

4.2 Community Leadership



Lay Leadership:

The lay leadership is organized as the Leeds Jewish Representative Council (LJRC) and functions as an umbrella organization of close to 50 Leeds Jewish organizations.

The council is headed by five, elected Honorary officers and a 16-member executive board which represent the main community organizations.

Under the board is a community council of over 100 delegates who represent all the affiliated organizations and key community officials.

The executive council meets in three to six closed annual meetings and the community council gathers three times a year.

In addition, the main community institutions (welfare, housing, educational campus) and synagogues have voluntary lay leaders and boards.

Most lay leaders are older and come from families with a long tradition of taking leadership roles in the community.

In the past, the LJRC led the formation of a steering committee which undertook a community-wide vision and strategic planning process; this plan has been influential on the community's development. Today, there is a growing call to update this strategic plan.

While the LJRC is commended by many as filling an important role in the field of advocacy and representing the community to outside authorities, its ability or willingness to lead large-scale change is perceived as limited. The leadership is viewed as a conservative body which focuses mainly on technical issues and coordination. Little time is devoted to discussing strategic issues, and some community members feel that the community is "stuck."

While the community president has a clear and vibrant vision for the future, there has been no structured activity to design and implement a community-wide vision. In many cases, change is led at the organizational level by professionals who receive the backing of important community philanthropic sponsors or by "community champions" who take the initiative.

Professional Leadership

Over the last 10 years, the community has recruited and developed a cadre of talented and passionate professional managers – executive officers and program directors - who are the dominant force in the developing and implementing policies and services.

There has been a distinct move toward a model of "leadership by professionalism." This change has been achieved with the backing of strong lay leaders on the boards of community organizations. Most of the professional leaders are newcomers to the community, and some reside outside of Leeds. This move has been viewed positively by many community leaders but has been criticized by others.

While this professional cadre has had a very impressive impact on the vision and development of the services they lead, they have had limited ability to influence community-wide change.

Spiritual Leadership

The rabbis of the synagogues receive deep respect from their congregations in regards to spiritual matters. Many of them are involved in efforts to develop creative new programs and adapt services to be more relevant to community members' needs. The spiritual leadership does not have a major impact on community issues and decisions outside of the religious sphere.

The Leeds Beit Din has a major influence on all matters regarding *kashrut* and personal and communal religious matters.

Lay Leadership: The Next Generation

The issue of recruitment and development of the future lay leadership of the community is seen by many of the current leadership as one of the community's most crucial challenges. The demographic changes in the community have resulted in a much smaller cadre of potential leaders. Many of those in the relevant age group are less involved in community activities and/or are not prepared to take on a role which demands a large investment of time.

Some believe that newcomers to the community may be a potential source of future lay leadership; however, it will take the time to cultivate them for these roles.

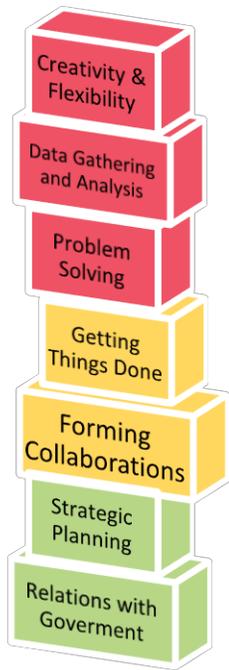
Leadership Training

There is limited professional training available for lay and professional community leaders. A forum has been created for the professional cadre, but many feel that it only partly answers the needs of the group. The expertise of lay leaders is based on experiences gained in their professional lives – which is important – but does not always prepare them for the unique characteristics of operating in a faith-based community.

There is a leadership training program for future leaders. Members of the community raised the importance of strengthening and upgrading this program by recruiting a larger and more diverse cadre of potential leaders and developing more innovative content and training methods.

In the past, leadership programs for older teenagers and young adults were conducted, but have not been conducted recently.

4.3 Organizational Competence



Overview

The community is comprised of many independent organizations (synagogues, educational, welfare) with a weaker lay/professional central body which is mostly funded by its affiliated organizations.

In recent years, the central body has been strengthened by the creation of several new professional roles (e.g. development, programming, media) with the support of the synagogues.

Each independent organization has an individual agenda and work plan. The central body has a limited role and limited legitimacy in promoting a comprehensive, community-wide organizational plan.

Strategic Planning

The community conducted a strategic plan 10 years ago. This plan was formulated by a steering committee of young leaders, under the leadership of the LJRC and with the professional guidance of the JDC – Leatid program. The community created the position of a director of development to assist in its implementation.

There is a widespread feeling that the strategic plan helped the community focus on critical issues and acted as a compass for promoting community development. However, today many feel that the plan has run its course and that it is time to update it for the next 10 years. There is a need to define a vision, goals, and priorities that take into consideration the accomplishments, changes, and projected trends in the community.

Scenario Planning

No community-wide scenario planning has been conducted, although some organizations have undertaken such planning. Community representatives suggest that this must be done as a component of the strategic plan in face of the challenges to the community's sustainability.

Coordination

While the community is relatively small, it is blessed with many organizations. This leads to the important role of coordination between the different players in the field. This is especially important in a community where the individual organizations are relatively strong and the central body is relatively weak in financial and human resources.

Today, there are several mechanisms that promote inter-community coordination, such as LJRC meetings (especially the executive body), the forum of professional leaders, and monthly meetings of the presidents of the Orthodox synagogues. Many point to the central role of the community development director in promoting coordination. Additionally, organizations with similar agendas hold periodic meetings, and ad hoc committees are formed when necessary.

Many have mentioned an improvement in coordination between community organizations during the past 5 years, and point to the major success of community-wide activities such as Shabbat UK and Mitzvah Day.

However, many community representatives speak of the need to significantly improve the coordination between the different organizations. They state that while in the past, coordination was “nice to have,” today it has become crucial for the community’s sustainability.

Strengthening coordination will allow the community to pool resources more efficiently, open services to all community members, and overcome the “law of small numbers.” This will enable the community to offer a wide array of activities and platforms, where each organization can take the lead in its area of expertise.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Each community organizations has its own organizational database – some more updated than others. Privacy laws forbid these organizations from passing information to the central body.

A community portrait was conducted by the JPR in 2003, and a limited survey and focus groups were carried out by the strategic planning steering committee in 2005. Additionally, the 2011 UK census report provides some data.

The need to conduct a professional study and survey to update the community profile was raised by many. This will assist in reaching strategic decisions based on current data, as well as provide feedback regarding the perceptions and needs of community members - especially those who are less involved or unaffiliated.

Getting Things Done

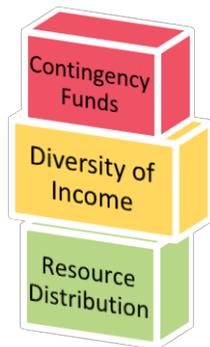
Community-wide interventions demand a long and tedious process of consensus forming and coalition-building between organizations. Many speak of the difficulty in implementing necessary changes in light of the community’s conservative character. The lay and professional leadership is devoted but is limited in its abilities (in time and resources) to lead multiple programs in parallel.

Relations with Local Government

The community has a robust connection with the local government, local emergency agencies, and other local communities. Plans are being developed with relevant government and business sectors to promote cooperation.

The issue is a high priority to the LJRC and to the president of the board, who invests time and effort in furthering this agenda.

4.4 Economic Sufficiency



The community narrative is one of a community founded by working-class Jews who worked hard to support themselves. Over time they learned that they must organize to secure their own financial well-being, as well as to care for the most vulnerable members of the community. Based on this understanding, they founded institutions such as the Welfare Board and other philanthropic organizations. On this basis, a cooperative, the Welfare Board, and other philanthropic organizations were formed.

Over the years, the economic situation of many community members has improved, and the community overall has become much more affluent.

Through membership fees and donations from a growing and devoted philanthropic cadre of Jewish community leaders, the community has become self-sustainable and developed an impressive infrastructure – synagogues, an educational campus, community centers, welfare, building association - and a wide variety of activities for members.

Today, due to demographic changes – notably the departure of young adults, young families, and some of the more financially secure members - and the increasing needs of an aging community, there is growing apprehension about the community's continued ability to provide the same level of quality and diverse services.

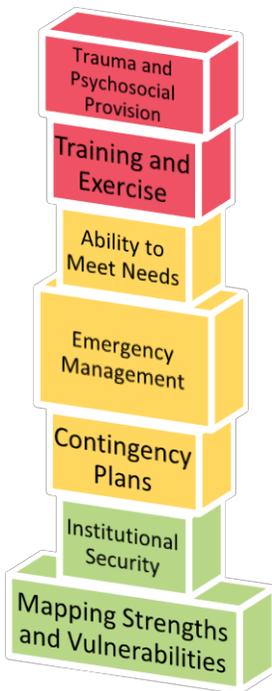
Dwindling memberships at some of the synagogues has led to economic deficits and difficulty in carrying out necessary maintenance and has contributed to discussions of possible future synagogue mergers. Community organizations have reached fundraising agreements to limit pressure on potential donors.

While there is a feeling that there are funds available for critical community programs, many see a need to begin a strategic planning process to map how to build a sustainable community in face of demographic changes.

These voices point to a growing need to:

- Determine priorities for community funding
- Determine levels of service
- Discuss ways to improve financial efficiency through the pooling of resources by community organizations
- Improve fundraising from government and civil society organizations
- Expand activities that might contribute to attracting new community members
- Develop contingencies for a time when the community will not be able to provide all of the services that it provides today

4.5 Security and Emergency Preparedness



Overall, the community does not feel that there is a high-level security risk in the area.

As in other UK Jewish communities, CST has taken the lead in working with the community in all matters of security and preparedness for crisis situations. The organization has a professional representative in the north of England who provides close assistance.

There are long established security systems in place to protect key community infrastructure. There are security guards at the most sensitive and heavy utilized institution, e.g. the community center and educational campus. There is a volunteer group of the CST – numbering over 30 members - which assists in providing ongoing surveillance all year and especially during holidays and public events.

There seems to be a positive balance between meeting security needs and allowing community activities to continue unhindered.

As required by law, the Welfare Board has developed and exercised a business continuity program and emergency management plan for its assisted living residences; some other institutes also have basic plans.

Some institution representatives express the need to upgrade institutional preparedness and emergency response plans, especially on the community-wide level, as well as of the need to develop an all hazard response plan.~

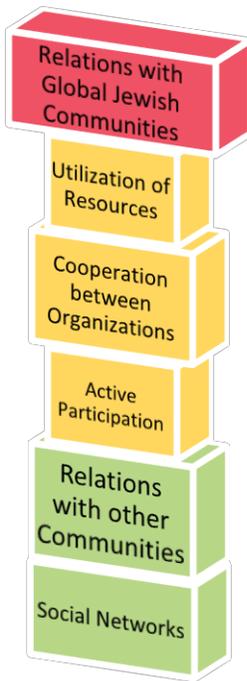
The community and its main institutions have excellent relations with local emergency forces, and the community invests in strengthening these relations. Community representatives sit on city-wide security forums.

During the last year, CST and community leadership started to recruit a community emergency management team, based on the template developed and utilized by other UK Jewish communities. The program is in the initial stages - recruiting members, planning basic training modules, and developing community emergency plans. The team will be led by the Leeds Jewish Rep Council together with the CEO of the welfare board, Housing association, main shuls and supported by volunteers.

A joint drill with representatives of all the major emergency responder agencies was conducted in October 2016 (after the mapping process). This will serve as a model to identify strengths and gaps in the community's disaster response and will provide the base for a working plan to strengthen the community's emergency preparedness.

While there are plans to provide for the psycho-social needs of the Welfare Board's ongoing clients during a crisis, there are no detailed plans for providing for the psycho-social needs of the wider community. There has been less emphasis on developing expertise in the field of psycho-trauma treatment in crisis situations. However, the Welfare Board's strong professional infrastructure could be utilized to offer these services.

4.6 Social Capital



Social Networks

There are more than 50 organizations of different sizes and levels of activity in the community. Each of these organizations can be considered a social network. They provide services and/or activities in fields such as religion, social and leisure, cultural, educational, political, historical, youth, and Israel.

The two main community hubs are the synagogues and the educational campus.

Synagogues

Leeds is home to eight synagogues. Synagogues have always been considered a central social hub of Jewish life in the city - "if there are no synagogues, there is no community." In these times of dwindling attendance at religious services, there is a need to strengthen these social networks.

The coordination between the synagogues has improved over the years, but many points to the need to further improve this crucial network. A strong and dedicated central hub that can facilitate connections between the separate networks that exist in each of the synagogues is notably absent.

The Chabad movement is an additional social network operating in the community. They mainly target Israeli newcomers, young families, and students (there is a branch of Chabad on campus). While they are not under the umbrella of community organizations, relations with the community are good.

The School Campus

The community runs a nursery, a primary school, and a newly established high school. The campus provides services to over 350 children and their families. The campus fills a major role in developing social networks between children, youth, and families.

Until the recent establishment of the high school, the social networks of many of the children were disrupted after primary school, with children developing new networks in their new schools. There is hope that the new school will have a crucial long-term impact on the community's social capital.

Some community representatives feel that the full potential of the schools' social capital is not utilized and that there is a need to promote organizational and educational activities to strengthen the connection between the school and other social networks.

MAZCC: Community Center

The community operates a community center which provides a variety of fitness, social and educational activities for a wide range of age groups (elderly, families, adults and children).

There is a small Orthodox synagogue on campus and the masorti community also holds meetings in the center.

MAZCC runs a kosher café and restaurant which is an informal community meeting place.

Volunteerism

There are approximately 800 active volunteers performing roles in the community (the number might be slightly less as there are people fulfilling a number of different volunteer roles). Volunteers primarily aid in the fields of welfare (including the community center, with over 200 volunteers), education, and security. In addition, each of the individual organizations in the community has its own cadre of volunteers.

Here again arise the questions of coordination, pooling of resources, and elimination of duplication of services. The Welfare Board has recently taken the role of inter-organizational volunteer coordination; it remains to be seen what impact this will have.

While many members of the community take part in voluntary activities, there is often a challenge in recognizing these efforts and utilizing volunteers in a way to strengthen their ongoing involvement.

Community representatives expressed the feeling that there is a relatively small group of “hardcore” volunteers, mainly from families with a long tradition of volunteering and/or middle-aged women. They are deeply involved, but many more members could and should take more meaningful volunteer roles.

The schools have obligatory volunteering programs. There is a feeling that these programs should be strengthened to provide more meaningful roles and to promote a culture of long-term volunteering.

Target Groups: The Community’s Future Social Capital

Children and Youth

The Zone was established following an extended period during which there was a lack of activities for young people – a vacuum that is felt until today. The Zone’s mandate is to “inspire and empower young people to learn and develop within an atmosphere of Jewish culture.”

The Zone provides services targeted to children and youth and is working to develop and expand creative and exciting programming. It is also reaching out to unaffiliated members of the community.

The Zone is seen by many as a high-quality response to this important age group, while others raise doubts regarding the ability of any single organization to provide quality solutions to so many different age groups under one roof.

Additionally, the three Orthodox synagogues have formed a joint youth movement - LJOY - and there are several other active youth movements in the community.

Today there is no fully functioning young leadership program.

Young Adults

Young adults are seen by the community as a crucial age group that will ensure the community's future. Today, most 18 year-olds leave Leeds for higher education opportunities and do not return. Most of those who remain in the area are typically not connected to the community through synagogues, as this is seen as a family activity.

The community has tried to establish a wide range of social and cultural activities and events to engage young adults but has met with limited success. This is a unique challenge, as it is a small and dynamic group, that is busy with many other activities and lack a physical space in which to connect.

Community representatives speak of the necessity to learn more about the needs and motivations of this age group, to study innovative programming from other communities, and possibly to supply a platform and the resources needed to develop a young adult social network through young adult volunteers.

University Students

Over 1,300 Jewish students study at Leeds University, and the community has often considered this group as a potential source that could strengthen the community's social capital.

There are several obstacles to overcome in order to attract students, including students' lack of motivation and awareness, the distance of the campus from the community, and the rich Jewish programming that already exists on the campus itself.

Efforts have been made to connect students to the community. These activities include the 'medic network,' job fairs, and lectures. Students are also involved in several of the larger community events.

These efforts have not led to impressive results. However, there is a growing understanding that students can indeed be a viable source for the future. Success on this front requires a long-term investment of time and effort, including an ongoing presence on campus, providing information to students, offering incentives for involvement, and building a visible core of young adults in the community.

Future Leadership: The 30 – 45 Age Group

A significant issue is the recruitment and development of a core of skilled and devoted volunteers aged 30-45 who will choose to become the community's future leaders.

However, changing community demographics and lifestyles have made it difficult to identify and develop a cadre of potential leaders from this age group. To make real progress, it is necessary to define a strategy and develop innovative programming targeting them.

Interestingly, many point to the vacuum that existed for over a decade in the field of youth activities and leadership programming as one of the main causes of these gaps in potential.

Welcoming New Members to the Community

The community is actively trying to attract new members from other countries and around the UK. New members are recruited through social media, newspaper articles, and word of mouth.

In the last five years, over 40 new families have joined the community.

The community development director takes a lead in this effort, and together with volunteers provides information, support, and services to help with the initial absorption of new families.

Relations with Other Local Communities

Over the years, interfaith activities have been led by various synagogues and community organizations. Activities include inviting schools to visit synagogues, joint forums, collaborative activities in community-wide events like mitzvah day, and in community involvement in city-wide projects. Activities in this field were often based on the personal interest of community members and or opportunities that arose.

To coordinate these efforts, the LJRC created the Leeds Jewish Interfaith Network run by a dedicated director who leads the community-wide interfaith activities.

There is need to further develop the strategic policy and programing in this field in order to realize the potential these activities have for strengthening the social capital of the community.

Connection to Other Jewish Communities in England and the World

The community has strong relations with community leaderships and organizations in London, Manchester, and the surrounding area especially in regards to joint advocacy, religious and educational matters.

There is going to be a first Rep Council meeting with Manchester, York, Birmingham, Liverpool and Glasgow in December. Strong formal and informal connections exist with the Jewish community in London,

The community has no formal relations with Jewish communities outside of the UK.