

AT A GLANCE: DATA ON IMMERSIVE JEWISH SERVICE-LEARNING PARTICIPANTS

2011–2012 PROGRAM YEAR

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Repair the World (Repair) and its grantee-partner organizations collected standardized data about immersive Jewish service-learning (IJSL) program participants. Together with Rosov Consulting, Repair developed a Common Participant Questionnaire (CPQ), which was administered by 20 grantee-partner organizations. This questionnaire asked participants about their demographics, motivations for participating in an IJSL program and prior relevant experience (e.g., Jewish volunteering and service more broadly). The survey was administered prior to each 2011–2012 program and achieved a 75% response rate, with a total of 1,632 participants responding to the survey. While 2011–2012 represents the first year of data collected from this tool, Repair and its partners hope that this tool will improve the quality, consistency and utility of data that are collected about IJSL program participants, lay the groundwork for analyzing trends in participation over time and, eventually, help measure program impacts.

Grantee-Partner Organizations with IJSL Programs in 2011–2012

- Agahozo Shalom Youth Village
- American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)
- American Jewish World Service (AJWS)
- AVODAH
- Bend the Arc (formerly JFSJ & PJA)
- B'Tzedek
- Habonim Dror
- Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life
- Jewish Disaster Response Corps
- Jewish Farm School
- JOIN for Justice
- Livnot U'Lehibanot
- Ma'ase Olam
- Tevel B'Tzedek
- The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)
- Tikkun Olam Tel Aviv-Jaffa
- Urban Adamah
- Uri L'Tzedek
- Yahel Israel Service Learning
- Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW¹

Most young adults who participate in an IJSL program are pursuing their undergraduate degrees when they apply to the program. Almost all participants (93%) are between the ages of 18 and 25, and approximately two-thirds (68%) are female. The vast majority of participants (87%) identify racially as Caucasian/White and ethnically as Jewish, Mixed Ethnicity, Caucasian/White, European or American.² As shown in the table below, high school and gap year students generally apply for medium-term programs, whereas the majority of undergraduate and graduate students apply for short-term programs, whereas the majority of undergraduate and graduate students apply for short-term programs. Working professionals and people in other situations (e.g. recently graduated) choose a wider range of program durations.

Professional or Student Status
N=1,595³

	Total Sample	By Program Length			
		Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term	Total
High School or Gap Year	5%	13%	86%	1%	100%
Undergraduate	75%	91%	8%	1%	100%
Graduate School	3%	76%	12%	12%	100%
Working	12%	22%	12%	66%	100%
Other Situation	5%	33%	24%	43%	100%
Total	100%	--	--	--	--

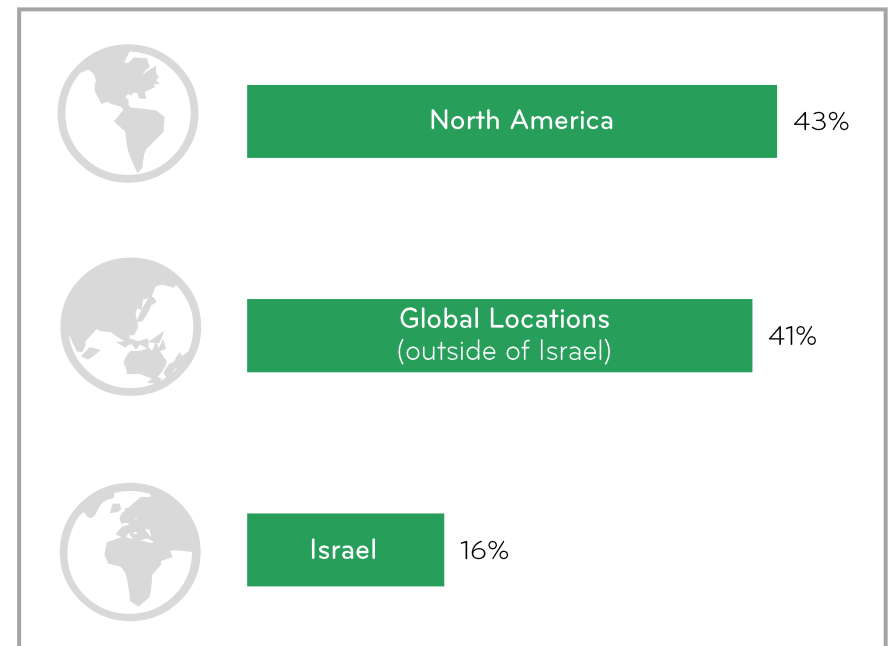
¹ Percentages may not total 100% in some graphs due to rounding.

² Respondents were asked to write in their race and ethnicity; responses were then grouped and analyzed. The European category includes European, Ashkenazi and Eastern European responses. Respondents that identified as non-Jewish were removed from the racial and ethnicity data analysis.

PROGRAM SELECTION

Participants attend a range of IJSL programs that vary in location, duration and focus. The majority of participants serve through a program in North America (43%) or in locations around the globe (41%), such as Rwanda or Haiti. An additional 16% attend programs in Israel. Short-term programs (i.e., 1–2 weeks) are most popular (76% of participants), followed by medium-term programs (i.e., 2–12 weeks) and long-term programs (i.e., 12 or more weeks) (13% and 11%, respectively).

Program Location
N=1,590



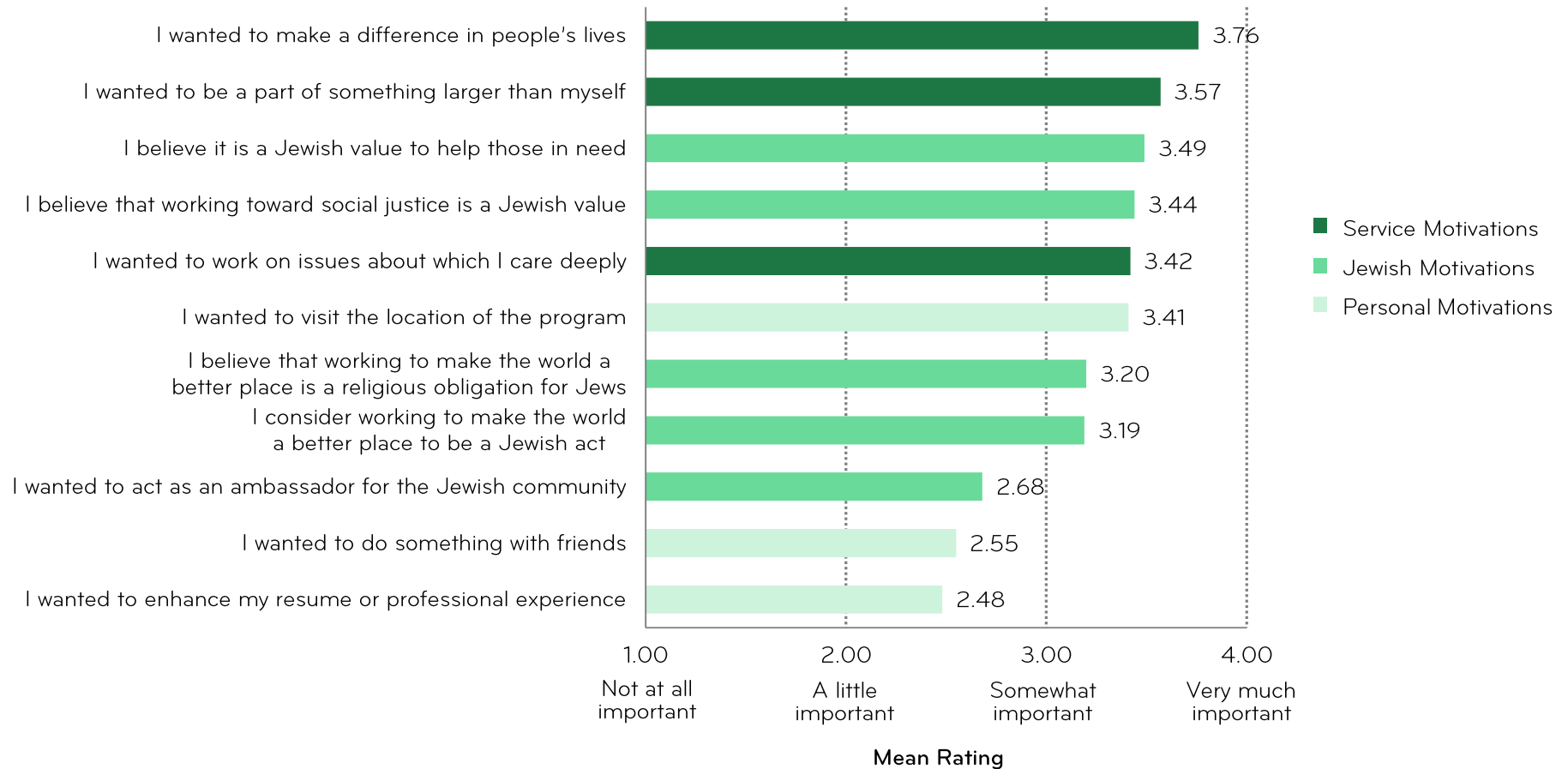
³ Throughout the report, the Ns listed below each graph title represent the number of participants who responded to each specific question.

MOTIVATIONS FOR APPLYING TO AN IJSL PROGRAM

Participants consider various factors when deciding to apply to an IJSL program. The most important factor cited by participants is their desire to serve others and be part of something larger than themselves. Overall, participants are more motivated by their desire to serve others than by Jewish or personal reasons. However, participants report that serving within a Jewish framework (e.g., acting on their Jewish values to help people in need or work toward social justice) are also important motivations for applying to an IJSL program.

Some groups of participants have different motivations for applying to an IJSL program as compared to others. For example, those who participate in long-term programs have slightly stronger service motivations than those in medium- or short-term programs. Females report slightly higher Jewish and service motivations for participation than their male counterparts. Finally, as described in more detail in the next section, previous experience in Jewish and volunteer activities also contribute to participants' motivations for attending an IJSL program.

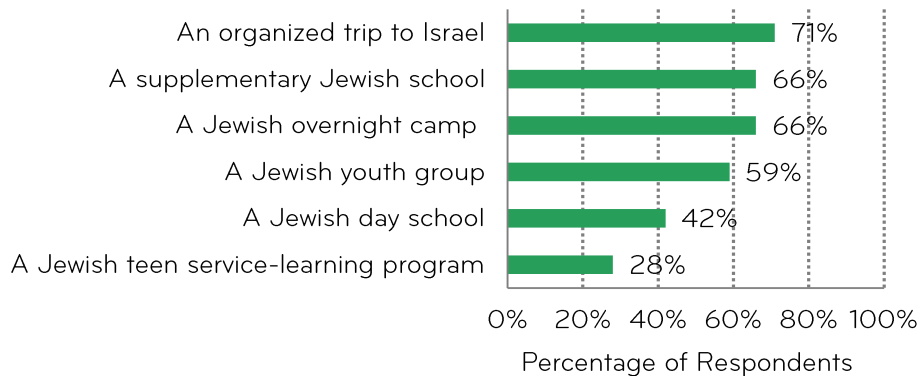
Importance of Different Factors in Participants' Motivation to Apply to IJSL Program
N=1,549 – 1,567



PARTICIPANTS' PRIOR JEWISH EXPERIENCE

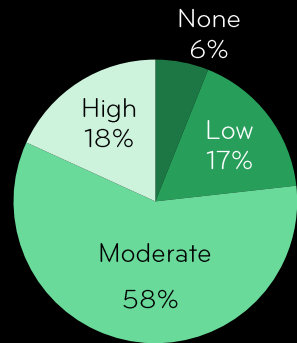
Participants come from a wide range of Jewish backgrounds and experiences, with most having a moderate level of engagement in Jewish activities before attending an IJSL program.⁴ More than half of participants have been involved with a trip to Israel, supplementary Jewish education (e.g., Hebrew or Sunday school), Jewish overnight camps and youth groups.

Types of Previous Engagement in Jewish Activities
N=1,553 – 1,572



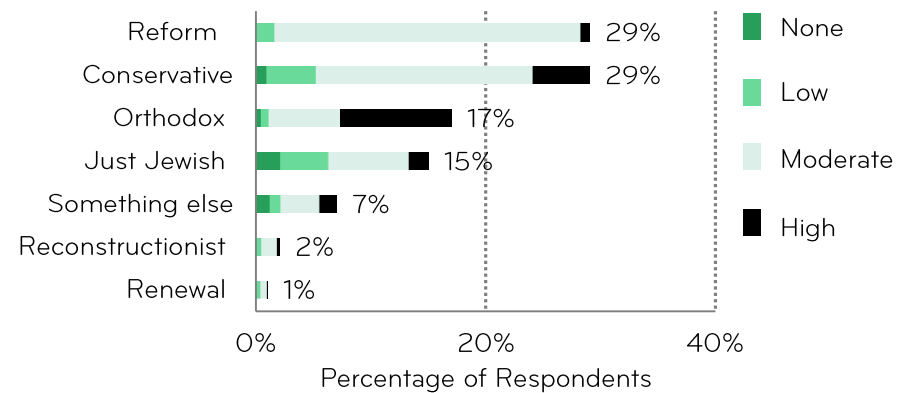
To better understand participants' engagement in Jewish activities, a rubric was designed to categorize participants as having none, low, moderate or high levels of engagement based on the number of years and number of Jewish programs or activities they had attended. These data were used to compare motivations for attending IJSL programs.

Level of Engagement in Jewish Activities
N=1,632



Participants have a wide range of Jewish identities. More than half self-identify either as Reform or Conservative, 17% identify as Orthodox and 15% as "Just Jewish." The graph below shows the percentage of participants who identify with a specific Jewish denomination, as well as their level of engagement in Jewish activities prior to the IJSL program.

Jewish Denominational Identity & Prior Jewish Engagement
N=1,580

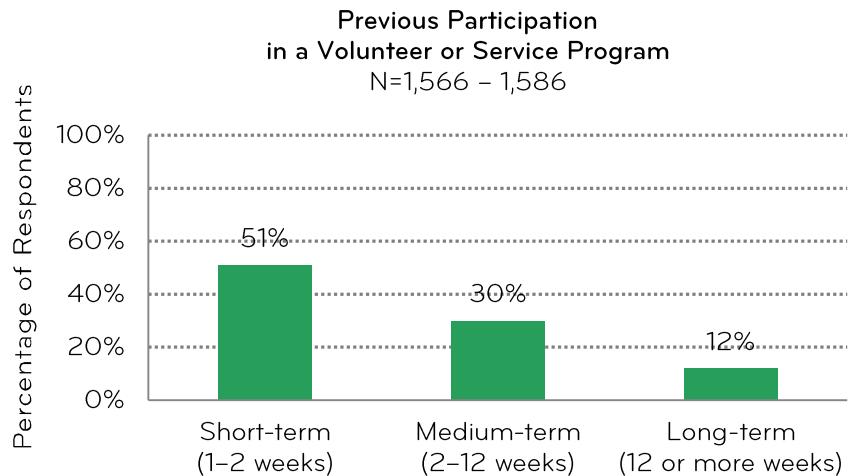


Prior Jewish experiences play an important role in the motivation to participate in an IJSL program. Participants who previously took part in an organized trip to Israel rate Jewish factors as slightly more important in their decision to apply to an IJSL program as compared to those who have not been to Israel. Also, participants who have higher levels of prior Jewish engagement are more likely than those with lower levels to rate Jewish factors as important motivations for applying to an IJSL program and have previous volunteer or service experience. Finally, participants with no or low levels of previous Jewish experience most often attend short-term programs in North America as compared to participants with higher levels.

⁴ The rubric used to categorize previous Jewish experience is explained in more depth in the [survey methodology](#).

PARTICIPANTS' PRIOR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

A majority (60%) of participants have been involved in a volunteer program prior to their 2011–2012 IJSL experience. Fifty-one percent have previously attended a short-term program, thirty percent a medium-term program, and twelve percent a long-term program.



Prior volunteer service experience is associated with deeper Jewish and service motivations for participating in IJSL programs. Participants who previously attended a Jewish teen service-learning program rate *Jewish* and *service* factors as more important motivating factors than those who did not attend a similar program. In addition, those with previous volunteer or service experience also rate *Jewish* and *service* factors as more important motivations for applying than those who do not (see page 3).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Repair the World and Rosov Consulting worked together to design the data collection tool and analysis, which Rosov Consulting then conducted. BTW *informing change* then distilled the data and designed and produced the final report in February 2013. For more information about this research please contact Repair the World staff at: mordy@wepair.org or access online information about the [survey instrument](#) and [survey methodology](#).