

Lessons from the Field: Learnings from Seven Years with Yayasan Hasanah











Education

Community Development

Environment

Arts, Culture & Public Spaces Knowledge

Lesson One: Financing Model

The endowment structure has helped us to be more **sustainable**, **stable** and **long-term** with our social mission - driving programmatic impacts with our partners.

Hasanah operates on a fixed annual budget.



Lesson Two: Tax Status

Truly understand your needs and nature of operations. Tax exemption for NPOs under Income Tax Act 1967 - Subsection 44(6) may or may not be useful for you.

Some questions to ask: Will you be raising funds externally? Who actually needs the tax exemption status - parent company or the NPO?



Lesson Three: People & Organisation

Professionalise the Sector

Attract the right talent and benchmark compensation correctly.

Strike a Good Balance

Find a good balance of people from grassroots/ developmental background and corporate/ strategic experience.

This includes people who understand impact frameworks, monitoring & evaluation frameworks and work dynamics in the social context.

Power Dynamics

Your approach to your grantee is based on a mutual trust partnership model - not a "clientagency" model.

Be wary of the power dynamics.



Lesson Four: The Sector

Globally, there is a certain science and art in navigating the social sector. It is not a charitable space, but a developmental space anchored on rights-based and justice frameworks.

It is **key** to understand this as it influences the behaviour and approach of the funder to the ecosystem.



Lesson Five: Mission & Vision

The mission and vision of the foundations should be succinct. For Hasanah, our vision and five focus areas were attained by reviewing Malaysia's development plans including the Malaysia plans, economic transformation models, government transformation models, SDG commitments and others.

Our **aspirations and mission** are not linked to business but anchored on national development. This positions us as a neutral entity, playing the role of Convenor, Collaborator and Catalyst for Change.



Lesson Six: Robust Structures & Governance

Building trust capital on a transparent and robust governance structure matters. Develop clear grant application process, impact assessment and measurement framework, finance and audit functions -- all pertinent within a nonprofit lens. Board representation is also important.



Lesson Seven: Storytelling & Communicating Impact

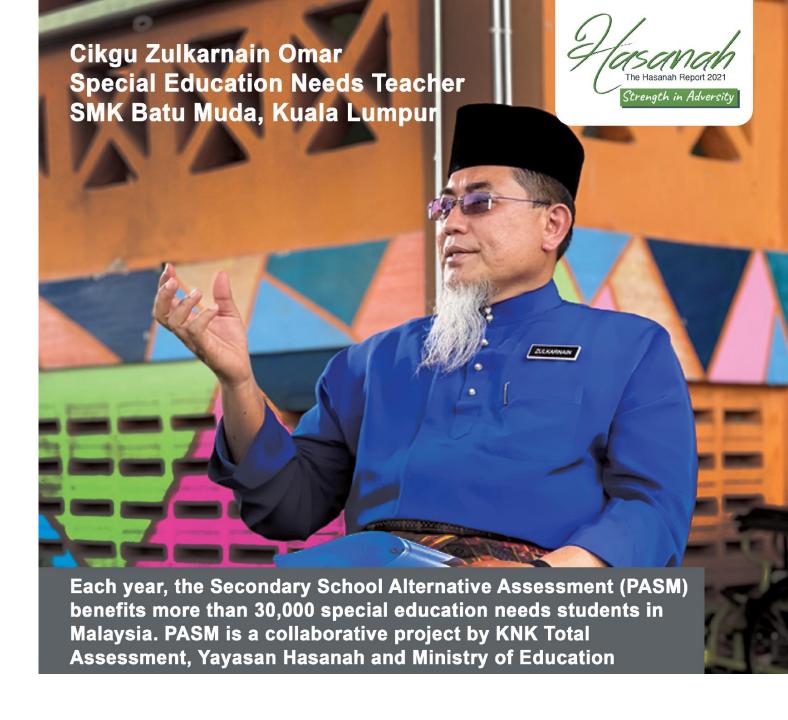
Communicating impact is the **biggest challenge** for astute and commercially-trained stakeholders. Figure this out early.

Rule-of-thumb: Always share stories to attract and resonate with different audiences, conveying both qualitative and quantitative results.



Lesson Eight: Partnership & Collaboration

Let go of egos and logos. At times, getting stuck with who gets the credit jeopardises an otherwise fantastic and high-impact collaboration. Be mindful and sensitive to this. We must give credit where credit is due; and always be conscious of the objectives of others, not just that of our own.



Lesson Nine: Be aware (and beware!) of scope creep

Even with the best intentions, you cannot boil the entire ocean. Be prudent of not falling into the trap of trying to raise the tide for all boats. It is **crucial to set boundaries** and be wary of unproductive "scope creeps". Be clear of who you are and your mandate.



Lesson Ten: It is a journey of constant learning and improvement

You stand on the shoulders of those before you, and you have been passed the baton to **be stronger and do better**.

Build a national institution that is focused on nation-building, for the advancement of our society and environment – a legacy that contributes to generations to come. Remain apolitical.

