Springboard’s Bet Cohort
Key Findings and Future Considerations

Nicole Samuel • Amy L. Sales • Rachel Minkin • Eliana Chapman

Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University

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INTRODUCTION

Springboard is Hillel International’s two-year professional development Fellowship for recent college graduates. The aims of the Fellowship are to identify and cultivate emerging professionals, to motivate them to apply their talents to the Jewish sector, and to build a talent pipeline for Hillel and beyond. Springboard’s program design reflects the ways millennials approach their careers and is consistent with the literature on emerging professionals and socialization into fields of practice. The Fellowship’s specialty tracks (Innovation, Social Justice, and Ezra Jewish Education), site placements, and various learning and support structures are key elements and are cited throughout the evaluation.

Bet cohort is the focus for the Springboard evaluation because it represents the Fellowship at a liminal point in its evolution—after the initial test case (Aleph cohort) and before scaling (Gimel cohort). By the time Bet Fellows entered the program, the Springboard team had a year of experience with Fellows in the field; the basic structures and methods of the program were well established. At the same time, there was still room to change the program and a willingness to do so.

This research builds on Tobin Belzer’s outcome evaluation of Aleph cohort, which found that Fellows succeeded in engaging students on campus through the specialty tracks. Belzer’s evaluation also suggested additional work in developing or refining different components of the Fellowship, including supervisor training, professional development curriculum, and career development assistance. The Bet cohort evaluation includes updates on these areas.

The present study also examines Springboard within a broader context: where Springboard stands vis-à-vis other Hillel Fellowships for emerging professionals, how Springboard fits with other efforts at Hillel International, and how Springboard is affected by the context of the local Hillel where Fellows are placed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The evaluation of Bet cohort is an expansive, multimethod study that included surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted over a two-year period, from December 2017 through November 2019.

The Aleph evaluation gave positive ratings for Springboard. Without a comparison group, however, that early research was limited in its ability to demonstrate the impact of the program. The Bet evaluation was designed to include several comparison groups, including Aleph cohort and Ezra Fellowship alumni.
Most important in this design was the inclusion of “New Hires,” young professionals who entered into Hillel work at essentially the same time as the Bet Fellows. The main difference between the two groups is that one was incubated and the other was not. This comparison was key to answering the question of whether and how the Springboard incubator experience differentially affected the performance and outcomes of young, emerging professionals.

The research employed quantitative and qualitative methods. The former indicated the prevalence of specific points of view and enabled us to make direct comparisons across groups. The qualitative piece added texture and nuance to the survey data. Interviews and focus groups allowed Bet Fellows the opportunity to “tell their story” and to explore their feelings, attitudes, and behaviors at a deeper and more individualized level.

The evaluation included a total of 13 different surveys as well as interviews with Springboard faculty and educators, SIC professionals, Bet Fellows, Hillel staff and students at eight Bet sites, Gimel Fellows, and JCSC Fellowship alumni. See Appendix for methodology.
Key findings from the Bet cohort evaluation appear below in chronological order beginning in Year 1 of the Bet Fellowship. The report describes how the Fellows developed over the course of the Fellowship and where they “landed” post-Springboard. This section also presents data from the alumni Snapshot surveys that focus on the effects that Springboard has had on the Fellows’ lives and work to date.

Results from surveys of comparison groups are included to provide context and comparison for the Bet Fellows’ results. These include other Hillel early career professionals (New Hires and Aleph cohort), Ezra Fellowship participants, and JCSC Fellowship alumni.

**Demographics**

One of Springboard’s goals for the talent pipeline is to increase its diversity. Demographic data from the Bet baseline survey show a relatively homogenous cohort in terms of gender, age, linguistic background, political orientation, and race:

- Nineteen Fellows identified as female, four as male, and one as “other.”
- All of the Fellows began the program when they were between 23 and 25 years of age.
- All grew up in English-speaking homes.
- All considered themselves politically liberal or moderate.
- The cohort was comprised of 22 white participants, two Latinx, and one Asian.

The cohort was more diverse in terms of sexual identity. Sixteen of the 24 Fellows were heterosexual, and six were bisexual, gay, lesbian, or queer. One identified as “other” (“exploring, asexual”).

Most of the Bet Fellows were highly involved in Jewish life as undergraduates (19 of 24; 79%); and most were at least somewhat involved with Hillel on their campus (20 of 24; 83%). Of the 20 involved with Hillel, 17 played a leadership role in the organization, indicating that most of the Bet Fellows were primed for the work they would be doing in their Springboard Fellowship.
Choosing Springboard

The most influential factor in Bet Fellows’ decision to join Springboard was the type of work they would be doing, with all but one Fellow saying it was “very” or “extremely” important (23 of 24). Also high on the list were the opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and to build their careers (20 of 24). Lowest on the list was the opportunity to work for Hillel. Salary—an assumed selling point for Springboard—was highly important for just over half of the Fellows (13 of 24).

Views of the Local Hillel

From early on in the evaluation, it was clear that the local Hillel was a potent factor in the Fellows’ satisfaction and productivity. Some Fellows were in placements where they had the organizational climate, resources, and support they needed to succeed on the job. Others were not. For example, 14 Bet Fellows agreed that their Hillel was open to experimentation and change; nine disagreed with this statement.

- Fewer than half of the Bet Fellows agreed that they had the necessary resources to do their jobs or enough time to accomplish their goals (11 of 23).
- Fewer than half said they could count on the local Hillel’s commitment to their specialty area (10 of 24).

Specialty areas often conflicted with existing priorities, particularly in Hillels with limited resources and/or small staff teams. An Innovation Fellow described her local Hillel as “too small to prioritize innovation.” Over a year later, in their exit interviews with the research team, Fellows most often mentioned issues with their Hillel’s commitment to their specialty—whether Innovation, Social Justice, or Jewish Education.

Comparison to New Hires

New Hires within the Hillel movement are the strongest comparison group for Bet Fellows. New Hires matched Bet Fellows on key dimensions and importantly, participants in both groups were in their first professional role in the Hillel movement, working fulltime on campus in entry-level student engagement positions (See Appendix for methodology). The two groups are largely similar in terms of demographic characteristics.

Bet Fellows and New Hires share some of the same motivations for taking a position with Hillel—the opportunity to learn new things, to build a career, and to work in the Jewish community. The majority in both groups valued the opportunity to make a difference (Table 1).
Supervision

Among the most notable differences between Bet cohort and New Hires were ratings of supervision. New Hires rated all items related to supervision higher and were overall more positive about their experience with their supervisors.

- While 90% of New Hires agreed that their supervisor helped them solve problems or resolve difficult issues, only 58% of Bet Fellows agreed with the same statement.
- Seventy-seven percent of New Hires agreed that they see eye to eye with their supervisor on most matters, compared to just over half of Bet Fellows (54%).

Professional Expertise and Confidence

The Bet baseline and New Hires surveys measured two dimensions of emerging professionalism: professional expertise and perception of self as Jewish leader and educator.

- At least half of all Bet Fellows (50%) and New Hires (59%) feel highly confident in supporting students along their Jewish journeys—the essential task for those working in student engagement.
- Both Bet Fellows and New Hires rated managing Jewish-related controversies lowest on the list of their professional expertise. Only a small percentage of both groups have high confidence in their
ability to manage Jewish-related controversies in Hillel or on campus (34% of Bet Fellows, 14% of New Hires).

- Bet Fellows and New Hires are similar when it comes to the perception of themselves as Jewish leaders and educators. Respondents in both groups are more likely to see themselves as Jewish leaders (92% of Bet Fellows, 97% of New Hires) than as Jewish educators (50% of Bet Fellows, 56% of New Hires).

**Thoughts about the Future**

The Bet cohort baseline and New Hires surveys included questions on respondents’ perception of the long-term impact of their work and thoughts about their careers.

- Participation in an incubator program seems not to affect views of long-term impact. Some 58% of Bet Fellows (11 of 19) and 56% of New Hires (18 of 32) believed that their work would have an impact that endured beyond their time in their current position.

- The two groups also share similar career intentions. Asked to imagine where they might be five years from now, more than half of Bet Fellows (54%) and New Hires (58%) said it was highly likely that they would be working as a professional in the Jewish community.

- The groups differed in their views of volunteer work. New Hires (65%) were more likely than Bet Fellows (46%) to see a future for themselves as lay leaders in the Jewish community.

**SPRINGBOARD IMPACT ON BET FELLOWS**

To analyze Springboard’s impact on Bet Fellows over the course of the Fellowship, the report compared Bet Fellows’ responses to their initial survey (T1, March 2018) to their end-of-Fellowship survey (T2, May 2019). Analyses are based on responses from the 11 Innovation and nine Social Justice Fellows who completed both surveys.4

Over the course of the Fellowship, Bet Fellows generally felt their professional expertise grew significantly. This includes expertise related to student engagement, programming, and relationships with colleagues as well as the specifics of their specialty tracks (Innovation or Social Justice).

**Views of the Job**

Bet Fellows’ views of their jobs changed over the course of the Fellowship. The percentage of Fellows who agreed they had the time and resources to do their jobs well increased from 42% to 68%. At the same time, the percentage of Bet Fellows who agreed that their co-workers helped them get the job done remained the same (55%).
Job Satisfaction

Bet Fellows’ job satisfaction over time was mixed, with increases in satisfaction on some dimensions of the work and decreases on others.

- Satisfaction with the opportunity to make a difference in Year 2 increased, up from 64% to 76%.
- Satisfaction with workload also increased over the same period, from 53% to 71%.
- Satisfaction with the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills decreased somewhat, from 76% to 65%.
- Satisfaction with the leadership of the local Hillel received the lowest rating in both years (53% and 47%).
- Assessment of their relationship with their supervisor remained stable or declined minimally. The greatest improvement was in the feeling that Fellows were being micro-managed by their supervisor, from 37% in Year 1 to 26% in Year 2.

Professional Expertise and Confidence

Fellows rated their professional expertise\(^5\) higher on all measures at the end of Year 2, demonstrating remarkable growth from Year 1. Particularly impressive was the large number of Fellows who became highly expert in different aspects of student engagement.

- The largest increases in expertise were on two items related to student engagement: reaching out to students and developing new methods. For both measures, more than half of Bet Fellows (53%) rated themselves as highly expert, up from 11% in Year 1.
- Sixty-three percent of Fellows said they were highly expert in motivating student engagement or participation in Year 2, compared to 21% in Year 1.
- At the end of Year 2, 84% of Fellows said they were highly expert at supporting students along their Jewish journeys compared to 58% in Year 1.
- More than three fourths of Fellows rated themselves highly expert in developing and implementing work plans (79%), a key professional skill, compared to 42% in Year 1.
- Managing controversial issues on campus remained the greatest challenge for Bet Fellows. At the end of Year 2, just 26% of Fellows rated themselves as expert in handling Jewish-related controversies, up from 21% in the previous year.

In qualitative interviews at the end of Year 2, Bet Fellows told members of the research team about their successful student engagement efforts. They explained how they deepened relationships with students, worked with diverse groups, taught Jewish content, organized alternative breaks, and created new events for their Hillel. As the Fellows moved on from Springboard, they hoped and believed that the programs they had initiated, the lessons they had taught students, and the impact they had had on staff culture would endure beyond their time on campus.
Expertise in Specialty Areas

Bet Fellows felt they gained measurable expertise related to their specialty track. Growth was especially marked in the Social Justice track.

- Nearly two thirds of Innovation and Social Justice Fellows (64%) said they were highly expert in leading efforts in their specialty at the end of Year 2, compared to 42% in Year 1.
- By the end of the Fellowship, four of the 10 Innovation Fellows considered themselves highly expert in design thinking. Fellows’ comments suggest that the majority of were unable to apply the material from their Springboard training to their local Hillel and they were unable to effect change to the degree they had imagined.
- Most Social Justice Fellows (seven of nine) rated themselves as highly expert at engaging students in Jewish life through their specialty. Similarly, most Social Justice Fellows (six of nine) reported they were highly expert at collaborating with other organizations on issues students were concerned about, both on and off campus.

Identifying as Jewish Leaders and Educators

Fellows’ sense of themselves as Jewish leaders and educators also developed over the course of the Fellowship. However, the lowest of these professional measures was consistently identification as Jewish educators.

- At the end of Year 2, all 19 Bet Fellows saw themselves as Jewish leaders, compared to 17 of 19 Fellows in Year 1.
- Fifteen of 19 Bet Fellows saw themselves as Jewish educators, an increase from eight Fellows in Year 1.
- Eighteen Bet Fellows agreed that they could tell their own Jewish story in a compelling way, a slight decrease from 19 Fellows in Year 1.

Mentorship, Support, and Guidance

Mentoring relationships helped many Fellows—but not all—feel expert in their work. Bet Fellows typically cited four sources of mentorship and support from senior colleagues. These included supervisors or other staff at their local Hillel, the Springboard professional team, senior track advisors, or Springboard faculty in their specialty area. These resources were helpful in building professional skills, dealing with difficult work situations, developing program ideas, and aiding Fellows think through next steps in their careers.

Jewish Learning

Springboard’s Jewish learning opportunities were intended to support growth in Jewish knowledge and commitment. The program included ongoing Jewish learning for Bet Fellows with faculty through monthly webinars, as well as in-person meetings at professional gatherings and conferences. These sessions—organized by track—were intended to introduce Fellows to Jewish text and values and engender a foundation of Jewish skill and self-confidence.
This effort was not entirely successful. Both faculty and Fellows expressed confusion over the goals of the Jewish learning sessions: Were they intended to bolster the Fellows’ personal Jewish learning and journey or were they to provide skills and knowledge for the Fellows to apply to their work on campus? Regardless, Bet Fellows generally preferred learning that was directly transferable to their work and included materials they could use with students on campus.

The summer learning programs, which took place after Year 1 and served both personal and professional purposes, were more popular with the Fellows than were the webinars. Importantly, many of the Fellows said they chose their summer program based on its application to their work on campus rather than on the quality of its Jewish learning.

Overall, the effects of the summer experiences were multilayered and accomplished more than the core purposes of Jewish learning and skill building. Fellows found value in recharging, experiential learning, increased knowledge of specialty areas, and new perspectives on careers, the top four outcomes mentioned during post-summer 2018 interviews.

**POST-FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES**

Bet Fellows’ activities after the Fellowship are further evidence of Springboard’s impact. Exit interviews with Bet Fellows (June-July 2019) and the first Bet alumni snapshot survey administered four months post-Fellowship (October 2019) provide initial indicators of the success of Springboard’s efforts to build a talent pipeline.

**Employment**

With support from Springboard, almost all of the Bet Fellows found employment by October 2019. The great majority landed jobs in the Jewish sector, outpacing the results for the Aleph cohort.

- At the time of the Bet alumni snapshot survey in October 2019, nearly 90% of respondents (27 of 31 Fellows) were employed either fulltime or part-time. Three of the four respondents who were unemployed were pursuing graduate studies.
- The majority of Bet Fellows (81%) continued to work in the Jewish community (including Hillel), as did their peers in the Aleph cohort (67%).
- Seven Bet Fellows planned to remain at the Hillel where they had had their Springboard placement.
- Three of the Bet Fellows (11%) and four of the Aleph Fellows (27%) moved to positions in the for-profit sector after the Fellowship.

Exit interviews with Bet Fellows suggest that Springboard deserves credit for encouraging Fellows to explore work in Jewish organizations. Many of the Fellows used their time in Springboard and opportunities such as the summer learning to envision their careers in Hillel, as clergy, or elsewhere in the Jewish world. We know from exit interviews that the shift in thinking was sometimes transformative. An Ezra Fellow reported that Springboard “unexpectedly” helped her see that she wanted to try working in a Jewish
A Social Justice Fellow never thought she would work in a Jewish institution. Yet, at the end of the Fellowship, she could clearly see herself “as a Jewish professional instead of just a professional who is Jewish.”

The data are not always positive. An Innovation Fellow, for example, said that the Springboard team was dismissive of her ideas and her local Hillel did not give her the opportunity to implement innovative programs. The experience made her feel “spiteful” toward the Jewish world, and she limited her post-Springboard job search to the for profit sector.

**Graduate Education**

As of October 2019, seven of the 31 Bet alumni were in graduate school: six were fulltime students and one was part-time. Most of the programs were chosen as further preparation for a career in the Jewish community as either an educator, clergy, or other nonprofit professional.

**Community Involvement**

By October 2019, 16% (5 of 31) of the Bet alumni had taken on lay leadership roles at least “somewhat.” This percentage holds for service in both the Jewish and general communities.

Though very few Bet Fellows were involved as lay leaders immediately following Springboard, comparable data from Aleph cohort and Ezra Fellowship alumni illustrates that lay involvement increases with time (Table 2) and suggests that increases in the Bet cohort are also likely.

| Table 2. Alumni lay leadership involvement: Cohort comparison (Snapshots, October 2019) |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| % Somewhat/Very much (3,4)      | Bet Alumni       | Aleph Alumni     | Ezra Alumni      |
| Taken on lay leadership role--  |                  |                  |                  |
| …in the Jewish community       | 16%              | 42%              | 58%              |
| …in the general community      | 16%              | 32%              | 29%              |

Note: n=31 Bet alumni; n=19 Aleph alumni; n=31 Ezra alumni. Results are presented in percentages to allow for comparison across groups. Table reports only those indicating somewhat or very much. The others answered none or a little.
SNAPSHOT SURVEYS: VIEWS OF THE FUTURE

One of the strengths of the Springboard evaluation research design is the alumni snapshot surveys. Designed as simple check-ins, the surveys tracked alumni over time. Findings in this section come from data gathered from the following cohorts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Date of Snapshot</th>
<th>Time Elapsed since Fellowship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bet (Springboard Fellowship)</td>
<td>October 2019</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleph (Springboard Fellowship)</td>
<td>October 2019</td>
<td>1 year 4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra (Ezra Fellowship)</td>
<td>October 2019</td>
<td>3-7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCSC (JCSC Fellowship)</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>11-24 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data allow a comparison analysis of Fellows’ trajectories regarding employment, career advancement, and Jewish commitments as well as enduring connections and future plans.7

Career advancement

Throughout the Bet cohort evaluation, three measures were employed to gauge career advancement: position in the organization’s hierarchy, span of control, and salary. These measures were used again in the October 2019 post-Fellowship survey.

- Four months after the Fellowship, half of the Bet Fellows held positions close to the top professional in their organization, a fact tempered by the relatively small size of most of the organizations.
- Half were earning salaries significantly higher than their $40,000 Fellowship salary. Of the nine Bet alumni earning $50,000 or more, six were employed in the Jewish nonprofit sector and one was employed at Hillel.
- Few had supervisory responsibilities. In their first position after the Fellowship, only 13% of Aleph alumni and 27% of Bet alumni had supervisory responsibilities.

Identifying as Jewish Professionals

Bet cohort’s strong identification as Jewish professionals, seen in the T1 and T2 surveys, resurfaces when compared to other alumni cohorts. Of the three comparable groups (Springboard Aleph, Springboard Bet, and Ezra Fellowship), Bet Fellows were the most likely to see themselves as Jewish leaders and educators. This fact may reflect the quality of their Fellowship program and/or the length of time since completing the program. Aleph, Ezra, and JCSC Fellows were surveyed between one and 24 years post-Fellowship—during which they had years of real-world experience that may have influenced how respondents understood “leader” and “educator.”

Consistent across cohorts and years, participants see themselves more as leaders than as educators (Table 3). This finding extends to the JCSC Fellows: 59% somewhat or very much see themselves as Jewish leaders, and 46% consider themselves Jewish educators.8
Enduring Effects

In the initial months post-Fellowship, Bet alumni continued to draw on the lessons learned during their Springboard experience and maintained relationships with Hillel and former colleagues. They also continued to build on their Springboard experience—seeking out mentorship and professional development opportunities, and giving and seeking support from their cohort.

- Nearly two thirds of Bet alumni (20 of 31) said they had “somewhat” or “very much” used lessons learned during Springboard. The same number of alumni said they maintained relationships with Hillel professionals.
- Perhaps most impressive, two thirds of Bet alumni had already sought out professional development opportunities for themselves only four months post-Fellowship.
- More than half of Bet alumni (17 of 31) sought out mentorship or coaching. The same number of alumni gave or received support from their Springboard peers.

The rate at which Bet alumni sought out professional development opportunities in their first months post-Fellowship was also noticeably higher than that of Aleph alumni a year after they had completed their Fellowship (Table 4). This finding suggests that Springboard successfully encouraged in Bet Fellows an appreciation for professional development and its importance in building a career. The Bet cohort’s percentage in seeking out professional development opportunities post-Fellowship is similar to that of JCSC alumni (69%).

Table 4 also shows Ezra alumni to be particularly motivated to seek out professional development opportunities. All but one of the professional Fellowship programs in which they participated were in the Jewish education or professional world (e.g., Wexner Graduate Fellowship, Hillel International’s Accelerate, M2 Camp Educators Cohort).

Table 3. Alumni identifying as Jewish professional: Cohort comparison (Snapshots, October 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do you consider yourself—</th>
<th>Bet Alumni</th>
<th>Aleph Alumni</th>
<th>Ezra Alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...a Jewish leader</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...a Jewish educator</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=31 Bet alumni; n=19 Aleph alumni; n=31 Ezra alumni
Future Intentions

The literature on professional work underscores that careers no longer follow linear pathways.9 Indeed, all of the alumni cohorts show high likelihood of job turnover within the next two years. In October 2019, 67% of the Bet alumni (21 of 31) said it was somewhat or very likely that they would look for a new job in the coming years, as did 63% (12 of 19) of Aleph cohort, and 52% (16 of 31) of Ezra alumni. Even among JCSC alumni, who are considerably further along in their careers, about 40% said they were considering a job change. As such, it is likely that Springboard alumni will make multiple job changes in their career and move in and out of work in the Jewish community, their specialty area, and perhaps the nonprofit sector.

Of the 21 Bet alumni considering a professional move, 16 said it was somewhat or very likely that their next job would be in the Jewish nonprofit sector (excluding Hillel), compared to six Bet alumni who said it was somewhat or very likely that their next job would be in Hillel. Looking at the Jewish nonprofit sector overall, including Hillel, 76% of Bet alumni considering a professional move said it was somewhat or very likely that their next position would be in the Jewish community. Bet alumni who intend to seek new jobs were on par with Ezra when it came to interest in the Jewish nonprofit sector but were the lowest of the three cohorts in terms of their interest in seeking positions in Hillel (Table 5).

Of the 41% of the JCSC alumni who said they were somewhat or very likely to change jobs in the next two years, most (62%) thought it was somewhat or very likely that their next position would be in the for-profit sector. About half said their next position would likely be in the Jewish nonprofit sector (other than Hillel), while 20% said it would likely be in Hillel.

Table 4. Post-Fellowship professional development: Alumni cohort comparison (Snapshots, October 2019) (In descending order by Bet percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Somewhat/Very much</th>
<th>Bet alumni</th>
<th>Aleph alumni</th>
<th>Ezra alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sought out professional development opportunities (e.g., conferences, seminars, courses)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in professional Fellowships or incubator programs</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=31 Bet alumni; n=19 Aleph alumni; n=31 Ezra alumni
Table 5. Likely next professional move: Cohort comparison (Snapshots, October 2019) (In descending order by Bet percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Somewhat/Very likely (3,4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bet Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish nonprofit (other than Hillel)</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For profit</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsectarian nonprofit</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillel</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Jewish faith-based nonprofit</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=21 Bet alumni, except for ‘Hillel’ where n=20; n=12 Aleph alumni, except for ‘Hillel’ where n=11; n=16 Ezra alumni
Springboard is a bold initiative to build a talent pipeline for Hillel and beyond. The program’s creators made several essential decisions during its planning phase, which in turn played key roles in the Fellowship’s success. One critical choice was to create tracks that would allow Fellows to engage students through the lens of a specialty. The value of this decision is seen in the Bet cohort data and in the growth that Springboard has enjoyed in the subsequent cohorts. A second decision was to use a cohort design and pay special attention to the support structures that would guide and sustain participants. Bet Fellows demonstrably benefited from the support of their peers and from the network of Springboard staff, faculty, and senior track advisors. A third choice was to make Springboard a two-year Fellowship. This decision turned out to be critical, as Bet Fellows did not become fully expert in student engagement until Year 2. Finally, the fourth decision to award or “match” the Fellowship to local Hillels and to provide was key to the Fellows’ work and to their individual professional development.

Outcome measures demonstrate Springboard’s accomplishments. Over the two years, Bet Fellows gained noticeably in their confidence and expertise as engagement professionals and as Jewish leaders. Graduating Fellows successfully moved on to professional jobs and/or graduate studies, with more than 80% of Bet participants landing in Jewish settings after Springboard. One of the first post-Springboard outcomes for Bet alumni was their interest in professional development. Two thirds of Bet participants sought professional development opportunities in the first few months, an interest many Fellows attributed in interviews to their experiences during Springboard. Finally, Bet Fellows reported positive feelings about their Springboard experience at the end of the Fellowship and in the first months as alumni.

At the same time, not all of the Bet Fellows benefited in all of the intended ways. The data show that there is room for improvement, from the campus selection process, to recruiting and onboarding Fellows, and ongoing professional development, including Springboard’s Jewish educational components.
IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

This section considers the implications of the findings and includes advice from Bet alumni to Springboard gathered during exit interviews in June and July 2019. Also included in this section are questions for Springboard that are intended to spark conversation and support the Springboard team, Hillel, and their partners in data-informed thinking and planning going forward.

Implications focus on the six elements most fundamental to Springboard and critical to the success of future cohorts: professional development, Jewish learning, specialty areas, campus placement, student engagement, and cohort diversity. The data also identify opportunities for improvement in each of these elements moving forward.

Professional Development

Advice from Bet Fellows

“Springboard should prepare Fellows for [social] isolation. I was naïve to think it was easy to go to a college town and make friends outside of work.”

“Fellows should have more time to share what they’re doing on campus during webinars to brainstorm with each other and learn from each other in a more formal way.”

First and foremost, Springboard is a professional development program designed to help build Hillel’s talent pipeline. The literature on work shows the importance of professional development in the early stages of one’s career, and the current research demonstrates how Bet Fellows benefited from the professional development they received during Springboard. Fellows shared examples of their learning, from learning to be “orchestra ready” during orientation in July 2017, to becoming Jewishly “empowered” in summer 2018, to career planning in Year 2. At the same time, the evaluation identified areas where Bet Fellows lacked or needed additional support, including fundamental professional skills, applying ongoing learning to their work on campus, and managing controversial topics related to the Jewish community or Israel.

Onboarding. Both Bet Fellows and faculty agreed that Springboard needed to provide Fellows with more training in basic skills and general onboarding to professional life. The Fellowship was the first full-time professional position for most participants and Fellows were relocating to new communities where they lacked support systems. Areas for additional training include time management, navigating workplace politics, “managing up,” and how to grow their own social networks.

Questions to consider. How might Springboard support Fellows’ development of basic professional skills? Which areas should be the responsibility of Springboard and which the responsibility of the local Hillel?

Applicability to campus work. Bet Fellows were looking for ways to bring their Springboard learning into their work on campus. One pitfall of Springboard’s training was the one-size-fits-all sessions that were too broad to be applicable to different campus
settings. Fellows were not interested in or willing to invest their time in training that did not have immediate utility. One challenge for Springboard is balancing training that encourages understanding of the larger skill set required for student engagement and Fellows’ specific needs related to their site placement. Future sessions might focus on skills related to student engagement, skills needed to be effective in the local Hillel, and skills needed for overall career development.

Questions to consider. How does Springboard help Fellows understand the applicability of general training to their respective local Hillels? How should Springboard seek to refine its training given the complexity of the different skills needed to do the job?

Managing controversial topics. Over the course of the evaluation, Bet Fellows reported feeling ill prepared to deal with Jewish or Hillel-related controversies on campus. This sentiment was particularly acute for Social Justice Fellows, who had difficulty building connections with other groups on campus because of Hillel’s association with Israel and its politics. Springboard Fellows—and all early career professionals across Hillel—need additional training and support in dealing with such difficult issues, including anti-Semitism and Israel/Palestine. At the same time, Springboard or other early career professionals cannot be the only staff in the local Hillel with this training and understanding.

Questions to consider. How might Springboard provide ongoing training to help Fellows become more sophisticated about controversial topics and learn techniques for dealing with them? How might Hillel include professionals at all levels in such training?

Jewish Learning

Advice from Bet Fellows

“I hated going on the calls and webinars. I would skip the session if there was a conflict—I would always pick the local program or meeting. The Springboard commitments made me feel like I was neglecting my Hillel and vice versa.”

“It was nice that they give us options for the summer, but maybe they should require each track to go to one place together. All Ezra Fellows should go to Pardes together. This would build our text skills and our connection to each other.”

Among Springboard’s primary goals for Bet cohort was Jewish learning. Jewish education was intended to help Fellows develop skills to support their work on campus and further inspire their professional and personal Jewish growth and development. However, the Fellowship’s Jewish educational elements lacked cohesion, and there was little vision for how Jewish learning fit in the Fellowship goals.

Methodologies. The research confirms that Jewish education is best when it is individualized and experiential. Over the course of the two-year evaluation, Bet Fellows specifically cited the monthly Jewish learning
webinars as the least useful component of the Fellowship. Many Fellows did not find the webinars to be relevant to their work on campus. This finding raises questions about how Springboard might provide relevant and meaningful Jewish content for Fellows across the two Fellowship years.

**Questions to consider.** What is the best design for ongoing Jewish learning that provides the Fellows with content and techniques that can be 1) useful with their students and 2) facilitate a love of Jewish learning and confidence as Jewish educators? Is there a way for Springboard to organize Jewish education that brings members of the cohort together as a community of learners at the same time that it speaks to the needs and interests of individual Fellows?

**Summer learning.** Summer immersive experiences are the centerpiece of Springboard’s Jewish learning, but Springboard itself does not have the capacity to provide these kinds of experiences. Instead, Springboard outsources summer learning experiences to other organizations. While Springboard sought to include a diverse range of experiences for the Bet Fellows, several of the programs offered did not include Jewish learning. Some of the organizers of these programs were also not familiar with Springboard’s goals.

**Questions to consider.** What are the criteria for including programs on the summer learning “menu?” How might Springboard work more closely with summer experience providers to learn about their offerings and program goals and likewise share the purpose, ethos, and needs of Springboard and of the Fellows?

**Immersive experiences.** While Jewish learning does not need to be limited to traditional text study, the summer experiences in immersive settings and rooted in *chavruta* learning and its methodologies showed the greatest net gains for Bet Fellows, both personally and professionally. In interviews, Bet Fellows shared that these experiences had a direct influence on decisions about post-Fellowship employment, graduate school, and the possibility of a career in the Jewish community.

**Question to consider.** How might Springboard expand its summer offerings to include additional immersive Jewish learning opportunities?
Specialties/Tracks

Advice from Bet Fellows

“Springboard needs to be more realistic in thinking about training and design thinking. Most innovation Fellows were doing engagement and programming. I was working on engaging students. I didn’t have a chance to sit at my desk and ideate—that’s not the job.”

“Students, both Jewish and non, would hear ‘Hillel’ and think ‘pro-Israel.’ This made it difficult to work with other organizations on campus. I would explain that I was the Social Justice Fellow at Hillel and they would respond, ‘We don’t feel comfortable working with you.’”

Springboard’s specialty areas or tracks were designed to help develop new practices in student engagement and to facilitate a culture of experimentation and change in local Hillels. Springboard has experimented with its tracks, from social media in Aleph cohort to the addition of Jewish education through its incorporation of the Ezra Fellowship. The tracks succeeded in attracting potential applicants to Springboard, particularly those may not have otherwise considered positions in Hillel. Below are implications for each of the Bet cohort specialties.

Innovation. The large-scale definition of innovation described during Bet training had to be scaled down for the realities of campus work. Fellows attempted to utilize design-thinking methods in their work, but their practices were not necessarily innovative. Innovation Fellows were able to thrive in those Hillels that supported innovation, whether through internal projects (e.g., Jewish Renaissance Project at Penn Hillel) or external initiatives that served the movement (e.g., the Organizational Design Lab). At the same time, Innovation Fellows at Hillels that did not embrace change—either incremental or systemic—found it difficult to apply design thinking in their work.

Questions to consider. Given the limitations on innovation within particular Hillels, how might Springboard rethink the training and preparation of Innovation Fellows? How might Springboard reframe the Innovation track so that it is applicable to a larger group of Hillels?

Social justice. Social justice Fellows in Bet cohort had great success in working with students who were previously uninvolved or under engaged in Jewish life, perhaps one of Springboard’s greatest achievements to date. Social justice Fellows who felt supported by their Hillel’s professional leadership and had access to resources from local Jewish social justice organizations were more successful than Fellows at local Hillels where leadership questioned the importance of or student interest in social justice. Social Justice Fellows who struggled in their work often had difficulty building alliances with other groups.
on campus, in part because their training did not adequately prepare them to work as community organizers. Other Social Justice Fellows faced the problem of meaning: While Fellows wanted to focus on social justice issues, local Hillels or their students were only interested in community or social service.

Questions to consider. What are the lessons learned from the Ezra merger and how might Hillel plan the integration of other programs into existing initiatives based on this experience? How do Bet Ezras, who benefited from the input and design of a different program, compare to Gimel and Dalet Ezra participants? How might Springboard adjust its program after graduating the current cohorts of Ezra Fellows? What is the impact of participants with more Jewish knowledge and background on the full cohort?

Ezra Jewish Education. Given Hillel’s emphasis on Jewish learning for both students and staff, it is fitting to include Jewish education as one of Springboard’s tracks. The experience of the Bet Ezra Fellows, who joined Springboard during Bet cohort’s first year, can be instructive for Springboard. The merger was difficult for Ezra Fellows in part because the two Fellowships have different goals and offered different models of mentorship, professional development, and Jewish learning. Springboard should use this unique situation to learn from the experience of the Bet Ezra Fellows and compare those experiences to the Gimel and Dalet Ezra cohorts.

Site Selection (The “match”)

Advice from Bet Fellows

“Springboard needs to prep supervisors better so they know what their Fellows should be doing when they arrive on campus. I didn’t have a job description and it affected me for the entire two years. My supervisor expected me to know what my job was but I came in expecting my supervisor to give me goals, to tell me what to do, where to focus my time. I floundered for months.”

“Springboard presented a utopian version of what we would be doing on campus during the application process and orientation, but the reality was different at local Hillels. Springboard needs to be more honest up front. They could say, ‘This is what we want you to do, but there will also be days when you will just be standing outside or lugging boxes.’”
“Springboard needs to be stricter in screening campuses and limiting to those [local Hillels] who embrace or want to see change. Hillels that apply [for Springboard] have to want to see change.”

Survey results and site visits to Bet campuses underscore the critical importance of placement or “the match” between the Springboard Fellow and campus. In comparison to New Hires, Bet Fellows gave lower ratings of their local Hillel, their jobs, and the supervision they were receiving—all critical factors in “the match.” While Springboard has refined the placement process in the years since Bet Fellows were matched in 2017, there are several areas where Springboard needs to actively work with the local Hillels.

**Supervision.** The literature demonstrates that millennials are looking for more from their supervisors than simply task supervision. Supervision of early career professionals, particularly those in their first fulltime professional job, requires patience and includes more than monitoring workload or assigning tasks. Bet Fellows were most likely to succeed when they had an experienced supervisor who was willing and able to work with and guide an early career professional. Not all supervisors can take on mentoring an early career professional. In interviews, the Fellows who left the program early shared a sense of misalignment or frustration with their supervisors. To its credit, Springboard understands the importance of quality supervision and has implemented formal supervisor training for new and returning supervisors. Since the training of Bet Fellows, Springboard has also required participation in the Kaplan Supervisor training course.

**Questions to consider.** How should potential supervision affect the campus selection process? What are the additional steps that Springboard might take to further action ensure successful supervision of Fellows at the local level?

**Support for specialties.** Local Hillels must fully support a Fellow’s specialty area. In some instances, campuses in the Bet cohort did not allow the Springboard Fellow to fully focus on student engagement through their specialty track. This was particularly acute in Hillels with smaller staff teams. Fellows in these settings were more likely to report time devoted to tasks beyond student engagement and their specialty area. Understandably, these Fellows were frustrated because they had applied to a particular track and were told by Springboard that their work would be as a Specialist in Innovation or Social Justice.

**Question to consider.** What criteria should be required of local Hillels in order to be considered as a placement for a Springboard Fellow?

**Support from top leadership.** Top leadership sets the tone for a local Hillel’s professional team. Survey results reveal that fewer than half of the Bet Fellows were positive about the professional leadership team of their local Hillel. Fellows were
disappointed that some local Hillels resisted change, failed to embrace components of the Springboard program (e.g., summer learning experiences and ongoing cohort learning, both of which were seen as distractions from local responsibilities), and perhaps most unfortunately, did not support specialties or tracks.

**Questions to consider.** How might Springboard assess top professionals’ enthusiasm for Springboard? What are the criteria for evaluating top leadership when local Hillels are looking to join a national initiative?

**Student Engagement**

**Advice from Bet Fellows**

“The expectations set from Springboard and Hillel International are very different than the reality on the ground. Springboard set a magic number of 180 connections. For someone at a larger campus, 180 is no problem. I was doing everything I could for the first year, and I still couldn’t meet 180. We were told by Springboard that each campus has its challenges, but I wish the number was tailored for each campus to something more achievable.”

Student engagement is a Springboard Fellow’s primary responsibility. Successful engagement takes time, and Bet Fellows were more positive about their student engagement efforts in Year 2. Fellows gave higher ratings to their expertise in supporting students and developing and implementing programming than to their skills in developing new engagement methods.

Most Fellows did not develop new methods for engaging students and relied instead on one-on-ones, coffee dates, or programmatic offerings. While Fellows may not have developed new approaches, they built meaningful and sustained relationships with students and created pathways to Jewish life for students previously underrepresented in local Hillels (e.g., such as Greek students, LGBTQA community members, and students interested in particular social justice issues). Overall, student engagement was an achievement for Bet cohort.

At the same time, several Bet Fellows questioned their success in student engagement because they failed to meet established metrics. In addition to requiring participating Hillels to submit Measuring Excellence data to Hillel International, Springboard asks Fellows to engage 180 unique students each year. In some instances, Fellows were chided by their supervisors for spending time with leadership students or others rather than engagement “targets.” Other Fellows expressed disappointment that they were encouraged to meet as many students as possible, emphasizing breadth rather than depth of relationships. Fellows expressed frustration that their work was being judged by numbers, particularly numbers that did not account for the size of a campus’ Jewish population or the campus “match” with Springboard. There are benefits to institutional metrics, but as the Fellows’ comments make clear, there are also downsides.
Cohort Diversity

As a program with a cohort model, Springboard benefits from a diverse applicant pool. Despite best efforts and intentions to recruit a diverse cohort, Bet Fellows are no more diverse than New Hires. There may be several reasons for this, including the difficulty of recruiting for a new program and limited outreach to prospective applicants (e.g., at the suggestion of local Hillel professionals or through self-selection). Developing an applicant pool that reflects greater diversity in terms of race and ethnicity is an area that continues to be a challenge. Springboard must also acknowledge the isolating nature of the Fellows’ role, especially for under-represented minorities, and make all efforts to ensure that Fellows feel supported.

ONWARD FROM BET COHORT

The Bet cohort summative report and its key findings demonstrate the impact of Springboard on individual Fellows, local Hillels, and the Hillel movement. The research explored the ways in which Springboard achieved its aims and how Bet Fellows influenced students, colleagues, the culture on campus, and individual Hillels. At the same time, the research generated additional questions about the impact of Springboard on Bet alumni, outcomes for current and future cohorts (e.g., Gimel and Dalet), and support for early career professionals.

Questions to consider. How might Springboard communicate the benefits of metrics to Fellows? What kind of measurement and reward structure might Springboard initiate in order to motivate Fellows, while also recognizing the other dimensions of student engagement (depth, authenticity, purposeful, meaning, etc.)?

Questions to consider. How might Springboard recast its thinking around diversity? In addition to race and gender, what other elements—diversity in Jewish background or practice, in political orientation, in social class, in life experience—might Hillel look for in building an applicant pool for Springboard?
Ongoing research can serve a number of purposes for Springboard and Hillel. Evaluation can help and guide Springboard as it continues to develop and refine its program. Data on alumni outcomes can help determine next steps around alumni engagement. More broadly, the research can support Hillel International in its efforts to develop a talent pipeline. Springboard is at the very beginning of tracking the career trajectories of alumni.

As a longitudinal research project, the Bet cohort study, with its multiple surveys and control group, will eventually allow a broad view of the results of incubator programs and their impact on career choices. Springboard Fellows, like the JCSC Fellows before them, represent an important segment of their generation’s Jewish professional and volunteer leadership. The data and measurement tools presented here can establish a path forward for learning, planning, and action that will benefit not only the Springboard and Hillel, but also the larger Jewish community.


3 In sections that make comparisons across two groups (e.g., Bet Fellows and New Hires), results are expressed as percentages.

4 As the program had not yet merged with Springboard, Ezra Fellows did not receive the baseline survey.

5 “Expertise” was defined as having mastered the content, being able to apply it in work, and being able to model or teach it to others.

6 Cited in interviews at the end of both Year 1 (August 2018) and Year 2 (June-July 2019),

7 For the sake of simplicity, alumni snapshot survey items had four-point response scales (not at all, a little, somewhat, very much).


9 See *Early Career Development: Literature Review* (January 19, 2019) for full discussion.

10 During exit interviews in June-July 2019, Bet Fellows were asked what advice they would offer to Springboard moving forward (n=24).
APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of Springboard’s Bet cohort included surveys, interviews, and observation. All data was collected and reported in compliance with Brandeis University’s Institutional Review Board.

SURVEYS

The evaluation included 13 surveys from March 2018 through October 2019. All surveys were web-based using a system that ensured confidentiality and data security. With the exception of the JCSC alumni, all survey samples were derived from lists provided by Hillel International, and none of the surveys were incentivized. The study included two surveys of Bet cohort during the Fellowship and one brief “snapshot” survey of alumni approximately four months post-Springboard. Also included were surveys of comparison groups, including New Hires, Springboard Gimel Fellows, Hillel New Hires, and Ezra Fellowship, and Springboard Aleph cohort alumni (Table A1).

INTERVIEWS

The research included individual and group interviews. Individual interviews were conducted in person or over the telephone. All group interviews were conducted in person. Interview samples were designed to represent different points of view and experiences.

Included in Table A2 are the case study interviews conducted during site visits to eight Bet cohort campuses in spring 2019.
Table A1. Bet cohort evaluation surveys (In chronological order by launch date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Launch date</th>
<th>Closing date</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bet Fellows: Baseline</td>
<td>3/8/18</td>
<td>3/30/18</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet supervisors and executive directors: Baseline</td>
<td>4/5/18</td>
<td>5/11/18</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gimel Fellows: Baseline</td>
<td>9/12/18</td>
<td>10/17/18</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hires: Baseline</td>
<td>10/3/18</td>
<td>11/2/18</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleph alumni: Snapshot Year 1</td>
<td>10/11/18</td>
<td>11/2/18</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra alumni: Snapshot Year 1</td>
<td>10/11/18</td>
<td>11/2/18</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCSC alumni: Snapshot Year 1</td>
<td>4/13/19</td>
<td>6/30/19</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet Fellows: Time 2</td>
<td>5/2/19</td>
<td>6/14/19</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet supervisors and executive directors: Time 2</td>
<td>5/23/19</td>
<td>7/8/19</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aleph alumni: Snapshot Year 2</td>
<td>10/17/19</td>
<td>11/22/19</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet alumni: Snapshot Year 1 (T3)</td>
<td>10/28/19</td>
<td>11/22/19</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra alumni: Snapshot Year 2</td>
<td>10/28/19</td>
<td>12/16/19</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>45</td>
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</table>
Table A2. Bet evaluation interviews (In chronological order by date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview participants</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total invited</th>
<th>Total participants</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bet Fellows HIGA Year 1</td>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>In-person focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIC and Springboard staff, funders</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Individual interviews in-person and by telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key informant interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JCSC alumni preliminary interviews</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Individual interviews by telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gimel Fellows NPI focus groups</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>In-person focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet Fellows End of Year 1 interviews</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Individual interviews by telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer program faculty Interviews</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Individual interviews in-person and by telephone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bet Fellows HIGA Year 2 focus groups</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>In-person focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet Fellows “Early Exits”</td>
<td>June 2018-March 2019</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Individual interviews by telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet campus site visits</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>In-person individual interviews and focus groups with Bet Fellows, students, Hillel staff, and campus contacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bet Fellows End of Year 2 interviews</td>
<td>May-July 2019</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Individual interviews by telephone</td>
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<td>Bet faculty Interviews</td>
<td>August-Nov. 2019</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Individual interviews by telephone</td>
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<td>JCSC alumni</td>
<td>July-August 2019</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Individual interviews by telephone</td>
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