



USINGA host BAMMISHO for a knowledge exchange visit

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USINGA and BAMMISHO teams

The USINGA HDSS proudly hosted BAMMISHO—the SAPRIN network’s newest and seventh node, based in the North-West—for a three-day visit from 25 – 27 March. This visit was designed as a knowledge exchange, providing BAMMISHO with a valuable opportunity to benchmark best practices in HDSS node management. The goal was to support BAMMISHO’s growth and enhance its operational capacity by drawing on USINGA’s extensive experience and deep operational knowledge.

BAMMISHO aimed to learn from USINGA’s established practices, gain insights into effective strategies for node development and better anticipate potential challenges in managing a population research infrastructure. This collaboration marks an important step in strengthening BAMMISHO’s foundation as it prepares to start operations.

The visit commenced with an orientation session facilitated by USINGA’s Project Manager, Palesa Mataboge. USINGA’s leadership team delivered an in-depth presentation outlining the node’s organisational structure, key operational areas and the roles played by various sections.



Each section gave a presentation focusing on their specific department—Data Management, Operations, Community Engagement and Communication—offering a holistic picture of how USINGA operates on a day-to-day basis. These presentations were designed to encourage open dialogue, with ample opportunities for BAMBISHO’s team to ask questions and engage in discussions throughout the session.

This interactive format allowed for a deeper exchange of ideas and provided BAMBISHO with valuable insights into the successful approaches and challenges that have contributed to USINGA’s growth. BAMBISHO’s team was also able to offer comments and suggestions, contributing perspectives that could help USINGA continue to grow and further refine its operations.

On the second day of BAMBISHO’s visit, the team was taken to the field for a practical, hands-on experience. This exposure allowed them to observe USINGA’s project management, data management and quality control teams in action. Each department provided detailed demonstrations of their daily tasks, offering BAMBISHO valuable insights into the processes that ensure accurate data handling and strong quality assurance.

This experience was especially valuable for BAMBISHO, as they have not yet started their own fieldwork. The knowledge and lessons gained during the visit will be crucial as they prepare to launch their operations—giving them strategies and confidence to handle any challenges that may come their way.

The day also included a cultural highlight, with BAMBISHO getting a “kasi taste” of local cuisine. The USINGA field team treated them to *umkhuba*—a dish made with vetkoek filled with fries—and *inhloko*, a traditional meal made from a cow’s head. BAMBISHO thoroughly enjoyed this unique and flavourful experience.

To wrap up the day, they joined field workers on household visits, gaining firsthand experience of how data is collected in real-life settings. This on-the-ground exposure gave them a clear understanding of how field operations work in practice.

On the final day of the visit, a day of reflection offered a valuable opportunity to pause and assess the learning experiences.

"From management to fieldworkers, every member of the USINGA team was knowledgeable, open, and generous with their insights," she said. "Your warm hospitality and thoughtful presentations gave us the confidence and clarity to learn, develop our work, and begin executing SAPRIN's vision through the BAMBISHO node. We are deeply grateful for the experience and your support," said Nompumelelo Nkosi of BAMBISHO.

Palesa Mataboge, Project Manager at USINGA, added, "It was a great pleasure hosting the BAMBISHO team. The visit was not only an opportunity to engage and learn from one another, but also a valuable moment for us to reflect on the work we do. We wish the BAMBISHO team every success on this journey — we have no doubt they will excel."