

The Project *Kavod*

Covenant Foundation Grant

Final Report



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Executive Summary

When I first got involved in Project Kavod, I was not sure of its importance. I understood spending money on improving our building to be a worthwhile investment. I considered educators to be an expense item. Investments need to be increased while expenses need to be cut. Now I understand that the compensation of the educators is actually a key investment towards achieving our synagogue's goal of increasing the involvement of Jewish children and their families.

Quote from a Project *Kavod* lay leader

Project *Kavod*: Improving the Culture of Employment in Early Jewish Childhood Jewish Education (ECJE) was implemented by CAJE in partnership with The Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education of Miami-Dade (CAJE-Miami) and The Greater Miami Jewish Federation and the four project pilot sites of Bet Shira Congregation's Early Childhood Center, Dave and Mary Alper Jewish Community Center's Early Childhood Center, Hebrew Academy of Greater Miami's Early Childhood Center and Temple Beth Sholom's Early Childhood Center.

Rationale for Project *Kavod*

The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE), with funding from the Covenant Foundation, launched a three-year pilot project in 2004 to improve the culture of employment in early childhood Jewish education in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The idea for this project was initiated by CAJE's Advocacy Commission. The underlying theoretical framework and assumptions came from three separate areas of interest.

1. The Crisis in Recruitment and Retention of Jewish Educators

The need to address the culture of employment of Jewish educators arises from the well-documented shortage of Jewish educators in all settings who are knowledgeable in both Jewish learning and best pedagogic practices (CIJE 1994 study, Kelner et al, 2005¹). A recent finding shows that about 25% of the teachers in day schools and congregational schools are new each year (Ben-Avie and Kress, 2006²). The key reason to invest in Jewish education is that it can lead to the lifelong Jewish affiliation of both parents and children. That Jewish educators are a critical component in providing quality Jewish educational experiences to learners of all ages is a guiding assumption of many professionals and lay leaders (Shonkoff and Philips, 2000³; Goodman and Schaap, 2006⁴). If we don't have sufficient qualified educators, we cannot achieve this goal. Young people are not entering the field in significant numbers and rates of people leaving the field are

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high because of the low compensation and the lack of *kavod* (status) (Ingersoll, 2001⁵). Therefore, it is important to improve the culture of employment of Jewish educators.

Starting in 2000, CAJE advocated for addressing the personnel crisis in Jewish education at the continental level. By 2004, the CAJE leadership came to the conclusion that national advocacy can have only a very limited impact on the personnel crisis, since the decisions that impact the culture of employment are made within individual institutions. Community support for Jewish education can assist the institutions by sharing vision and resources. A community-level shared vision and resources can provide the catalyst for significant change and greatly enhance individual institutions. While CAJE had conducted some national research as a follow-up to the CIJE study of Jewish educators from the 1990s, in order to get to the community-level shared vision and a wise allocation of resources, solid information on the educators was seen as critical. In other words, CAJE needed a partnership with a local community.

Miami was chosen because the community has a tradition of supporting day school educators by offering benefits and supporting day school education by financially supporting the schools. The Federation and the Central Agency are both well-established and have provided strong leadership to the local community.

2. The Tools for Achieving Transformative Community-wide Change

At this time in Jewish history, most U.S. Jewish communities are vibrant, thriving societies providing a plethora of services and opportunities for its members. However, within Jewish communal life (including Jewish education) there is an ongoing need to keep up with the fast pace of change and the ever-emerging needs within each community. We now have available significant new knowledge on how to achieve transformative change in complex multi-party deliberations. Educational transformational change initiatives address three factors:

1. Substantive areas to be changed (e.g., curriculum, organizational design, staffing patterns)
2. People (mindset, behaviors, and cultural changes required to achieve the desired substantive changes)
3. Process (actions used to plan, design, implement, and evaluate the substantive and people changes).

Transformational change initiatives are created and implemented using a change formula and a customized change process model to create a vision, desired outcomes, and an implementation plan. The Project *Kavod* consultant was well-versed in the theory of how to achieve transformative change. The Project *Kavod* meetings supported the sharing of power and capacity to create mutually-acceptable recommendations.

The overall approach was based on the theory of how to achieve community consensus involving multiple independent partners with both lay leaders and professionals. It included approaches to the action research and the role of the evaluator that were well-suited to a community change effort. Although this partnership work was consensus-based, it also is important to acknowledge that agency decisions are based on the appropriate use of the key influence approaches such as consensus, political, and collaboration. "Political" as a decision-making tool means that the most powerful rules, as opposed to consensus-based decision-making. "Political" also implies that lobbying in advance of decision-making is a normal part of the culture, as opposed to consensus-based decision making, which requires a level playing field.

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The lessons learned will be shown throughout this report and a soon-to-be-published Change Manual. Significant buy-in and shared leadership by both the professionals and the lay leaders was achieved by drawing heavily on this second theoretical framework.

3. The Importance of High Quality Early Childhood Jewish Education to the Jewish Community

Early childhood Jewish educators were chosen initially because they are the lowest-paid full-time educators. The reasoning was that, if Project *Kavod* could improve the culture of employment in early childhood Jewish education, it could be adapted for use in the other delivery systems of Jewish education. As a result of this theoretical framework, the main initial focus was on determining who the educators were and on the culture of employment. It was less focused on the quality of the education and on the rationale for early childhood Jewish education.

Early on in Project *Kavod* a third theoretical framework emerged. Recent studies have shown the crucial importance of the first six years of life in brain development in creating an individual's identity. Jewish knowledge, stories, songs, tastes, and smells acquired early on create the fundamental building blocks for lifelong Jewish identity and Jewish learning. Early childhood Jewish education is not only a gateway for an individual's Jewish identity, but also serves as a gateway for Jewish parents to become involved in learning activities and celebrations. Many marginal Jews open themselves to opportunities to increase their Jewish literacy when their children are enrolled in Jewish education programs.

Of the approximately 600,000 Jewish pre-schoolers in the United States, it is estimated that barely 100,000 currently are enrolled in early childhood Jewish education. In order to realize the potential impact of early childhood Jewish education programs and achieve lifelong connections with both the children and families, we need a compelling vision for early childhood Jewish education systems, qualified early childhood Jewish educators, and exemplary professional development. We also need to provide an adequate salary or the educators will not be able to continue working in our early childhood programs.

(Realizing the potential)...one would think the Jewish community would invest to provide state-of-the-art ECE facilities, top-notch Jewish curricula, prioritize teacher training and professional development, increase teacher salaries and market the benefits of Jewish early childhood education to young parents.

Remarks made by Michael Steinhardt, September 24th, 2003
at the Jewish Early Childhood Retreat, hosted by the Grinspoon Foundation,
UJA-Federation of New York, and the Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation

This theoretical framework showing the importance of early childhood Jewish education started to have a significant impact early on in Project *Kavod*. The lay leaders were not so much focused on the recruitment/retention crisis as much as they were interested in the early childhood programs acting as gateways to lifelong Jewish affiliation. Hence, they identified the need for early childhood Jewish educators who can facilitate the achievement of this goal. If their institutions can't afford to hire the most qualified educators they will not be able to achieve this goal. This led to an interest in assessing the culture of employment in light of the qualifications of the educators. While some of the programs in Miami have space for additional students, others are full and have a waiting list. In those programs with a waiting list, the major reason to consider changes would be the importance of increasing Jewish literacy for the students and the families.

Site Level Changes

Project *Kavod* accomplished several significant substantive changes:

- The four pilot sites were able to significantly increase the salaries of their ECJE educators and implement other changes that raised the quality of their ECJE programs and the culture of ECJE employment.

- The lay leaders and non-ECJE professional staff increased their active support for improving the quality and culture of employment for their ECJE program.
- The ECJE programs increased their general education standards and extent of their general education professional development.
- The sites increased the financial incentives for professional development.

Community Level Changes

- *Create a Viable Partnership:* At the community level, lay leaders and professional staff actively participated in a Project *Kavod* Committee and a community-wide Task Force.
- *Create a Case for Change:* At the community level, a Culture of Employment Survey was administered to educators working in the ECJE sites in Miami-Dade. The community partners now are a committed and passionate network of informed lay leaders and professional staff. Project *Kavod* created a data-based case for change, using action research tools such as customized surveys, review of key documents, and identification of best standards.
- *Create a Consensus-Based Strategic Plan:* As shared leaders, lay leaders and professional staff actively participated in a Project *Kavod* Committee and a community-wide Task Force. The two committees used state-of-the art consensus decision-making, dialogue, and systems thinking. The Task Force produced eighteen recommendations. The included areas are: create community and site-level strategic plans, increase community appreciation of ECJE education and educators, increase salaries and benefits, and recruit and retain quality ECJE educators.
- *Text-Based Curriculum:* CAJE and its Advocacy Committee developed a text-based sourcebook on Jewish values related to the employment of educators and directors.
- *Change Manual:* The staff of Project *Kavod* is in the final stages of producing a Change Manual that will allow other communities to pursue a complex multi-part change effort by customizing the methodology and models from Project *Kavod*.
- *Continue Miami-Dade Community Changes:* CAJE-Miami is creating a newly-constituted *Kavod* Committee that will be responsible for determining next steps, including the development and refinement of a programmatic and financial strategic implementation plan.
- *Increase appreciation for ECJE and the culture of employment:* The project partners and the Miami-Dade Jewish community were able to increase their appreciation for quality ECJE and the need to improve the culture of employment.
- *Understand the recruitment and retention crisis:* The partners now understand that there is a recruitment and retention crisis in Jewish education.
- *Understand the value of ECJE Jewish literacy:* The partners now understand that there must be an increased focus on the Jewish part of ECJE.
- *Understanding of the value of ECJE for reaching both parents and their children:* The partners now understand the importance of ECJE to the future of the Jewish people.

Lessons Learned and Outcomes

At the community and site levels, Project *Kavod* achieved substantive and change accomplishments and identified lessons learned that need to be addressed by future community partnerships. Project *Kavod* increased our understanding of solutions for the personnel crisis in Jewish education, showed the power of a well-organized change process, and also has led to advances on the road towards excellence in early childhood Jewish education.

The following key messages and lessons learned are based on the recommendations that were stated by community, agency, and site partners in community and site meetings, written communications, and on the impact surveys.

Substantive long-term outcomes

A community can define the road to, pursue, and ultimately achieve:

- **Stronger Jewish schools** in general and stronger early childhood Jewish programs in particular.
- A **stronger Jewish identity** for the children educated in the system.
- A **higher rate of children continuing in further Jewish education** (whether day school or congregational school).
- A **stronger Jewish identity of the families** of these children.
- A **higher affiliation rate of the families** with the Jewish community.
- A **more positive culture of employment for Jewish educators** - A positive impact on the culture of employment of Jewish educators in general and in early childhood in particular.
- A **greater understanding by the Jewish community of the importance of Jewish education** in general and EC Jewish education in particular.

Change lessons and outcomes

- **Complex change takes time:** Building partnerships takes time. It is a process, not an event. Community partners and project staff allocated the time needed to create the case for change and create informed recommendations. Project *Kavod* has created significant accomplishments, but it will take about 3 to 5 years and the allocation of significant resources to refine and implement the Task Force recommendations. In general, complex change initiatives require multi-year funding in order to have a significant impact.
- **Leadership in change organizing is critical for success:** When pursuing complex change there is a clear need for an expert change organizer, in addition to the need for the project staff to acquire organizational development and community change skills.
- **Ongoing contracting:** The sponsoring organizations and the change consultant engaged in ongoing contracting regarding their roles, responsibilities, and tasks. There needs to be a clear agreement in these areas among all the key stake-holders in order to achieve significant changes.
- **Clarify Roles:** Especially in the initial phases of Project *Kavod*, there was a significant need for the change consultant to help the partners clarify what was expected of their agency in this complex change effort. Each organization had its own strategic plan and mission that might need to be adjusted during a transformative change process.
- **Technical expertise:** The CAJE-Miami and GMJF staff provided technical expertise and participated in the partnership meetings. Projects that are focused on transformational change require the expertise of the key professionals regarding the local conditions, including funding requirements.
- **Change consulting and evaluation expertise is essential:** The work of the project's partners was enhanced by the consultative team who provided synergistic change consulting and evaluation support.
- **Obstacles can be overcome when using consensus-based change organizing:** In spite of several challenges such as turnover in lay and professional leadership and the financial impact of a hurricane, the sites continued to work with the project staff to improve the culture of employment in ECJE. Overcoming obstacles such as these is a common phenomenon in transformative change projects. The goal should not be to avoid obstacles, but to overcome them.
- **National impact supports local change:** Project *Kavod* produced site and community changes that were supported by CAJE's national advocacy and expertise. The lessons and outcomes of Project *Kavod* are of keen interest to leaders on the national level and in other localities. Knowledge of the national attention, with a national organization involved in the project (CAJE) and a national foundation funding the project (The Covenant Foundation), provided an impetus to the local stake holders to strive for successful outcomes.

These lessons and outcomes can lead to collaborations in other Jewish communities engaging lay leaders in partnership with the professionals to

- Change the thinking about a Jewish educational system.
- Examine the funding within this system.
- Engage a community in visioning and understanding Jewish education in a whole new way.
- Improve the culture of employment for Jewish educators.

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Quote from a Project *Kavod* lay leader

Introduction

In 2004, the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE), with funding from the Covenant Foundation, launched a three-year pilot project to improve the culture of employment in early childhood Jewish education in Miami-Dade County in Florida.

Project *Kavod*: Improving the Culture of Employment in Early Jewish Childhood Jewish Education (ECJE) was implemented by CAJE, in partnership with The Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education of Miami-Dade (CAJE-Miami), The Greater Miami Jewish Federation, and the four project pilot sites of Bet Shira Congregation's Early Childhood Center, Dave and Mary Alper Jewish Community Center's Early Childhood Center, Hebrew Academy of Greater Miami's Early Childhood Center, and Temple Beth Sholom's Early Childhood Center.

Rationale for Project Kavod

The idea for this project was initiated by CAJE's Advocacy Commission. The underlying theoretical framework and assumptions came from three separate areas of interest.

1. *The Crisis in Recruitment and Retention of Jewish Educators*

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Starting in 2000, CAJE advocated for addressing the personnel crisis in Jewish education at the continental level. By 2004, the CAJE leadership came to the conclusion that national advocacy can have only a very limited impact on the personnel crisis, since the decisions that impact the culture of employment are made within individual institutions. Community support for Jewish education can assist the institutions by sharing vision and resources. A community-level shared vision and resources can provide the catalyst for significant change and greatly enhance individual institutions. While CAJE had conducted some national research as a follow-up to the CIJE study of Jewish educators from the 1990s, in order to get to the community-level shared vision and a wise allocation of resources, solid information on the educators was seen as critical. In other words, CAJE needed a partnership with a local community.

Miami-Dade County, Florida was selected as the first Project *Kavod* community because of its commitment to a 30-year-old community-wide program of benefits for most of its full-time

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licensed Jewish educators, except the early childhood educators. The Federation and the Central Agency are both well-established and have provided strong leadership to the local community. The community also has recently invested in a number of initiatives to improve early childhood Jewish education. At the beginning of the project, Dr. Chaim Y. Botwinick, CAJE-Miami President, noted that:

This project, as envisioned, offers our community the opportunity to seriously upgrade and enhance the image, status, and development of our early childhood Jewish educator community.

2. The Tools for Achieving Transformative Community-wide Change

At this time in Jewish history, most U.S. Jewish communities are vibrant, thriving societies providing a plethora of services and opportunities for its members. However, within Jewish communal life (including Jewish education) there is an ongoing need to keep up with the fast pace of change and the ever-emerging needs within each community. We now have available significant new knowledge on how to achieve transformative change in complex multi-party deliberations. It was transformational because there was no history at local, community, or national levels where both the quality of ECJE and the ECJE culture of employment had been significantly changed. Educational transformational change initiatives address three factors:

1. Substantive areas to be changed (e.g., curriculum, organizational design, staffing patterns)
2. People (mindset, behaviors, and cultural changes required to achieve the desired substantive changes)
3. Process (actions used to plan, design, implement, and evaluate the substantive and people changes).

Transformational change initiatives are created and implemented using a change formula and a customized change process model to create a vision, desired outcomes, and an implementation plan. In a transformative project it is not possible at an early stage to determine the expected outcomes. These outcomes become defined by the key stakeholders as they together decide the outcomes they want to pursue. The Project *Kavod* consultant was well-versed in the theory of how to achieve transformative change. The Project *Kavod* meetings supported the sharing of power and capacity to create mutually-acceptable recommendations.

The overall approach was based on the theory of how to achieve community consensus involving multiple independent partners with both lay leaders and professionals. It included approaches to the action research and the role of the evaluator that were well-suited to a community change effort. Although this partnership work was consensus-based, it also is important to acknowledge that agency decisions are based on the appropriate use of the key influence approaches such as consensus, political, and collaboration. "Political" as a decision-making tool means that the most powerful rules, as opposed to consensus-based decision-making. "Political" also implies that lobbying in advance of decision-making is a normal part of the culture, as opposed to consensus-based decision making, which requires a level playing field.

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3. The Importance of High Quality Early Childhood Jewish Education to the Jewish Community

Early childhood Jewish educators were chosen initially because they are the lowest-paid full-time educators. The reasoning was that, if Project *Kavod* could improve the culture of employment in early childhood Jewish education, it could be adapted for use in the other delivery systems of Jewish education. As a result of this theoretical framework, the main initial focus was on determining who the educators were and on the culture of employment. It was less focused on the quality of the education and on the rationale for early childhood Jewish education.

Early on in Project *Kavod* a third theoretical framework emerged. Recent studies have shown the crucial importance of the first six years of life in brain development in creating an individual's identity. Jewish knowledge, stories, songs, tastes, and smells acquired early on create the fundamental building blocks for lifelong Jewish identity and Jewish learning. Early childhood Jewish education is not only a gateway for an individual's Jewish identity, but also serves as a gateway for Jewish parents to become involved in learning activities and celebrations. Many marginal Jews open themselves to opportunities to increase their Jewish literacy when their children are enrolled in Jewish education programs.

Of the approximately 600,000 Jewish pre-schoolers in the United States, it is estimated that barely 100,000 currently are enrolled in early childhood Jewish education. In order to realize the potential impact of early childhood Jewish education programs and achieve lifelong connections with both the children and families, we need a compelling vision for early childhood Jewish education systems, qualified early childhood Jewish educators, and exemplary professional development. We also need to provide an adequate salary or the educators will not be able to continue working in our early childhood programs.

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This theoretical framework showing the importance of early childhood Jewish education started to have a significant impact early on in Project *Kavod*. The lay leaders were not so much focused on the recruitment/retention crisis as much as they were interested in the early childhood programs acting as gateways to lifelong Jewish affiliation. Hence, they identified the need for early childhood Jewish educators who can facilitate the achievement of this goal. If their institutions can't afford to hire the most qualified educators they will not be able to achieve this goal. This led to an interest in assessing the culture of employment in light of the qualifications of the educators. While some of the programs in Miami have space for additional students, others are full and have a waiting list. In those programs with a waiting list, the major reason to consider changes would be the importance of increasing Jewish literacy for the students and the families.

Goals

Project *Kavod* had both substantive and partnership goals. The substantive goals were those that could improve the quality of Early childhood Jewish education by addressing the recruitment and retention of Jewish education personnel and the culture of employment in which they work. The partnership goals were those that enabled the project's partners to create community consensus options that would improve the culture of employment in ECJE programs.

The final report describes how well the substantive and partnership goals were achieved at the four pilot ECJE sites, and at community and national levels, as a result of the efforts of the partners and the project staff. The data regarding the substantive and partnership impacts is based on project surveys, focus groups, document review, minutes of project meetings, in-depth interviews, participant feedback, and staff observations.

Project Kavod's Substantive Goals

The project's substantive goals were designed to promote excellence for ECJE schools by addressing the recruitment and retention of ECJE education personnel and the culture of employment in which they work. Early childhood educators were selected as the target population because ECJE is the gateway that strengthens both the children's and families' Jewish affiliations and enhances their Jewish identities. ECJE educators are also the least compensated full-time professionals in Jewish education.

The substantive goals were:

1. Raise the consciousness of lay leaders, professional staff, and educators regarding the issues of employment practices, fair compensation, and appropriate benefit opportunities.
2. Recruit and train four institutional teams of lay leaders and educators to focus on the project goals at their ECJE site.
3. Include full-time early childhood educators in community-wide benefit programs currently serving day school educators.
4. Develop and teach a text-based curriculum on Jewish values related to the employment of educators and directors that the partners can use as their values when they develop the substantive and partnership goals.
5. Develop a web-based information resource on the recruitment and retention of ECJE education personnel and the culture of employment in which they work.
6. Identify approaches that will enable CAJE-Miami to continue to develop customized substantive and partnership approaches to improve ECJE and the culture of employment.
7. Identify post-project substantive and partnership approaches that enable CAJE both to continue to advance the improvement in the quality of ECJE and the ECJE culture of employment at national, community, and site levels and to increase the use of consensus-based community change models.

Project Kavod's Partnership Goals

1. Create a viable partnership of lay leaders and educators who engage in consensus-based approaches to address the achievement of the project's substantive goals.
2. Assess the current Miami-Dade's ECJE culture of employment and create the case for change and the initial desired outcomes for the project site levels and the community level.
3. Design and implement a change strategy that improves the partners' capacity to engage in ongoing learning and thinking so they can create adaptive substantive and partnership strategies.
4. Implement substantive goals at each of the project pilot sites.
5. Increase the community's readiness and capacity to understand the need for quality ECJE and to improve the ECJE educators' culture of employment.
6. Develop a community change manual that can be used by communities to create customized partnership and substantive approaches to improve ECJE and the culture of employment.
7. Educate gatherings of Jewish educators, funders, and other parties on the need to improve ECJE and its culture of employment at national, community, and site levels.

Project *Kavod*'s Partnership Change Model

Project *Kavod*'s Partnership Change Model is based on a transformative change model that has been used by the project change consultant for decades. The consultant worked with the consultative team and the partners to customize the model so that it fulfilled the needs of the project's partners and enhanced their capacity to design and implement substantive action goals.

Project Kavod's Partnership Principles

Partnership principles provide a framework that enables the parties to create a mutually beneficial vision, goals, and implementation plans. The principles used in this project were used by the partners and project staff to create the substantive goals at the site and community levels. The Project *Kavod* principles are listed below.

1. *Project Mission and Vision*: The project's mission is to improve the quality of and the culture of employment in early childhood Jewish education in Miami-Dade, Florida.
2. *Jewish Values*: The development of the project's substantive and partnership goals will be guided by Jewish values, culture, and traditions and set within a pluralistic outlook that garners the respect of all segments of the Jewish community.
3. *Create and Refine Working Agreement*: The parties who officially participated in the grant and the project staff created and refined their understanding of their roles, responsibilities and authority.
4. *Project Partnership Mission*: The project partnership (lay leaders and professional staff) is a mutually-beneficial relationship that creates and achieves substantive and partnership goals that address the needs of the total community and each constituency.

Project Kavod's Six-Stage Change Model

The project change process included the following six-stage change model. Although the project's first stage was the initial phase, the remaining stages were not implemented in a linear fashion. Earlier stages were readdressed as the partnership grew in its understanding of the substantive issues and the change issues related to the impact that increased ECJE quality and culture of employment would have on the fiscal resources of the organizations (ECJE sites, CAJE-Miami, GMJF) that would need to fund the potential changes. The site partners implemented the model in a time and manner that was appropriate for their sites.

At the current time, the community partners have not fully addressed all of the tasks associated with the phases, but they will continue to work together in a post-*Kavod* committee created by CAJE-Miami. The Six-Stage Change Model and specific tools to implement it are in a manual that will be on the websites of CAJE and of the Covenant Foundation.

Stage One: Decide to Act

- Assess environmental and internal wake-up calls regarding the current reality of the substantive issues related to ECJE.
- Create an initial vision, commitment, and resources to achieve the vision.
- Assess the organizational readiness and capacity to succeed in sponsoring the change initiative.

Stage Two: Create Partnerships

- Identify and mobilize an inclusive network of dedicated partners.
- Develop a common knowledge base and “case for change” that provides compelling data that provides motivation for the change.
- Recognize and honor the needs of all partners.

Stage Three: Design the Initial Desired State

- Create shared purpose, values, vision, and commitment to enhance ECJE quality and the culture of employment.
- Assess the current reality of ECJE at the site and community level and the partners’ readiness and capacity to succeed in achieving these changes.
- Develop action recommendations that are conceptually acceptable to the partners who could implement the changes.

Stage Four: Mobilize the Community

- Identify and engage key community stakeholders (at community and site levels) so that they understand the need to enhance ECJE and support the action recommendations.
- Identify potential funders and obtain their commitment to consider funding the changes.
- Garner feedback on how to enrich the proposed action recommendations and the partnership network.

Stage Five: Implement the Change

- Create short-term gains by implementing the recommendations as a pilot or selecting a few as the first achievements.
- Diagnose the impact of the implementation of the substantive and partnership changes and refine them as needed.
- After the initial gains are achieved, use increased acceptance to change more of the ECJE system.

Stage Six: Learn, Modify and Sustain the Change

- Create a system to continuously improve and sustain ECJE quality and the culture of employment.
- Identify the cumulative impact of the change, including direct and indirect impacts on ECJE and other aspects of the community's educational system.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the creation of value-added changes.

DVF Change Formula for Transformative Change

The DVF change formula that was created by Kathleen Dannemiller (*Whole-Scale Change*, 2000) provides a framework for the partners as they create a data-based and compelling case for change.

$$\mathbf{D \times V \times F > R}$$

(Dissatisfaction x Vision x First Steps > Resistance)

The partners using consensus decision-making create a common data of dissatisfaction (Case for Change) with the current reality. The shared vision depicts an inspiring desired end state. The first steps are the significant initial actions that begin to move the actualization of the vision. Resistance to change is normal and can occur at organizational, group, and individual levels. The Community-Level Change section (page 14) describes the project's approaches that were used to evoke support for the project's substantive goals, create a partnership composed of proactive lay leaders and professional staff, and to address resistance.

Staff

Project Kavod Staff

The project staff included professional staff from the agencies that formally contracted with Covenant Foundation for this grant, plus a change consultant and an evaluator. The professional staff from CAJE-Miami and from GMJF both provided technical input to the community lay leaders and professional staff and participated in the creation of the substantive goals that were created by the project's Community Committee and Task Force. The CAJE Project Manager provided technical input and actively assisted the evaluator with formal surveys. The ECJE Directors, lay leaders, and other professional staff at the pilot sites worked diligently to ensure that their site engaged in the project change processes.

The change consultant helped the four sites and the community partners create appropriate consensus decision-making approaches and become co-learners who diagnosed and created transformative action goals. The evaluator fulfilled the role of participatory research by implanting an evaluation process that produced useful data for the project partners and would provide helpful insights to other communities. Covenant Foundation's Director of Operations was the project's program officer who provided wise counsel oversight to the project staff. The Chair of CAJE's Advocacy Commission and its ECJE staff provided apt feedback to the Project Director and change consultant.

Site–Level Changes

After the teacher surveys came back and the early childhood director and I shared them with our President and Treasurer, we began to think about what we could do. I made a presentation to our Executive Board about Project Kavod and the survey data. Then the Board made a recommendation to the Budget and Finance Committee to look at the upcoming budget and see what increases could be made for the ECJE educators. The first year we could not do anything, but now we are able to increase the ECJE educators' salary. The other professional staff supports the ECJE increase. This was not easy, because it put pressure on lay leaders who now have to increase their fundraising efforts to cover not only our annual campaign, but also add the ECJE changes.

Quote from a lay leader

Project *Kavod* had a positive impact on the culture of ECJE employment at all of the four project sites. Before the project, most of the project sites were improving their ECJE culture of employment and they also increased their efforts as a result of Project *Kavod*. The project staff provided ongoing consultations. Each site created a project team composed of the ECJE Director, lay leaders, and other professional staff. Dr. Francine Herold, the Director of ECJE at Temple Beth Sholom, not only actively worked for Project *Kavod* at her site, but also played a leadership role in efforts to improve the community's quality of ECJE and the culture of employment. Although she passed away in the fall of 2006, her leadership, vision, and passion for ECJE continues to inspire everyone who participated in the project.

As they garnered the data to create their site's Case for Change, the site teams were influenced by the findings from their site-level fiscal survey, the community-wide ECJE Educators' Culture of Employment Survey of educators, and the dialogue they had with other participants at the Project *Kavod* Community Committee and Task Force meetings.

Finances of Early Childhood Programs Survey

At the beginning of the project, each site worked with Eli Schaap, the CAJE staff's Project Manager, to take, understand, and apply the results of a Finances of Early Childhood Programs Survey (see Appendix B). The survey used the fiscal variables of income, as well as direct and indirect expenses, to determine the total profit/loss ratio of the site's ECJE program. The survey results were confidential and the survey information was only available to the actual site partners themselves and the project staff (Eli Schaap, Pat Bidol Padva, and Roberta Goodman).

When the financial survey was administered, none of the four sites reported that ECJE was creating a profit. Without stating the results for an individual pilot site, this finding was shared with the Project *Kavod* Community Committee. This was a surprise to both the CAJE and CAJE-Miami professional staff, as ECJE sites throughout the country often create a profit for their host organization. This profit may occur even though the ECJE educators are not earning a living wage.

Impacts of Site-level Changes

At the completion of Project *Kavod*, the project staff visited each site to dialogue about the project and its impact on the site. The site participants also asked the site partners to complete an impact survey. The major positive impacts for all four of the project sites were that:

- The four pilot sites were able to significantly increase the salaries of their ECJE educators and implement other changes that raised the quality of their ECJE programs and the culture of ECJE employment.
- The lay leaders and non-ECJE professional staff increased their active support for improving the quality and culture of employment for their ECJE program.
- The ECJE programs increased their general education standards and extent of their general education professional development.
- The sites increased the financial incentives for professional development.

The following description of all of the site level impacts is based on the site meetings, the site-level impact survey and written communications. The site-level impact survey (Appendix G) was returned by all four sites.

1. **Salaries:** All four sites increased their ECJE salaries. At one of the four sites the treasurer indicated that salaries have been increased significantly during the three years of Project *Kavod*. His figures show that the salaries of the teachers increased, on the average, by more than 25% during this three-year period. Significant increases also occurred at the other three sites.

Comments:

- *The project provided us with important information to work with lay and professional staff toward meaningful raises. Some of the teachers will receive raises in the thousands of dollars to bring them up to a somewhat better level.*
- *As a result of Project Kavod, we formed an Early Childhood Committee. As a result of the Committee's work, the salaries of the teachers have been increased by 5%.*
- *We have studied tuition rates in our geographic area and presented our finding to our Budget Committee, requesting a substantial increase. A part of this added income has been allocated to additional increases in teacher salaries. We have learned that our leadership is sensitive to the need to recruit and retain qualified teachers. We fully understand the continuing need to educate the community regarding the need to compensate early childhood professionals is an ongoing challenge and will need the support of lay leaders and clergy as we move ahead in the coming years.*

2. **Benefits:** Two sites increased their ECJE benefits and two could not afford both salary and benefit increases.

Comments:

- *We were able to re-structure our budget to accommodate a significant increase in full-time employees with benefits.*
- *There is no way that we could afford to raise both the benefits and salaries. We pay \$1,000 towards a full-time educator's benefits and can't increase it. We are hoping that through Project Kavod, there has been a raised level of awareness as to the importance of excellent salaries and benefits to qualified ECJE teachers and that the Miami Jewish Federation will help us out financially with part of these increases as a match towards what the teachers give and the schools give. The same will hopefully also occur for increases in teacher salaries.*
- *The President of our institution came to a staff meeting to thank the teachers for their outstanding job. Although the President and the Board recognized the need to increase insurance benefits, the declining ECJE enrollment and other financial strains on the institution left the Board unable to address the need to increase teacher benefits at this time. However, the President and the School Committee voted to increase student tuition to cover the ECJE educators' raise of 3 percent. In addition, the Committee is considering another 5% increase for next year.*

3. **Lay Leaders Support for Project Kavod Goals:** Lay leaders at all four sites have increased their active support for enhancing the quality of ECJE at their site and the culture of employment for their ECJE educators.

Comments:

- *Before Project Kavod, many people thought early childhood was a baby-sitting service. Educating even some of the parents was an awakening.*
- *Project Kavod was discussed at both School Committee Meetings and Synagogue Board meetings.*
- *Significant budget changes were approved to raise salaries for fall 2007 and to increase the number of full-time employees.*

4. **Non-ECJE Professional Staff Support for Project Kavod Goals:** Non-ECJE professional staff at all four sites have increased their active support for enhancing the quality of ECJE and the culture of employment for their ECJE educators.

5. **Judaic Literacy Standards:** Three sites increased their Judaic literacy standards for the educators.

Comments:

- *After attending conferences sponsored by CAJE, more Israeli curriculum and Hebrew vocabulary were added to the curriculum.*
- *We have hired many more educators with Jewish backgrounds.*

6. **Judaic Literacy Professional Development:** Two sites increased their professional development in Judaic literacy. One site already had staff with a high level of Judaic literacy and one site did not have the coverage to offer more professional development.

Comments:

- *Increase collaboration and professionalism among staff: Eight teachers attended the Florida Early Childhood Conference and they reviewed their learning at subsequent team meetings. Three more site retreat training days will be held during the school year.*
- *Increased commitment to Jewish education for teachers: We have joined the Keshet L'Yisrael Project and five teachers and the ECJE Director will study with families and visit Israel next December as part of an Israel Education Project.*

7. **Jewish Educators:** Two sites increased the number of their Jewish educators and, at one site, all of the ECJE educators were Jewish before the project began.

Comments:

- *We have hired many more educators with Jewish backgrounds.*
- *Our teachers were already Jewish.*
- *It is difficult to fill the positions with Jewish educators. A meeting was held with parents of Jewish students enrolled in the school who were educators and choosing not to work in the school. Recruitment of qualified moms like themselves was discussed. The addition of suggested benefits and the recruiting methods created at this meeting will be carefully considered in the coming years.*

8. **General Education Standards:** All four sites increased their general education standards for the educators.

9. **General Studies Professional Development:** All four sites increased their general studies professional development.

Comments:

- *Through CAJE-Miami, we are now offering CEUs for staff professional development at our own facility.*

10. **Incentives for Professional Development:** All four sites provide limited incentives for professional development.

Comments:

- *We have made college-level courses available at our facility to ease the teachers' burden in acquiring proper certification and degrees.*
- *Leave time and substitutes were provided for teachers to attend various Jewish holiday, "God Talks" and Torah workshops.*

11. **Recognition for ECJE Educators:** Three sites recognize their ECJE educators at site level events attended by lay leaders, parents, and professional staff.

Comments:

- *One of our teachers was nominated for a Jewish Teacher of Excellence award.*
- *We use many opportunities to recognize our ECJE educators.*

12. Inclusion ECJE Educators in ECJE Meetings: Two sites include ECJE educators in meetings that impact ECJE and/or other educational programs held within the same organization.

Comments:

- *Our executive director did not support this goal.*
- *A staff member is already on the ECJE School Committee.*

Community-Level Changes

Although we were not a project pilot site, the task force recommendations were very helpful in educating our Board members, parents, and administration on the present culture of employment in early childhood Jewish centers. They were a great starting point for us to continue discussions on ways to improve the culture of employment at our school sites.

Quote from a non-project site ECJE Director and a member of Project *Kavod* Task Force.

Project *Kavod* had a positive impact on the culture of ECJE employment and the creation of consensus-based partnerships at the community-level. The interventions that resulted in the changes are listed below. The following description of all of the community level impacts is based on Community Committee/Taskforce meetings, individual communications with project staff, impact surveys (appendix G and I) and written communications.

- *Create a Viable Partnership:* At the community level, lay leaders and professional staff actively participated in a Project *Kavod* Committee and a community-wide Task Force.
- *Create a Case for Change:* At the community level, a Culture of Employment Survey was administered to educators working in the ECJE sites in Miami-Dade. The community partners now are a committed and passionate network of informed lay leaders and professional staff. Project *Kavod* created a data-based case for change, using action research tools such as customized surveys, review of key documents, and identification of best standards.
- *Create a Consensus-Based Strategic Plan:* As shared leaders, lay leaders and professional staff actively participated in a Project *Kavod* Committee and a community-wide Task Force. The two committees used state-of-the art consensus decision-making, dialogue, and systems thinking. The Task Force produced eighteen recommendations. The included areas are: create community and site-level strategic plans, increase community appreciation of ECJE education and educators, increase salaries and benefits, and recruit and retain quality ECJE educators.
- *Text-Based Curriculum:* CAJE and its Advocacy Committee developed a text-based sourcebook on Jewish values related to the employment of educators and directors.
- *Change Manual:* The staff of Project *Kavod* is in the final stages of producing a Change Manual that will allow other communities to pursue a complex multi-part change effort by customizing the methodology and models from Project *Kavod*.
- *Continue Miami-Dade Community Changes:* CAJE-Miami is creating a newly-constituted *Kavod* Committee that will be responsible for determining next steps, including the development and refinement of a programmatic and financial strategic implementation plan.
- *Increase appreciation for ECJE and the culture of employment:* The project partners and the Miami-Dade Jewish community were able to increase their appreciation for quality ECJE and the need to improve the culture of employment.
- *Understand the recruitment and retention crisis:* The partners now understand that there is a recruitment and retention crisis in Jewish education.
- *Understand the value of ECJE Jewish literacy:* The partners now understand that there must be an increased focus on the Jewish part of ECJE.
- *Understanding of the value of ECJE for reaching both parents and their children:* The partners now understand the importance of ECJE to the future of the Jewish people.

Project Kavod Community Committee

In October 2004, a Project *Kavod* Community Committee was created. It included lay leaders representing GMJF, CAJE-Miami, and the four project sites. CAJE and GMJF professional staff participated in the committee meetings. The purpose of the community Committee was to lead and guide the community-level ECJE change effort.

During the first meeting, they reviewed and endorsed the following vision statement that representatives of the four project sites had created at a CAJE conference the previous summer.

Miami-Dade's organized Jewish community, parents, and the general community will create a vision and the passion to enhance the quality of early childhood Jewish education and improve the culture of employment for ECJE educators.

The change consultant consulted with Joanne Papir, the Chair of the committee, to create dialogue and decision-making approaches that would enable the committee to understand, discuss, and create consensus-based decisions. In order for the Chair to fully participate in the dialogue and consensus decision-making, the change consultant facilitated the meetings. In order to record the input of the partners, the change consultant created and distributed the meeting minutes. Appendix A contains the names of the members of the Project *Kavod* Community Committee and the Task Force. The Chair of the Task Force and the CAJE-Miami staff periodically updated the Board of Directors about the project.

Community-wide ECJE Educators' Culture of Employment Survey

In December 2004, it was decided that the community partners could not address the current situation of the community's ECJE without research that would help them understand the current state of the culture of ECJE employment. The four pilot sites also did not want to make changes without CAJE and GMJF also identifying how they could improve the current culture of ECJE employment.

The consultative team created a customized version of a survey that was previously administered by CAJE in other parts of the country. The survey was developed in English and translated into Spanish. The survey was disseminated to the 23 ECJE sites in Miami-Dade. With the proactive assistance of the Miami-Dade Jewish Council of Early Childhood Directors, the survey was completed by the majority of the community's ECJE educators. The Educators' Survey and a comprehensive profile of South Florida ECJE educators are in Appendix C. The highlights of the profile are listed below. In addition, during the 2005-2006 school year, the directors answered an extensive survey of the schools (Appendix E).

Highlights of the Profile of Miami-Dade ECJE Teachers and the Survey of Schools

Two hundred eighty -three Jewish educators (54% of the 528 educators) from 18 of the 23 ECJE sites (78% of sites) participated in an ECJE Educators' Survey. The response rate from the participating sites was 62%. The school survey was answered by 16 of the 23 sites (70%). The total number of students in these 16 sites represents 75% of the total number of students in the system. The following highlights are drawn from the survey responses of the teachers (excluding the assistants) and of the site surveys:

- Salary is an important source of income (91%) and, for 29%, it is the main source. Most earned less than \$20,000 from their job (52%). Close to half the teachers have a total

family income of less than \$45,000 (42%). Eight percent state that they currently have no major medical insurance

- Jewish people are pursuing general and Jewish educational credentials in order to enter the field. If you want to keep the new generation of ECJE educators, then you must have decent salaries and benefits. Most (67%) have considered leaving the field of Jewish education because of their salary.
- A majority of the current ECJE educators do not have adequate general and Judaic credentials and this impacts the quality of the ECJE Jewish education. Forty-nine percent of the teachers have a Bachelors Degree in any field. Thirty-eight percent of the ECJE teachers and assistants are not Jewish. Of those who identify as Jewish, 27% indicated never receiving any Jewish education, 28% had a Jewish education only as a child, and only 45% have had any Jewish education as adult. Twenty-three percent of the teachers in Miami who identify as Jewish indicated that they had received both Jewish education as an adult and had a degree/license in early childhood education. This number dropped to 12% if only those teachers who had earned a BA degree were considered.

In the Miami-Dade ECJE system there are 23 programs which are hosted by two Jewish Community Centers, ten synagogues, and nine day schools. The total number of ECJE students is 2,971, of which 2,391 are Jewish (80%). This is about 40% of the Jewish ECE-aged children living in Miami-Dade.

Creation of the Project Kavod Task Force

When the Community Committee dialogued about the educator survey results, they decided to create a Task Force on the Culture of Employment that would create substantive action recommendations that would improve the culture of employment for Miami-Dade ECJE educators. The Committee Chair, Joanne Papir, asked Judge Steven Robinson to chair the Task Force. He was the Chair for the CAJE-Miami Day School Committee that created the GMJF/CAJE-M Day School Funding Program. All of the committee members were asked to participate in the Task Force deliberations. Letters were sent to the Miami-Dade ECJE directors asking them to inform their lay leaders and educators about the creation of the Task Force and asking their lay leaders and site educators to consider joining the Task Force.

During its meetings, the Task Force participants reviewed documents, listened to presentations, engaged in thoughtful dialogue, and developed consensus recommendations to improve the Miami-Dade culture of employment. With the technical support of Dr. Chaim Botwinick, Margie Zeskind, Bruve Y. Yudewitz, and Eli Schaap, during the first two meetings, the Task Force members examined and discussed the following documents:

- Overview of Project *Kavod* and national early childhood Jewish pedagogical and Jewish literacy trends.
- Overview of national surveys on salaries, benefits, and employee morale.
- Results of the 2005 Project *Kavod* ECJE Educator Survey.
- Results of the 2005 CAJE-Miami ECJE Directors Survey on Salaries and Benefits.
- Overview of the Miami-Dade Day School Funding, Teacher Fringe Benefits, and Allocations Program.
- Overview of the Miami-Dade ECJE demographics.

The change consultant facilitated the meetings and created a comprehensive consensus system thinking approach for the Task Force. The systems thinking approach enabled the Task Force members to identify the underlying causes of the current ECJE culture of employment, identify and assess the interconnected and interdependent relationships between the substantive and organizational issues, and identify leverage points for change. The consensus approach included the development of potential recommendations, time to ponder them individually between meetings, ranking the original list of recommendations using four criteria (fiscal impact on the ECJE site and/or GMJF/CAJE-Miami, fiscal impact on the individual educator, impact on educator morale, and support for quality ECJE education) and then discussing their ranked list before they selected their final recommendations.

During the February 23, 2006, meeting, the Community Committee heard presentations on the task force recommendations and a parallel ECJE Directors proposal. Judge Steven D. Robinson presented the task force recommendations and explained why he thought that the Community Committee should have Project staff and committee members carefully examine the options to determine which of them could be implemented. Judge Robinson reminded committee members and the project staff that:

Although many of these options are expensive, we must remember that if they are implemented they will improve the Jewish literacy and continuity. The fiscal cost of these options must be considered as a wise investment in our youth. In addition, the teachers in our early childhood schools need to be paid a livable wage as stated in texts on Jewish values related to employment of educators.

The 18 Task Force recommendations covered the areas of creating community and site-level strategic plans, increasing community appreciation of ECJE education and educators, increasing salaries and benefits, and recruiting and retaining quality ECJE educators.

Task Force Recommendations

Create ECJE Community and Site-Strategic Plans

1. Develop and implement a communal-level vision, strategic plan, and action goals that ensure the delivery of quality early childhood Jewish education.
2. Require and assist in the development of a site-level vision, strategic plan, and action goals that ensure the delivery of quality early childhood Jewish education.

Increase Community Appreciation of ECJE Education and Educators

3. Develop a marketing plan that promotes the importance of Early childhood Jewish education.
4. Expand ECJE collaborative community forums among ECJE schools, JCCs, synagogues, and GMJF/CAJE.
5. Create opportunities for ECJE education to be included and visible in community-wide educational forums.
6. Create a universal and meaningful community-wide recognition program for ECJE educators.
7. Create a Jewish-based code of ethics stakeholders that outlines the importance of Jewish values in Jewish education.

Increase Salaries and Benefits

8. Examine current and starting salaries and develop a plan to increase them under a uniform CAJE-Miami standard.
9. Develop a community-wide list of health, pension, and disability benefits that can be combined into a package that meets the needs of individual educators and develop a plan to enhance them.
10. Create a consortium of joint purchasing, such as of insurance, to leverage fiscal resources.
11. Develop a community-wide program to attract and provide training for new ECJE educators.

Recruit and Retain Quality ECJE Educators

12. Develop a community-wide mentoring and induction program for new educators.
13. Significantly increase the Jewish literacy of ECJE educators.
14. Increase the number of licensed/certified ECJE educators.
15. Ensure that quality community-wide Judaic and secular ECJE professional development in-service training options are available.
16. Require and pay for advanced professional development for ECJE educators.
17. Develop a process for the continuous assessment of teaching and learning that measures the growth of individual and total staff.
18. Train educational administrators so they can enhance mentoring of teachers.

Miami-Dade Jewish Council of Early Childhood Directors Allocation Proposal

Many of the ECJE Directors had participated in the task force and after the ECJE recommendations were created, they met and created the following proposal to be considered along with the task force recommendations. Jodi Mischon Bruce, ECJE Director for the Lehrman Community Day School, presented the proposal and stated that they would like it considered for adoption by GMJF and CAJE-Miami and ECJE schools.

The ECJE Directors would like an **Early Childhood Allocation** from the GMJF, based on the following factors.

I. Qualifications

In order to qualify, ECJE schools would need:

- A minimum of 80% of the early childhood teachers to have an AA degree in early childhood educator or child development or an AA degree in an unrelated degree with a CDEA.
- Additionally, teachers would need a minimum of Judaic studies (the framework to determine this needs to be determined).

II. Allocations

The allocations would be based on a per capita basis with the following specifications of the ratio of an educator to the students:

- Birth to 2 years – 1:1
- 2 years to 3 years – 1:2.5
- 3 years to 4 years – 1:5
- 4 years to 5 years – 1:5

The allocation would include pension and health options as well. If schools are in compliance, their early childhood teachers would be entitled to receive up to \$600 for health benefits. The Greater Miami Jewish Federation would match up to \$1000 for a teacher's pension plan. In order for teachers to qualify, they would need to work for at least three years in the same location.

III. Recommended salary scale for early childhood teachers

We want a Recommended Salary Scale for early childhood teachers.

Dialogue on Presentations

After the presentations on the Task Force recommendations and the ECJE Directors Allocation Proposal, Dr. Chaim Botwinick shared a review of them by the CAJE Miami's professional staff. They created a draft document entitled the *Project Kavod Strategic Action Plan Recommendation*. The plan's estimated budget range for the implementation of the recommendations was up to \$1,000,000 over the next three to five years. He also stated that:

The planning for the programs and activities in the strategic action plan should take place as soon as possible, given available financial and human resources.

The CAJE-Miami ECJE Department is creating a comprehensive in-service training and development program, as well as recruiting strategies, that they are undertaking as a result of its new vision, mission, and strategic direction.

Bruce Yudewitz also prepared a document entitled the *Early Childhood Teachers Compensation Enhancement*. He shared the core issues related to changes in the community's ECJE culture of employment by stating that:

Clearly, the issue for Project Kavod is how to enhance salaries and benefits beyond simply developing a salary schedule and benefits catalog that would be dependant on the willingness of individual schools to implement them. Any community participation in providing funds to assist and provide incentives for schools to move in this direction would have to be linked to a commitment on the part of schools to raise salaries, adhere to a salary schedule, and comply with guidelines for funding. As with the day schools, the community (GMJF/ CAJE-Miami) support for this effort would require a methodology for ensuring that the funding leads to a measurable improvement in the quality of early childhood programs.

Each of the meeting participants (lay leaders and staff) shared and discussed the Task Force recommendations and the ECJE Directors' proposals. The following list of representative responses illustrates both their understanding of the recommendations and what they think needs to be done to continue the work of Project Kavod:

- The Community Committee and the Task Force will meet as one body for all future meetings.
- We need to build lay leadership for ECJE that represents the total community as well as those who are active with a particular ECJE site. The outreach meetings should include parents, grandparents, lay leaders, professional staff, the general community, and funders. The goal would be to have the community understand and be willing to lobby and advocate for quality ECJE and for enhanced teacher compensation.

- It is time that site-level ECJE meetings are held about these recommendations. It may be most helpful to hold meetings between the lay leaders and Directors of several sites. The planning for these meetings should begin after Passover.
- We are getting important survey data that builds a strong case for change and we need to share it with other people via publicity and outreach.

Consensus Task Force Recommendation

After the discussion, Judge Steven Robinson made the following consensus motion that was endorsed by the meeting participants (expressed by individual polling):

We accept the Task Force Recommendations and Directors' Proposal and ask that the Project Kavod Community Committee and Task Force and the ECJE Directors create a community outreach process that helps the community understand and support quality ECJE and ECJE educators.

Project Kavod Leadership Forum and Focus Groups

The Leadership Forum educated me! After it, as an Executive Director, I raised the salaries of the educators in my ECJE program.

Quote from a Communal Professional Executive

The Community Committee/Task Force decided that the best way to reach out to the total community about Project *Kavod* was to convene an ECJE Leadership Summit. They conducted a proactive outreach campaign to invite communal leaders, rabbis, educators, and funders to the October 18, 2006, forum. The outreach included presentations to the CAJE-Miami Board, the GMJF's Community Planning and Budgeting committee, plus letters, e-mails, and telephone calls to communal leaders.

The forum goal was to be a meaningful and inclusive experience for the Miami community. The participants would be shown how they could play a vital role in creating a clear and compelling path designed to ensure Miami-Dade has the support to develop exemplary ECJE sites and a positive culture of teacher employment. The forum was well-attended and was the largest communal gathering ever devoted to ECJE in Miami.

The forum was designed to evoke positive and passionate responses from the participants. A participant folder was created that included an *Executive Summary of the Community Report on Early Childhood Jewish Educators: Culture of Employment Survey* and the Task Force recommendations. Joanne Papir chaired the forum and began by stating:

As Chair of the Project Kavod Community committee, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to this landmark event on behalf of Jewish education for the Miami community and the nation at large.

Tonight you will hear from several wonderful, erudite, devoted individuals. We hope you will find the subject matter to be enlightening, exciting, and meaningful as we unfold for you the progress made in Jewish ECE education over the last three years due to the work and research done through Project Kavod. "Kavod" in Hebrew means "honor."

Saby Behar, President of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, welcomed the participants and shared that it was a community challenge to identify approaches to provide the resources needed to fund ECJE. During his *D'var Torah*, Rabbi Gary Glickstein, the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Sholom, used *Torah* texts to present the need for ECJE and how it increases the Jewish connections for the students and their families. Iris Petroff, President of the CAJE, thanked the Miami-Dade community for actively addressing the project goals. Joanne Papir gave an overview of the accomplishments of the project by the community and the four project sites. Judge Steven Robinson, Chair of the Task Force, gave overviews of how quality ECJE helps the students acquire the cognitive skills to succeed in their future learning and of the Task Force recommendations.

The keynote presentation, *Leadership that Makes a Difference*, was given by Lee Meyerhoff Hendler, a Baltimore philanthropist and ECJE advocate. Ms. Hendler was the primary funder and catalyst for the Baltimore project, "*Machon L'Morim*," an exciting and innovative professional development initiative for early childhood Jewish educators that promotes change and aims to infuse Jewish values into ECJE programs. During her presentation, she stressed the need for leaders to pay attention and focus on what needs to be done for the Jewish community, to personally do them, and to reach out to friends to join in these efforts. In the afternoon prior to the forum, Ms. Hendler also made a luncheon presentation to the Foundation of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation on intergenerational philanthropy and the insights she has garnered from being part of a family with intergenerational foundations. The luncheon participants were asked to attend the Project *Kavod* Leadership Forum.

In order to reach out to local ECJE lay leaders and professional staff, three regional Project *Kavod* Focus Groups were held in the north and south of Miami-Dade County and in Miami Beach. The perceptions stated are similar to those that were made on Project *Kavod* Impact Survey and are included later in the report in the section: Preferred Future *Kavod* Impacts.

CAJE-Miami Kavod Committee

During the last Project *Kavod* Community Committee - Task Force meeting (12/4/06), the members talked about Project *Kavod* and what they had accomplished. These perceptions are included later in the report in the sections: Preferred Future *Kavod* Impacts and Perception of Project *Kavod* Change Processes

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Chaim Botwinick stated that "CAJE-Miami will create a *Kavod* Committee that will be responsible for determining next steps, including the development and refinement of a programmatic and financial ECJE strategic implementation plan for our community." He also said that the current members of the Project *Kavod* Community Committee/Task Force should let him know if they are interested in serving on the new committee. In addition, members of the philanthropic community will be asked to serve on this committee.

Preferred Future *Kavod* Impacts

Beginning teachers need support, a community-wide program to provide mentoring for new ECJE educators.

Quote from a lay leader on the Community Committee

The members of the Project *Kavod* Community Committee and the Project *Kavod* Task Force were asked (on an Impact Survey Appendices F, G and H) to identify which of the Task Force recommendations that they would like CAJE-Miami, GMJF, and/or local ECJE sites to implement. Eleven Impact Surveys were returned and the site-level surveys were prepared by more than one person. The respondents included nine lay leaders, seven ECJE professional staff, and three non-ECJE professional staff.

High Priority for Implementation

Increase Salaries

Comments:

- *It is important that nothing be mandated that the schools can't afford. I love it when a third-party like GMJF tells another institution that this is what you have to do and then they wonder why fiscally this institution gets into trouble. I'd rather see that there is a suggested guideline and an incentive for the schools by the Federation to increase teachers' salaries with a match from the Federation. This will make the burden on the institutions a little lighter and more institutions would benefit from and increase the number of their qualified teachers.*
- *Matching funds should be provided to those sites that increase their staff's salaries. The GMJF must provide funds, if this is to be successful.*
- *Our ECJE site has raised thousands of dollars to increase our ECJE salaries.*
- *I feel that this is going to need to be a combined effort of GMJF, CAJE-Miami, and ECJE Sites. Ideally, a scale will be developed so that all ECJE sites can be consistent with their salaries.*
- *There needs to be matching funds for schools that do raise their teachers' salaries for a minimum of three years.*
- *This needs everyone at the table to develop a plan that will be followed.*

Develop a Marketing Plan for ECJE

Comments:

- *We must get the message out that quality early childhood Jewish programs exist and encourage people to come check us out.*
- *A professional marketing consultant with expertise in marketing education should help the Federation come up with a plan that it can implement.*
- *The more the word is out there, the more supporters our program will have.*
- *This is one of the next steps. Without community understanding we will not be able to achieve any of our goals. This will involve the newly-formed *Kavod* committee.*
- *Partner this with local sites.*

Create Communal-level Vision, Strategic Plan, and Action Goals

Comments:

- *Federation and local philanthropists need to support this with financial incentives!*
- *The sites together should come up with this vision with the help of a professional consultant.*
- *A communal vision is of utmost importance, so that we are all on the same page.*

Medium Priority for Implementation

Create Site-level Vision, Strategic Plan and Action Goals

Comments:

- *A professional consultant should help each site to do this.*
- *We work hard each year to provide a quality early childhood Jewish education to our students.*
- *CAJE should be a resource in this process.*

Community-wide Benefits Package

Comments:

- *Hopefully, Federation would see fit to match these benefits with what the teachers are paying for them or with what the schools are paying for them. In the past, Federation had a benefit package for the teachers, but the teachers' salaries were so low that they couldn't contribute to this package and therefore were without the benefits.*
- *Again, it is important that the sites not be mandated to implement this package, but rather encouraged by matching funds perpetually.*
- *At my present work site, we have a great benefits package. Therefore, this is not a high priority of ours as it has been addressed.*
- *The number of educators with pooled resources should make the provision of quality insurance, retirement funds, and disability insurance more affordable.*

Consortium of Joint Purchasing

Comments:

- *A professional consultant should help Federation do this and get input from the local ECJE sites as to their needs.*
- *This should be developed with the ECJE sites and hopefully will be then researched for elementary, middle, and high school.*
- *This already exists for the JCC through the Federation.*
- *This has the potential of creating a logistical nightmare and would require a part-time person to coordinate this effort. This is too much for the ECJE department at CAJE.*

Expand Inclusion of ECJE Education in Education Forums

Comments:

- *This involves everyone and should definitely be guided by a professional consultant.*
- *I think that the Federation and CAJE–Miami should play an active role in providing community-wide educational forums.*

Expand ECJE Community Forums

Comments:

- *Team work is the answer. The more minds think together, the more we can accomplish.*
- *CAJE-Miami does a good job with this.*
- *Only in conjunction with the marketing and community education plans.*

Community Recognition of ECJE Educators

Comment:

- *Look at other models that are successful and involve the heads of the ECJE sites to approve them.*

Create a Jewish-based Code of Ethics

Comment:

- *This, of course, is idealistic and hopefully can be generated over time as an outcome of the on-going work instead of as a planned document.*

Provide a Community-wide Program to Attract and Train New ECJE Educators

Comments:

- *Beginning teachers need support. A community-wide program to attract and provide training for new ECJE educators would help with the recruitment and retention of ECJE educators. CAJE should play a big part in this endeavor.*

Provide a Community-wide Program Mentoring and Induction for New ECJE Educators

Comments:

- *CAJE-Miami already does this with the Models of Excellence and the new ECJEI initiative.*
- *Beginning teachers need support, a community-wide program to provide mentoring for new ECJE educators. CAJE should play a big part in this endeavor.*

Increase Jewish Literacy of ECJE Educators

Comments:

- *We currently have a Jewish literacy curriculum ready to go, but we do not have a way to pay for the teachers' time away from the classroom or for work outside of regular hours in order to implement it. We need some community help with this.*
- *If CAJE-Miami will certify ECJE educators, they must have a fixed numbers of hours in Jewish literacy.*
- *CAJE-Miami will offer the opportunities, but the ECJE programs need to require their educators to attend them.*

Increase the Number of Licensed/Certified ECJE

Comments:

- *This will require a phrased-in timeline and financial benefits need to be in place!*
- *GMJF must provide funding if this to happen.*

Provide Judaic and Secular ECJE Professional Training

Comment:

- *CAJE-Miami is doing a great job and needs more financial support.*

Require and Pay for Advanced Professional Development for ECJE Educators

Comment:

- *I am sure that there is a fund for this at the Federation and, if not, I highly recommend it.*

Train ECJE Administrators to Enhance Mentoring

Comments:

- *This is an ongoing challenge for CAJE-Miami! It is not easy to do.*
- *Have CAJE-Miami research the available mentoring programs and get the data to the local sites. Have the same fund at the Federation that takes care of advanced professional development pay for this as well.*

Develop Continuous Assessment Process of ECJE Teaching and Learning

Comments:

- *Reinventing the wheel is not necessary here. ECJEI and others are working on developing these kinds of tools. Also, the general ECJE education has tools available.*
- *Through NAEYC, we are doing this.*

National-Level Substantive Impacts

Early childhood Jewish education is similar to a woman in the first trimester of pregnancy. Major changes are taking place that form the foundation for everything that happens afterwards. Yet, others don't know the woman is pregnant and therefore don't realize what major changes are taking place. Only during the second and third trimester is the outside world aware of what is happening. The second and third trimesters are more similar to the elementary school through high school years.

Quote from a lay leader on the Project *Kavod* Community Committee

CAJE's Educational Change Focus

Project *Kavod* has transformed CAJE. While CAJE always has had a strong focus on improving the culture of employment for Jewish educators, this focus was always on the national level and through its membership of Jewish educators. CAJE now realizes that change can only be effected locally and through a partnership of Jewish lay and professional leaders at the host institutions, central agency, and the Federation. CAJE will contain its action research by customizing surveys such as the Project *Kavod* ECJE Educator Survey.

One of CAJE's primary assets is its ability to network with educators and other Jewish organizations about the issues facing us in Jewish education. Since the receipt of the Covenant grant for Project *Kavod*, CAJE and especially Eli Schaap, the Project *Kavod* national coordinator and CAJE's Associate Executive Director, have been promoting the work of Project *Kavod* and lessons learned in all of its networking and outreach modalities. This has included CAJE conferences, publications, broadcast e-mails, and website. In all the meetings that CAJE staff conducts with other Jewish organizations, lay leaders, and potential funders, Project *Kavod* is always a key topic. In addition, articles about Project *Kavod* have appeared in the Jewish Press and Miami-Dade newspapers. The Project *Kavod* Change Manual will be shared widely with the key Jewish education organizations in the United States and Canada.

Torah-based Text on Jewish Values and Education

CAJE and its Advocacy Committee supported the development and use of a *Torah*-based curriculum, *Text and Tradition: The Importance of Jewish Education and Jewish Educators*. Edited and annotated by Norman Meskin, it focuses on Jewish values related to the employment of educators and directors. It enabled many of the Project *Kavod* partners to consciously link the need to improve the culture of employment and Jewish values. This text is being used by education committees, congregational and community boards of education, parents, and educators.

Perception of Project *Kavod* Change Processes

As a result of my participation on the Community Committee and the Task Force, I was able to bring the information and statistics back to my President and Treasurer. I insisted that they attend some of the meetings and make a presentation to our Executive Board and Finance Committee. I learned how to create community consensus decisions.

Lay Leader on the Community Committee and Task Force.

The members of the Project *Kavod* Community Committee and the *Project Kavod* Task Force were asked (via an Impact Survey) to share which of the project change processes helped the partners understand the substantive issues and create a community consensus. Eleven Impact Surveys were returned and the site-level surveys were prepared by more than one person. The respondents included nine lay leaders, seven ECJE professional staff, and three non-ECJE professional staff.

Project *Kavod* Community Committee/Task Force

Comments:

- *Ideas were discussed and were brought back to our site's School Committee. We developed better recommendations that benefited our site.*
- *Participation on the Community Committee and the Task Force was outstanding.*

Project *Kavod* Task Force Recommendations:

Comments:

- *Although we were not a project pilot site, the task force recommendation were very helpful in educating our Board members, parents, and administration on the present culture of employment in Early Childhood Jewish Centers. They were a great starting point for us to continue discussions on ways to improve the culture of employment at our school sites.*
- *The salary recommendations were particularly helpful.*

ECJE Project Sites Fiscal Survey of Income and Expenses

Comments:

- *This was very important and allowed us to raise tuitions to cover the new salary scales and structure.*
- *It made us, lay leaders, realize that our ECJE program wasn't a "cash cow." We realized how low the teacher's salaries were when compared to public schools and how few of our ECJE teachers could afford the health benefits we offered or even have a pension with the salary they were receiving.*

Community's ECJE Educators Survey:

Comments:

- *It became clear that something needed to be done to improve the morale of these teachers. They clearly are teaching because they love what they do. However, the reality today is that for many this is an additional salary in a two-income home and, in many cases, the main salary. If we want to give our children a solid beginning when it counts the most, then the teachers they have during these formative years need to be highly qualified, motivated, and happy individuals.*
- *The survey report supported our School Committee's ECJE vision. The report was great evidence to present to our synagogue board.*

Project Kavod Leadership Forum and Focus Groups

- *The Leadership Forum educated me! After it, as an Executive Director, I raised the salaries of the educators in my ECJE program.*
- *The Leadership Forum and Focus Group were helpful in educating our Board members, parents, and administration on the present culture of employment in early childhood Jewish centers.*

Development of Text-based Curriculum on Jewish Values

Comment:

- *The text has been helpful in infusing Jewish values into our discussion regarding raising salaries and benefits of our ECJE educators.*

National Awareness of the Miami Project Kavod Project

Comment:

- *It helps when you are aware that your efforts could help improve the culture of employment at early childhood Jewish sites around the nation and not just in the Miami area. We all want quality early childhood Jewish programs throughout the nation and we can learn from other's successes.*

Support Provided by Project Kavod Staff:

Comments:

- *It is essential to have outside consultants who are expert in areas such as change consulting, financial resource development and marketing as CAJE Miami does not have staff who are skilled in these areas. I have sat on too many committees, strategic planning and such, where the things come slowly to a halt, because the people are stuck and can't proceed. An outside eye is helpful.*
- *I truly believe that without Eli Schaap and Pat Bidol Padva, who kept us focused and moving on schedule, we wouldn't have accomplished anywhere near what we did. For a committee run by lay leaders, it is very easy to get sidetracked, lose interest, and not have time to devote to the committee. We are all involved in so many communal and personal matters that it takes a very organized, kind, great professional to assist us. I have been on too many committees where the intentions are all great and the passion is there, but we lack the ability to move forward. We get to a great list of ideas and then there is no way to decide what to implement.*
- *It was important that the project consultant helped us use methods that helped us discuss everything in a focused manner and make better decisions. In this case, we had an excellent*

synergy between the committee members, the lay chairs, and Pat Padvá. Having her made our job of supporting Project Kavod not only possible, but also a pleasure.

- *Project Kavod staff were very helpful and made objective concrete suggestions.*
- *It was helpful to have a community change consultant who helped us create consensus recommendations and a consultant who understood how ECJE programs are financed.*

Project *Kavod* Evaluation

Evaluation was an integral part of Project *Kavod* throughout the entire process. The evaluator was more like an “action researcher,” not just assessing outcomes or results of the process, but tapped for her expertise throughout. For example, the evaluator was a key figure in designing the educator survey that became an important tool in making the case for improving the culture of employment, salaries, and benefits. The evaluator wrote a separate report about her work and findings.

The key concerns and suggestions that emerged from her interviews and focus groups with many of the participants are listed below. The context that led to these conclusions is included at the end of the Evaluation Report in Appendix F.

Concerns and Suggestions

Need for a Road Map

While this group agreed to the condition of creating a process from the ground up, it was suggested that the wisdom gained from Project *Kavod* should be used to create a model for other communities. Part of the road map needs to address the school selection criteria and process in order to find schools that are well-suited to the project. Schools need to know expectations up front.

Learning from One Another

Several individuals suggested that the schools should have ways of learning from one another, either in person or using technology. The process needs to work at developing these lines of communication and support. This would apply to learning from the initial Project *Kavod*, as well for future endeavors.

Educational Change Expertise

A need exists for someone on the CAJE-Miami staff to become an expert in communal and educational change both for institutions and the community to help support an initiative like Project *Kavod*. It is not sufficient to rely on consultants all the time; internal expertise is needed as well. An existing staff member's participation in professional development to gain greater communal and educational change expertise is one possible solution.

Working Relationship between Agency and Consultants

Tension can emerge in terms of how the local agency works with the consultants. The consultants need the support of the local agency to achieve the project's goals and vice versa. The local agency knows the community well, but it has many demands placed on it that can undermine or limit how it addresses the core Project *Kavod* issues. The consultants, the project itself, and the commitment to the funding source can serve to deflect “distracting” concerns or issues so that the agency can move forward in achieving the project's goals.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

At the community and site levels, Project *Kavod* achieved substantive and change accomplishments and identified lessons learned that need to be addressed by future community partnerships. Project *Kavod* increased our understanding of solutions for the personnel crisis in Jewish education, showed the power of a well-organized change process, and also has led to advances on the road towards excellence in early childhood Jewish education.

The following key messages and lessons learned are based on the recommendations that were stated by community, agency, and site partners in community and site meetings, written communications, and on the impact surveys.

Substantive Long-Term Outcomes

A community can define the road to, pursue, and ultimately achieve:

- **Stronger Jewish schools** in general and stronger early childhood Jewish programs in particular.
- A **stronger Jewish identity** for the children educated in the system.
- A **higher rate of children continuing in further Jewish education** (whether day school or congregational school).
- A **stronger Jewish identity of the families** of these children.
- A **higher affiliation rate of the families** with the Jewish community.
- A **more positive culture of employment for Jewish educators** - A positive impact on the culture of employment of Jewish educators in general and in early childhood in particular.
- A **greater understanding by the Jewish community of the importance of Jewish education** in general and EC Jewish education in particular.

Change Lessons and Outcomes

- **Complex change takes time:** Building partnerships takes time. It is a process, not an event. Community partners and project staff allocated the time needed to create the case for change and create informed recommendations. Project *Kavod* has created significant accomplishments, but it will take about 3 to 5 years and the allocation of significant resources to refine and implement the Task Force recommendations. In general, complex change initiatives require multi-year funding in order to have a significant impact.
- **Leadership in change organizing is critical for success:** When pursuing complex change there is a clear need for an expert change organizer, in addition to the need for the project staff to acquire organizational development and community change skills.
- **Ongoing contracting:** The sponsoring organizations and the change consultant engaged in ongoing contracting regarding their roles, responsibilities, and tasks. There needs to be a clear agreement in these areas among all the key stake-holders in order to achieve significant changes.
- **Clarify Roles:** Especially in the initial phases of Project *Kavod*, there was a significant need for the change consultant to help the partners clarify what was expected of their agency in this complex change effort. Each organization had its own strategic plan and mission that might need to be adjusted during a transformative change process.

- **Technical expertise:** The CAJE-Miami and GMJF staff provided technical expertise and participated in the partnership meetings. Projects that are focused on transformational change require the expertise of the key professionals regarding the local conditions, including funding requirements.
- **Change consulting and evaluation expertise is essential:** The work of the project's partners was enhanced by the consultative team who provided synergistic change consulting and evaluation support.
- **Obstacles can be overcome when using consensus-based change organizing:** In spite of several challenges such as turnover in lay and professional leadership and the financial impact of a hurricane, the sites continued to work with the project staff to improve the culture of employment in ECJE. Overcoming obstacles such as these is a common phenomenon in transformative change projects. The goal should not be to avoid obstacles, but to overcome them.
- **National impact supports local change:** Project *Kavod* produced site and community changes that were supported by CAJE's national advocacy and expertise. The lessons and outcomes of Project *Kavod* are of keen interest to leaders on the national level and in other localities. Knowledge of the national attention, with a national organization involved in the project (CAJE) and a national foundation funding the project (The Covenant Foundation), provided an impetus to the local stake holders to strive for successful outcomes.

These lessons and outcomes can lead to collaborations in other Jewish communities engaging lay leaders in partnership with the professionals to

- Change the thinking about a Jewish educational system.
- Examine the funding within this system.
- Engage a community in visioning and understanding Jewish education in a whole new way.
- Improve the culture of employment for Jewish educators.