

MATANEL FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Kaima Hukuk Farm / **Year:** August 2016- July 2017

Name of the Program: Kaima Hukuk Farm	Year of activity: August 2016- July 2017
Name of the report's writer: Efrat Noy	
Function of the report's writer: Founder, Director	
Mail: pafush@yahoo.com/ Kaima.hukuk@gmail.com	Phones: +972-58-581-3952
Website: www.kaimahukuk.org.il	Facebook: www.facebook.com/kaima.north

- 1. Number of active participants in the program:** We initially projected the ability to recruit a rotating group of 20 young farmers in the first year of operations. We exceeded this target by engaging 26 teens, 18 of whom are considered long-term (participating at least twice weekly for 3-4 months).
- 2. Estimated number of impacted participants:** In addition to the young farmers whose work subsidies are underwritten in large measure through a generous grant by the Matanel Foundation, Kaima Hukuk has engaged approximately 150 others through our educational and community outreach programs (details in section 4.6.) and some 300 weekly and more occasional customers as well as those purchasing from our farmer's market.
- 3. Program status at date of the activity report (ten lines):** Since our founding on March 1, 2016, NGO Kaima Hukuk, located on land owned by Kibbutz Hukuk, has made substantial progress establishing ourselves in Israel's northern periphery as a change-maker for teens who have left the school system, supporting their return to normative educational institutions and encouraging their sense of personal satisfaction. Our employment-as-education model (conceived of/developed by Kaima Beit Zayit, the founding farm in the Kaima Educational Farm Network) is designed to foster the conditions and relationships so important to re-engaging Israeli teens who have dropped out of school 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. On the business side, we have expanded our customer base both geographically and in terms of scale, developments which are helping to support our educational enterprise.
- 4. Main achievements, number of events and participants during the last year of activity:** This has been a year of many beginnings. While challenged by geographic and local bureaucratic obstacles, we are methodically demonstrating to our regional partners our legitimacy as an educational NGO and a viable operating farm with the capacity to meet market demand. Additionally, we legally transitioned from a business into a registered NGO; our young farmers are showing notable personal progress; permanent educational and agricultural staff and all necessary physical infrastructure are in place; operating procedures were created, applied and reflected upon; and the farm is operating successfully and growing as projected. Details follow:
 - a. Farm Establishment:** The third farm in the burgeoning Kaima Educational Farm Network, Kaima Hukuk is the only one whose start-up costs included purchasing an existing (though underperforming) commercial organic farm, in this case in operation for seven years. The transaction included purchasing a business which sits on 12,000 sp.m. of fenced land zoned for agricultural purposes, 50% of which had already been cultivated; a small grove of fruit trees; a modest customer list of 60 names, all from within Kibbutz Hukuk; an old tractor; a limited drip-irrigation network; some tools; and an old army tent. In the first year we improved the irrigation infrastructure; acquired new tools; built a new 50 sq.m. protective structure to house our kitchen and work space; turned the old tent into a vegetable packing station; put in a refrigeration room; installed two compost toilets, and cultivated another 30% of our land.

- b. **Youth and Community Outreach:** Most of our young workers (ages 15-18) come from the geographically and socially peripheral municipalities of Tiberias, Zafed, Hatzor Ha'glilit and Ha'golan. Of the 26 youth employed to date, most have returned to traditional classroom, boarding school or night schools and are on track to perform military or national service. However, to us the program's most profound impact – that on the personal experience of the individual - is harder to measure. It is more simply evidenced by the boy who now openly shares his struggle with addiction with an older colleague over a parsley bed; the girl who, instead of ditching school to hang out with friends, wakes up early for work; or the boy who takes charge for the first time in his life and presents the team with a solution to an agricultural problem. Beyond our work with our young farmers, Kaima Hukuk collaborates with nearby Nofim, a home for mentally disabled adults whose residents work on the farm on a weekly basis. (This initiative is allowing us to explore our contention that our model - tapping into the restorative power of nature, respects diversity, and meets each participant where he/she is in terms of ability - can be applied to other populations). We also host and enjoy the contribution of hundreds of volunteers, many through the international "HaShomer HaHadash" program and the local school system. Additionally, this spring we started offering “sustainable agriculture” workshops to visiting groups (teachers, tourists etc.) led with the assistance of our young farmers.
- c. **Social Business:** Kaima Hukuk has aggressively developed the farm's business by following CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) practices, growing our clientele from 35 to an average of 100 weekly orders. We now operate over 20 distribution points making it possible to reach as far as Kiriyat Shmona, Misgav and Kfar Vradim, the furthest community located some 50 kilometers from our fields.
- d. **Financial Targets:** Like other Kaima social franchise farms, our professional staff agreed to forgo salary for the first six months during our initial start up phase. This placed a strain on us and kept our budget artificially low in our first year of operations. However, as we begin to build our financial platform, we are pleased to be able to cover nearly 50% of our budget through self-generated sales. We hope to grow this number to 70% in the next two years by building our customer base; and developing our income-generating workshop initiative which will reach 5-8 groups monthly in the fall and spring; adopting new methods to improve agricultural productivity in harsh summer months.
- e. **Relationship with Local Authorities:** This past year we invested considerable time liaising with local education and welfare authorities on the issue of recruitment. Our efforts to establish good working relationships gradually proved beneficial as the number of youngsters referred to us is beginning to increase. We are hopeful that the joint efforts initiated through the Kaima Educational Farm Network to secure increased financial support and recognition from Israel's Ministry of Welfare (which refers youth in their charge to our programs) will soon prove fruitful. Note, despite the clear need for government buy-in and approval, our most successful advocates are our young workers themselves, whose personal enthusiasm and successes attract a number of their peers to participate.
- f. **Kaima Family:** As part of the Kaima network, we enjoy the mentoring by "Our Oldest Sister" - Kaima Beit Zayit. With their leadership, the "Kaima Family" has become a support network and a learning community so priceless to us as a young amuta. Excitingly, two former participants of the Kaima Beit Zayit program will join us as social service volunteers in the forthcoming school year.

5. Evaluation

a. Methodology:

Educational/Social: Evaluation of educational/social impact is based on (1) record keeping on recruitment and retention; and (2) qualitative data and feedback from participants, permanent (adult) staff, and other relevant players (parents, teachers, social workers, etc.). On the professional side, data is gathered in weekly staff meetings to evaluate: (1) recruitment challenges which persist in spite of a genuine need; (2) reasons for leaving Kaima and engagement in normative social institutions; (3) the program's impact on participant attitudes and behaviors; (4) personal progress in terms of learning and taking initiative; and (5) daily functioning of and participation in the farm's agricultural routine.

Business: As a social business, we regularly evaluate our financial inputs/outputs. Additionally, this past winter we conducted a customer feedback survey to better understand trends and needs. The survey focused on factors such as: (1) quality and quantity of crops; (2) growth in customer base and weekly orders; (3) customer satisfaction related to product and service quality; and (4) meeting self-financing annual target .

b. Results:

Educational/Social: We identified three main barriers to recruitment. They include: (1) low parental support in families not focused on education; (2) transportation challenges from more far-flung locations, particularly from Arab villages; and (3) competition in a rural environment where agricultural employment opportunities for unqualified workers are common and salaries competitive. However, once a young person joins the farm it's a different story. Of the 18 long-term young farmers in 2016-17, most ranked high on our success scale. Specifically, each made substantial progress, overcoming challenges of his/her life circumstances. Most notable are changes in attitude - from distrust and resentment to trust and enthusiasm - and changes in behavior - from passivity and withdrawal to action and initiative. The main reasons for a long-term worker departure were actually positives. They include: enrolment into boarding school/high school (9 participants) and military/national service (4 participants). Feedback from parents and authorities is positive and supportive. In particular, our summer program for youth on the verge of dropping out of school received high praises from participants, parents and social workers.

6. Business: At present we are cultivating approximately 80% of the farm's land, with some 25 vegetable varieties grown annually. On average, 75% of the produce contained within our 100 weekly vegetable baskets is harvested from our fields; the remainder is supplemented by purchasing from other organic growers allowing us to maintain our high standards related to quality control and customer satisfaction. Building the business side as we've done in the first year is notable given two factors: (1) some crops were partially lost this past year to disease and pests, somewhat common with organic farming; and (2) sales dropped dramatically during the summer months when customers go on vacation. We project that increased experience and investment in marketing will lead to a proportional increase in output and our weekly customer count, with a higher percentage of vegetables coming from our own fields.

7. Comparisons with the preceding year: Not relevant as this was our first year.

8. Provisional guide lines for program advancement in the next year:

a. Educational: (1) To determine new strategies to tackle recruitment challenges, such as organizing transportation from specific locations, offering higher wages, and collaborating more intensively with so called "last chance" high school program authorities; (2) To hire a part-time "Recruitment and Government/Municipal Partnership Coordinator" to focus on recruitment, retention and financial collaborations; (3) To develop and offer more diverse learning opportunities (i.e, developing a bee hive, a chicken coop, and a sprouts greenhouse); (4) To develop and offer more activities and educational workshops for the general public; and (4) To make increased use of our national service volunteers as an important bridge between our young farmers and adult population.

b. Business: (1) To increase our professionalism; (2) To learn and apply new organic agricultural practices to address the soil issues and weather conditions of our region; (3) To invest in new marketing practices in order to grow our customer base; (4) To focus more on customer service; (5) To raise the funds to buy a used vehicle for deliveries; (5) To export our social business model for use by other area NGOs.

c. Fundraising: Without a doubt, the early funding and encouragement of the Matanel Foundation has been invaluable to our ability to attract other philanthropic partners, so crucial to our operations and financial platform. Without prior fundraising experience, we are grateful to now have the support of three new donors giving an average of \$8,000. We believe that the engagement of the trustees of the Matanel Foundation most certainly paved the way for others to come on board.