



Myers JDC
Brookdale

The Kaplan Leadership Initiative

**Evaluation Report:
Findings from the Follow-up
of the First Cohort (2018-2019)
And Second Cohort (2019-2020)**

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Abstract

Background

The Kaplan Leadership Initiative (KLI) is the first international JDC program that has set itself the goal of developing young leadership in Jewish communities in Europe, the former Soviet Union (FSU) and Latin America (LATAM). The program is designed for professionals in mid-level positions in Jewish communities who aspire to strengthen their leadership skills and increase their impact within their organizations and communities. The program focuses on providing knowledge, skills and tools in four areas: community development, leadership, Jewish content and context, and management.

Goals

This report summarizes the findings of the follow-up study of the First and Second Cohorts of the program. The study sought to determine whether program graduates are still working in the Jewish community, if they have changed their roles since graduation, if they use the knowledge, skills and tools they gained through the program, and the extent to which they are staying in touch with each other.

Methods

The follow-up for Cohort 1 graduates was conducted through semi-structured Zoom interviews in English and Russian (N=23). An online self-administered survey was used for Cohort 2 graduates in English, Russian and Spanish (N=42). Research staff also sought information about the non-respondents from program staff.

Findings

Many similarities were found between Cohort 1 and 2 graduates. The vast majority indicated that they continue to work in the Jewish community, mostly in the same organization and in the same capacity as when they participated in the program. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, all program graduates working in the Jewish community maintained their positions or were promoted. While adapting to the health crisis, many graduates developed new skills.

Graduates reported using the knowledge, skills and tools they acquired in the areas of management and leadership in their daily work, but in the areas of community development and Jewish content and context they reported less

use. Most graduates are part of regional networks which serve as platforms for communication and friendship, both social and professional.

Graduates found the establishment of a global alumni network desirable and expressed interest in participating in such a network in order to be updated on areas of practice of fellow alumni and to benefit from mutual learning and collaboration. Graduates of Cohort 2 seem to be more committed to the global network than their predecessors.

Recommendations

This report offers several recommendations for improvement derived from the findings of the follow-up concerning selection of program participants, expertise in delivering the program, refining program content, supporting graduates after the program ends, and the methods and content conducive to building the global alumni network.

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