



MATIBI NOOK HUB

SET-UP REPORT

JULY 2022 // PREPARED BY
PROJECT DEFY

2022



project
DEFY
Design Education For Yourself

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Introduction

Opening its door on the first week of October 2021, The Matibi Nook Hub (MNH) is now a full-fledged self-designed learning center, catering to the needs and aspirations of the learners and community members. Despite the limitation posed by the pandemic with challenging

stop-and-go operations, the team members of Project DEFY and FFM Trust, together with the local community members, managed to start the self-designed learning journey in Matibi. This report represents the culmination of the team members' hard work, how our learners undertook their self-designed journey and various activities in the Nook. This report attempts to share every phase and process to understand the procedure, concepts, impacts, and progress of the Nook Hub, both in self-learning and community-building.

This report accounts for the different phases of the inception of Matibi Nook Hub from the commencement of operation to the execution of the First Cycle.

We hope you will find this report informative and fruitful, and inspire you to continue the support to bring revolution in education and learning.

At present, **36 Learners in 14 teams** are exploring different skills and learning areas in the Nook Hub. We would like to take the opportunity to thank our learners for investing their hard work, dedication and commitment to making the Nook Hub an enriching learning place. As a team, we gained immense inspiration from our learners through their values of teamwork, collaboration, forgiveness and helpfulness. We ended up learning more about ourselves and coming up with more innovative new ideas than before in Matibi Nook Hub.

We would like to acknowledge the community members for their immense contributions and support to us. We would also like to thank our partners and funders for the support, efforts and resilience that they have shown and committed to making the project happen, especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic.



Project Overview

The Matibi Nook Hub is the first Nook, where the local community members actively participated and contributed tremendously from the beginning. The community members donated the land for the Nook and even volunteered to construct the building of the Nook. All the nearby villages made bricks together and donated them to the Nook Hub. It is also the first Nook Hub ever where the building is constructed by the community. The buildings for most of the Nooks are on rent or owned by the local government departments.

The Matibi Nook Hub is also made possible through global collaboration and partnership of Project DEFY, FFM Trust and community members of Matibi, with support from LBS.

Project DEFY is the knowledge partner of the Project.

As an **owner of the Nook Concept**, Project DEFY provides all relevant know-how, training and knowledge transfer to ensure successful and effective operations. **Answer Nzuma** and **Boicha Huidrom** from Project DEFY have been leading in coordinating the set-up of the Nook and providing training, guidance, and continuous support to ensure the successful running of the operations.

FFM Trust is the Project Holder and Implementation Organisation. FFM oversees the project management, obtaining required permissions, liaising with various government departments, and receiving the funds from LBS. As an implementing organization that is running the Project, FFM procures all tools and equipment and employs the Nook Fellows and volunteers working with the Project. More importantly, maintaining relationships and engagement with the local community members is a key role carried out by FFM.

Location of the Matibi Nook Hub

Matibi Nook Hub is situated at Kure Village, Murawi Township which is 30kms away from Neshuro Growth Point where the Mwenezi Rural District Council (MwRDC) is located and 175kms away from the City of Masvingo where provincial government offices are located. It is located in one of the most remote areas of Zimbabwe. Most of the roads leading to Matibi from Masvingo City are unpaved roads. The Nook Hub and nearby villages do not have electricity and water connection from any public service departments and there are also no such facilities to accommodate the development. The Nook is completely off-the-grid. The nearest electricity connection point from the Nook is 4 km away. Despite the day-to-day challenges of being off-grid, it also allows us to work towards a sustainable and creative self-reliant ecosystem on our own.

There is no public transport available from the Nook to the nearest city like Masvingo. There are only a few taxi services operated a few times a day by individuals. So, if the team members want to go to the town or other cities, they have to contact the taxi driver a day before. Since it is located in a remote area, only a few groceries shops are open in nearby business centres. Other stores like hardware, electronics, clothes, pharmacy etc are not available. The team members have to travel to Masvingo to buy the necessary items for the Nook and it is quite a time-consuming process. Luckily, we have access to Matibi Mission Hospital, a partner of FFM Trust, located at around 10kms from the Nook for any medical emergency.

Despite all the logistical challenges, Matibi gives us a pristine and clean environment, beautiful scenic views and a calm home. There is a beautiful lake, just 200 meters away from the Nook where the team members enjoy evening walks, birdwatching and seeing the sunset there. Every day, we heard different birds and animal sounds making it an experience for all. No workplace can offer such an environment which is challenging, pleasing and rewarding at the same time.



Introducing the Local Community

The Nook Hub is located in Kure Village with an approximate population of 1045 from 195 households. There are 690 females and 355 males in Kure village. Like every part of Zimbabwe, there is a high rate of unemployment in Kure and nearby villages. There is a considerable lack of livelihood opportunities, adequate resources like infrastructure, public services and health care, and access to education and information. High inflation and the increasing cost of living in Zimbabwe also affect them. Therefore, most of the population lives below the poverty line and relies on outside help to sustain themselves. Most people are engaged in farming, rearing cattle and as daily labourers. Youth from the community and nearby villages migrate to South Africa and nearby countries, looking for employment opportunities. Frequent droughts in recent times also worsened the situation. There is also a high rate of school dropouts in the community. Even those who have finished school, most of them could not continue further studies as they could not afford it and the lack of education facilities nearby makes it an attainable dream for most.

Many of the community members do not have access to technology and information smartphones, the internet and television. Only a few learners and community members have smartphones, but cannot access the internet and information properly due to poor network connectivity and electricity issues. Community members also face various challenges like access to clean water, proper hygiene and sanitation, a high rate of teenage pregnancies and infections of STI due to lack of awareness of sexual health. Early child marriage is also a big issue in the community. Alcoholism and Drug abuse among youth and men are also common problems in the community.

Therefore, the idea of Nook Hub where the community can solve their own problems, access information and technology and co-create the learning journey perfectly suits the need of the community. Apart from various challenges, the Kure community is a very close knitted community, where, people know each other and sharing food is very common. Community members are willing to help each other and live collaboratively.



Outreach and Enrollment of the Learners:

The team visited the four closest villages named Chirongo, Chamaona, Musvoti and Marufu villages during the outreach. However, word quickly spread and we got far much more positive responses from the villages which are far from the Nook Hub. The most exciting experience for our team was going around the villages and talking to different families and learning about their expectations, desires and dreams as they were doing outreach for the new learners. Outreach meetings were conducted in June 2021 with the Mwenezi District Administrator where courtesy calls were done to introduce the nook staff and appeal for assistance in coordinating with TelOne (internet service provider) and Rural Electrification Agency (REA), an agent which is responsible for the rural electrification process.

The outcome of the meetings was successful as the DA promised to assist on the issues tabled and to continue supporting the organization as it is working on uplifting the marginalized community of Matibi. Another courtesy call to Mwenezi Rural District was made and the team met up with the Chief Executive Officer of the Council who was pleased with the progress of completing the Nook structure. He vowed that the council would continue to support FFM Trust in implementing all its projects. During these meetings, the local community management, the chief, councillor and the village heads were given clarifications on how the nook will be operating as there was a misconception of how and what the nook was all about and how the community would benefit from it. However, there were some concerns raised by the community disability committee on having more physically challenged learners to be enrolled as they are left out in some of the community projects as they need special attention, and specific provisions for toilets, rooms and furniture. The construction of door ramps and pathways which will be used for access for wheelchairs has been tabled for this financial year.

During our visits, we met up with some grandmothers who are also the guardians taking care of their grandchildren. They were unable to come and participate in the enrolling process because their responsibilities were too demanding.

The major concern of the outreach was the community's expectations of an incentive (monetary, food etc) to be given out when they come to the nook which showed how the community has become dependent on getting handouts rather than acquiring skills to empower themselves. The Nook is challenging this notion by creating opportunities for the community members to explore their passions and increase their knowledge and skills to become independent and not dependent on handouts.

In the month of September, 64 People were interviewed to be learners at the nook, different age groups from 12 villages participated during the interview stage. Due to the nature of the program that was to be implemented. Some of the participants pulled out as their expectations were not met.



Goals & Objectives of the Matibi Nook Hub

The foremost objective of Matibi Nook Hub (MNH) is to provide a safe and open environment to foster a community of self-designed learners, where they can discover their interests, curiosity and needs. The community members can use the space and resources available to solve the challenges they face themselves. Thereby, giving back power into the hands of learners, leading to the acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge that enrich the learners' lives in various ways, contribute to the creation of new livelihoods for the learners and others, or help to improve community life by addressing and solving local problems.

The specific objectives are:

- To automate the culture of self-learning and curiosity to ensure positive changes making in the community.
- To foster the capacity of developing critical, scientific and logical thought; and self-design the learning system in the localized context taking into account for the global understanding of it.
- To solve the adversities faced by the community based on their local needs and interests.
- To create a self-sustaining learning system that focuses precisely on relevant skills, creativity and community need through the advancement of exploration and enquiry.
- To enable smooth flow of information and knowledge sharing within the community.
- To provide a platform for start-ups and establishing new business enterprises.
- To accommodate everyone in the community with feasibility and human resources.

Moreover, The MNH will act as a growth point to spread information about self-learning in the country and other parts of the continent. It aims to be a resource centre and a tool for outreach where people and organizations can acquire the opportunity to learn about how the Nook operates and SDL works. In the coming years, we hope to have more Nooks in Zimbabwe based on the philosophy, concept, design and functioning of MNH. Most importantly, the organization's goal is to attain self-sustainability, and financial independence and become an independent entity, which can then enable it to be managed and run by the community with minimal intervention from Project DEFY or any other organization.



Setting-up the Nook Hub

Schematic Diagram of the Nook Hub



Building

The team hired the local architecture and contractor for the construction of the building with the help of local volunteers. The design made by the architect was approved by the team before the construction started. The building is now at 95% completion with the construction work to finish the front part of the building, plastering of the toilets, putting air vents, skirting and window seals still ongoing. As part of the inclusive culture and learning experience at the Nook, the painting of the building, and security bars for all the windows and doors will be designed and installed by nook learners as part of their projects using the equipment that is readily available at the Nook as part of their projects.



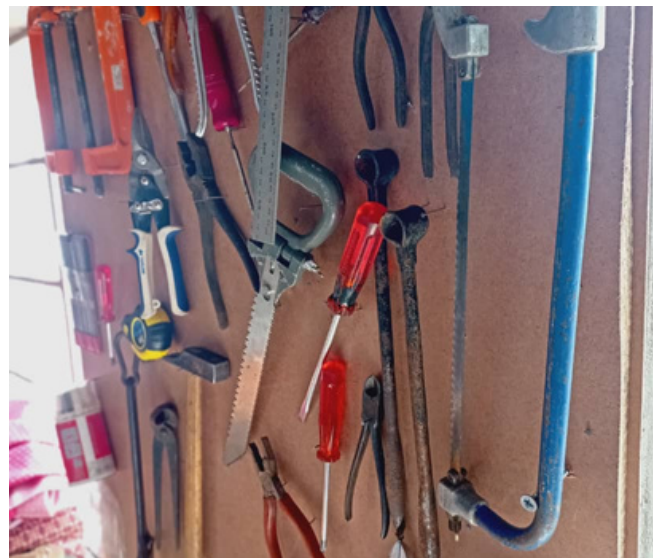
Furniture

The Nook Hub has 10 tables and 23 chairs which are used in the learning hall area. Most of the furniture was sent in the container donated from Switzerland by well-wishers. 4 storage cupboards are also used to keep the materials.



Tools

Based on the required tools and materials list provided by Project DEFY, the team purchased the materials from Johannesburg, South Africa. This was done after the submission of bid analysis which showed a price comparison between Zimbabwe, South Africa and India. A decision was then taken to purchase in South Africa as the prices were more favourable and less straining on the budget allocated.



Electricity

The Nook Hub uses solar power as the primary source of electricity, with a capacity of 5500 watts or 5.5kva being generated. The nature of the panels is higher brands, favourable and usable during cloud cover. However, because of the high volume of usage and on cloudy days, we have to use a portable petrol generator of 5000 watts/ 5kva as a secondary source of electricity. We are trying to reduce consumption as the fuel prices of the generator are becoming more expensive to maintain.

As the Nook is situated in a completely off-grid place most of the learners and community members come to the Nook to charge their mobile phones also.



Toilet

The MNH has 2 separate toilets blocks for males (2 urinary, 2 flush systems and washing basins) and female (4 flush system with washing basin). One of the toilets in each block is designed to accommodate physically challenged persons. To accommodate the needs of the bathroom for the Nook Fellows and visitors, the urinal section of the male is improvised to use as a bathroom.



Water

The centre uses a solar-powered borehole system with 10000-litre tanks installed to store the water. The water from the tank is used by learners and community members around the nook.

First Aid Kit and Safety

The Nook Hub has a standard first aid kit box with essential medication and bandages. The Keyholders and some learners will get training from Matibi Mission Hospital on basic First Aid. FFM, as a move to encourage the collaboration of different projects the Nook will be partnering with Matibi Mission Hospital.

Four Fire Extinguishers of 9kgs each are put into different strategic spots. Learners were trained on how to use it by the Nook Fellows.

Internet

Since the nook is in a remote area, there was a challenge in getting a good reliable ISP. However, we managed to get one through the telecommunications company TelOne.

Our internet was set up using VSAT technology. One of the major challenges is the availability of internet access as VSAT is prone to be affected by the weather. Another challenge is the high cost of the packages but poor service delivery, with a maximum download speed of 3mbps.

This speed is for the unlimited package, whereas a limited package (100gb) has a speed of up to 25mbps but tends to be costly since our learners use the internet for research purposes and also to find inspiration and network with learners from other nooks. We did engage with the Star Link providers who intended to have satellites servicing the Zimbabwe region in 2022, however, the satellites have not been deployed yet. The nearest fibre network is 40km away and makes it difficult to have access.



Laptop

When we opened the nook, we received 9 laptops and 2 desktops. Out of the 9 laptops, 6 are working. The desktops started working recently when we got monitors which support HDMI and VGA. The monitors we had received earlier used DVI which is not common in Zimbabwe, so getting the connection cables proved to be a challenge.

Out of the 6 working laptops, 2 had outdated tech and couldn't support most of the software we use at the nook. However, these really helped in introducing people to computers and how they work. Windows OS was installed on the laptops.

Kitchen

The centre is using an open plan kitchen which is 8m x 5m in size, with appliances like stove-cum-oven and fridge which are both using gas. Nook fellows with the help of a few learners managed to make a washing sink with running water.

Garden

Nook learners started a small garden with various vegetables like kale, cabbage, brinjal etc. The main reason behind the garden is to complement the feeding program which the nook has for the learners, produce from the garden is used as a relish for lunch which is provided five times a week and also for the nook fellows who are staying at the nook.

Storage Room

The nook has a storage room inside the building which is 2,5m x 4,5m in size where all the materials and equipment not in use are stored.





Signboard

The nook has two signboards which are yet to be erected one will be at the front of the building and the other one will be mounted on the side of the road pointing in the direction of the Nook for easy access for anyone visiting.

Matibi nook hub

A self- learning environment

enter if you dare to dream

A concept by



www.projectdefy.org

Partnership and implementation by



Supported by



Beautification of the Nook Hub

With the vast land that the nook was constructed on, we managed to put a lawn and flowers to beautify the space and also make a few path ways for people to use.

Painting and graffiti on the walls are yet to commence in September 2022.



How we started self-learning in Matibi:

At the beginning of November 2021, Matibi Nook Hub was well equipped with tools, furniture and necessary materials for the commencement of operation and unraveling the self-learning journey together with the community. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the DEFY Team members could not travel. The visa process and application also got delayed due to frequent lockdowns and travel restrictions. As such, we decided to move the official start of the Induction Program, until the situation had improved and the team could travel. We did not let the challenges hinder the learning process and we focused on different ways of engaging with the learners and project building.

During this time, learners also helped in the physical setting of the space, arranging the furniture and tools, cleaning the space, making the lawn garden etc. One of the projects taken by the learners during this time was the making of 3 beds using locally available materials. The team shared their carpentry experience gained from their training period at the Bulawayo Nook process with the Nook learners. The whole bed-making process showed positive results as the community was slowly understanding the concept of collaboration and how it will be implemented and used in the Nook.

As a team, we discussed and ideated different ways to engage our learners before the DEFY team could travel. We came up with the Edison Challenge. The challenge was about generating electricity using unconventional methods and lighting up a LED 7 W Bulb for 30 Seconds.



Edison Challenge: Generating Electricity via Unconventional Methods

Solar Panels and Battery is the only source of electricity for most of the villages near the Matibi Nook Hub. The nearest electrical grid from the Nook is 4km away. Not only as a way to engage learners, but the idea of the challenge was to invoke curiosity, and creativity among the learners and initiate ways to solve their own problems. Most electricity is currently generated by energy sources that have adverse effects on our environment and the planet as a whole. Now, it's time to look for alternative methods of generating and using electricity that does not harm our planet. With this in mind, the Nook learners came up with out-of-the-box ideas for generating electricity.

Starting from 1st to 18th December 2021, the challenge was held at the Nook Hub premise using tools readily available at the centre or request for additional materials only if no alternative could be found in the community. Learners for this particular challenge were divided into six groups by themselves. Critical thinking skills and creativity were identified amongst learners which they demonstrated through submission and presentation of different ideas which included the use of potatoes, spark plugs, alcohol, and a bicycle dynamo to generate electricity.

Project outcomes were innovative, challenging and exciting. Out of the six (6) groups, two (2) successfully met the criteria and the most innovative award was scooped by the team which managed to create electricity using the bicycle dynamo and the best team effort by the team which created electricity using potatoes.

The Chairman of the FFM Trust Zimbabwe also attended the final presentation of the projects and handed over the awards to the teams. After the Edison Challenge, the Nook was closed for the Christmas holiday and reopened on the 3rd Week of January. We planned to open during the 1st week of January 2022, but there was a strict imposition of lockdown and restrictions by the government.



The Induction Program

Designed by Project DEFY, the main aim of the Induction Program is to introduce the idea of SDL to the learners. Every new learner will go through the Induction Program when they are enrolled in the Nook. Apart from project making, the induction program tries to encourage learners to try out new areas of skills, gather confidence and experience the freedom of choice in what they wish to learn. With facilitated learning sessions, we introduce new avenues of learning and skills areas to the learners that they have never explored before. With discussion and deliberation sessions, the program is intended to break the mental barriers and stereotypes of the learners to help them decide on their learning journeys instead of making choices based on family pressure and societal influence. We tried to invoke curiosity, encourage them to keep an open mind to do things outside their comfort zone and have fun with them.

From this phase, we followed a semi-structured routine in the Nook where the team hosted discussion sessions and various activities like team-building activities, watching movies, playing games, etc. We also conducted morning and evening circles - discussions where learners share their thoughts, ideas, opinions, and questions. In these circles, we also do a daily check-in on the progress of their projects with the larger groups. We explore different topic discussions, and various ice-breaking sessions and talk about challenges faced in the community. It cultivates the culture of questioning, sharing ideas, teamwork, bonding and helping each other in the Nook. Some of the learners have even started leading and facilitating the discussion sessions. The discussion and activities cover many topics which are beyond the Nook and education. So, we encourage learners to ask about anything and everything concerning their life, curiosity, and various societal problems.

Together with the learners, we also fixed the timing of the opening of the Nook Hub. The Nook Hub is open from 9 AM to 2 PM, daily from Monday to Friday. On Saturday, we keep it open-ended and organize various activities like games, watching movies, etc.

There are Four Phases in the Induction Program with specific purposes; Early Projects, Exploration, Goal Setting and Design Week.



Early Projects

The idea behind the Early Project is to invoke interest and create a buzz about the Nook Hub in the community. Before we enrol the learners and start working with them, the Nook Hub is just an empty physical space with tools and laptops. Even if we talked about the problems of education and explained the concept of the Nook to the community, they will not remember it. So, we invite a few people to work on the projects based on the criteria set out by Project DEFY where the intention is to evoke a reaction that makes people say “wow” when they see the outcome of the project. Secondly, “it should be a new or innovative project for the local community”, or “the project should be useful for the Nook”.

Based on these parameters and the challenges faced during the pandemic, we decided to work on the following projects;



Foldable Outdoor Picnic Table and Chair:

Most of the houses in Matibi are small and do not have space for different types of furniture. People don't want to buy furniture which has only one specific purpose. Also, Barbeque "Braai" Culture is part of many lives in Zimbabwe. People, families, and friends make bonds and hold conversations over it. By making multi-purpose foldable outdoor picnic tables and chairs that one can carry around easily for outdoor events. Inside the house, it can double as a dining or study table.



Hand Crank Washing Machine:

Most of the community wash their clothes using the conventional method of hand washing. As societal norms, it is done mostly by women. Considering the challenges faced by women, and learners about taking most of their time washing clothes, the team thought it will be a great idea to start the discussion around it by making a hand crank washing machine and to show that it is also possible to make and share the load of house chores. We had thought of making an electrical one but the availability of electricity in the community is a question, we went ahead with the hand-crank method and it evoked a lot of curiosity and led to amazing conversations. In the future, we are planning to make an automatic machine operated using electricity.

Facial Recognition Hand Sanitiser Dispenser:

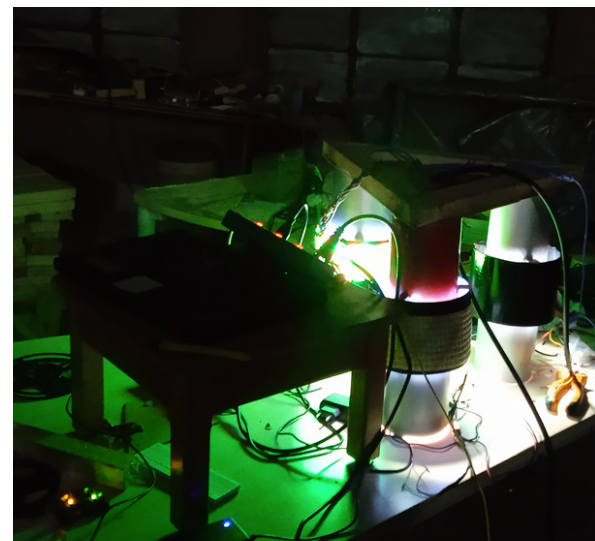
As we started the Nook during the peak of Covid, instead of buying the Sanitiser Dispenser, we decided to make it on our own. Apart from necessity, we decided to add the features of collecting attendance records for the learners. When the learners come to the Nook and sanitize their hands, the scanner will also record their attendance at the same time.

Chandelier that turns on during the night and turns off in the morning:

Learners wanted to make an electric bulb that turns on and off automatically when it is dark and there is light respectively. Learners came up with the idea because many families are facing shortages of electricity at night as they forget to turn the lights and devices off in the morning because of attending to early morning chores such as visiting the field, cattle herding etc. Instead of making just a bulb, we suggested making a chandelier to challenge them and learn more about electrical circuits and wiring.

Multipurpose Firewood Cooking Brick Stove:

Most learners come from very far places and it is very difficult for them to bring tiffins as they don't have time to cook and some can't afford to have more than 2 meals per day. Some of the learners walk 20km every day just to come to the Nook. As they are going to spend most of their day time in the Nook and difficult to plan for their lunch, we made a cooking area where they can cook their food together, share, and bond over lunch. Instead of just making a simple cooking stove, we build a multipurpose stove where they can cook, bake and barbeque "braai". Now, we cook food together and enjoy different conversations and jokes.



Biodegradable Period Panties:

Many women do not have access to sanitary pads and only a few from the communities are aware of menstrual hygiene. Also, only plastic disposable sanitary pads are available in the shops nearby. As most of the community members are from low-income families, they do not have disposable income to purchase it. Considering the situation where the learners and community members are not able to access sanitary wear. We talked about sanitary hygiene with the learners and took up the project of Biodegradable Period Panties. We collected used clothes and made different panties of different shapes and sizes. Some of the learners started making it on their own at their homes also.



Charcoal-Based Water Filter:

All the households in the community do not have running water and mostly rely on nearby water bodies like dams, wells or boreholes. They use the water for drinking and other purposes like washing, cooking etc. directly from the source without any filtration process. People who cannot afford to have a borehole or dig their well, have to walk far to fetch the water. To minimize the challenges faced by the community, learners suggested making a water filter using locally available materials where water can be treated and made safer and accessible. Grey water can be filtered and used for other purposes like cleaning floors, washing clothes, watering plants, etc.



Exploration and Introducing New Learning Areas

The main purpose of the fast-paced Exploration phase is to introduce new learning and skill areas to the learners. The facilitated sessions are designed to invoke curiosity and enable learners to pursue a broad range of new and exciting hands-on activities and projects every two to three days. Learners may be able to identify what they are interested in or like about a particular learning area and it will help them to set their learning goals also. Another aim of the Exploration is to enable our learners to make their own choice of learning and skills that they want to pursue without worrying about society and family expectations carried by learners when they come to the Nook for the first time.

Based on the interests of the learners as well as on creating exposure to new fields and enabling our learners to acquire some foundational skills and knowledge that will be useful for their projects, later on, the team facilitated the following sessions:

Basics of Computer and Email:

Due to a lack of access to technology and computers, many of the learners were new to computers and using them for the first time. So, we held a session on the basics of using computers and created email ids as well. The learners learnt how to set up Email accounts and how to use them to communicate and to access and register for various open online courses and platforms for their learning. A session on how to find information and ideas online also helped them understand the need for a computer and the usefulness of the internet.

Screen Printing on T-Shirt:

Many well-wishers donated used clothes to the Nook for the learners and community. Learners wanted to upcycle them, transform them into something new and customized with traditional patterns, their own names, etc. So, the team conducted a session on screen-printing on T-shirts and learners made various designs with traditional arts, paintings etc.

3-D Designing Using Sketch-up:

As designing and prototyping is an important part of any project or product making, the session was designed to help the learners to get an overview of the project before they started working on it. The learners designed tables and chairs using Sketch-up. For many learners, this was the first time that they were using software on computers.

Graphic Designing

Learners were introduced to some basics of graphic design like fonts, typography, signage, alignment, etc., and software like Canva and Adobe InDesign. Using the software, learners made advertisement posters, visiting cards, calendars etc.

Film-making

Nook Fellows shared various techniques to capture videos like framing, compositions, tracking and editing. After the session, learners divided into teams and made 1 min videos on topics like awareness of early child marriage, ads videos of their projects, etc.





Electronics

The use of electronics was a new experience for the learners as most learners had never seen or used electronics. We introduced electronics projects using Arduino, servo motors, etc. Learners used youtube tutorials and made various projects like a smart dustbin that opens and closes the lid automatically, a walking stick for the visually impaired that detects obstacles ahead, a smart toll-booth system that detects motion and lifts to allow passage.

Carpentry:

At the Nook Hub, we didn't have enough chairs and storage shelves for all the learners. By exploring skills, we decided to make sitting stools and storage shelves. The learners learned how to use different carpentry tools and machines during the session.



Baking

After making the multi-purpose firewood cooking stove the session was based on baking. Baking became one of the most demanded sessions by the learners as they enjoyed baked cakes and bread sharing the food happily with each other.



Welding

With this session, we wanted to introduce welding in a fun and challenging way. So, we created a challenge where they had to make steampunk metal art pieces. Using scrap metal, bolts and nuts. This experience saw amazing art pieces like flowers, small tractors etc. being produced by the excited and creative learners.



Making Shower Gel:

Most of the community members rely on one type of solid soap for all purposes like bathing, washing clothes, utensils and cleaning floors etc. So, learners wanted to experiment and make shower gel that can address various skin problems. Together with learners, we made a shower gel using natural ingredients. Some learners expressed interest to take the project forward in the future.

Goal Setting

After the high-paced hands-on exploration phase, it was time for learners to start taking ownership of their self-designed learning journey and make choices on what they liked to learn based on their needs, aspirations and curiosity. By this time, team members from India, Answer Nzuma and Boicha Huidrom were in the Nook Hub and co-facilitated the Induction Program on the ground with the Nook Fellows.

In this phase, Learners decided on their learning goals and projects for the next three months. The goal-setting phase took seven working days to complete. Learners were given spaces to think and decide on their projects. Based on the concept of Ikigai, learners were first asked to identify three learning goals that fulfill the following criteria below:

- Things that they like to do
- Things that they are good at
- Things that can help in earning money or sustain them

After they came up with the learning goals, we asked the learners to refine them based on the criteria of the SMAART Goal (Specific, Measurable, Aspirational, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound). We explained how the learning cycle of 3 months will work and exhibitions week, in which we will showcase the projects to the other stakeholders such as community members, partner organisations and other possible learners.

On the 2nd day of the Goal Setting, we did speed dating as a fun way to make teams and create a collaborative environment based on similar interests and areas of learning. We encourage them to work as a team with the spirit of helping each other and learning from each other.

After making teams, each group came and presented their goal to the DEFY team and Nook Managers. This was a period of intense questioning, deliberations, research on the projects, and sharing ideas to refine and make the goals better. Learners also expressed their frustrations with the questions and shared that the questioning and deliberation made them think better and helped them to come up with new and innovative ideas.



36 Learners in 14 Teams set the following SMART Goals for the 1st Goal Cycle of the Matibi Nook Hub:

Name of the Learners	SMART Goals
Josephine Chigohi, Patience Shoko	To bake 2 (two) 3 tier Layered Cakes (Mushroom and Stiletto Shoe Shapes) using locally sourced natural ingredients with Traditional Zimbabwean Flavors
Causemore Chebani, Edmore Chizanga, Brian Matiza, Simon Matambo	To make a 3 Wheel Electric Rechargeable Bike with 1 seat which can run for 20 KMs with minimum speed of 30 km/hr
Elistina Siziba, Florence Kadungure	To make 1 organic hair shampoo to remove dandruff and 5 in1 organic hairgel (conditioner, oil, moisturiser, hair softener and hair strengthener) for black man and women's hair.
Eunice Phiri, Patience Moyo, Charity Muridzo	To make 1 cake with a village scene using local flavours as a way of celebrating our culture and way of living in Matibi
Pikirai Mashingaidze	To make 5 school clothes for 6 year olds(1 dress, 1 trouser, 1 skirt, 2 shirts -1 long sleeved and 1 short sleeved) and to sell it after completion
Egness Mafefe, Sharon Zimuto, Acceptence Muchemwa	To make 2 dresses which can be worn both in summer and winter and also one fashionable raincoat
Tafadzwa Shiri,Caroline Chigoro	To make 3 different fine dining dishes (1 starter, 1 main meal, 1 dessert) using local available ingredients
Joseph Kandira, Obey Kure, Mary Sithole	To design and make an illustration booklet focusing on 3 traditional minor games
Chiedza Nduma,Sibonile Chiketa,Ndaizevei Zirimbe	We want make to 1 gown with a totem embroidered but also changes to 3 different styles on the top part) and a African attire church dress which changes into Sequin party dress

Name of the Learners	SMART Goals
Life Makopa, Simbarashe Mutandadzi	To design, architect and make a miniature 3D model for the Matibi Nook hostel for 50 people
Charles Chidari, Tanaka Chidyamakono	We want to make an online android educational traditional game called TSORO for kids aged 10-15 years which helps to improve strategic skills and also learning arithmetic, calculations
Evelyn Mabhena, Synthia Chikati, Petronella Chikweya	To make 5 types of braids styles inspired by african culture and bonnets to protect the styles then make 1 minute videos on what we have made.
Tapiwa Runesu, Nolwazi Ndlovu	To make a 20-minute documentary on the impact of early child marriages focusing on 5 mothers who are 20 years and below in ward 3 of Mwenzi District and the language used will be Shona with English subtitles
Marko Matiza	To make one expandable dining table with two folding chairs

After setting the goals, we started the 90 days count-down to achieve the goals set. A calendar of 90 days on chart paper is posted on the wall. The calendar acts as a reminder of how much more time the learners have and encourages them to achieve their goals.



Design Phase

The purpose of the design phase is to help the learners understand their goals better by identifying problems that they are trying to solve, incorporating more ideas, finding the resources they need, designing, taking feedback and making prototypes. In the end, we also help them to come up with milestones to achieve their goals.

Day 1 & 2: Empathize

During these two days, we did the discussion and tried to understand the difference between sympathy and empathy. It was followed by identifying the problems learners are trying to solve and the target audience of their project. The learners talked to their target audience in the community to gather insights and learn more about the problems and how their projects solve or helps the community.



Day 3, 4 and 5: Ideation and Designing

After identifying the problems and gathering insights, learners came up with various solutions and ways to solve the problem. Some of them incorporated the ideas and made changes to their goal statements. Most of the learners stuck to their original ideas and goals, but it helped them to think further and understand the goals better. We asked the learners to make technical drawings and design their project/product on paper first and digitally using various software like Balsamiq, Sketch-up, and Adobe In-design.

As many of the learners are not very handy with laptops, using the software for the first time, was a challenging task and took more time than expected. But, the outcome of the activities was really great as many learners enjoyed and started gaining more confidence in digital designing using software.



Day 6, 7 and 8: Prototyping and Creating Milestones

We started with the wallet exercise where all the learners created unique wallets based on requirements set by team members. In the exercise, the learners were the designers and the team members were the clients. After making the prototype of the wallets using paper in 30 minutes, learners also presented it in front of everyone. We did this exercise to get rid of the fear of speaking in front of people and we wanted them to build the skills of presenting their projects as well. Using paper and waste materials, learners made the prototype of the projects and took feedback from their peers

At the end of the few days, the learners came up with the milestones to achieve their goals. The team sat with each team and refined the milestone together.



Participation in DEFY's Global Demo Day

To support our learners in advancing their projects and invoke the spirits of entrepreneurship, Project DEFY organized the first edition of Global Demo Day on 17th March 2022. Learners and teams including the Nook Fellows from all the Nook, who was ready with a working prototype of the project could register and pitch their projects. Two teams from MNH with the projects of Hand Sanitiser Dispenser and Chandelier participated in the Global Demo and won a total prize of 400 USD to advance their projects.

The learners learned how to pitch their project ideas, and make business plans and budgets. presentation skills with the support of the team. When the DEFY Team travelled to the Nook Hub, the team handed over the cash prize to the teams and Nook Fellows. The teams bought the required materials and have been working on the projects with support from Gilbert. Before the GDD, the learners were quite shy and afraid to present their projects. With various practices and encouragement, they shared that they gained confidence and feel proud of their projects after GDD.

Co-creation of the Trust Code in the Nook

One of the core values of the Nook is to create a place where the learners are always in charge - of their own learning, and of everything that happens there. As such, every Nook Learner enjoys as much freedom as possible, as long as this freedom does not violate the freedom of another or go against any of the fundamental values of the Nook. As values and culture cannot be created in short time, we started the process together with the learners from the beginning of the Induction Program.

One of the first steps is co-creating the Trust Code of the Nook, together with the learners. We divided the learners into four groups and asked them to come up with the rules that they wanted to enforce and follow in the Nook. Each group presented their rules and if any of the learners or facilitators had issues with any particular rule, they were given the chance to raise their hands and explain the reasons for their dissent. After the deliberation, we came up with a consensus and decided on the rules unanimously. All the learners and Nook Fellows also contributed to it.

During the presentation, learners also discussed about the consequences if someone breaks the rules. Some of the learners suggested that there should be strict punishment and even expulsion from the Nook. The facilitator stepped in and discussed various ways to solve the conflict and consequences through arbitration, community resolutions process etc. instead of shaming and stopping someone from learning.

Unanimously, after deciding on the Matibi Nook Hub Trust Code, it was printed out in both English and local languages. The printed rules were signed by everyone and laminated then fixed to the Nook walls. The Matibi Nook Hub Trust Code is not constant, if anybody or a new learners wants to add or challenge the existing rules, we will follow the same deliberation process and rectify it.



Selection of Keyholders

To enable more ownership and remove the centralized management of the Nook Hub, the team also selected six learners as keyholders of the Nook. Keyholders will get the opportunity of learning leadership skills, taking up a few responsibilities for the functioning of the Nook and even they could potentially be the next Nook Manager / Nook Fellow. Since it was the first time, the team selected three men and three women learners as keyholders based on their skills and active participation in the Nook. The team also took the consent from the selected keyholders and approval from the other learners.

The NFs will handhold them in the beginning and impart knowledge and skills to take up the additional responsibilities like managing social media pages, collecting data and attendance, purchasing materials, doing outreach etc based on their interest. They are selected for two-goal cycle terms. If there is any conflict, misuse of authorities, inactive roles, etc, anybody can raise a complaint and solve it through various conflict resolution mechanisms. From the 2nd Term, the keyholders will be selected by voting and nomination process.

Learning and Ongoing Support for the Nook Hub and Team Members

Nook Manager Training Program

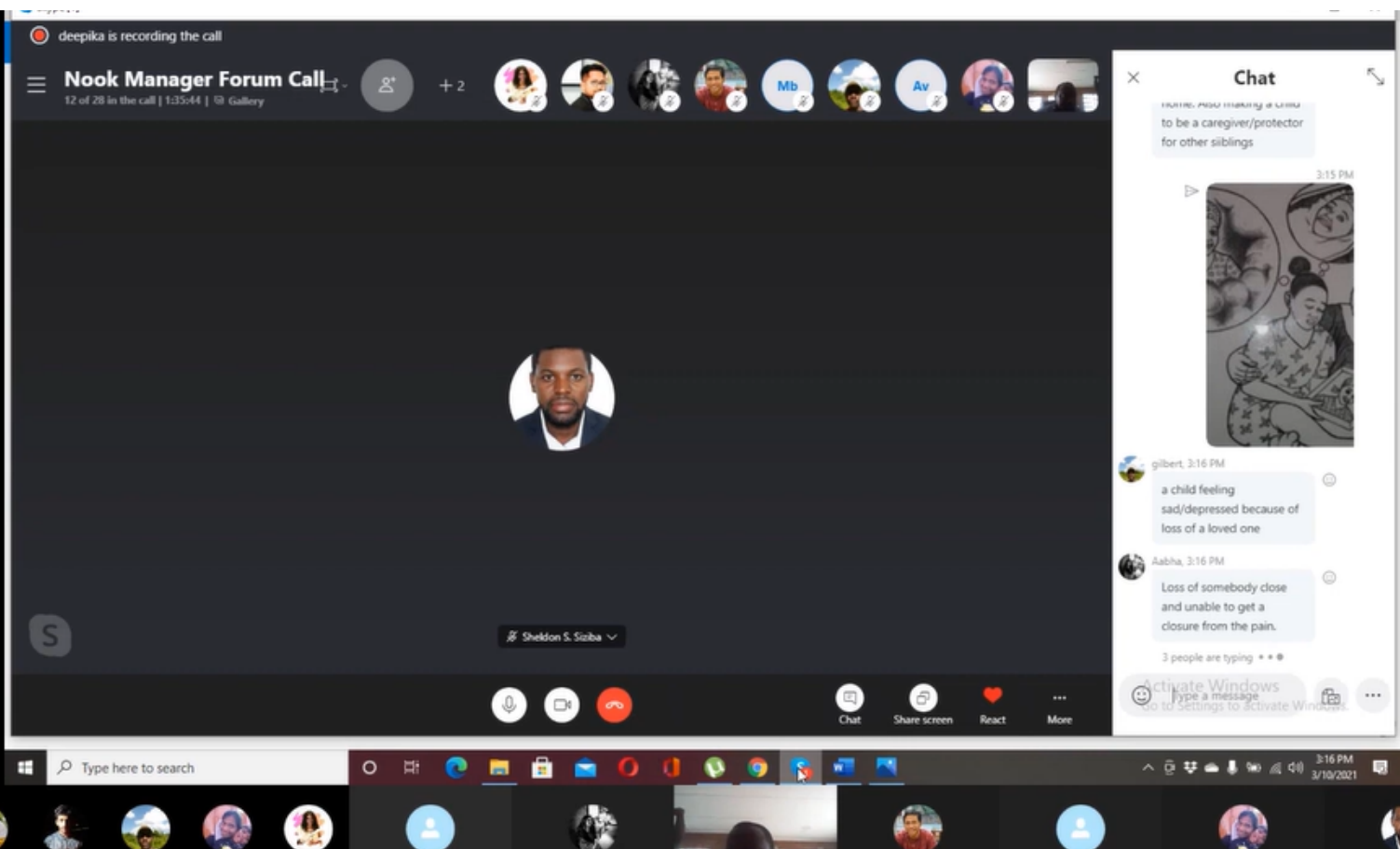
Project DEFY organized an informative, creative and hands-on training program for the MNH Manager and Innovation Lead. There are 3 Modules in the Training Program; Foundation, Learning Cycle in the Nook and Ongoing Functions of the Training Program.

The training program is intended to help the local team to learn about their roles and responsibilities, gain a deep understanding of the philosophy and practice of self-designed learning and how to facilitate it, and ultimately help them to acquire an in-depth understanding of all facets of the Nook model, from learning to community-building, impact measurement, finance, communications, and much more. The goal is that after this training program - while Project DEFY continues to provide regular training and assistance - the team members on the ground should be able to successfully and autonomously fulfil their role and thereby benefit the local community of learners in the most effective manner, without daily micromanaging from outside.

Gilbert and Sheldon attended the online-based format of the two modules; Foundation and Ongoing Functions of the Training Program with other Nook Fellows from different locations like Bangladesh and India. The platform offers cross-nooks learning with diverse knowledge and culture sharing. For the 2nd Module, they received on-ground hands-on training from DEFY Team members, Abhijit and Muzamil during the setting up of the Bulawayo Nook Hub. At the end of the training program, Gilbert and Sheldon gave presentations on their learning and ideas of the Nook to the team and shared feedback on the training as well.

Nook Forum Call

The Nook Forum Call is a platform designed by Project DEFY where all the Nook Managers/Fellows gather and share their learnings, exchange ideas, discuss the challenges, brainstorm solutions and learn skills together. It is also a platform to minimize the distances among the Nooks and build a community of educators. Every Wednesday, we organize the forum calls and sessions are facilitated by NFs and DEFY Office Team members. NMs can bring up any topic or issue for discussing amongst learners. There is no restriction in selecting the topic for the discussion or sessions. Skilling sessions on various software and topics are very regular in this call. Sheldon and Gilbert have been attending the forum call regularly and conducted various sessions before.



Nook Health Monitor

As a way to support and provide help, Answer has been having monthly calls with the Nook Fellows and doing various discussions on the ongoing functions and programs of the Nook Hub. On the calls, we discuss the activities in the Nook, outreach, quality of the projects and how we can improve our interaction with the learners based on certain parameters. The parameters are not a necessary part of the impact assessment, it is a way for the team to guide the discussion and come up with further activities and learning to improve the functioning and program of the Nook. From this call, DEFY Team also learns more about the Nook Hub, challenges faced by the team and learners on the ground and come up with solutions together.



Participated in CORE Conference

Consortium Of Regenerative Educators is a conference organized by DEFY Team members where we invite all the team members and partners working on the Nook Project to discuss the way ahead and collectively design the future of learning and education through a grassroots movement, putting the needs of local communities first. The first edition of CORE was held from 6th June to 12th June 2022 in Dharamsala, India.



Sheldon participated in the CORE by representing Matibi Nook Hub and FFM Trust. He presented the work done by FFM and Matibi Nook Hub to the participants. He also facilitated a session as a panellist on the topic 'Expectations from community and Realities on the ground', with other participants from India and Rwanda moderated by our partner Christoph from the Chennai Nook. He also hosted a very fun ice-breaking session and team-building activities during the conference.

Future Plan and some of our Challenges:

Completion of 1st Goal Cycle and Exhibition Week

We are looking forward to completing the First Cycle in September. In the meanwhile, the team have been having regular check-ins on the progress of the goals, acquiring the required materials for the goals, and preparing the learners for the Exhibition Week. The Nook Fellows also conduct various workshops and skilling sessions for the learners which are useful in their projects.

The exhibition week will mark the completion of a 3-month-long goal cycle. During the exhibition week, we will invite the community members, parents of the learners, government officials, representatives from other organizations and NGOs, and industry experts related to the learner goals and they will have the opportunity to showcase their projects to them. We intend to show the abilities, confidence and skills of the learners through their projects. As a team, together with the learners, we will be ready to take feedback from them. We are hoping from the stakeholders that we invited different opportunities like jobs, funding, internship or even purchasing the projects will come out of it. There will be fun, entertainment and celebration of our learner's achievements during the exhibition week. As part of our outreach effort, we are looking forward to enrolling more learners in the coming 2nd Cycle.

Rearing Livestock as part of the Nook Sustainability Program

The Matibi Nook Hub community and village authority were kind enough to allocate more land to us. Together with the community members, the land will be used for rearing goats, cattle and other livestock to generate income for the Nook and the community. This is the first step taken to attain self-sustainability and reduce the dependency on funding for the Nook Hub and community members. The plans are being finalized and will start the activity soon.

Beautification of the Nook Building

The construction work of the Nook Hub building is almost at completion. The plastering of the walls is at completion. We are planning to do graffiti and other artwork on the walls with the learners where they can express freely about Nook, the community and themselves. The FFM Office will be set up in one section of the Nook.

Psycho-social support program for our Learners

The project will take place in collaboration with Bulawayo Nook Hub. The vision of the project is to promote an enabling environment for communities and families in Bulawayo and Matibi to preserve, nurture and restore the psychosocial wellbeing of children and youths who are mostly the learners at the two nook centres.

Working with orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS can be taxing. A lot of input is channelled towards the children and youths by the camp counsellors. However, the camp counsellors do not take much time to reflect on who they are in the process of caring. There is a need for them to take time for introspection and determine who they are, what their own needs are, what their challenges are and where their strengths lie. By knowing and understanding what makes them resilient and coping with the situation, they can begin to transfer those skills to the children and youths who are learners. It is important to note that it is not only the children and youths that are affected by HIV/AIDS and mental health issues but the camp counsellors as well hence the need to build their capacity to provide PSS. Children and youth may express psychological distress (anxiety, sadness). Some may become silent and withdrawn while others may feel and express anger and hyperactivity. Therefore, there is a need for camp counsellors to be empowered in the provision of psychosocial support. All emotions are valid emotions, and camp counsellors need to understand them with empathy. Sometimes engaging in a creative interactive activity, such as playing and drawing can facilitate this process. Camp counsellors play a big role in helping children and youths find positive ways to express disturbing feelings such as anger, fear and sadness. If children and learners are witnessing violence at home, or if they are the target of the violence, it causes trauma and distress and may lead to disruptive behaviour.

Therefore, SWIZIMAID TRUST together with FRIENDS FOR MATIBI intends to implement Psychosocial support camp programming that empowers and equips camps to provide PSS to learners covering all essential elements of positive human development that include emotional, social, mental, physical and spiritual needs.

Psychosocial support will go a long way in building resilience among the learners. The idea of conducting Psychosocial Support camp counselors' training came after realizing the challenge and the needs that are faced by learners attending the nook in both the organizations. Some of the learners attending nook sessions showed signs of psychosomatic problems which adversely affect their participation in such situations at both centers. A mini-survey was conducted to visit some families and this prompted the need to conduct a PSS training for volunteers from the two organizations. The trained pool of volunteers will work as camp counselors in the PSS life skills training camps as well as run PSS programs in the areas where the two organizations are operating from.

Some of our challenges

Challenges are part of learning to do things differently and with a much greater impact. Naturally, there were and are still several challenges that we faced in terms of setting up the Nook Hub in Matibi.

These include:

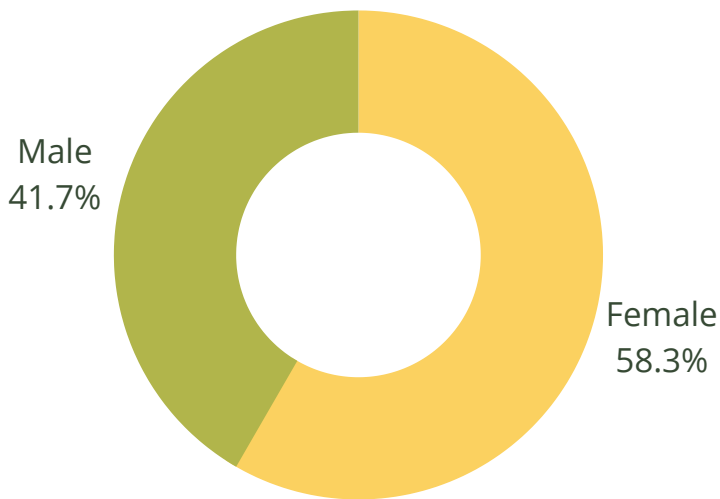
- Because of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions, we could not maintain the continuity of learning in the Nook and community engagement in the beginning. It led to the dropping out of some learners.
- The construction of the Nook Building took more time than we expected because of the weather conditions, pandemic, unavailability of materials and delays from the contractors.
- Because of the travel restrictions, the Visa application of the DEFY Team members was delayed for quite some time. The team members were not able to participate personally at the beginning of the Induction Program.
- The communication between team members from India and Zimbabwe was frequently disturbed because of the slow internet. However, team members find ways to communicate effectively through WhatsApp and can keep in touch when it is needed.
- Lots of materials and tools are not available in Zimbabwe easily and it is very costly. So, the team has to spend a lot of time travelling and finding places that are not expensive. For example, after comparing prices, Sheldon went to South Africa and purchased the tools.
- As the Nook is located in a remote area, it is very hard for the learners and team members to get the materials needed for the projects and that delays timelines.
- As most of the villages are isolated and dispersed housing, many learners have to walk more than 15 km daily just to come to the Nook Hub. Lack of transportation worsened the situation.
- Due to a lack of accommodation facilities or rented houses in the community, learners from far places could not shift near the Nook Hub and it still is a challenge for most of them to dedicate more time to their projects.



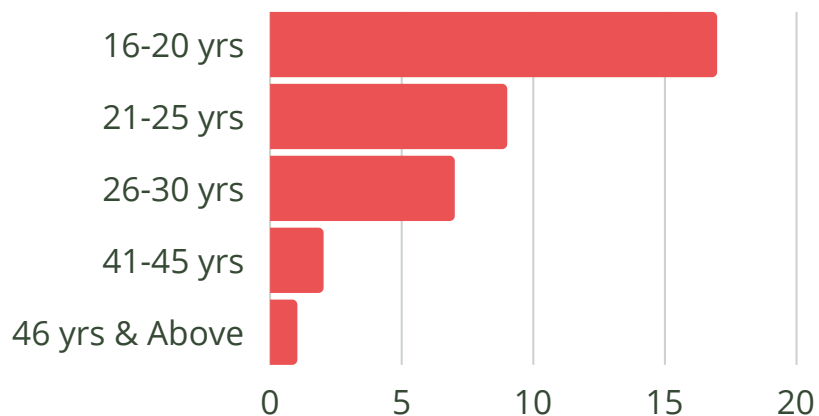
Meet the Learners

Charted representation

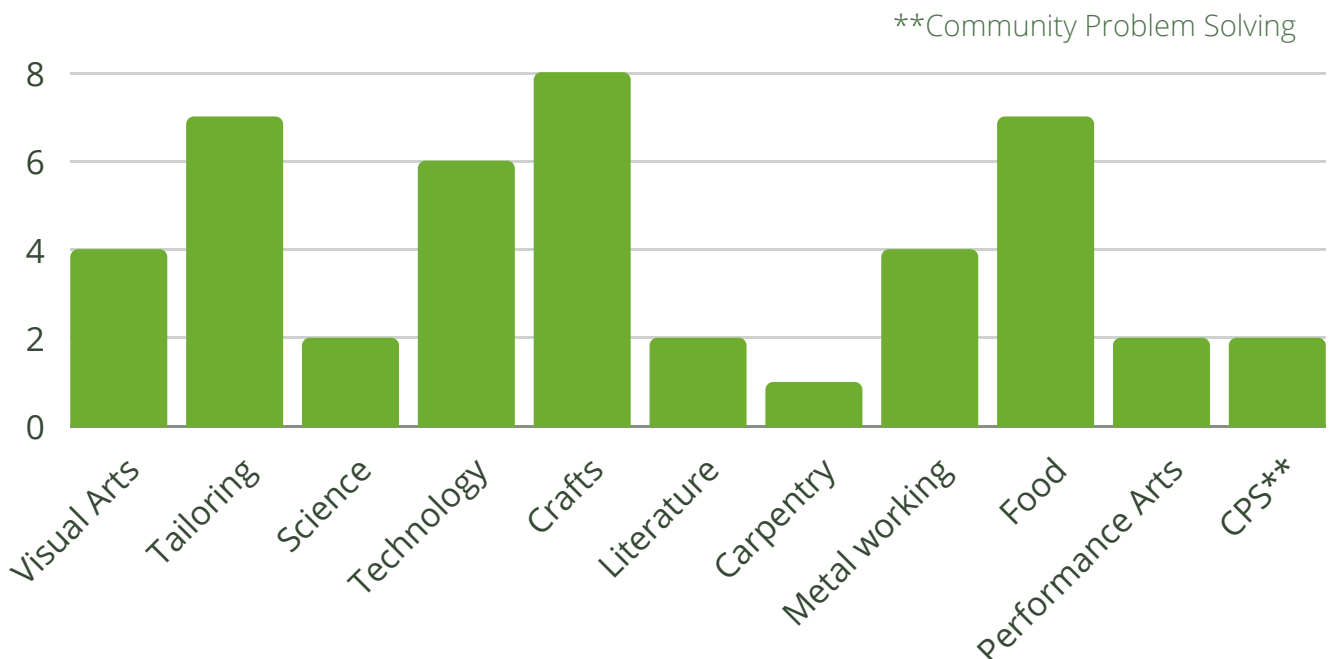
Gender Distribution



Age Distribution



Areas of Learning vs No. of Learners



Learner Stories

Simbarshe Mutandadzi (20 years old)



My name is Simbarashe aka Simba. I am 20 years old and I come from a family of 6. My father is a pastor and that's where we get our income, though sometimes he buys and sells stuff. Currently, I am not going to school. I stopped my education journey at O'levels due to school fees being a challenge. I come from a village called Musvoti and in my village, most people earn an income through farming cotton and gold panning. Many of my age mates end up going to pan for gold so they can bring some money home. Many don't even see education as an important thing, formal or informal.

I first came to the nook in October 2021 after I heard it from the ward councillor. Since I had failed and money was a challenge, I decided to start coming to the nook. I am gaining skills which I think will be helpful to me. This is one of the reasons why I keep coming to the nook. Currently, I am designing a nook hostel which will accommodate at least 50 people. This is because some of my friends walk very long distances to come to the nook. Also, there are many people from other villages and neighbouring communities who would like to attend but they don't have accommodation.

When I finish my 3 months project, I'm looking forward to opening my own architectural design shop where I can design homes for my community. Currently, people just build, and those with a little bit of knowledge travel to Masvingo just so they can have a house plan.



Tanaka Chidyamakono (17 years old)



I live in Chirongo village. I come from a family of 6. I did not finish high school due to financial challenges. My father is a businessman, however, most people from Chirongo survive through farming and piece jobs.

When I heard that there is a school without teachers in October 2021, I decided to join the movement and have been coming ever since. During my time here at the nook, I took part in the making of beds for the Nook Hub. Besides woodworking, I also did some sewing and making reusable sanitary wear just to mention a few. Besides the skills I have gained so far, one of the things I commend the Nook for is how I learned to open up and socialize with others. This was well influenced by the activities we do in the nook and also the morning circle.

Currently, I am making an app for a traditional game called Tsoro, which is not yet available digitally. According to me, the Nook is a free learning space that does not confine me and gives me the freedom to explore and think outside the box. After finishing my first project, I hope to continue developing games which are not yet mainstream or available digitally.



Meet the Team



Sheldon S. Siziba
Nook Hub Manager



Gilbert T. Rupere
Innovation Lead



Evelyn Mabhena
Keyholder



Chiedza Nduma
Keyholder



Eunice Phiri
Keyholder



Simbarashe Mutandadzi
Keyholder



Brian Matiza

Keyholder



Tapiwa Runesu

Keyholder



Oliver Mueller

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Switzerland



Adnos Chikomo

Project Co-ordinator, FFM Trust



Answer Nzuma

Director of International Projects,
Project DEFY



Huidrom Boicha

International Hopper,
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