



**MARKET  
DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE NIGER DELTA**

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# USING INCLUSIVE MODELS TO IMPLEMENT DEMAND-DRIVEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



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# **USING INCLUSIVE MODELS TO IMPLEMENT DEMAND-DRIVEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in human beings is a form of modern-day slavery, a global scourge where people are sold illegally for abuse and profit. Together, it produces more than \$150 billion from forced economic exploitation for commercial sex, domestic work, or other economic activities. The Global Slavery Index estimated in July 2018 that there are 40.3 million survivors of modern day slavery around the world, 71% being women and 25% being children. Unfortunately, Edo state is one of the key sources of human trafficking in Nigeria.

In response to the complex issues of modern day slavery in Edo State, the second component of the MADE II programme is partnering with various public and private sector actors to significantly increase the capacity of the state to provide aspirational economic opportunities and increased incomes for vulnerable youth and women as well as returnees. It should also be noted that this component under MADE II's Edo State Investment Portfolio (ESIP) offers a unique opportunity to use market systems solutions to improve resilience and decrease the vulnerability of those at greatest risk of being trafficked.

MADE's target is to create aspirational employment opportunities and facilitate income increases for at least 30,000 poor low-skilled youths and women from Edo State, who are susceptible to human trafficking. This will be achieved through the implementation of the market systems approach to generating wealth creation and employment in the Niger Delta's non-oil economy as already shown to be successful from the MADE I programme.

The purpose of this paper is to share the already emerging lessons learned from MADE's approach using market systems-based approaches to develop inclusive models in implementing demand-driven skills development intervention for returnees, potential victims of human trafficking as well as vulnerable households. By sharing its learning, MADE hopes to stimulate the interest of public and private sector actors working in the area of human trafficking to learn some critical success factors from MADE's experience, implementing the skills development intervention. Knowing the pitfalls to avoid, and the key learning elucidated in this paper will serve as guidelines in design of similar programmes targeting this segment of Edo's population.

## 2. BACKGROUND

By way of contributing to addressing the the complex issues of modern day slavery, DFID looked to an already existing programme in the Niger Delta that had shown strong evidence of success in its interventions. It's Market Development Programme in the Niger Delta (MADE) which deployed the market systems approach to raising the incomes of 150,000 poor people in the Niger Delta over a 4.5 year period (2013 – 2018) took on the daunting challenge. Results already indicated that the MADE programme had exceeded its target by February 2018 which led to an extended period of two years to double its target from phase I, while also taking on the challenge of responding to issues of human trafficking and modern day slavery using a market development systems approach.

The creation of the Edo State Investment Portfolio (ESIP) component was to address illegal migration by stimulating sustainable livelihoods and developing aspirational employment opportunities while influencing behaviour change in the target group of vulnerable women, youth, and victims of human trafficking. By providing access to opportunities and increased incomes, it is expected that the lure of illegal migration will be reduced, increasing resilience and reducing the vulnerability of those most at risk of being trafficked.



During the inception phase of MADE II from March 2018, several specific scope analysis were carried out to enable a better understanding of the environment in Edo State and help define what opportunities might be considered aspirational, capable of stimulating increased livelihoods and building desire to stay. Amongst the studies undertaken were:

1. Vulnerable group assessment
2. Edo Economic outlook and investment scan
3. Stakeholders mapping and capacity assessment
4. Sector Analysis
5. Edo LGA mapping of business and crops with comparative advantage.

The findings of these scoping activities highlighted the following:

- There is a constant increase in demand for skilled labour especially in the hospitality sector in and outside Edo state.
- Findings showed that the youth in Edo state considered entrepreneurship as aspirational and were willing to acquire the relevant skills required in areas such as Fashion, cosmetology, hospitality etc.

These initial assessments during the six-month inception phase led to the identification of potential opportunities of intervention, that has resulted in ESIP creating a specific portfolio of activities, one of which was the skills development intervention, which is the focus of this learning document.

### **STRATEGIC APPROACH OF MADE's SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION**

The Skills development intervention seeks to promote alternative economic opportunities for women, potential victims of human trafficking, and vulnerable households by presenting opportunities for building their knowledge, improving their technical and enterprise skills as well as providing market linkages for services and products produced by these segment. The essence of the skills development intervention is to improve and strengthen technical and artisan skills of youth and women as well as vulnerable families by promoting their access to alternative livelihood opportunities, that will reduce pressure from families and the tendency to migrate.

MADE's strategy for the skills development intervention is fundamentally to work with private sector lead firms and service providers to facilitate both:

1. Skills Development for products: This is targeted at mainstreaming producers into a supply chain that guarantees access to ready markets by facilitating skills development to produce a range of cosmetic products while linking them to markets for ready products.
2. Skills Development for Employment: This is targeted at facilitating and increasing access to employment (jobs or services) opportunities for returnees, vulnerable persons, skilled workers and artisans. This involved training beneficiaries in line with identified job specification and available employment opportunities especially in the hospitality industry and in other areas of skilled artisanry while lead firms facilitate their placements in these jobs.

#### **Delivery Approach to the Skills Development Intervention**

##### **Skills Development for Products**

In this intervention, MADE partnered with Genius Hub and Society for the Empowerment of Young Persons (SEYP) to pilot a business model that trains people to produce cosmetic products for identified markets and to link local producers into a supply chain that guarantees ready markets for their products. The strategy of the intervention involved training of trainers (TOT) by Genius Hub who then acted as aggregators for offtake of products from their network for the bulk markets

through Genius Hub. A key role of the Genius Hub master trainers was to guarantee the integrity of the products by providing technical support services to local producers through training and follow-up on production, then the aggregation of products for offtake by Genius Hub. In the pilot, the training focused on household cleaning agents and cosmetology products (liquid soap, disinfectants & air fresheners); as well as organic skin & hair care products (black soap).

### Skills Development for Employment

Under this intervention, MADE partnered with Handy Jacks to profile skilled artisans and craft persons and feature them on their online platform where potential clients could access the artisans and demand for their services.

MADE is also partnering with Amena Entrepreneurial Academy to facilitate improved skills development, certifications and linkage to jobs for the hospitality sector, targeted at returnees and potential victims of Human Trafficking. MADE is supporting Amena Academy in the development and implementation of a curriculum for hospitality, housekeeping and stewarding; after which Amena Academy links the trained beneficiaries to jobs in the hospitality industry in and outside Edo State.

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ESIP INCEPTION TO IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

While implementing this intervention, MADE and some its partners learned some valuable lessons from using inclusive models to implement demand-driven skills development within the state. The lessons presented from a project life cycle view point speak to the challenges that were encountered, how they interventions evolved and adapted in response to these challenges and holds some key recommendations for other programmes or organisations wishing to implement skills development interventions for returnees, potential victims and vulnerable households. These lessons are explored in detail in the section that follows.

### 1. Lessons Around Design and Concept:

*Lessons 1: Timely research and analysis are critical to informing sound intervention design:* A key lesson that emerged from the initial MADE I intervention was the lack of credible secondary data to inform the initial design. This was a critical lesson learned from the initial programme, therefore the ESIP/MADE II deliberately ensured that this would not be the case. Hence the drive for data on specific areas like demographics, key drivers of human trafficking etc was critical for MADE II. Considering the general lack of credible secondary data to inform program Specifically, the baseline and scoping study in the skills development sector provided an opportunity to profile unemployed youth, artisans, service providers and youth

#### **Box I**

#### *Parameters for Defining the Right Beneficiary*

The willingness of the client or beneficiary to commit to financial and time contributions; to ensure maximum attendance and active participation at the training sessions.

Profiling and vetting of beneficiaries to ascertain that information provided are valid, and consent of the client/beneficiaries to provide or share information with the service provider at intervals during and after the programmes.

Potential beneficiaries/ clients must have basic qualification or capacity to receive and apply the knowledge acquired. Where this is lacking, is the client or beneficiary willing to be trained and then able to apply knowledge accordingly? Is the service provider able to provide this support or recommend other service providers?



development agencies in Edo and Delta States. This enabled MADE II to be more strategic in designing and delivering the artisanal intervention. Findings from the study enabled MADE II to identify and prioritize the choice of skills for products development and employment.

An example of this was cosmetology which is the study of beauty treatment requires cleaning agents such as liquid soap, detergent, etc. which are always in demand. They stood out as a skill for product development, presenting a business opportunity that requires very minimal startup capital for rural low income and vulnerable households. The scoping study also identified hospitality and construction artisanry as the sectors with the highest potential for large employment. This enabled the MADE II team to execute informed decisions in executing the programme.

*Lessons 1.1: It is important to understand that a detailed process is required in matching the proposed skill-sets with those of beneficiary skills to ensure sustainability of the intervention:* It is important to identify the right set of clients and beneficiaries and matching them with the right skills at the onset to achieve the intended results in a skills development intervention. As with most skills development programmes applying a conventional approach to their delivery, beneficiaries were often generic, with no clear cut measures on how the beneficiaries are matched to skills based on interest, expectations and evident desire to take it forward. As a result, most beneficiaries were often not fully committed to the process. Selecting the right beneficiaries requires determining the following:

1. Qualifications or educational requirements necessary to access the programme;
2. If language would be a barrier to the beneficiaries and adapt accordingly;
3. Are the beneficiaries fully committed to being part of the training programme in terms of attendance and investment in training materials;
4. Post-training will the beneficiaries have access to raw materials /resources for the products at minimum costs;
5. Finally, is the programme aspirational to the target group in terms of prospects for job and service opportunities and also achievable income?

This led to start-up packs or grants given to beneficiaries being either sold out, given away or used for other activities. The lesson for ESIP/MADE II was that it needed to design with tact to match skills to target beneficiaries' aspiration of livelihoods using certain defined parameters as shown in the box I.

Targeting of beneficiaries was based on demography and then on what could be considered aspirational to the target groups. For the demography, these were persons within the identified highly endemic regions of the state; which are regions prone to human trafficking or had communities that had suffered environmental shocks due to extreme geographical activities like Oredo, Ikpoba Okha and Orhionwon in Edo South Senatorial District and Ekpoma, Esan West in Edo Central Senatorial district.

As a result, the programme had to ensure *that* it had targeted the right group of beneficiaries. The profile of the target group for skills development interventions was:

1. Potential victims of human trafficking who are unemployed or underemployed
2. Vulnerable households with no alternative source(s) of livelihood
3. Skilled returnees with no access to markets(jobs) for their products or services.

This involved carrying out detailed research which focused on specifically knowing what type of skills the intervention needed to deliver and knowing what category of beneficiaries was in the right position to benefit from the potential those skills could bring. For example, from the initial scoping studies, cosmetology (such as the making of cleaning agents) and hospitality (becoming professional housekeepers and stewards in hotels) were the two areas of skills development that MADE saw to

hold the most potential for the target beneficiaries comprising returnees, potential victims and vulnerable households and this became the focus of the intervention. As emphasized earlier, matching skills with the beneficiary profile is one way to avoid implementing programmes that at the end, show no visible evidence of change as leaving it too open can often be detrimental to the success of the project.

## 2. Lessons Around Delivery/Approach:

*Lessons 2: A key lesson that emerged is the importance of establishing and maintaining good relations, particularly with key stakeholders:* Establishing and maintaining good relationships with key stakeholders is pivotal to operate effectively and fostering strong local partnerships is a good way to apply the market systems delivery approach. As part of the initial studies in the second phase, MADE commissioned a stakeholder mapping and capacity needs assessment in Edo State to determine which organisations, government agencies and private sector companies are working to address human trafficking and modern-day slavery and to map them based on interest and will, as well as assess their level of technical capacity. This informed the programme's decision about suitable stakeholders for engagement with the programme. The final decision on the choice of partner to engage was based on a pre-set criterion as set out in box II.

In the skills intervention, four organisations - Amena Academy, Genius Hub, Handy Jacks and Society for the Empowerment of Young People (SEYP) were initially identified for a pilot based on the pre-set criteria. Several key lessons have emerged in the way MADE has engaged these partners and others to deliver the skills development intervention.

*Lessons 2.1: Building the capacity of partners on the delivery approach of the intervention is crucial:* The entry of MADE into the human trafficking room in February 2018 provided an opportunity to address the issue from the perspective of business systems growth by leveraging Edo State's investment potential in a way that promotes people's sustainable economic livelihoods. But this was a fairly new and challenging approach – away from the conventional direct delivery approach of most programmes from government and the private sector. MADE knew that getting this right would help to prove how market systems can be applied to tackle other development challenges beyond agriculture on a sustainable basis; knowing that trafficking in human beings is a complex issue made the project aware that it was not going to be easy to prove.

### **Box II**

#### Partner Engagement Criteria

- ❖ Capacity/track record on the issue of human trafficking and modern-day slavery
- ❖ Interest and willingness to engage and adopt MADE's proposed business models
- ❖ Level of influence: How influential is this partner within the space?
- ❖ The necessity of involvement: Why is there need to engage this partner? Why not another?
- ❖ Quality of governance: Do they have structures in place to run sustainably?
- ❖ Potential for scalability: Can they pilot and run to scale without continuous support?

It began by initially using the M4P CAPABLE training sponsored by the Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) to develop the capacities of Genius Hub, Amena Academy and other established organisations on the market systems approach. PIND launched the Capacity Building for Local Empowerment (CAPABLE) initiative in 2013, to boost the institutional and technical capacities of local civil society and business membership organizations so they could increase their competitive advantage to accessing funds and improve the quality of service delivery to communities. MADE partnered with

PIND in 2015 to expand the range of technical training and capacity building services offered by

supporting the design and delivery of a new course on 'market systems development' as an approach for development organisations. In 2018 MADE applied it to change the mindset of organizations working in the modern-day slavery area.

Secondly, the MADE programme supported these organisations to develop a training curriculum for the delivery of the skills intervention focusing on the skills-based aspirational sectors (cosmetology and hospitality). To a large extent, this worked as planned. Introducing these organisations to the market systems approach enabled them to become creative in adopting 'beneficiary-centric' business models that were more sustainable than the 'training-fee focused' way they were used to delivering their training. These organisations are now applying the market systems approach in other areas of their skills delivery programmes beyond cosmetology and hospitality which they are partnering MADE on. An example of this, for instance, has been Genius Hub is applying this approach in their fashion line to train and in turn offtake fashion items from their target beneficiaries. SEYP is also applying this model in their tie and dye training programme. These organisations, today have become advocates, applying the M4P approach to their skills development interventions while encouraging peer organisations to do the same.

*Lessons 2.2: By engaging partners in the areas of their strength rather than getting them to fit into the projects strategic vision can save valuable time:* While it is important to align partner expectations, not paying attention to the strengths or the existing capacity of a partner and how this can be beneficial to the programme is a major pitfall that can slow down efforts. The initial socio-economic study conducted by MADE helped to define what sectors were considered as aspirational and ultimately decided where MADE's efforts were concentrated on. It made much sense then to engage partners to deliver the already pre-defined skills e.g. skills for products (cosmetology), skills for jobs (hospitality and artisanry). But as the programme evolved and partners struggled to deliver results, it became obvious that engaging these partners in areas that weren't necessarily their areas of expertise was like putting square pegs in round holes. For instance, it would have made better sense to engage SEYP from the onset in delivering skills for the product (cosmetology) which was one of skills programme rather than engaging them to facilitate recruitment and engagement of 1,000 workers for Okomu oil palm plantation. SEYP has several years of experience targeting returnees<sup>1</sup> and running skills development programmes on cosmetology, catering, fashion and business/financial literacy skills. Similarly, engaging Genius Hub whose strength is in fashion would have been a better way to go, rather the programme engaged them to deliver a product that was new to them – cosmetology. While it is important to identify skills from a needs assessment standpoint, it is as much important to engage partners who have the strength to deliver results in their areas of expertise.

*Lessons 2.3: It is critical to understand that achieving scale-up in skills development programmes that have adopted a market-systems approach is a gradual process:* A market systems development programme will not churn out results as soon as it starts. While MADE was ambitious at the beginning, it was also conscious of the fact that it needed to test and try out the concepts, pause to learn, continue with what works, dropping what does not work or adapting to make it work. This requires a gradual but steady process. It means then that the best practice for running these kinds of programmes intending to reach large numbers is to the first pilot with small numbers (50-100 maximum) for a minimum period of 2-3 months and gradually scaling up to reach the intended target.

MADE's thinking behind results also evolved. While setting out to increase the incomes of 30,000 vulnerable youth, it also realized that the time was too short for the programmes to pilot, scale-up and gain traction all within two years. More so, skills development requires time to perfect! Learning

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<sup>1</sup> SEYP runs a shelter for returnees and victims of sexual abuse

a new skill and being adept at it is not as easy as pie. Against the backdrop of the one-off training that most programmes are used to, skills development requires even more time for a follow-up to enable trained workers or producers master their skills to meet the requirements of the market. The focus then shifted from becoming more focused on numbers to building capacities in the right partners to pilot interventions, learn with them, support them to adapt and to achieve scale even when MADE is no longer there. For instance, some partners are already showing their readiness to take this forward as evidence in their increasing investment in the sector.

For instance, Genius Hub is expanding their training content to target more beneficiaries in production of organic cosmetology products (e.g. black soap) and Amena Academy has already invested over 20 million Naira in raising a cadre of professional housekeepers and stewards to meet the demands of the thriving hospitality industry in Edo. The important point to note here is that market systems programmes evolve and may take time to achieve intended results but bear in mind that 'slow and steady wins the race', sustainably delivering continuous services.

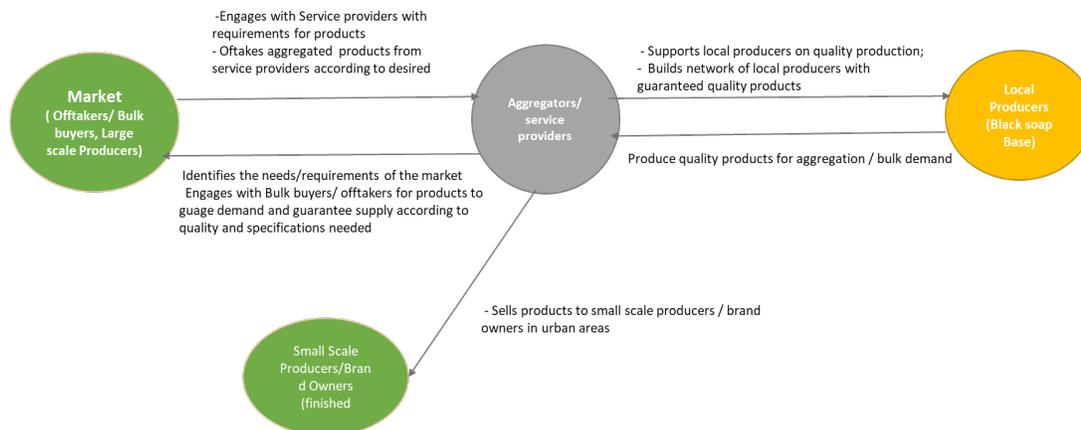
### 3. Lessons around Product & Service Development:

*Lessons 3: Ensure the testing of any assumptions that may have emerged during the development and planning stages of the intervention:* Hypotheses are assumed to be true, but they do not always end up being true. They may sometimes turn out to be false, which can have a significant impact on the project. MADE developed and facilitated a business model with Genius Hub that mainstreams producers into a steady supply chain with a guarantee of ready jobs or markets for their products and services. Genius Hub piloted products in the Cosmetology line such as cleaning agents and personal care products e.g. liquid soap, bleach, izal, air-freshener & perfumes. As indicated in the supply chain illustration below, the plan was for Genius Hub to train a group of associates as master service providers who train and aggregate finished products from local producers on to an end market (high-value bulk markets).



This model was drawn on the assumption that there is a ready bulk market for finished products from local producers. After all, these are fast-moving consumer goods that are always in demand. It will be easy to aggregate and offtake these products and sell to a waiting market. So it seemed at the beginning, but experience soon taught a different lesson. The bulk market was saturated with popular brands that were far more standardized. Perceptions around quality, pricing and packaging made it difficult to penetrate the market. It was time to think! The focus of the intervention was to adapt the model to products with ready markets and to produce to meet the specification of that market. Together with Genius Hub, MADE adapted the business model to move from supply-driven to demand-driven, as illustrated below.

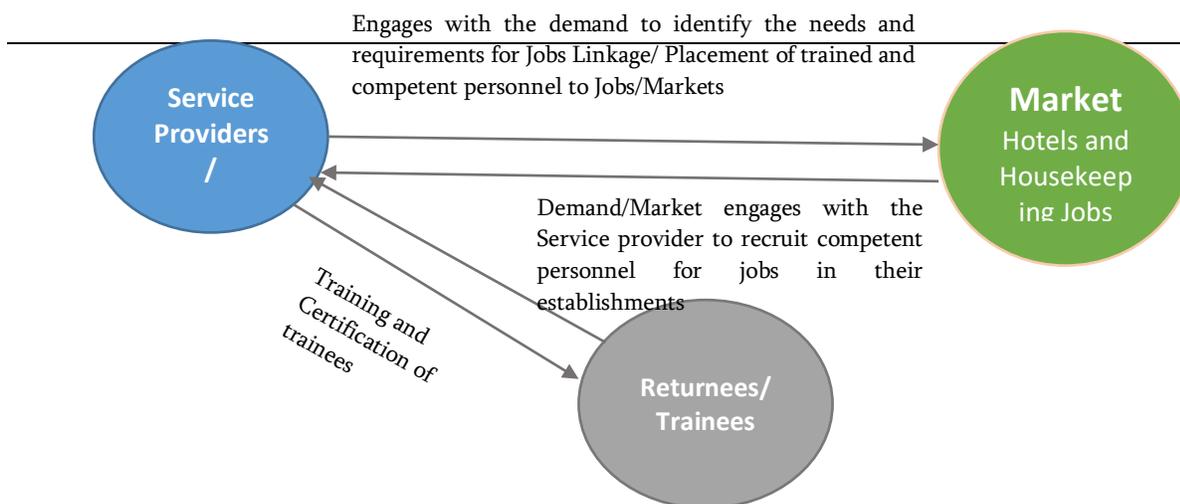




In this model, Oklan Best was identified as a ready market for a specific kind of cosmetology product - Black Soap. The raw materials for production were easily accessible by the local people (plantain peel and stump, palm kernel bunch and cocoa pods). The earlier concerns from the bulk market around standardization were eliminated. All the off-taker wanted was a steady supply of black soap from local producers, with an estimated offtake of 2,000kg (two tonnes) of produce every month. At this point, meeting this high demand meant the number of local producers had to grow. Having proven the viability of this model, Society for the Empowerment of Young Persons (SEYP) was engaged to join Genius Hub in training more local producers to meet the monthly offtake capacity by Oklan Best. The partners are now applying this model in other products line they run such as fashion by Genius Hub and Tie and Dye *Adire* (Cloth) fashion accessories by SEYP. The assumption in itself does not harm but not having a contingency plan can slow down project results.

*Lesson 3.1: Sourcing alternative use of innovative funding models that can reduce barriers to entry and discourage expectations of hand-outs is critical:* A major barrier to entry for skills development has always been the cost of training. This is the reason most development programmes often take up the cost of training for their beneficiaries. Training fees in the hospitality industry range from N65,000 - N150,000 depending on the suite of services offered. While these fees are undoubtedly affordable for most medium income earners who see the value being offered, the ESIP target population of returnees and potential victims of human trafficking are unable to afford these fees. This limits their accessibility to the training.

ESIP/MADE II realized that this is not a sustainable model in the long run and has convinced its partners to see the potential in finding new funding models that will enable its target market to afford to attend these courses. This could be either through the training company making their money off the sales of the products they are teaching people to make (so training becomes an embedded service) or allow people to pay for the training later by providing the services in which they were trained. For instance, Amena Academy trains and certifies beneficiaries to become professionals in housekeeping and stewarding and job placements for the graduates in establishments in the hospitality sector. Through a payment plan over 10 months, graduates can pay back the investments on training and still maintain a decent minimum wage during this period. The illustration below shows the transactional relationship between the market actors in Amena Academy's model.



Another example alternative funding model is the skills for product business model, which offers beneficiaries an opportunity to be trained at almost no cost, with a guaranteed immediate offtake for their products (now proving to be a viable model in the Black Soap product development). These models help partners and service providers to operate as businesses that identify other services they can provide to increase the organisation's income streams, without having to depend heavily on training fees alone. This approach which, rather than help them scale, keeps them focused on clients that can afford their services. At the same time, beneficiaries can key into these opportunities without having to worry about upfront training costs; with this, they are learning to take charge of their destinies and not waiting to receive handouts that sometimes mean less to them.

*Lessons 3.2: Programmes should Strategically prioritise what works and focus resources into getting it to work better:* It is key to identify and focus on what works well and tweak it to ensure it works better and grow to scale rather than pursue several skills at once. As earlier discussed in the scoping study conducted at the beginning of MADE II. The identified areas such as hospitality and construction artisanry sectors were the highest potential for large employment. In response to the latter, MADE supported Handy Jacks, an online platform that profiles and links artisans to jobs to extend the configuration of its platform for artisans in Edo state. The programme also facilitated engagements with apex associations of artisans in selected informal sectors, supporting activities for enumeration, promotional activities, coordination and registration of artisans in the state. A total of 1,000 artisans were registered on the Handy Jacks platform. At face value, this seemed like a perfect plan. Artisans are registered on a platform, they are linked to jobs, they increase their income from accessing more markets for their artisan craft - except that the Edo market is different to Lagos in terms of utilizing skilled artisans at such scale. This may have worked in the fast-paced booming economy such as Lagos where Handy Jacks is more popularly known but the question of how this applies to the Edo context deserved some more insights and lead. Part of applying a market systems approach is knowing when to adapt and when to pull back. This helped in refocusing resources to viable opportunities with more potential for scalability.

#### 4. Lesson around Sustainability and Exit:

*Lessons 4: It is prudent to ensure that the capacity of aggregators are built to facilitate access to markets for products which will, in turn, ensure sustainability:* Skills development becomes more demand-driven when local producers are given access to markets for their produce. Building aggregator capacity in partners is a key part of ensuring the sustainability of the demand and supply pull. Aggregation helps to ensure ready offtake which increases productivity among local producers. Some of these producers on their own are taking the learning from aggregation forward by aggregating their finished product and supplying an available market no matter how small. For example, Genius

Hub, Amena Academy and SEYP are further proving the efficacy of aggregation by identifying ready markets and driving supply by local producers to meet the specification of that market. A critical recommendation for service providers in skills for products is to properly identify viable products and market requirement before adopting the aggregation model in their service delivery.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, implementing market-based skills development programmes effectively requires a strategic approach by stakeholders. Service Providers and Lead trainers may be required to adapt to new roles and approaches that reflect what the market for products or skills should be, to effectively improve the value proposition of the programmes to make them more operationally sustainable. When training to meet market demand, trainers must have periodic follow up with clients and beneficiaries of programmes as well as engagement with the demand market; this becomes leverage to better position service providers and trainers to attract more clients, investors and funders.

MADE's expectation is to see that impact of interventions in this area are sustainable and continue to grow to target more of the target population through a system where service providers are capable and incentivized to continually carry out support services to the target groups with or without external funding. Beneficiaries of skills development programmes are also able to access markets for their products and services due to inclusive systems that facilitate market linkages; while other potential beneficiaries or clients see the value in these systems and are willing to fully commit to the criteria required to be part of these programmes.

