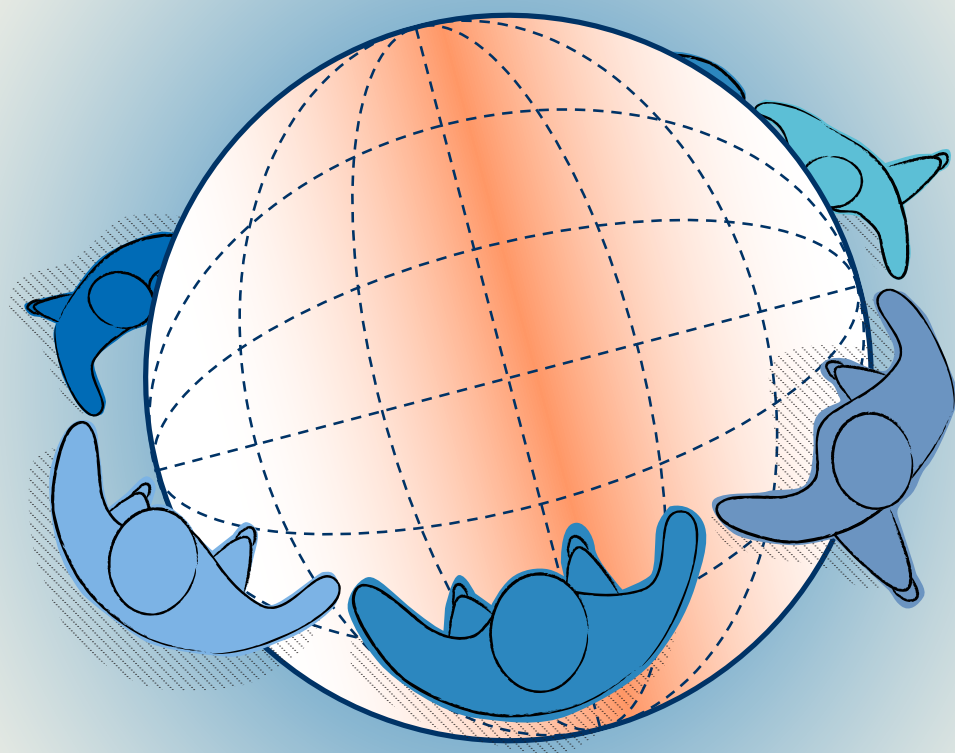


Brandeis University

Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

Learning To Do Good: Evaluation of UJA-Federation of New York's Break New Ground Jewish Service Learning Initiative

Fern Chertok
Nicole Samuel



© 2008 Brandeis University
Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

Additional copies of this publication are available from:
Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University
Mailstop 014
Waltham, MA 02454-9110
781.736.2060
www.brandeis.edu/cmjs

Acknowledgments

Support for this study was provided by UJA-Federation of New York. We wish to thank Alan Cohen and Dana Trobe at UJA-Federation for their advice and support throughout the project. Our ethnographic observers, Matthew Boxer, Eli Finkelshteyn, MeLena Hessel, Ariel Liebhaber, Rachel Maimin, and Nina Robinson, provided invaluable assistance. Joshua Tobias and Nina Robinson contributed to the development and administration of data collection and the report. Our work benefited from the assistance of our Cohen Center colleagues, including Masha Lokshin and Deborah Grant. We are particularly appreciative of the many ways in which our work was made possible by the assistance of the administrators and staff of the trip providers. We wish to thank American Jewish World Service, Hillel at Binghamton University, the Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst, Jewish Funds for Justice, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, and the Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center. We are also grateful to the local campus trip organizers at Albany University, Binghamton University, Brooklyn College, Columbia University, Hillels of Westchester, New York University and Yeshiva University. We also thank Rabbi David Rosenn of AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps, Michelle Lackie of Hillel- the Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, and Simha Rosenberg, formerly of the Jewish Coalition for Service for sharing their invaluable knowledge and experience in the field of Jewish service.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables and Figures	iv
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	5
Trip Providers	7
Evaluation Methodology	9
<i>Participant Surveys</i>	9
<i>Ethnographic Field Observation</i>	10
<i>Key Informant Interviews</i>	10
Findings	11
<i>Characteristics of Participants</i>	11
<i>Jewish Engagement Prior to BNG</i>	11
<i>Service Involvement Prior to BNG</i>	13
<i>Motivations for Participation</i>	15
<i>The Group Experience</i>	17
<i>Learning about Social Justice</i>	19
<i>Interactions with Local Residents: Lessons of Tolerance and Diversity</i>	26
<i>Gaining a Jewish Perspective on Service</i>	29
Summary and Recommendations	37
References	41
Additional Resources	43
Appendix A: BNG Surveys	45
BNG Pre-Trip Survey for College -Age Participants	45
BNG Immediate Post-Trip Survey: College -Age Participants	57
BNG 3-Month Follow-up Survey: College-Age Participants	61
Appendix B: BNG Guide for Ethnographic Observation	67
Observation of Pre-Trip Experiences	69
Guidelines for Observation of Trips	70
Appendix C: BNG Key Informant Interview Materials Briefing Sheet	73
Pre-Trip Provider Interview Protocol	74
Participant Onsite Interview Protocol	75
Staff Onsite Interview Protocol	77

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Overview of BNG Alternative Break Trips	8
Table 2: Survey Response Rates	9
Figure 1: Pre-Trip Jewish Campus Involvement: College Age Participants.....	11
Figure 2: Pre-Trip Jewish Identity	12
Figure 3: Pre-trip Volunteer Involvement	13
Figure 4: Pre-trip Volunteer Experience with Jewish Sponsorship.....	14
Figure 5: Pro-Social Motivations for Participation.....	15
Figure 6: Personal Growth Motivations for Participation.....	16
Figure 7: Reactions to the Group Experience	18
Figure 8: Reactions to Service Work	20
Figure 9: Civic Responsibility: College Participants	22
Figure 10: Civic Responsibility: High School Participants.....	23
Figure 11: Empowerment: College Participants.....	24
Figure 12: Empowerment: High School Participants.....	25
Figure 13: Interactions with Local Residents	27
Figure 14: Diversity Attitudes: College Participants	28
Figure 15: Connections between Jewish Identity and Service on the Trip	29
Figure 16: Reaction to Learning about Jewish Social Action: College Participants ...	30
Figure 17: Integration of Service into Jewish Identity: College Participants.....	31
Figure 18: Integration of Service into Jewish Identity: High School Participants.....	32
Figure 19: Experience of Jewish Living.....	33

Executive Summary

Community service is quickly becoming an integral part of the contemporary young adult experience. Leaders of the U.S. Jewish community are focusing on the potential of Jewish-sponsored community service to address the most pressing needs of the developing world and engage young adults. UJA-Federation of New York developed the *Break New Ground Jewish Service Learning Initiative* (BNG) to involve college-age young adults and high school students in immersive, ten-day service learning experiences. The goal of the program is to “strengthen the life-long connection to Jewish communal life” within an age cohort who places a high value on social justice and community service. Seven organizations were selected to provide alternative break trips for 177 high school and college-age participants.

This report describes the findings of an evaluation of the inaugural year of BNG conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies. Researchers examined the characteristics of participants, their experiences during the program, and the impact of BNG on their commitment to social action and civic responsibility, appreciation of and tolerance for diversity, and development of a Jewish perspective on service. The research design included collection of qualitative and quantitative data through key informant interviews with various stakeholders from BNG program providers and host communities, ethnographic observation of a sample of trips, and online surveys of participants at three points in time. Response rates for each survey are high, ranging from 65%-84%.

Characteristics of Participants

College-age participants came into BNG with more Jewish connections and greater involvement than typically found among their peer group. The Jewish identities of high school participants were less central to them, and their connections to the Jewish people more tenuous. BNG participants were also well acquainted with community service work. Not only had they almost universally participated in service in the year prior to the trip, but they also had a substantial history of volunteer work under Jewish auspices. The strongest motivations for participation in BNG were to help those in less fortunate circumstances and to act on personal values of justice and fairness.

The BNG Group Experience

On BNG trips, the group became the immediate Jewish community for participants, and being part of a group of peers engaged in service was an essential part of the experience. Group members bonded and felt a strong sense of community. Participants looked to each other for support when the work was difficult, and their understanding of the experience was amplified by sharing their joys and frustrations.

Learning about Social Justice

BNG trips gave participants the opportunity to step outside of their usual lives and immerse themselves in the hands-on work of “repairing the world.” The BNG experience encouraged volunteers to confront the complex issues that surround social justice work and come to terms

with the reality of domestic and international poverty and, perhaps more jolting, deprivation within the Jewish community. Participants, especially at the college level, came away from the experience feeling that they made real improvements in the lives of local residents. Program participants also gained an enhanced sense of their ability for and commitment to working toward social justice in their home campuses and communities. High school participants were understandably less assured of their ability to influence community policy but made considerable gains in their sense of empowerment and their intent to take leadership roles in the community.

Lessons of Tolerance and Diversity

Person-to-person encounters with local community members provided one of the greatest learning opportunities during BNG trips. BNG volunteers saw the consequences of poverty and natural disaster with their own eyes while working side by side with local residents. While not all interactions were easy or comfortable, students affirmed the importance of coming face to face with the challenges and benefits of cultural diversity on an alternative break program. Participants strongly agreed that their BNG experience increased their ability to relate to people from diverse circumstances. Participants returned with a greater appreciation of the potential of different groups to creatively address social issues but also more realistic about the difficulties inherent in bridging socio-economic, educational, and cultural distinctions.

Gaining a Jewish Perspective on Service

Most college participants gained an abstract understanding of the Jewish perspective on

service but were more limited in their ability to apply it to their own experiences. High school participants were less likely to make the connection from either an abstract or personal perspective. Surveys taken three months after participants return showed there was some growth in the incorporation of service into the Jewish identity of college-age participants. The gains were more modest for high school participants; most left the trip with only slightly less tenuous connections between their Jewish identities and service. Both high school and college students showed greater awareness of the social action opportunities available in the Jewish community as a result of their BNG experience. Among college-age participants, these outcomes were even more pronounced among those who identify as Orthodox.

The modest and mixed BNG outcomes related to Jewish identity, especially among high school participants, may be due to the difficulties related to incorporating Jewish life and learning into the trip. Jewish learning sessions received mixed reviews. Poor matches between the Jewish background and knowledge of participants and the level of Jewish curriculum, combined with reliance on a narrow set of educational strategies, meant that many participants were less than fully satisfied with the Jewish learning component. There were many missed opportunities for informal teaching about the relevance of Jewish text and values to the actual work being done. In addition, the potential to use observance of dietary laws, Shabbat, and other festivals as opportunities to teach about Jewish tradition and diversity was not fully realized.

Conclusions

In its first year, BNG made great strides toward its goal of expanding Jewish-sponsored service opportunities for young adults. Participants had meaningful and often life-changing experiences serving both domestic and international communities. Face-to-face encounters with the reality of economic and social inequality helped participants reexamine their assumptions and attitudes about the causes of social problems. Participants also took initial steps toward developing a Jewish perspective on service.

There are areas for improvement as BNG enters its second year. The mixed and often limited impact of BNG on high school participants, particularly in regard to developing a Jewish lens for service, suggests that developmentally this population may not be best suited to take full advantage of the program's offerings.

Recruitment efforts at the college level did not reach students beyond those who were already substantially involved in both Jewish life and in service work or advocacy. In Year Two, trip providers and campus professionals should focus more energy on diverse recruitment efforts to reach those students who are largely disconnected from Jewish life on campus or in their community.

The formal and informal Jewish learning strategies employed on BNG trips are another area in need of attention. Trip providers should have curriculum that speaks to all participants, regardless of Jewish background. Efforts should be made to either recruit staff with background in formal as well as informal education or to provide staff with training in these areas. Together these efforts will increase

the connections that young adults make between their Jewish identities and their desire to work toward social justice.

Jewish-sponsored service, such as BNG, provides an unparalleled opportunity to bring young adult Jews together from across the denominational spectrum. Pluralism should be an explicit aspect of recruitment, teaching, and discussion.

BNG is an important contribution to the service learning field, providing alternative break opportunities to Jewish young adults with connections to the New York area. As a classic immersive experience, BNG brings together peer groups to learn from each other in both obvious and subtle ways. Through volunteerism, face-to-face encounters with people from diverse backgrounds, Jewish learning, and self exploration, UJA-Federation's Break New Ground empowers participants to make a difference as part of a Jewish community.

Introduction

*Learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice.
Aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan.
Defend the cause of the widow. (Isaiah 1: 17)*

Community service is quickly becoming an integral part of the contemporary young adult experience. Thomas Friedman (2007) has named this cohort “Generation Q - the Quiet Americans...quietly pursuing their idealism, at home and abroad.” The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey found that over one-third of young adults engage in volunteer activity (Lopez et al., 2006). The majority of Jewish college students indicate that leading a moral and ethical life and making the world a better place are the most important aspects of their Jewish identity (Sales & Saxe, 2006). Like their peers, contemporary Jewish young adults are strongly committed to issues of social justice and are highly motivated to act on their beliefs through advocacy and volunteer service (Greenberg, 2005). They have developed a perspective that is universal rather than particularistic and a concern for victims of poverty or injustice that is both local and global (Arnett, 2002).

Increasingly, leaders of the U.S. Jewish community are focusing on the potential of Jewish-sponsored community service, both for addressing the most pressing needs of the developing world and for engaging young adults (Greenberg, 2001; Messinger, 2003; Steinhardt, 2001). A recent report on this burgeoning field noted that “Jewish service learning provides young Jews with the opportunity to understand and consider Jewish values and express those values through hands-on service to others, simultaneously transforming themselves and changing the world” (Irie & Blair, 2008, p.7).

UJA-Federation of New York developed the *Break New Ground Jewish Service Learning Initiative* (BNG) to involve college-age adults and high school students in intensive, ten-day service learning experiences. The goal of this program was to “strengthen the life-long connection to Jewish communal life” within an age cohort who places a high value on social justice and community service. The program was open to two groups of students: those who attend universities in the UJA-Federation’s eight county target area and those whose parents reside in UJA-Federation’s target area. BNG was launched in December 2007.

This report provides a summary of the findings of research conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) on the inaugural year of BNG. The purpose of the BNG evaluation was multifold: to understand the impact of alternative break experiences on participants and provide UJA-Federation and trip providers with feedback to aid the continuing development of the initiative. This research was designed to answer questions in three interrelated areas:

Who signs up for the program? To what extent has BNG served as an outreach tool, drawing previously unengaged students into active Jewish involvement on their college campus or in their home community?

What experiences do participants have during a trip? What emotional, cognitive, and collective experiences do participants have during a BNG trip? How is Jewish learning and observance incorporated into the trip experience?

What are the impacts on student volunteers? Does participation in BNG lead to greater tolerance for diversity, enhanced

understanding of social justice issues, heightened sense of civic or social responsibility, or increased sense of self efficacy in the arena of community involvement? Does participation strengthen individual Jewish identity, sense of Jewish peoplehood, or the perceived connection between Jewish tradition and values and social justice work? Do participants have stronger intentions to become involved in the Jewish community, in Jewish social justice initiatives, or in other forms of volunteerism or advocacy?

The following sections present and describe the pilot BNG program, study design, and methods and characteristics of program. The report then examines participant experience during BNG trips and the impact of this program in several broad areas, including commitment to social action and civic responsibility, appreciation of and tolerance for diversity, and development of a Jewish

perspective on service. The report concludes with the implications of the findings for the continued development of the BNG program.

Trip Providers

UJA-Federation contracted with seven organizations to provide 7-10 day alternative break trips. Two of the providers developed trips for high school participants while the remaining providers focused on college-based trips. Some of the providers, including American Jewish World Service, Jewish Funds for Justice, PANIM, and the Joint Distribution Committee already had extensive expertise in organizing community service trips for youth or young adults. Other providers, including the Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center, Binghamton Hillel, and the Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst had limited prior experience in this field. Several smaller providers both organized and recruited for their trips, while larger providers partnered with local organizations, such as campus Hillels, to recruit participants. In addition, most trip providers worked in partnership with agencies in their destination communities to orchestrate service work. Table 1 on the next page provides an overview of the providers, recruitment partners, participants, destinations and local community partners for BNG trips.

Table 1: Overview of BNG Alternative Break Trips

Provider	Recruitment Partner	Participants	Destination	Local Community Partner
PANIM	Same	High School	New Mexico	Quanimptewa King and Belinte, Bitsoie, Antonio, and Bluehouse Families Deer Hill Expeditions
Sid Jacobson JCC	Same	High School	New Orleans	New Orleans JCC Amizade
		High School	Jamaica	
Joint Distribution Committee	NYU Hillel	College	Israel	Self-organized
American Jewish World Service	Yeshiva University	College	Thailand	Self-organized
	Columbia Hillel	College	Nicaragua	
	Brooklyn College Hillel	College	Nicaragua	
Binghamton University Hillel	Same	College	West Virginia	Global Volunteers
Jewish Funds for Justice	Binghamton University Hillel	College	Boothville, LA	ACORN/Holy Cross Hands on Gulf Coast Southern Mutual Help Organization
	Hillels of Westchester	College	New Orleans	
	Albany University Hillel	College	Biloxi, MS	
Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst	Same	College	Belarus	Jewish Agency for Israel

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation design included collection of both qualitative and quantitative data through key informant interviews with various stakeholders from BNG program providers and host communities, ethnographic observation of a sample of trips, and online surveys of participants at three points in time.

Participant Surveys

Three online participant surveys were developed for this project. Surveys were completed prior to the trip, immediately following the trip, and three months after the trip. The pre-trip survey included questions on Jewish background and education, prior experience with and attitudes toward social justice work or service learning, motivations

for participation, and current involvement in Jewish life. Also included were questions about self-efficacy and sense of civic responsibility. Wherever possible, existing measures from the field of secular service learning were adapted for use. Within one week of returning from the trip, participants received the second survey which asked about the onsite service work and educational components of the program, as well as participants' initial understanding of the trip's influence on their Jewish and social justice involvements. Three months after the completion of each trip, participants completed a follow-up survey which asked about many of the same attitudes and involvements assessed in the pre-trip survey; this survey also included questions about the impact of the trip on Jewish community

Table 2: Survey Response Rates

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Pre-trip Survey</i>	<i>Post-trip Survey</i>	<i>3-Month Survey</i>
JDC	89%	89%	68%
Binghamton Hillel	100%	100%	100%
AJWS	78%	60%	63% (see note)
JFJ	89%	81%	54%
JCHB	85%	70%	50%
Sid Jacobson JCC	100%	88%	77%
PANIM	50%	38%	(see note)
Overall	84%	73%	65%

Note: Three-month surveys for some or all of this provider's trips are currently in the field and final response rate data is not available.

involvement and commitment to service work and social advocacy. Participant surveys are presented in Appendix A.

Extensive follow-up efforts were made to gain optimum response from all groups. Multiple reminder e-mails were sent to participants. Surveys returned prior to September 15, 2008 were included in the analyses. As seen in Table 2, there is some variation in the level of response rate by provider and by the particular survey, with cooperation rates generally higher for pre-trip and immediate post-trip surveys. However, even with somewhat diminished response rates for the final survey, overall response rates for each survey are high, ranging from 65%-84%.

Ethnographic Field Observation

Ethnographic observers accompanied six trips, one for each BNG provider offering a winter or spring alternative break. In addition, each observer attended one pre-trip meeting with the group they accompanied. Observers were trained by CMJS using observation guidelines and protocols specifically designed for this project (Appendix B).

Key Informant Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by phone and in person with key informants including BNG program providers, trip leaders and staff, members of the host community, staff from local partner agencies, and BNG consultants. Interview protocols are presented in Appendix C.

Findings

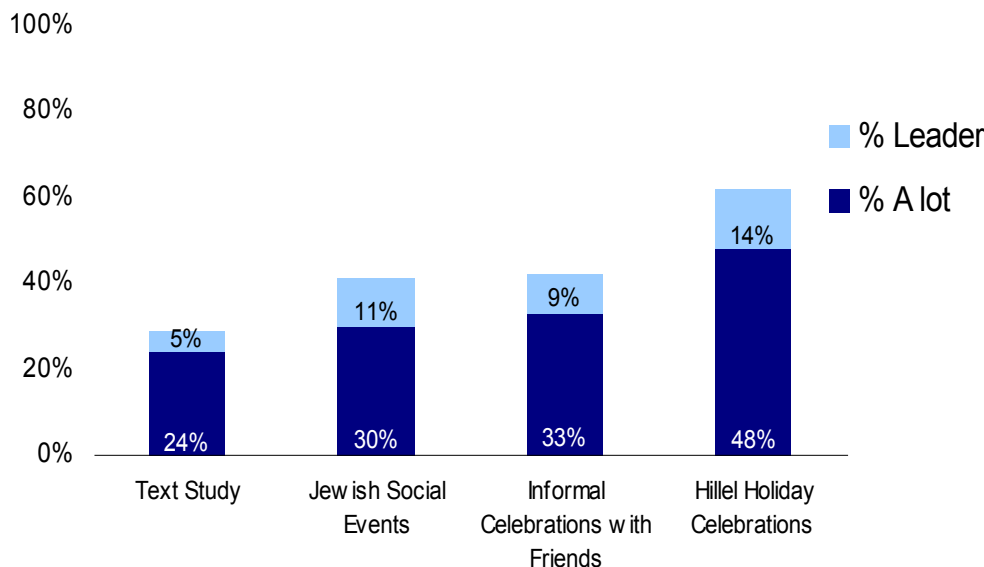
Characteristics of Participants

177 young adults traveled on a BNG alternative break trip with most (134) participating in college-based trips. BNG participation at the college level was heavily weighted toward women as over three-quarters (78%) of participants were female. By comparison, high school trips were overall evenly gender balanced. In terms of school standing, the largest subgroup of college participants (32%) is currently in their sophomore year, while among high school trips the largest subgroup is composed of juniors (37%).

Jewish Engagement Prior to BNG

It appears that even before registering for a BNG alternative break trip, college-age participants have more Jewish connections and greater involvement than is typically found among their peer group. College-age participants indicate a very high level of Jewish involvement both before and during college and a strong personal Jewish identity.¹ Almost one-quarter (24%) were raised in homes that they describe as Orthodox or Traditional. Additionally, two-fifths (43%) attended a day school or yeshiva, and almost three-fifths (57%) participated in Jewish youth groups during high school. More than

Figure 1: Pre-Trip Jewish Campus Involvement: College-Age Participants*



*Yeshiva University student not included in these analyses

¹Yeshiva University's dual secular and religious based curriculum attracts more observant students than is typical for undergraduate institutions. In order to most accurately describe the pre-trip Jewish engagement of typical BNG participants, responses from Yeshiva University participants were not included in any analyses related to Jewish background, identity, or involvement. Participants from Yeshiva University are included in all other analyses.

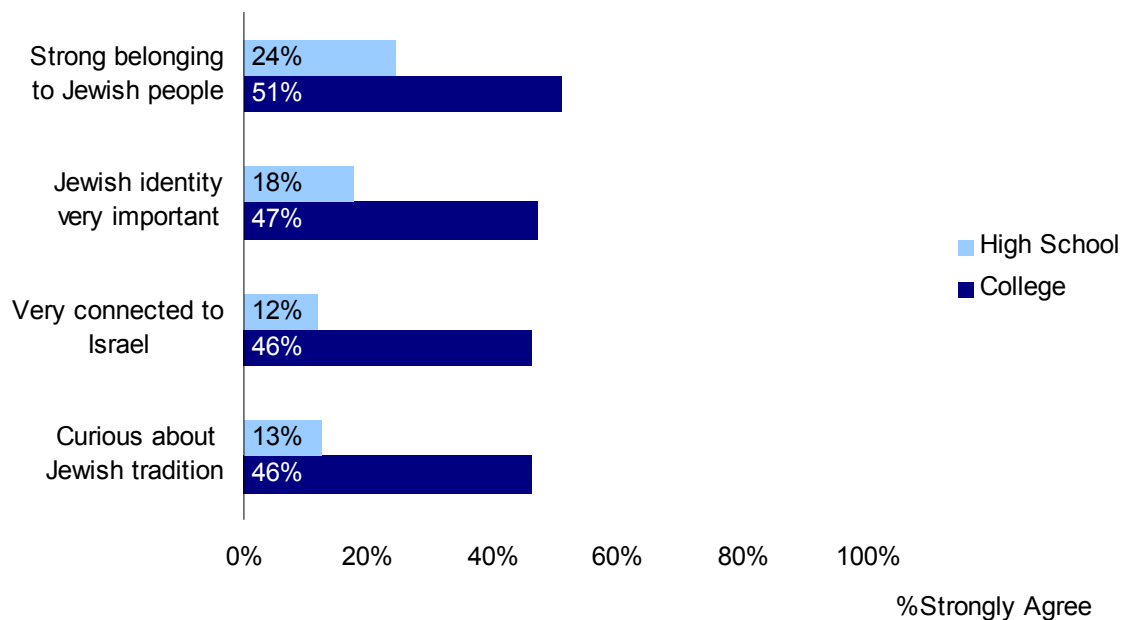
half (55%) have taken a course on a specifically Jewish subject as undergraduates and half (50%) attend religious services at least several times each month. As shown in Figure 1, at least one-third and as many as two-thirds are substantially involved in Jewish study, social events, and ritual observance.

The pre-trip Jewish involvement of high school participants is more difficult to characterize. More than four-fifths (82%) are being raised in homes identified with the Conservative or Reform movements and less than one-tenth (9%) are being raised in either Orthodox or Traditional homes. While one-third (32%) attend Jewish religious services at least several times a month, this number is almost identical to the proportion that have a Jewish day school background. The

overwhelming majority (79%) have attended a Jewish summer camp but only two-tenths (20%) are very involved in Jewish youth groups. Over one-third (38%) indicate that they participate “a lot” or are leaders of Jewish study, but it is likely that for most this is related to their Hebrew school experience. Perhaps most interestingly, almost three-quarters (74%) belong to a Jewish-related Facebook group.

College-age participants came into BNG with a strong sense of Jewish peoplehood and Jewish identity. By contrast, Judaism was less central to the identities of high school participants, and their connections to Israel and to the Jewish people were more tenuous (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Pre-Trip Jewish Identity*



*Yeshiva university students not included in the data

Service Involvement Prior to BNG

BNG participants were well acquainted with community service work. Almost universally, (99%) participants reported involvement in some form of volunteer work in the year prior to their trip. Almost one-third of both populations (30% college and 29% high school) had traveled on a previous alternative break trip. As seen in Figure 3, the most common forms of volunteer activity are related to youth or human services organizations, fundraising, and efforts to assist Jewish organizations such as Hillel and synagogues.

Both college and high school participants also entered BNG with a history of volunteer work

under Jewish auspices. Not only had most volunteered directly for Jewish organizations but at least 50% of each group indicated that half or more of their volunteer work was done with Jewish sponsorship (Figure 4).

BNG was designed to attract a diverse group of students along the continuums of Jewish and social justice involvement. Recruitment was intended to yield participants representative of the Jewish population on their campus or in their community, including those who were currently active in social justice work but had limited engagement in Jewish life and those with strong attachments to the Jewish community but less involvement in community service or volunteerism.

Figure 3: Pre-trip Volunteer Involvement

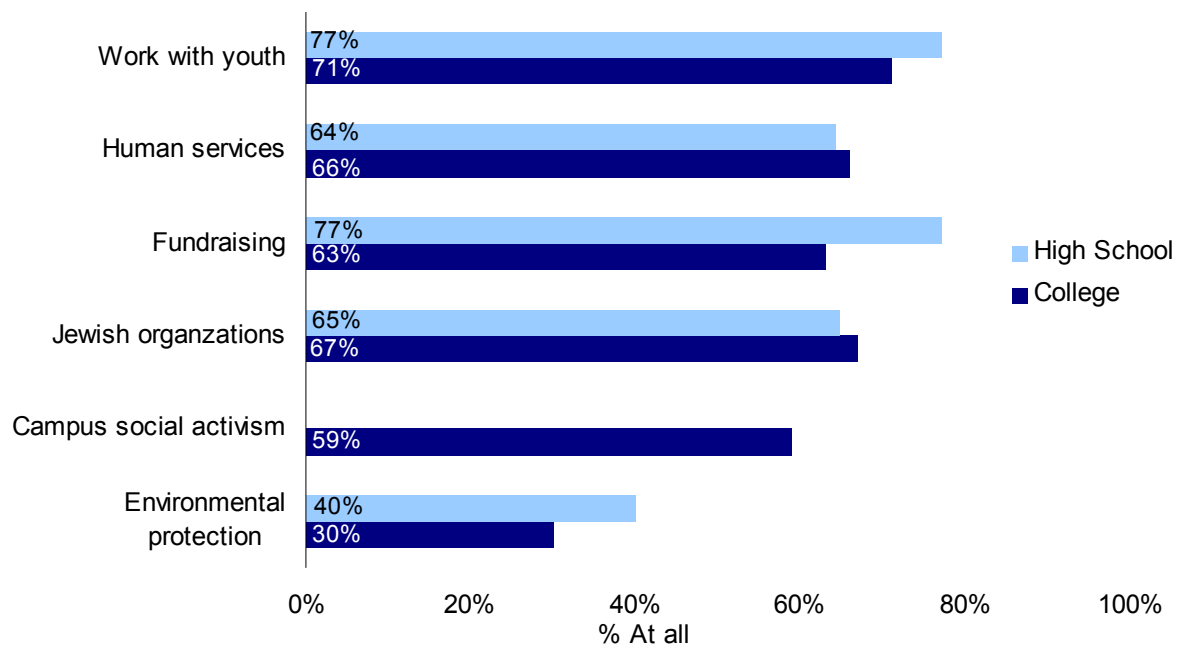
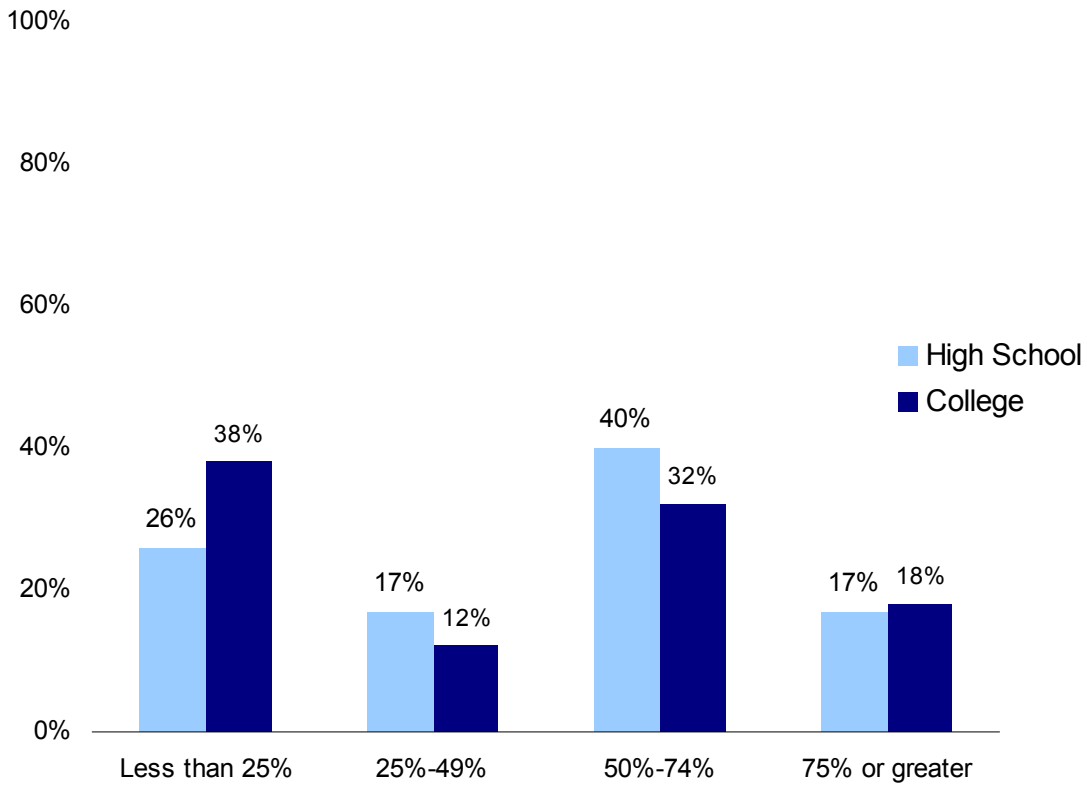


Figure 4: Pre-trip Volunteer Experience with Jewish Sponsorship



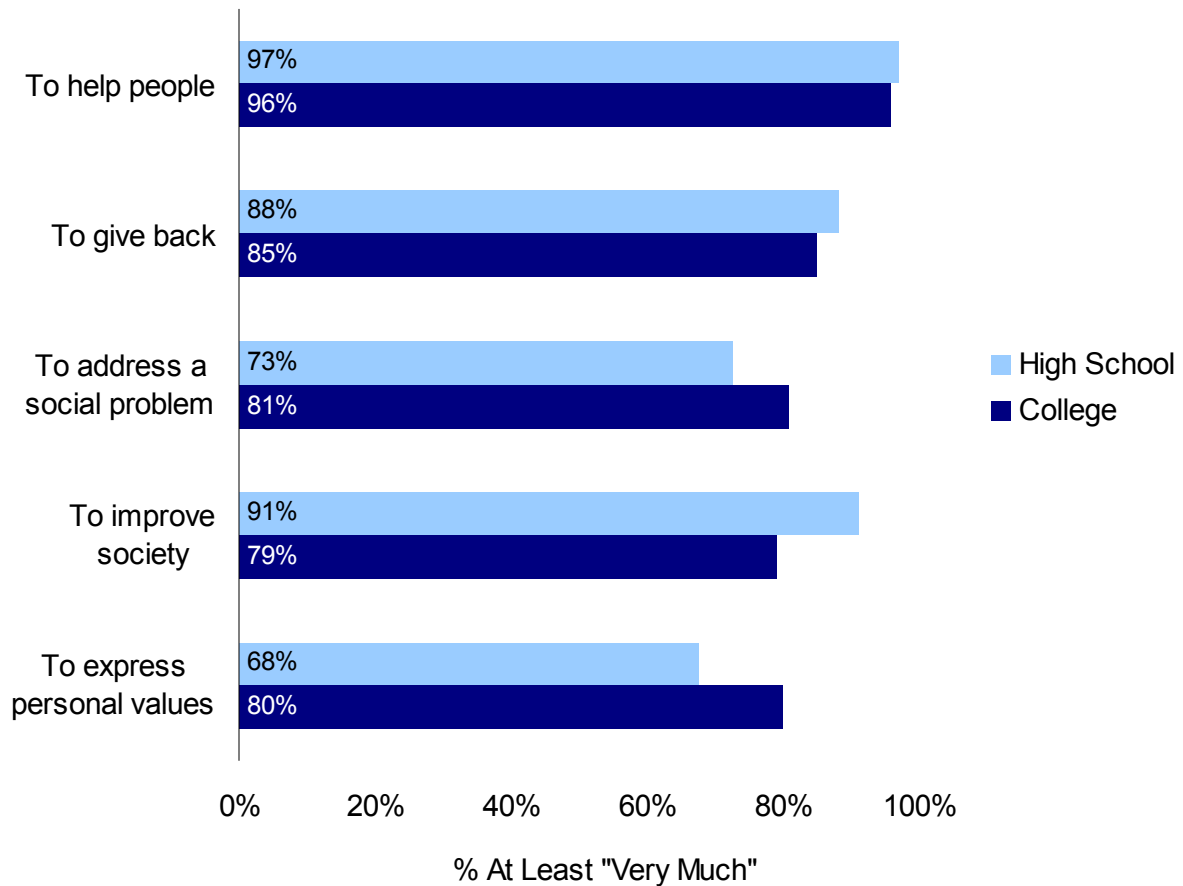
Information on participant characteristics gathered in the pre-trip survey reveals that, especially at the college level, recruitment efforts in the first year of the initiative reached students who were already substantially involved in both Jewish life and community service.

Motivations for Participation

There are many factors that influence a student’s decision to become involved in community service and the selection of alternative break options. As evident in the

importance of pro-social reasons for participation in BNG, students express a strong desire to help those in less fortunate circumstances and to act on their personal values of justice and fairness (Figure 5). Students who traveled to the Gulf Coast recalled the events following Hurricane Katrina and described feeling both incredulous and helpless as they watched television images of the storm’s aftermath. For these participants, BNG was an opportunity to personally contribute to efforts to rebuild communities in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Figure 5: Pro-Social Motivations for Participation



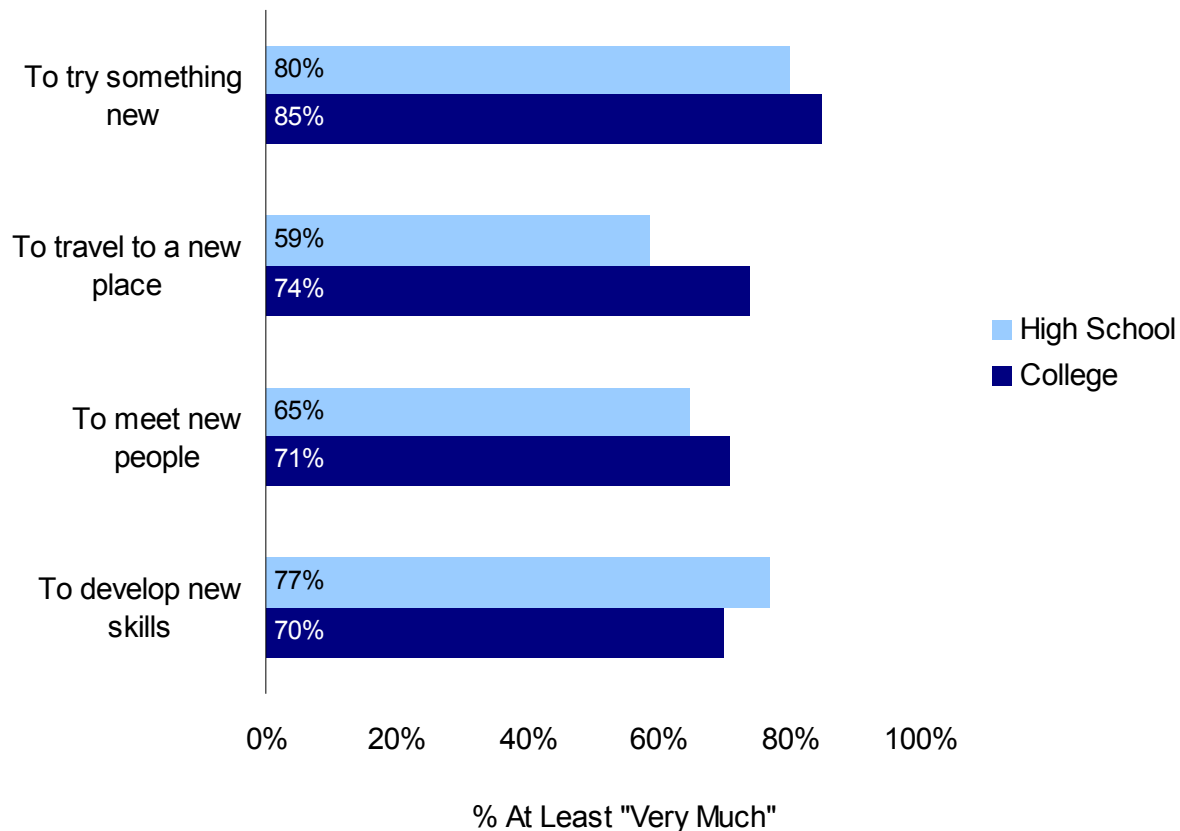
The majority of college and high school participants hoped to have fun on the trip (73% college and 82% high school).

Participants also recognized that an alternative break program was an opportunity for personal growth and new challenges. While the high school participants seemed somewhat more hesitant about new experiences, most participants at both levels chose to go on the trip, expand their horizons, and broaden their perspectives (Figure 6). Several college students indicated that they were interested in travel and the opportunity to experience new or different cultures. Acknowledging her own

comfortable living situation one student explained, “I grew up in a bubble where I was always given anything I needed. I am very appreciative of that, but I want to know what is out there. I wanted to break out of my shell.” Another college student, active in Jewish life but admittedly “new to the social justice camp,” told us, “I thought that this trip would be a good opportunity to get my hands dirty for a good cause and be an introduction to the world of social justice.”

Many BNG participants had a history of Jewish engagement. Over one-half (57%) of

Figure 6: Personal Growth Motivations for Participation



college participants and a smaller proportion of high school participants (35%) were strongly motivated by their desire to increase their connection with the Jewish community. For religiously observant students, working under the auspices of a Jewish organization represented one of only a few options to engage in alternative break trips while maintaining their observance of Shabbat and dietary laws. For some students, the trip presented an opportunity to bring together their interest in service with their Jewish identity: “I had to come to Nicaragua to learn new ideas about Judaism and community building, and that’s why it had to be with a Jewish organization, not just with a random spring break or Peace Corps.”

The Russian-American young adults who traveled to Belarus through BNG had a unique opportunity to explore both their Jewish and Russian roots. Several were involved in Jewish life or with the Russian-American community before the trip, but it was the first experience with Jewish learning and Jewish organizational life for many. Many of the participants were curious about the communities that they left behind as young children and sought a connection to their homeland. As one participant explained, “I always wondered what life would have been like for me if my parents had stayed in the Former Soviet Union.”

Utilitarian motivations were the least important in the decision to enroll in BNG, especially among college participants. Less than one-third (30%) of college participants indicated that they were strongly motivated by the desire to enhance their resume or explore career options and even fewer (24%)

saw the trip as a way to get field experience related to their major field of study. Several high school students emphasized in interviews that the experience to visit and work in New Orleans would give them an edge in the college-application process, and when surveyed, 42% felt that the potential boost to college admissions was a very important motivation. Although some high school participants frankly admitted that the trip was an efficient way to complete their schools’ community service requirements, less than one-third (29%) were strongly motivated by this aspect of the trip.

The Group Experience

The group was a lifeline for those who needed anything, from a hug to medical help; it definitely became a supportive team unit. It was also a wonderful group for exploring new ideas and thoughts about the world and social justice, a veritable sounding board.

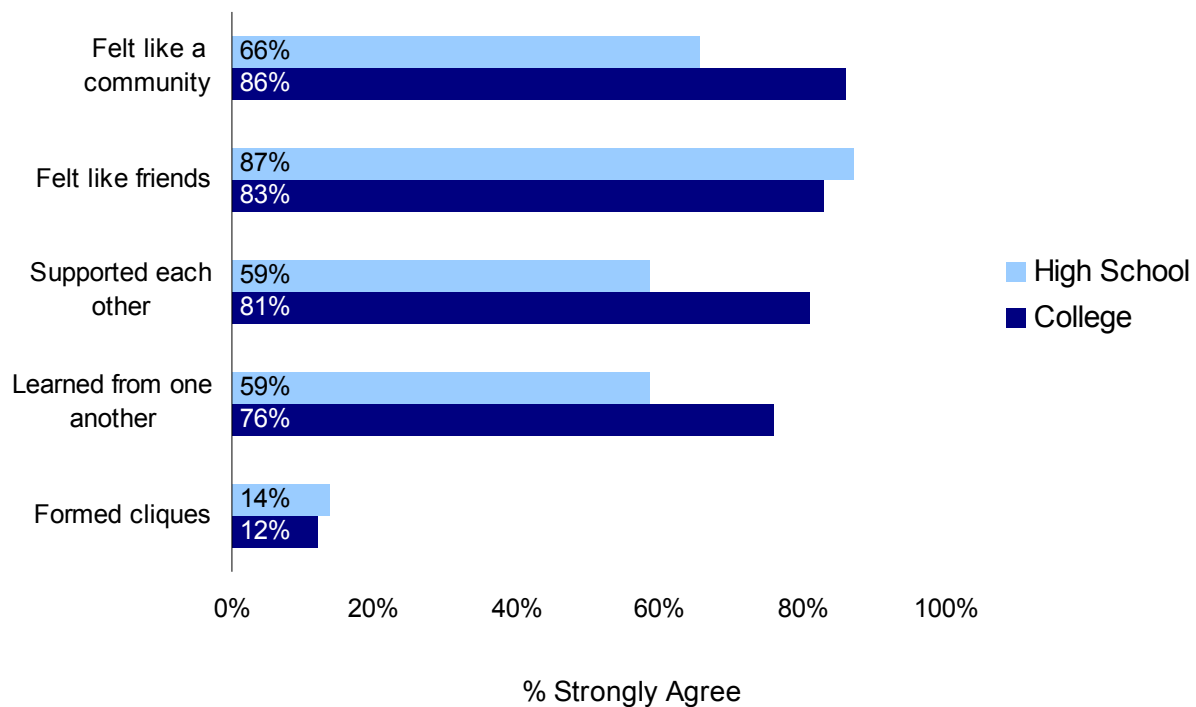
We became such a close knit family and encouraged each other both on the worksite and in our home.

Research on immersive travel programs, such as Taglit-Birthright Israel, has shown that the group itself is one of the key elements of the experience (Saxe & Chazan, 2008). On BNG trips, the group becomes the immediate Jewish community for participants. Being part of a group of peers engaged in service is an essential part of the experience. Given the importance of the group experience in shaping the overall response to the trip, we consider how BNG participants, many of whom did not know each other prior to enrolling in this program, felt about their respective groups.

In response to the survey distributed immediately after their return from the trip, almost all high school participants (93%) and more than four-fifths (82%) of college participants strongly characterized the experience as “fun” and almost universally college (92%) and high school volunteers (97%) strongly agreed that they formed new friendships with other members of their group. College participants overwhelmingly and strongly agreed that their groups felt like supportive communities (Figure 7). Although somewhat less enthusiastic about the supportive nature of their groups, high school participants still overwhelmingly (82%) reported that the group atmosphere enhanced their experience.

Development of a strong sense of community began even before groups departed for their respective trips. All BNG providers were required to conduct pre-trip educational sessions for each group. Pre-trip sessions were intended as a strategy to initiate team building and as a forum to begin participants’ education about the host community, the issues they would be addressing through their service, the Jewish framework for service, and the navigation of cross-cultural differences. Participants often told us that the most useful aspect of pre-trip meetings was the opportunity to get to know their traveling companions: “I think the pre-trip meetings were helpful for starting to form the dynamics of our group. It got us more energized and excited about the work we were doing.”

Figure 7: Reactions to the Group Experience



The experience of working together with a shared sense of purpose continued to foster group cohesion and enabled participants to surmount differences during the trip.

I didn't think there were people [in the group] I share my values with. I wasn't sure how to deal with that and relate to others. But being here and seeing the curiosity and genuine interest that people displayed by digging deeper into issues. It's about people coming closer, being able to participate in something.

Although there was little evidence that groups lost cohesion and dissolved into cliques, a small subset of participants felt that they were outsiders and perceived insurmountable differences between themselves and their peers on the trip. One college student admitted, “I feel like this group is very different from me. They have very different views on life...which is good, because you give a different perspective. But it's also hard because when you are the only one, it's lost in the shuffle.” These areas of discomfort were about interpersonal style for some participants, but for others they related to issues concerning Jewish identity and Jewish observance. Although experienced by only a small minority of participants, the tension that developed around these issues is an important topic that will be discussed in greater length later in the report.

There is an adage that “if the group is good, the trip is good.” On this dimension, BNG trips were very successful. Group members bonded and felt a strong sense of community. When the work was difficult, they looked to each other for support. Their understanding of the experience was amplified by sharing their joys and frustrations. The BNG group experience is reminiscent of that reported by

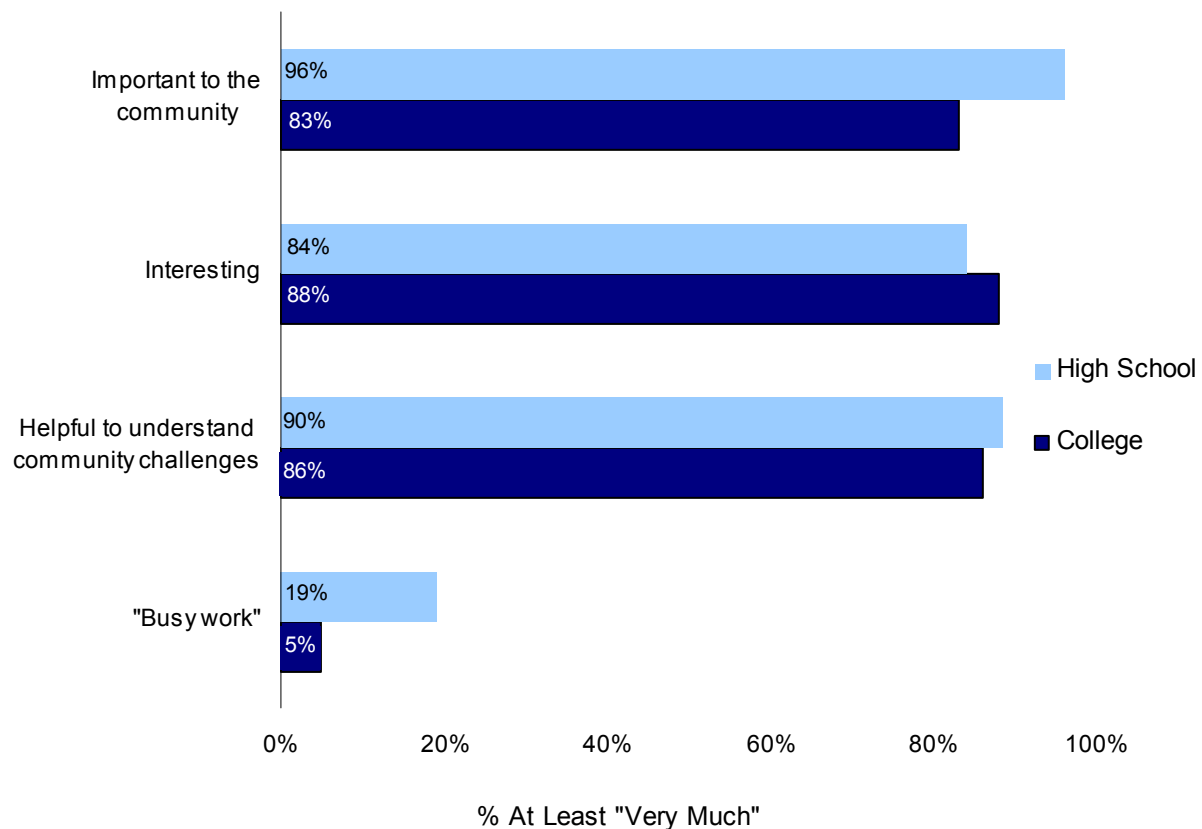
many groups of adult service volunteers: “Serving with committed colleagues in a world needy of our strength, we begin as co-workers but end as brothers and sisters” (Swartz, 2001, p. 5).

Learning about Social Justice

What we were doing was a physically demanding task, but I took it on head first. I tried to do the best I could, and our combined efforts really have made a difference that you can see.

BNG volunteers left behind their classrooms, comfortable homes, and dorm rooms and painted bomb shelters, worked construction, and cleaned cemeteries as part of their efforts to improve the lives of others. Most participants felt that their service work was important and interesting and helped them understand the realities faced by their host community (Figure 8). An overwhelming majority of college (86%) and high school participants (82%) strongly agreed that their trip gave them the opportunity to address a social problem. Many students felt proud of their efforts, especially regarding manual labor. One college participant said, “I enjoyed the physical labor. Work for me is going to the library for five hours and studying. So to know that our bodies can be productive in other ways has been meaningful.” Other participants expressed a great sense of accomplishment with their completed product. A college student explained that the highlight of his trip was “the feeling of completing something and working construction to rehabilitate a house” and for another it was “waking up every morning and knowing [she'd] be making a difference.”

Figure 8: Reactions to Service Work
The work we did was...



Just as participants expressed pride in their accomplishments, they also experienced some frustration with different aspects of the service experience. Disorganization was the most frequent complaint, as less than one-third (32%) of high school participants and less than half (48%) of college participants strongly agreed that their trip was well organized. Problems with transportation and coordination with local service partners, especially in Gulf Coast communities, left participants from some groups feeling that they had significantly less time to be actively working: "Some days were disorganized by the [local service partner]. We were driving around trying to find places. Other times we woke up

early and ended up waiting for hours to get transportation."

The sense of accomplishment was accompanied and somewhat dulled by the realization that the scope of the work was immense and efforts to ameliorate some of the conditions might be just "a drop in the bucket." This led to challenging but fruitful discussions in some groups about the value of what they accomplished in comparison to the trip's financial cost. Several students suggested donating funds directly to the local community instead of sending volunteers, while others argued their physical presence in depressed and impoverished areas was an

important statement of support. One college student felt that his group's presence in the community had stimulated neighborhood residents to get involved in the service project. "It's exciting that [residents] are getting excited about this and are contributing to their neighborhood."

The BNG experience encouraged volunteers to confront the complex issues that surround social justice work. Almost nine-tenths (89%) of high school participants and 78% of college participants strongly agreed that their experiences encouraged them to reexamine their assumptions and attitudes toward the causes of social problems. In both their service work and in reflection sessions, participants were challenged to come to terms with the reality of domestic and international poverty and, perhaps more jolting, deprivation within the Jewish community. For the participants of the NYU-JDC trip to Israel, the experience volunteering in Acco was particularly eye opening. All of these volunteers previously experienced Israel but now met, for the first time, Arab and Jewish Israelis living below the poverty line. All BNG participants encountered significant disparities between their own socio-economic situation and that of their host communities on a daily basis during their trip, prompting them to ask serious questions about justice and fairness:

It's been meaningful to see how other people live. It raises questions about how was all this chosen. I am still grappling with those questions: why was I born into a family in New York, and that little girl was born into a poverty-stricken country with little opportunity to improve herself?

The trip is most memorable in the way it greatly affected the way I view problems in the nation and the world. I now more fully understand the way social justice is indelibly linked with issues of race, class, and economics.

Even before the end of their trip, many college-age participants expressed a strong desire to continue the work they started, both on campus and in their host communities. Several groups discussed how to advocate and teach their peers about the issues they encountered on BNG; it was clear that their commitment to both service and the people they served would not end when they returned home.

The data from the three-month follow-up survey reveals that many of the social justice lessons learned on BNG trips continue to resonate months after their return. Comparing their responses before and after the trip, college participants are higher on all dimensions of civic responsibility—showing greater commitment to volunteering, being informed and involved community members, and taking action to change policy (Figure 9). High school participants also show substantial increases in civic responsibility and are even more positive in their intent to take leadership roles in the community and to seek careers that will allow them to continue to make positive change (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Civic Responsibility: College Participants

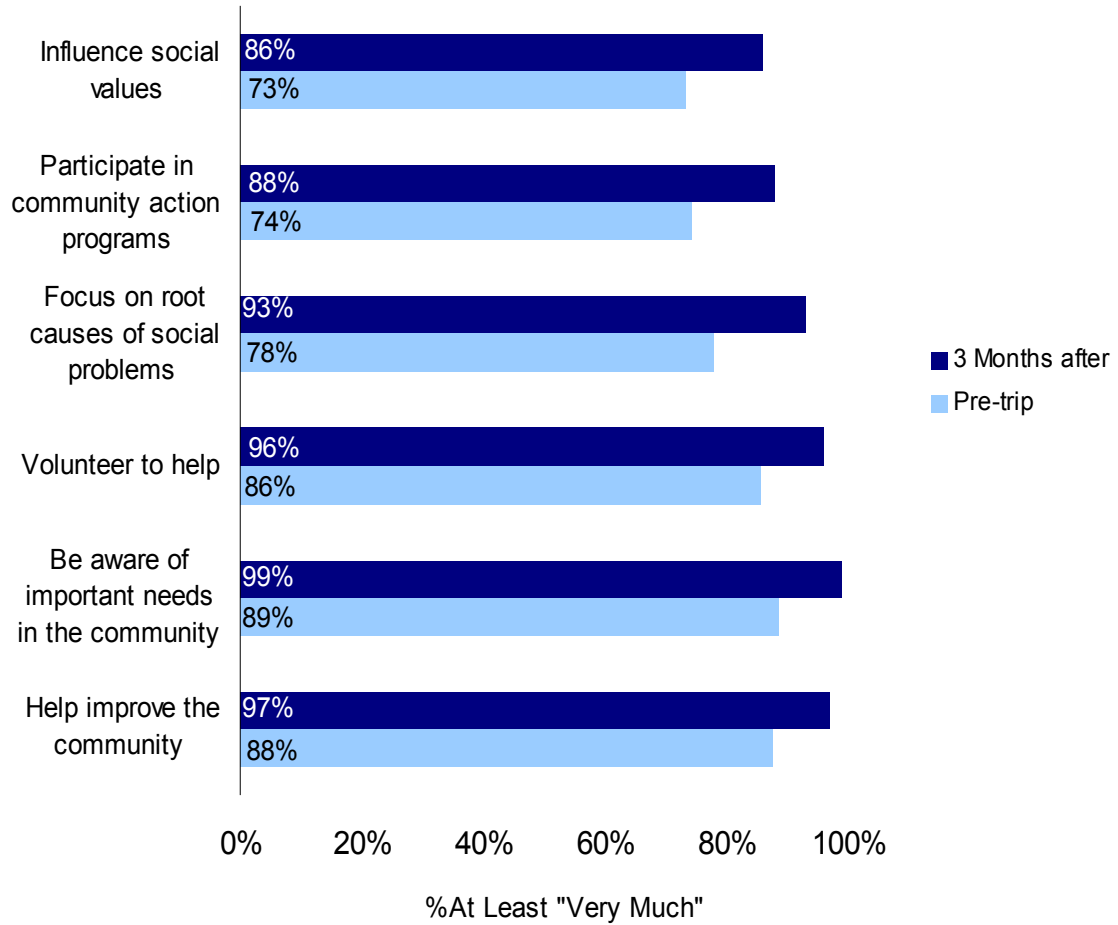
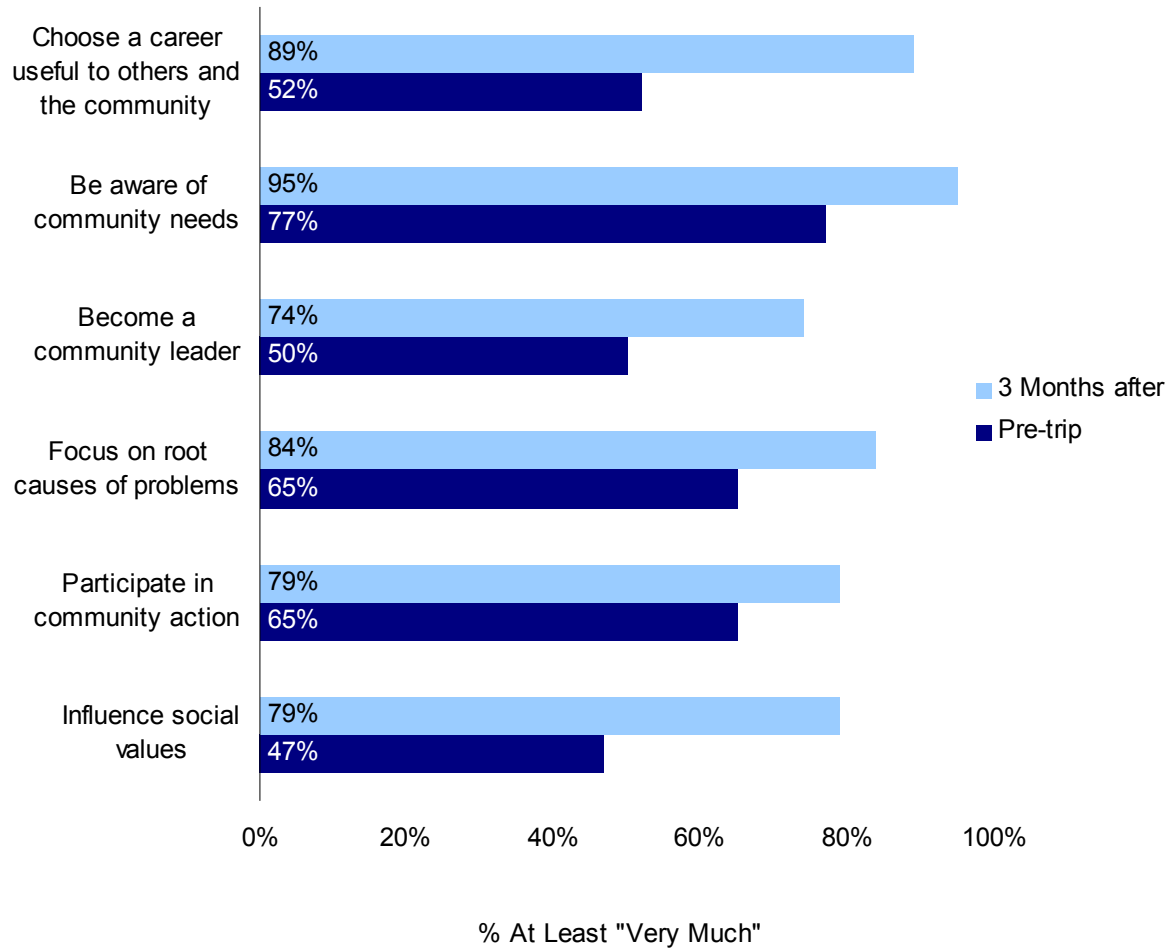


Figure 10: Civic Responsibility: High School Participants



Participants also return with a greater sense of personal empowerment and more confidence in their ability to engage in the tasks required to effectively work for social change. Following their trip, college participants see themselves as more capable of taking an active role in making others aware of problems, developing solutions, organizing change efforts, and influencing decisions (Figure 11). While understandably less assured of their ability to influence community action and policy, high school participants also make considerable gains in their sense of empowerment (Figure 12).

Figure 11: Empowerment: College Participants

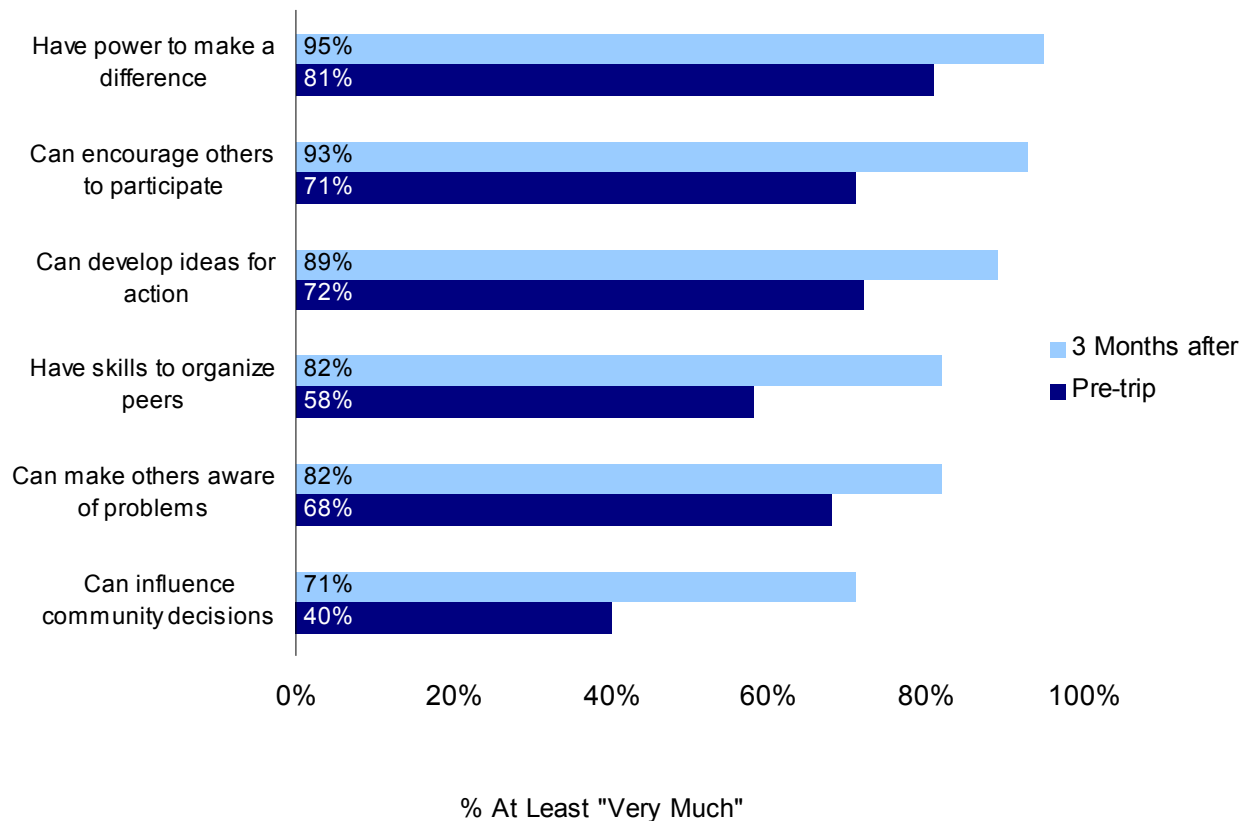
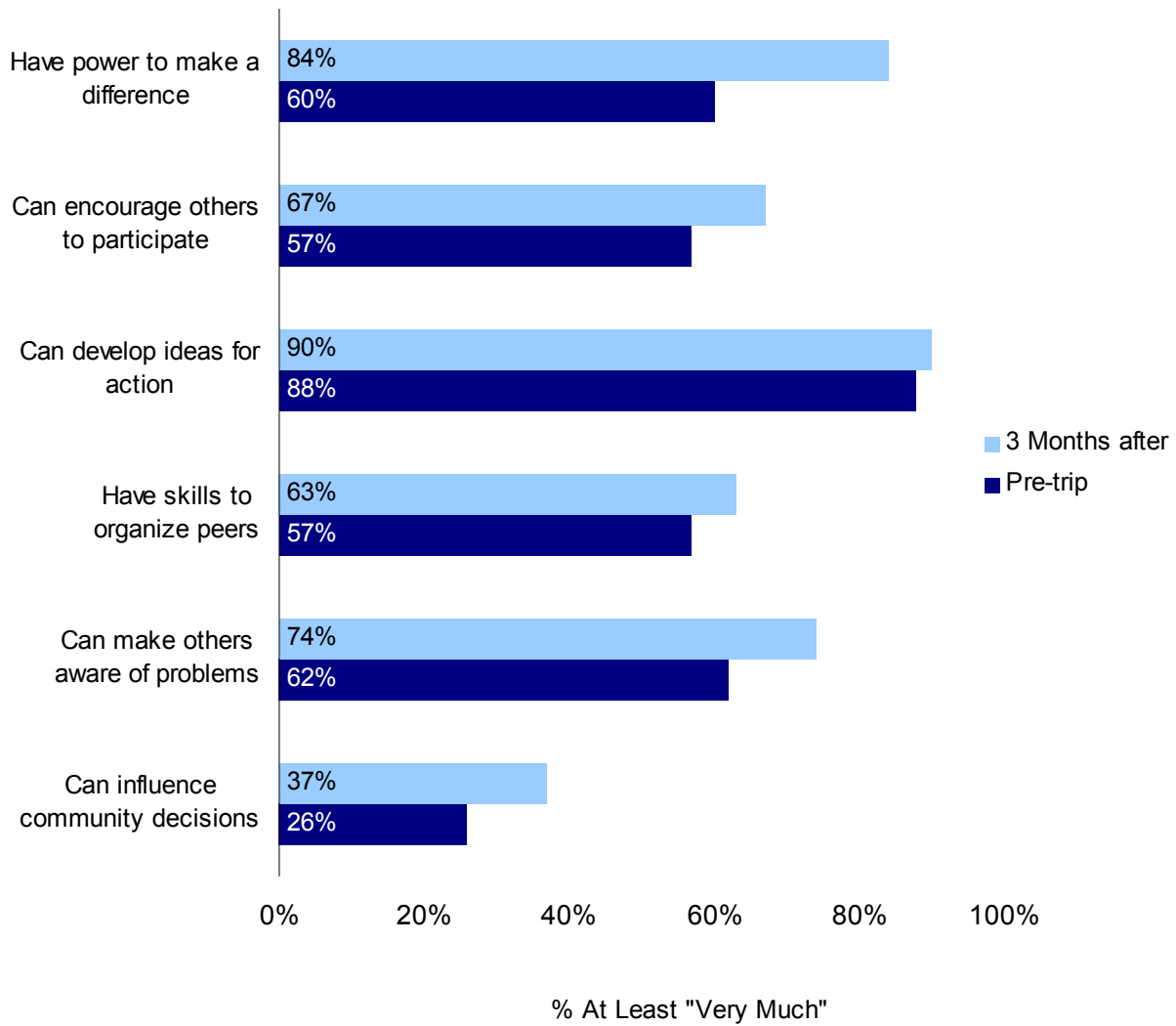


Figure 12: Empowerment: High School Participants



BNG trips gave participants the opportunity to step outside of their usual lives and immerse themselves in the hands-on work of “repairing the world.” They came away from the experience not only feeling that they made real improvements in the lives of local residents, but also with an enhanced sense of their ability for and commitment to working toward social justice in their home campuses and communities.

Interactions with Local Residents: Lessons of Tolerance and Diversity

No matter where you go, people will be fairly similar, and they might have their cultural difference but when you get down to it, people are people and that’s what matters. And I think that’s what this trip shows you. Don’t think about stereotypes, don’t think about separating people; it’s all about unity. It’s about working together and bringing everyone together and that’s how we’re going to make the world a better place.

You don’t really realize how impoverished these people are until you see for yourself in their homes. We thankfully witnessed it first hand when we went into their houses on Shabbat.

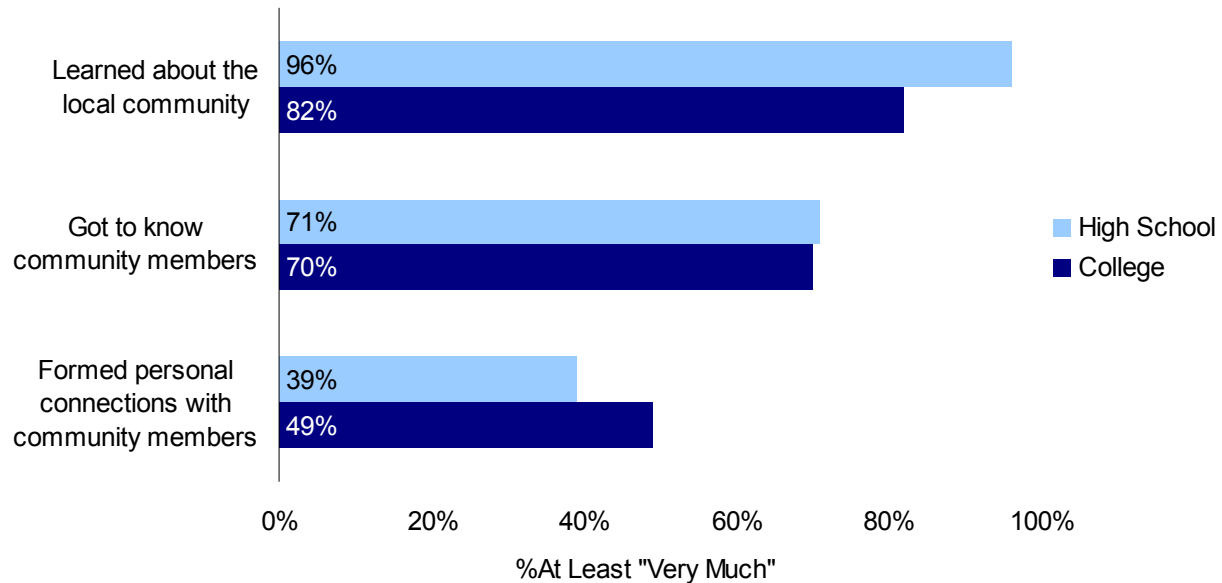
Participants from all groups emphasized that interactions with members of the local community were among the most meaningful and important experiences of their trip. BNG volunteers saw the consequences of poverty and natural disaster with their own eyes while working side by side with local residents. Students were warmly welcomed into the

communities and homes of local residents and came to appreciate not only their struggles and hardships but also their resiliency and hopes for the future.

Students also admitted that these interactions were both individually and interpersonally challenging. While the majority of participants felt that they had positive interactions with local residents and were able to learn about the community, far fewer felt that they had forged real relationships with these individuals (Figure 13). Although ten days is a very short period of time in which to create strong connections, the comments of participants suggest that the real limitation was not time constraints but the inevitable challenges of surmounting differences in cultural background, education, and economic level. Some groups reported odd or uncomfortable interactions with members of the local community while others became frustrated when residents criticized or redirected their efforts: “It’s hard for us to relate to [local residents] since we are in such a different economic situation. Even after you hear their stories it’s hard to understand what they’ve been through.”

Follow-up surveys conducted three months after the trip suggest that participants are still sorting out their complex and often mixed feelings about working with individuals from different backgrounds. Over half of college (60%) and high school participants (65%) strongly agree that their BNG experience increased their ability to relate to people from

Figure 13: Interactions with Local Residents



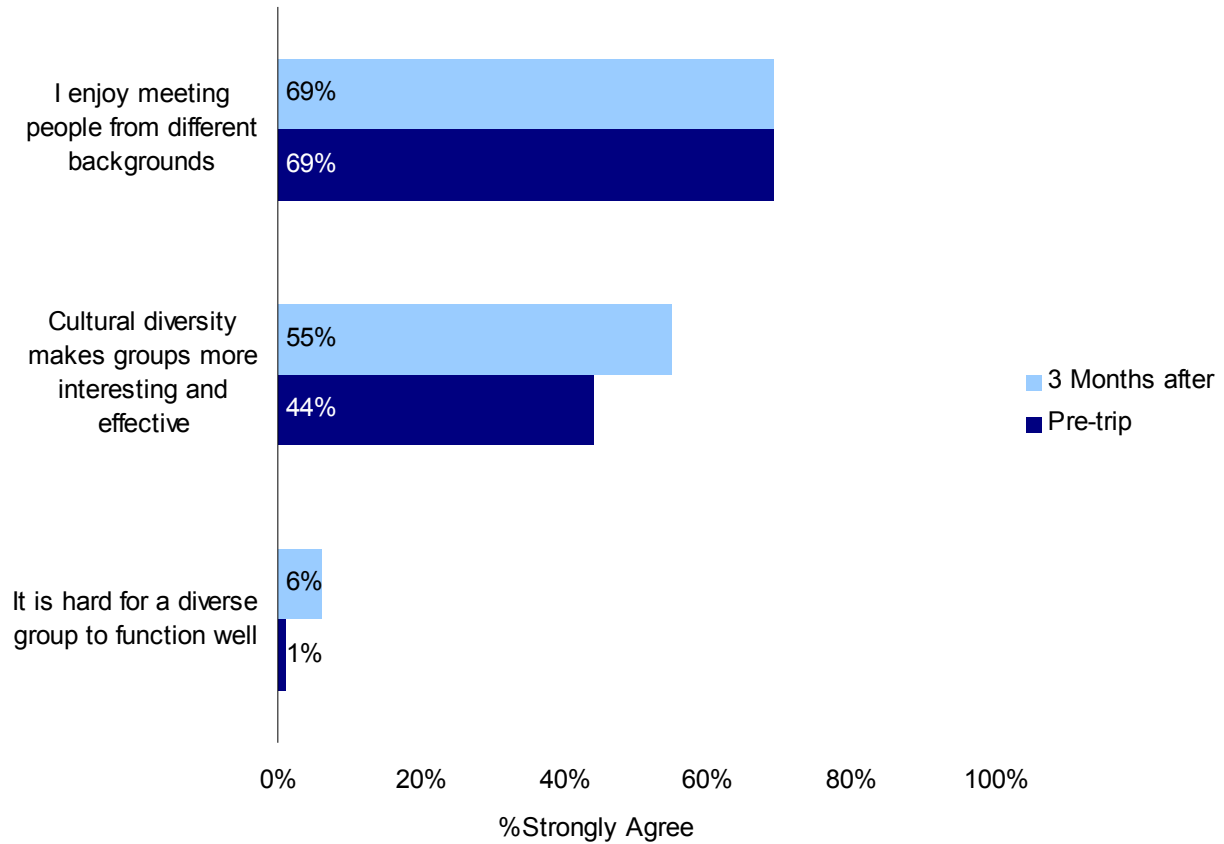
diverse circumstances. College-age participants appreciate the potential of different groups to creatively address issues but are somewhat more realistic about the difficulties inherent in bridging socio-economic, educational, and cultural distinctions (Figure 14). Unfortunately, the percentage of high school participants indicating that they strongly enjoy meeting people from other backgrounds decreased from 56% pre-trip to 47% post-trip. There is even a greater level of decrease in their belief that cultural diversity can be a source of strength and innovation in a group setting (44% pre-trip, 32% post-trip).

The majority of participants are inclined to see larger social causes as primarily responsible for the plight of the impoverished both before and after the trip. However, a small group of participants returned from BNG with heightened “victim-blaming”

explanations of poverty and social disadvantage. About 7% of college participants became strongly convinced that “we need look no further than the individual in understanding his or her problems,” and 11% of high school participants came to strongly endorse the belief that it is difficult to “understand why people are so poor when there are so many opportunities available to them.” While these numbers represent only one-tenth of participants, the attitude is not inconsequential and reminds us that “This kind of service risks being understood as a kind of noblesse oblige, a private act of kindness performed by the privileged that does little to address underlying causes of inequity and injustice” (Westheimer, 2001, p. 12).

Person-to-person encounters with members of the local community provided some of the greatest learning opportunities during BNG

Figure 14: Diversity Attitudes: College Participants



trips. Both high school and college participants acknowledged the impact of interacting with individuals living in circumstances far different than their own. While not all interactions were easy or comfortable, students affirmed the importance of coming face to face with the challenges and benefits of cultural diversity on an alternative break program.

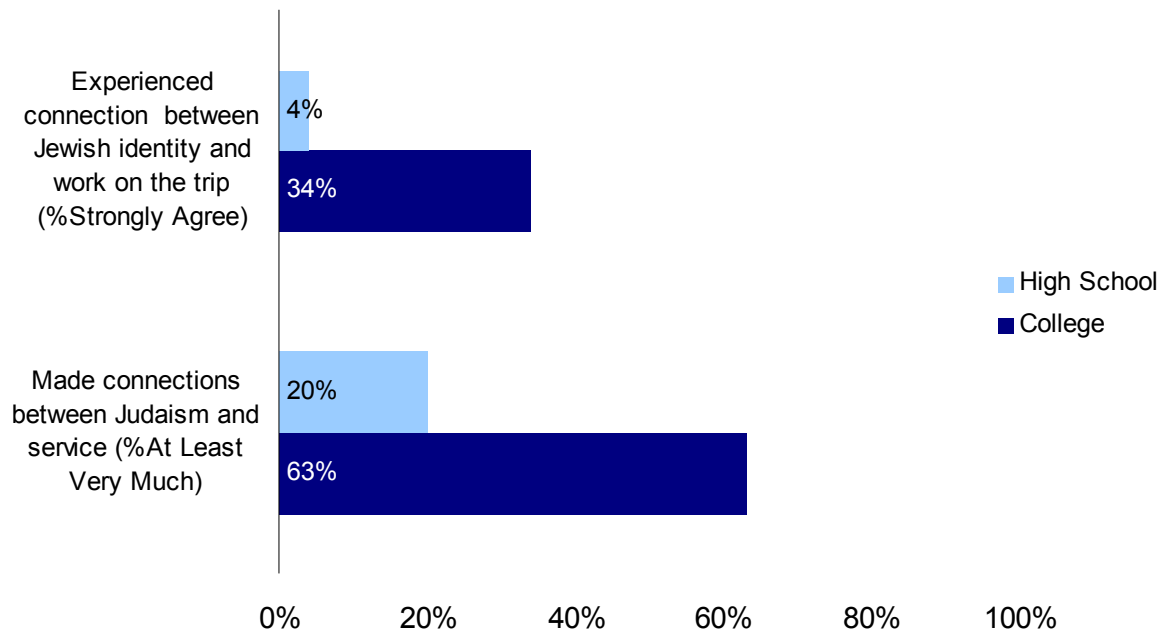
Gaining a Jewish Perspective on Service

Even a cursory search of the internet reveals a veritable explosion of secular alternative break programs. Organizations like Break Away, Habitat for Humanity’s Collegiate Challenge, and hundreds of campus-based offices and

clubs have offered a service trip in the last year. The “value-added” of programs such as the BNG is their explicit goal of enhancing the sense of connection to the Jewish people and bringing about a view of “commitments to service and social change as core parts of their Jewish identity.” In this section, we consider aspects of the trip and participant outcomes related to these goals.

Survey results showed the impact of BNG on enhancing college participants’ capacity to see service through a Jewish lens. Two-thirds of college participants strongly felt that their trip helped them see connections between Judaism and service (Figure 15). By contrast, only

Figure 15: Connections between Jewish Identity and Service on the Trip

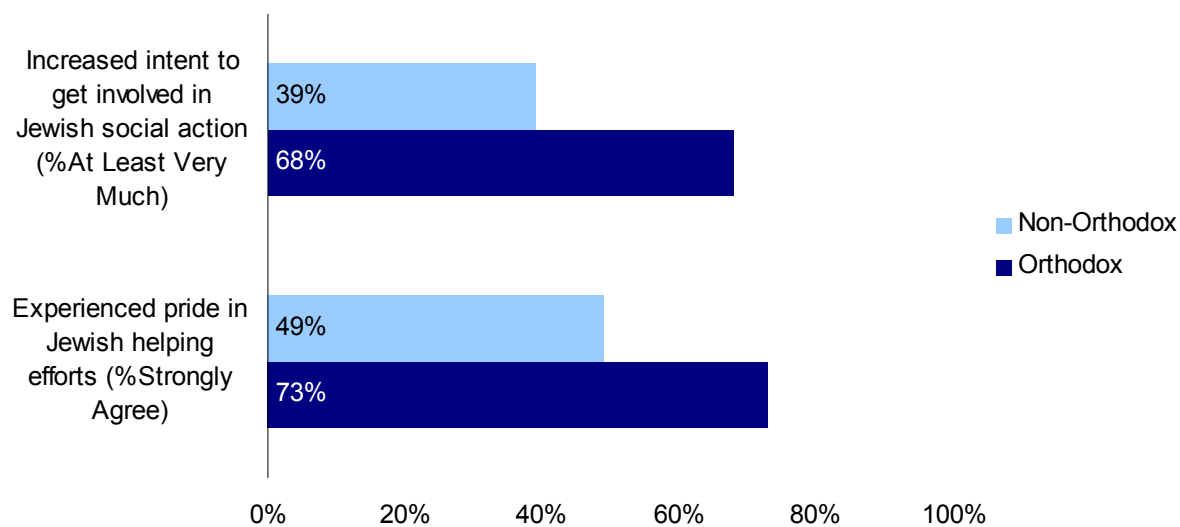


one-fifth of high school participants gained this perspective. Far fewer high school and college students experienced a connection between their Jewish identities and the work with which they were personally involved on the trip. In other words, most college participants gained an abstract understanding of the Jewish approach to service but were more limited in their ability to apply this perspective to their own experience. High school participants were less likely to connect service and Judaism from either an abstract or personal perspective.

Both high school and college students showed greater awareness of the social action opportunities available in the Jewish community as a result of their BNG experiences. Participants expressed an increase

in their desire to become personally involved in Jewish service efforts as well as increased pride in those endeavors. Again, high school participants demonstrated the most modest changes with less than one-third indicating substantially increased desire to become involved in Jewish social justice (18%) or pride in “Jewish helping efforts” (32%). Among college-age participants, these outcomes appear to be influenced by current denominational affiliation. College participants who identify as Orthodox are far more likely to show both increased intent to participate and strong pride in Jewish social action as compared with their peers who currently affiliate with non-Orthodox denominations (Figure 16). Less than half of the non-Orthodox participants indicate strongly positive outcomes on either of these

Figure 16: Reaction to Learning about Jewish Social Action: College Participants



measures of connection to Jewish-sponsored service.

Comparing participants’ responses before and three months after the trip suggests that, especially among college-age participants, there has been some growth in the incorporation of service into their Jewish identities (Figures 17 and 18). The gains are more modest for high school age participants; most left the trip with only slightly less tenuous connections between their Jewish

identities and service. As one high school student argued, “I think community service is a people thing, it’s not a religious thing. Anyone can do it, anyone is capable. It doesn’t relate to religion because it’s all about your actions. What does that have to do with religion?”

Figure 17: Integration of Service into Jewish Identity: College Participants

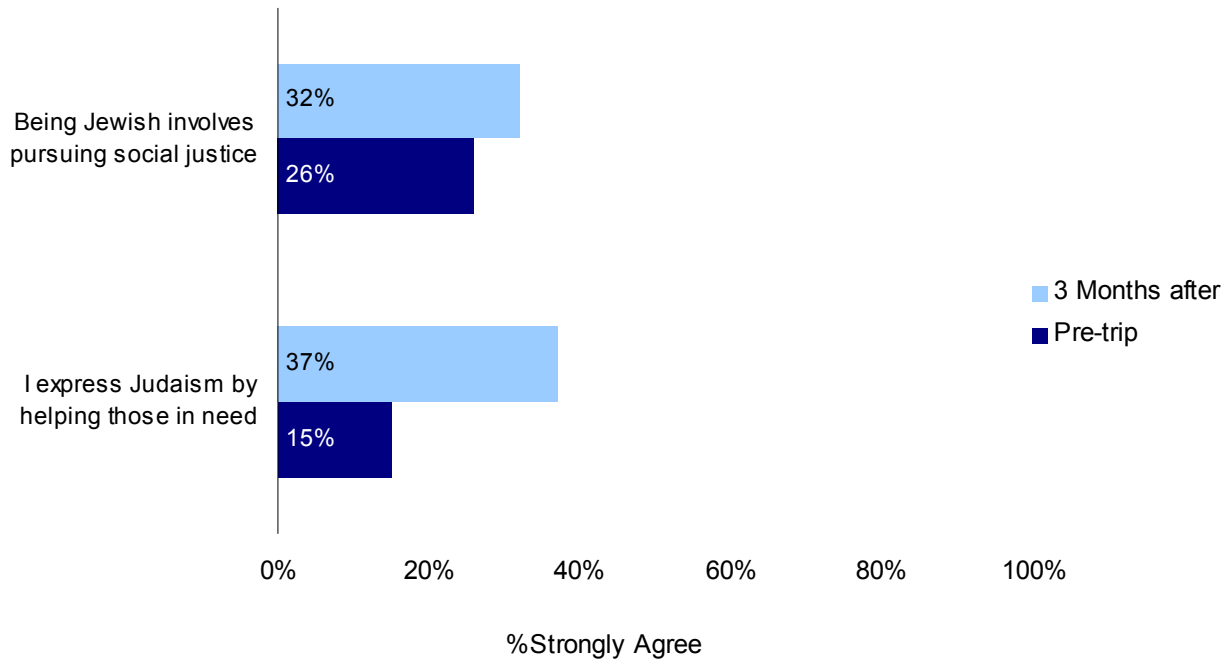
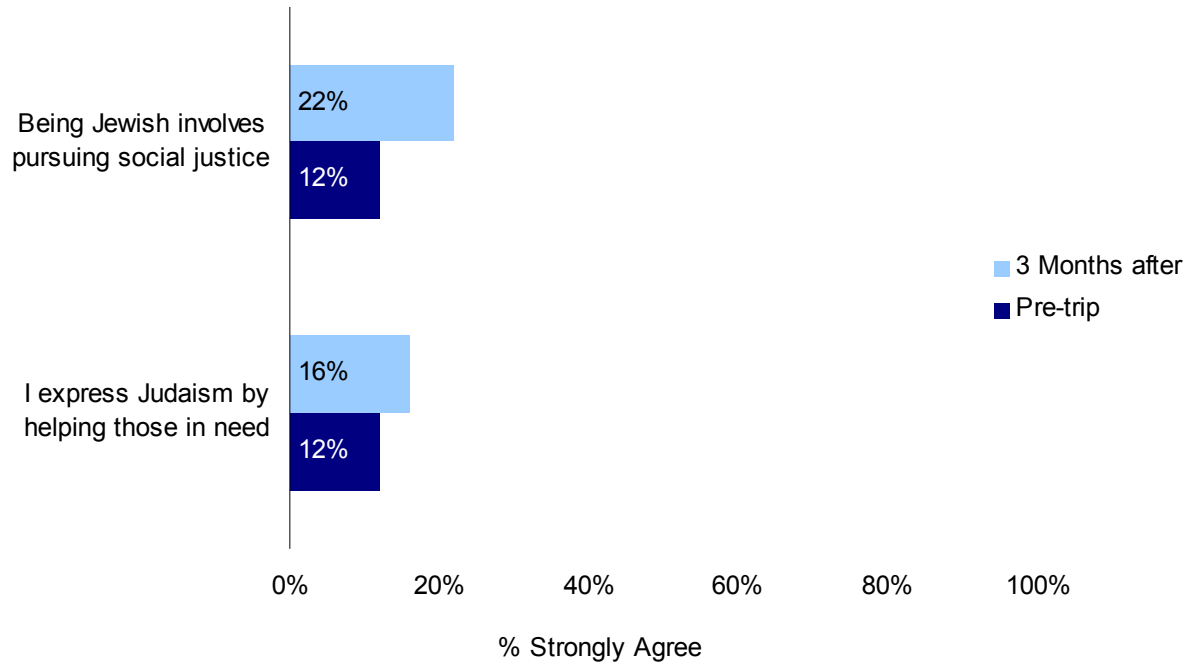


Figure 18: Integration of Service into Jewish Identity: High School Participants

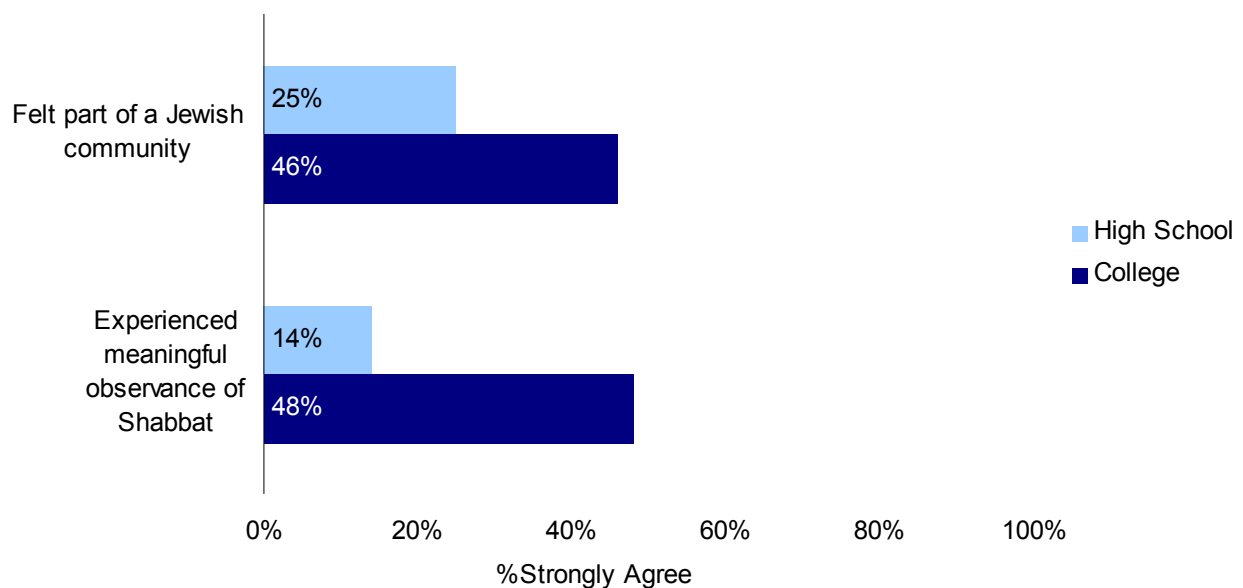


Jewish life on BNG trips included being part of a Jewish peer group, observing some level of *kashrut*, and celebrating Shabbat together. All groups observed Shabbat with at least one special meal while some groups also attended synagogue, participated in Jewish learning programs, hiked, or explored the community in which they were working. The BNG group experience was a very positive example of Jewish community and meaningful observance of Shabbat for almost half of college participants, regardless of denominational identity (Figure 19). Among high school participants far fewer experienced either personally meaningful observance or Jewish community.

The modest and mixed BNG outcomes related to Jewish identity, especially among high school participants, may be due to the

difficulties related to incorporating Jewish life and learning into the trip. Although the social justice curricula received high marks, Jewish learning sessions received mixed reviews. Only 37% of college participants and one-quarter of high school participants strongly agreed that the BNG experience expanded their knowledge of Judaism. Individually, participants affirmed that the time set aside for daily Jewish learning served as a reminder of the trip's purpose. A high school participant said his group's Jewish learning "really translated to our work here in New Orleans. We talked about scale of *tzedakah* [Maimonides' ladder] and learned the best ways to give. Now I can see it happening right before my eyes." Unfortunately, other students described the sessions as tedious or felt that the level of Jewish learning missed the mark. While some groups felt that Jewish study was an

Figure 19: Experience of Jewish Living



imposition because of their lack of experience with traditional texts, the same curriculum often felt too rudimentary for participants with higher levels of Jewish education and experience studying traditional texts. Like many of the other participants on her trip, one college student with a day school background, wanted more sophisticated Jewish text options:

For this group in particular, there seems to be a general consensus that service is a Jewish obligation. If that's the starting point, we might not need to focus so much on 'Is service a Jewish obligation?' and move toward 'What does that mean for our identities as Jews?'

For some, Jewish learning also felt divorced from the service experience. There were missed opportunities for informal teaching about the relevance of Jewish tradition and values to service work during the trip. One college participant noted that his group never reflected or engaged in Jewish learning near the location of their service project. He felt that the separation of time and space from their work site removed the work experience from the group discussions. Repeated, ongoing, and informal reinforcement of lessons introduced in structured learning sessions are particularly important when Jewish concepts and text are new to participants. While most trip staff had experience working with this age group, few had sufficient training as educators and relied on a narrow set of classroom-based educational strategies. One college student complained that the structure of the Jewish learning “made us feel like we’re back in Hebrew school, like we’re little kids.”

Jewish learning varied on all trips, though each group used curriculum that explored the

connections between Judaism and social justice. The exception was the trip to Belarus. Though the participants on this trip learned a great deal about their Russian heritage, there was little opportunity for Jewish learning. For example, there was no effort to explain the observance of Passover or use the seder to teach about Jewish ritual to Belarus participants, many of whom have little or no family experience of Jewish holiday celebration. As a result, many participants said they felt lost, and Judaism remained for them a fondly viewed but foreign experience. The program focused on the Holocaust rather than the connection between service and Jewish tradition. The group’s service project, restoring a Jewish cemetery, was not explained in a Jewish context. The group connected their service work to their cultural heritage but not to their Jewish life.

The potential to use observance of dietary laws, Shabbat, and other festivals as opportunities to teach about Jewish tradition and diversity was not fully realized. Shabbat plans were often announced rather than achieved as a result of group discussion. Kosher meals were planned ahead of time by trip staff. Jewish observance and Jewish diversity were typically not the explicit foci of learning. In addition, most trip facilitators did not actively work with participants to grapple with issues of ritual observance, leaving group members unsure or uncomfortable with differing approaches. Perhaps more disheartening, junior staff seemed unprepared to respond to student questions about observance. Staff, on at least on one trip, communicated their own discomfort and distaste for Orthodox practice. College students also expressed anxiety regarding ritual observance during the trip. One stated, “I was at times intimidated by the level of

observance practiced by some members of the group. Group leaders could have done a better job making all denominations feel at ease.”

Another remarked, “I felt isolated in my Jewish background and experiences.”

Participants reported positive experiences of Jewish pluralism when groups were encouraged to work together to determine how they would observe Shabbat or other festivals. As a result, these participants felt ownership and engagement in Jewish life during their BNG experience. One noted, “I thought Shabbes was an interesting experience because everyone contributed in some way and tried to make it their own, and it gave me the opportunity outside the structure to have more freedom to try some new things.”

Another concluded, “I think the most

memorable moments involved aspects of our communal life there. I've never had an experience cooking my own food while practicing kashrut with a group of Jews.”

Jewish life on BNG trips helped participants, especially those at the college level, take the first steps toward connecting social justice work to their Jewish lives and identities. Jewish learning needs further development and better integration into the trip experience if the full impact of participating in Jewish sponsored-alternative break trips is to be realized.

Summary and Recommendations

The meaning of Jewish existence is to foster in ourselves as Jews, and to awaken in the rest of the world, a sense of moral responsibility in action.

Mordechai Kaplan

In its first year, BNG made great strides toward its goal of expanding Jewish-sponsored service opportunities for young adults. As with other successful efforts to engage young adults, BNG trips wove together multiple strands of emotional, intellectual, and hands-on experience to create a lasting impact. Jewish life and learning on BNG increased the salience of social justice in the Jewish identities of participants and helped participants develop a Jewish perspective on service. Participants had meaningful and often life-changing experiences serving both domestic and international communities. Face-to-face encounters with economic and social inequality helped participants to reexamine their assumptions and attitudes about the causes of social problems. Participants returned to their campuses and home communities with a renewed commitment to taking an active role in “repairing the world.” In addition, BNG alumni felt an increased sense of empowerment about their ability to make a difference through their participation in social action. The civic orientation and sense of self-efficacy developed by participants has important individual and communal benefits. Social responsibility in the late teen and college years has been shown to be a key predictor of continued volunteer engagement beyond college and into adulthood (Oesterle, Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004).

The success of BNG is measured beyond participants’ Jewish and civic engagement. In developing and implementing BNG, UJA-Federation encouraged a diverse group of campus and community organizations to

strategize, plan, and convene service learning trips. In particular, the grant process brought smaller campuses and local community centers to the table, empowering them with additional resources. BNG also included community-based organizations that work with populations not typically engaged in service learning, such as Russian-Americans and post-college young adults.

As we document the program’s strengths, we recognize that there are also areas for improvement as BNG enters its second year. In the initiative’s first year, recruitment efforts did not reach students beyond those who were already substantially involved in both Jewish life and in service work or advocacy. Trip providers had difficulty expanding their applicant pool beyond Hillel leaders and other students active in the Jewish community. Trip providers and campus professionals should note the lessons of Year One and focus more energy on diverse recruitment efforts in Year Two. The goal should not be to exclude those who are already involved with Jewish life but to make additional efforts to reach those students who are largely disconnected from Jewish life on campus or in their community. Actions might include recruitment through campus service organizations or university-sponsored offices for community involvement. Related academic departments, such as social work, public policy, education, economics, or sociology, could also be targeted as potential partners.

The formal and informal Jewish learning strategies employed on BNG trips are another area in need of attention. Poor matches between the Jewish background and knowledge of participants and the level of Jewish curriculum, combined with reliance on a narrow set of educational strategies, meant

that many participants were less than fully satisfied with the Jewish learning component. There were also many missed opportunities for informal teaching about the relevance of Jewish text and values to the actual work being done. It is important that trip providers have curriculum that speaks to all participants, regardless of Jewish background. In addition, efforts should be made to either recruit staff with background in formal as well as informal education or to provide staff with training in these areas. Together, these efforts will increase the connections that young adults make between their Jewish identities and their desire to work toward social justice.

Research on Jewish life on college campuses has repeatedly concluded that significant tensions exist between religiously observant and non-observant students (Chertok, Sales, Klein, & Saxe, 2006; Sales & Saxe, 2006). On most campuses, non-Orthodox students have little person-to-person contact with their Orthodox peers. With Jewish high school attendance almost universal among Orthodox teens and substantially less common among their non-Orthodox peers (Schick, 2005), the situation is even more pronounced among high school students. Non-Orthodox college students often cite discomfort with observant students as the reason they avoid organized Jewish campus life and activities.

Jewish-sponsored service, such as BNG, may provide an unparalleled opportunity to bring young adult Jews together from across the denominational spectrum. Working and living closely together as peers in the service of shared goals are the exact conditions most

conducive to reducing prejudice and creating more favorable intergroup attitudes (Gaertner et al., 1990). In short, programs like BNG have huge potential to help bridge the divisions between young adult Jews from different backgrounds and provide a positive experience of Jewish diversity. Pluralism should be an explicit aspect of recruitment, teaching, and discussion on trips. Areas of daily life, such as food preparation, provide rich opportunities to respectfully explore diverse Jewish traditions and should be used to their fullest potential. At the same time, the value of pluralism cannot be taught by those who feel neither knowledgeable nor comfortable with the topic; staff selection and training are essential.

The mixed and often limited impact of BNG on high school participants, particularly in regard to developing a Jewish lens for service, suggests that developmentally this population may not be best suited to take full advantage of the program's offerings. In their study of Jewish adolescents, Kadushin, Kelner, and Saxe (2000) conclude that "Judaism is important to them, but only as it coheres or coexists with their aspirations for academic success, financial security, and social belonging" (p vii). As with other Jewish immersive experiences, such as trips to Israel, research indicates that programs for college-age participants have more impact than equivalent programs focused on adolescents (Ukeles, 1994).

BNG is an important contribution to the service learning field, providing alternative break opportunities to Jewish young adults with connections to the New York area. As a

classic immersive experience, BNG brings together peer groups to learn from each other in both obvious and subtle ways. Through volunteerism, face-to-face encounters with people from diverse backgrounds, Jewish learning, and self exploration, UJA-Federation's Break New Ground empowers participants to make a difference as part of a Jewish community.

References

- Arnett, J. J. (2002). The psychology of globalization. *American Psychologist*, 57, 774-783.
- Chertok, F., Sales, A. L., Klein, A., & Saxe, L. (2006). *Perceptions and realities of Jewish life on an elite campus*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.
- Friedman, T.L. (2007, October 10). Generation Q. *New York Times*.
- Gaertner, S.L., Mann, J.A., Dovidio, J.F., Murrell, A.J., & Pomare, M. (1990). How does cooperation reduce intergroup bias? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 692-704.
- Greenberg, A. (2005). *OMG! How generation Y is redefining faith in the iPod era*. New York, NY: Reboot.
- Greenberg, Y. (2001). Personal service: A central Jewish norm for our time. *Contact*, 4, 3-4.
- Irie, E. & Blair, J. (2008). *Jewish service learning: What is and what could be*. Berkeley: BTW Consultants, Inc.
- Kadushin, C., Kelner, S., & Saxe, L. (2000). *Being a Jewish teenager in America: Trying to make it*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.
- Lopez, M.H., Levine, P., Both, D., Kiesa, A., Kirby, E., & Marcelo, K. (2006). *The 2006 civic and political health of the nation: A detailed look at how youth participate in politics and communities*. College Park, MD: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.
- Messinger, R. W. (2003). *Jewish service: A vision for 21st century American Judaism*. New York: American Jewish World Service.
- Oesterle, S., Johnson, M.K., & Mortimer, J.T. (2004). Volunteerism during the transitions to adulthood: A life course perspective. *Social Forces*, 82, 1123-1149.
- Sales, A. L., & Saxe, L. (2006). *Particularism in the university: realities and opportunities for Jewish life on campus*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.
- Saxe, L. & Chazan, B. (2008). *Ten days of Birthright Israel*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.
- Schick, M. (2005). *A census of Jewish day schools in the United States 2003-2004*. New York: AVI CHAI Foundation.
- Steinhardt, M.H. (2001). Service as a strategy to strengthen the Jewish community. *Contact*, 4, 7.
- Swartz, J. (2001). Doing well and doing good. *Contact*, 4, 5-6.

Ukeles, J. (1994). *Campus and community: Strengthening the identity of Jewish college students*. New York: American Jewish Committee.

Westheimer, J. (2001). Community service learning: Pursuing Jewish ideals of compassion and justice. *Contact*, 4, 12.

Additional Resources

The following reports by researchers at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies are available for download at <http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs>.

Jewish Service Learning

Chertok, F., & Samuel, N. (2008). *Justice, justice shall they pursue: Young adult interest in long term service options*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.

Chertok, F., Samuel, N., & Saxe, L. (2006). *You shall tell your children: An evaluation of the ICHEIC Service Corps*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.

Jewish Adolescents and Young Adults

Kadushin, C., Kelner, S., & Saxe, L. (2000). *Being a Jewish teenager in America: Trying to make it*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.

Sales, A. L., & Saxe, L. (2006). *Particularism in the university: Realities and opportunities for Jewish life on campus*. New York: AVI CHAI Foundation.

Sasson, T., Saxe, L., Rosen, M., Selinger-Abutbul, D., & Hecht, S. (2007). *After Birthright Israel: Finding and seeking young adult Jewish community*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Steinhardt Social Research Institute.

Saxe, L., & Chertok, F. (2007). The 1,2,3, principle. *Reform Judaism*, 62-65.

Saxe, L., Sasson, T., Phillips, B., Hecht, S., & Wright, G. (2007). *Taglit-Birthright Israel evaluation: 2007 North American cohorts*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Steinhardt Social Research Institute.

Appendix A: College and High School BNG Surveys

BNG Pre-Trip Survey for College Age Participants

S. About You

Q. Sex

Are you . . .

Male

Female

Other [text box]

Attend

Do you currently attend college?

Yes

No

Q. College

What is the name of the college you attend?

Name: _____

Q. Collegeloc

In what state/province is this college located?

State/ Province: [drop down menu]

Q. SchYr

In terms of the number of credits you've completed, are you a . . . ?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Other. Please specify: _____

Q. Major

What is or will be your major field of study?

Q. Minor

If applicable, what is or will be your second major field of study, minor, or concentration?

Q. Major

What is or will be your major field of study?

Q. Minor

If applicable, what is or will be your second major field of study, minor, or concentration?

[drop down menu]

S. Volunteer Experience

In this section we will ask you about your previous experience with volunteering, service, and social action

Q. PrevTrip

Have you ever participated in an alternative break/vacation service trip?

No

Yes. Please Specify: _____

Q. CurInvLvl

How do you feel about your current level of involvement in volunteering, service or social action?

Much less than I would like

Somewhat less than I would like

Just about right

Somewhat more than I would like

Much more than I would like

Q. PastYrVolFreq

Over the last year, how often did you engage in any of the following volunteer or social action efforts?

		Was this activity sponsored by a Jewish organization?
<p>Serve or assist as a mentor, tutor, coach, counselor or some other activity that benefited youth or schools?</p> <p>Help people through human service organizations such as hospitals, nursing homes, crisis centers, shelters, or food or blood banks?</p> <p>Volunteer for a performing or arts organization such as a museum or theater?</p> <p>Volunteer for a candidate’s campaign or a political organization?</p> <p>Engage in activities to protect the environment, wildlife or animals?</p> <p>Help with first-aid, fire-fighting or search and rescue activities or at a public safety organization?</p> <p>Work to educate, influence public opinion or lobby others on behalf of an organization or cause?</p> <p>Personally walk, run or bicycle to raise money for a charitable cause?</p> <p>Volunteer in other ways to help raise money for a charitable cause or organization?</p> <p>Volunteer for a synagogue, Hillel, Federation or other Jewish organization?</p> <p>Help to maintain, repair or build facilities or homes?</p> <p>Take part in campus social activism?</p> <p>Work on a voter registration campaign?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A few times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Regularly</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Q. ExpViews

In the last year, have you done any of the following to *express your views or opinions about a political or social issue*?

<p>Contacted or visited a public official at any level of government?</p> <p>Contacted or written to a newspaper or magazine?</p> <p>Called in to a radio or television talk show (even if you did not get on the air)?</p> <p>Taken part in a protest or demonstration?</p> <p>Signed an email petition?</p> <p>Signed a written petition?</p> <p>NOT bought something because of conditions under which the product is made?</p> <p>NOT bought something because you dislike the conduct of the company that produces it?</p> <p>Bought a certain product or service because you like the social or political value of the company that produces or provides it?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
--	--

Q. VolReason

People participate in volunteer or social action work for many reasons. How important to you is each of the following reasons?

<p>To "give back" to the community</p> <p>To improve society as a whole</p> <p>To help people</p> <p>To meet new people</p> <p>To travel to new places</p> <p>To enhance your resume</p> <p>To address a social or political problem</p> <p>To develop new skills</p> <p>To feel personal satisfaction</p> <p>To do something related to your Jewish identity</p> <p>To get field experience related to your major or future career</p> <p>To have fun</p> <p>To be more connected to the community</p> <p>To try something new</p> <p>To express your Jewish values</p> <p>To explore career options</p> <p>To do something with your friends</p> <p>To express your personal values</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all Important</p>
---	---

Are there any other reasons why you participate in volunteer or social action work?

Q. FriendsVol

Among the people you consider your closest friends, would you say that . . .

- None do volunteer or social action work
- Some do volunteer or social action work
- Most do volunteer or social action work
- All or almost all do volunteer or social action work

S. Your Thoughts and Ideas

Q. Impact

To what extent do you believe. .

<p>You have the power to make a difference in the community.</p> <p>You can successfully encourage others to participate in the community.</p> <p>You have enough influence to impact community decisions.</p> <p>You have the skills to organize other students to take action on a problem in the community.</p> <p>You can develop ideas about how to take action on a problem in the community.</p> <p>You have the skills to persuade other people that a problem in the community needs to be solved.</p> <p>You can effectively work with others to make a change in the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completely <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all
---	---

Q. ImportantToYou

How important is it to you to . . .

<p>Help others in difficulty? Be aware of important needs in the community Participate in community action programs? Become a community leader? Help improve the community Focus on root causes of social problems Influence social values? Find a career that provides you with the opportunity to be helpful to others or useful to society? Volunteer your time helping people? Work for positive social change?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Important <input type="checkbox"/> Very Important <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Important <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all Important</p>
--	---

Q. SocialIssues

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

<p>In order for problems to be solved, we need to change public policy I don't understand why some people are poor when there are many opportunities available to them We need to institute reforms within the current system to change our communities People are poor because they choose to be poor Many of the factors that contribute to poverty are beyond the control of the individual We need to look no further than the individual in understanding his/her problems Individuals are responsible for their own misfortunes We need to change people's attitudes in order to solve social problems I enjoy meeting people who come from backgrounds very different from my own It is hard for a group to function effectively when the people involved come from very diverse backgrounds Cultural diversity within a group makes the group more interesting and effective I prefer the company of people who are very similar to me in background and expressions I find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree</p>
--	--

S. Participating in the "Break New Ground" Program

Now we want to know about why you would like to participate in this particular service trip. While your responses may be very similar to the reasons you gave for volunteering in general, please tell us how important each is to your desire to participate in this service opportunity.

Q. ParticReason

Thinking about the "Break New Ground" program for which you are registering, how important to you is each of the following reasons to participate?

<p>To "give back" to the community</p> <p>To help people</p> <p>To address a social or political problem</p> <p>To meet new people</p> <p>To travel to a new place</p> <p>To enhance your resume</p> <p>To develop new skills</p> <p>To have fun</p> <p>To learn more about community service</p> <p>To be more connected to the Jewish community</p> <p>To try something new</p> <p>To express your personal values</p> <p>To do something related to your Jewish identity</p> <p>To do something Jewish over break/vacation</p> <p>To explore career options</p> <p>To connect with Jewish students from other campuses</p> <p>To do something with your friends</p> <p>To connect with Jewish students from your campus</p> <p>To feel personal satisfaction</p> <p>To improve society as a whole</p> <p>To express your Jewish values</p> <p>To get field experience related to your major or future career</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all Important</p>
---	---

S. Your Connections to Jewish Life

Now we would like to know a bit about your background and your connections to Jewish life.

Q. Jidentity

For each statement, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree . . .

<p>Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself</p> <p>I am curious about what Jewish tradition says about things</p> <p>I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people</p> <p>For me, being Jewish is just about family and food</p> <p>I express my Judaism by helping those in need</p> <p>I feel very connected to Israel</p> <p>Doing community service is part of a Jewish way of life</p> <p>Jewish law affects my everyday behavior</p> <p>My friends and I create our own Jewish holiday and Shabbat celebrations</p> <p>I am very interested in Jewish prayer/spirituality</p> <p>For me, being Jewish involves actively pursuing ideals of social justice</p> <p>My Jewish identity is just one of many identities that make up who I am</p> <p>I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world</p> <p>Service is central to my Jewish identity</p> <p>My Jewish identity is one of the most important identities that make up who I am</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither Agree nor Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree</p>
--	--

Q. Frat

Do you belong to a “Jewish” fraternity or sorority?

- Yes
- No

Q. Jclasses

Have you taken any college courses specifically focusing on Jewish subjects, such as Jewish history, Hebrew, or the Holocaust?

- Yes
- No

Q. CampusInvolv

Thinking about this semester, how involved have you been in each of the following?

Israel-related programs or events Jewish cultural events or exhibits Jewish learning/text study Jewish-sponsored service or social action Jewish meditation Jewish observance or celebration with friends outside of any formal organization or group Holiday celebrations organized by Hillel or another Jewish group on campus Jewish social events Visiting Jewish or Israel related websites or blogs (Heeb, Jewschool, Ha'aretz, JPost)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Leader
---	---

Do you belong to any Jewish related groups on Facebook?

YES

NO

Q. AttndReligSvc

Thinking about the last year, how often have you attended Jewish worship services at a synagogue, Hillel, Chabad, minyan, havurah, or with another group?

- Never
- Only on High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur)
- A few times a year
- About once a month
- Several times a month
- Weekly
- Daily

Q. LvlInvolve

How do you feel about your current level of involvement in Jewish life and activities?

- Much less than I would like
- Somewhat less than I would like
- Just about right
- Somewhat more than I would like
- Much more than I would like

Q. WhatsJudaism

To what extent do you think Judaism is a . . .

Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely
Culture	<input type="checkbox"/> Very much
Ethnic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
Values system	<input type="checkbox"/> Very little
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all

Q. ReligGrowingUp

What religion or denomination, if any, did your family most identify with while you were growing up?

- Orthodox
- Traditional
- Conservative
- Reform
- Reconstructionist
- Secular/cultural Jew
- Just Jewish/ no denomination
- Post-denominational
- Protestant
- Catholic
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Muslim
- None
- Don't know
- Other. Please specify: _____

Q. ReligNow

What religion or denomination, if any, do you most identify with currently?

- Orthodox
- Traditional
- Conservative
- Reform
- Reconstructionist
- Secular/cultural Jew
- Just Jewish/ no denomination
- Post-denominational
- Protestant
- Catholic
- Buddhist
- Hindu

- Muslim
- None
- Don't know
- Other. Please specify: _____

Q. JewishParents

Do your parents (or step parents) consider themselves Jewish?

		Does this parent consider themselves...?
Parent 1 Parent 2 Parent 3 Parent 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Step-mother <input type="checkbox"/> Step-father <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative Other non-relative	<input type="checkbox"/> Born Jewish <input type="checkbox"/> Converted to Judaism <input type="checkbox"/> Partly Jewish <input type="checkbox"/> Not Jewish

Q. JewishLife

Did you ever . .

Have a bar or bat mitzvah ceremony? Attend a full-time Jewish day school or yeshiva? Attend a part-time Hebrew school that met once or several times a week? Have a Jewish confirmation Participate in a Jewish youth group (e.g. USY, NFTY, NCSY, Young Judaea, BBYO)? Attend a summer camp or program with Jewish content? Work at a summer camp or program with Jewish content?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
--	---

Q. KidAttend

When you were a child or teenager, before college, how often did you participate in service or social action sponsored by a Jewish organization or group?

- Not at all
 Sometimes
 Regularly

Q. IsraelTrip

Have you been to Israel . . .

<p>On an organized travel or study program before college? On <i>Birthright Israel</i>? On some other trip (with family or friends)?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
--	--

Thank you for completing the “Break New Ground” pre-trip survey! Please click below to submit your survey.

Clicking this button will complete your registration process.

BNG Immediate Post-Trip Survey: College-Age Participants

Welcome back from your "Break New Ground" trip!

We are very interested in learning about your experiences on the trip. The survey you are being asked to complete is an important part of our research on student experiences on these service trips

This survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. While you are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer, we hope that you will answer honestly and completely.

All of your responses will remain strictly confidential. Only the research team will see your answers. No one from the organization providing your alternative break trip or from your school will see your responses. No one from UJA-Federation of New York will see your individual responses. Findings of this research will be reported only in ways that do not identify individuals.

If you have any questions or difficulties, please contact Graham Wright by email at break-newground@cmjs.org or by phone at 781-736-2134.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Click on the button below to begin the survey.

Fern Chertok
Principal Investigator

S. YOUR TRIP GROUP

Q. Group1

How much do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements?

The people in my group

- | | |
|---|---|
| Felt like a group of friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree |
| Felt like a community | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Disagree |
| Learned from one another | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Agree Nor Disagree |
| Formed separate cliques | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Agree |
| Supported each other | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree |
| Were disruptive or distracting | |
| Were on the trip to explore their Jewish identity | |
| Were on the trip to have a good time | |
| Were on the trip to help others | |

Q. Group2

TO WHAT EXTENT did you...

Form new friendships with others in your group? Form connections with the trip leaders? Feel like an outsider to the group? Feel the group atmosphere enhanced your experience? Feel the group atmosphere detracted from your experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Great extent
---	--

Q. GrpCmnts

Do you have any other comments about the group on your trip?

S. YOUR EXPERIENCES ON THE TRIP

Q. Trip

Overall did you find the trip...

Fun? Exhausting? Personally meaningful? Educational? Well organized? Physically demanding? Emotionally challenging?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Agree Nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree
---	---

Q. Desire

TO WHAT EXTENT did the trip give you the opportunity to...

Meet new people? Give back to the community? Connect with other Jewish students? Have fun? Experience someplace new? Address a social or political problem? Develop new skills? Do something related to your Jewish identity? Learn more about service work? Gain experience related to your major or future career? Explore career options? Help people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Great extent
--	--

Q. Work

Thinking about the work you did on this trip, TO WHAT EXTENT do you think it was...

<p>Important to the community? Interesting to do? Mostly “busy work”? Too demanding? A good way to understand the challenges facing the local community?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Some-what <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Great extent</p>
--	--

Q. Opportunities

During the trip, TO WHAT EXTENT did you have opportunities to...

<p>Reflect on your own reactions to the experience? Learn about the reactions of other participants? Re-examine your assumptions or attitudes regarding social problems? Get to know members of the local community? Gain a Jewish perspective on service work? Expand your knowledge of the problems faced by the local community? Learn about the local people and culture? See the impact of your work on the community?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Some-what <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Great extent</p>
--	--

Q. Experiences

How much do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements about your experiences on this trip

<p>Moments of religious or spiritual inspiration A personal connection to the local people I met Connections between my Jewish identity and the work I was doing Meaningful observance of Shabbat or other Jewish rituals Pride in the efforts of Jewish groups to help others A sense of being part of a larger Jewish community A desire to become more involved in community or social justice efforts A desire to become more involved in Jewish social justice efforts</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Agree Nor Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>
--	--

Q. Memorable

Overall, what was most memorable about this trip?

Q. Disappointment

What was your greatest disappointment with this trip?

BNG 3-Month Follow-up Survey: College-Age Participants

S. Welcome to the Final *Break New Ground* Follow-up Survey.

It has been several months since your alternative break trip and we are very interested to hear how the trip has affected you, your ideas, and your future plans.

This survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. While you are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer, we hope that you will answer honestly and completely.

All of your responses will remain strictly confidential. Only the research team will see your answers. No one from the organization providing your alternative break trip or from your school will see your responses. Findings of this research will be reported only in ways that do not identify individuals.

If you have any questions or difficulties, please contact Graham Wright by email at break-newground@cmjs.org or by phone at 781-736-2134.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Fern Chertok
Principal Investigator

Participating in a program like the *Break New Ground* trip affects people in many different ways.

1. To what extent did your experience on the trip...

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a. Increase your ability to relate to people from diverse backgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all |
| b. Give you insight into social issues | <input type="checkbox"/> A little |
| c. Cause you to think about your Jewish identity in new ways | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat |
| d. Give you an experience of meaningful Jewish worship or celebration | <input type="checkbox"/> Very much |
| e. Help you make connections between Judaism and service work | <input type="checkbox"/> Great extent |
| f. Help you connect with Jewish students from other backgrounds | |
| g. Expand your knowledge of Judaism | |
| h. Give you the experience of being part of a Jewish community | |

2. To what extent has your experience on this trip increased your...

<p>a. Desire to be involved in service work b. Awareness of Jewish sponsored service or social justice efforts f. Interest in influencing social values g. Involvement in the Jewish community on campus h. Participation in Jewish sponsored service work i. Interest in taking courses related to social issues j. Interest in pursuing a career related to social issues k. Involvement in the Jewish community at home</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Great extent</p>
---	---

3. Please describe other ways in which your experience on this trip has had an impact on you.

4. Since returning from your trip have you attended any meetings for your trip group?

- No
 Yes

5. How likely would you be to recommend this alternative break trip to a friend?

- Very unlikely
 Somewhat unlikely
 Somewhat likely
 Very likely

<p>Since returning from the trip how often did you . . . ?</p>	<p>Frequency</p>	<p>Was this activity sponsored by a Jewish organization?</p>
<p>Volunteer or assist as a mentor, tutor, coach, counselor or some other activity that benefited youth or schools?</p> <p>Do volunteer work that helped people in human service organizations such as hospitals, nursing homes, crisis centers, shelters, or food or blood banks?</p> <p>Volunteer for a performing or arts organization such as a museum or theater?</p> <p>Work as a volunteer for a candidate or a political organization?</p> <p>Engage in volunteer activities aimed at protecting the environment, wildlife or animals?</p> <p>Volunteer to help with first-aid, fire-fighting or search and rescue activities or at a public safety organization?</p> <p>Volunteer to educate, influence public opinion or lobby others on behalf of an organization or cause?</p> <p>Volunteer to personally walk, run or bicycle to raise money for a charitable cause?</p> <p>Volunteer in other ways to help raise money for a charitable cause or organization?</p> <p>Help as a volunteer to maintain, repair or build facilities or homes?</p> <p>Volunteer for a synagogue, Hillel, Federation or other Jewish organization?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A few times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Regularly</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Q. OtherVol

Since returning from the trip have you volunteered in any other way? Please specify:

How interested would you be in participating in a 6-12 month post-college volunteer program in the developing world (e.g. Peace Corps)?

- Not at all interested
 A little interested
 Somewhat interested
 Very Interested

Q. Impact

To what extent do you believe . . .

<p>You have the power to make a difference in the community. You can successfully encourage others to participate in the community. You have enough influence to impact community decisions. You have the skills to organize other students to take action on a problem in the community. You can develop ideas about how to take action on a problem in the community. You have the skills to persuade other people that a problem in the community needs to be solved.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Extremely <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all</p>
---	---

Q. ImportantToYou

How important is it to you to . . .

<p>Help others in difficulty? Be aware of important needs in the community Participate in community action programs? Become a community leader? Help improve the community Focus on root causes of social problems Influence social values? Find a career that provides you with the opportunity to be helpful to others or useful to society? Volunteer your time helping people? To work for positive social change?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Extremely <input type="checkbox"/> Very much <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all</p>
---	---

Q. Social Issues

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

<p>I don't understand why some people are poor when there are many opportunities available to them</p> <p>People are poor because they choose to be poor</p> <p>We need to look no further than the individual in understanding his/her problems</p> <p>In order for problems to be solved, we need to change public policy</p> <p>Individuals are responsible for their own misfortunes</p> <p>We need to institute reforms within the current system to change our communities</p> <p>We need to change people's attitudes in order to solve social problems</p> <p>It is hard for a group to function effectively when the people involved come from very diverse backgrounds</p> <p>I prefer the company of people who are very similar to me in background and expressions</p> <p>I find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture</p> <p>I enjoy meeting people who come from backgrounds very different from my own</p> <p>Cultural diversity within a group makes the group more interesting and effective</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p>
--	--

S. Your Connections to Jewish Life

Q. Jidentity

For each statement, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree

<p>I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people</p> <p>I express my Judaism by helping those in need</p> <p>I feel very connected to Israel</p> <p>Doing community service is part of a Jewish way of life</p> <p>Jewish law affects my everyday behavior</p> <p>My friends and I create our own Jewish holiday and Shabbat celebrations</p> <p>I am very interested in Jewish prayer/spirituality</p> <p>For me, being Jewish is just about family and food</p> <p>For me, being Jewish involves actively pursuing ideals of social justice</p> <p>I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world</p> <p>Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself</p> <p>I am curious about what Jewish tradition says about things</p> <p>Community service/ social action is central to my Jewish identity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p>
--	---

Appendix B: BNG Guide for Ethnographic Observation

Research Goals

The purpose of the BNG evaluation is multifold: to understand the impact of the program on the life trajectories of participants and the organizational capacity of trip providers, and to provide UJA-Federation and trip providers with feedback that can help in the continuing development of the initiative. More specifically, through observation information that you will be gathering we hope to answer the following questions:

What experiences do participants have during a trip? What emotional, cognitive and collective experiences do participants have during a BNG trip? How is Jewish learning and ritual life integrated into the trip experience? To what extent do participant experiences on trips reflect the initiative’s educational standards?

What are the impacts on student volunteers? In what ways does participation in the BNG impact on the life trajectory of participants beginning with the cognitive, attitudinal and emotional shifts that begin during the trip? What elements or experiences on the trip might lead to greater tolerance for diversity, enhanced understanding of social justice issues, heightened sense of civic or social responsibility, and increased sense of self efficacy in the arena of community involvement? What trip elements seem to strengthen individual Jewish identity, sense of Jewish people-hood, or awareness and concern with communal issues?

The Contribution of Participant Observers

We want you to record the program as delivered, much as you would a college course, although perhaps inescapably in somewhat less detail. We are especially interested in the lessons being conveyed (in deed and word) about the connection between Judaism and community service and social action, and about the Jewish people and Judaism. But we would also be delighted if along the way you managed to tell us something about the “story of the trip”. What is the group like and what is the ambiance of the trip? If it’s too hard to get at both at the same time, then just record the program as you witness it.

Playing the Role of Participant Observer

- ***Entering the field.*** Declare your role as participant observer at the earliest possible moment, but don’t exaggerate its significance. Explain that you are focusing mostly on the educational program rather than on the individual members of your group, but that you’d love to know how people are reacting, and that you’ll record their comments if they’d like.
- ***Informed consent.*** As soon as you’ve conveyed the information in the preceding item, you’ve established “informed consent” for observing public behavior. When you conduct individual interviews you will need to go over the Briefing Sheet and get a signed Informed Consent Form from

each person that you interview.

Balancing roles. How might your roles as participant and observer come into conflict with one another? Discuss.

Taking Field Notes

- **Field jottings.** If you don't write it down, you'll forget it. Read Lofland and Lofland Chapters 4&5.
 - **Description versus evaluation.** For the most part we want your descriptions of the program activities and experiences. In places, though, we would also like to hear your evaluation: Does a presentation seem biased to you? How so? The key here is to be clear, for yourself and your reader, about the distinction between description and evaluation.
 - **Labels versus descriptions.** Avoid substituting labels for descriptions. Don't see, *He became angry*. Instead: *He turned red, his hands trembled, and he yelled, 'Enough of that!'*
 - **Recognizing our own biases**
 - **Writing up good field notes.** Describe both what is taught or done and how it is done. Try to capture specific narratives, overarching messages, and also emotional tone. Use plenty of direct quotes; capture verbatim language.
- Your audience.** Write to me and your other colleagues; we are your audience for these notes.

OBSERVATION OF PRE-TRIP EXPERIENCES

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

1. Where is the meeting held? How long is it scheduled for? Is there food?
2. Who is at the meeting? How many participants (number of men and women)? How many staff or trip leaders? Who are these people?
3. Describe the activities in detail. What are participants being asked to do? Who leads each portion of the experience? What activities are done to help participants get to know each other?
4. How do participants seem to react to each other at the beginning? Do they already know each other or are they strangers? How does this change during the meeting? Are there key points at which they begin to be more comfortable with each other?
5. What information is conveyed to participants? What are they told about the trip, the destination, and the activities they will be doing there? What are the messages regarding the recipients of their help? What are the messages about the connection between Judaism and social action?
6. How do participants respond (verbally and non-verbally) to this information about this trip and the connections to Judaism? What questions do they ask and how engaged do they seem in the meeting? Are they intrigued, bored, excited, worried?
7. Is there anything “Jewish” about the meeting? In other words, could you tell from the activities or information that this is a Jewish service trip? How do participants seem to respond to the Jewish elements?
8. As participants leave what is their mood and what are they saying to each other?

GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION OF TRIPS

Focus on Description versus Evaluation

For the most part we want your descriptions of the program activities and experiences. In places, though, we would also like to hear your evaluation: Does a presentation seem biased to you? How so? The key here is to be clear, for yourself and your reader, about the distinction between description and evaluation.

Areas for Observation

Daily Itinerary/Routine

What is the daily routine?

How does the day start and end?

Is there time set aside for debriefing everyday?

Are there particularly special events/moments that are a hallmark of the trip?

Service Work

What kind of work are the students asked to do/engaged in?

How do students respond to the work?

Who else is working with the group?

Interactions between the student group and the local community.

How is the community introduced to the students?

How are the group introduced to the community? (Do they just arrive, is there a ceremony/introductory program, etc).

What is the response of the community to the visitors?

As the week progresses what do interactions between students and members of the community look like?

Educational Programming

Describe the educational programming on the trip.

Is there a formal curriculum?

Who runs the education programming? Does it vary between local and trip staff, staff and students?

How often does the educational programming occur?

How are Jewish sources or topics used and explained?

Are there separate sessions of Jewish topics?

Jewish Life/Ritual

How is the celebration/practice of Jewish rituals and observances introduced or explained to the group?

What Jewish rituals/observances does the trip incorporate during the week? (Is there time set aside for daily davening, benching after meals, etc.)

How does the group observe Shabbat?

Group Dynamic

What are the interactions among group members like?

Are there sub-groups or cliques, isolated members?

How does the group handle challenges such as changes to schedule, frustrations in the work, etc?

How does it change over the course of the trip?

What are some of the rituals the group develops?

Student Leadership

How are students engaged in leadership roles?

Are there student led committees or task groups?

Appendix C: BNG Key Informant Interview Materials Briefing Sheet

The UJA-Federation of New York is developing the *Break New Ground*-Jewish Community Service Initiative to involve young adults in intensive ten day community service experiences. UJA-Federation of New York has awarded a research grant to the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies of Brandeis University in an effort to learn more about student experiences on the “Break New Ground” alternative break service trips. The purpose of this research is to understand the impact of the BNG on participants and to provide UJA-Federation and trip providers with feedback that can help in the continuing development of the initiative.

The individual interview, in which you have been asked to participate, is an important part of this study. The interview, which will be lead by a member of the CMJS research team, will last approximately 40 minutes. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and choosing to do so or not will have no personal repercussions. We hope that you will participate fully and honestly but you are also free to skip any questions that you choose not to answer.

The fact of your participation in this interview and the information obtained through it will be kept confidential by CMJS. No one else from your organization nor staff of UJA-Federation New York will see your individual responses. All information from this study will be reported in ways that do not identify individuals.

If you have any questions or concerns at any time, you are welcome to contact Fern Chertok or Nicole Samuel, the co-principal investigators on this project, or the Brandeis Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (9781-736-7596). This committee works to safeguard the interests of individuals who participate in Brandeis-sponsored research.

Fern Chertok
fchertok@brandeis.edu

Nicole Samuel
nsamuel@brandeis.edu

Pre-Trip Provider Interview Protocol

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. Your year in school, your major, your experiences doing community service or social justice work?
 - Has any of that work been under Jewish sponsorship or for a Jewish organization?
2. What motivates you to seek out service opportunities?
3. Have you already or do you plan on studying abroad during college? Tell me about your experiences outside the U.S., such as study abroad or alternative break programs.
4. As you think ahead to life after college, what are your plans? Does volunteering fit into your plans in any way?
5. Some leaders in the Jewish community are developing a long term volunteer program for young adults similar to the Peace Corps. [*Distribute description of JCorps*]
 - What are your reactions to this program? Would you want to participate if this program was offered?
 - What is most attractive and what is least attractive about the proposed program?
 - How do you feel about the Jewish elements of the experience?
 - How do you feel about working with a peer group of Israeli and European Jews
 - How do you feel about the development work you would be doing?
 - How do you feel about the location in Sub-Saharan Africa?
6. Are there considerations (e.g. needing to pay back student loans or parental concerns) that might affect your attraction to a program like the one described in the handout?

Participant Onsite Interview Protocol

Background

1. Tell me a bit about yourself.

- What year are you? Are you a sophomore, junior, etc?
 - What is your major?
 - Aside from classes and studying, where do you put most of your time/energy?
 - What, if anything have you done this year in terms of Jewish activities, events, or practices (make clear that these don't necessarily refer to Hillel or anything formal)?
- How involved, if at all, have you been in social justice work?

2. What initially led you to apply for this trip? How did you find out about it?

3. What were your expectations or hopes for what you would learn or experience in this program? How does participation in this program fit into your academic or personal goals?

4. What, if anything were you concerned about before the trip? (Probe for travel arrangements, roommate or social issues, issues related to service work, etc.)

Experiences on the Trip

5. What has the trip been like for you so far? Have there been any particularly memorable moments for you?

6. What has it been like to be part of this group?

7. What did you think about the work and the members of the local community in the first days?

8. What have been the challenges or difficulties related to...

- The work (physical labor, tutoring, etc.)
- Your relationship with the other group members (social cliques, etc.)
- Your relationship with the members of the local community.

How did you deal with those challenges?

9. How well did the pre-trip meetings prepare you for what you have experienced here?

Impacts

10. So far, how has your participation in this program measured up to the hopes and expectations you had before the trip began? Are there any ways in which it has fallen short of those expectations?
11. Thinking about yourself today and how you were at the start of the program, what changes have you seen in yourself that you think were influenced by your involvement on this trip?
12. Is there anything different now about how you see and relate to the work or the people from the local community?

Staff Onsite Interview Protocol

[Note: Question #2 and the “Onsite” questions should be asked of all trip staff – even if they were interviewed pre-trip].

Introduction

1. Tell me a bit about your role in the organization/group? Have you led/staff service trips like this before?

What has the trip been like for you so far? Have there been any particularly memorable moments for you?

Pre-Trip Planning

Tell me about your target population for this trip – who are they? (Probe for uninvolved Jewish students, social activists, juniors/seniors, bri alumni, etc?). Why were you interested in this particular population (untapped resource at the school, etc? Is your target population represented in the group that we’re traveling with?

How did you advertise/publicize the “Break New Ground” trip? (Probe for student newspaper, Hillel listserv, other listservs, flyers, etc.) Was the advertising successful in reaching your target population? Who else did it bring in?

Let’s talk about the selection process. Who was your ideal participant? What qualities/ characteristics made them right for this trip? (Probe for level of involvement in Jewish life, previous social action/service experience, social dynamics of the trip, etc).

Tell me about the pre-trip meetings. What did you want/need to accomplish during the meetings? How did you go about accomplishing your goals? What worked well and what would you change for next time? (Probe for student interaction/icebreakers; background on destination; service-related training; Jewish related prep – kashrut, Shabbat, etc.).

How did you prepare students for their visit here? What did you think is most important for them to know/understand before they arrived in the field?

Onsite

How has the program measured up to your hopes and expectations? Are there any ways in which it exceeded or fallen short of those expectations?

What do you think about the work and the members of the local community? Is it the type of interaction/partnership you envisioned?

Tell me about the group dynamic. What are the strength and weaknesses of this particular group?

Tell me about Jewish life during the trip and the opportunities for Jewish learning. What are your expectations for Shabbat and/or other Jewish rituals? What type of special planning did you do in preparation for Shabbat, kashrut (Probe for contact with local Jewish communities, establishing a student committee, etc.).

Is there anything else that I didn't ask but you think we should know to understand about this trip or [organization] experience organizing this trip?

The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is a multi-disciplinary research institute dedicated to the study of American Jewry and the development of religious and cultural identity.

Brandeis University



Maurice *and* Marilyn Cohen
Center *for* Modern Jewish Studies