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Senior Policy Advisors Working Paper. "Strategic Plan for the
Development of Lead Communities: Some Issues to be
Considered", March 1991.

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PRELIMINARY WORKING PAPER FOR DISCUSSION BY CIJE
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STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF LEAD COMMUNITIES

SOME ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

I. BACKGROUND

The Commission on Jewish Education in North America has recommended the establishment of three to five lead communities.

- A. Lead communities will be model communities. In the lead communities, the CIJE hopes to demonstrate what can happen when:
- a community has outstanding personnel.
 - the importance of Jewish education is recognized by the community and its leadership.
 - necessary funds are available.
- B. These communities will serve a "leadership function" for other North American communities. As laboratories for educational practices and policies, they will function as test sites for "best practices" -- exemplary and excellent programs in all fields.
- C. Each lead community will be required to undertake a process to redesign and improve a wide array of intensive educational programs.
- D. Through feedback, evaluation and close monitoring, the innovations developed in the communities will be diffused throughout the continent.

II. THE CIJE ASSIGNMENT

A planning process will systematically develop the concept of "Lead Communities" provided by a CIJE sub-committee staffed by educators and planners will guide the process.

The plan should include:

1. A description of alternative conceptions of a lead community. Two models are discussed in Appendix A.
2. A re-examination and amplification of the assumptions upon which the concept is based.

3. Recommendations to guide the work with lead communities (Appendix B).
4. Criteria for the selection of lead communities.
5. A method for the selection of lead communities.
6. Suggestions for an appropriate local mechanism for work with CIJE to establish the lead community and to coordinate on-going activities.
7. An assessment and diagnostic tools to assist communities in self-study and the preparation of a local educational profile.
8. A program for the development of best practices.
9. The rosters of experts for work with the communities in each programmatic area (e.g., supplementary school, day school, etc.).
10. For training and consultation purposes: A design for the relationship between lead communities and continental and regional institutions, the denominations and their training institutions.
11. Recommendations for the development of community leadership to guide and support the lead community.
12. A process for building contacts with foundations interested in supporting specific categories of innovative programs.
13. A mechanism to maintain- in partnership with CIJE - a feedback-loop to monitor and guarantee ongoing program evaluation.
14. Recommendations for diffusion of the findings on the impact of programs in the communities. This should include recommendations on the ideal relationship and method of communication between lead communities and other interested communities, and between institutions and organizations during the period when ideas and programs are being developed.
15. Alternative scenarios of how a lead community might work (Appendix C).

APPENDIX A

LEAD COMMUNITIES: TWO POSSIBLE MODELS

- A. A lead community could be all of the Jewish educational institutions of an individual community. One to three such sites could be established. Each would require the participation of minimum number of institutions OR a substantial number of the educational institutions in the community (e.g., early childhood programs, supplementary schools, day schools, JCCs, Jewish studies programs of local colleges and universities, adult education programs).
- B. Several lead communities could be established each of which could have a different focus within Jewish education by ages (e.g., elementary school age), by institutions (e.g., day schools), or some combination.

For example, three lead communities could decide to focus on early childhood, supplementary and day schools. Three others would focus on the high school and college-age programs, and three additional on JCCs, summer camps and Israel Experiences. Thus, a significant portion of the map would be covered by this approach.

APPENDIX B

WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

The Lead Community concept is based on several assumptions.

1. LOCAL INITIATIVES

The initiative must come from the local community with the key participants fully committed to the endeavor. The community must set for itself the highest possible standards and guarantee necessary funding.

The community selected must develop a local mechanism to be responsible for the initiation of ideas, the design of programs and program implementation.

2. LEARNING BY DOING

The notion of a Lead Community assumes that it is possible to demonstrate effective approaches to specific community problems and that these can then be replicated elsewhere. NOTE: Significant questions concerning innovation and implementation can only be resolved in real settings and by careful consideration of the many processes involved.

3. BEST PRACTICE

An inventory of "best practice" will be an important resource. Examples suggested by the denominational bodies, training institutions, educational organizations, JCCA, JESNA, CJF, and other groups, together with their staffs will be brought to the site, integrated and funded.

4. CONTENT

The educational program will be guided by a carefully articulated philosophy developed by reflective deliberations on educational goals and implementation strategies. Local institutions working with the national organizations, CIJE co-sponsors and others will be invited to participate and will produce background papers on the education philosophy to guide the effort. They will be used to guide the evaluation of the program. These papers will address issues such as: the problem of translating philosophy into curriculum, the texts to be studied and the teaching methods to be used.

5. ENVIRONMENT

The community will be characterized by innovation and experimentation. Creativity will be encouraged. Programs will not be limited to existing ideas. As ideas are tested, they will be carefully monitored and subject to critical analysis. Openness and creativity, monitoring and accountability are not easily accomplished, but are vital to the concept.

6. EVALUATION

Work will be monitored documented and evaluated to discover what can be achieved with a massive systematic investment of thought, energy, and funding. The results will serve as the basis for diffusion and dissemination.

7. DISSEMINATION

The results of work and lessons learned will be diffused throughout the North American Jewish community and to other interested communities through the world.



APPENDIX C

AN EXAMPLE OF A LOCAL COMMUNITY AT WORK

After establishing selection criteria, the Board will consider several possible communities and choose from among them. Each community selected will create a structure to work in partnership with the CIJE - an existing local commission could serve that function.

A study of the community must be undertaken to learn about the community - the market for Jewish education, the commitment of lay leadership, and the current level of funding.

Some of the elements of a preliminary plan would include:

1. PERSONNEL

A personnel study will show the number of filled positions (full-time and part-time) in all areas of formal and informal Jewish education in the community.

The study will also identify positions that need to be created and ultimately filled.

The denominations, organizations and training institutions and others will be invited to join in developing a plan for recruiting, training and retaining personnel.

a. RECRUITMENT

All of the recommendations on recruitment in the Commission report and the results of a future national recruitment study will be reviewed. The community will be required to act on those recommendations.

Some examples:

- Recruit appropriate local college students and contract with them for several years of work in the supplementary schools, day schools and JCCs
- Recruit people interested in career changes.
- Encourage general educators to train for positions in Jewish education.

- Recruit outstanding educators (e.g., Jerusalem Fellows, Senior Educators) from outside the community to assume key positions.
- Recruit personnel from national organizations and build a program to prepare them for positions.
- Survey retirees to recruit appropriate candidates for positions.

b. TRAINING

New people will be prepared for the field.

Everyone currently in the field will be involved in in-service training and professional development activities.

For example:

- All non-professional teachers will be individually assessed (current knowledge, individual potential) and a program designed to meet their needs.
- All professional teachers, principals, and informal educators will be involved in continuing education planned jointly by the national and local mechanisms.
- Special fast-track programs will be developed for retraining general educators or career-changers.
- A consortium of training institutions, each with a specific assignment, could adopt the community. The training institutions, the local universities, institutions in Israel, and other appropriate groups could be invited to participate.
- Lay leadership training programs will be established.
- As a result of the community study, a new map of the educational needs in the community will be developed.

This map will include positions for special education; for experts in early childhood education; for teacher-trainers; for

specialists in the teaching of Bible, Hebrew, History, Israel Experience programs; consultants on Jewish programming for JCCs; adult and family educators.

It may be determined that there is a need for an increase in the number of positions in the community. This could include more full-time positions. This could be the beginning of a new conception of the profession!

Accompanying the should be a description of the training, salary, benefits and status appropriate to each position. (Thus, a Bible expert may earn the same salary and be granted the same status as a principal. This would expand the possibilities of advancement beyond the conventional linear pattern of teacher, assistant principal, principal.)

d. RETENTION

The study may point to the need for improved relations between lay boards and educators; the need for better compensation, sabbaticals, trips to Israel as well as on-the-job training.

The local mechanism will determine the conditions that are necessary to retain outstanding people in the field.

2. COMMUNITY - LEADERSHIP, FUNDING, AND STRUCTURES

Appropriate community leadership will have to be involved from the onset. These leaders will develop the community plans for oversight. The community will create its own evaluation program or accept a national one so that success can be measured and appropriate decisions made.

Only with well-informed and totally committed leadership will necessary funding and overall support be obtained for the work.

A partnership between the lay leadership, educators, and educational institutions must be created.

3. AN EXAMPLE OF AN INSTITUTION - THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL

The supplementary schools in a specific community are offered below as one example of how the CIJE and local group could work to implement appropriate recommendations.

A community taskforce composed of the acknowledged leaders of various movements is created to help the local group examine the schools. They bring examples of "best practice" and invite their developers and thinkers in the area to join in deliberations on the supplementary school. Together, they plan an approach to improving the supplementary school.

The following might be included:

- elaboration of education philosophies.
- school's relationship to synagogue, informal education, summer camping, trips to Israel, family and adult education.
- definition of legitimate and anticipated educational outcomes.
- Scope and sequence of curriculum and its content
- available methods and materials to be introduced.
- problematic areas for which materials must be developed.

Each denomination is given the opportunity and appropriate support to develop a plan based on one of the elements listed above.

The local group and the CIJE reviews, modifies, and adopts the plan. Funding and criteria for evaluation are agreed upon. The appropriate institutions are asked to undertake responsibility for training the personnel and accompany the experiment as a whole.

For example, for the Conservative schools, the Jewish Theological Seminary and its Melton Research Center works with the staff helping them to decide on materials and to develop a training program for its teaching. They would be involved with the local schools on a regular basis to monitor progress and to consult.

Although denominations work individually with their schools, there are areas where all work together. On many issues--such as integration of formal and informal education and the use of the Israel Experience and family education, and, possibly even in certain content areas, such as the teaching of Hebrew, combined effort yield significant results.

Within a few years, we learn what can be achieved with an investment of proper thinking and training. We also see how informal education, the Israel Experience, family education and other elements combine to increase the impact of the supplementary school.

CIJE, in addition to its role in planning, evaluating and overseeing the entire project, would, as quickly as possible, extrapolates principles from the experience. The public debate lead to the development of policies on important issues (such as salaries, benefits, professional status, sabbatics, etc.) Specific lessons learned and steps accomplished are disseminated to other communities.

