



במה לקהילה
בכרמים (ע"ר)
Community Stage
منصة للمجتمع

Community Stage in Kibbutz Kramim

A center for education, culture
and social action in the Negev





Community Stage

The Community Stage is a social venture based in Kibbutz Kramim that works to advance Israel's Negev region and elevate all of its diverse communities through programming that promotes pluralism and regional dialogue; coexistence and cooperation; sustainable practices; and cross-community, civic responsibility.

Its goals are:

- To promote educational, social and cultural activity in the Negev;
- Community and inter-community development;
- To encourage sustainability;
- To enhance diverse Jewish identity and pluralism;
- To advancing special needs populations;
- To develop and strengthen the local economy and create sustainable livelihoods.

Kibbutz Kramim is a mixed community of secular and religious Jews living and creating together, with an ecological focus and kibbutz values. To support Community Stage, Kibbutz Kramim hosts groups from Israel and abroad and imbues them with the unique spirit of ecological and social Zionism in the Negev's modern day pioneers.

We invite you to take part in one of Communities Stage's exciting activities, programs or workshops; to visit the Kibbutz; and to learn more by contacting us.



Community Stage A Non-Profit Organization in the Negev with a Social Business Model

The Community Stage in Kibbutz Kramim (“Community Stage”) is a nonprofit organization with a social-business model, based in Kibbutz Kramim in Israel’s Negev desert.

Community Stage seeks to advance Israel’s Negev region and elevate all of its diverse communities through programming that promotes pluralism and regional dialogue; coexistence and cooperation; sustainable practices; and cross-community, civic responsibility.

Its goals are:

1. Educational, social and cultural activity in the Negev
2. Community and inter-community development
3. Encouraging sustainability
4. Enhancing diverse Jewish identity
5. Advancing special needs populations
6. Offering workshops, lectures, events and conferences to engage communities inside and outside of the Negev.

About Community Stage & Kibbutz Kramim:

Community Stage was established by the renewed community of Kibbutz Kramim. Seven years ago, a group of young people – mostly from the center of the country – arrived at the collapsing Kibbutz with the aim of populating and developing the Negev. A new vision was formulated for the Kibbutz, in cooperation with its senior members, with an emphasis on mixed religious-secular populations, sustainability and inward and outward social responsibility.

Community Stage's aim is to advance cooperation between its neighbors including Jewish and Arab communities and ‘normative’ and special needs communities in the fields of education, broader Israeli society, and the environment.

Sustainability & Our Social-Business Model:

As an organization that works in the periphery, it was important for us to build an economical model that will be based on independent income alongside philanthropy, and that can provide long term employment for community members and our neighbors.

Kibbutz Kramim supports its philanthropic activities in the region with donor support, activities fees, and through the social business model of Community Stage which offers programs ranging from full day educational activities to month long retreats, which center on Community Stage’s visions and goals. These educational programs are marketed to groups in Israel and abroad. For example, we have established a sustainability training center, recognized as an environmental, “green” activity for Taglit (birthright), as well as other programs such as Community and Mutual Responsibility, Discourse of Identities, Challenges of the Negev, and more. We have also developed educational programs for overseas youth who wish to reside and work in the Negev’s communities for longer periods of time – from three weeks to two months. Moreover, we offer various workshops in accordance with the community members’ areas of expertise (drama, yoga, outdoor training and others).



Culture of Cooperation

A Kramim Community Stage Initiative
for the Production of Diverse Cultural Events

Based on Cooperation between Different Communities in the Negev

Principle idea:

Producing cultural events based on the cooperation of artists from different population sectors and representing varying art forms at Kibbutz Kramim's Community Stage

What is at the core of the initiative?

The Negev is home to many different communities (Arab, Jewish, religious, secular, rural, urban, Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, rich, poor). The worse the economic, social, and/or security situation in the region, the more these communities tend to withdraw and the less they engage in cross-community activities and interactions.

The Kramim Community Stage was founded in the belief that cooperation between various population sectors is the most effective possible tool for advancing the Negev as a whole. We are making a concentrated effort to promote joint initiatives in order to develop the region and turn it into a unique and attractive area that draws people from across the country.

Art is a multi-cultural language that has the magical ability to cross religious, socio-economic, and cultural divides, and serve as a bridge between different worlds, connecting people and overcoming differences. The idea of producing cultural events based on cooperation between different sectors in the Negev is the innovative locus of our initiative.

Good things are happening at Community Stage in Kibbutz Kramim:

In 2013, "Culture of Cooperation" and Community Stage's other projects produced 9 Negev cultural events. The events hosted artists from the fields of music, film, theater and visual arts. Most of the artists either came from the Negev and/or their art addressed social issues stimulating deep social discourse. Among the artists were secular and religious Jews, Bedouins, Middle Eastern and Ashkenazi Jews, young and old. The cultural events were all open to the area and combined performance with dialogue between the audience and artists.

Kibbutz Kramim as the perfect location for an inter-sectorial cultural center:

Kibbutz Kramim lies north-east of Be'er Sheva, near Shoket Junction. The adjacent communities are Meitar, Omer and Lehavim; kibbutzim Dvir and Lahav; the Bedouin communities Hora, Lakiya and Abu Basma; the religious communities Shmaria and Sansana; and of course, also Be'er Sheva. Community Stage has a small structure (a small hangar) with a stage, with up to 120 seats. Artists from the region perform in the structure and the shows are advertised among the neighboring communities.



The Kramim Bakery

A bakery operated by people with disabilities
alongside Kibbutz Kramim residents

The Kramim Bakery is a joint project of the Beer Sheva branch of ALUT (The Israeli Society for Autistic Children) and "Community Stage" in Kibbutz Kramim, located in the Negev Desert. The bakery is a vocational center on Kibbutz Kramim which provides practical training and job skills for a group of thirty autistic, young adults, ages 20 to 30, on a daily basis. In addition to the bakery, the Community Stage – ALUT partnership also integrates the adults into the real life of the Kibbutz. This includes the Kibbutz's industry and workforce, for example landscaping in the ecological garden and working in the events hall and kitchen, all alongside Kibbutz residents, and hosting joint social activities for the ALUT adults and Kibbutz members.

Community Stage is a regional, nonprofit center which brings educational and cultural programs to the Negev and promotes social activism. Believing that the success of the Negev depends on the cooperation of its disparate populations, Community Stage promotes inter-community development and dialogue through regional forums and joint projects. Another main goal of Community Stage and Kibbutz Kramim is social responsibility – both within the Kibbutz and outside its walls in the broader Negev community. Along these lines Community Stage works towards the integration of disabled and normative communities, through projects such as the Employment Center and Bakery at Kibbutz Kramim.

The Kramim Bakery is currently housed in a community hall used for parlor meetings and community events. The hall is not suitable for the bakery or for the needs of disabled adults. The Kramim Bakery, through ALUT and Community Stage, is currently seeking funding for more appropriate facilities for the Kramim Bakery, to maximize this already successful program and ensure that its participants are receiving the most they can from their time at the Bakery.

A permanent facility to house a professional baking workshop will enable:

- Kibbutz Kramim to continuously adopt autistic adults, ensuring them a life time of integration and participation in the Kibbutz and in Kibbutz life;
- An expansion of the bakery that can accommodate more autistic adults and community members and create more work shifts with more flexibility;
- The creation of up to twenty more positions for autistic adults at the bakery;
- An increase in production in the bakery which will enable the bakery to serve a wider, public constituency, increasing the bakery's exposure and work to more communities in the region.



Jewish Identity in Jeans

A Playful Window on the World of Judaism
Program for Youths

On the day I ascend to the heavens and the angels inquire about the contents of my bag of knowledge, culture and spirit, I will proudly announce that I read Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment in high school (the full text, not the abridged version) completed a Master's degree in philosophy (cum laude) and read all of Shakespeare's plays, most Plato dialogues and some Buddhist texts.

"Wait a second," they will curb my enthusiasm, "You visited the world's cultural sites and that is indeed impressive, but what did you pick up from your Jewish heritage, the one into which you born and from which you are departing today? You leave your children behind – what are you bequeathing to them from your ancestors?" Then, I will stand there in disgrace and face the truth: "I didn't pay many visits to the lands of Jewish culture, but only consumed modern Israeli works. My children are left with a measly Jewish tradition that is mostly related to Jewish holidays, and not much in addition to that".

My son will soon start junior high and will celebrate his Bar Mitzvah in six months. "Judaism in Jeans" was written for him as well as for his friends and other adolescents.

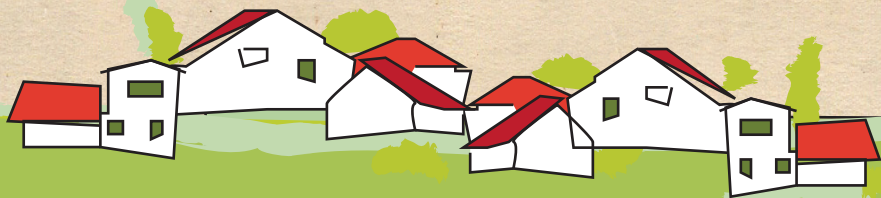
Much effort was put into making Jewish culture and texts accessible – even exciting and intriguing – to youths in Israel and in the Diaspora. We tried to combine past and present, and retell stories that took place a long time ago with a present-day groove. We attempted to connect Jewish tradition with Israeli culture, tying both of them to our 21st-century world. The program is structured according to the Hebrew

calendar and each activity is connected to a universal topic (beginnings, rain, heroism, sustainability, mutual responsibility, memory, freedom, etc.) that is related to that particular month and embeds enjoyable activity and Jewish and Israeli texts.

The program was designed for secular youth, but is also suitable for a mixed secular-religious crowd and offers a unique meeting point for youths who come from different backgrounds and traditions.

Regrettably, I did not benefit from such a program when I was young, but am blessed with it now. The work on it encouraged me to continue to study Jewish culture. I very much hope it will do the same to our younger generation.

Tamar Milshtein
Initiator and Producer
Community Stage
Kramim



Israeli Discourse

Seminars on “Shabbat in a Mixed Community” and a “Shared Life for Secular and Religious Jews – Diversity in Israel”
Hosted by: Community Stage, Kibbutz Kramim

The IDF, much like the rest of Israeli society, is comprised of diverse identities, e.g. religious/secular, Israeli-born/immigrant, Mizrahi/Ashkenazi, male/female, right-wing/left-wing, Tel-Avivi/north-Israeli/south-Israeli, civilian/soldier, Jewish/Muslim, etc. These identities are all contained by the Israeli army, but the various characteristics embedded in them and the significance of weaving them together into an Israeli tapestry should be understood.

Kibbutz Kramim’s Community Stage invites commanders and soldiers to seminars and communal Shabbat feasts, with the aim of connecting the servicemen and women to Israel’s diverse identities, while emphasizing the connection between secular and religious Jews as manifested in the kibbutz. Special Shabbat for commanders and their partners will reveal various links between the Negev’s secular and religious populations and allow them to sample its unique charm. At the same time, they will be invited to examine their own identity and compare it to those of the other guests.

The goals of the Shabbat seminar:

- Experiencing a Shabbat in a mixed community
- Learning some of Shabbat’s religious, social and cultural aspects
- Exposure to public and private spheres during Shabbat
- Learning to appreciate diversity
- Secular and religious – a discourse of compromise or one of choice and understanding?
- Experiencing the social cohesiveness of the Shabbat
- Allowing the commanders and their partners to experience a ‘Shabbat in slippers’



Partners



המשרד להגנת הסביבה



קיבוץ כרמים



MONTREAL



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