



Global Day of Jewish Learning

Post Event Survey of Community Organizers

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Research Success Technologies



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Global Day of Jewish Learning was held on November 7, 2010 to mark the completion by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, renowned Jewish teacher and philosopher, of his 45 year long project of translating the Talmud.
- The goals of the Global Day were to unify the Jewish people around a shared culture of learning sacred texts, and to raise awareness of the Talmud through Rabbi Steinsaltz's historic achievement.
- 408 communities in 48 countries participated in the Global Day.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GLOBAL DAY

This evaluation found that the Global Day filled a unique niche, providing a platform that promotes global Jewish belonging and peoplehood through a focus on Jewish learning and Talmud.

Participating communities report the Global Day inspired their lay and professional leadership both by exposing them to other learners worldwide and by providing resources and support that promoted Jewish learning.

Respondents also report the Global Day was a unique forum that encouraged local collaboration across organizations and denominations.

THE RESEARCH

- A post-event Internet survey was e-mailed to 202 key contacts in sponsoring communities -- mostly in the United States and Canada* -- with whom Global Day staff had direct contact
- 64% began the survey, 52% completed it.

WHO PARTICIPATED?

- A diverse spectrum Jewish organizations and denominations organized Global Day events
- Participants came from all age groups
- There were approximately 600 events in 408 communities worldwide.

WHO REPORTS SUCCESS?

- 89% rated the Global Day as “very” or “moderately successful.” 48% stated that there is more interest in Jewish learning in their communities as a result of the Global Day.
- 47% of the survey respondents took part in the Global Day with the explicit motivation of “celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz’s work” or “to increase awareness of the Talmud.” Of these, 94% rated the day as “moderately” or “very” successful; and, 55% stated that there is more interest in Jewish learning in their communities as a result of the Global Day.

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- **Peoplehood**

71% participated in order to feel part of a world wide Jewish happening. Of these, 82% felt their expectations were met in this area to a “great extent.”

- **Jewish learning**

57% participated to foster a positive attitude to Jewish learning. Of these, 65% felt that their expectations were met in this area to a “great extent.”

- **Collaboration**

50% participated to bring Jews from diverse backgrounds together. Of these, 62% felt their expectations were met in this area to a “great extent.”

BENEFITS

Written feedback indicates that the Global Day ...

- connected participants to the global Jewish community
- provided a general boost for Jewish learning
- led to organizational collaborations that further Jewish learning
- proved that there is a market for text based Jewish learning, which community leaders often assume does not exist.

FUTURE INTEREST

- There is strong interest in continuing the Global Day
 - 62% want the Global Day to continue in the current format
 - 27% want the Global Day to continue in a different format.
- The 11% who do not want the Global Day to continue had poorly defined reasons for participation in the first place.
- Those who want the Global Day to continue in a different format are interested in educators visiting their community.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- The Global Day of Jewish Learning was held on November 7, 2010 to mark the completion by Rabbi Steinsaltz's 45 year long project of translating the Talmud.
- 408 communities in 48 countries participated in the Global Day.
 - Each community received curricular materials based on the teachings of a single volume of Talmud, tractate Ta'anit, focusing on a variety of topics with suggested models for implementing the day of learning.
 - Events were locally implemented and not under the purview and control of the Global Day organizers.
- The curriculum and facilitator's guide were distributed in four languages: English, Hebrew, Russian and Spanish.
- Global Day staff provided e-mail and telephone support and marketed the program. 54% of organizations learned about the Global Day through a direct communication from Global Day staff or an email from a Global Day partner.

THE GOALS OF THE GLOBAL DAY*

- **UNITY:** the Jewish people will come together on November 7th in the exploration and celebration of their shared culture, texts and history.
- **CELEBRATION:** We are celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz's completion of the Talmud and the sacred text that unites Jews from around the globe.
- **LEARNING:** the Day reminds us that – while we may be dispersed across the globe – we are bound together through our sacred sources and values.

* Taken from the Global Day mission statement

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What was the reaction to the Global Day of Jewish Learning?
- How did sponsoring communities benefit from the Day?
- What were the expectations of the organizations responsible for implementing the Global Day and were they met?
- To what extent did participants have an interest in Rabbi Steinsaltz's work and the Talmud? What was the impact of this interest on their Global Day participation?
- Is there interest and need for continuing the work begun by the Global Day for Jewish learning?

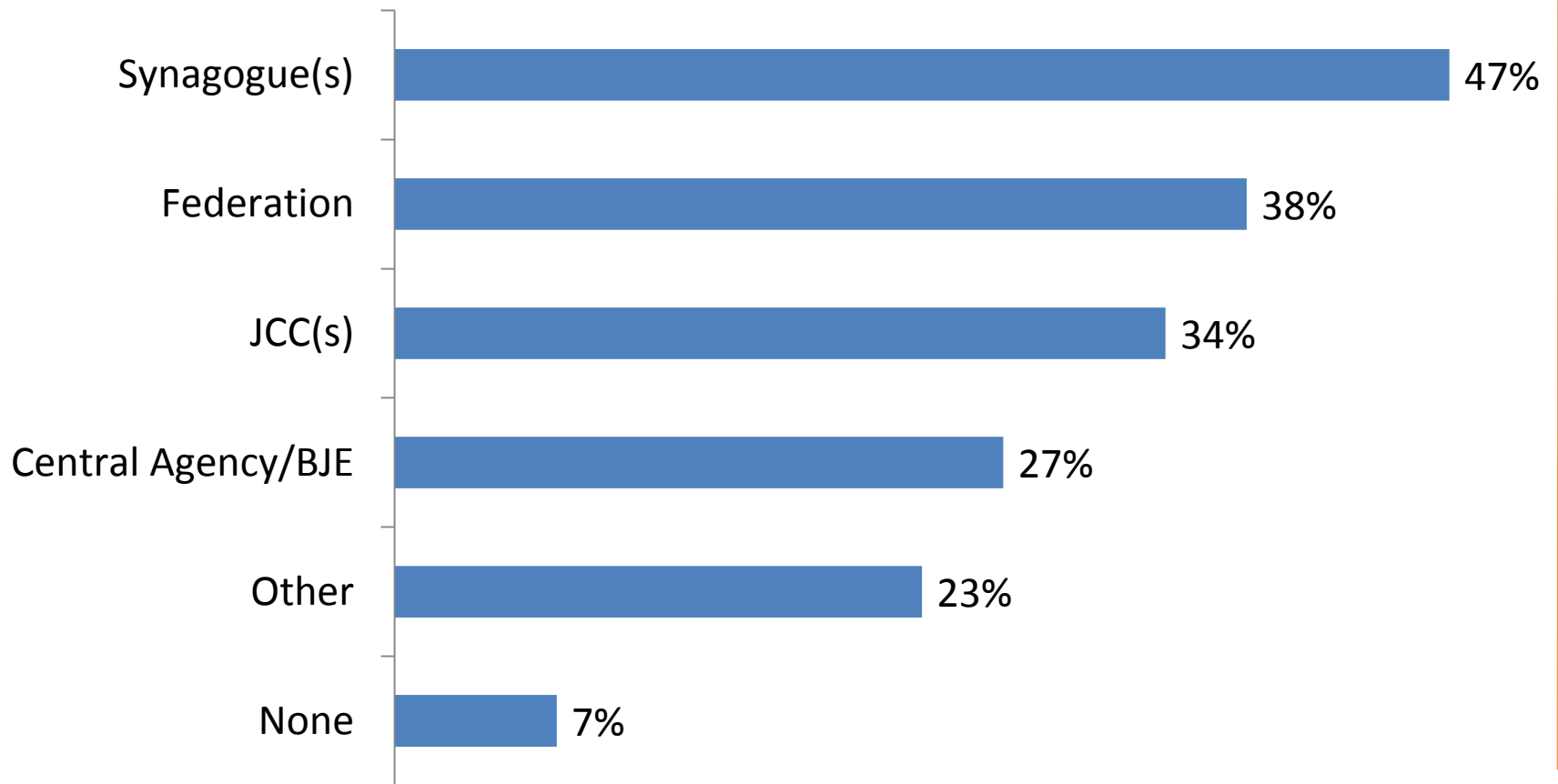
METHODOLOGY

- A post-event internet survey was e-mailed to 202 key contacts in sponsoring communities mostly in North America.*
- Each contact represented an organization directly responsible for implementing the Global Day.
- 64% began the survey, 52% completed.
- The survey was administered immediately after the Global Day with follow-up reminders over the course of November 2010.

* In addition approximately 200 communities worked through the Joint Distribution Committee and Rabbi Steinsaltz's Institute for Jewish Studies in the CIS.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GLOBAL DAY

Almost all North American Jewish communities have an organization which focuses on Jewish education. Only 7% of the organizations participating in the Global Day report no Jewish education organization/entity in their community.



Despite the widespread presence of local Jewish educational organizations, very few sponsor community wide events linking themselves to worldwide Jewry. Even rarer are text based education programs. By offering the opportunity to create programs based on Jewish peoplehood and Talmud study, the Global Day filled this void.

Major motivations for participation

Answer = "To a great extent"



These written responses elaborate on the survey findings that respondents were moved by being part of global Jewish study event.

“The vast majority of participants felt a great sense of belonging to the Jewish community in town and the Global Jewish community in general. The cheers of the participants when they saw the name of our community in the video emphasized their excitement and enthusiasm. We had a wonderful and elevating atmosphere. Many of them noted in their evaluation form that they hope to see future events similar to this one. The idea of connecting diverse Jewish communities around the world was a successful and uniting force.”

“I loved it, and so did our community! It was more than the sum of its parts -- a beautiful, heart- and mind opening conversation about prayer, exposure and learning about Talmud, a kind of wave of awakening about the difference between studying alone and studying in conversation with others, and a deep and surprising appreciation amongst us all about the long years we have been a community of study and inquiry together. Also, we are a small, rural community, and we don't always feel much in contact with the larger Jewish world. This experience helped us to feel very connected.”

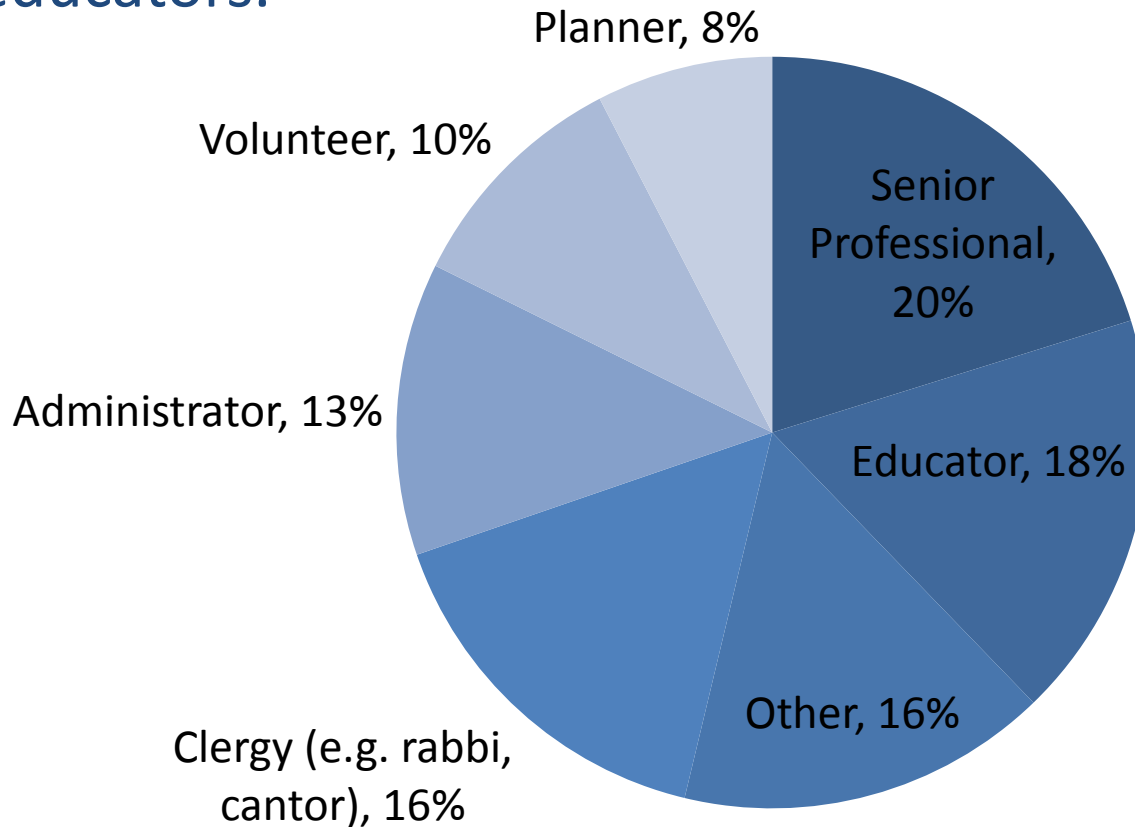
“Our community has been tossing around the idea of a Limmud program for a few years, and the response has been tepid, to say the least. Now that we've seen how people respond to programming - I think it will encourage our Board (at the central Jewish Education agency) to think harder about putting together a Limmud (adult Education) conference. Another example is the many institutions that are now clamoring for more programming and partnership with our Agency.”

“The Global Day has opened up the possibility of Talmud learning reaching the not religious & unaffiliated sections of our community. One third of the people who attended one of the 5 Shuls participating had never studied a page of Gemorrah before.”

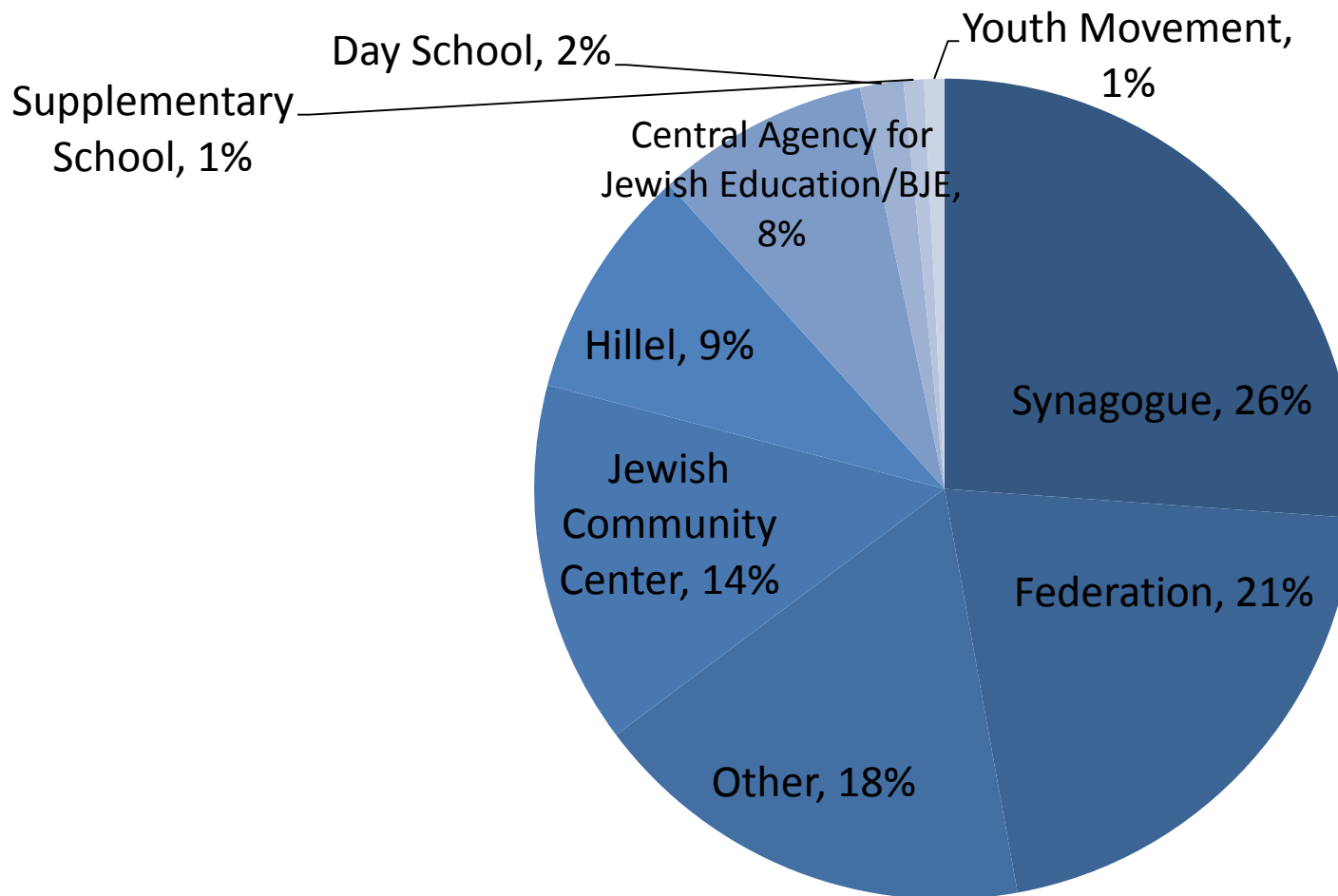
“Another way in which the Global Day will impact the community is that it was hopefully successful in lowering the barriers for less traditional students to enter and utilize the beit midrash.”

WHO ANSWERED THE SURVEY?

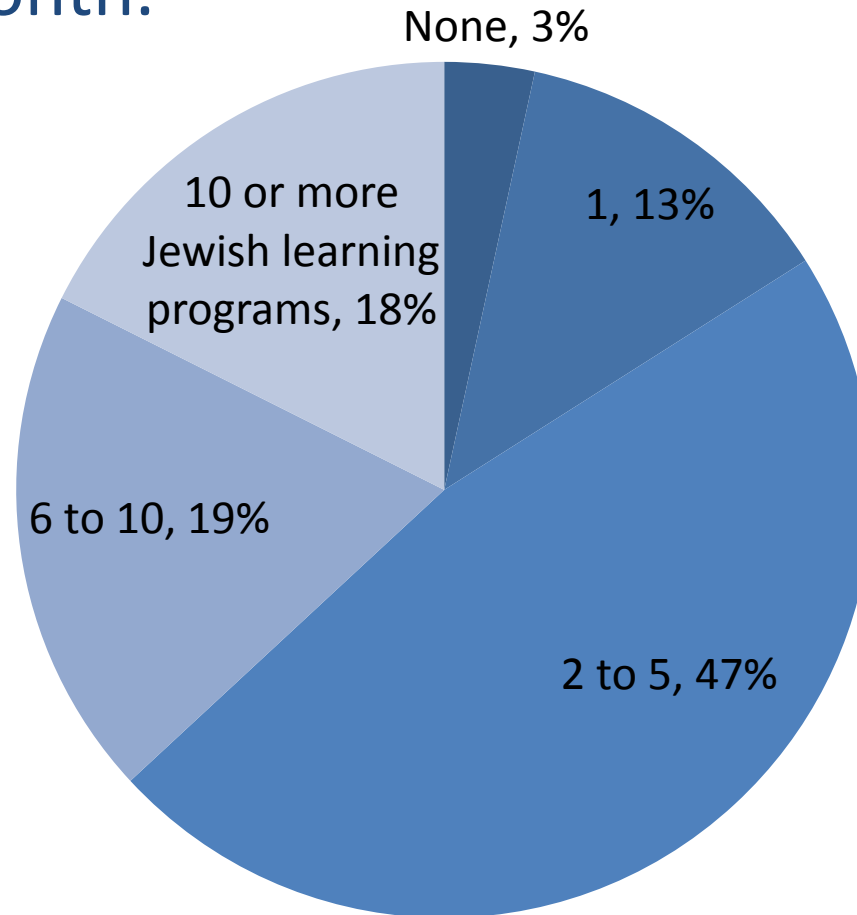
Respondents to the survey are their organization's point person (key contact) for the Global Day. As a group they occupy a full spectrum of professional and volunteer positions. 69% of key contacts devote at least 25% of their jobs to promoting Jewish learning. 11% are full time Jewish educators.



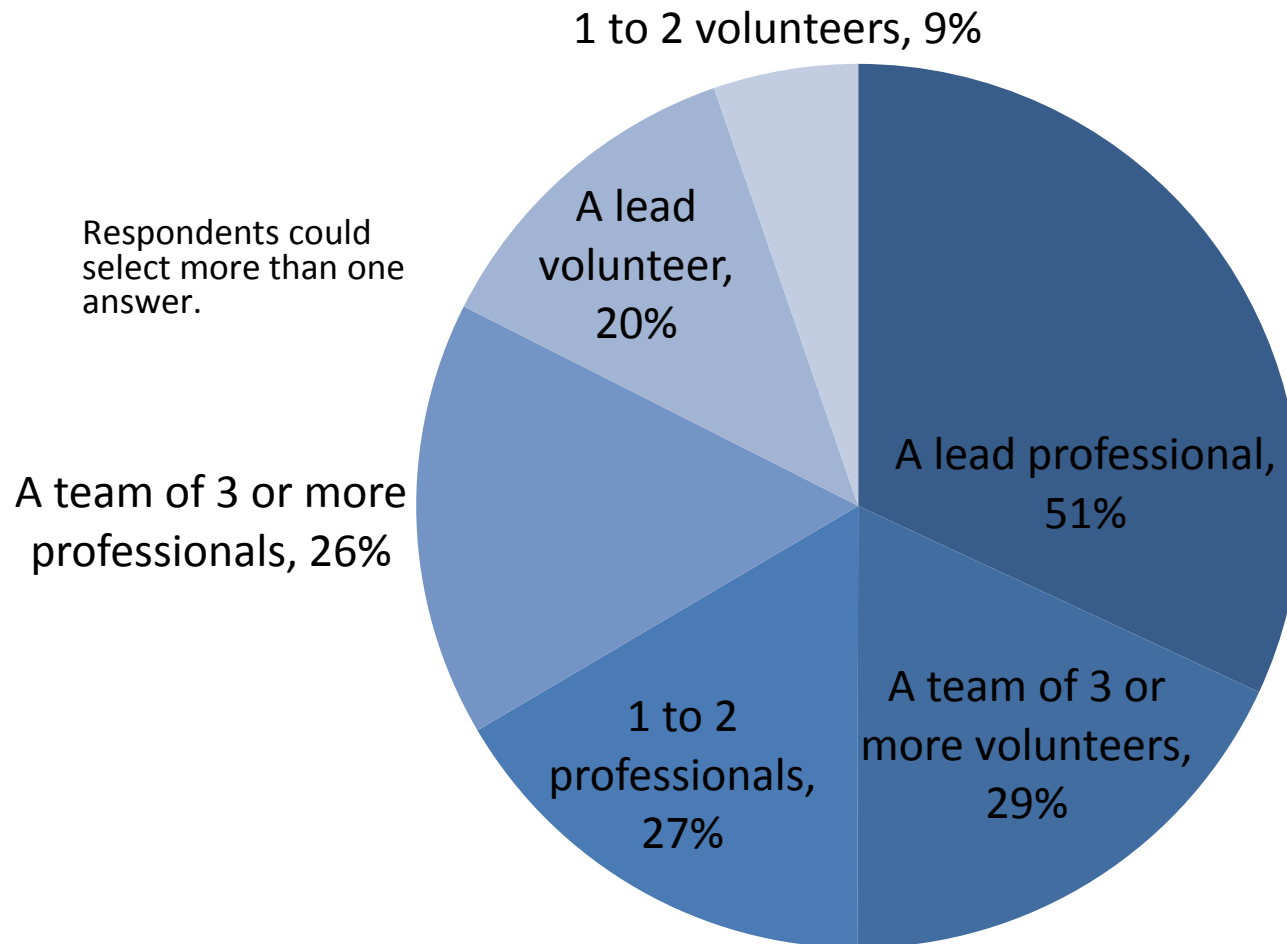
A diverse spectrum of community organizations often led by synagogues and federations served as primary organizers for the Global Day



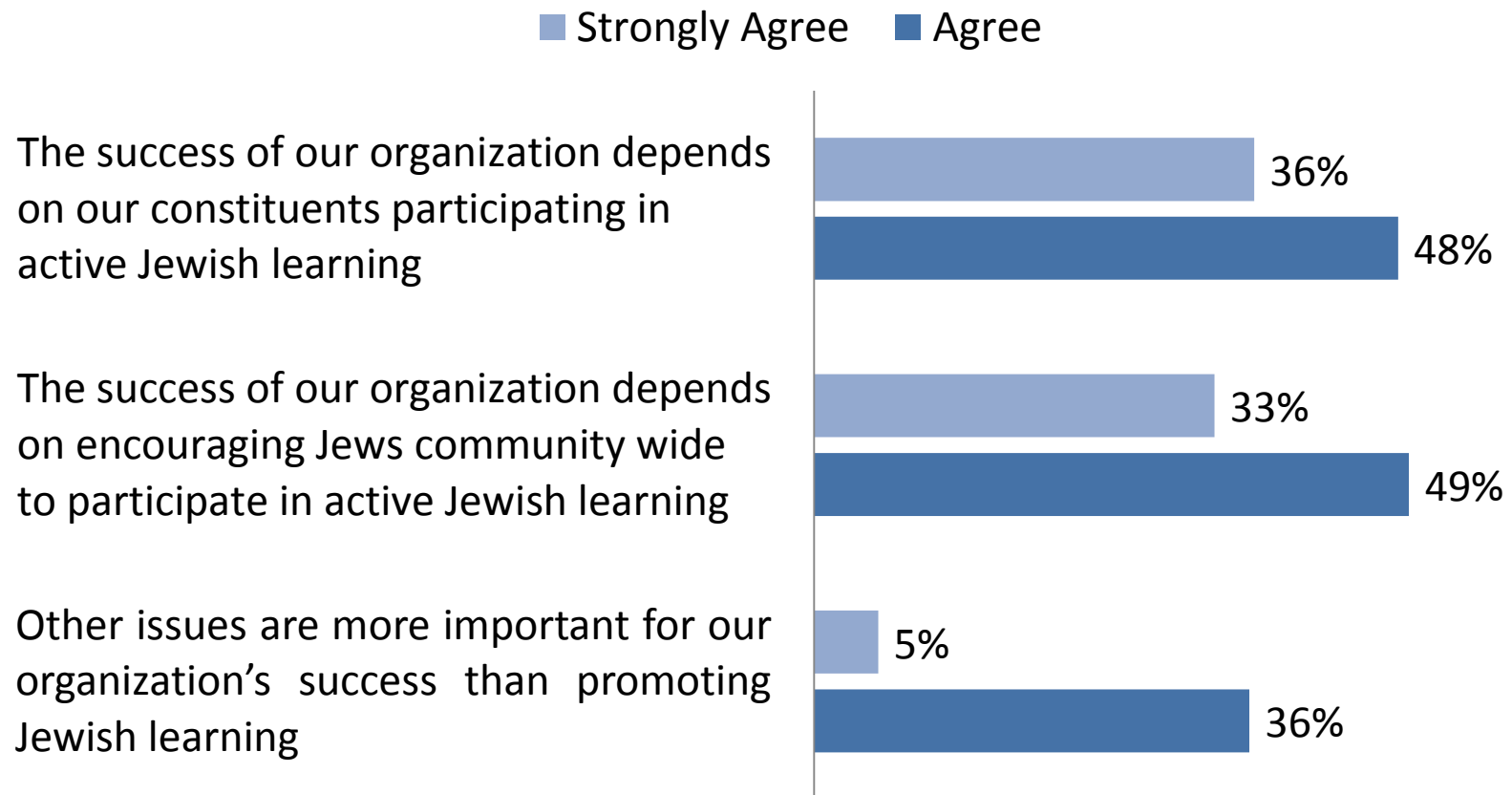
Organizations serving as primary organizers are actively involved with Jewish learning, with 84% sponsoring at least 2 learning programs in an average month.



In almost all cases at least one professional was involved in implementing the Global Day. 58% included volunteers, with 20% led by a volunteer.

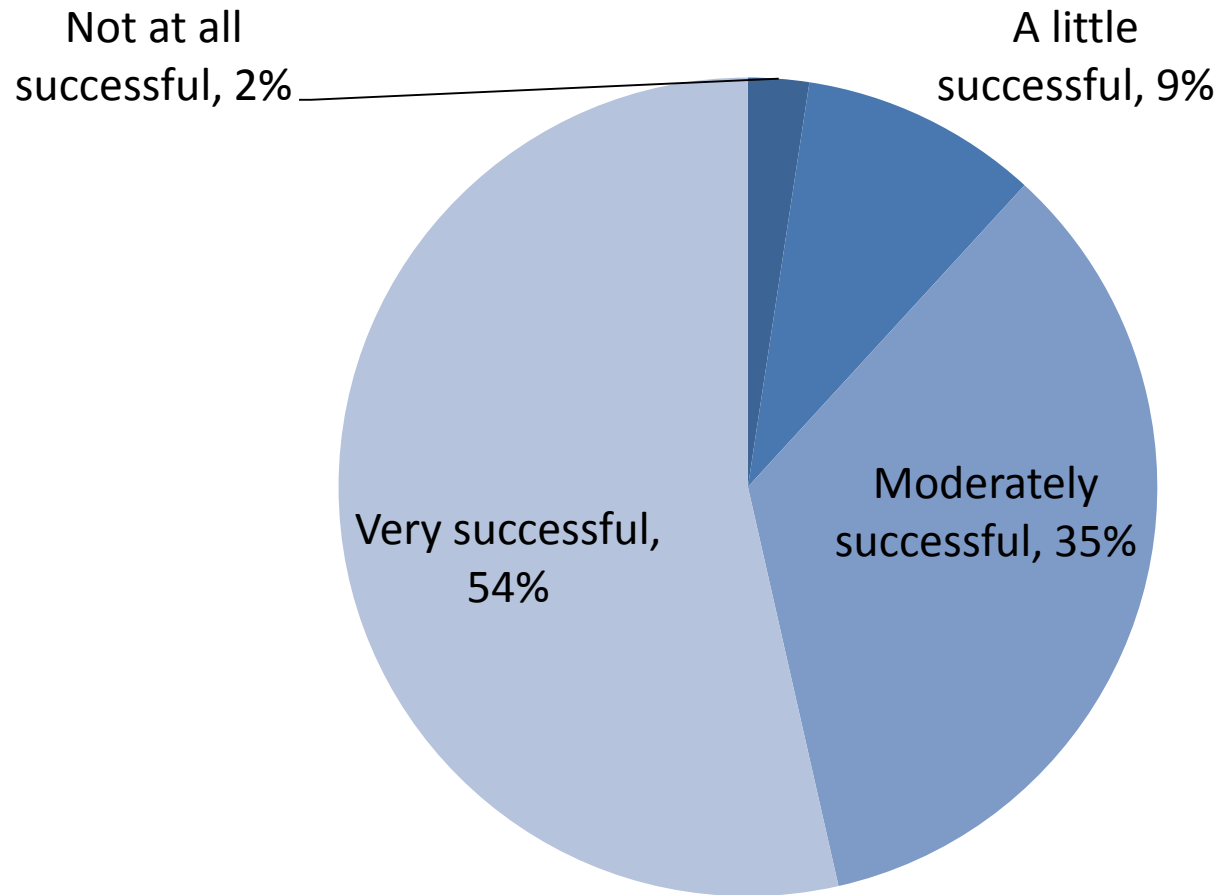


A large majority regard Jewish learning as important to their success. A minority (between 33% and 36%) regard Jewish learning as their most important organizational mission.

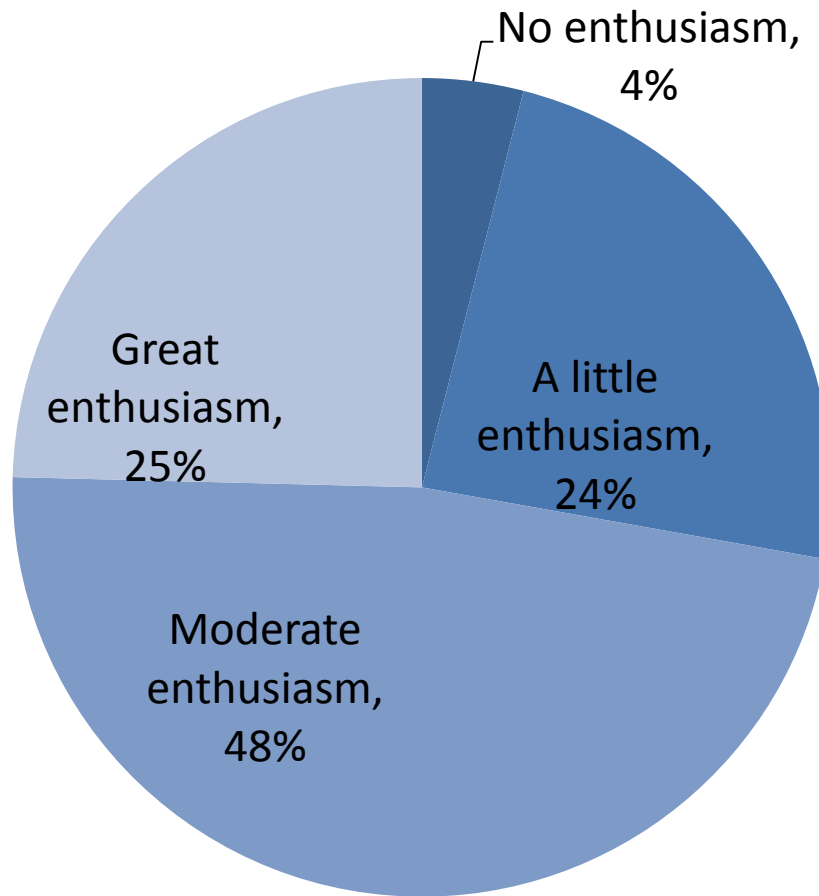


APPRAISAL OF THE GLOBAL DAY'S SUCCESS

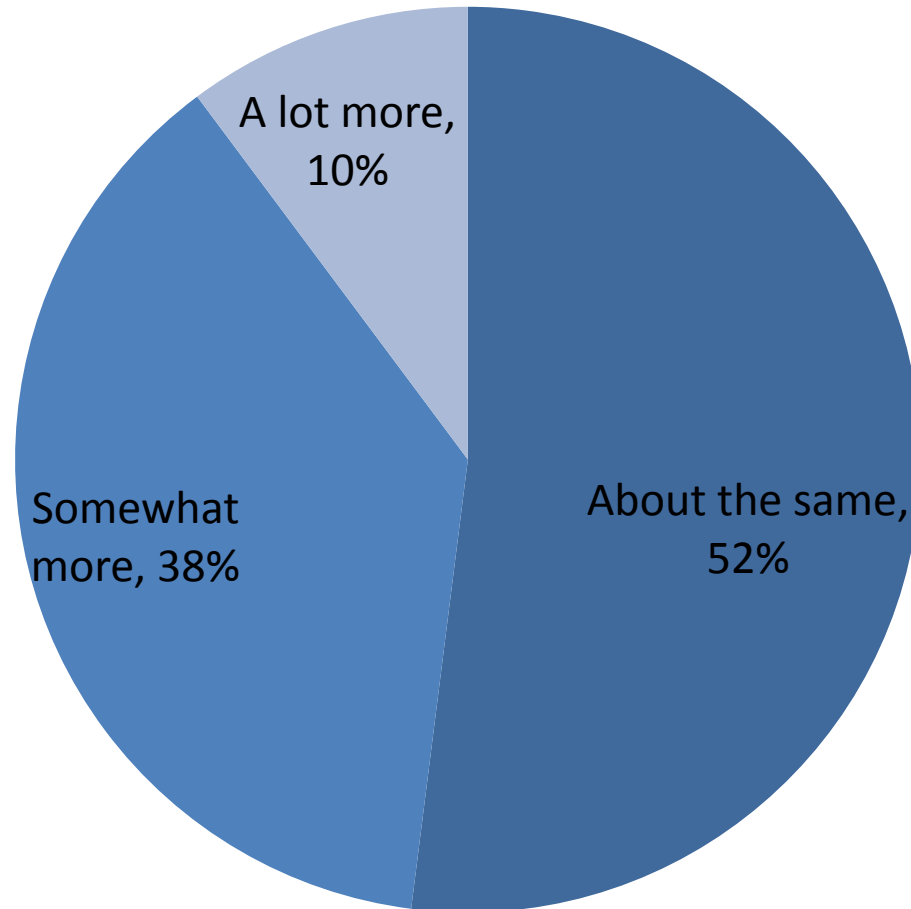
89% rated the Global Day as “moderately” or “very” successful



73% felt that the general reaction to the Global Day in their communities ranged from moderate to great enthusiasm.



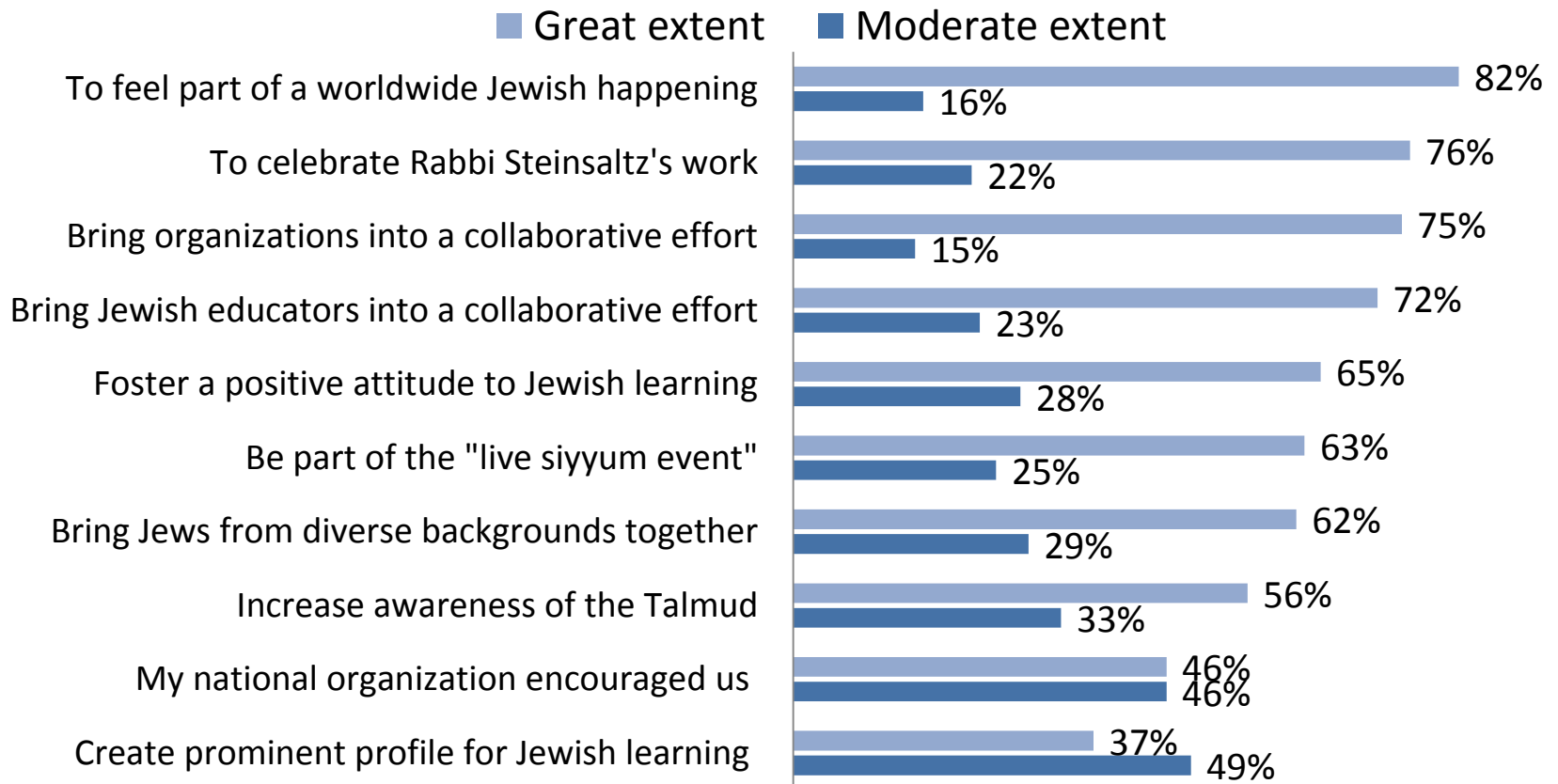
48% stated that there is more interest in Jewish learning in their communities as a result of the Global Day.



A majority of organizations felt their expectations were met to a “great extent.”

Were expectations met?

Answers of those who cited a particular area as an important reason for their participation in the Global Day



“LET MY PEOPLE KNOW”

Celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz’s work
and raising awareness of the Talmud

Following Rabbi Steinsaltz's mandate of "let my people know," communities reported greater interest in Talmud as a result of the Global Day.

"I have held many study groups for my congregants for many years. This Global event seems to have triggered an interest in Talmud studies among congregants who previously never showed any interest in Talmud studies."

"The Global Day stirred greater awareness of and interest in Talmud. It strengthened sense of belonging to a worldwide Jewish community."

"For the first time all the kids know what the Talmud is. I actually wrote a play to introduce the topic. The high school kids were enthralled and want their own Talmud class."

47% of the survey respondents took part in the Global Day with the explicit motivation of “celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz’s work” or “to increase awareness of the Talmud.”

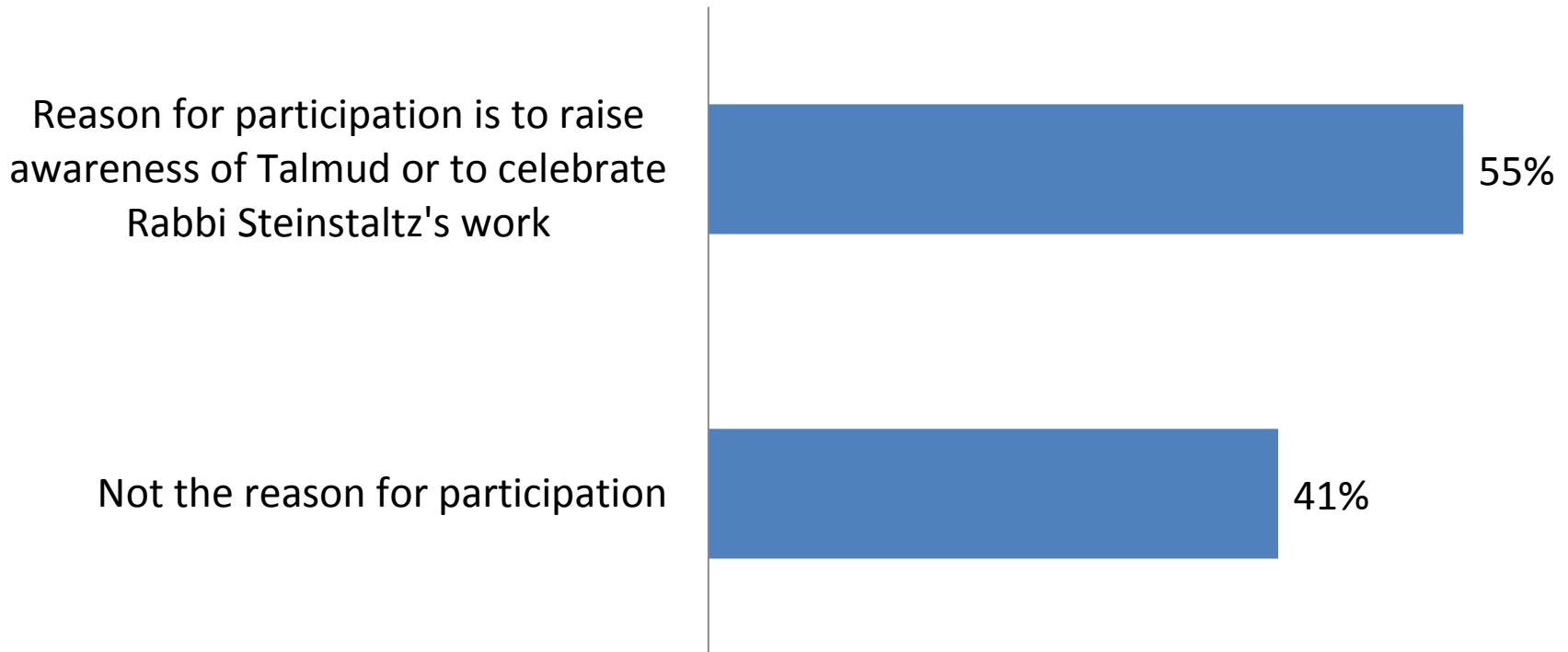
Organizations that participated with the goal of celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz’s work or to raise awareness of the Talmud, were far more likely to rate the Global Day as “very successful.”

Percent stating that the Global Day was a success

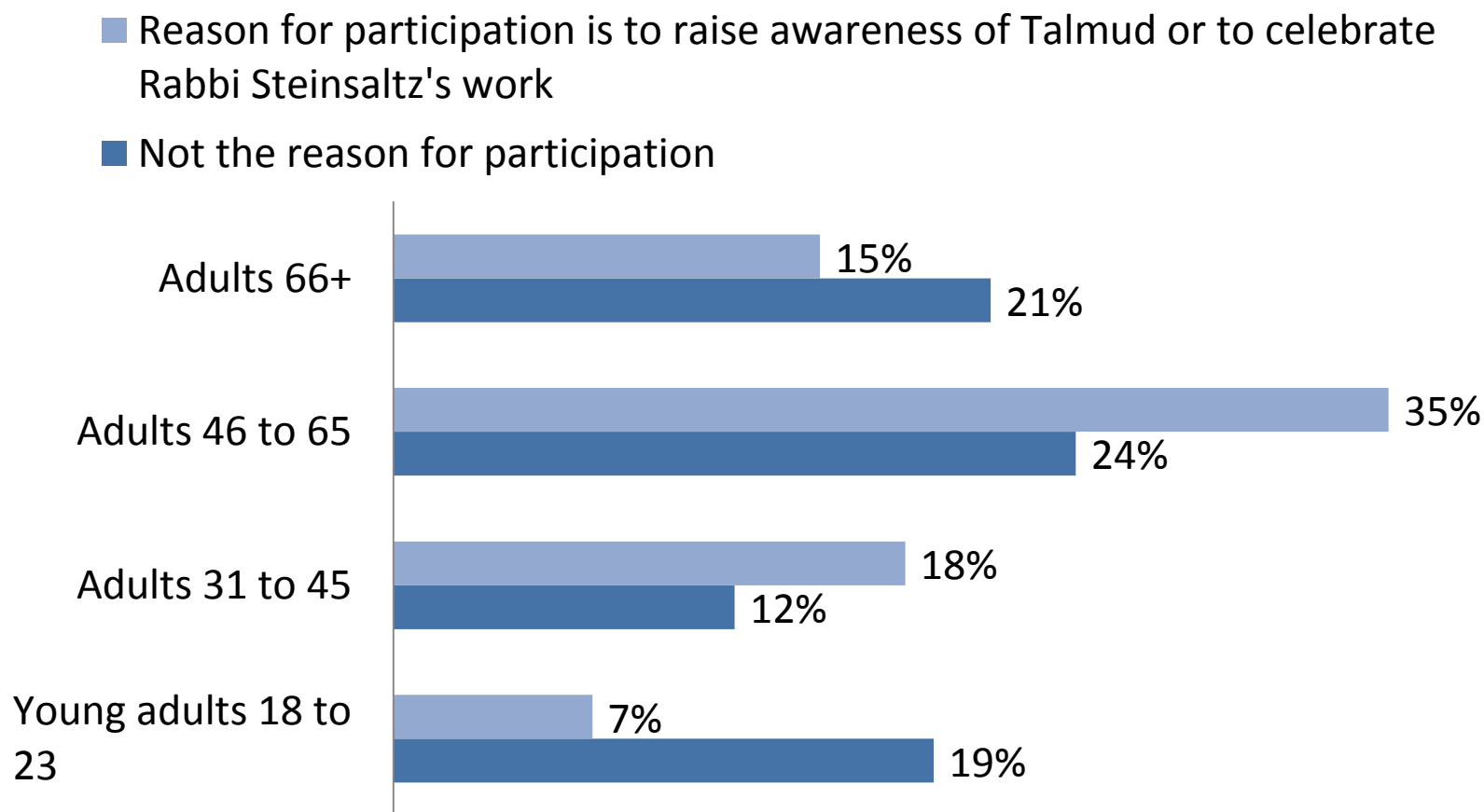


Organizations that participated with the goal of celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz's work or to raise awareness of the Talmud, were far more likely to state that the Global Day increased interest in Jewish learning in their communities.

Percent stating that the Global Day increased interest in Jewish learning in their communities



Organizations that participated with the goal of celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz's work or to raise awareness of the Talmud, were more likely to work with adults, than with youth, young adults or older adults.

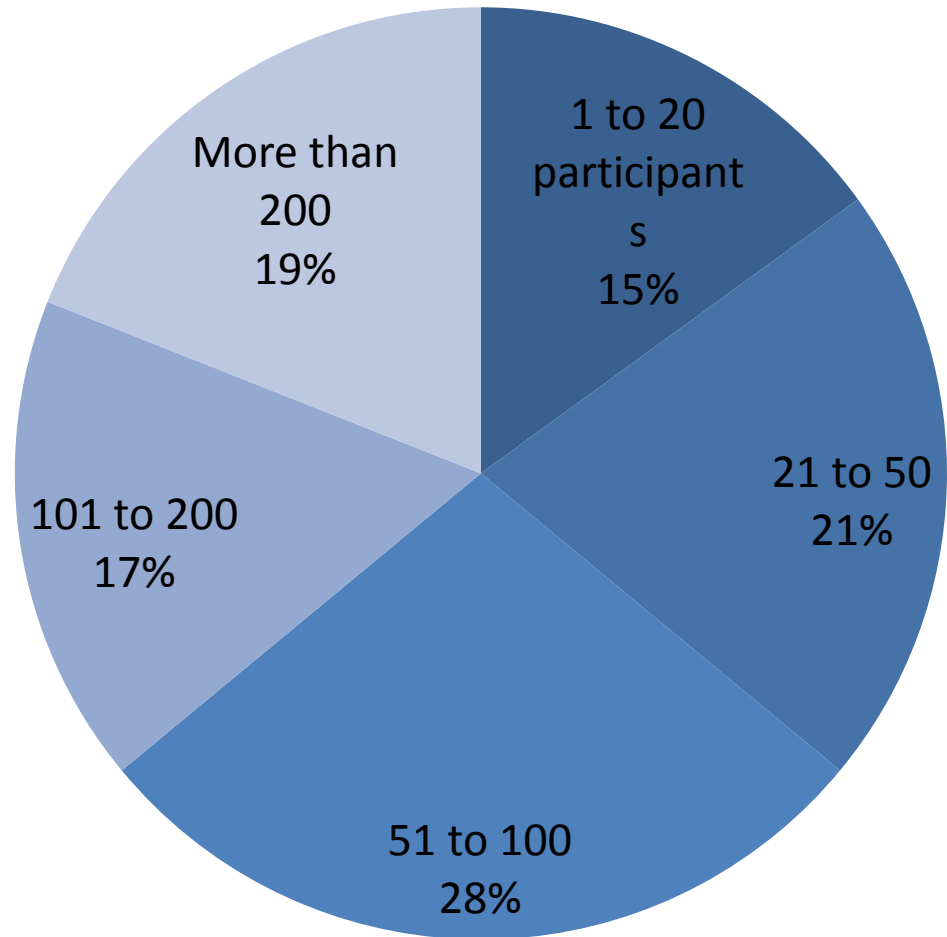


WHAT HAPPENED ON THE GLOBAL DAY?

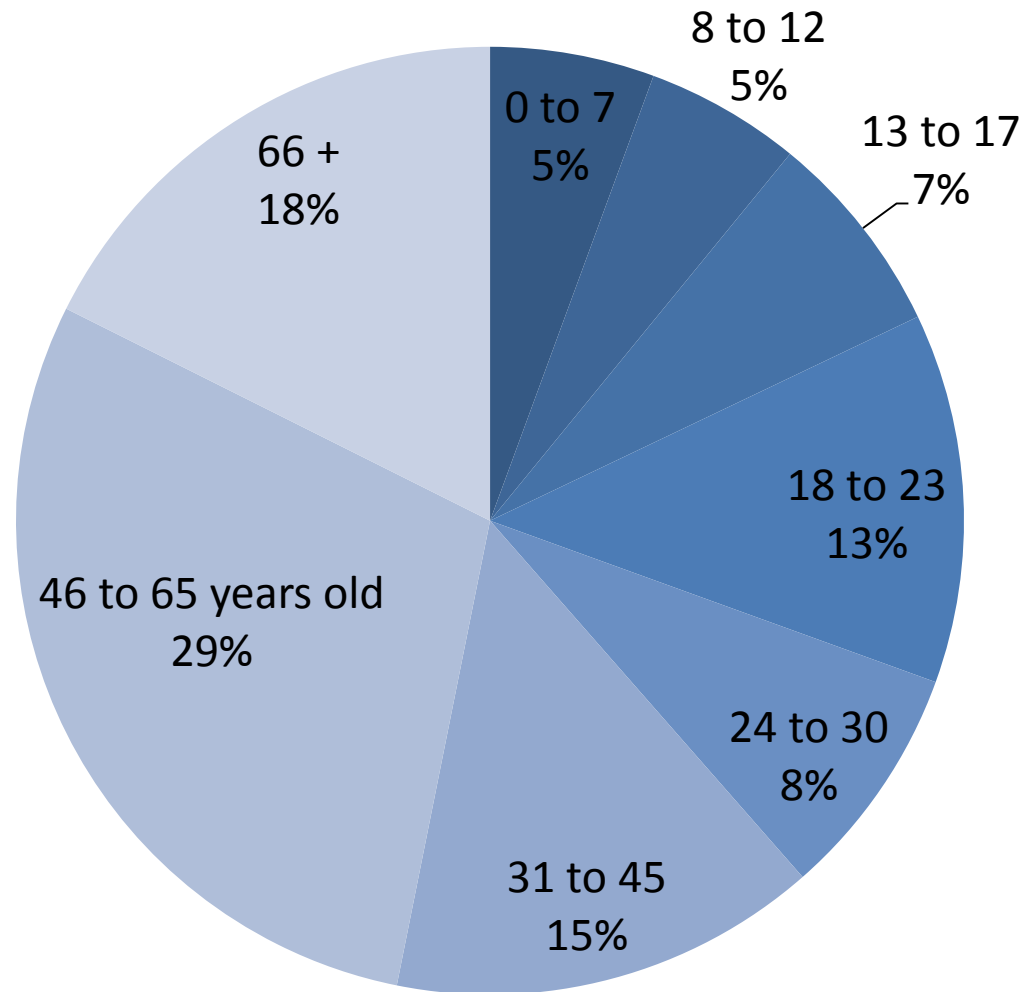
64% report more than 51 participants attending their Global Day events

Participation

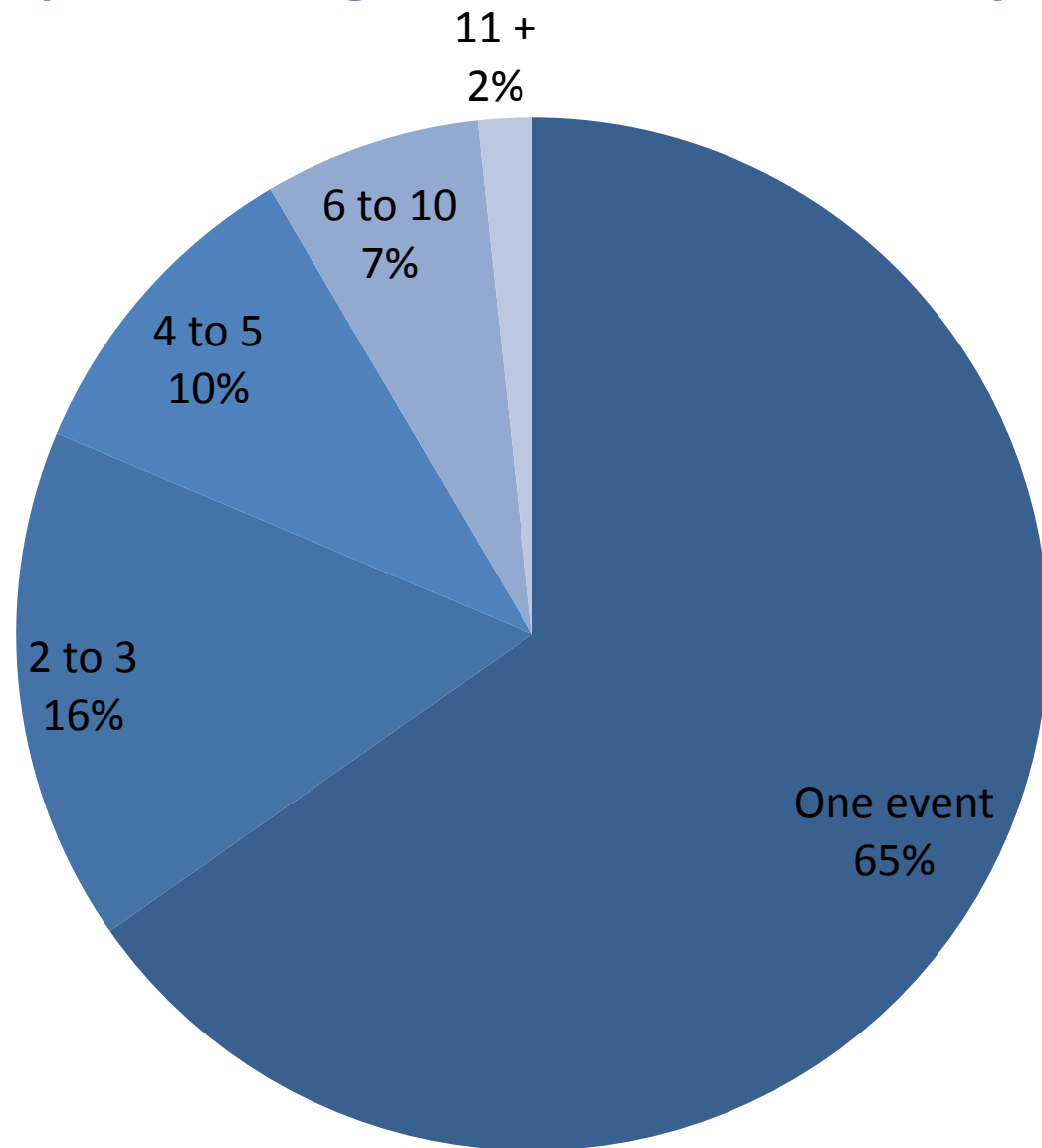
- North American organizations reporting: 117
- Average: 186
- Minimum: 4
- Maximum: 5688
- 36% had over a 100 participants attending their Global Day events



Global Day programs served all age groups. 17% served children and teens, 21% young adults, 44% adults and 18% older adults.

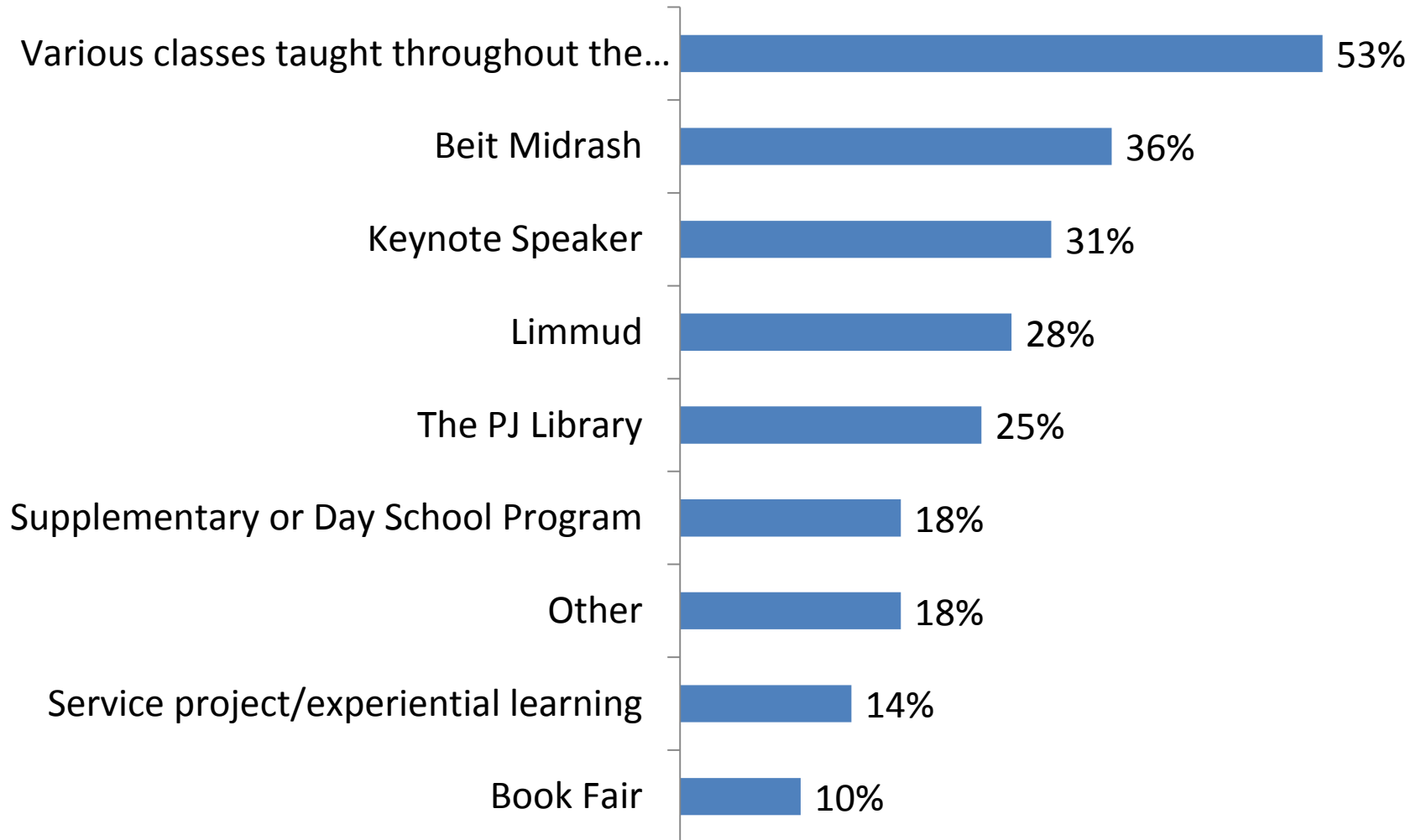


35% report running two or more Global Day events

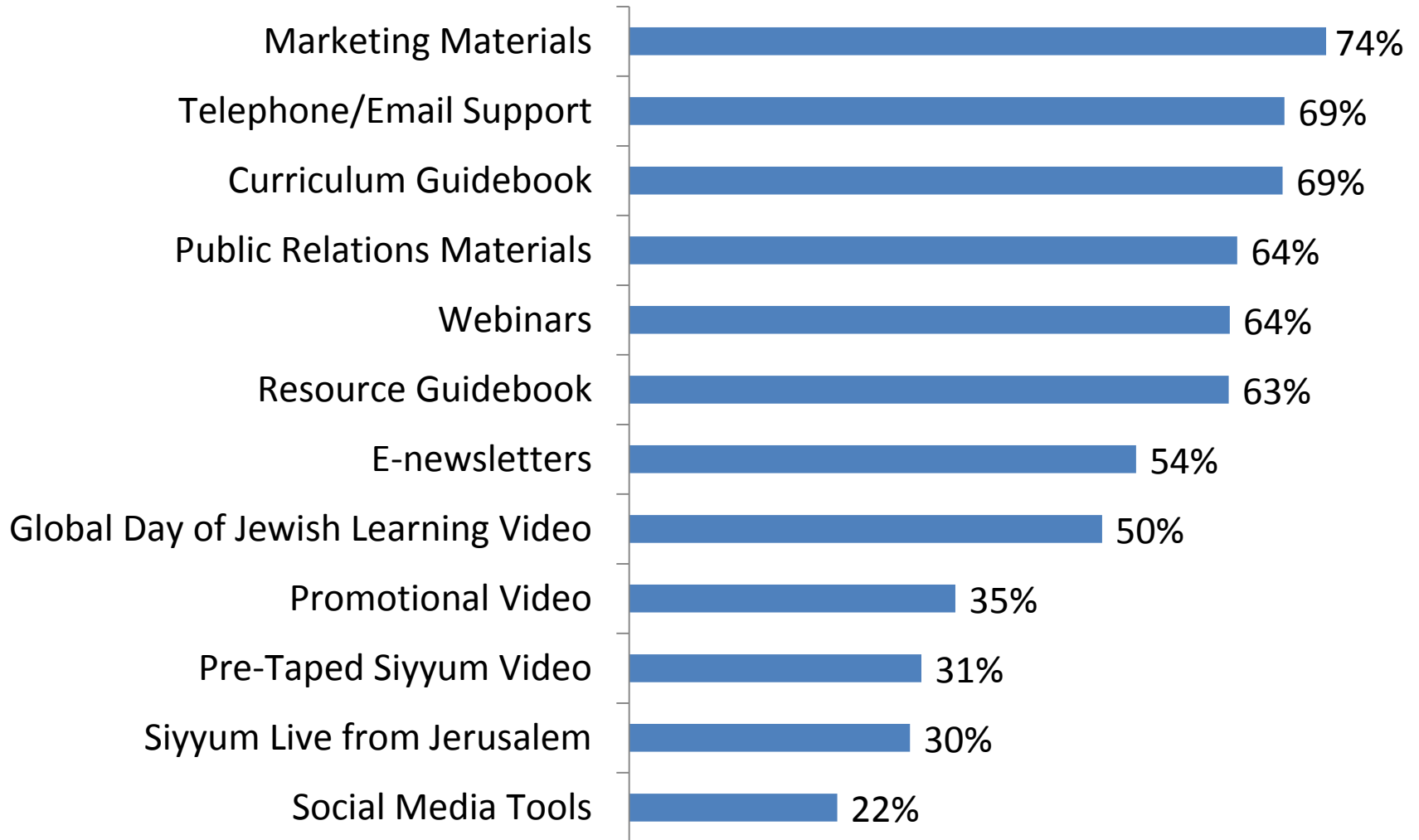


Global Day programming included ...

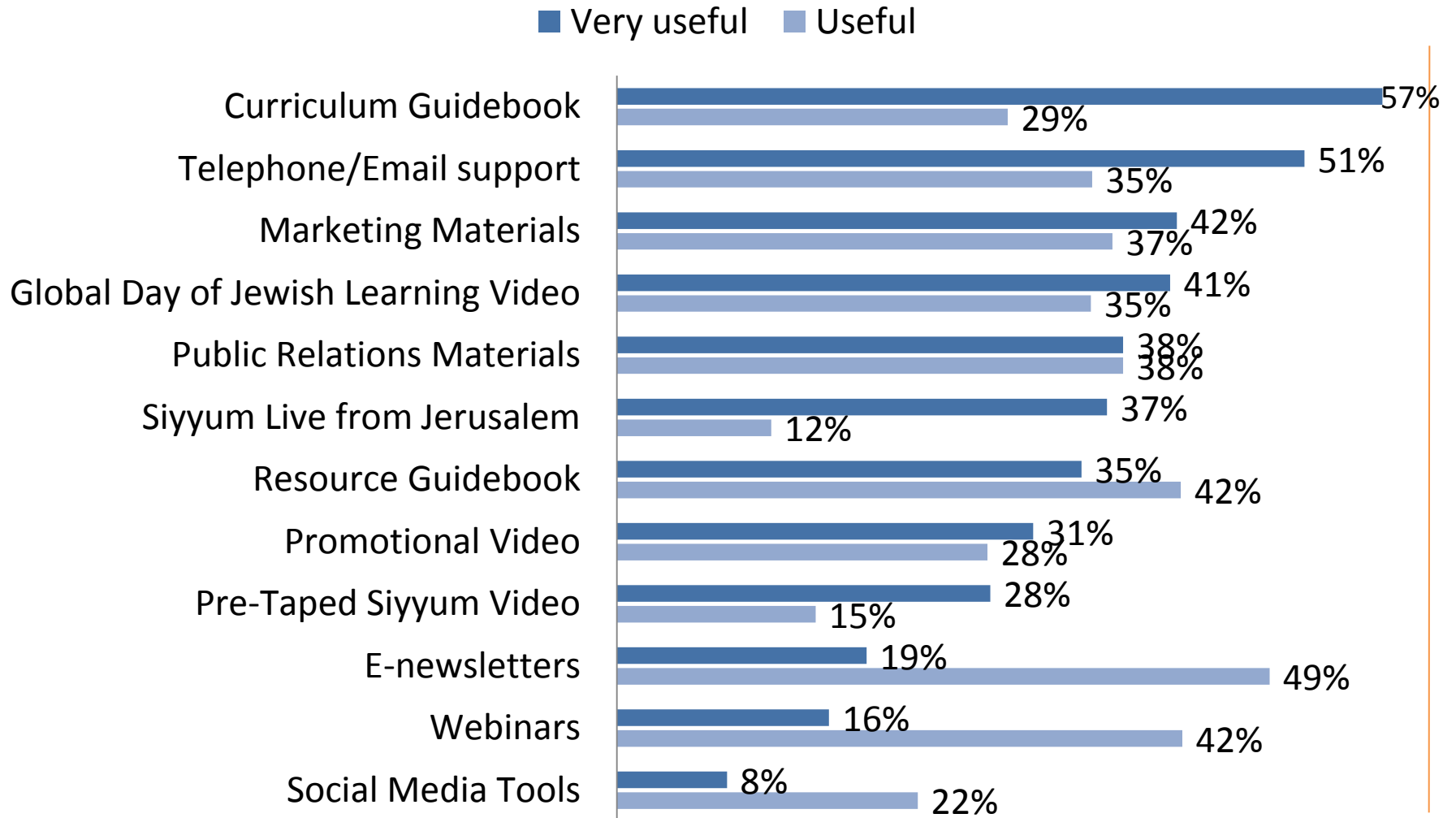
Respondents could choose more than one or more program options



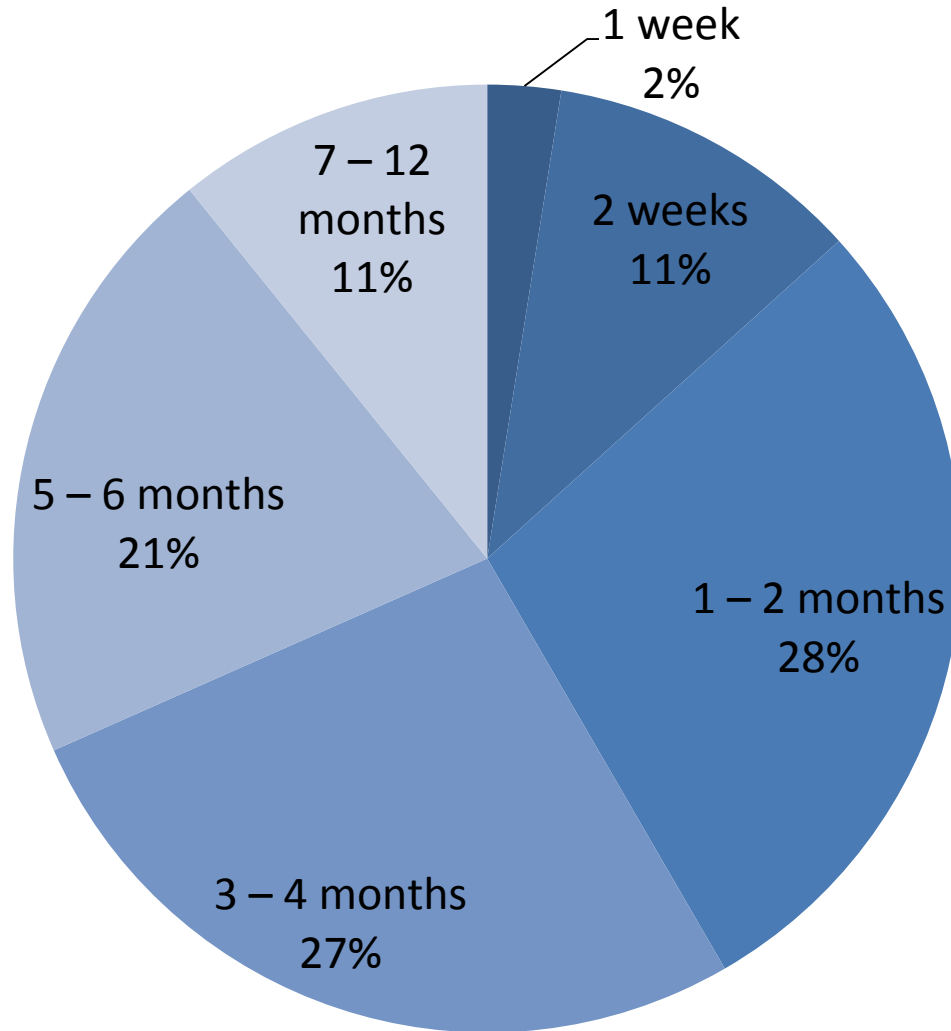
Global Day resources used for planning



If Global Day resources were used, were they “useful”?

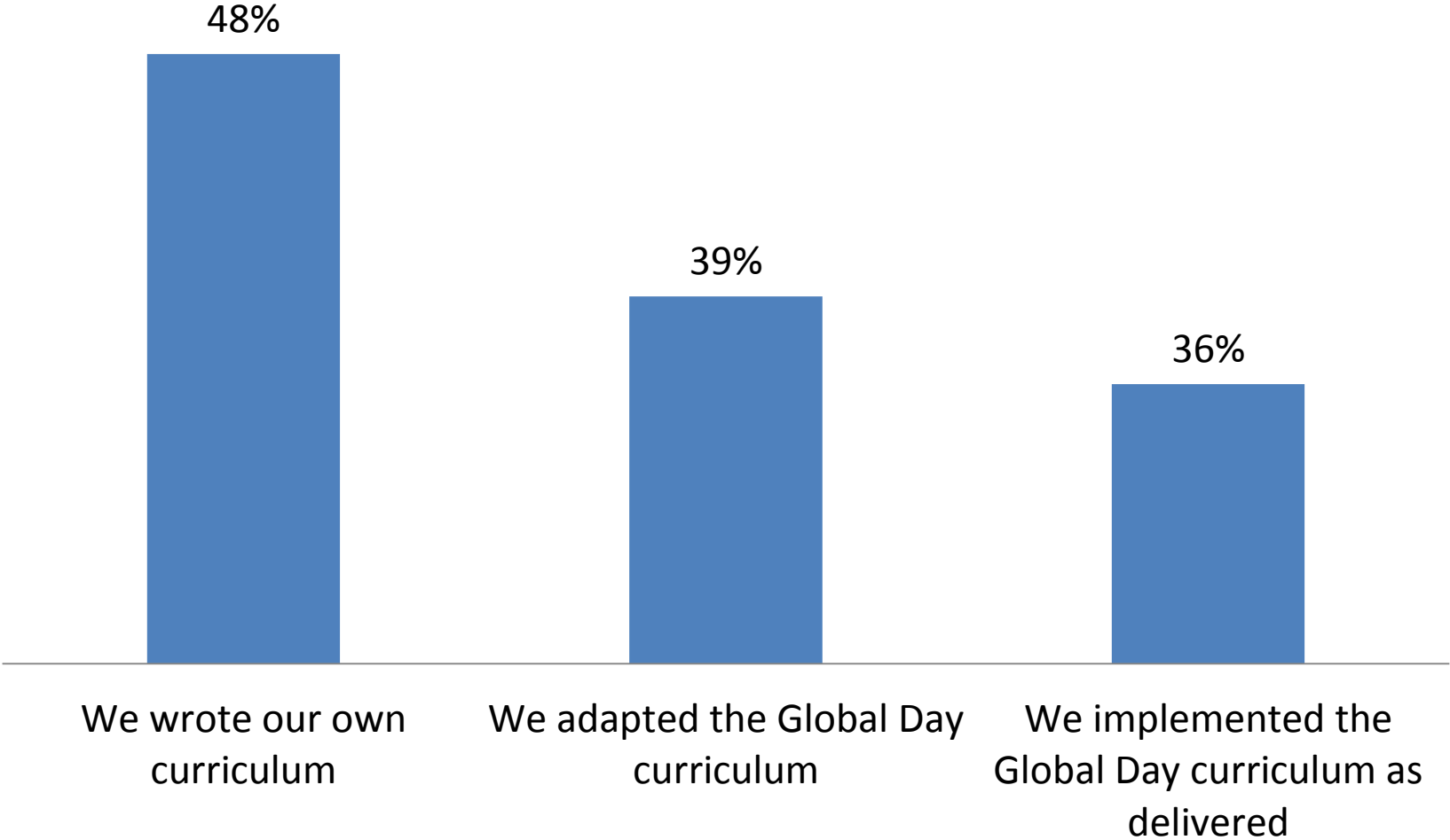


87% started planning at least one month in advance. 59% gave 3 months or more for planning.



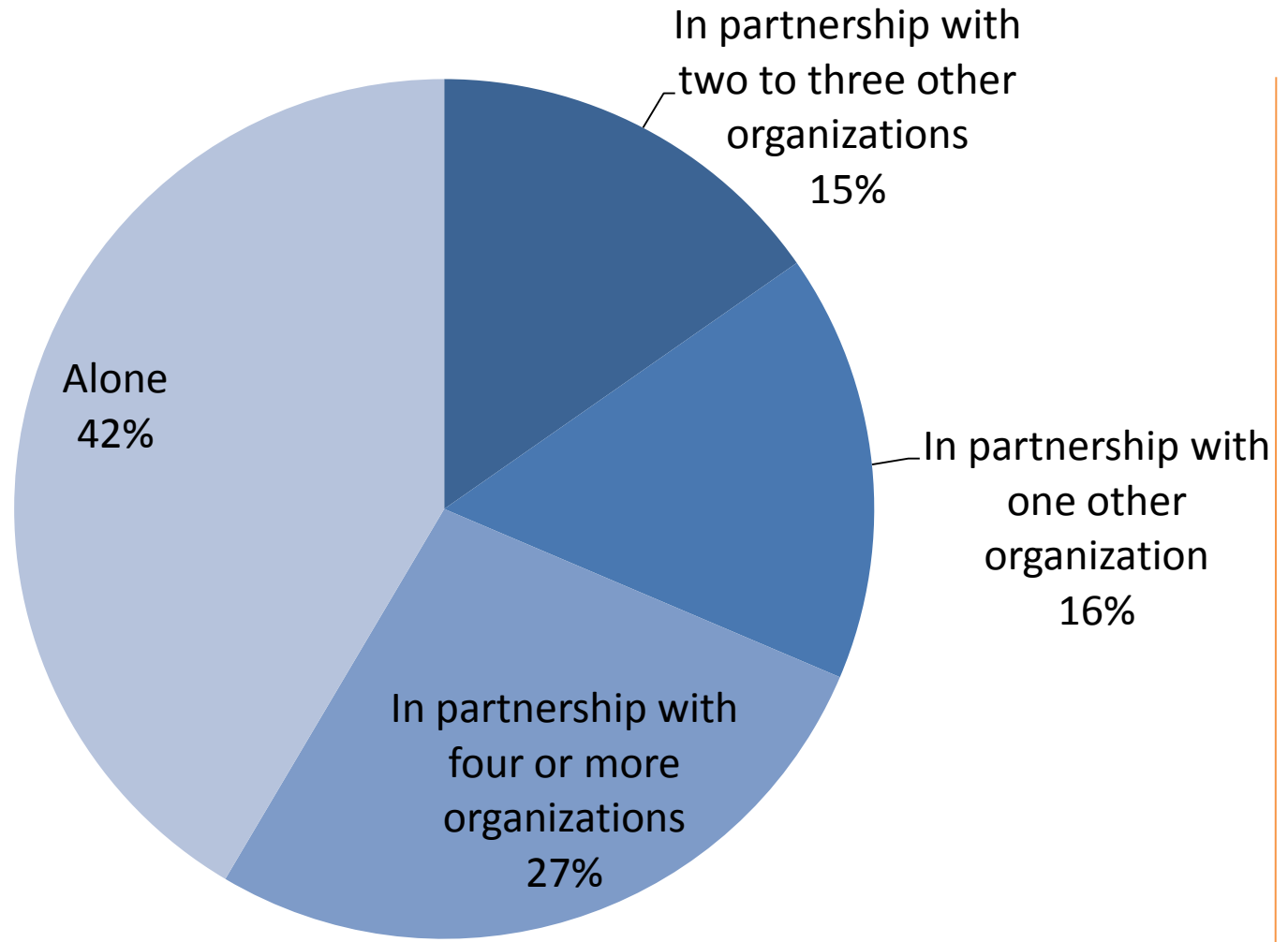
How was the Global Day Curriculum implemented?

Respondents could select more than one option

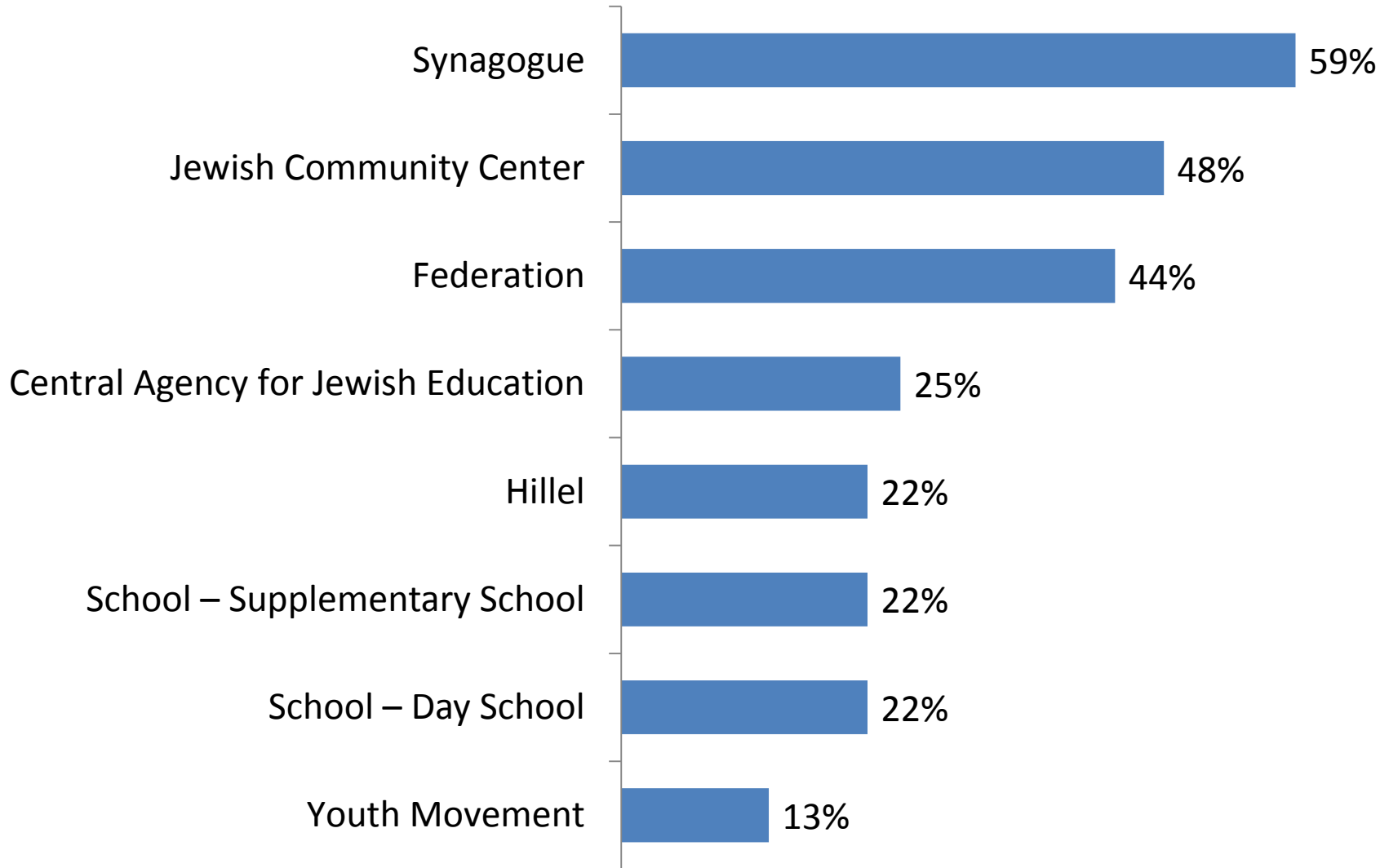


PARTNERING

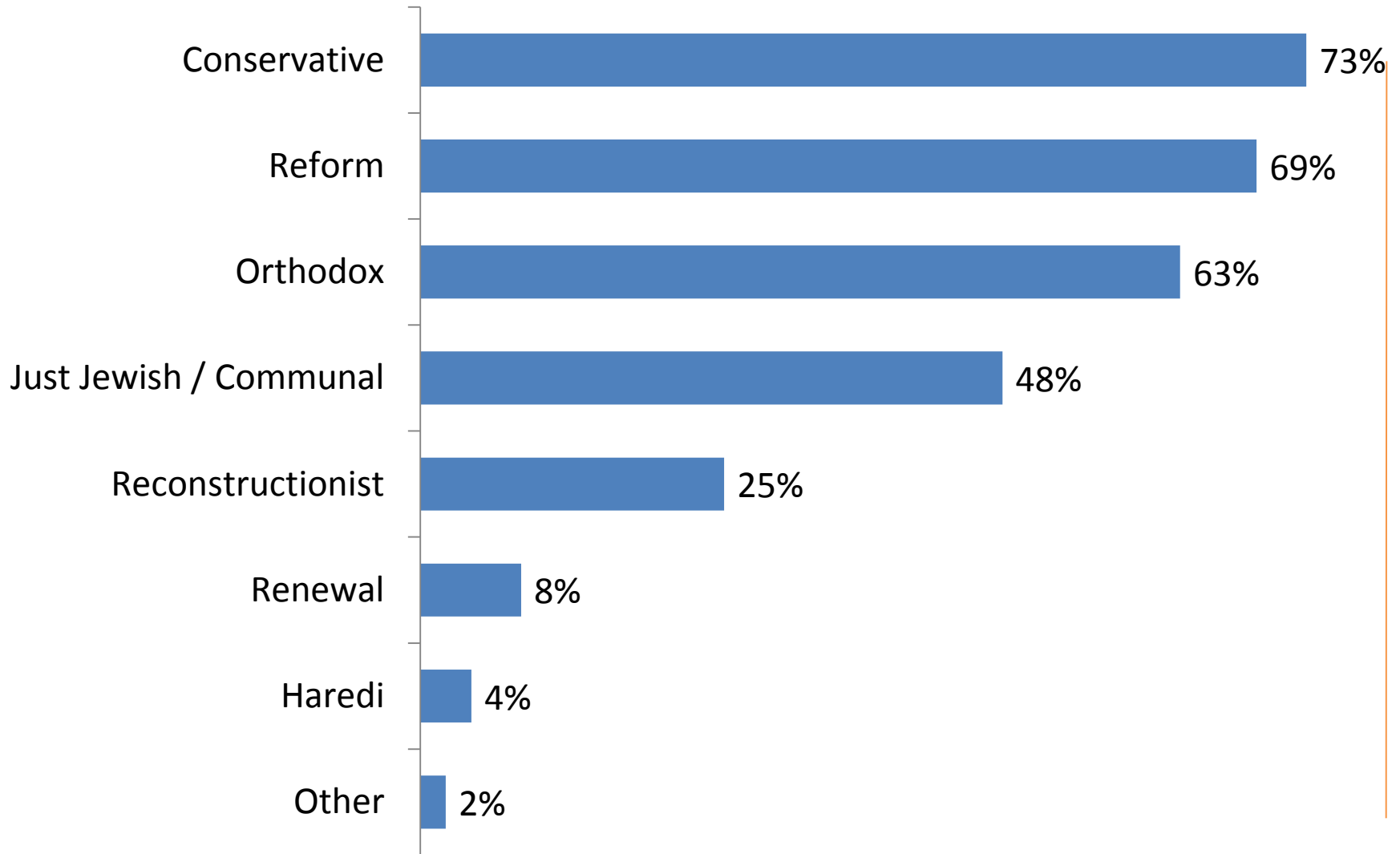
58% implemented the Global Day in partnership with other organizations.



Partnering organizations included a full range of community groups.



Partnering organizations included the entire Jewish spectrum.



Examples of increased interest in collaboration engendered by the Global Day:

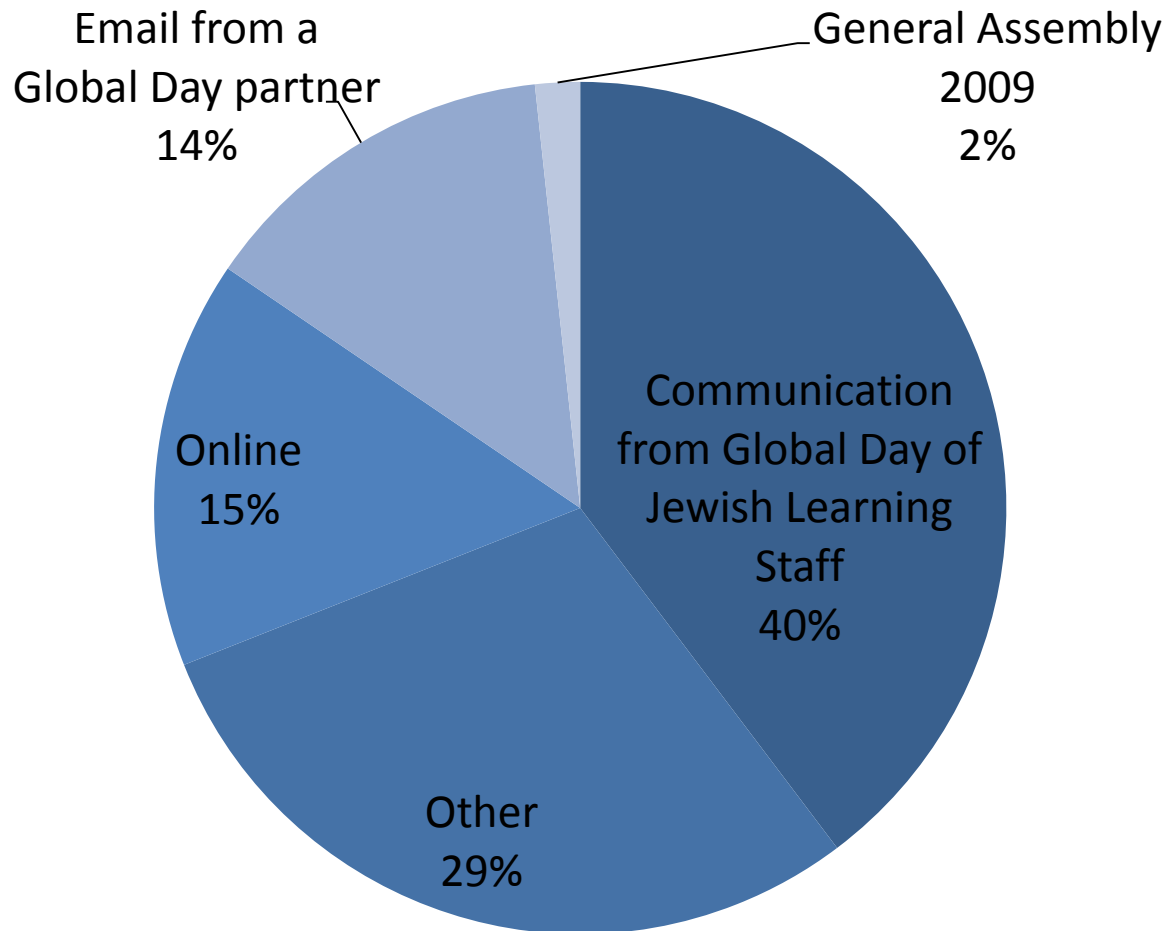
“We are already speaking about making this first Sunday in Nov. our annual day of Jewish Learning. We will expand to include the Hillels and Jewish organizations on the surrounding college campuses to join us in planning the program. We will also reach out to the medical schools in the area, so even if people are not affiliated with the 2 synagogues in this area, they will have plenty of notice of this special day of Jewish learning.”

The most valuable aspect was the community building and collaboration among the leaders of the various denominational/religious groups on campus. I am hopeful that this experience will spur them to do more collaborative, community-wide learning programs.

“We will begin talks with the JCC about holding a similar event next year in conjunction with book fair”

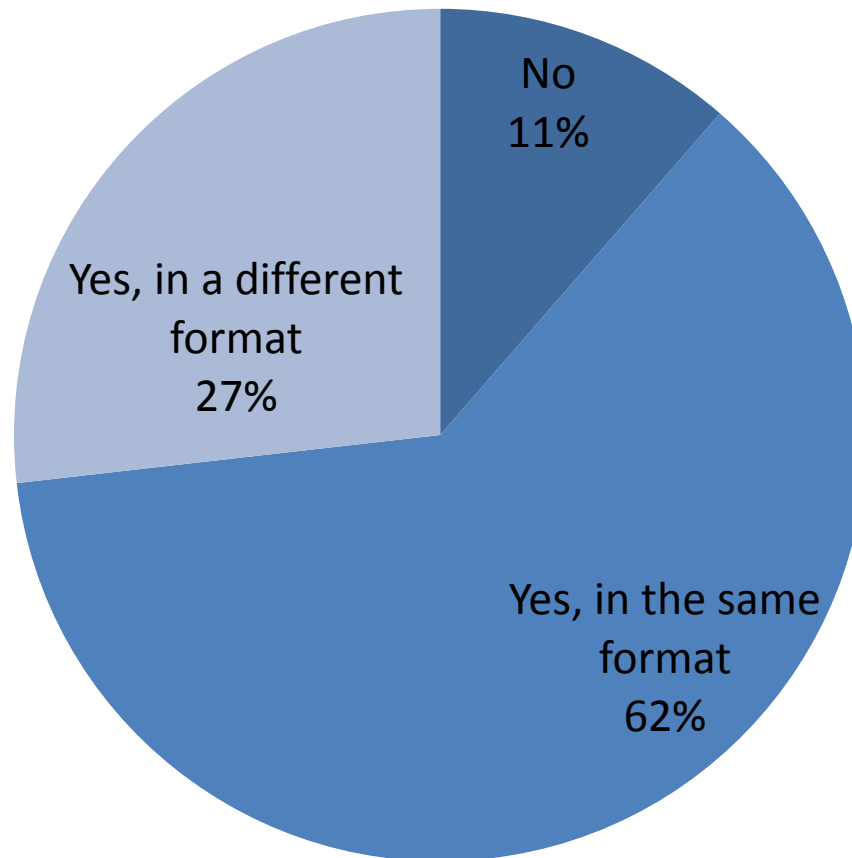
MARKETING

54% of organizations learned about the Global Day through a direct communication from Global Day staff or an e-mail from a Global Day partner.

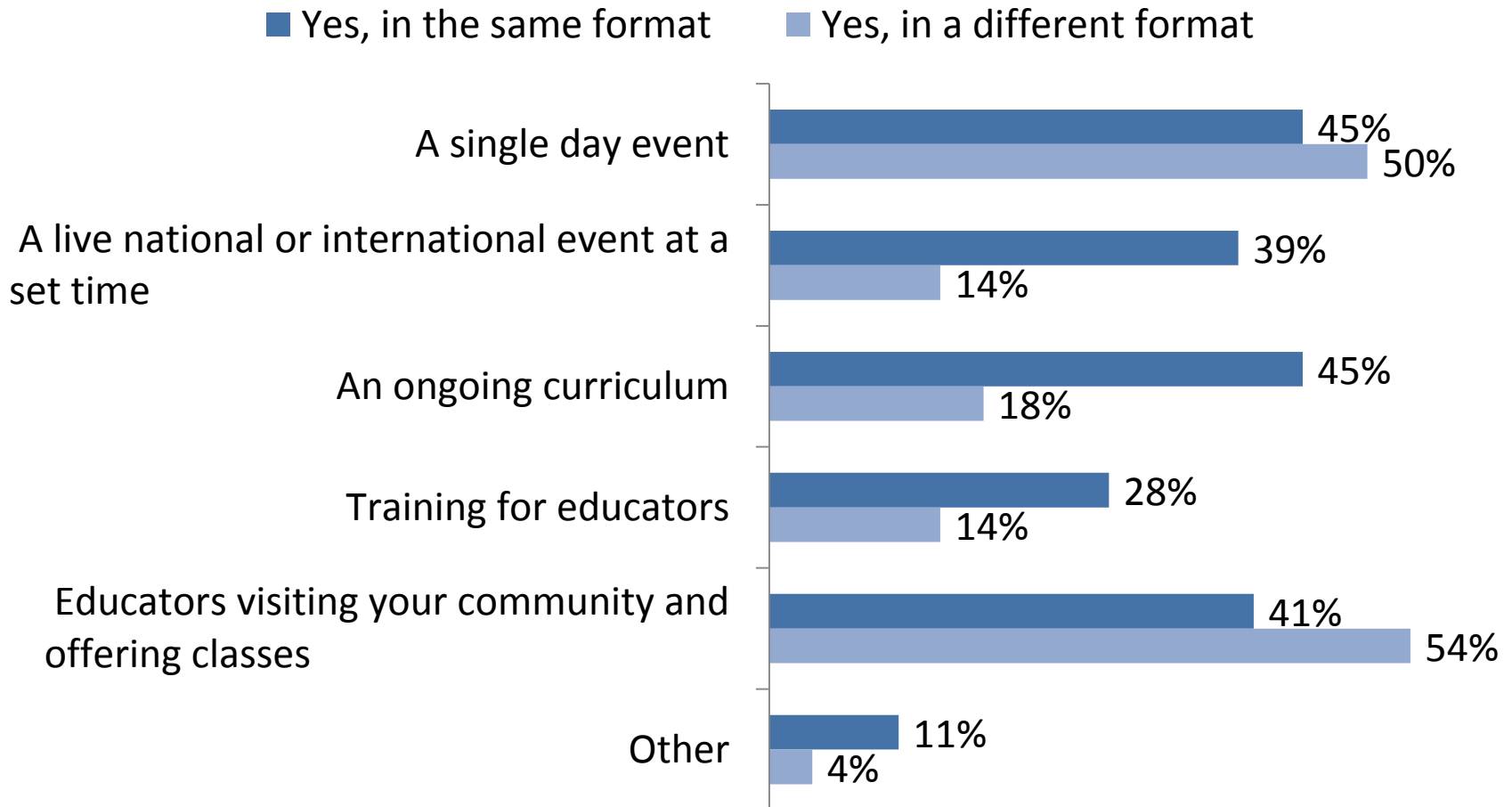


CONTINUING THE GLOBAL DAY

89% want to see the Global Day continue in the current or an alternate format.



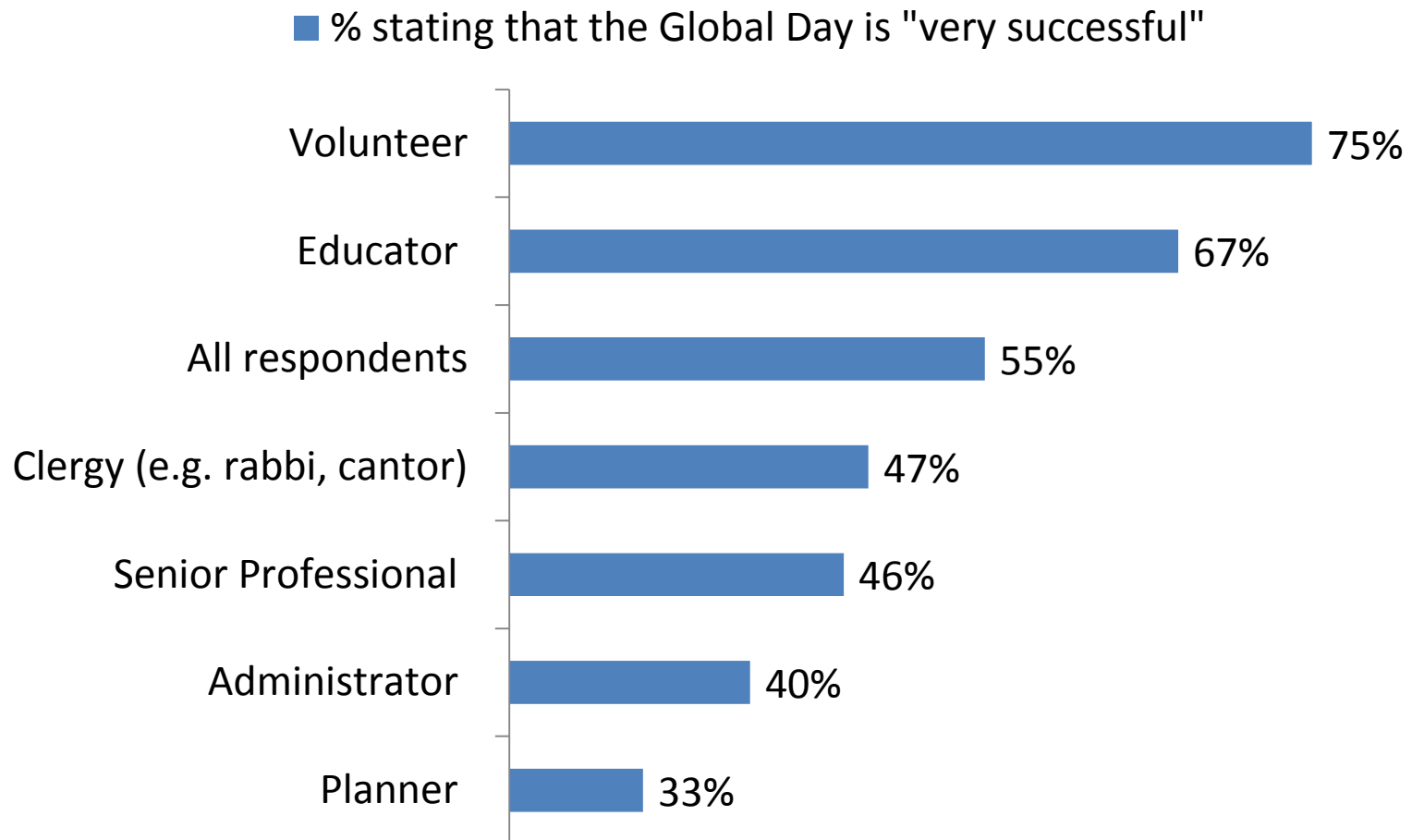
Those who want the Global Day to continue in a different format would like to educators to visit their community.



FACTORS LEADING TO SUCCESS

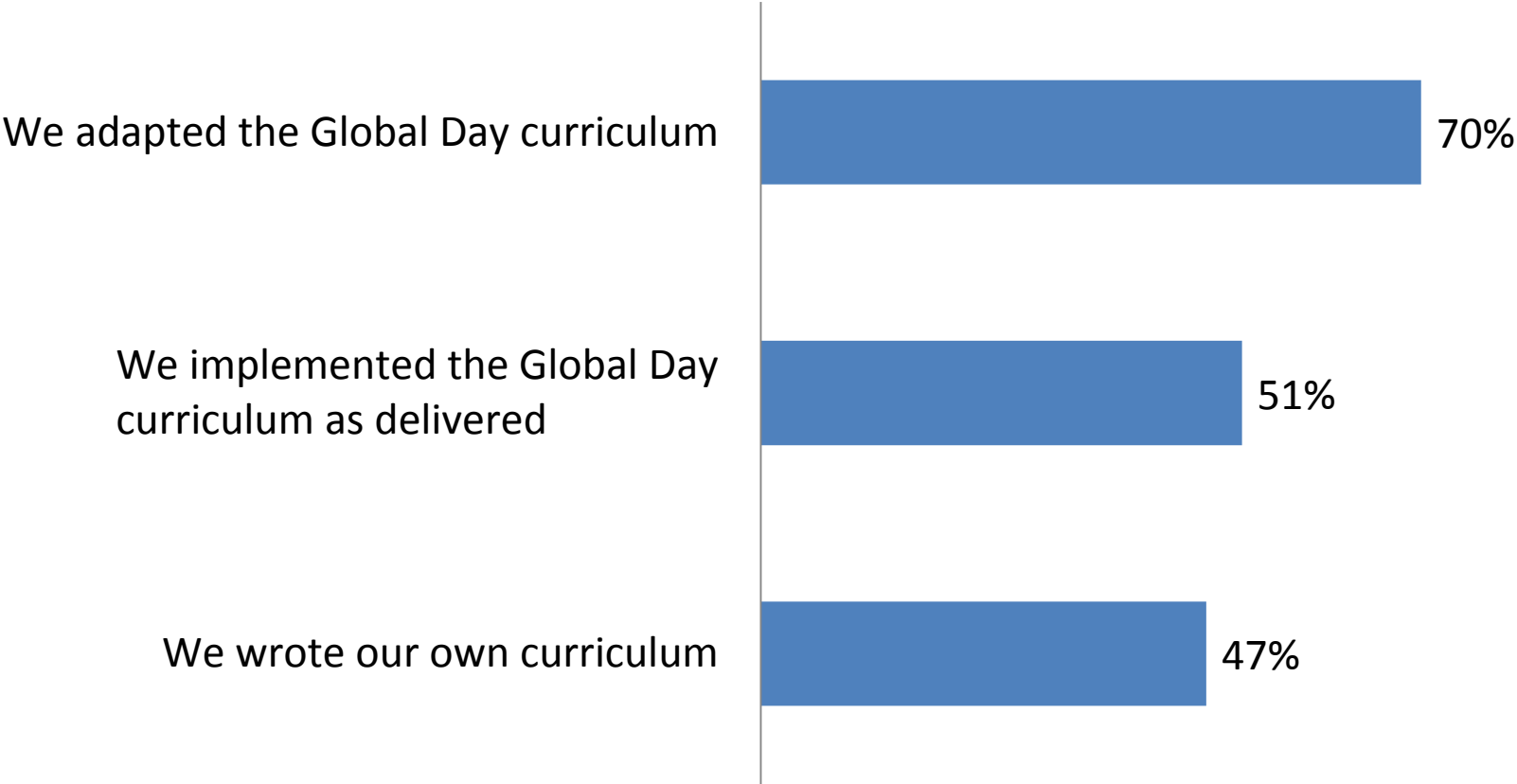
The following slides show a general pattern indicating that “success” is an outcome of local investment. These include the extent to which groups assigned educational personnel and volunteers to plan and implement their programs.

Organizations that assigned volunteers and educators -- as opposed to those in clerical or administrative positions -- were far more likely to regard the Global Day as “very successful”



If an organization assigned personnel with the capacity to adapt the Global Day curriculum to their needs, they were far more likely to regard the Day as “very successful.”

■ % stating that the Global Day was "very successful"



CONCLUSION

FULFILLING A NEED

While there are educational organizations in almost all North American Jewish communities, it is rare to find a community wide event with a focus on the Global Jewry. Even fewer focus on text based learning and the Talmud. That is why the Global Day of Jewish Learning filled such an important need.

GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

- The Global Day achieved its goals. Participating groups joined in the Global Day in order to feel part of global Jewry and to foster positive attitudes towards Jewish learning.
- About half of the participants joined the Global Day with the explicit goal of celebrating Rabbi Steinsaltz's work and raising awareness of the Talmud.
 - Of these organizations, large majorities reported the Global Day met their expectations.
 - For the rest, the celebration of Rabbi Steinsaltz's work was an opportunity to push forward Jewish learning and the concept of peoplehood.

SUCCESS

- Participants report the Global Day
 - Inspired participation in Jewish learning
 - Provided resources and generating support for educators to promote Jewish learning
 - Encouraged collaboration across organizations and denominations.
- A large majority felt that the Global Day was successful and generated enthusiasm. About half felt the Global Day has created more support for Jewish learning in their communities.

FOCUSING RESOURCES

- Resources might be best appropriated to focus on organizations who reported greatest benefit for their communities from the Global Day.
- These are organizations who are willing to invest in their Global Day programming in terms of time allocated for planning, assigning qualified staff whose focus is Jewish education and who regard collaboration as a priority.