

Determining Congregational Priorities

by Philip Katz

Draft: March 5, 2009

In May 2006, Kahal B'raira created a Strategic Direction, containing 18 initiatives. In January 2009, we went through a review process with the goals of adding new initiatives, if needed, and prioritizing the initiatives.

First, the leadership (our Executive Committee) determined what original initiatives had been completed. Then the leadership developed a few more initiatives and grouped the initiatives into four categories.

A review committee then determined the process for the congregation to finalize the process. The committee assigned a "resource value" to each initiative which represented the relative resources (financial and human) needed to accomplish the initiative. The committee then called for a meeting of the congregation.

At the congregational meeting (of 26 members), the following process was explained and implemented:

1. The initiatives and groups were reviewed.
2. Members were asked to add or remove any initiatives.
3. Members reviewed the groupings and made any necessary changes.
4. The review committee assigned resource values to new initiatives.
5. Members broke up into groups, one for each category.
6. Each group decided which two initiatives in their category were most important and gave a short presentation to the rest of the members
7. All these pairs of initiatives, and their resource values, were posted
8. Each member was given an equal number of dots to place on initiatives, the total number of dots was approximately equal to 1/3 the sum of the resource values posted
9. Members then placed their dots where they wanted (with sufficient time for discussions and negotiations)
10. The initiatives that received as many dots of their resource value were then considered of highest priority; those that reached 50% of their resource value were considered of moderate priority; the rest of low priority; the initiatives that did not "make the cut" were considered of lowest priority.

While this was not a perfect process, it did allow for excellent discussions within the groups and among all the members. Most members believed the process and outcome reflected the philosophy and thinking of the whole.