Yesod Peer Visits Guidelines

Introduction - What is a Peer Visit?
Visiting a similar organization in another community and possibly country, to learn from their best practices and experiences and develop networks for collaboration. Applicants may know where and who to visit at the time of their application or may request help from Yesod to identify a relevant partner. For example, a JCC Director or Department Director may plan to visit a JCC in another European country of comparable Jewish community size, to learn about their intergenerational programming and outreach.

You can either visit another organization as an individual or with a group of people from your organization.

Who might go on a Peer Visit?
Possible profiles for peer visits:

1. A Jewish community professional working for a JCC wanting to visit another JCC to gain inspiration, learn from their experiences, best practices around topics of programming, organization etc. Especially for professionals working in younger organizations, with less experience or smaller infrastructures etc.
2. A (senior) Jewish community professional in an organization (for example, senior management etc.) looking to meet and visit with a peer in an equivalent position with a different organization in order to exchange best practices, see where common interests or similar challenges lie, network, and make valuable connections.
3. A Jewish community professional looking to visit an organization similar to their own that is not necessarily a Jewish community, but might be a social welfare organization, a youth movement etc. in order to learn from them and bring back best practices, inspiration etc. to their organization.

What can Yesod help you with?
Yesod can try to help you find a suitable organization or community to visit and make introduction with the relevant people if you do not already have one in mind, but a clear goal and purpose of your visit and what you would like to learn is required for us to get started.

What won't Yesod offer?
Yesod will not help you with logistical questions, such as organization of flights, hotels, other transport. We will also not develop itineraries for you.

Why should you do a Peer Visit?
To get you started and have a clear picture of your peer visit, here are a few questions that we encourage you to think about:

Why? What's the purpose of your visit?

Who? Who do you want to meet and why? What type of professionals, what roles? Do you want to meet someone who does the same kind of work as you or do you want to meet someone in a higher position or who works in a completely different area? What kind of organization do you want to visit? A JCC, a different organization? What's important to you about that organization (e.g. should they be very experienced, more grassroots, a pluralistic Jewish community?)

What? What area, what content types are you hoping to learn about?

For how long? How much time do you want to spend visiting the organization?

Format? Are you interested mostly in one-on-one meetings? Would you like to participate in a certain event like a Friday night dinner or a service? Are you interested in shadowing someone during their workday?

When? Think about a suitable time for you to visit (that of course needs to be in accordance with your hosting organization). Does it make sense for you to go before a special program or an event you're currently planning?

Size – are you interested in visiting a smaller or a larger community or organization?

Why should an organization or community host a Peer Visit?

Here are some points about how a peer visit can be a rewarding experience also for the hosting organization:

- Hosting people from another organization or community is an opportunity to connect with peers and foster personal connections for future collaboration. It's also a great chance to network!
- Receiving a visitor will make you look at your organization / community through a different lens and may help you realize things you have taken for granted, not been aware of or had not thought of before
- A peer visit can be a good opportunity to reflect on your organization, think of its strengths, resources and structure. Equally, you can also use it to think of current challenges and discuss these with someone who has an outside perspective.
- It's a good opportunity to give back. It can feel good to pay it forward and help someone out who is looking to learn
- In every encounter lies a possibility of learning something new, being challenged in your views or gaining a new friend!

Getting you started: Things to keep in mind when planning a Peer Visit

When organizing a peer visit it's important that both organizations know what they are responsible for. We've put together a list to help your peer visit go as smoothly as possible. The list of responsibilities is a good place to start and can be adapted depending on your needs.

We suggest you share this guide with the host organization when you are planning your peer visit so that it is a successful experience for everyone.

Visiting organization

- Think about the purpose of your visit. What is the goal for your visit? What would you like to achieve?
- What would be the best possible outcome of your peer visit?
- What area and contents would you like to focus on in your visit? Are you interested in strategy or more concrete programming questions?
- Do you have a concrete project you can bring with you and use as an example to work with?
- Make clear to your host what specifically you're interested in and plan out an agenda for your visit together accordingly.
- Who do you want to meet with? What positions / roles are you most interested in?
- Determine who will participate in the visit. People should agree to participate in the team only if they have a genuine desire to both offer and receive new ideas and to report back to others.
- Notify the hosting organization (with enough advance notice) of the names, arrival dates/times and other relevant information about arriving participants
- Review the materials sent by the hosting organization (if applicable).
- Prepare to present/discuss your own organization and programs, as well as your successes and current challenges.
- When you return home, share relevant information, approaches, skills, recommendations and ideas with those who did not participate.
- And don't forget to share with Yesod how it went, what you learned and how we can improve your support in this matter

Host organization

- Establish availability and identify tentative dates for the visit. If possible, the visit should happen at a time when the visitors can observe your activities taking place, if that's what they're interested in.
- Determine who will participate in receiving your guests. Designate who will be responsible for taking them around and being their contact person during the stay.
- Visitors will probably need some help with logistical arrangements, e.g. local transport, kosher meals, recommendations for hotels etc. Think about how you can help them out.
- Inform key staff, volunteers, and community leaders of the upcoming visit as you see necessary. Other members of your staff and / or community might also be interested in meeting with your visitors, even if they initially hadn't come to mind.
- Introduce the visitors to community leaders or other staff / members as appropriate and if you think that they might be interesting for your visitors to meet.
- Prepare and share an agenda for the visit together with your visitors. Consider including discussions with staff, volunteers, participants and community leaders. Don't forget to estimate and include travel times and distances between locations. Also consider including a wrap-up or closing activity.
- Prepare any other program materials and share key documents and background information about your organization with the visitors prior to their coming if it's relevant to their visit.
- Try to identify strengths, unique points, best practices from your organization that you think might be helpful to the visitors.