



NOOK PROJECT OVERVIEW

As at August 22nd, 2020

INTRODUCTION

This project overview traces the developments that took place in the ongoing construction of the Zimbabwe Nook Hub at Murawi Business Centre of Matibi in Mwenezi District of Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The unfolding developments are arranged in phases. Phase 1 was initially meant to constitute preconstruction and the under-structure (up to the slab level); Phase 2 comprising superstructure up to the gable level; Phase 3 consisting of fixtures including roof, doors, glasses, floor tiles, electricals and plumbing; as well as Phase 4 representing post-construction furnishings such as furniture, stationery and other equipment. The project coordinating panel comprising 2 members from FFM and 2 from DEFY initially postulated that the above activities would consume around 35 Thousand USD. However, prices were rising day by day thereby threatening to exceed that projection quickly and considerably. Situations on the ground were also changing, leading the said panel to review the project terms more than once along the way as explained below.

PHASE 1

Earliest activities in this project began in the middle of year 2019. The FFM funded the preconstruction activities to the tune of 1,400 USD. This fund, received on 3 June was intended to cover brick making, meetings, licensure and unforeseen costs.

Some 3 months after in September, villagers had made 65 thousand bricks but were failing to make concrete stones. *The first significant change in the cost structure of the project took place: the FFM funded the purchase and ferrying of quarry which was initially pledged by the community.* This change of terms took place during the visit of a DEFY delegate who met authorities of the Rural District Council including the Building Inspector. In this meeting the Council advised that machine crushed quarry was recommended rather than manually crushed stones.

As a result, FFM gave 6,170 USD for the purchase and transportation of 66 m³ of quarry and the fund was received on 23 October (note that the withdrawal from the bank could involve several transactions due to the prevailing cash crisis).

On the 11th of the following month, the FFM Trust received 8,330 USD geared towards the buying of other Phase 1 materials. The materials included 470 bags of cement; 36 poles; 5 wheelbarrows; 5 shovels; 3 picks; a measuring tape; a builders' line; 6 spirit levels; 5 damp



proofs; 200 brick forces; and 3 corner squares. Some 10 goats for relish needed by the labourers were also bought under this fund.

Together the quarry fund and the rest of the Phase 1 materials took **14,360 USD**.

When the villagers were taking their time to gather gravel (a penultimate stage of Phase 1), the Building Inspector permitted the builders to proceed with the superstructure since Phase 2 materials had already been funded for by mid December 2019. This means the cement that was earmarked for the slab was used in Phase 2, only to be replaced in July 2020 as will be seen below.

Of note, the DEFY visit in October 2019 gave the onetime volunteers the chance to try their luck by asking for money tokens. Regrettably the innocent guest fell in and asked them what amounts they would want so that a contract would be effected on top of any other stuffs they needed in the work. This raised the volunteers' hopes for tokens to the extent that they later heaped pressure on the Trustees to make the contracts. The Projects Coordinator relayed the issue to the coordinating panel but the responses were not forthcoming. A cost proposal that included the tokens of 100USD per builder and 50USD per assistant had however been submitted earlier to Fungai and Oliver and accepted with the hope that the preconstruction fund was going to be sufficient to cover such contingencies, including tokenising the inspector as well.

The latest decision on the issue of tokens is that the volunteers are going to be tokenised after successful completion of Phases 1 and 2. The Inspector says this can be determined in the next inspection visit in two weeks' time (roundabout 10 September). There are 12 builders claiming \$100 each; and \$50 each for 10 assistants – meaning 1,700 USD in total. Two assistants have also been guarding the Nook but have not demanded payment for this service.

PHASE 2

The Trust received **6,440 USD** for Phase 2 materials in 3 transactions namely 17 December, 2 April and 6 April. The money was used to buy and ferry 88 deformed bars; 12 ring force clamps; 2 kg tying wire; 26 overalls; 26 helmets; 26 pairs of safety shoes; 13 trowels; 13 mortar boards; 13 hand hawks; 13 steel floats; 5 wide door frames; 8 narrow door frames; 3 double French doors; 2 NDV window frames; 8 NE1 window frames; 1 NE2 window frame; 21 NE9 window frames; 21 D54 window frames and 120 roofing sheets.

Two reasons caused the materials to be bought at different times instead of one time. Some of the materials such as square tubes and scaffolds were not readily in stock upon doing the quotations, and more unfortunately, some billing errors were noted by the Inspectors during the middle of the construction work. For example, the initial Bill of Quantities had the following errors:



- air vents were not included
- roofing sheets were under-calculated
- cement for plastering and skating was not included
- other under-calculated materials were ring beam bars and clamping wires

When the Covid-19 lockdown was declared on 30 March 2020, the construction had reached the *ring beam* level of the superstructure with only 14 cements remaining. The implementers panicked and forgot for a while that there were still 195 cements to be procured. Some **2,090 USD** for these cements and other omitted items was received on July 24th. By August 21st, the builders were putting final touches on the wall structure, after which they will revert to the slab. The Inspector calculated that this superstructure needed 4 more days to conclude while the slab can take 2 weeks, going by the less energetic pace of the builders. A lenient date of finalisation for the ongoing phase is September 10th.

An optional next step before Phase 3 proper is to acquire 155 bags of Cement for plastering and skating. The cost of this set of assignments is 1,395 USD. Four builders out of the 12 volunteers are willing to do this work for no extra tokens above the bespoke 100 USD per builder.

PHASE 3

Deliberations on Phase 3 dominated most of the communications including Skype meetings conducted by the coordinating panel since early September 2019. Several decisions and regressions were made: for example the 8 November meeting questioned the once granted paying of inspection tokens and transport for inspectors. Understandably, the inspection visits were becoming too many due to the ill experience of the volunteers. Unfortunately a 3 September 2019 communication with Fungai and Oliver had a proposed breakdown of expenses that included tokens for 13 builders and 13 assistants, which was acknowledged as good. Now there remain 12 builders and 10 assistants as stated earlier above.

On January 9th the meeting came up with the following priority list for Phase 3 actions:

1. roofing
2. electricals
3. plumbing
4. ceiling
5. painting
6. glasses and doors
7. floor tiles

Unfortunately the Bills of Quantities for these assignments were unavailable and the Inspector had to help with these. By early March when the quotations were finally gathered,



the total bill was 57 Thousand USD including some outstanding Phase 2 materials. The next meeting of May 29th removed ceiling, painting and plumbing from the priority list in that order. When that was done, the new priority list had 4 assignments namely:

1. Roofing
2. Electrical
3. Glasses and doors
4. Flooring

However, the combined cost was still high at 40 Thousand USD and yet there was already a decision to cap the 2020 Nook expenses at 30 Thousand USD. Also, it was considered that the removal of plumbing must be accompanied by an alternative, namely Blair toilets with bathrooms as well as borehole water. Hence, Flooring was dropped and two new assignments emerged in its stead as just stated. Meanwhile the costs remained stubbornly high.

On 14 June there arose the idea of trying the way of open tenders for all the jobs at hand to increase the competitiveness of prices. Tenders were invited for the following:

1. Roofing
2. Electrical tubing and wiring
3. Flooring with ceramic tiles
4. Glasses and doors
5. Blair toilets with bathrooms
6. Plumbing
7. Borehole water system
8. Solar power system
9. Internet installation
10. This was also the opportunity to tender for the construction of a classroom block at Matibi Mission although not related to the Nook.

A total of 15 companies competed for the 10 jobs above, and the initial tender analysis process was conducted. The analysis so far revealed a significant downward spiral of the prices although the outlook differs from project to project. The tentative priorities and costs in USD now stand as follows:

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|----------------------|----------|
| 1. Borehole | 9,610.00 |
| 2. Blair | 1,834.00 |
| 3. Roofing | 9,194.00 |
| 4. Glasses and doors | 2,981.00 |
| 5. Electrification | 1,473.00 |



The above 5 priorities take 25,092 USD together. The risk of price changes still looms high and it is therefore recommended to be prompt in implementing. The rest of the assignments are now designated as Phase 4 work.

WAY FORWARD

The actual Phase 4 work, which must be implemented in 2021, will now encompass the following supply-and-fix actions and costs:

1. Plumbing 3,128
2. Tiling 7,773
3. Solar power 15,512
4. Internet installation 7,465
5. Then Nook start-up costs including equipments, training and launching.

The first 4 assignments have been quoted for 33,878 USD while the Nook start-up costs are approximately 26,000 USD so far. The coordinating team wish to control these start-up costs so that they fall on or below the 20,000 USD mark.

The above form the basic requirements for operating a Nook Hub in Matibi. When the Nook gets running, other necessary developments of lesser priority will surface in due time. They include ceiling, painting and perimeter wall (durawall).

Conclusion

The Nook project has so far consumed 24,290 USD being costs for Phases 1 and 2. Some 1,395 USD is needed (albeit optional in light of priority) to plaster and skirt the hall using 4 genuine volunteers identified among the 12 builders currently building the hall. Phase 3 has 5 selected projects quoting 25,092 USD together. For Phase 4, there are 4 activities for which the total verified quote is 33,878 USD and Nook start-up activities whose total cost is expected to be capped at 20,000 USD. At this point the Nook project will be expected to begin running its intended business while less urgent developments such as ceiling, painting and boundary wall may still be pursued without haste.