

MATANEL FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: *Kaima Nahalal Farm*

Year: 2018-2019

The Matanel Foundation has generously provided Kaima Nahalal with a three-year grant to help underwrite our young farmer work stipends – a central component of our “employment as education” programming. Below is our report on year two of this grant.

Name of Program: Kaima Nahalal Farm

Year of activity: 2018-2019

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Number of active participants in the program

We initially projected the ability to recruit a rotating group of 22 young farmers to participate in our 2018-19 intensive agricultural employment programming (Project Lavender) for a minimum of 4 months. We are pleased to have been able to engage 18 young farmers in this track, the majority participating 2-4 times per week. Another 13 will participate in our summer 2019 program. See information on expanded primary target population below. Of the 18 who graduated from the program this past year, nearly 90% have moved on to assume important life challenges:

- 2 joined the army
- 3 are performing national service
- 4 are pursuing professional studies
- 6 returned to fulltime school studies
- 1 is enrolled in a leadership program in her school

Note: Two girls, with whom we are in regular contact, left the program as they are still struggling with drug abuse and other problems. We are pleased that they both now wish to return to the farm.

Estimated number of impacted participants

In addition to our intensive educational work with our core group of young farmers (noted above) and the 70 plus families who form our core customer base, we provided educational experiences for approximately 2,000 individuals who also volunteered a few hours or few days on the farm. Significantly, our young farmers played an important role implementing/leading many of these activities.

Program status (at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines)

This past year Kaima Nahalal significantly expanded our target population, implemented new activities, grew geographically, and matured professionally. And while we are still in our pilot phase and face many continuing challenges, in looking back, we proudly acknowledge our progress. We have established ourselves as a valuable educational resource serving individuals, families and communities in the Jezreel Valley; we produced healthy organic vegetables for scores of families in the area, using sustainable farming methods and generating significant income; and we hosted hundreds of young farmers, volunteers and visiting groups each year, allowing them to reconnect to the land and enjoy the region. Most importantly, we created a lively, warm, supportive, diverse, learning community, where girls and young feel a sense of belonging, are given the tools needed for greater independence, and have the opportunity to learn from and with more mature women through the Matanel-supported Project Lavender initiative.

The past year's main activities - achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc

- 1. Expanded primary target population:** From the outset, Kaima Nahalal established ourselves in Israel's northern periphery as a change-maker for girls (ages 15-18) who have left the school system, supporting their return to normative educational institutions, encouraging their sense of personal satisfaction, and building their capacity for self-respect. Our flagship employment-as-education model (conceived of/developed by Kaima Beit Zayit, the founding farm in the Kaima Educational Farm Network, supported through the Matanel Foundation) is designed to foster the conditions and relationships so important to re-engaging troubled teens and direct them toward meaningful endeavor. Our approach works by utilizing organic farming principles and practices to develop vocational and social skills; offer work experience; teach teamwork; encourage leadership development; build a sense of community; cultivate personal accountability; and promote environmental stewardship. The most significant development this past year has been our capacity to integrate another population into daily farm life: young women (ages 18-21). Participants in this new cohort are referred through Tmura, an NGO which facilitates modified national service programming for troubled young women after they age-out of other programs, such as residential treatment facilities, or following incarceration. While too early to understand the long-term implications, extension of our educational outreach to this new population further supports our contention that our educational model can and should be expanded to help others.

- 2. Extended programming to the wider community:**
 - a.** In addition to our intensive, daily employment program, we also provided numerous outdoor agro-educational experiences for approximately 2,000 individuals who volunteered a few hours or days on the farm. This was largely made possible by our new Garden of Eve initiative. The undertaking, named for the Bible's first woman and humankind's original mother, emphasizes the feminine, life-giving aspects of nature. Though not part of the Project Lavender budget, Garden of Eve allowed us to offer additional enrichment and leadership opportunities and provide new agricultural knowledge to Lavender participants.
 - b.** We were approached by a newly established pre-army *mechina* (preparatory program) for troubled girls (ages 18-20) coming from backgrounds which may include drug/alcohol abuse, physical and sexual violence, and prostitution. Following last summer's pilot project for 22 participants, in September, five were selected to join us as a central part of our farm team. We were very excited to bring on board slightly older girls who have already come a long way in improving their lives.
 - c.** We expanded our partnership with the Jezreel Valley Regional Council, under whose jurisdiction we fall, as well as other non-profit service providers. For example, after considerable effort, we successfully established a connection with a local hostel for homeless girls, which has now agreed to send a select cohort to take part in limited farm activities on a regular basis.

- 3. Expanded economic model:** We doubled our CSA membership base to 70 weekly customers. Not only are we offering our organically grown vegetables to more families in our region, we are also generating approximately \$80,000 (45% of the funding required for our educational and ongoing expenses) through farm sales, setting the stage to reduce dependency on philanthropic contributions over time.

Evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with previous year, conclusions for the future):

- 1. Methodology:** Lacking the resources to engage in an external evaluation process, all evaluation is conducted by Kaima Nahalal staff and with the assistance of the Matanel-supported Kaima Center for Economic Development and Educational Training, an umbrella body which provides business and pedagogic resources to all Kaima network farms
 - **Daily:** Each day ends with a staff review of each participant and shifts in the group dynamic.
 - **Weekly:** Every week we conduct an education meeting of the full adult team.

- **Monthly:** Every month we organize a special activity such as a friendship circle, a picnic at one of the many local springs, or an offsite lunch for both our young and adult team members to share and speak about both farm issues and life experiences.

2. Lessons learned/conclusions for the future

a. Educational

- Receive only one girl at a time and not a few together, especially not from the same institute.
- Identify an adult team member for each participant within a few days of joining the farm.
- After the first month, give each young team member responsibility for her own farm task.

We also noted that investing in other programs, namely our Garden of Eve initiative which brings the general public to the farm in large numbers, added a new dimension for Project Lavender participants who now have increased opportunities to express their knowledge and assume more leadership on the farm.

- ### b. Economics:
- Without previous business experience, we knew there would be a learning curve in terms of implementing our economic model. With greater experience under our belt, have made small but important adjustments regarding agricultural expenses and income projections. For example, we improved our customer ordering system (previously conducted through whatsapp using our cell phones) to a more professional online platform developed and utilized with strong results by our mother farm, Kaima Beit Zayit. This resulted in a 50% increase in self-generated revenue.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

1. **Continue to invest in programming for current cohort and pilot new initiatives for others.** Program implementation will continue for our primary cohort -- girls and young women, ages 15-21. As the project thrives on diversification, and given requests from other service providers, we are considering a new, limited collaboration with NGOs which tend to the needs of young women between 18 and 25, a population with very few educational options in our region.
2. **Strengthen our professional team.** While we launched the project with minimal staff, essential in the start-up, it has become critical that we expand our professional team by adding another adult professional to work alongside our over-burdened agricultural manager and a part-time social worker or psychologist.
3. **Provide a National Service residence.** We benefit tremendously through the contribution of our national service volunteers. In order to recruit these young women, we must secure modest housing to enable them to remain onsite in a region with limited public transportation.
4. **Secure additional capital resources.** Our main educational tool is our agricultural work. Beyond having to replace tools from time to time, this year we raised the funds to purchase a small two-wheeled push tractor which the girls can operate. Each year we must set ourselves a similar goal in order to maintain our physical infrastructure.
5. **Intensify campaign for government support.** Securing much-needed, fair share ministerial support is critical to the entire Kaima network. This is a huge undertaking, largely being attended through the Kaima Center for Economic Development and Educational Training. Until we are able to secure government support at appreciable levels, philanthropic support will remain important.
6. **Increase our customer base:** We seek to further grow our CSA customer base from 70-90.
7. **Develop and offer more diverse learning opportunities.** Because sustainable agriculture and farm-to-table activities are effective ways to connect women of different backgrounds to one another, we seek to continue to expand our Garden of Eve intergenerational programming and infrastructure, a goal which will further benefit our Project Lavender participants.

Thank you, Matanel Foundation, from Kaima Nahalal!