



Learning Brief on the Sustainability Model Programme (SMP) Peer Learning and Exchange Visit

Introduction

This learning brief summarizes the major insights, challenges, and recommendations that came out of the SMP peer learning and exchange visit conducted by Nomadic Assistance for Peace and Development's (NAPAD) finance team at HESED. Over the five-day experiential learning period, the team gained a clear and practical understanding of how a well-organized institution structures, manages, and sustains its community development programs. The visit also allowed NAPAD to interact with both HESED's internal systems and its on-the-ground project implementation. The key lessons and takeaways from this valuable experience are outlined below:



This experiential learning visit was both insightful and transformative. The most significant takeaway was the exposure to HESED's IGA, which provided the team with a new perspective on how community-driven enterprises can be designed and sustained. NAPAD is grateful to the Executive Director - Eunice Ngwawe, and the HESED team for their openness, mentorship, and support throughout the visit.

Advancing Localization: Empowering locally led response, recovery and resilience amid crisis.

Key Learnings

ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES



Financial Tracking and Costing

Gained a deeper understanding of how HESED designs budgets, tracks financial flows, and monitors costs associated with project activities. This gave NAPAD practical ideas for ensuring transparency and accountability within its own projects.



Reporting Formats and Documentation

The sessions demonstrated the importance of structured documentation for donor reporting and internal learning. HESED's approach to standardizing reporting formats will support streamlining of records and strengthen institutional memory.

INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITY (IGA)



Resources Diversification

The NAPAD team was introduced to HESED's income-generating projects including tailoring workshops, small-scale shops, value addition initiatives, and skills-based enterprises. Each was designed to meet local and refugee needs while creating sustainable income streams for the community.



Skills Training and Capacity Strengthening

NAPAD team observed how HESED invests in skills training for beneficiaries, enabling them to transform raw skills into income-generating opportunities. For example, workshops emphasized not just the technical skill (e.g., tailoring), but also record-keeping, customer service, marketing, business management, and quality control.



Community Ownership

A striking lesson was the degree of community and Refugees involvement in identifying, managing, and scaling IGAs. Beneficiaries are not just passive recipients; they are trained, equipped, and mentored to take full ownership of the activities. This ensures higher success and sustainability.



Design and Sustainability

HESED's IGAs are structured not just as livelihood activities but as long-term sustainable enterprises. They integrate business planning, market analysis, and cost recovery strategies, ensuring the projects can thrive beyond donor funding.



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Key Learnings



Impact on Livelihoods

From interacting directly with beneficiaries, NAPAD team saw how IGAs have improved household income, enhanced resilience, and reduced dependency on external aid. This reinforced the role of IGAs as a powerful tool for community empowerment.



Comprehensive Planning

NAPAD team gained practical ideas on structuring IGAs around community priorities and market demand, embedding financial literacy and business management, monitoring profitability and sustainability, and ensuring community buy-in.



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