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Haskalah 2.0

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Innovation in Jewish Historical Context

If every historical age poses complex challenges for Jewish identity and community, then one framing question, to begin any analysis of contemporary Jewish innovation, contains trace echoes from the Passover Seder. 'What makes today's Jewish innovation so different, if at all, from any other examples of Jewish innovation from the past?' The pat answer to that very complicated question is a riddle that makes no sense: everything and nothing. In some ways, the context and trends,

The Backstory

Haskalah 2.0 is an analytical essay based on a consultation on Jewish innovation and social entrepreneurship which took place in Toronto on December 15-16, 2009. It was organized and convened by Jumpstart, JESNA's Lippman Kanfer Institute, and The Jewish Federations of North America, hosted and co-sponsored by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and co-sponsored by the Andrea & Charles Bronfman Philanthropies. All quotes in the report are from participants in the consultation. A full list of participants and their organizational affiliations can be found at http://jewishecosystem.org/toronto2009.

Genesis of the Consultation

The landscape of dynamic new Jewish startups has expanded in both visibility and relevance over the past few years. New projects, as well as new support frameworks, opportunities for networking and deliberation, research, resources, and collaborations, are all in the process of coalescing into what can potentially become a robust communal infrastructure. Even the current economic

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opportunities, and challenges that characterize Jewish innovation (and the people driving it) are profoundly different than in previous eras. This analysis explores some of those differences and emerging trends in-depth. To reach for an obvious first example, who could have predicted that Facebook would become a viable, indeed, even necessary tool for conceptualizing, organizing, building, and sustaining global Jewish communities around the world?

In some ways, there are important continuities, despite all the significant technological, social, and environmental changes that have shaped our lives over the past few decades. Think about the *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment), the Jewish encounter with European modernity, which began roughly during the last half of the eighteenth century, beginning in Western Europe. When Jews were offered the promise of political emancipation, those opportunities to participate more fully in secular European society unleashed waves of creative energy and transformational shifts in Jewish culture that still reverberate today. Those early Jewish innovators, known as *maskilim* (proponents of Jewish Enlightenment and

The Backstory (cont.)

situation has not halted this momentum. In fact, efforts are under way to ensure that the Jewish startup sector can sustain itself through these challenging times. These efforts are intended to support the revitalization of the Jewish community that is occurring in a multitude of organizational types and geographical locations.

Despite the vitality of the innovation sector, the creation of new organizations dedicated to supporting its growth, and the increasing interest from the mainstream Jewish world in the sector, until recently no forum existed to discuss and debate the macro issues facing Jewish innovators, and to focus inquiry and research on the sector in an effort to better understand its potential and its challenges.

Moreover, since the emergence of hundreds of nonprofit startups across North America, there have been few opportunities to review the new environment as a whole and explore how collaboration among startups, and between them and larger institutions, could achieve positive sustainable change in the Jewish community.

With so many questions unanswered and core issues unresolved, building on the converging work about social entrepreneurship broadly and innovation within Jewish life is not an easy task. To help move this endeavor forward, in

What is an "innovation ecosystem"?

Although the use of the terms "ecosystem" and "innovation ecosystem" to describe Jewish organizational dynamics are relatively recent, the concept of a "system of innovation" has been circulating in the global world of business for more than two decades. The application of biological and ecological metaphors to economic systems dates to the mid-1990s, and the term "innovation ecosystem" originally appeared in the early 2000s.* This initial iteration of the ecosystem metaphor focused on the interactions between organizations and actors in the production and diffusion of new knowledge. Initially, innovation thought leaders focused on networks within specific nation-states, but that has changed with the increasing globalization of knowledge and capital. The phrase "innovation ecosystem" is now being used as a descriptor of a particular type of business sector, not simply as an abstract metaphor. In the business world, it is conceptual shorthand to describe the network of organizations, people, ideas, publics, media venues, organizational incubators, and funders, within a particular sector or subsector, that develops, promotes, and diffuses new ideas, technologies, products, and services.

This report takes as a starting point that the *entire* Jewish communal world, including cultural, educational, social justice, human services, advocacy and policy groups, consti-

tutes an *overall* Jewish ecosystem, of which the innovation ecosystem is a subsector. This is typical of ecosystems in the natural world where a multiplicity of systems are nested, overlapping or contiguous. The classic example of this is a rain forest, the totality of which is a complex ecosystem, but consists of subsystems known as the emergent level (a few trees which shoot up above the top of the forest), the canopy, the understory, and the forest floor. In the overall Jewish ecosystem there are number of subsystems, such as the Federation world, religious movements, camping, day schools, and community relations organizations, among others.

The innovation ecosystem is the particular part of the Jewish world which has identifiably distinct characteristics examined in the 2009 report published by Jumpstart, The Natan Fund and The Samuel Bronfman Foundation called *The Innovation Ecosystem: Emergence of a New Jewish Landscape*. This study describes the characteristics and challenges of innovation in Jewish life. The report explores the contours, trends, achievements, and implications of Jewish startups in order to encourage stakeholders (funders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and others) to support these organizations and promote their growth. The authors argue that the emerging Jewish innovation ecosystem is at the leading edge of the American Jewish

community's transition into the twenty-first century. They suggest that the characteristic concerns of this system reflect and revolve around the needs and aspirations of many American Jews today: more open and inclusive access to Judaism, meaningful Jewish engagement, and intimate niches where diverse Jews can 'find their way in' to Jewish life decoupled from denominational or particularistic Jewish labels.

The concept of a "Jewish innovation ecosystem" remains contested in the Jewish communal world, even as Jewish innovators have been quick to embrace the practices that flow from the metaphor. Because of the diffuse nature of the innovation sector, and the lack of a central coordinating authority, the knowledge and social capital generated within the sector frequently does not get leveraged to make the case for the importance of innovation in strengthening and revitalizing Jewish life.

The extraordinary breadth of innovative start-up organizations within the larger Jewish ecosystem is an important facet of contemporary Jewish life, one that warrants study, analysis, discussion, and support, all of which are the purposes of the think tank, the December consultation, and the focus of this paper. ■

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* See Lundvall 1985; Moskowitz 2007; Jumpstart et al 2009, 3. The first use of the term "Jewish ecosystem" appears to be Moskowitz 2007; however, she does not draw from the management literature, but rather works directly from the ecological metaphor.

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reform) of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries eagerly embraced the radical ideas of the day. Denominationalism, secular Jewish cultural production, and Zionism are but three dramatic changes resulting from the *Haskalah*. And those *maskilim* (Jewish innovators, reformers and radicals) were intent upon transforming their own Jewish communities of origin by introducing exciting new ideas about modernity, secularism, and social change.

Viewed in a broader Jewish historical context, Jewish innovators of today could be viewed as the twenty-first century equivalents to the *maskilim* of Europe. Today's Jewish innovators are the latest wave in a long history of energizing and creative moments, harkening back to a social movement of change and adaptation that began with Jews' eager embrace of modernity almost three hundred years ago.

Like the thinkers and activists of the *Haskalah*, twenty-first century Jewish innovators are multicultural translators working in two directions simultaneously. Today's *maskilim* use the tools, concepts, and frames of their own local/global Jewish communities, while also harnessing emerging ideas, philosophies, and technologies of the contemporary secular cultures in which they live. If Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) sought to translate the bible into German as a "vehicle for exposing traditional Jews to modern culture, and getting unobservant Jews to return to Judaism,"[1] then his contemporary counterpart might be Amichai Lau-Lavie. As founder of Storahtelling, Lau-Lavie re-interprets the Bible into contemporary theatrical

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1   See Efron et al 2009, 270-272.

December 2009, Jumpstart, JESNA's Lippman Kanfer Institute, and The Jewish Federations of North America convened a gathering, co-sponsored and hosted by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, that brought together key actors and analysts of Jewish innovation. Participants included entrepreneurs launching new initiatives in the community, support organizations that help the entrepreneurs, funders, and representatives from the federation system. The goals were to begin to map and create logic models of innovation in the Jewish ecosystem to better understand the needs and challenges emerging in the field.

Objectives

The initial consultation brought together a diverse group of thinkers, representative of the actors within the innovation ecosystem – social entrepreneurs, funders, established organizations dedicated to revitalization, and other supporters of Jewish communal reinvention – to begin to map out some of the needs and relationships within the sector and to identify key issues that will affect its success going forward. An additional goal was to create an intentional community of sector leaders to discuss these issues and consider the aggregate contribution they were making to re-defining Jewish life in the 21st century. These were the stated objectives of the consultation:

■ To develop a logic model that can guide planning and building the innovation sector in Jewish life.

■ To build relationships and foster collaboration among key thought leaders and activists working in and with the Jewish innovation sector.

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idioms and restores to the Torah Service the role of the *meturgeman*, the ancient translator and interpreter, who disappeared from synagogue life in the 10th century. Musicians such as Naomi Less, Matisyahu, Jewlia Eisenberg, and Josh Nelson create eclectic music that fuses and borrows freely from contemporary musical genres, while exploring deeply religious themes and concerns. Their predecessors and influences might include Baby Boomers such as Shlomo Carlebach and Debbie Friedman, Eastern European *chazzanut* (cantorial traditions), Broadway vaudevillians, Sephardic *baqashot,* and traditional *piyyutim*. The Jewish Farm School, Hazon, EKAR: Jewish Urban Farm and Garden, and many other new Jewish groups interweave environmentalism, sustainability, and agricultural education with traditional Jewish text study and community organizing. In other words, pastiche and hybridity, in the service of innovation, is not new in Jewish culture.

What is new, and worth exploring, is *from where* these modern-day *maskilim* borrow and integrate their sources, *how* they create interesting hybrid forms to explore contemporary Jewish identities and concerns, *why* they tend to be so passionate about Jewish community, and *how* they engage Jews today. Like previous *maskilim,* today's innovators borrow freely from, and are deeply influenced by, the cultures, ideas, and technologies of the contexts in which they live – both secular *and* Jewish.

There are some key differences between today and three centuries ago. A major difference between early *maskilim* and the Jewish innovators of today is the

The Backstory (cont.)

- To model a consultation process to address a range of issues affecting the long-term success of the innovation sector.

- To create a series of useful deliverables that describes the sector from various perspectives.

- To publish a reflective report on the gathering assessing its content and outcomes.

Method

The consultation took the form of a series of moderated discussions and exercises intended to illuminate the assumptions, challenges and needs of the sector as a whole. In particular, the organizers hoped to derive several tools that would help increase understanding of the sector, and help innovators and supporters of innovation think more strategically about their work.

After a number of discussions among the organizers, it was decided that the meeting would focus on deriving a logic model for the sector and a "map" of the innovation ecosystem, identifying the critical processes and relationships through which key actors, together with additional interventions, can combine to play a significant positive role in the Jewish community of the future. The hope was that by clearly identifying the preconditions and pathways for maximizing the impact of the innovation sector (i.e., what is needed for it to succeed), this logic model could guide the development of an investment strategy in and for that sector that can continue to strengthen it over the coming years.

Dr. Caryn Aviv was engaged as rapporteur for the consultation and was tasked with writing a report that details both the process and content of

recognition of *interdependence* between innovators and the broader, more established Jewish community. Modern-day *maskilim* and "traditionalist" Jewish organizations are interdependent on each other in terms of their own self-definitions, their need to establish legitimacy among stakeholders and constituents, their need to form strategic partnerships out of self-interest, and their shared desire to offer meaning and relevance to the (Jewish) world.

For example, the first modern wave of innovation in Western Europe had few support organizations to help the innovators. Today, there is a whole "support system" of innovation incubators, funders, and mentors who want to help Jewish innovators conceptualize, implement, and replicate their work to maximize their impact. Unlike today, many Jewish communal organizations and leaders at the time of the original *maskilim* did not think they needed to change, nor did they particularly want to. Today, "traditional" Jewish organizations (like Federations) have come to recognize that they *need* to change if they want to remain relevant to large swaths of Jews. Today's Jewish organizational "traditionalists" (rabbis, synagogues, Federation officials, donors and funders) recognize that they need to "do things differently," and seek new ways of doing so, even if that transformational change might be slow, challenging, risky, uncertain, and incremental. Often these "traditionalists" want to partner with, and in some cases, fund or otherwise sponsor, specific innovative projects that make both good business sense and meet their mission. For example, the Kavannah

Garden in Toronto is housed on the campus of the Jewish Federation and brings to it more (primarily young) Jews who would otherwise not think to hang out at the Federation campus. Rather than encountering deep resistance and hostility to emerging, innovative ideas and leaders, established Jewish communities around the world are asking how they can incorporate and facilitate the growth of this trend in Jewish life.

The Emerging Paradigm for Jewish Innovation

Across the world of Jewish organizing and organizations, innovation is taking root as a powerful engine for change, renewal, and creativity. The February 2010 issue of *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility* included more than fifteen articles by and about Jewish innovators, thinkers, and activists who are experimenting with new forms of community-building, education, programming, and non-profit organizing. The Joshua Venture Group, an investment program in innovative ideas and emerging leaders in the Jewish world, was flooded with 131 applications for its most recent round of funding and technical support.[2] Bikkurim: An Incubator for New Jewish Ideas, which houses, nurtures and helps launch innovative Jewish start-ups in New York City, had 50% more applications in 2010 than in any year past.[3]

Jewish innovation is often difficult to define. The impact of innovation can be extremely powerful, but at the same time it's hard to predict or quantify. Debates about what constitutes or qualifies as "innovation" sometimes provoke anxiety or lead to false dichotomies between what is innovative and what is "established."

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2   Joshua Venture Group 2010.
3   Personal communication with Nina Bruder, June 14, 2010.

Proponents of Jewish innovation argue that new forms of creative, spiritual, and artistic opportunities are in fact vital to Judaism's future. Alternatively, and more prosaically, is Jewish innovation simply an emerging industry unto itself, a set of responses to current circumstances and strategic business opportunities with its own set of economic interests at stake?

In the end, innovation is often simply defined by what it is decidedly *not* – the patterns and practices of the current Jewish communal "establishment." Many Jewish innovators have been influenced by or are products of Jewish federations, synagogues, Hillels, day schools, summer camps, and other mainstays of the Jewish communal world. Many, but not all, leaders of Jewish startups describe themselves and their work (sometimes defiantly) either as *alternatives* to these traditional organizations, or (less frequently, at least in public) in opposition to, or as an antidote to, these institutions. Others take a more explicitly cooperative approach to framing Jewish innovation, arguing that their ideas and organizations expand the range of options for participation Jewish life, often through strategic partnerships and collaborations with established Jewish institutions. Still others seek to provide opportunities to grow and nourish emerging leaders who hope to take on important future roles and responsibilities within the larger Jewish community. This means that both the success and failure of individual projects make a meaningful contribution to Jewish life. "For the groups that make it, it's wildly empowering and they grow," according to Bikkurim's Nina Bruder. "For the groups that don't make it, there is still a sense of ownership – they don't automatically walk away from the Jewish community. There's a sense of 'I can try this, I have some opportunity here to pursue my idea.' It's about strengthening the sense of Jewish identity and that Jewish life and community have meaning for them."

There is little agreement on how to identify the characteristics or parameters of Jewish innovation, nor is there consensus about who (individuals and organizations) belongs to the field of innovators. That in itself reflects the dynamism of the field. But it also poses a challenge. If there isn't broad agreement about what constitutes Jewish innovation, then how can people agree on whether and why it might be necessary to support and fund, to develop and grow the field? To be fair, the current wave of Jewish innovation itself is only about a decade old and these disagreements may just be a natural and healthy debate within a nascent field.

These are some of the issues explored by a group of Jewish leaders who met in Toronto in December 2009 to discuss a research and learning agenda surrounding Jewish innovation.

Some argue that a lack of clarity about the nature and parameters of Jewish innovation adversely impacts innovators' ability to grow and enlist support for their organizations. Advocates for building the field of Jewish innovation (including the publishers of this report) believe that innovators need conceptual tools, maps, and shared language to provide coherence and offer opportunities for scaling up successful creative ideas. The proponents of clarification and coherence in (and for) the field argue that without systematic thinking about innovation, it is difficult to ensure that innovation has a sustained positive impact on Jewish life. In this view, the Jewish world needs to invest in innovation pro-actively so that the maximum number

of people can benefit from innovators' ideas and energy. The extension of this argument is the fear that because the pace of change is unfolding so rapidly, people will have moved on and won't necessarily see a need or have a desire to participate in the Jewish community by the time the Jewish world decides collectively to adopt innovative practices. It should be noted that not everyone shares this concern that the innovation sector be developed in a systematic way. A number of people argue that there is no need for a special focus on innovation for its own sake. In this framing, it's the responsibility of individual organizations or specific sectors (education, spirituality, etc.) to seek their own advancement and renewal, without any special regard for the broader innovation field.

Core questions, insights and challenges facing stakeholders and innovators in Jewish life today

What is meant by the term "Jewish innovation"? Is Jewish innovation, about people, organizations, ideas, vision, form, content, outcomes, impact, or all of the above?

Many people don't agree about the "unit of analysis" when they talk about Jewish innovation. Is "innovation" defined by a specific set of values or content (e.g., promoting diverse forms of Jewish expression), or is it simply anything that is new? Should the focus be primarily on innovative ideas (regardless of who champions them), on particular practices, on up-and-coming superstar leaders, or on specific start-up organizations? Does it matter whether an innovation actually "works," or are certain ideas valuable in their own right, even if their implementation remains flawed?

The Backstory (cont.)

the consultation, as well as contextualizing it within the framework of social innovation and Jewish communal evolution. Our hope is that it will both clarify the discussion and propel the conversation forward.

As this report and Dr. Aviv's analysis show, there were some obstacles to achieving the stated objectives of the meeting, but the discussion that emerged was fruitful, passionate and illuminating.

Community Development

The gathering was a combination of private and public deliberations. In addition to participating in the consultation, the group that assembled in Toronto engaged with local activists and others selected by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to explore ways in which the Jewish innovation sector in Toronto can be further advanced. This was especially important, as the Jewish community of Toronto has already demonstrated its commitment to fostering Jewish innovation and social entrepreneurship. During this public portion of the gathering participants engaged community leaders in a discussion of practical ways they can collaborate effectively to benefit the Toronto community.

Similar uncertainty emerges for those who want to understand what is needed to develop and encourage innovation in the Jewish world. Are we concerned primarily about the success of the innovators as potential future leaders, the innovations themselves, the organizations they launch, or the community as a whole, which the innovators and innovations seek to impact? At the December meeting, when asked to come up with specific examples of "needs to be met" for a logic model of the Jewish innovation sector, some participants expressed confusion. Sociologist Steven M. Cohen wondered if this was even possible: "I can see doing the logic model for any one organization, but for a whole system? What's the entity that is supposed to be encompassed by the logic model? What provision do we have for people and organizations that are defining themselves out of the domain – socially driven research – is it included? What's in and what's out, what's the provision for defining what's in and what's out? How does it all hang together? Will good research be an input that gets included in the field as important to the overall field?"

In other words, was the primary task to define the needs OF the innovators in the Jewish world, or to define the need FOR innovation in the Jewish world overall? Are innovators supposed to make a case for why their work is necessary (which would answer the "need-for" question)? Or, is the goal to establish a shared understanding of the needs and challenges that Jewish innovators face in doing their work successfully (the "needs-of" question)?

More broadly, what assumptions underlie the motivations for Jewish innovation? What guiding principles and perceptions drive Jewish innovators in the work they do? What emerged at the December

conference was a shared recognition of the need and desire to have both of those conversations (the need FOR innovation in that world and the needs OF the innovators and those supporting them), and to generate both lists of needs and assumptions at the same time.

What are the key roles, players and structures that form an ecosystem for Jewish innovation? What is the scope of the sector in question?

One of the products of the December 2009 conversation was a visual tool to "map" all the different players in the Jewish innovation sector, their functions, and their roles in relation to one another. The organizers presented this visual tool as a prompt to encourage participants to identify and discuss:

- where people/organizations locate themselves/ their work in the Jewish innovation sector;

- how they relate to other actors, organizations, and functions in the broader Jewish world;

- what people, organizations, or functions are missing in the visual tool participants created;

- what are the underlying values, concepts, and assumptions that either link or separate players in Jewish innovation.

This visual tool (see page 14) provided a useful way to think analytically at the macro level about the broader Jewish world, which includes both "established", and "emerging" organizations and ideas. There was widespread agreement among participants that the map demonstrated that there is significant innovation happening *within* and *across* the overall Jewish world that is important, interesting and worthy of discussion and analysis. The map provides a way to articulate roles, responsibilities, and needs of people in each domain of Jewish communal life. To locate

oneself "on the map" allowed participants to voice the different challenges and opportunities that exist in each niche of the innovation sector, and across the entire Jewish communal system as a whole. One important next step generated from this meeting is to descriptively and analytically outline all the ways that different actors, agencies, and programs interact with and influence others who are situated at various locations within the totality of Jewish life. In other words, what are the complex relationships and exchanges that occur throughout the system? Where are there conflicts and unmet needs?

Is the Jewish innovation ecosystem a market-driven response to changing needs and circumstances? Is it a sign of resistance to, or the decline of deliberate centralized planning and resource allocation?

Tied to the rapid pace of innovation and change in the Jewish world, there is an emerging (possibly generational and organizational) tension in Jewish life about the assumptions, language, and operational approaches that undergird how the Jewish community can and should work. The emergence of the Federation system roughly one hundred years ago responded to the needs of the times. Federations offered a way to centralize philanthropy, the prioritization of communal needs, and the coordinated allocation of resources to meet those needs. For the past one hundred years in the United States, Jewish communities have developed through a "planned economy" model of Federation and denominational movement financing as the primary drivers of Jewish life. A planned economy assumes (and sometimes imposes) some collective and shared assumptions about needs and goals. That kind of ideological conformity and expected fealty to a central-

ized authority has been perceived as irrelevant or too cumbersome to many of the leaders and organizations within the innovation sector. What is clear so far is that the work of Jewish innovators is much more flexible, market-driven, and individualistic than the planned economy models of federation- and denomination-based Jewish life.

Recently, the world of Jewish philanthropy has witnessed the strong emergence of family foundations, individual mega-donors, and pooled funds of individuals who want to participate more actively in philanthropic processes. These foundations, often called "boutique philanthropy," sometimes (but not always) have smaller boards, more streamlined grant application processes, and different or more narrowly focused programmatic areas than traditional Jewish Federations. Boutique philanthropies work both outside of and alongside traditional Jewish Federation campaigns to support Jewish community programs.[4] What is clear is that the rise of "boutique philanthropy" in the Jewish world in the past fifteen years has completely changed the paradigm for how individuals, families, and communities allocate their dollars. This shift has also spurred the development of an astonishing array of new programs and ideas in which people invest.

Innovative changes and ideas in both the Jewish funding and programmatic worlds raise the question and challenge of whether a planned, centralized Jewish economy still fits current realities and needs. One of the participants sees the current Jewish landscape as an exciting interplay between unmanaged innovation, which can appear messy, and the continuing need for institutional planning and support, which is necessary for broad transformation.

4   See Moses and Solomon 2009.

The Jewish world looks increasingly diverse, and not everyone shares the same assumptions about Jewish identity, life and culture. The innovation bubbling up within the wider Jewish ecosystem is both a response to, and a product of, the need to create more opportunities to connect to Jewish life.

If boutique philanthropy and proliferation of startups have become important drivers of Jewish innovation, several questions emerge:

- What does this changed landscape mean for the future of Federation and movement-based planned economies?

- Is a planned economy approach on the decline towards obsolescence? Or is there an emerging hybrid economy that harnesses the creativity of the innovation ecosystem in partnership with the reach and influence of the established Jewish world?

- If planned economy models and actors want to remain relevant *and* involved in the Jewish innovation ecosystem, then what are the most meaningful and effective ways to do so?

- How might boutique philanthropists and Jewish innovators work with Federations in mutually beneficial partnerships, how could those partnerships support innovation, and what would those partnerships look like?

What are the best or most useful tools to evaluate impact in the Jewish innovation ecosystem? Are logic models the gold standard?

Logic models were first developed in the early 1970s based on engineering models that rely on quantifiable inputs and outputs. Logic models provide a managerial tool for program planning and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. Logic models often ask

The Backstory (cont.)

Process

The consultation began on the morning of December 15, 2009 at the new Lipa Green Centre on the Toronto Federation's Sherman campus. Following a breakfast and introduction of the consultation's purpose and convenors, participants dove right into the explanation of logic models and how the concept would be used during the consultation. Participants had completed a pre-meeting online survey which asked them to identify pertinent information about their organizations, including need and vision statements. The assembled results were distributed to participants in advance, so after a brief review of the survey results the group was asked to step back from their individual or organizational roles and identify key needs and visions that were common to the entire sector. Participants then broke into small groups to begin the first step of filling out the logic model worksheet by enumerating key outcomes and inputs for Jewish innovation broadly. The logic model process used an "outside/in" strategy of first identifying starting conditions (needs) and results (vision) and then filling in the center, which focused on the activities and outputs needed to move from the needs to the visions. There was a degree of frustration with both the usefulness and applicability of the logic model as the group worked its way through the exercise, which ultimately led to some of the most interesting exchanges of the consultation, detailed in Dr. Aviv's analysis.

people to think and plan by reverse engineering – starting from the ultimate outcomes or desired results in order to devise the best path to achieve those results.

But how can Jewish innovators and their supporters create a logic model (based on those engineering models that rely on quantifiable inputs and outputs), when so much of what Jewish innovators AND Jewish traditionalists do is largely unquantifiable, focused on producing "meaning" and "engagement," and appears qualitatively slippery? Is creating a logic model for the entire innovation ecosystem necessary, or is it a more useful tool for an individual organization to strategically plan its work? What provision is there for people and organizations that define themselves as clearly influencing innovation but not driving it (e.g., researchers and analysts)? How do all of the pieces that might go into a logic model for an entire sector of the larger ecosystem hang together?

At the gathering, Jonathan Woocher of JESNA suggested that there is a relationship, but not complete congruence, between what a logic model might look like for one particular organization, and a logic model for the Jewish ecosystem as a whole. Some of the confusion at this point in the think discussion echoed the confusion about the need FOR innovation and the needs OF the overall Jewish ecosystem. For example, Bikkurim's logic model for an innovation incubator might differ from Romemu's logic model for an emergent spiritual community, but an overall logic model for the sector would ideally incorporate the needs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of both organizations. Participants also pointed out that using a logic model in one context could create a domino effect in another context. As Bikkurim's Nina Bruder put it, "The whole innovation sector is an input for the larger Jewish community."

The key to thinking about innovation and logic models is the ability to toggle back and forth between individual organizational outcomes and the macro level of the Jewish innovation sector's overall outcomes. This proved to be a difficult task, as people often found it challenging to think on the macro level about the innovation ecosystem, rather than from their own vantage points within the system.

Participants generally agreed that a logic model of the sector could be quite useful for some players in this economy (particularly funders). But there also was concern that a systemic logic model, where the mapping of inputs/outputs is generated by organizationally specific needs, might not apply sector-wide, particularly for the entrepreneurs working in the system. Logic models are a static, decidedly linear and somewhat inadequate way to map the overall sector because they don't account for the messy, unpredictable, and non-linear complexities of real life. If logic models and theories of change are recognized as limited in scope and value, then innovative organizations and their funders need other ways to map goals, vision, activities and outcomes. As Assaf Weisz, the Executive Director of Young Social Entrepreneurs of Canada, framed it: "When do we know when something is successful, what does that look like? Outcomes are '*tachlis*' [practical], vision is aspirational."

A consensus emerged from this conference: the Jewish innovation sector would benefit from new tools, beyond logic models, to help plan, assess and evaluate

During lunch participants were invited to help fill in a wall sized diagram of the "innovation pipeline" through which new initiatives move from concept to implementation. A ten-foot piece of butcher paper and colored markers were provided. The empty pipeline diagram contained a list of organizational stages from left to right. They were: Idea, Pilot, Startup, Venture, Going Concern, and Community Institution. Participants were instructed to locate their organization on the pipeline and to annotate the diagram to reflect the challenges and opportunities at each stage, with a special eye towards identifying gaps in the pipeline of support for growing organizations.

After lunch the participants worked together on the "inside" pieces of the logic model. The group then met to refine and revisit the information collected thus far, and it was at this point that a discussion ensued on the

Logic Model Description/Definition

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
resources such as money, labor, and social/knowledge capital	programs and processes	immediate outputs of the work that are delivered to constituents	results that are the long-term transformation(s) the process is intended to achieve

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the work of the innovation sector. This could help innovative organizations strengthen their work as well as help funders make funding decisions. The development of new tools to engage these questions was beyond the scope of the meeting. But one clear outcome of the meeting is that coming up with new ways to capture and map the creativity, flexibility, vitality, and dynamism of the Jewish innovation sector using different visual, conceptual, and analytic tools is a challenge and opportunity.

What is the best way to assess and evaluate Jewish innovation so that people can replicate and learn from it?

Business metrics are clear: balance sheets, profits and losses. In the Jewish world the metrics get fuzzy and unquantifiable quickly because they are largely concerned with the making of "meaning": meaningful Jewish religious/spiritual experiences, meaningful pathways to involvement in Jewish life, meaningful encounters with other Jews, a meaningful revival of Jewish life in an age of overwhelming choice and

applicability of logic models to sector-wide strategies. The discussion then moved on to address the roles of various actors within the innovation ecosystem, based partially on the "Social Entrepreneurship and Marketplace Map."[i] This map is a modified version of a map of London's Underground, which identifies key "stops" on the social entrepreneurship circuit as: Social Entrepreneurs, Funders, Enablers, Influencers, Media, Public and Education. Another large butcher paper version was posted on a wall and participants were encouraged to make a version of the Tube map modified for the Jewish world, identifying the key actors at each Tube stop. The evening was given over to candle-lighting for Chanukah, a social dinner, networking, and sharing of current activities and issues.

Following the afternoon discussion, and in response to feedback from some participants, the organizers convened to consider changing the schedule for the following day. It was decided to scrap the original plan to

Map of Jewish Ecosystem

i   Finlayson et al 2009.
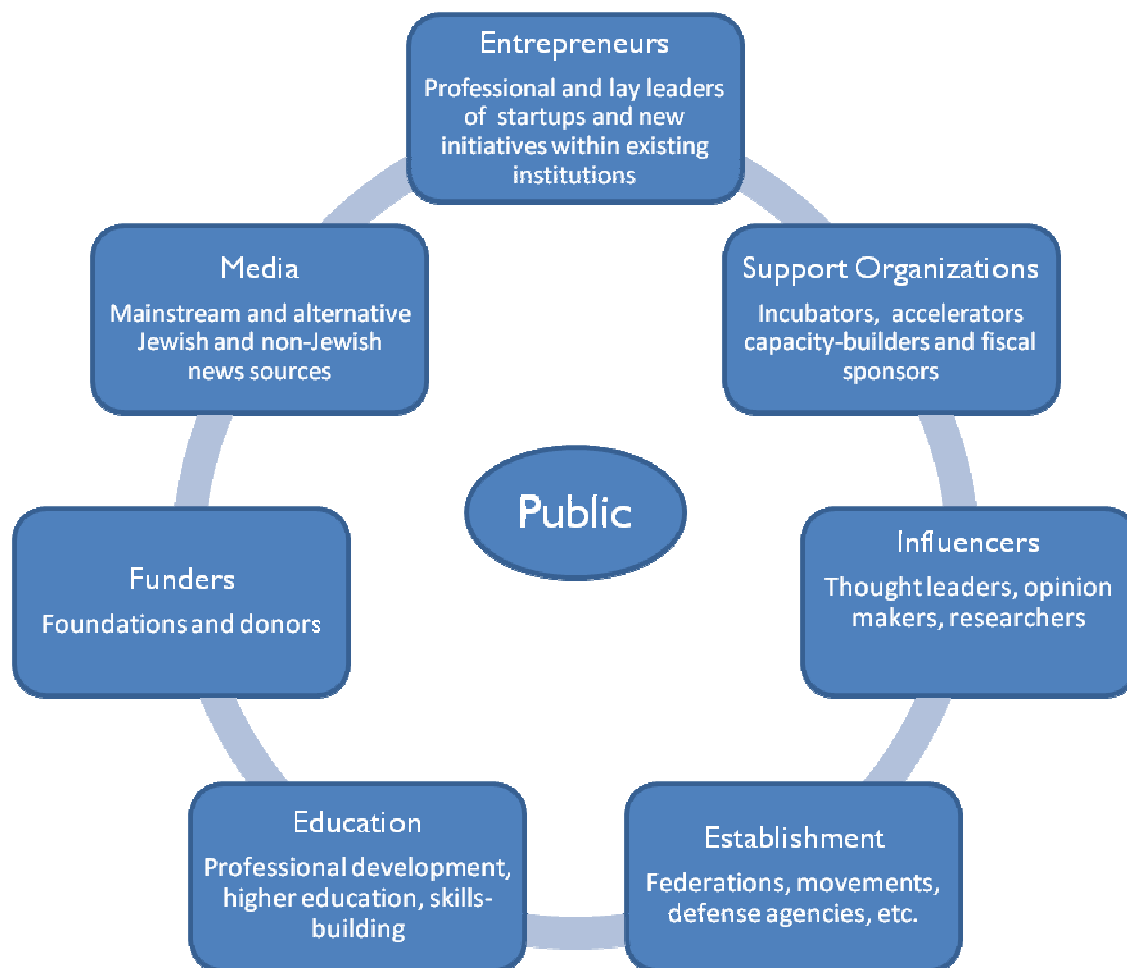
continue to focus on the logic model, since the modeling process elicited skepticism and even some consternation from many in the group, and instead to create an exercise that would focus on surfacing important next steps for the sector and the think tank.

The next morning began with a briefing and discussion with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto professional and lay leadership about innovation and social entrepreneurship. Several consultation participants and local entrepreners were on a moderated panel that focused on the rationales for and issues involved in supporting innovative projects from both a community and funder perspective, with a question and answer session following.

Following the discussion, the consultation participants reconvened in a World Cafe format in which small groups of randomly assigned partici-pants were asked to brainstorm on what needs to be known and what needs to be done to most effectively support the innovation sector from a variety of perspectives. Tables were set up to represent the various stops on the Tube map: Entrepreneurs, Support Organizations, Funders, Established Organizations, and Influencers. Each group rotated through the tables and produced a list of "Need to Know" and "Need to Do" topics from the perspective of each table's "tube stop." A report back allowed the hosts of each table to briefly summarize what they heard from the groups that passed through their stations.

After a brief wrap-up the consultation officially concluded, and the participants spent the afternoon on site visits to MaRS Discovery District and the Centre for Social Innovation, two of Toronto's leading centers supporting scientific and social creativity.

Participants

The depth and breadth of the group of participants were key to the success of the conference. The sector depends on the active engagement of recognized thought leaders across the various segments of the organized Jewish community: philanthropists and foundation leaders; organizational development and capacity-building experts, researchers and thought leaders; and of course representative innovators them-selves. Participation was by invitation only from a guest list developed by the organizers. Every attempt was made to include a variety of view-points, skill sets and roles in order to assure the conversation was reflective of the innovation ecosystem as a whole. ∎

competition in the secular marketplace of ideas, and other intangibles.

This challenge in defining metrics for Jewish innovation compounds the difficulties in understanding and assessing success in the Jewish innovation world, especially for funders, who are by and large relatively risk-averse. Marcella Kanfer Rolnick of the Lippman Kanfer Family Foundation framed risk this way: "As a funder and investor you have to have self knowledge: what's your risk tolerance and your risk profile? We made a seed investment in a new program. I coached an individual who did not have a lot of experience in the Jewish community, who wasn't the right person at the right time, but it was a good idea. To me, it was a smart failure because we were okay with the $10,000 that didn't pan out, because we learned from the experience. We're funders who tolerate the ambiguity knowing that it might not always work." However, that kind of tolerance and even embrace of failure as a learning tool may not be the norm in the Jewish philanthropic world.

What is the best way to identify and develop strong, effective, and dynamic leadership in this emerging field of innovation?

Late in the first day of the meeting, after eight hours of work, participants were asked to step back and think about where the Jewish ecosystem sector is heading. At one point, out of exasperation from what he perceived as a paralysis of decision making in the room, Gary Wexler of Passion Marketing pointedly addressed the consultation's organizers and said, "I want to talk about being undemocratic. You are entrepreneurs who have a vision for something. You are riveted on that vision. Accomplishing that vision does not always lend itself to being democratic and politically correct. You must be passionate, committed and able to make decisions in order to move forward. Right now there is so much democracy and political correctness here in this room that it's paralyzing your ability to make decisions and move forward. Just say what you think and what you want to see in the creation of the discipline and the vision of the sector! There's an abdication of leadership in this room. Lead already!" People burst into laughter and it broke the tension and the deadlock in the room.

Following Wexler's challenge, Jumpstart's Shawn Landres offered both a personal and an organizational response. Earlier in the conversation, Daniel Libenson of the University of Chicago Hillel had challenged the innovation sector to help make a compelling argument for Judaism and Jewish life in the twenty-first century, to make the case for Judaism's global significance beyond the Jewish people. Landres presented the organizers' three long-term goals for a Jewish innovation learning agenda in the context of Libenson's challenge:

- **Translation** – what's happening outside the Jewish world that Jewish innovators need to know?

- **Distillation** – what's happening in the Jewish innovation ecosystem that can be cultivated for teaching beyond the Jewish community?

- **Provocation** – what are the big, new, and radical ideas and questions that emerge from the Jewish innovation conversation to challenge existing assumptions and paradigms?

Ultimately, Landres concluded, the point of this effort would be not simply to transform Judaism for the twenty-first century but to ensure its continuing global significance, for the Jewish people and for the world.

Jewish innovation for its own sake was pointless, he said; the question was whether Jewish innovation would help make Judaism matter.

Wexler's challenge and Landres's response provoked an important question: Who gets anointed (or anoints themselves) as a leader in this arena of Jewish innovation? What are the most effective ways to *lead successfully* in Jewish innovation circles? These questions echo the insight about planned vs. market-driven Jewish communal economies. Who is driving the metaphorical "leadership bus" in the Jewish innovation ecosystem when the ecosystem itself is globally diffuse, decentralized, and driven by democratic and progressive impulses? Is it possible to expect or demand that Jewish innovators cooperate and collaborate (on projects, funding, marketing, etc.)? Or are assertive, individualistic leadership styles and competitive strategies more effective ways to do business in this part of the Jewish world?

At the heart of this debate is the question about how people harness, acquire, and use power to exercise leadership. Hal Lewis, in his book *From Sanctuary to Boardroom: A Jewish Approach to Leadership*, uses traditional Jewish sources to think about historical and contemporary approaches to Jewish leadership and power. Lewis argues, not surprisingly, that Jews historically express ambivalence towards the unbridled use of power, and that a collaborative power-sharing system, while not necessarily democratic, is reflected in both medieval Jewish *kehilot* (communities) and in contemporary Jewish organizational cultures, like Federations. It must be noted, however, that leadership and power are not the same as entrepreneurship. Charismatic and dynamic leadership is important, but so is humility, compassion, and a willingness to

collaborate by "listening to the people." "What we're looking at Jewishly are what are the gaps and the needs that we might not see ourselves – we listen," offered Marcella Kanfer Rolnick. We have some core areas: Jewish learning and engagement, Jewish *tikkun olam* (the Jewish people repairing the world for other peoples), accelerating the effectiveness of Jewish leaders. [We're] making sure there's robustness in where we're investing. Where is the market space that is not yet served? It takes time – 5-10 years to really get going and plant roots. So a lot of our funding investors only want to give for a year, or 3 years, but we want to discover the talent and then bring in other investors, we're not going to get out when the going is good, we want to develop things over time. We want to evaluate the return on our investment."

An important strand of thought about innovation and leadership draws on theories of social networks. In this framework, collaborations of people and organizations work to connect previously unlinked ideas and technologies, in order to address and solve emerging and/or new problems. Andrew Hargadon's *How Breakthroughs Happen: The Surprising Truth about How Companies Innovate*, argues forcefully against the myth of the "lone genius." Like other social science theories that rebut the cult of heroic individualism and the unbridled use of power, Hargadon demonstrates, through a series of case study examples, how innovative changes are a reflection of *collaborative* social interaction among coworkers. Hargadon suggests that innovation occurs when people, objects, and ideas from across diverse social and cultural worlds come together and recombine ideas in new ways. This approach to understanding and supporting innovation seems inherently appealing when applied to the context of the

Haskalah 2.0 cont.

Jewish world.

How can people working within the Jewish innovation ecosystem connect with each other and identify ways to work together on creative projects and collaborations?

Different players in the Jewish innovation sector have different needs for knowledge, planning, action, and evaluation. But there is an emerging consensus: *knowing* who those players are, what their different needs are, and what opportunities exist across the different nodes of the innovation ecosystem, might significantly help key players to conduct and coordinate their work more successfully, strategically, and efficiently. However, despite the stated and perceived need for connection and collaboration, an undeniable tension exists in the innovation ecosystem. In a sector where dollars, air time, and staff time are constrained, there is a real sense that an organization's best potential collaborators are also its closest competition for a small slice of the communal funding pie.

Participants from across the sector said that they want to network with others to develop collaborative and strategic relationships, expand their social networks, harness supporters, and create relationships they can then tap into for decision-making, feedback and advice. They said they wanted more time, space, and opportunities to share information, knowledge and strategies with one another. Currently, there is no one educational program or international conference for various players within the Jewish communal world who are interested in innovation. The Jewish Funders Network holds an annual conference for philanthropists, but there is no corollary meeting or conference for other actors working on innovation in Jewish life to come together and share ideas, present their work, and meet others. Thus one potential next step generated

from this think tank consultation is a conference or festival, open to anyone working in the Jewish world and invested in learning, sharing, and collaborating on innovative ideas in Jewish life.

Next Steps to Support Jewish Innovation

The questions that emerged from the discussions are, paradoxically, indicators of both opportunity and challenge. The convenors think the debate generated amongst participants indicates a healthy and thriving Jewish community where people are deeply passionate about what they do, what they believe in, and why they're working so hard to contribute meaningfully to Jewish life. Rebecca Guber of the Six Points Fellowship for Emerging Artists observed that "we see a future where young Jews around the world connect to Jewish life through doorways that are open to them. People connect to their Jewish identity through Jewish life, not necessarily through institutions, but by how they define Jewish life."

The process of surfacing, articulating and understanding the key questions and gaps in knowledge for this field is also a sign of a healthy Jewish innovation ecosystem. However, the questions raised here also point to current and future challenges. What are the issues and core practices that innovation support organizations need to know about and need to do to achieve success in their role? What do innovators themselves, especially those who are mentored by such organizations, need to know and need to do? What insights from the wider innovation community might funders need in order to maximize their grantmaking efforts? How else might the map be enlarged and the conversation widened? As Eli Malinsky from Toronto's Centre for Social Innovation wondered, "Is there a group of people around the table (and not here today) who have a stake in these kinds of conversations? Is there a research agenda to push the field forward and improve it? How can we get the ideas out into the

community to increase effectiveness and viability?" Some of those challenges and next steps include:

- Developing a shared vocabulary to talk about and enact this work successfully. This includes greater consensus about how to support emerging and established innovators and entrepreneurs.

- Creating a usable analysis of how the broader Jewish ecosystem works, where there is conflict, unmet need, exchanges and relationships among different actors. There is a continued need for descriptive and analytic mapping of existing and emerging networks and relationships in the Jewish innovation ecosystem, how actors work with one another, and how people can capitalize on the synergies among different players in that system.

- Compiling innovators' and innovation stakeholders' assumptions about the Jewish world that drive their work – this important element of organization building (along with vision statements and mission statements) would be useful for potential funders, partners, and constituents.

- Creating a cross-communal Jewish innovation conference that would bring actors across the Jewish innovation sector together to share ideas, learn from one another and build relationships.

- Discovering new tools and metrics—beyond logic models—to plan and measure successful innovation.

- Developing standardized practices, such as grant applications, evaluations, and communication channels to streamline processes, eliminate duplication, and save time for organizations to maximize their impact and focus on providing programs.

- Building tools for funders to assess degrees of risk tolerance, with an acknowledgment that some amount of failure is part of that equation. This includes finding ways to assess the learning value in failure and an ability to measure unintended positive consequences.

- Finding opportunities for young innovative organizations to grow, including scaling, replicating, and integrating their work with that of established organizations.

This analysis has taken, as a starting point, the assumption that the world of Jewish non-profits constitutes a Jewish ecosystem *overall*. The extraordinary breadth of innovative start-ups within this larger ecosystem is an important facet of contemporary Jewish life, one that warrants study, discussion, and support.

When the early *maskilim* circulated their ideas and visions of Jewish life, they often were met with open hostility and vociferous resistance. Some Jewish innovators and radicals left organized Jewish communities altogether, not only because they could (often for the first time), but because their ideas and advocacy for change were unwelcome. Not so today. The contemporary Jewish and secular worlds, like a few centuries ago, offer unprecedented opportunities for creativity, renewal, and fusion. We are witnessing yet another historical moment of imaginative, resourceful, and inventive change in Jewish life.

Jewish innovation might initially seem scary, threatening, confusing, or dangerous to some observers. But radical, daring, provocative approaches allow us to re-imagine what seems tired, irrelevant, dull or taken for granted. The conveners of the December 2009 consultation want to see a sustained commitment to the growth and evolution of the Jewish innovation ecosystem. The hope is that more people can engage with and benefit from the exciting energy and ideas that have profoundly re-invigorated what Jewish life looks like. The innovative spirit infusing Jewish life today can prompt us to re-imagine what might be possible – and meaningful – in the future. ∎

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Jumpstart

Jumpstart is working across the globe to empower a new generation of Jewish organizations that are providing unique and compelling gateways into Jewish life. Through hands-on help to Jewish innovators and catalyzing new approaches to building Jewish community, Jumpstart is both an entrepreneurial support system and research & development laboratory for the Jewish future.

Jewish Federations of North America

The Jewish Federations of North America represents 157 Jewish Federations & 400 independent Jewish communities. The Federation movement, collectively among the top 10 charities on the continent, protects and enhances the well-being of Jews worldwide through the values of tikkun olam (repairing the world), tzedakah (charity and social justice) and Torah (Jewish learning).

JESNA - The Lippman Kanfer Institute

The Lippman Kanfer Institute is an action-oriented think tank for innovation in Jewish learning and engagement. Its goal is to ensure that Jewish education remains relevant and effective in the challenging and rapidly changing environment of the 21st century. The Lippman Kanfer Institute brings new thinking to important issues and opportunities facing Jewish education, such as the limited and episodic nature of educational participation among many Jews; the need to build powerful synergies among multiple forms of education; and the untapped potential of technology, the arts, social action and other media for Jewish communication, self-expression and engagement.