



Led by Federation CJA



The Spark: Montreal Fellowship to Ignite Innovation

Mini Impact Report June 2022

Generously funded by the Passport to Jewish Life Funders:

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INTRODUCTION

Federation CJA's Passport to Jewish Life engaged 28 participants within six institutional teams from across our community to benefit from Clal's signature innovation training program. These teams came together to learn with and from one another, and embarked on a journey to gain the tools to listen deeply, design differently, and engage meaningfully with diverse members from our interfaith community. Change does not occur on its own. Without the people, organizations, and community members who believe in the mission to support diverse opportunities for Jewish engagement and Jewish life, we cannot build a Montreal Jewish community that aspires to embrace a culture of inclusivity and belonging. Tonight, we take this moment in time to applaud the accomplishments of this group to date. Through Spark: Montreal, we believe the ripples of change are only just beginning — for all of us to benefit from.



Carly Goodman
Senior Manager, Community Belonging and Disability Inclusion,
Federation CJA on behalf of Federation CJA

Over the last six months, Federation CJA and the Montreal Jewish community have taken a bold step in creating more relevant, user-centric, and high-quality Jewish opportunities. Six institutions and their dedicated professionals and lay leaders have been learning, interviewing, discussing, and designing in order to better serve interfaith couples, families, and individuals. Tonight at the Spark: Montreal Symposium, we celebrate their achievements and look forward to their next chapters. It has been my honour to guide our Spark: Montreal participants through this process, and I know the work they have begun will continue to reverberate in the Montreal Jewish community for years to come.



Rabbi Julia Appel
Director of Innovation Training and Curriculum,
Clal - The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

A groundbreaking approach to reimagine how Jewish institutions in Montreal can better serve interfaith couples, families, and individuals.

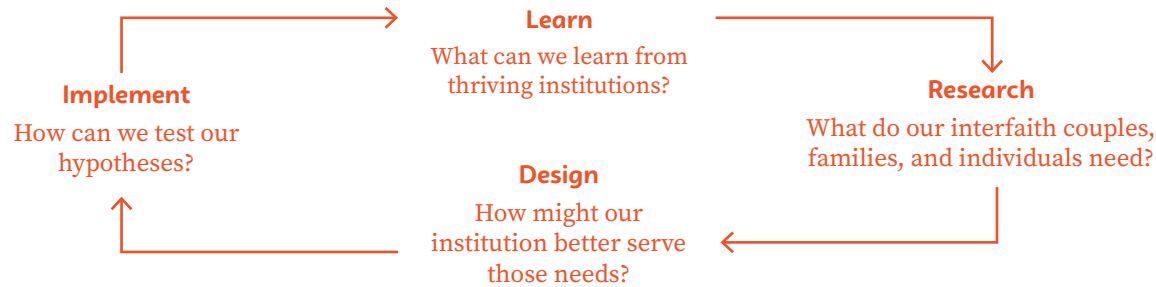


Who

Led by Federation CJA, in partnership with Clal, generously funded by the Passport to Jewish Life funders, Spark: Montreal engaged six teams of four to six professionals and lay leaders representing two synagogues and four communal institutions.

What

A 6-month training fellowship that teaches user-centered design as an approach through which to realign institutional offerings with unmet constituent needs and interests, specifically among interfaith couples, families, and individuals.



When

January to June of 2022, with continued support for implementation through December 2022

Where

Virtual team workshops, regular team meetings, one-on-one team leader coaching sessions, assigned readings and exercises, and concluding in-person symposium.

Participant demographics

- 29% synagogue, 71% communal
- 65% professionals, 35% lay
- 42% under 40
- 48% no prior experience with prototype development
- 43% no prior experience with designing for belonging and change
- 38% no prior experience in launching pilot programs
- 29% no prior experience in research about interfaith families, couples, and individuals

Participating Institutions



Congregation Dorshei Emet

Team leader: Rabbi Boris Dolin
Team members: Oria Lissak,
Eric Shostak, Marie-Christine Thank



The Jewish Public Library

Team leader: Barbara Whiston
Team members: Erica Fagen, Melanie LaGassé Valle,
Janna Milmine, Kimberly Tepperman



Congregation Shaar Hashomayim

Team leader: Robyn Bennett
Team members: Rachel Feldman,
Jessica Neat, Netta Rotstein



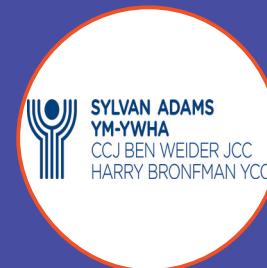
The Museum of Jewish Montreal

Team leader: Anya Kowalchuk
Team members: Sarah Deshaies, Carly Gatt,
Jared Roboz, Mike Szilagyi



Federation CJA

Team leader: Judy Kremer
Team members: Pascale Greenfield,
Jaclyn Hoffman, Miri Rozenek,
Jodi Toledano, Laetitia Weiss



The Sylvan Adams YM-YWHA

Team leader: Keren Ludvig
Team members: Lara Goldenberg, Marni Schlomowitz,
Benjamin Toropov

ABOUT

In 2020, Federation CJA commissioned a report by Rosov Consulting, “Learning about the Montreal Jewish Community in 2020: A Focus on Interfaith Families.” Responding to this report and ongoing conversations and strategic planning with local clergy, professionals, and stakeholders in Passport to Jewish Life, Federation CJA engaged Clal to create the Spark: Montreal Fellowship to Ignite Innovation. The Fellowship’s primary purpose is to enable participants to better support and engage Montreal’s interfaith couples, families, and individuals by listening for, interpreting, and ultimately responding to their challenges, needs, and interests.

Spark: Montreal’s Goals

- Increase participating teams’ capacity to better serve and engage interfaith couples, families, and individuals by developing innovative, user-centered initiatives.
- Inspire institutions to deepen their commitment to ongoing learning, experimentation, innovation, and change.
- Teach professionals and lay leaders how to assess the real-world needs experienced by their constituents and apply design-thinking principles in practice.
- Build new connections and networks among participants, as well as within and across organizations.

"This has been a great experience and has made me proud to be part of the Montreal Jewish community!"

"I feel like there is no problem too big to tackle; that with creativity, teamwork, and expansive thought you can try and do anything. This is a big shift for me."

"I am excited to be in this community of learners, all of whom yearn to open welcoming doors"

"As an interfaith person, I feel a mixture of relief and happiness to see this inclusion work happening."

BY THE NUMBERS

6 INSTITUTIONAL TEAMS

28 PARTICIPANTS

118

Total interviews conducted with inter-faith couples, families and individuals

420

Total participant hours learning in workshops with Clal

672

Total participant hours collaborating in team meetings

30

Total hours in one-on-one coaching

IMPACT

This kind of experiential learning has an impact on individual participants, on their institutions, and on the community as a whole.

At this point in the process, we won't know all the ways that Spark: Montreal will contribute to communal change over time. However, what is clear is that the fellowship had important impacts on the 28 participants and brought the over 100 constituents they interviewed to the forefront of the communal conversation.

Impact #1: Confidence in better engaging and serving interfaith couples, families, and individuals.

"The idea of an inclusion statement had a big impact on me: being overt about acceptance of everyone and not making assumptions about what people know about us."

"I learned to be more informative to interfaith couples in the community – to be more sensitive to their needs and more aware and connected to the sources that can answer their needs."

"The people I reached out to for interviews were touched that they were even asked to participate. It made them feel included and respected within the wider Jewish community. The feeling of belonging for my interviewees made me feel that I was making a difference."

"I used to feel that people who had intermarried were by definition uninterested in their Jewish side. I now realize that there is so much more nuance!"

82% are more confident in their ability to teach their colleagues about interfaith inclusion.

82% felt Spark: Montreal was successful or very successful in training community professionals and volunteers to assess the needs of their interfaith constituents through interviews.

82% felt Spark: Montreal was successful or very successful in enabling participants to learn about the needs, challenges, and lived experiences of interfaith couples, families, and individuals and transform.

73% are more confident in their ability to serve the needs of interfaith couples, families, and individuals.

IMPACT

Impact #2: New methods for innovation and change-making

"I feel inspired from what we've learned. I plan to bring more intentionality to program design and discussion, and to do my best to encourage innovation and to stay away from relying on "how it's always been done."

"It was a safe zone to take risks."

"I learned a lot about thinking of users' experiences, and thinking more holistically about what it means to gather purposefully. These are skills I will definitely use in my work and life."

82% are more confident in their ability to assess the needs of individuals in the Montreal Jewish community.

82% are more confident in their ability to create a new innovation within their institution

Impact #3: New relationships with colleagues across the Montreal Jewish community.

"Having weekly team meetings and objectives helped us form a tight bond, and we worked well together."

"I've appreciated being able to have very engaging conversations about topics I would not have previously discussed or would not have had someone else to discuss them with in a meaningful way."

"In my professional and volunteer life, I only worked with people in the same organization or institution. I enjoyed the sessions with members of different organizations in Montreal, because I got to listen to and learn their perspectives and challenges."

91% felt Spark: Montreal was successful or very successful in helping participants build new connections among diverse participants, both within and across organizations.

Impact #4: Building new leadership and professional skills.

"I loved the opportunity to lead a team and put my own "touch" on every team meeting. At first it took me out of my comfort zone, but over time challenged me to think about how to engage my learners and motivate them throughout the process. Thank you for this unique opportunity!"

"The program has undeniably bolstered my leadership skills, particularly in taking responsibility for my team, communicating deadlines and tasks to them, managing their work and building relationships through collaborative work."

68% are more confident in their ability to inspire their colleagues

WHAT'S NEXT

As teams move into the final implementation phase of the Spark: Montreal Fellowship, they will be able to apply their learnings and bring designed prototypes to life with the support of special research and development micro-grant funding accessible to all teams. The prototype journey continues until December 2022, which allows for further refinement, testing, and community-based inclusion innovation in the months ahead.



