

MATANEL FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Amutat Kaima, Year: Academic Year 2016-2017

Please present your activity report (as WORD document) not to exceed 2 or 3 pages

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Function of the report's writer: Founding Director	

Program status at date of report (not to exceed 10 lines):

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a self-directed approach to problem solving and new skill acquisition based on the assumption that when the individual is directly involved in identifying problems, he/she is more invested in determining solutions. With the help of the Matanel Foundation, Kaima's PBL Workshop is allowing us to realize the benefits of this effective teaching tool and other enrichment activities for our young participants (15-18) by stimulating their once dormant sense of curiosity, and helping them create tangible results of which they can be proud. The Workshop incorporates two curriculum elements: 1) one-on-one PBL project work led by an experienced craftsman; and 2) externally facilitated certificate-granting vocational courses. Regarding the former, under the mentorship of our PBL Workshop Manager, Michael Mizrachi, a talented photographer and Bezalel trained work master craftsman and instructor, Kaima youth learn how to research needs which interest them, outline an action plan, present their ideas to a committee, report on their progress, and deliver a product/solution, modeling real-world professional settings and encouraging positive relationships with adults. Regarding the latter, our youth take part in trade/vocational certificate-granting programs approved by and partially supported by Israel's National Insurance Institute.

Review of main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.:

1. Main Achievements:

1.1 Human resource and physical development: Kaima now has at its disposal a well-equipped, sophisticated onsite workshop that serves as the physical home for all PBL activities and apprenticeships. We were fortunate that Michael Mizrachi (referenced above), a former Kaima board member, was sufficiently motivated by our work with youth to leave his previous employment; donate his equipment; pass on his knowledge of and passion for repurposing used items and integrating them into useful objects; and assume full-time work with our youth who greatly admire him. The workshop is now physically incorporated into the Kaima multi-purpose warehouse, packing station, and administrative offices in a donated structure.

1.2 Examples of student-initiated projects for their own use:

- A round table built from recycled wood for a teen's bedroom built by a boy – see photo
- A book cabinet for a teen's bedroom built by a girl – see photo.

1.3 Examples of student-assisted farm repairs/construction projects:

- A tomato drying rack which allows the farm to reduce waste of summer surplus tomatoes when many customers were on vacation and add to our product selection. – see photo.
- A lunch table for our off-site hydroponic farm participants.
- A bench for the farm made from recycled wood
- A cabinet for the farm's office made from recycled wood

2. Number of participants:

During the 2016-2017 academic year, a total of 22 youth took part in PBL and vocational training programming.

3. Number of events/activities:

3.1 On-site: PBL activities took place three days per week, with a one-week break for Pesach and another for Sukkot.

3.2 Off-site:

- **Vocational courses:** Kaima youth participated in external courses of their choice, selected as part of our workforce entry workshop referenced below. The courses enabled our youth to explore potential vocational interests and build new skills. Courses included wood crafting and welding; professional tractor driving; computer science; air brush design; and more.
- **Educational tours/activities/workshops:** Participants toured the pottery and glass departments of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Israel's national school of art, granting diploma certification as well as BA and MA degrees. For some, this was the first exposure to an institute of higher learning.
- **Workshop on entering the labor force:** Organized by an external facilitator and two Kaima professionals, we offered a ten-meeting workforce entry preparatory course. The workshop focused on self-esteem, decision-making, and assuming responsibility. We also helped identify potential occupational orientation and found a course for each participant, referenced previously in this report. Bituach Leumi provided partial funding of the workshop and courses.

Evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons to prior year, conclusions for future):

1. **Methodology:** Evaluation data are culled from participant feedback; staff and psychological evaluation; and observations from parents. Presently, we are interested in assessing the participant's:
 - 1.1 Satisfaction and attitudinal/ behavioral changes
 - 1.2 Ability to develop problem solving capacities, follow a plan, and meet expectations of one's self and others
 - 1.3 Readiness to assume new challenges beyond basic requirements
2. **The project has proven effective in allowing us to:**
 - 2.1 Teach new hard and soft employment skills, easily transferrable to other areas of life, to Kaima youth based on challenges which interest them.
 - 2.2 Further develop the young person's critical thinking and the process of skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating an idea and achieving a practical goal.
 - 2.3 Address "failures" as "opportunities" and part of the learning process.
 - 2.4 Encourage positive relationships with adults through close interaction with Kaima professional mentors and by facilitating external internships to interested youth, and certification courses recognized by Israel's authorities.
 - 2.5 Provide meaningful activities to ensure that our youth stay off the streets and engaged in positive endeavor.
3. **Results/Comparison:** The vast majority of Kaima workers remain part of the Kaima community - even when they advance to other educational or vocational programs - to either formally on a part-time basis or as volunteers. Approximately 80% of Kaima participants return) either a traditional classroom or night school; or enter rehab for the first time, results attained within six months on average. With nearly five years under our belt, we are now seeing deeper results. Youth are taking more responsibility and are moving into higher management positions on the farm and in the PBL Workshop. Please note that Kaima has recently initiated an externally facilitated evaluation process and will be in a better position to measure the results of our Workshop and other Kaima initiatives upon its completion.

Lessons learned:

Here we relate to lessons learned by our educators regarding the meaning of the program for the young person. Michael, the PBL Director, remarks that: *"The process I go through with the teen is a true collaboration...it enables us to work together as a team which is very different than the teacher/student construct and central to the Kaima ethos."*

One of the most important dynamics of the PBL lab is that the young person's lab partners provide real time feedback, thus reflecting the workplace development process. In all cases we see that the young person benefits by the disciplined process of planning and the important lessons learned with trial and error that are important in realizing his/her vision.

Such is the case regardless of the end-user. A teen may choose to undertake a project where he/she is the end-user. For example, K just moved to a new apartment with his mother and needed bedroom furnishings which he decided to build on his own though he had little to no experience in wood work. He approached the challenge by considering his needs, researching the right processes, developing plans, and working with Michael. Once the project is completed Michael with join K in his new home and assemble the furniture, also part of the bonding and PBL process. So far the experience has been a great source of pride for K. Much is the same case when a teen chooses to undertake a PBL project connected to the farm. In this instance, he/she develops and delivers a solution to an agricultural or structural problem with the community becoming the end user and the teen understanding the lasting value of his/her efforts.

Provisional guidelines for program advancement in the next year:

- 1. Further adapt Kaima's PBL model:** As noted, Kaima's PBL activities now form an integral part of our alternative educational curriculum and a complement to our primary educational tool of farm work. The PBL process does not focus exclusively on problem solving with the goal at arriving at a singular solution, but it allows for the development of other skills, including critical thinking and enhanced group collaboration and communication. Thus, one year into the official launch of the project, we are now considering utilizing the workshop framework to explore both individualized programming, as is currently the case, as well as group programming. For example, in the coming year, we may consider utilizing the PBL framework to engage our youth to undertake more team projects, particularly those that benefit the farm. Two planned projects include building a mobile sales cart for selling vegetables in pop-up locations and an on-site music lab for participant use.
- 2. Codify Kaima's PBL model:** Traditionally, PBL concepts have been applied to conventional classroom learning. We would like to write up our program to help others learn from our adaptation of the concept.
- 3. Encourage blogging as a way to document projects:** One of our past participants developed a blog post of the different stages of his project. We hope that others will follow his example and document his/her work for uploading onto Kaima's Facebook account and website.
- 4. Use the workshop to develop the "Zero Waste Project":** Kaima is a partner in the Jerusalem Botanical Garden "Hub for Social and Environmental Activism" which seeks, among other things, to teach the public about urban reclamation and renewal. Our association with them also provides an outlet for Kaima youth to practice their nascent leadership skills. With the right funding, we are considering developing the Zero Waste Project with our youth helping to build the curriculum and carry out the initiative which will help teach the public to turn discarded items into useful items and art based on some of the creative techniques and principles employed by the PBL Workshop. We wish to suggest that *"if you understand that nearly everything can be recycled, then you will understand nothing need be wasted."*
- 5. Use the workshop as a testing ground for new farm products.** Also under consideration is the idea of creating functional and artistic items that our youth may choose to market and sell by developing an onsite farm shop.
- 6. Increase the number of educational tours to other labs, workshops and factories and meet other craftsmen/women.**

This marks the first year of support on the part of the Matanel Foundation of our PBL Workshop. Were it not for the Foundation's belief in Kaima's vision, we would not have been able to proceed with this next vital initiative. Our pride in our participants should be a source of joy for the Foundation On behalf of all our beneficiaries we thank the Matanel Foundation for its generosity and readiness to support Kaima financially and with professional guidance.