

The Effect of Mass Programming Upon Federation Leadership Development Programs

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Mass programming is indicative of the growth of leadership development programs as they have become a core function of Federation, serving the emerging needs of single young Jewish adults who have joined these programs in significant numbers.

Leadership development programs conducted by Jewish Federations have grown phenomenally in the last decade, in both the number of young men and women who have participated and in their expanded curricula. This growth, beneficial for the most part, is not without its costs and it poses certain dilemmas.

Leadership development has outgrown its adjunctive status in Federations and now is a widely accepted core function which requires significant staff time, considerable budget and extensive use of facilities. The deployment of these resources, particularly when they are limited, should be made in a planned way to obtain optimum results. Because of the rapid expansion, the growth of many of these programs preceded the planning. Unless Federations deal decisively with the transition from smaller to mass programs, the very character and intent of leadership development risk losing their focus and effectiveness.

Background

Many Federations now operate mass programs each involving hundreds of members. The increased participation has resulted from the change from smaller based elitist programs to more open and inclusive recruitment. Not only have the numbers of members increased, but the groups also have become less homogeneous in com-

position, the median age of members has become somewhat younger, there have been differing levels of commitment to Jewish communal service and availability, and more unmarried persons have become affiliated.

There was an expansion of the program curricula concomitant with the increase in membership. At one time, the core feature of the training program was a course in Jewish civics which customarily consisted of presentations about major issues before the Jewish people (usually with some local adaptation), the services rendered by the Federation affiliated agencies, campaign participation, Israel, and how Federation operates. Although a Jewish civics course remains a staple, other sequences since have been added.

Placement programs were an early addition. Through these, observers were assigned to the boards of directors of the agencies and on Federation committees to learn first-hand about decision-making, to get a practical exposure to agency management and service delivery as well as to gain visibility by the nominating committees.

Some programs then lengthened from one to several years and, soon thereafter, advanced training sessions were added. These usually taught how allocations were established and how community planning worked.

Jewish education courses were offered next and they were intended to increase the members' knowledge of Judaism, especially about Jewish ethics as a foundation for community decision-making. Eventually

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these were augmented by weekend retreats and then missions to Israel. A later development was the inclusion of confluent education techniques which were intended to give participants an experiential as well as an intellectual grasp of subject matter.

Mass Program Rationale

Most recently, functions which clearly are social in nature and intent have surfaced and appear to be happening with increasing frequency. Part of their etiology may be attributed to the increased numbers served by the training programs. As the groups have become larger and more impersonal, some added sociability was needed to emphasize that these were groups with a continuing life and task orientation and not merely occasionally assembled audiences.

Another and more imperative reason for the proliferation of social programs was that the needs of the growing number of young and unmarried persons who affiliated began to be felt. The social events served to bring them together under the prestigious auspices of the Federation even though some of the socials were related to campaign or the celebration of Jewish holidays or to other sectarian occasions.

Despite the radical difference between these social events and the programs conducted before their inception, the high rate of intermarriage was and is of such great community concern that the inclusion of out-and-out social events in the leadership development spectrum has not been seriously challenged nor the implications thoroughly examined.

Many leadership development programs have become identified as a "Jewish connection" for young persons who are beyond the reach of college Hillel but who are not yet prepared to join an organization such as a synagogue. These groups, then, become meeting grounds for young, unmarried adults whose social interests appear to be at least as dominant as their

community service interest.

Another reason why social programs are permitted to expand of their own momentum is what they imply to their sponsors. Large attendance figures customarily are regarded as an index of a program's success. This reason may have forestalled any questions raised about the compatibility of serving this social need while retaining the original basic purpose of preparing young people to assume positions of responsibility within Federation, its campaign and its agencies.

More and more, communities are appraising their mass programs and trying to define whether or not the shifting goals and changing clientele of their leadership development groups are in Federation's best interests.

Program Goals

An original goal was to prepare a small and select number of young people to fill predetermined vacancies within Federation's structure and campaign and for service with the agencies. In the early 1970's, along about the time placement programs were initiated, the goal was expanded to include bringing larger numbers of young persons into responsible positions while they still were under 40 years of age. The rotation policies of the Federation board of directors and those of its constituent agencies sometimes became targets for liberalization, and trained younger people began to be "exported" to kindred organizations and services.

The Jewish education programs and many of the retreats began to shift the goal from quantity to quality; to improve the quality of the Jewish lifestyle of these future leaders, deepen their Jewish commitment and encourage more observance and practice. The missions to Israel also served these ends as well as to make participants better campaigners. The quality goal was reinforced through the confluent educational programs in that leader-

ship skills would be improved.

Because the quality goal affected so many of the trainees and was regarded as an ultimate end in itself, there appeared to be less concern with promoting more program graduates rapidly into the decision-making structure of the Jewish community than there had been when such an integration effort was a fundamental goal.

The perceived goals of the social programs appear to be three-fold: to enhance and expand recruitment for the leadership development programs, to strengthen the groups by offering a programmatic variation which adds more friendliness and to have marriageable age Jewish youth meet one another under community auspices.

Although each Federation will make its own determination of what it wants to derive from its leadership development program and what works best for it, there are fundamental and universal questions with which all must reckon.

The Dilemmas

One question deals with image. Can a program sustain a dual perception in the community and achieve two distinct ends? Can a program which is identified as a mass meeting ground for young, single people still recruit those others interested in and prepared for training as community leaders? Will the prestige and acceptance accruing to the smaller select groups predicated on training survive the influx of so many more members interested in social contacts?

The question of Federation as an indirect service agency arises. Certainly there are functional Federations, but most of the big city Federations do not provide services directly to their populations. Their constituent agencies do this. Federation fundraising benefits organizations, and allocations and community planning are done with the agencies and their representatives. Leadership development, in a sense, has departed from strict interpretation of this

concept in that it draws its participants directly from the community at large.

As the programs became larger and more social, the functional aspect raises the question of purview in some communities. Should the social functions be the province of the Jewish community centers, the synagogues, Jewish educational organizations or consortiums of these and perhaps others?

Funds and space requirements are other considerations. Many Federation staff members carry leadership development responsibilities as well as other assignments. As the mass programs have expanded, more staff time has frequently been required for them. This often means a larger budget and the greater use of facilities as well. Do the end results justify these expenditures and just how are the end results measured?

The shifting objectives of the group pose still another dilemma. The infusion of more younger members has implications which cannot be ignored. Are they affluent enough to make campaign contributions in consonance with what is expected of prospective leaders? Is their status in the community stable enough so that they will be available for community service in reasonable numbers at the conclusion of the training program? Will there be available a sufficient number of meaningful positions for the increased number of program "graduates" to aspire to? With increased memberships, particularly of those who may be transient in the community and not remain with the program for any length of time, will there be a "frustration factor," a program drop-out rate so large that it affects the entire leadership development effort?

Do mass programs inhibit the extension of leadership development groups into other Federation areas of concern? For example, leadership development serves to elevate standards of giving, participation levels and skills on the part of participants. This, then, influences the raising of standards throughout Federation and, in some

instances, with the constituent agencies' leadership as well. Can these higher standards be maintained with the mass program clientele or must these standards be reduced in order to attract the numbers sought for mass programming? If so, does this imply a deadend for leadership development in this regard?

Modalities

The simplest choice a Federation can make between the elitist and mass programs is to opt for one or the other and then structure its choice to exclude unwanted members, starting with the entrance requirements.

If the elitist program is selected, the entrance requirements could include nomination and sponsorship by an established community leader or professional staff member, a narrower age range with an older minimum age, some record of prior community service and campaign contribution (perhaps of a given magnitude), strict attendance requirements and an explicit and reasonably demanding commitment on the part of the nominee for volunteer service. The training group would have a limited membership, of course, and the usual quid pro quo is that group members are promised appointments to boards of directors or assignment to important committee or campaign trade groups upon their successful completion of the training sequence.

Mass program entrance requirements usually are less restrictive and are characterized by four key provisions: persons may volunteer to join and sponsorship is not necessary; eligibility is based upon a wide age span (such as 21 to 40 years); residence is required within the Federation's service area; and the aspirant is expected to be Jewish. Little or no weight is given to the person's prior community accomplishments or campaign gifts and even the criteria of residence and Jewishness sometimes are modified.

Federations, however, are not limited to these polarized choices. There are variations and combinations of modalities which have been tried and which allow a Federation to engage in a more complex program, trying to some extent to serve the needs and derive the benefits of both kinds of programs.

One such is the two-track approach which, in essence, is an elitist program operating within a mass program. With this the membership is divided into two groups, those on a general interest track and those others on a training track. There is an open recruitment for the entire program, the entrance qualifications of which are about the same as stated in the preceding and all participants start as general interest track members.

The general interest track offers monthly programs based upon major issues in Jewish life plus others which celebrate Jewish holidays. In addition, there are other events such as dialogues with Israelis, debates on controversial issues in Jewish life such as abortion, state aid to sectarian education, affirmative action. There are also Talmud study groups, Jewish education courses, tours of local agencies and opportunities for community service, both individually and as part of task force groups. Campaign solicitation is another outlet.

The training track sequence includes attendance at general track meetings plus those subjects described in the preceding as advanced training, the latter offered on a once-a-month basis. Additionally, training track participants are eligible for weekend retreats, dialogues with community leaders, and membership on leadership development governance committees. Most important, agency placement is reserved for those who are on the training track and is not available to those on the general interest track.

To remain a member of the general interest track, a person must attend a given number of monthly program meetings and,

during the course of a year, make a contribution to the Federation's annual campaign. Training track members are required to attend at least a majority of the training sequence programs, to make capability donations to both Federation campaigns and to work as solicitors in at least one of them. Their participation in general interest programs is encouraged but optional.

The consortium model is another approach. With this, there is a dual recruitment, one for the training program and the other for the mass program. Federation solely conducts the training program, which remains under its auspices. Those aspects which deal with community issues, agency services, campaign, allocations and social planning are its exclusive purview. The Jewish education courses, holiday observances, Israel dialogues and social events are conducted by a consortium which could consist of the Jewish community centers, synagogues, Jewish educational agencies and other institutions professing an interest in the development of a Jewish lifestyle among young persons and in promoting social contacts. These institutions lend their expertise, personnel and facilities to the program as well as helping to recruit participants for the mass program. Federation's role as a partner is to help provide clientele and to be as supportive as it can to the program.

The referral model is another avenue which offers possibilities, especially for those Federations which recognize the social needs of young people but who are either unable or unwilling to serve them directly or in partnership with other organizations. The Federation maintains a list and description of Jewish social outlets within the community, brings this to the attention of its leadership development members who may be interested and perhaps even counsels them in making the appropriate individual choices. In addition, the Federation could establish a

forum body for representatives of such services to provide communication and coordination among them and easy accessibility to the Federation related members interested in meeting others. Among the smaller communities, the referral model also offers an opportunity for regional cooperation and interaction.

The delegate model is another option which is distinctive in its form of recruitment. Instead of either an open or even selective recruitment from the Jewish community at large, the Federation invites its affiliated agencies and the Jewish constituency organizations operating within its boundaries to delegate one or more representative younger leaders from their ranks to a community young leadership council. Because the council then deals with established leaders, there is no need for the council to conduct a placement program. Although some aspects of the training programs heretofore described may be incorporated in this model, the principal rationale for its being two-fold: to develop a total community attitude on the part of delegates as opposed to a parochial view of only one aspect of Jewish communal life (a statesmanlike view) and to provide a forum for young leaders to share experiences and mutual concerns and to exploit contacts among community resources.

Each of these models has a distinct attraction as well as limitation. The two-track system is the most comprehensive programmatically and its wide attraction to persons with a variety of interests. It also is the most demanding of staff time, implies the largest budget and the greatest use of facilities. It requires the most time and financial commitment of those who embark on the training track. For those Federations with the resources to mount a two-track program, there will be the greatest yield in sheer numbers and the flexibility of offering both a leadership training and social program with the capacity for member crossover between the two tracks.

The consortium model permits agencies with expertise, experience and suitable facilities to conduct activities for which they may be better suited than the Federation. There also is a separation between the training and social events which helps preserve the character of each. For those communities still struggling with the question of turf, a workable solution is offered in the consortium approach. However, the integrity of the total group is not reinforced and crossover from one activity to the other may not be well served, nor is the total-community attitude aspect of member development. Although the burden of service delivery is shared, the result is a limited confederation which has implied weaknesses.

The referral model recognizes the needs of single young persons and provides a service consonant with Federation's indirect service approach to community, both in terms of a limited specific service to individuals and in working cooperatively with organizations. It does little, on the other hand, for recruitment; nor does it enrich services for young people except perhaps through the synergistic action of the groups represented in the forum.

The delegate model ranks high in prestige because of its representational nature, and it can serve, in a sense, to consolidate the functional relationship between Federation and its affiliates. Its limited size has budgetary advantages, and it brings a certain cohesiveness to the community. Its

limitations are that it tends to replicate the type of community leadership extant and it does not lend itself readily to progressive evolutionary change nor does it bring new people into the training program.

Conclusion

Mass programming is indicative of the growth of leadership development programs as they have become a core function of Federation, serving the emerging needs of single young Jewish adults who have joined these programs in significant numbers. That this amalgam has come about in a de facto manner instead of a de jure is tactically less important than the recognition that a problem exists which begs decisive solution. Federations which are experiencing this challenge and remain poised on the edge of the dilemma will, in time, have to content with it as a crisis situation.

A community's history, the size and growth or decline of its young Jewish population, its resources and the relationship between its Federation and the constituent agencies and organizations will be influential in determining its course of action. So long as an unacceptably high rate of inter-marriage prevails in the community and so long as the creative survival of the Jewish people are community priorities, mass programming will remain a viable vehicle for involving young people in the philanthropic enterprise of which Federation is the locus.