INTRODUCTION

Repair the World (Repair) and its grantee-partner organizations have been collecting standardized data about immersive Jewish service-learning (IJSL) program participants for the past two years. In the 2011–2012 program year (2012 in this report), the Common Participant Questionnaire (CPQ) was administered to 20 grantee-partner organizations; in the 2012–2013 program year (2013), 18 grantee-partner organizations, along with 4 additional organizations who participated in Repair’s pilot technical assistance (TA) program, collected data from their participants. The questionnaire, administered prior to the start of each program, 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 2013 survey achieved a 96% response rate, with a total of 1,304 participant respondents (compared to a 75% response rate in 2012, with a total of 1,632 participant respondents). This report provides a summary of the 2013 IJSL participant cohort; where appropriate this year’s data are compared to the previous year’s cohort.

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1 The 2012 and 2013 datasets vary slightly: Three organizations that submitted 2012 data did not submit 2013 data. Given the differences in the samples, comparisons between 2012 and 2013 data are only intended to give a general sense of commonalities and differences.
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Most young adults who participate in an IJSL program are pursuing an undergraduate degree when they apply to the program. While the majority both this year and last year are between the ages of 18 and 25 (93% in 2012; 85% in 2013), there is slightly more diversity in age and professional/student status this year. As shown in the green columns below, the majority (63%) of 2013 IJSL participants are pursuing an undergraduate degree. This year, more participants are either working or in other situations compared to the 2012 cohort. Since short-term programs are designed for undergraduate and gap-year students, it is not surprising that long-term program participants mainly consist of people who are in graduate school, working or in other situations.

The demographics of the 2013 participants are very similar to the 2012 participants. In both years, the vast majority of participants (87% in 2012 and 2013) identify racially as Caucasian/White and ethnically either as Jewish, Mixed Ethnicity, Caucasian/White, European or American. Also, about two-thirds of participants in both cohorts are female (68% in 2012; 66% in 2013).

PROGRAM SELECTION

Participants attend a range of IJSL programs that vary by location, duration and focus. As illustrated below, the 2013 participants serve in programs all around the world with approximately one-third serving in each North America, Israel and other global locations. Short-term programs (i.e., 1–2 weeks) remain the most popular (67% of participants), followed by long-term programs (i.e., 12 or more weeks; 19% of participants) and medium-term programs (i.e., 2–12 weeks; 14% of participants)

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2 Percentages may not total 100% in some graphs due to rounding.
3 Throughout the report, the Ns listed below each graph title represent the number of participants who responded to each specific question.

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MOTIVATIONS FOR APPLYING TO AN IJSL PROGRAM

While participants consider various factors when deciding to apply to an IJSL program, the most important factors cited by participants are their desire to serve others and to be part of something larger than themselves. Similar to last year, 2013 participants continue to be more motivated by their desire to serve others than by Jewish or personal reasons. However, acting on their Jewish values and serving within a Jewish framework continue to be important motivators.

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 are less motivated by Jewish reasons, and those in short-term programs are less motivated by service reasons compared to people in the other length programs. Females report slightly higher Jewish and service motivations than their male counterparts. As described further in the next section, previous experience also contributes to participants’ motivations for attending an IJSL program.

![Importance of Different Factors in Participants' Motivation to Apply to IJSL Program](image-url)
PARTICIPANTS’ PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN JEWISH ACTIVITIES

Similar to 2012, most 2013 participants have a moderate level of engagement in Jewish activities before attending an IJSL program. Almost all attended a Jewish overnight camp, and more than half of participants have been involved with a trip to Israel, supplementary Jewish education (e.g., Hebrew or Sunday school) or youth groups.

Types of Previous Engagement in Jewish Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Jewish overnight camp</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An organized trip to Israel</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A supplementary Jewish school</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Jewish youth group</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Jewish day school</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Jewish teen service-learning program</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants have a wide range of Jewish identities. Comparable to the 2012 cohort, the 2013 cohort primarily self-identifies either as Reform or Conservative. 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.

Prior Jewish experiences play an important role in participants’ motivations to participate in an IJSL program. 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. Participants who previously took part in certain Jewish activities (i.e., an overnight camp, organized trip to Israel, Jewish youth groups) rate both Jewish and service factors as slightly more important compared to those who have not participated in these activities. However, participants who attended a supplementary Jewish school have slightly lower service motivations compared to those who have not had supplementary Jewish education.
PARTICIPANTS' PRIOR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

In 2013, IJSL programs attracted participants with similar previous volunteer experience compared to the previous year. A majority (61%) of participants have been involved in a volunteer program prior to their 2013 IJSL experience.

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 service factors as more important motivations for applying than those who do not.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Repair the World worked with Informing Change in 2013 to conduct data analysis and produce this report. The report builds on a 2012 report written by Informing Change, and based on Rosov Consulting’s preliminary analysis. Rosov Consulting also partnered with Repair to design the data collection tool. For more information about this research please contact Repair the World staff at: maital.friedman@werepair.org or access online information about the survey instrument and survey methodology.