

MATANEL FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT

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| Name of the Program: Kaima Hukuk Farm | Year of activity: 2018-2019 |
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Number of active participants: This past year, 30 Israeli youth (ages 14-18), who dropped out of school or were at risk of doing so, as well as 8 socially challenged young adults (ages 18-21), took part in Kaima Hukuk's long-term young farmer program. An additional 9 took part in summer activities. This is an overall increase of more than 35% over the previous year. Included are those addicted to drugs and alcohol, young people who have turned to crime and prostitution to support themselves, victims of physical/sexual abuse; and others.

Estimated number of impacted participants: Beyond our flagship young farmer program, Kaima Hukuk engaged approximately 500 other individuals through a variety of short-term educational and community outreach initiatives. We also grew our customer base to 820 (including ongoing and occasional customers).

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 as we sought to refine our educational, agricultural, business model. Utilizing the solid foundation of the "employment-as-education" model developed by Matanel-supported Kaima Beit Zait, Kaima Hukuk is now seen as an essential player in brokering real change in the lives of disconnected young people. Our method encourages the individual to grow alongside the vegetables he or she is cultivating, acquire social and vocational skills, and develop a sense of belonging, trust, and self-worth. Moreover, the farm, now a respected organic producer, also serves as a gathering place in a region of diverse communities and ecosystems where large numbers of people of all backgrounds can come together to learn about environmentalism and social and agricultural diversity.

Main achievements during last year (including number of events/participants, etc.): Overall, we strengthened our educational and physical infrastructure and generally are operating successfully and growing our economic activities as projected. Details follow:

1. Youth and community outreach:

- a. **Alternative youth education (ages 14-18):** In pursuit of our long-term aim of promoting social and economic mobility for vulnerable youth from Upper Galilee communities, our farm employment program encourages the young person to enter into a unique social and business contract and, in the process, provides much-needed hard and soft skills. To date, Kaima Hukuk Farm has employed 88 young workers. 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 80% over 18 have proceeded to military or national service. However, beyond what the numbers reveal, the program's most profound impact is evidenced by the boy who now openly shares his struggles 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 and is more motivated to learn; or the young adult who takes charge for the first time in his/her life and presents the team with a solution to an agricultural problem. These moments, and many others, are the true measure of our success.
- b. **Modified national service for young adults (ages 18-21):** After great results with the 14-18 year old sector, in 2018, we continued our initiative to integrate another population into the farm: young adults, ages 18-21. For the second year, our young farmers were joined by sherut leumi (national service) volunteers referred through Haaguda Lehitnadvut's Tmura program, an enterprise which facilitates sherut leumi activities for young people who cannot be recruited to the IDF. Many Tmura participants come from background similar to those of our young farmers. 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.

Currently, 8 young adults are enrolled in the program. These young farmers, together with two conventional national service volunteers, reside in two nearby apartments we help oversee. We are particularly excited as 3 of our Kaima-Tmura farmers, now in their second year, will soon complete their national service commitment. These youth have come a long way. One, S, who worked for 3 years at Kaima Bet Zayit, and is now in his second year at Kaima Hukuk, is running nearly all of the farm's agricultural activities. Once an alienated teen, who locked himself in his room, S is now a confident young professional. A, too, has made great progress, evolving from a self-destructive girl into a functioning, trustworthy young woman. The third, M, a young immigrant, without family support, relates to Kaima Hukuk Farm is her first real home!

- c. Special needs adults:** This year also saw the continuation and deepening of our collaboration with the Nofim Home for mentally disabled adults (ages 30-60) who work with us weekly through our "Teaming Up" initiative. This collaboration allows us to explore the contention that our model--which taps into the restorative power of nature, respects diversity, and meets each participant where he/she is in terms of ability--can be readily applied to other populations. Notably, other Kaima farms are studying our work with Nofim residents to adopt/adapt it for use with similar populations in their own communities.

Throughout this past year 10 Nofim residents participated regularly. Very quickly, feelings of belonging and comfort replaced alienation. According to caregivers' feedback as well as Kaima staff observations, all Nofim participants eagerly awaited their farm visits and expressed deep satisfaction with the experience which seemed to provide much-needed social, mental and physical stimulation beyond that which they encounter in their daily framework in their care facility.

During the year, we realized that the physical work in the field does not suit the older Nofim participants. This led us to develop a new farm initiative: an herb nursery. Today, Nofim participants are experts in preparing herb seedlings, a job which can be done seated. Most young Kaima farmers warmly interact with the Nofim team, sometimes forming important relationships; all now show greater sensitivity to those suffering mental disabilities. We were particularly heartened when Kaima Hukuk participant, N, after working on the farm for 7 months, decided to pursue a career in special education following her experience. Without a doubt, the integration of Nofim participants into the farm community has created a more tolerant and diverse environment.

- d. Educational workshops:** This past year we expanded our sustainable-agriculture/social-activism workshops to visiting groups. Such programs included summer youth activities in partnership with our local regional council, and agricultural workshops for school and scouting groups, educators, synagogue communities, NGOs, the IDF, and other visitors from around the world. Some 500 people of all ages and backgrounds took part in these programs. Such inter-community activities allowed our farmers to demonstrate their newfound knowledge by helping to lead agricultural workshops. Recently, we teamed up with The Jewish Agency to host visiting groups of Jewish youth from the USA. All the activities involve agricultural work, thus offering 'hands-on' connection to the Galilee and its unique geography and history. We also enjoyed the contribution of hundreds of other volunteers, many connected to the international "HaShomer HaHadash" program and the local school system.

- 2. Economic activities:** This year our customer list grew to an average of 115 per week, consistent with the previous year. 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 49 distribution points along three delivery lines which cover a considerable portion of the Upper Galilee.
- 3. Kaima network activities:** We benefit from mentoring and support provided by the Matanel-inspired 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 wonderful farm network seminars (and hosted one of them) which enabled us to share our experiences and bond with other likeminded Kaima-enthusiasts.
- 4. Physical upgrades:** This past year we purchased a much-needed shaded-structure for visiting groups.

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

1. Methodology:

- a. **Educational:** 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 youth; b) shifting participant attitudes, behavior, and communication; and c) youth participation in the farm's agricultural routine.
- b. **Economic:** As a social business, we also assess a) crop quality; b) growth in customer base and weekly orders; c) customer satisfaction regarding both our product and service; and d) progress in meeting our self-financing annual target.

2. Outcomes/comparisons:

a. Educational:

- Recruitment is growing slowly, but consistently. Overall, the number of young workers is on the rise, owing to a) professional network building; b) improved public transportation options to/from Hukuk; and c) growing popularity through word-of-mouth referrals. As noted, 30 youngsters participated in our "employment-as-education" program. On average each person stayed 3 months; 39% were referred by public social workers and 39% by educational institutions/organizations. The rest contacted us themselves. Of those who reached adulthood and left the farm, 80% entered military/national service, social contracts not previously within their capacity to pursue.
- Of the 44 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) a shift from passive to active engagement and eventually initiative-taking; b) the emergence of inner motivation; c) decreased hostile and self-destructive behavior patterns; and d) increased self-confidence and self-worth.

- b. **Economic:** We increased our yield by 25% over the previous year, with some 45 vegetable varieties now grown annually. And, while income is up 18% over the previous year, we are still challenged to significantly build our customer count and retain our current base. To remedy this, we hope that our new advertising and marketing ventures, which include an upgraded website, as well as a revamped delivery system, will help us reach our target of filling an average 160 orders each week.

Provisional guidelines for advancement in the next year:

1. **Educational:** To provide other meaningful activities to encourage youth to stay off the streets, thus reducing boredom, loneliness, delinquency and addiction, we have outlined a two-fold strategy. First, we want to create a multi-generational PBL workshop (a variation on the Matanel-supported initiative pioneered by Kaima Beit Zayit) to facilitate external vocational training and provide onsite wood and metal work apprenticeships led by craftsmen and other professionals from the wider Hukuk community. This will help encourage curiosity (a crucial personal motivator) and build new skills. Second, we want to establish an afternoon leisure center to tighten social bonds after working hours; expand circles of support and familiarity; and provide opportunities to create a supportive, positive social network. (Though we have yet to raise the funds for the modest physical costs associated with the leisure center, this past year we hired a half-time afternoon mentor to augment the guidance provided by the farm's pedagogic and agricultural team.)
2. **Economic:** We seek to a) add new organic agricultural elements (i.e. a vegetable nursery and a chicken coop); b) purchase a delivery vehicle; and c) expand our workshop programming for educators and others with social influence to advance Kaima's alternative education model. We are also in the process of seeking partners to help build and equip a modest field kitchen which and other physical upgrades to enable us offer new programmatic opportunities for visiting groups and generate additional funding through user fees.
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 has seen us through our initial three-year pilot phase. The security of the trustees' multi-year support afforded us the opportunity to turn our dreams into reality. The Foundation has been a true friend and among the first to believe in us and to support our vision. For this, we are forever thankful!