

MATANEL FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: *Kaima Nahalal Farm*

Year: 2019-20

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

Name of Program: Kaima Nahalal Farm	Year of activity: 2019-20
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Number of active participants in the program

We initially projected the ability to recruit a rotating group of 50 young farmers to participate in our 2019-20 intensive agricultural employment programming (Project Lavender) for a minimum of three months or during our intensive summer program. We are pleased to have been able to engage 51 young farmers in this track, the majority participating 2-4 times per week. Of the 18 who graduated from the program this past year, nearly 90% have moved on to assume important life challenges: Details below.

	Project Lavender <i>(girls & young women ages 15-21)</i>	Special COVID-19 Program <i>(girls & young women ages 15-18)</i>	2020 Summer Program <i>(girls & boys ages 15-18)</i>
#	18	16	17
NOTES	4 returned to fulltime school studies 4 are pursuing professional studies 1 started a new job 1 started academic studies 6 will continue into 2020-21 2 dropped out * <i>(one left owing to medical problems and one because of the summer heat)</i>	Resources were diverted in order to provide meaningful engagement and employment for girls who found themselves without a framework during the two-month COVID-19 shutdown.	As planned

Estimated number of impacted participants during grant period

- 51 young people impacted by our intensive educational work (noted above)
- 70-90 weekly customers received food baskets
- 25-40 people received monthly food donations
- 1,281 individuals volunteered a few hours or few days on the farm and took part in group programming *
- 695 families received our weekly farm update

** Reflects marked reduction owing to COVID-19. Not surprisingly, in the wake of the pandemic, all bookings were canceled. Even those who optimistically rescheduled for later in the year, again called things off. Though we have been approached by some of groups to present elements of the program online, our group farming activities (which include groups upwards of 40 people at a time) have been suspended. See last section for our plans to restore our group work in the coming year.*

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 still face many continuing challenges—in addition to those presented by the pandemic described throughout this report—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. Overview of youth employment program: From the outset, Kaima Nahalal established ourselves 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. Since our founding, 140 have completed the program.

2. Chronological overview of 2019-20 events/groups:

Teachers for children with disabilities (Kiryat Ata)	30
Druze teachers (Osfia)	30
Haroot Lamerchakim - pre-army program for girls just out of boarding schools and rehab	22
Shefa Group - Canadian and American women's mission	15
Vibe Israel – program for multinational food bloggers	8
Haim Dotan Architects - Chinese women's social initiative	10
Jewish Agency Ofek Program - pre army leadership for girls	30
Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel – program for soldier educators	50
Mandel Institute of Leadership – program for young adults	16
Meitarim and Miftanim – program for Ministry of Welfare workers	18
Suckot Open Day	300
Bina: The Jewish Movement for Social Change – pre-army program for boys and girls	10
Jezreel Valley Regional Council – program for youth guides	50
Jewish Agency Achrai - pre-army program	6
Western Galilee School – program for 8 th grade children	200
Ein Yahav - pre-army program	16
Kibbutz Genosar – program for 11-year-olds	40
Kibbutz Afikim – program for 11-year-olds	40
Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'akov – program for 11-year-olds	55
Haamakim Tavor School – program for teens with disabilities	35
Kinnert School – program for 11-year-olds	58
Giv'at HaMore School – program for educators	15

The Beit Uri Residential Village for Special Needs Populations – program for educators	15
Sarid national service – program for boys and girls	12
Green Leadership Track for Zicron Yaacov district schools – program for children ages 11-15	200
Total	1,28

3. Impact of COVID-19: While we are disappointed at having to suspend our group programming because of the pandemic (as noted on the first page of this report), we have utilized this period as an opportunity to focus more intensively on our flagship youth employment initiative, which continued to operate without interruption, becoming even more important in our region given the shuttering of other programs.

Beginning the second week in March, and during the shutdown, four of our girls were unable to participate as transportation options were extremely limited. We remained in phone contact with those unable to or choosing not to continue during this period. We were also approached to provide employment for around six weeks to a group of girls from a local boarding school which had to send home all participants (except for those without other shelter), as well as a pre-army program for girls which also had to cease operations. For many, working on the farm was their first foray into employment, not to mention a novel experience. This also presented an opportunity for our regular participants to step up and help integrate the new group.

So effective was that undertaking that we were subsequently approached by another local boarding school working with vulnerable girls identified as being on the cusp of dropping out. We were financially challenged to do so but we managed to bring them to the farm on a part-time basis for the remainder of the summer. From past experience, the farm can provide a bridge back from the brink for those just hovering at the danger point.

Additionally, joining our Project Lavender participants, for the fourth year, is a group of 16 particularly vulnerable youth, ages 14-18, identified by our local regional council as being in urgent need of a summer framework. We are so glad to have them with us once again and are grateful to local authorities for helping to subsidize the project. Note: the summer program is always boy and girls together.

One message was consistently reinforced -- Providing a safe space and an activity as healthy and life-affirming as farming is a powerful way to encourage a sense of purpose and meaning during these bleak times. Many of our daily conversations revolve around nature's resiliency and all that can be learned by working to grow one's own food.

On the business side, our customer base remains steady after a growth spurt that began at the outset of the pandemic. Additionally, this year, our harvest is more varied and stronger than ever. This noted, limited resources, the pressure to meet the needs of our weekly customer base, and the stress and drain on motivation related to the pandemic, means that for the time being we will not seek to expand sales.

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

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.

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. After a number of years of preparation, we hope in September 2021 to initiate our long-anticipated pilot project with Tmura, an NGO providing alternative national service opportunities for young women (18-21) unable to take part in conventional IDF/voluntary civil service. As the project thrives on diversification, and given requests from other service providers, we are considering expanding collaborations 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. **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. Building the residential program is also essential for the implementation of the Tmura track referenced above.
3. **Restore our group programming:** Given that we do not yet know when tourism will resume, we are working on a new marketing strategy with tour guides to try to encourage local groups to participate in our outdoor programming, reinforcing that social distancing on the farm is easy to manage. Our 2021 projections are both optimistic and realistic in this regard.
4. **Strengthen our organizational capacity and 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.
 - Professional salaries are too low to sustain a strong team over time.
 - The team requires basic, protective work clothing (hats, shoes, long-sleeved shirts, etc.)
 - The team requires more professional development.
5. **Secure additional capital resources.** Each year we tackle at least one significant capital investment or physical upgrade in order to maintain our infrastructure, add value to our educational work, and/or generate new income. This past year we raised the funds to purchase a new cooling room which had a significant impact on waste reduction. In 2020-21 we hope to develop a therapeutic nursery to facilitate one-on-one interaction and expand output by growing our own sprouts, herbs and baby plants/trees, thus increasing profit. Another goal is to create a proper workshop space to take care of basic farm repairs and engage in PBL programming implemented and some of the other network farms with the assistance of the Matanel Foundation.
6. **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 to 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.
7. **Increase our customer base:** We seek to further grow our CSA customer base from 70-90.
8. **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. Given the continuing pandemic, we have adjusted our expectations downwards but still remain optimistic.

Thank you, Matanel Foundation, from Kaima Nahalal!