exist in their own institutions with little interaction.*

*We learned a wide variety of ideas about how best to "do" CRE— benchmarks, incorporating CRE expectations into rabbinic contracts, ideas about varying goals of CRE, thoughts about fundraising and contacts with others in the field. It was interesting to think about the relationship between continuing rabbinic education and rabbinical school curriculum.*

2) What were the most useful aspects of the conference for you?

Summary of Responses:

*It was energizing and encouraging to simply see who else had agreed to be in the room. The World Café format promoted very productive conversations and gave everyone a voice. A tone of inclusion and respect was created. It felt like breaking up into so many small groups allowed the participants to come up with many more ideas and reactions than they would have with fewer, larger groups.*

*Hayim's talk was good, as well as Larry Goleman's presentation on continuing Christian clergy education. Meeting and networking with the broad and diverse spectrum of the Jewish community interested in continuing rabbinic education, including people I do not know, was very helpful.*

*We are beginning to see that there is some wisdom and experience in the broader community about what continuing education for clergy might look like. The conference created greater momentum for this project. Some of the contours of the Alliance seem to have gained some clarity.*

3) What aspects of the conference could have been improved - and how?

#### Summary of Responses

*There should be more lay people and funders invited. It would have been good to have a panel of representatives from the different schools discussing current practices. It would have been good to have a discussion of some programs that some consider to be currently successful, and why/how they got that way. Could have been some formal materials giving a current state analysis. It would have been helpful to receive some of the research information before the conference, or some other framing material—blogs and references to the web aren't enough. I would want to be able to do some more learning about what is available in the non-Jewish world, the non-clergy world and the world of adult learning more generally. This conference involved a lot of brainstorming. In the future it would be helpful to vet a lot of these ideas and really tease out how they will work. The presentation from the funder's perspective was unfocused.*

*I think we have to be careful about some of the language we use. Many, many people were referring to "rabbi" as "pulpit rabbi" only, even after we saw the research that showed that almost 50% of rabbis are now not in pulpit settings. We cannot leave these rabbis out of our conversations and thinking.*

*I did leave wanting more, but I suppose that that is both praise and criticism. Having so many short and limited conversations allowed us to consider many issues, but none in depth. The World Cafe was not well thought out. In every group I was in folks thought that the questions were a straightjacket. Sometimes we talked about what was on our minds; other times we were good soldiers. More break time. Lots of important work happens in those breaks. It was some of the most valuable time for me in terms of connecting with folks, sharing information, making plans for follow up, etc.*

*Generally the format was excellent and my constructive feedback is minor. The conference was terrific. We need to take the next steps.*

4) In what ways, if any, will you apply the insights and knowledge you gained at the Conference?

#### Summary of Responses.

*We have already had a meeting to reflect on the conference and revised the next steps of our work. (There were 4 from our institution at the conference)*

*I have a richer perspective to work with in making programming decisions. The insights and knowledge I gained will help me to better define the program I am working on. I learned new vocabulary for thinking about what we are doing. It will stimulate thinking about foundation priorities in this area. I think they provide the basis for moving forward on a shift toward standardized CEU's, which is the first step toward making them mandatory. We will now consider how our particular offerings can touch on, or point to, the all of the four frames of CRE -- we are so focused on "formation" and "textualization" but we know that we have to address the other areas as well.*

*There is not a specific application to be named at the moment, but the overall insight to the field was a great benefit. I didn't feel that the purpose was for me to gain insights, but to share some thoughts and brainstorm with others. I will think about them...*

*It just gives me a sense that we, as program providers of CRE, really are at the center of an important initiative that stands to have more impact by the creation of an alliance for information sharing and advocacy (and by extension, fundraising).*

5) With whom (which groups and individuals) will you share what you learned the Conference - and what will you tell them?

Summary of Responses:

*Alumni; senior staff of our institution; the other administrators at my institution; my board; my colleagues and lay leadership at my home institution. Other funders, that they need to be aware of a nascent movement starting; our committee on professional development; our development team; rabbis in the field.*

6) What types of information would you be interested in seeing on the blog as a follow-up to the Conference?

Summary of Responses:

*Proceedings from the gathering. Ideas people have post-conference. Feedback from the conference. Reactions and responses. Any new developments as a result of the conference. It would also be good to receive updates about progress in securing additional funding and welcoming more parties to the Alliance.*

*A consistently updated inventory of programs and expert presenters in the field. A list of all programs available by organization and cross-*

*referenced by major subject and listing CRE courses from all movements and knowing which might be open to a wider audience; papers related to CRE.*

*More information from the Christian world -- how the denominations came to create their expectations for clergy and congregations, how they formulated the distinction between "continuing education credits" and other forms of continuing ed. Discussion of specifically "rabbinic" (and possibly cantorial) "certificate" programs (like DMin -- but thinking about the Jewish ministry) and how they might be created and recognized. Research on rabbis and their role in the American Jewish sphere.*

7) What do you see as the critical next steps in the creation of an "Alliance" for Continuing Rabbinic Education?

Summary of Responses:

*We need to come up with a culture and system to make this happen. Prioritization and mobilization. Agreement on the mission of the Alliance. Not to let it "drop" - but meet/create the Alliance committee and have them meet sooner than later to discuss these next steps.*

*An identity that cares. Can there be some new governance group, facilitated by JESNA, called the Alliance for continuing rabbinic education? They can have a logo and a simple purpose...taking on the next critical steps in the creation of an alliance for CRE. They may work on two tracks, (or you may need to add others) for the next five years and then work back ward from that...all along keeping the larger group in the loop and adding voices where needed. Dollars are needed too, so having some designated group seek funds to support the low hanging fruit work and the bigger vision/strategic plan work. In some ways you've done a visioning that will allow you to do the low hanging fruit. You might not do the bigger vision part until some on the ground successes happen*

*Bringing together all the organizations to officially accept the concept - and do so openly. They may have to go to their boards etc. for that approval. Getting the seminaries together to start talking 'tachlis.' Serious conversations with the rabbinic organizations and congregational organizations. The former need to articulate what they see as the needs of their members and how they might be served by an ACRE -- the benefits to them and their members. The latter have to see this as something of value for the congregations and not "just" another "benefit" that they have to fund for rabbis.*

*Securing funders and broadening the discussion to include lay leadership and cultivate their support. Expand circle of those involved; inform top lay leadership of denominations; create Internet resources for sharing information about program providers; publish small volume of proceedings for marketing to funds.*

*1. Web-page with list of CRE offerings (descriptions, dates, sponsors, registration). 2. Platform from which participants in any CRE program can share impressions - testimonies, if you will. 3. Creation of a statement about the importance of CRE issued by the Alliance (including synagogue body representatives: URJ, US , etc.) to be used in advocating communal expectation of and support for CRE.*

*Standardization of CEU's, moving toward universal rabbinic access to all the programs offered by everyone.*

*Assistance in funding, support for curriculum development, support for assessment tools.*

8) What do you see as the positive factors that are currently in place (and should be capitalized on) to support the establishment of an " Alliance" for Continuing Rabbinic Education?

Summary of Responses:

*The need, the need, the need.*

*The very coming together of all the people in the room this week was impressive. The different points of view and approaches Jewishly, and content wise, suggests real interest and need. Many providers of continuing education recognize their needs for support in thinking about the continuing education needs of rabbis, expertise in how to deliver it, advocacy and marketing. A number of providers are already doing things. 1) The good will of all of the participants and institutions represented at Wednesday's conference and the willingness to support and work for the betterment of the Alliance. 2) The talent of the organizers up to this point.*

*Lots of interest. Positive regard among conference participants. Desire to keep alliance broad-based. Wisdom in building slowly and awareness that growth of trust among participants in alliance is critical. Considerable momentum; diverse providers, funders and partner agencies; ripening of the issue in many people's minds Moving at a good pace, building trust, open discussion*

*The funders seem interested and where there is \$\$ there is action...*

9) What do you see as the main obstacles that must be overcome in order to establish an "Alliance" for Continuing Rabbinic Education?

Summary of Responses:

*The articulation of the nature of CRE and its goals. Defining membership; acquiring sufficient commitment from core leaders. The wide range of expectations of an Alliance. It is easier to talk the talk than walk the walk. The inclination to have such an alliance be either (a) a united rabbinic organization or (b) a united program provider*

*The most practical obstacle is funding. If the initiative is to move forward it will need guidance and follow through of the same caliber that went into planning the conference, but focused on a greater and greater number of different fronts. Philosophically, the greatest obstacle will be the challenge of changing the culture of the Jewish community to the point where all of the stakeholders will buy in to the vision and support it.*

*Helping all at table understand that "alliance" can only strengthen and not diminish what they offer. Feeling of competition btw programs, particularly btw the denominational movement programs and the non-denominational programs. The issue of "benchmarks and standards" is complicated -- they don't apply per se. But, there may be a "natural history" of a rabbinic career (particularly congregational, but this may be true in other fields as well), and "developmental" points that need to be "provoked" as well as mediated and supported. The congregational organizations need to find a place in this conversation as well -- in such a way that it does not create a hammer to be used against rabbis, but as a means to support them in their work with congregations. Creating this as mainstream in rabbinic contracts.*