**JAFI Educators' Community**

**Goals:**

* Formulation and assimilation of a unified educational language throughout the organization.
* Design and implementation of educational vision, principles, and pedagogical standards.
* Construction of a broad platform connecting content creators, educators, and administrators throughout JAFI, in order to:
  + Learn together, support one another, and inspire one another;
  + Advance and cultivate strategic cross-organizational collaborations;
  + Encourage excellence, creativity, and innovation in the field of education;
  + Develop tools and skills for the building and implementation of educational strategy.

**Agenda:**

1. We will assemble a representative group of 24 leading educators active in JAFI's educational initiatives on the ground.
2. **STAGE 1:** We will hold a 2- to 3-day residential seminar in October-November 2021. After the seminar, we will continue processes and independent work in smaller groups of 2 to 3 participants within the community (the first circle).
3. **STAGE 2:** We will hold a regular series of meetings for the community, once every 3 weeks on average for 4 hours each week, in order to continue the guidance and development of the educators' community and achieve strategic goals. Between the meetings, participants will work independently, in pairs, or in groups of 3 to accomplish tasks and develop educational and pedagogical materials. In order to bring these processes to a close and integrate learning with implementation, we plan to hold an additional residential seminar.
4. **STAGE 3:** We will build, lead, and guide a process of implementing and expanding the community's circles, along with completing a curriculum and various content clusters as well as other educational responses on the ground. The community will convene for a third and final residential seminar at the end of its first year of activity, after which it will continue to hold regular meetings for continued learning, mutual support, and the reinforcement of guidance and monitoring processes.

**Rationale:**

JAFI's work boasts a wide and diverse range of educational initiatives and depends on the creation of unique content in almost every area of its operations. The division between its three areas of influence – Aliyah and absorption, connection, and Israeli society – allows for greater professionalization and customized, focused responses, and relies on increasing decentralization of educational authority and on independence among educators on the ground.

As a result, the connection between JAFI's various programs is not always clear, nor is the educational continuum between them. The curriculum and content units operate independently and at a disconnect from one another, as do the educators who run them. Different educators have different views of their role, aims, and visions, and – consequently – different educational methods and practices.

In addition to this division of labor, our work is characterized by a plurality of geographical areas. Each location has internal differences that require understanding, sensitivity, and customization of content and education to its own unique needs – whether the needs of its communal institutions, its partners and donors, or its customers/participants. This, of course, is in addition to the wide range of generations and ages that take part in JAFI's activities in Israel and in the global Jewish world.

This has led to an abundance of programs around the world that encourage Aliyah, as well as various institutional frameworks for the absorption of olim in Israel; many diverse initiatives to strengthen connection to the Jewish people in Israel and in the rest of the Jewish world; and, of course, educational work within Israeli society.

Alongside creating the strategic and structural change comes an organizational need to establish a shared language, shared principles, and shared educational standards that will allow JAFI to fulfill its vision and its strategic agenda.

The far-reaching changes in our various spheres of activity, and especially in the field of education, alongside the dynamic reality in Israel and in Jewish communities around the world, have brought a flood of educational, methodical, and pedagogical needs, constraints, and challenges. In conclusion:

1. JAFI has a wide variety of educational projects that are not necessarily connected or coordinated with one another.
2. JAFI has a number of educational flagship programs that largely enjoy pedagogical independence, and the educators who lead these programs have different visions and methods of working.
3. JAFI's educational work is extremely different in different geographical areas.
4. North American Jewry is deeply divided in its relationship with Israel, with a growing number of teenagers and young people distanced from Israel.

**Theoretical Basis:**

The above represents a rare educational opportunity to wrestle anew with the big questions with which JAFI has engaged almost from its inception, and to put JAFI's resources and strengths in the field to use.

In fact, this is the goal of the Educators' Community: to guarantee that every participant in a JAFI program will have the opportunity to wrestle with the three big, burning questions: identity, a sense of belonging to the Jewish people that is both active and educated; and a connection to Israel.