**VENTURE SPOTLIGHT: GROWTORAH**

**Founder:** Yosef Gillers  
**Launch:** September 2014

**About:** GrowTorah develops educational Torah garden programs for Jewish schools and communal organizations. Through hands-on garden lessons, day school students can create personal connections to the Torah they learn every day.

**Mission:** GrowTorah aims to cultivate a more passionate, compassionate, and sustainable future driven by Torah values.

**Growth:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>May 2018</th>
<th>May 2019</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>5000+</td>
<td>170%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>150%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Market:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Market Size</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern and Centrist Orthodox Day Schools in the USA</td>
<td>150+</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Day Schools in North America</td>
<td>825+</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We sat down with Yosef Gillers to talk about GrowTorah’s accomplishments, highlights, and what’s to come*
**Top Accomplishments of the Year:**
1. Expanded geographical coverage beyond Bergen County and Riverdale to include Brooklyn and Philadelphia
2. Team expansion to two full-time and one part-time employee
3. Acceptance into the JOFFEE (Jewish Outdoor, Food, Farming & Environmental Education) Fellowship
4. Received grants from Emanuel J. Friedman Philanthropies and Hazon to expand

**Accelerator Highlights:**
1. *Community of practice:* When Sara Just-Michael, GrowTorah Garden Educator, joined the seminar, the cohort was so happy for me to have another team member. The community of support within the Accelerator cohort has been pivotal in our growth.
2. *Lisa Schneider’s course on Digital Strategy:* Lisa spoke about creating a persona for Merriam-Webster and bringing the dictionary to life on social media. She demonstrated how with drive and hard work, one can accomplish anything, even revive a centuries-old dictionary.
3. *Mentorship:* The mentors from the Accelerator have been great. Josef Loeffler’s advice to “hire the right people because the venture's needs will change” has been instrumental to me as I expand our staff. As a growing and changing startup, we need the right people because our needs will continually change. Throughout the cohort, I’ve learned consistently that relationships are everything.

**On the Horizon:**
1. *Curriculum:* We are creating a new curriculum with micro-lessons to spread GrowTorah learning to a wider audience. We are halfway done with our initiative and plan to release it this summer.
2. *Scale:* We are currently exploring alternative models to scale more quickly and responsibly. We want to make sure that we are not only growing, but growing wisely.
3. *Camp:* Last year we had 16 campers participate in our summer camp. This year, we'll open again at Cropsey Community Farm with Rockland Farm Alliance from August 19-23. Check it out on [www.growtorah.org/camp](http://www.growtorah.org/camp)
Thank you, Yosef, for being an instrumental part of our cohort! You are always helping the other ventures with your excellent branding and website advice. We appreciate you sharing your insights and thoughts for feedback and growth.

See Yosef in action at the **Accelerator Demo Day** on **September 22, 2019. SAVE THE DATE!**

**Accelerator Updates:**

**Next seminar:** May 28-30 on Marketing and Evaluation  
**Accelerator Demo Day:** September 22nd, 2019  
**Apply:** Cohort II application opens July 2019

The OU Impact Accelerator relies on the donations of its partners and supporters to transform the landscape of the Jewish community and address our most pressing needs. Please consider making a donation to the OU Impact Accelerator to advance our work.

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