

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Matanel Fellows for Sustainable Development

Year: 2023

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole report will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document).

Name of the Program: Matanel Fellows for Sustainable Development

Year of activity: 2023

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Function of the report's writer: Director of Development

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Number of active participants in the program:4

Estimated number of impacted participants:

- 28 YSP participants,
- 100 villager farmers,
- 18 participants in a malaria training

1. Give the actual state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):

The Matanel Fellows for Sustainable Development program in 2023 has been completed. This year, our fellowship program with the University of Arizona was limited due to lack of accommodations which were only partially completed by the time of their arrival. We also did not actively seek a larger group of interns while we took the opportunity to assess YSP and community openness toward hosting Western groups. Encouraged by the very positive reception, we plan to expand the program next year, collaborating not only with the University of Arizona but also with University of Haifa and with independently recruited groups of interns.

2. The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):

With the assistance of the Matanel Foundation, this year Tevel b'Tzedek hosted 4 fellows at our project village in Mphande, Zambia. Three fellows, Christina Ruth, Rachel Wolter and Edan Levy, were part of a program coordinated with the University of Arizona's [Arizona Center for Judaic Studies](#). An additional fellow volunteered separately for a longer period on our project farm. University of Arizona for-credit summer program included one month in Israel and 3 weeks month in Zambia with guidance and instruction provided by University of Arizona senior faculty, along with Tevel b'Tzedek. The Tevel-UA program introduced students to the challenges of global poverty and social justice through a Jewish lens. It also examined issues in Israeli society, and Israel's role, potential and actual, in international development including . meetings with relevant Israeli stakeholders such as Ofra Fahri, the Israeli Ambassador to Zambia.

In Mphande, Matanel Fellows stayed in Tevel's newly constructed housing in the village. Volunteers taught village youth participants in our Youth Service Program (YSP) English, math and financial literacy (both to the YSP and village farmers) and also volunteered working on our demonstration farm. Fellows also engaged in diverse research during their stay, exploring topics ranging from religious affiliation to the dynamics of village markets. One researcher delved into the labor force structure, types of work, and the influence of leaders on local markets. Another focused on a Community Mapping Research Project, examining authority, leadership, and the economic and political dimensions of the community. This involved interactions with community leaders, discussions on community functioning, goals, perceptions of Tevel's presence, and reflections on the program's impact in Mphande.

An important achievement of the initiative was the collaboration with a major university which provided 9 university credits for the program. The initiative was also very important because it was the first time that Tevel hosted a group in Zambia in our dormitories which can house up to 18 people. These dormitories have since hosted 18 participants from surrounding villages in a five-day malaria training course for Community Health Volunteers. Tevel also hosted a group of Tevel supporters from the US and Israel in the village accommodations who volunteered their expertise in teaching YSP participants business, advocacy, and behavioral development among other topics

Another participant of the Matanel Fellowship program, Jesse Milman, generously dedicated his time and efforts to enhance our dormitory for visitors. Jesse played a pivotal role in acquiring all the necessary amenities to ensure the comfort of up to 18 people staying there –from toilet seats to cooking utensils and from shower curtains to comforters. Furthermore, he taught English and actively engaged in the creation of compelling content about the YSP program for our social media platforms. This content will serve as a valuable asset in our future fundraising endeavors and in expanding our fellowship program. The incorporation of these 4 fellows marked a significant milestone in our efforts to engage volunteers in our work in Mphande. The local youth extended a warm welcome and benefited greatly from their presence, acquiring valuable knowledge and skills. This experience and infrastructure has created the potential for future expansion, promising to

bring added value to our work in our model project in Mphande and as we expand, the entire area.

In 2023 Tevel also dedicated a significant amount of time and effort to create a customized service-learning program in partnership with the Jewish Federation of MetroWest New Jersey for 15 participants from the US, Ukraine, and Israel. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, the project did not materialize as planned due to an unforeseen technicality. While this outcome was a major disappointment, we are determined to use the program with future groups.

3. The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):

Throughout the program and afterwards, fellows and YSP participants were asked to share their experiences and insights gained from the program. An analysis of fellows' feedback as well as YSP feedback was done including Tevel staff and University of Arizona's Professor Leonard Hammer from the University of Arizona Faculty of International Law and Human Rights and Professor David Graizbord, the Director and Curson Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Arizona. Program staff analyzed the following evaluation criteria:

- **Benefits to YSP participants:**

Direct engagement with YSP participants involved gathering feedback on their experiences and desire for future similar engagements in order to understand which aspects resonated with the YSP and identify areas for improvement or expansion. Discussions highlighted the tangible benefits experienced by YSP participants, emphasizing the program's contributions to their growth and development.

- **Community Acceptance of Volunteers:**

A key criterion was the acceptance of fellows by the YSP. The evaluation considered the quality of the relationship between the fellows and the YSP, seeking to analyze the mutually rewarding interaction.

The evaluation indicated a successful program, with positive outcomes for both the fellows and the YSP. The commitment to enhance and expand the program for the upcoming year reflects the overall satisfaction and the belief in its continued positive impact. Further to informal feedback from the 3 University of Arizona fellows, fellow Jesse Milman drafted a thorough [report](#)

Volunteer/Fellow Highlights:



This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to journey to Mphande, Zambia, witnessing firsthand the impactful work Tevel is doing. As

the inaugural volunteer to reside at the training center for an extended period, I played a key role in expanding the project and fully immersing myself in the vibrant life of Mphande village.

Living without running water, electricity, and a reliable cell signal presented its challenges, but the warmth and acceptance from the community and Youth Service Program members made me feel at home. In my capacity as an intern, I conducted daily English classes, imparted lessons on ecological agriculture, and lent a helping hand in the field. Additionally, I contributed to furnishing the newly built center, fostered connections with local Zambian NGOs, and managed social media posts for Tevel.

One standout experience was my journey with David, a YSP member, deep into the bush to film the charcoal-making process. Hiking four kilometers, crossing a riverbed, and climbing steep mountains, I gained firsthand insight into the challenges villagers face in reaching their primary source of livelihood. Encountering an elderly couple sorting charcoal and a group of young workers cutting trees for production, I gained a profound appreciation for the labor-intensive process. Returning to the village, David graciously invited me to share a meal of Nshima, the staple food, with his wife and adorable six-month-old baby. Despite the villagers' hard work and limited income, their generosity shone through.

The experience of witnessing the demanding work of charcoal production, followed by an immediate invitation to share a meal, exemplified how poverty in Mphande is met with generosity. Tevel's efforts to combat deforestation aim to provide Mphande with a sustainable, alternative livelihood. I am hopeful that, Mphande can transition to a future free from long hikes into the bush for tree-cutting and instead focus on becoming a thriving breadbasket in the region.

- Jesse Milman, Tevel Volunteer April-August 2023



In addition to my research responsibilities, I actively contributed to teaching conversational English to the Youth Service Program (YSP). My focus was on students with limited or no prior knowledge of English, guiding them through the basics of conversational skills. The enthusiasm and

mutual support among the students were palpable; they eagerly collaborated and displayed genuine excitement for learning.

One particularly memorable connection I formed was with Olinety. Initially reserved due to her limited English, Olinety gradually warmed up as I earned her trust through collaborative cooking sessions during lunch breaks. Olinety consistently volunteered, fearlessly tackling questions, unfazed by any mistakes. The atmosphere was one of camaraderie; the students were genuinely invested in each other's understanding of the concepts.

Olinety's passion for learning was evident despite having completed only up to 6th grade and her brightness and eagerness for knowledge were inspiring. Witnessing the rapid progress of these students and building authentic connections with them proved to be immensely rewarding. The opportunity to spend more time with this group was especially meaningful, considering their initial hesitancy to open up due to communication challenges. I am grateful for the chance to contribute to their growth and witness the transformative journey of these YSP participants.

- Christina Ruth, Tevel Fellow, Summer 2023

4. Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

University Programs

In 2024, Tevel will continue to work with the University of Arizona and reach out to universities across the United States to find additional students for the program, leveraging our success this year. Further, together with the University of Haifa, Tevel will offer a new [Master's Degree in Jewish Social and Environmental Sustainability](#). The curriculum offers coursework in the fields of Judaism, social justice, the environment, and the connections and balances between them. Students will study for two semesters in Israel and a third semester will include an internship with our project in Mphande, Zambia. The program has received a 60,000 NIS Impact Grant from the University of Haifa to develop the curriculum.

Supervised internships for students

In addition to scheduled programming with these universities, Tevel is set to broaden its internship offerings in Zambia, extending opportunities to accommodate up to 8 additional volunteers. These internships will provide enriching experiences lasting 6-8 weeks. With the establishment of our dormitory facilities and the assurance that the village is both secure and welcoming for interns, we are excited to provide a conducive environment for students from a wide range of fields.

Partnership with Aardvark

In March of 2023, the first group of twenty "Aardvark" (a Jewish gap year program in Israel) participants traveled to Nepal for a two-week immersive

experience in village community development accompanied by Tevel educational guidance. Following this pilot project, Tevel and Aardvark will embark on a new partnership to enhance and expand programming in both Nepal and Zambia.

5. Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the list of the participants to the program (as PDF documents)

[Please see photos of passports \(each photo is labeled\)](#)

Name of Fellow	Entrance Israel	Exit Israel	Entrance Zambia Date	Exit Zambia Date	Funding Request (3 weeks in Zambia and 1 prep week in Israel)
Jesse ...	Israeli resident		August 2	October 20	\$1000
Christina Ruth	June 12	July 9	July 10	July 30	\$500
Edan Levy	May 15	July 9	July 10	July 30	\$500
Rachel Wolter	June 12	July 9th	July 10	July 30	\$500
Total Funding Request					\$2500

6. [Please join photos](#) and movie: Please click to see album of Fellows and vidoes