

MATANEL FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Kaima Hukuk Farm / **Year:** August 2017 - July 2018

Name of the Program: Kaima Hukuk Farm	Year of activity: 2017-2018
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Number of active participants in the program: In the past year 36 youngsters who had dropped out of school took part in our long-term and summer activities, ten more than the previous year.

Estimated number of impacted participants: Beyond our core youth employment program referenced above, Kaima Hukuk Farm engaged approximately 400 other individuals through our educational and community outreach programs. We also grew our customer base to 580 through our Community Supported Agriculture weekly membership and occasional customers.

Actual state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the report, no more than ten lines):

This past year was one of continued consolidation and professionalization in terms of developing a cohesive educational, agricultural, business model. We are now widely recognized as a valuable resource in our region for our ability to provide alternative education for teens that have left the school system. With the solid methodological foundation of the “employment-as-education” model developed by Kaima Beit Zait, also supported by the Matanel Foundation, Kaima Hukuk Farm is now seen as an essential player in brokering real change in the lives of disconnected youngsters. Our young farmers are growing, alongside the vegetables they are cultivating, acquiring social and vocational skills, and developing a sense of belonging, trust, self-worth and meaning. Our two year’s experience has borne fruit, not only in education, but also on the business side as we are operating in line with our initial financial start-up phase targets to support our social mandate at significant levels through the sale of our harvest.

Main achievements during last year of activity (achievements, number of events/participants, etc.): As stated, this past year has been one of considerable progress. Specifically, we have evolved from a new, remote educational NGO and young social business to a legitimate player in the Northern Galilee educational field, as well as a well-known organic producer. Above all, we were fortunate to witness meaningful personal transformations as our young farmers naturally began to reconnect with normative Israeli society after only a few months on the farm. Overall, we strengthened our educational and physical infrastructure and generally are operating successfully and growing as projected. Details follow:

1. Youth and community outreach:

- **Youth outreach:** To date, Kaima Hukuk Farm has employed 55 young workers (ages 14-18). Most come from the geographically and socially peripheral municipalities of Tiberias, Zafed, Hatzor Ha'glilit and the Golan. A significant majority has returned to normative educational settings and most over 18 have proceeded to military or national service. However, success cannot and should not only be measured in numbers but on our impact on the individual. While each young person has a unique story, all have found themselves outside of the school system, socially alienated, and share feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and low motivation. All need a place where they belong, feel valued and can mature. All have found that on our farm.
- **National Service Volunteers:** This year, our young farmers were joined by four national-service volunteers, three of whom came to us through Haaguda Lehitnadvut’s Tmura program, an initiative which facilitates Sherut Leumi (national service) activities for young people who cannot be recruited to the IDF. Many Tmura participants come from backgrounds similar to those of our young farmers. To support their important contribution, we are renting a “Sherut Apartment” for them on Kibbutz Hukuk. The collaboration with Tmura allows us to target disconnected young adults, at the threshold of adulthood, who benefit from the farm’s unique and empowering environment and set an example to our younger participants. The partnership proved extremely successful, with two “Sherutniks” choosing to stay for another year's service.

- **Nofim:** This year also saw the continuation and deepening of our collaboration with the Nofim Home for mentally disabled adults who work with us weekly and have become a natural part of the farm's life.
 - **Educational workshops:** We also developed our "Sustainable Agriculture and Social Businesses" workshop for visiting groups. A total of 17 workshops, each for 10-42 participants (mainly educators and social activists), took place during the winter
2. **Farm establishment/development:** Once the decision was made to join the Kaima movement, we purchased an operating commercial organic farm, initially paid for with a personal loan from one of our founders. This past winter we successfully paid off the loan following an extremely time consuming but highly successful crowd funding campaign which raised NIS129,000. This enabled us to develop the farm's infrastructure: construct a much needed 'net-house' to cover a third of the field during the region's intensely hot summer; purchase a trailer for vegetable delivery; set-up our own beehive; and plan a plant and sprout nursery.
 3. **Relationship with local authorities:** One of our most effective decisions was to hire a part-time "Recruitment and Government/Municipal Partnership Coordinator" to focus on recruitment, retention and financial partnerships with local welfare and education authorities and organizations. As a result, more youngsters are now referred to us by third party bodies, such as schools and social service providers. Additionally, partnerships were created/strengthened with Ha'aguda Lehitnadvut, Nofim Home, Kidum Noar Tveria (the public service for disconnected youth in Tiberias), a local hostel for teens with addiction, and others.
 4. **Social business:** This year our customer list grew to 580. In peak season we filled as many as 112 weekly orders. Although we did not see a significant, sustained rise in orders, our overall income from farm sales grew owing to increased product variety and improved quality. We now reach 36 distribution points along three delivery lines which cover a considerable portion of the Upper Galilee. Additionally, we recently launched a new promising marketing campaign to further grow our business.
 5. **Financial targets:** Owing to increased net-value-per-basket profits and income from our educational workshops, and despite growing expenses (a result of a growing number of young paid farmers, the addition of a fulltime professional, and investments in business and agricultural development) we are proud to have been able to generate 57% of our budget. At the present, the remainder is primarily financed through philanthropy, for which we are very grateful, and limited local government support. And whereas our summer employment program is partially funded by the Golan Regional Council, ministerial recognition and support regrettably lags behind – an issue we are actively trying to rectify.
 6. **Kaima family:** We benefit from mentoring and support provided by the Kaima Center for Economic Development and Educational Training, ongoing pedagogic meetings across the Kaima network, and regular visits from Ariel Knafo, former Kaima Beit Zait chief instructor. This past year we also participated in two wonderfully inspiring seminars which enabled us to share our experiences and bond with other likeminded Kaima-enthusiasts.

The Evaluation

1. Methodology:

- **Education:** Evaluation of our educational/social impact is primarily based on analysis of a) qualitative data which includes feedback from participants, adult staff, and other relevant players (parents, teachers, social workers, etc.) and b) quantitative data on recruitment and retention. Our weekly pedagogic staff meetings focus on: a) practical ways to reach more out-of-school youth; b) the impact on participant attitudes and behaviors; c) everyday functioning and participation in the farm's agricultural routine; and d) personal progress in terms of learning and taking initiative.
- **Business:** As a social business, we regularly evaluate our financial inputs/outputs. We are particularly interested in factors such as a) crop quality; b) growth in customer base and weekly orders; c) customer satisfaction regarding both our product and service; and d) meeting our self-financing annual target. (Note: we recently established a routine feedback-call to all new customers following their first order which allows us to make real-time adjustments.)

2. Outcomes:

- **Educational:** Overall, the number of young workers is on the rise, likely the result of a) professional network building; b) improved public transportation options to/from Hukuk; and c) growing popularity owing to the bandwagon effect. As noted, 36 youngsters participated in our “employment-as-education” program. On average each person stayed 3.5 months. Some 38% were referred by public social workers and 33% by educational institutions/organizations. The rest contacted us themselves or through their parents after hearing about us from a friend. Of those who reached adulthood and left the farm, 75% have entered military/national service, social contracts not previously within their capacity to pursue.

Of the 55 young farmers who have participated in our core programming, most rank high on our success scale, meaning they made substantial progress. Qualitative data collected from self-reflection as well as accounts of adult staff who spend hours alongside our young farmers reveal a number of characteristics common to most success stories. These include a shift from passive to active engagement and eventually initiative-taking; the emergence of inner motivation; decreased hostile and self-destructive behavior patterns; positive feelings of self-confidence and self-worth.

- **Business:** We increased our yield by 30% over the previous year, with some 30 vegetable varieties now grown annually. Our produce is sold to CSA members (an average of 100 receive a weekly basket) and to the general public at our onsite weekly farmers market. While proud of our growth, we find ourselves challenged to significantly build our customer count and retain our current base. To remedy this, we are now using the services of an agronomist as part of a professionalization scheme. Data suggests that these challenges are not a matter of quality but a result of growing competition to meet market demand and resistance to adjust to the CSA membership system. Our newly hired marketing consultant created a bold digital campaign to help us reach our target of 160 weekly baskets sold. The campaign is already bearing fruit with 54 new potential members contacted over the course of five weeks. As part of our new integrated marketing plan we are also renewing our website and rethinking our marketing and delivery methods.

Comparisons with preceding year and conclusions:

1. **Educational:** Recruitment is growing slowly, but consistently. More importantly, we are successfully fulfilling our core mission – acting as a change-maker in the life of the disenfranchised young person. Regarding the latter, our positive impact is unquestionable, evident chiefly by looking at attitudinal and behavioral changes. It is also clear that our adult staff is learning from experience as well as the support of the national Kaima Center. Unlike the previous year, when we were struggling to be noticed, this year our hard networking work paid off in the form of many important collaborations.
2. **Business:** We invested considerable human and financial resources to improve the variety and quality of our harvest and upgrade customer service. While income is up 20% over the previous year, we hope that our new advertising and marketing ventures will help us reach our target of filling an average 160 orders each week.

Provisional guidelines for advancement in the next year: Beyond our ongoing activities we have outlined other strategies to sustain our current growth and advance further in the coming year. For example:

1. **Educational:** We seek to a) open a second Sherut apartment, thus increasing the Temura program capacity to seven participants; b) offer diverse learning opportunities by undertaking new agricultural endeavors; c) provide vocational training through an apprentice program involving various craftsmen and other professionals from the wider Hukuk community.
2. **Business:** We seek to a) add new organic agricultural elements (i.e. a sprout greenhouse, vegetable nursery, and a chicken coop); b) purchase a delivery vehicle; c) attract increased tourism; and d) expand our workshop programming for educators and others with social influence to advance Kaima's alternative education model.
3. **Government buy-in:** Together with our sister Kaima farms, we continue to lobby for recognition and financial support from Israel's relevant ministries. We are hoping this year will be the turning point.

The Matanel Foundation was our first true friend, the first to believe in us and to support our vision. For this, we are forever thankful!