

## Exchange Visit KNOW-HOW3000



### Participating Organizations

Mathare Children's Fund panairobi (MCFp) and Restart Africa

2015, September 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>

Gilgil, Kenya

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## 1. Introduction

The exchange visit was a prize that MCFpanairobi won in a learning platform KNOWHOW3000 competition, called KNOWLYMPICS. The competition was conducted and funded by HORIZONT3000.

The project which MCFpanairobi chose for the exchange visit was Restart located in Gilgil Kenya. Restart is similar to MCFpanairobi as it works with education for orphans and also runs very successful income generating projects – one of them being the Senata Women Group (SWG), the focus of our visit. SWG is a handi-craft workshop. It is registered in Kenya as a women's group and operates under the Restart trust. Their main products are jewellery, beadwork, textiles and bags.

In the visit participated Titus Mwangi (Head of Project), Richard Oluoch (Programme Officer Sponsorship), Augustine Waziru (Social Worker), Anne Ochieng (Programme Officer Teenage Mothers ), Anne (Tailoring Teacher), Duncan Mwaniki (Accountant), Phoebe Akhinyi (Production Lead, Bags) and Britta Wulfekammer (HORIZONT3000 Technical Advisor) from MCFp; and Mary Coulson (Founder CEO Restart), Peter Ndolo (Assistant to CEO), Lilian – Senata Womens Group, Social Workers from Restart. The visit took place 2015, September 24<sup>th</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup>.

## 2. Objective

The objective of the exchange visit was to learn, share best practices and understand required next steps for successful income generating activities.

## 3. Insights

During the visit MCFpanairobi staff captured many findings and was able to identify key success factors of Restart that have helped especially the Senata Womens Group to become self-reliant:

- They have a well-established local and international network which is key for successful fundraising.
- They have clear objectives, clear roles and responsibilities and everyone is aware of them.
- Their investments are diversified to spread the risk (Senata Women Group, Herbal Garden, Briquette production).
- They have a responsible leader and all-rounder in the team who has the full overview.
- They do a good display of products.
- They bring women together to better exchange ideas, issues and motivate each other.
- They have a registered women group which allows for tax exemption.
- They produce different types of bags and products to diversify.
- Employees learn different handicraft skills which help them to diversify and adopt to market needs.
- Quality is key and the responsibility lies with everyone.
- Their work space is organized and structured in a convenient way.
- They are always scouting for new products.
- Support systems are in place. Income from different projects supports the orphanage.
- They use leftovers for training instead of using new expensive material (i.e. use old material and waste material for sewing training).
- They apply learning on the job methods for apprentices.
- They have a strong believe in themselves, even in tough times.
- They have good teamwork.

We also used the exchange to reflect on matters, where there is room of improvement for Restart:

- Currently there is no exit plan for the orphans. Recommendation is to think about an exit strategy for their orphans once they finish school

- They have limited documentation about their work and lessons learned. Recommendation is to start documenting so that they keep the knowledge in case staff moves on and to keep record of their lessons learned for future references

## 4. Outcome

From the experience of the trip to Restart in Gilgil the MCFpanairobi team concluded that the learnings will be of great help especially to the IGA team. Based on the previous findings the following short-term actions have been identified and are in the process of being implemented at MCFpanairobi:

- Trade fairs: Participate in fairs to gather ideas about potential new products.
- Roles and Responsibilities: Identify and agree on clear roles and responsibilities.
- Peer to peer training: Apprentices learn “on the job” from an experienced peer.
- Quality: Implement a quality processes for all IGAs.
- Tax exemption: Seek expert advice on how to get tax exempted
- Recycling: Use leftover materials for training purposes
- KRA (Kenya Tax authority) training: Conduct training with KRA

In a mid-term perspective, the intention is also to strengthen the relationship between MCFpanairobi and Restart to enable a frequent knowledge transfer for both:

- Knowledge transfer: Start a frequent knowledge transfer with Restart
- Training exchange program: Restart to train MCFp “train-the-trainer in tailoring; MCFp to train Restart on marketing and sales

## 5. Evaluation

The trip to Gilgil was a full success. All staff members were able to engage with Restart co-workers and exchange valuable insights for their respective areas. The findings and success factors will guide MCFpanairobi in implementing changes to improve MCFpanairobi’s Income Generating Activities and to become more self-reliant. Besides that it was a fantastic opportunity to get out of the everyday work environment and a good team building activity.

## Appendix

### Questions prepared by MCFpanairobi for the Exchange Visit

- How did you tap in selling your products in western countries?
- Which means do you use to export your products abroad?
- Do you also sell your products locally if yes where?
- How do you balance the rescue project (orphanage) and IGA?
- Is the net factor product income from abroad able to sustain the center fully i.e. paying the workers and running the center activities?
- How much are you able to raise annually?
- What kind of products are you making?
- How do you manage to sustain the project with minimal help of the donors?
- What are some of the motivations that you have used to ensure that the community remains positive towards the project?
- How did you manage to get the markets outside the country and what about the export expenses?
- What are some of the leading challenges that you always come a cross and how do you go about them?
- Apart from training the group that does the craft work on craft skills, do you also have some other trainings for them? Which ones?
- Do you have a program whereby the beneficiaries pay back to the project? If yes, how?
- Do you have an exit program for the children in the center? If yes, how does it work?
- Do you reintegrate the street children back to their families or relatives after rehabilitation?
- Do you involve the parents of the children in activities of the program? If yes, what are their responsibilities?
- What do you do that makes you not depend on donors? Did you at one time depend on donors?
- How did you start the projects and what is the capital?
- What made you start making the bungles and other products?
- How do donors feel when they realize that you started to generate some income on your own?
- Where do you sell your products? Who are your major customers?
- Do you send them as parcels or do you send one of you to take them?
- Where do you see this organization in five years' time?
- How do you select the people to assist or sponsor?
- What are the risks associated with sourcing of raw materials or holding the line of costs of services?
- What financial strategy have you laid down to ensure that there is no misuse of funds
- How regularly and who reviews your cash flow to avoid fraud?
- Does your staff have training to keep in touch on the changes that may be there in line of your venture?
- How do you manage to export your products and make profits since there are high taxes in exports or are you registered for tax exemption?
- What strategy and skills do you apply to ensure that you keep sailing in the market i.e. next to have obsolete goods?
- How many products do you sell? What's the price range of products?
- Who does the design and who does the shopping for material?
- How do you brand the products? Do you add labels on products, where are they made?
- Is one product made by one woman or are several women working on it? do you have production lines?
- How do you ship abroad? What are the costs? How many shipments abroad per year? Which countries?
- How do you store your products and keep track of? How do you keep track and monitor large orders?
- How is the quality control executed and what are the challenges?
- Do you produce on demand or on stock?
- Are the crafts women paid per piece or per hour?
- How to introduce new products and how to train? How to build capacity?
- How to bookkeep?
- How did Restart access the European market? How to work with the famous designer?
- Do you have any understanding with the government regarding taxes?
- What were the challenges you faced while starting up the IGA?
- How do you ensure synergies are galvanized amongst the women in the IGA?