

Kaplan Leadership Program Mapping of Cohort 2

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Kaplan Leadership Program

The Kaplan Leadership Program is the first international JDC program with 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 young Jewish community professionals in mid-level positions who want to strengthen their influence and leadership ability, particularly within their own organizations and communities. The program focuses on providing knowledge, skills and tools in four areas: community development, leadership, management, and Jewish content and context.

The Kaplan Leadership Program has evolved during the course of two cohorts, each built on three regional seminars and one global seminar, with interim activities and assignments between seminars.

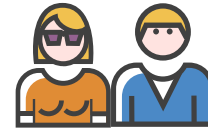


The Kaplan Leadership Initiative



Main Goal

Increased capacity of Jewish professionals for current and future senior leadership roles in a global context, as a means to strengthen communities.



Participants

Mid-to senior-level managers at a variety of Jewish institutions, including welfare and social services, Jewish community centers, synagogues schools, educational programs, and Jewish media.



The Kaplan Leadership Initiative-Cont.



Structure

- Three regional groups: Europe, FSU and Latin America
- 2 regional seminars, a joint global seminar, and an additional regional seminar
- Two cohorts: 2017-2019, 2018-2020, (the third cohort is taking place during 2022-2023)



Final outcomes

- Graduates take leadership positions in local or global Jewish communities and lead meaningful processes to strengthen communities/organizations
- Graduates implement acquired knowledge, skills and tools to: Respond to evolving community needs in adaptive and creative way | Deal with community diversity in a pluralistic and inclusive way | Bring best practices of community development to additional communities and regions
- Graduates actively engage with each other as part of a network of Jewish professionals



Evaluation Goals and Methodology





Evaluation Strategy



Focus

To examine the program as a whole

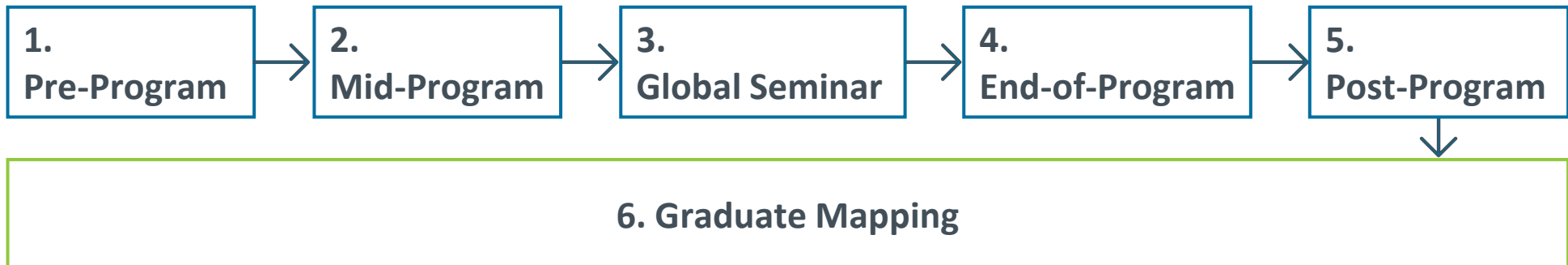


Goals

- To examine the implementation of the program
- To assess the extent to which the program achieves its desired goals
- To contribute to ongoing improvement



Evaluation Process





Research Goals and Questions at Mapping Stage

Evaluation Goal

Mapping the career path of the Kaplan fellows and their involvement in the community



The second round of mapping was conducted two years after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, during the Russia- Ukraine War. These factors are reflected in high rate of change in residence, and place and scope employment for graduates, e.g., several graduates have immigrated from Ukraine and Russia to Israel and elsewhere.

Evaluation questions

Are the graduates still working in the Jewish community and if so, in what positions?

Are the graduates who are not employed in the Jewish community involved in committed voluntary positions?

Are they using the knowledge, skills and tools they acquired through the Kaplan Program?

Are they actively networking with each other?



Methodology

Data analysis regarding cohort 2 graduates' (N=42) employment and type of position as known to program staff

Brief semi-structured online interviews with graduates from all three regions:

Europe

Interviews in English with 11
(73% of graduates, n=15)

FSU

Interviews in Russian with 13
(93% of graduates, n=14)

LATAM

Interviews in English with 6
(46% of graduates, n=13)



Four of the LATAM graduates were not interviewed because they do not speak English, and a Spanish-speaking interviewer could not be recruited. Three others were interviewed for the program's graduate activity evaluation shortly before this mapping evaluation was conducted. While these three were not re-interviewed, their employment data were obtained.



Main Findings



Changes in employment





Cohort 2 employment positions two years post program, percentages and numbers (N=42)

	Total	Europe	FSU	LATAM
N	42	15	14	13
In the Jewish community, same organization, same position	29% (12)	20% (3)	29% (4)	38% (5)
In the Jewish community, same level job, new organization	14% (6)	--	36% (5)	8% (1)
In the Jewish community, promotion or expansion of responsibilities in the same job	45% (19)	67% (10)	14% (2)	54% (7)
Working outside the Jewish community	10% (4)	13% (2)^	14% (2)	--
Unemployed	2% (1)	--	7% (1)	--



Employment positions two years post program: Cohort 1 compared to Cohort 2, percentages and numbers

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
N	100% (28)	100% (42)
In the Jewish community, same organization, same job	46% (13)	29% (12)
In the Jewish community, same level position, new organization	3% (1)	14% (6)
In the Jewish community, promotion or expansion of responsibilities in the same job	25% (7)	45% (19)
Working outside the Jewish community	18% (5)	10% (4)
Unemployed	7% (2)	2% (1)

- **Higher mobility in cohort 2:** Almost twice as many of cohort 2 graduates (45% compared to 25%), reported a promotion or responsibility expansion. Only 29% (12) of cohort 2 compared to 46% (13) of cohort 1 did not report any change in job or workplace.
- Appendices 1-2 present a comparison of graduate employment by region (Europe and FSU). The previous cohort did not include a group from LATAM, therefore there is no comparison data.



Program Impact





Overall impact of the program

Graduates stated that the Kaplan Program affected them ‘as a whole’, rather than according to specific activities and tools. Many emphasized that the program gave them the opportunity to see themselves and their professional careers in a different way. The program enhanced their self-confidence, empowered them and motivated them to rethink their personal and professional status and goals:



Today I can dream of bigger things than I dared before”.



Overall impact of the program- Cont.

Some graduates stated that the program increased their sensitivity to the importance of Jewish values as guidelines in their work:



Life changes when thinking about changes... It is not only important getting to know concrete tools but to recognize important values... The fact that people gather to improve the world is extremely significant! At Kaplan it was within the program, it was in the infrastructure of the program..."



Impact in core areas of the program

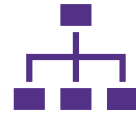
The graduates commented on the Kaplan Program's impact on them in its four areas of focus:



**Community
development**



Leadership



Management



**Jewish content
and context**



Impact in core areas of the program

Community development

- The program introduced the fellows to the broad Jewish community and to diverse ways of being Jewish. For some graduates, this was the first time to see how other communities' work.



A feeling that you are familiar with Jewish life, beyond your small town. The program gave a broader understanding of the wider Jewish community"

- Many graduates reported that the program was unique because it offered them an opportunity to learn about other communities around the world, including ways to develop, maintain and improve community projects, programs, and overall community resilience.



The meeting with other realities is the highlight of the program. Meeting people from other communities is amazing"



Impact in core areas of the program

Leadership

The program developed and increased the participants' self-perception as leaders.



Each of us perceives himself as a leader... no one but us will do it - we have to lead! This is the most significant product of the program. This is exactly the long-term result of the program..."

Management

Many graduates use methods taught in the program in their daily work to raise motivation, increase managerial responsibility and promote teamwork.



I became a much more efficient manager and am trying to develop further in this direction..."

Jewish Learning

Although all graduates were asked about all core areas of the Kaplan Program, only European graduates referred to program impact in deepening their Jewish knowledge, connection to Jewish sources and Jewish learning.



Networking

- Many graduates from the three regions noted the creation of personal and professional connections, mainly in their regions, as the most significant benefit of the program. Kaplan Alumni Network serves as a platform for sharing information, receiving support, learning about other programs and projects and receiving referrals to sources of assistance.
- Graduates said that the program contributed to the creation of a professional community that helped them to find their professional and personal identity.
- The connections made in the program were used by two graduates to find a new job in a different Jewish community.



I don't think the goal should be to learn more, to educate more, but simply to work on the connections. The connections and exchange of information, about the organizations and how the communities work in other parts of the world, is really important”.



Networking-Cont.



Regional network

The regional networks were reported to be a significant source of consultation and support for many graduates in the three regions, with most saying they maintain personal and professional contact with other graduates through their region's network. Many consider such networking opportunities the most valuable benefit of the Kaplan Program. Many also expressed interest in networking with other Kaplan program cohorts in their region.



The Global network

While some graduates mentioned that they maintained connections with graduates from other regions, most did not. The full potential of the Kaplan Global Network has yet to be realized.



Program impact: Using skills and tools acquired through the program



Online tools:

The program introduced graduates to various online tools which prepared them for working remotely after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Coaching and mentoring:

Several mentioned that the coaching and mentoring helped them develop professionally and personally.



Storytelling:

Many graduated said that they frequently use the skills and tools taught by Lior Shoham about the art of storytelling and presentation.



English proficiency: A few graduates stated that the program helped them improve their English.



FSU graduates stated that they use design thinking, public relations and fundraising skills that have been taught in their regional seminars.



Program impact: Using the global network to provide support during the Russia-Ukraine war

- Graduates from all regions used personal and professional connections they created through the program to assist people during the war.
- European graduates, especially from countries near the conflict areas (Poland, Romania, Estonia, Germany and Bulgaria) helped refugees find housing and adjust to new communities in several countries and provided other humanitarian assistance.
- Graduates from LATAM gave emotional support to Ukrainian graduates and expressed their solidarity.



I used the network to transfer the refugees from Ukraine [like] helping a woman with three children to find housing in the Czech Republic, or a young woman who came to Budapest without any money – I contacted [one of European graduate] and he helped within 4 hours” (FSU).



Regional highlights





FSU

- There are many changes among FSU graduates: 36% (5) have completed or are in the process of making Aliya; 21% (3) graduates have fled Ukraine to other European communities. Aside from their Jewish community roles, two of Ukrainian graduates volunteer intensively in the community (Jewish and non-Jewish) and in the Ukrainian army. These changes may be a result of the war and may also have been influenced by the empowerment and confidence instilled in them during the program.
- Many graduates have questioned whether cooperation between graduates on different sides of the conflict is still possible, while others believe that continued FSU Region joint activity is crucial.



FSU-Cont.

- Because of the damage to the Jewish communities in Ukraine and Russia, several graduates proposed to use more flexible criteria for program admission, including age, job seniority and job responsibilities. Given the current political situation, joint activities for representatives from different sides of the conflict must be thought out and performed with great care and attention.



Europe

- Graduates from Europe emphasized the importance of the Jewish learning they experienced in the program. Several stated that they were continuing to advance their Jewish learning.
- The regional group is very active and supportive, and the graduates attribute this to the investment of the regional team in the group during their regional seminars.
- Graduates referred to the importance of diversity in the composition of their group, crediting it for giving them a broader professional and community perspective.



LATAM

- The Kaplan Program helped motivate LATAM graduates to establish their regional professional network, “RED.” These graduates planned and built the network and continue to maintain it. Many of them are currently very active and enthusiastically looking for ways to promote and expand it.



Summary and Recommendations





Summary

- The Kaplan Program had a broad and positive effect on graduates, increasing their self-confidence, empowering their personal and professional growth and developing their common professional identity as Jewish professionals, as well as equipping them with knowledge, tools and skills.
- 88% (39) of cohort 2 graduates are still working in the Jewish community, despite the uncertainty and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war. Moreover, 45% (19) were promoted within their communities despite the challenging times.
- The Kaplan Program was successful in the creation and establishment of vibrant regional networks. The Kaplan Global Network remains a work in progress.



Recommendations



Diversity:

Recruit participants for the program from different denominations, organizations and backgrounds, in a way that represents the variety of ways to be Jewish and to be a Jewish professional.



Locations:

Regional seminar programming should take place in a variety of geographical locations with communities that are interesting and relevant for the graduates to learn from.



Learning in groups:

Considering the wide cultural and professional diversity of the program participants, it is useful to create many choice options for learning in global seminar – based on different levels of knowledge, experience and expertise.



Recommendations- Cont.



Hands-on learning:

Since practical learning is retained longer than theoretical learning, classes should focus on learning through practice, case studies and peer learning.



Networking:

Maximum effort should continue to be invested in creating and maintaining personal and professional connections among graduates, both regionally and globally.



Alumni involvement:

Some graduates want to help the Kaplan Program reach its goals. Their talents should be used to enhance the experience of participants in cohort 3 and to strengthen alumni program activities.



The program gave me the opportunity to see myself in a completely different way... The program allowed me to see myself as a Jewish professional... The program had a positive effect on my life in general, I feel that I am a better person, because of the program” (LATAM)



I don't know where I'd be without it (the Kaplan program). I suspect I would be junior to where I am now. I would be earning less money and I wouldn't have been doing what I am doing now because I do have the ability and confidence to stand before the president or chairman and talk about vision led strategy at community level and I got it from the program” (Europe)



Thanks for the program - one of the best programs - well done! Very happy to be a part and keep in touch” (FSU)

Thank you

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Appendices



Appendix 1: Europe - Current employment of Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1, percentages and numbers

	Europe Cohort 1	Europe Cohort 2
N	15	15
In the Jewish community, same organization, same position	34% (5)	20% (3)
In the Jewish community, same level position, new organization	6% (1)	--
In the Jewish community, promotion or expansion of responsibilities in the same job	34% (5)	67% (10)
Working outside the Jewish community	13% (2)	13% (2)^
Unemployed	13% (2)	--

^ One graduate (7%) is still involved in the Jewish community as a volunteer



Appendix 2: FSU - Current employment of Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1, percentages and numbers

	FSU Cohort 1	FSU Cohort 2
N	13	14
In the Jewish community, same organization, same position	62% (8)	29% (4)
In the Jewish community, same level position, new organization	--	36% (5)
In the Jewish community, promotion or expansion of responsibilities in the same job	15% (2)	14% (2)
Working outside the Jewish community	23% (3)	14% (2)
Unemployed	--	7% (1)