



**Aumtat Kaima**  
**2021 Yearend Activity Report**  
**Executive Summary**

**The Kaima international farming network uses the tool of employment and the magic of nature to engage and empower young people as they explore alternatives to conventional educational and social settings.**

While the pandemic continued throughout 2021, Kaima remained relevant to the individual and the community at large. And though social distancing protocol significantly impacted the number of groups we could welcome, life on the farm remained a hub of activity – it provided consistent employment for young people, encouraged individual development, and played a role in sustaining safe food pipelines. Below is a summary of our accomplishments, challenges and plans for the future.

### **Impact on the individual**

#### **1. Quick stats**

- 63 youth (ages 15-18) and young adults (ages 18-21) participated in our full-time farm employment program, 114% of our goal.
- ~50% assumed more than one position on the farm, including leadership roles.
- ~85% returned to normative educational/social settings within six months.
- ~95% left at the age of 18 to perform military/national service or enter the workforce.

#### **2. Additional details**

- Provided each participant with a minimum of 7.0 hours of daily farm employment and complementary educational programming, on average, four days weekly, amounting to 88,200 hours annually.
- Facilitated onsite Project Based Learning (PBL) programming for 35 youth in our sophisticated carpentry workshop. PBL projects benefited either the individual or the farm, for example by upgrading infrastructure or creating new product lines to offer CSA members.
- Facilitated offsite certification courses for 14 youth in areas such as welding, blacksmithing, carpentry, product design, jewelry making, tractor-driving, and English-language development.
- Provided intensive one-on-one mentoring to help each young person (upon turning 18) transition off the farm and into an undertaking of his/her choice, such as army/national service, additional education, or workforce placement.
- Provided full-time alternative national service programming for a record 18 young men and women participating in the Tmura initiative for young people, who, for a variety of reasons, cannot be recruited into conventional army or civil service programs. We will expand this activity in 2022 by launching our first supervised residential program for young women, ages 18-21.

*In combination, these activities encourage independence; personal accountability; positive intergenerational relationships; entrepreneurial thought; return to more conventional educational settings; resolution of personal trauma; family reconciliation; matriculation and army/national service; and the development of other important skills tied to educational advancement and workplace readiness.*

### 3. One person's story

#### B'S STORY

##### BEFORE KAIMA

Having struggled at school for years, in the wake of the pandemic, 16-year-old, B dropped out entirely. The youngest of seven boys, B comes from an ultra-Orthodox family living in Beitar Illit, a cloistered, Ultra-orthodox community within which he felt stifled and unable to function. The rigid nature of his upbringing and a particularly complex family story led B to frequently run off, roam downtown Jerusalem, and use drugs and alcohol. He rarely returned home and frequently found himself sleeping in his grandparent's house not far from the city.

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##### AT KAIMA

B arrived at Kaima at the age of 17, having been referred by a social worker from a Jerusalem-based youth organization. Initially, B was aggressive, demonstrated no motivation, and did not believe he would last at the farm longer than a week. Although a strong kid who did not find the farm's physical work difficult, B suffered panic attacks and was unable to express his personal turmoil.

At the beginning of his journey, B was withdrawn and impatient, dismissing anyone who approached him. Over time, he began to form meaningful relationships with the adult female staff, finding in them a sympathetic ear. His initial distrust slowly gave way as he began to reveal stories of brutal abuse within his family and the collective silence of the larger community. Over time, B managed to forge close ties with some of the other youth, even becoming his team's "big brother" as he mentored newcomers.

While working at the farm, Kaima helped B enroll in and funded a BA program in psychology from the Open University. B completed his first course and is determined to continue his studies following a two-year commitment to perform national service, something he'd not thought of before coming to Kaima.

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##### AFTER KAIMA

Upon turning 18, we bid B farewell along with other team members who had completed their time on the farm. He immediately began his national service at a therapeutic horse farm on a kibbutz in the Hefer Valley, where the farm manager took him under his wing and continues to nurture him. Once a lost boy whose traumatic past kept him from engaging with others in positive ways, B now serves as a therapeutic riding instructor for children with special needs. Most impressively, he is in charge of the day-to-day care of the horses and stables, and takes an active part in leading tours, classes, and guided walks. B has already decided to remain at the Kibbutz for a second year before returning to his studies. We are incredibly proud of B and will continue to stay closely connected to him as he moves forward in life.



## Impact on the community

1. Maintained our weekly CSA customer count of 500 families, who consumed 275,000 pounds of our harvest, the proceeds of which helped support ~60% of our budget.
2. Donated 60 boxes of veggies each week to hungry families and organizations working to alleviate food insecurity, feeding 240 people weekly or 12,000 annually.
3. Carried out programming for the general community on agricultural diversity, conservation, zero-waste farming, farm-to-table lifestyles, etc. Note: approximately 640 people took part, an increase over 2020, but not yet approximating pre-pandemic numbers.
4. Painstakingly restored 50 meters (165 feet) of ancient, damaged terracing on land on which the farm sits. This is a multi-year undertaking and part of our commitment to environmental stewardship.

*In combination, these activities demonstrated the viability and desirability of Kaima's diverse financial operating model; engaged our young farmers in modeling one of the highest forms of Tikkun Olam by feeding the hungry; provided environmental educational experiences for the general community; and enabled us to play a prominent role in safe food-delivery systems, particularly important during the pandemic.*



*Recognizing our outstanding volunteers as part of Israel's national Good Deed's Day celebration*

## A major development

Beyond what was referenced above, we draw attention to a major accomplishment achieved on behalf of the larger Kaima movement, a network of five socially-responsible educational farms, four in Israel and our youngest, in Africa. While each farm is responsible for its own fundraising, as members of the Kaima network, they benefit from centralized development activities provided through Kaima Center for Economic Development and Educational Training, facilitated by Amutat Kaima.



Kaima Beit Zayit is currently the only network farm that receives funding through the Ministry of Welfare, the government body responsible for addressing the needs of the young people in our care. It took The Center many years of lobbying the Ministry (starting in 2017) to obtain such funding. Though The Center had endeavored at the time to secure an agreement that would benefit the entire network, the Ministry would only agree to begin by funding Kaima Beit Zayit in 2020.

Not to be dissuaded by the bureaucracy involved, we remounted the campaign and are currently in the advanced stages of securing ministerial recognition of and funding across the network. Ministry representatives made another site visit in November after which negotiations moved forward considerably. We anticipate that an agreement will soon be reached and that funding to help underwrite the costs of the baseline stipends will be released to all Israel farms as early as spring 2022.

### Ten years looking ahead

The main challenge (or as we see it, the main opportunity) is to prepare for a major expansion. Kaima's newly reconstituted and highly engaged board secured an agreement from the moshav granting us permission to build on an additional nine dunam plot just below where the farm sits. This will be the site of our new packing house (likely a ½ dunam structure) and will incorporate a streamlined setup for receiving and shipping, refrigeration, sorting, etc. It will also provide greenhouse space for specialty items, such as sprouts and mushrooms, and will include a demo kitchen, our administrative offices, our wood and metal workshop, music room, and more. We also hope to build a traditional olive press to produce oil from the mature trees we are caring for. This is an enormous opportunity for us. We are casting a wide net to bring others into the planning process. We hope to unveil our plans at our annual Open Day, hopefully (COVID and other factors allowing) during Sukkot, 2023.

