

MATANEL FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT

Organization: Amutat Kaima, Year: Academic Year 2017-2018

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 1) stimulating their once dormant sense of curiosity, 2) helping them create tangible results of which they can be proud; and 3) cultivating new skills in preparation for workforce entry.

The Workshop incorporates two curriculum elements: 1) one-on-one and group PBL project work led by experienced professionals; 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 woodwork 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, both personal and professional. 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.:

The results of year two of the project have been fantastic with more hours devoted each day to exploration and positive activity which brings about the type of pride and satisfaction that comes with working with one's hands. Our staff is highly adept at channeling the creativity and awakening an entrepreneurial spirit within our young people and has brought an added level of professionalism to our PBL track. Below are some highlights:

1. Main Achievements:

- Examples of student-initiated projects for their own use: A wooden cajón drum (based on designs for box instruments which trace their origins to Peruvian music); a free-standing clothes closet, a wall-mounted coat rack, and more.

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

- Two eco-friendly composting toilets for use in our new visitor center
- A soundproof music room
- A recreational climbing wall constructed with donated materials
- A large wagon for use in our warehouse
- A decorative cart for vegetable display and pop-up sales for use at festivals

1.2 In a new undertaking, to further exercise their entrepreneurial spirit, our youth are now offering some of their creations to the public through our new online marketplace. While some are working on sophisticated large pieces and home furnishings (which can be made to order), our web-shop is initially offering smaller household and garden items such as clocks, birdhouses, and magnetic strip knife holders. As is the case with our farm sales, profits from our online marketplace will be reinvested into the collective.

- 1.3 In another new effort, expert welder and highly involved volunteer, Shalom Schwartz started a new mechanics course in which he teaches our young participants to dismantle and reassemble an old, but functioning Vespa motorbike. Beyond teaching automotive skills, importantly, the course also challenges the young person to exercise his/her intuition.

Number of participants:

During the 2017-2018 academic year a total of 24 youth took part in PBL and vocational training programming.

In May 2018, we organized an overnight at our mother farm for around 60 current participants and program alumni - some now back in school and others in the army or performing national service. The group gathered for a work-a-thon to do some repairs to the original agricultural terracing, in been in place for generations, and brainstorm about other farm needs. By the next morning they had surprised us by building a quirky, but functional set of benches using recycled wood and discarded industrial canisters. We are blown away that the farm remains an anchor for so many and the PBL lab such an inspiration.

2. Number of events/activities:

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

2.2 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; sound engineering; computer science, one with an emphasis on anti-cyber crime; and more.
- **Educational tours/activities/workshops:** Off the farm, participants 1) toured Kaima Nahalal, one of our sister farms, to learn about how that farm operates; 2) visited Moshav Ein Yahak in the Central Arava where they met Tomer Tene, a well-known organic farmer who demonstrated irrigation and fertilization challenges in hot conditions and explained new developments in tomato and pepper greenhouse growing; and 3) took part in a three-day desert survival course.
- **Workshop on entering the labor force:** Organized by external facilitator Roi Cohen of NGO Hut HaMeshulash and two Kaima professionals, we offered a ten-meeting workforce entry 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. 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 oneself 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 Mentor at a deeper level those participants who seek more responsibility as they move into higher management positions on the farm and in the Workshop
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Provide meaningful activities to ensure that our youth stay off the streets and engaged in positive endeavor.

3. Results/Comparison:

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The PBL Lab has truly become multi-generational. This year, many members of our adult team learned side-by-side with our youth as a collective.

Kaima, with the help of the Matanel Foundation, will soon implement an externally facilitated evaluation process, leaving us better positioned to measure the results of our Workshop and other Kaima initiatives.

Lessons learned:

Kaima's PBL activities now form an integral part of our alternative educational curriculum, complementing our primary educational tool of farm work. The PBL process does not merely focus on problem solving with the goal at arriving at a singular solution, but allows for the development of other skills, including critical thinking and enhanced group collaboration and communication. Whether undertaking a PBL project for personal use or one intended to benefit the farm, the teen gains a sense of tremendous pride, accomplishment and satisfaction with both the process and finished product. Particularly for those who apply themselves to developing and delivering a solution to an agricultural or structural problem (with the farm community becoming the end user) the teen feels a lasting value about how his/her efforts impact others.

Provisional guidelines for program advancement in the next year:

1. We will encourage our other network farms to initiate their own variations of the model. While it will require they secure funding in to do so, they readily appreciate the value added.
2. Workshop participants (particularly those who are learning carpentry and metal work) will play a central role in creating our new visitor center.
3. We hope to create a new media track in order to teach about film making and other visual arts.
4. We hope to build a teaching program where our participants can use the Workshop to teach visitors how to make simple crafts.
5. With the assistance of the Matanel Foundation we seek to write-up our program to help others learn from our adaptation of the concept.

This marks the second 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 vital initiative. On behalf of our beneficiaries we thank the Matanel Foundation for its generosity and readiness to support Kaima financially and with professional guidance.