

Nook Project

Half Year Report March 2023 – August 2023

31.08.2023



Reporting Organisation	Friends For Matibi Association
Implementing Organisation	Friends for Matibi Trust
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Time Span Program	[01.03.2023 – 30.03.2025]
Reporting Period	[01.03.2023 – 31.08.2023]
Country / Region / Area	Zimbabwe, Masvingo, Matibi
LBF-Number	

Planned Total Program Amount [2023-2024)	\$110.000.00
LBF Grant Approved:	\$55.000.00
LBF Grant Paid up to Date:	\$55.000.00, 17.03.2023]
Next Payment LBF:	[amount, DD.03.2024]

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1. Program

1.1 Situation

The Nook is located in a remote area, with high political influence surrounding the community which has embraced the nook concept and is in full support of it hence there is still need to sensitise the community. The community which the project is being implemented at has a high number of people migrating to neighbouring countries for survival, a high number of young girls underage getting pregnant and getting married, and a high number of unemployed youths who are misusing drugs. All this has been caused by the country's situation which has not been stable for a long time. The current inflation rate is at 77.2% as of August 2023, such economic results do not reflect any changes to the community we are working in as we have seen different local NGOs supporting the community with food supplement due to the dry spell during the farming season. The community members in different villages around in the ward, mostly elderly women and young mothers are taking advantage of opportunities which are being provided by the organisation under the sustainable livelihoods projects which is implementing organic farming. The nook closed its doors at the end of 3rd cycle on August 4th 2023 to pave the way for elections which were approaching to ensure the safety of learners and staff.

The location of the nook makes it very hard for the team members to procure the tools and materials needed for the projects. This delays our timelines as it takes 3-5 weeks for proper acquisition of materials. The organisation is still facing challenges importing a vehicle for the project as the import duty fee is at 100% with the cost of buying the vehicle which is way too high and not cost effective for our budget.

The lack of accommodation facilities at the nook or rented houses in the community keeps hindering learners from far places to take part in the activities at the nook. Those with facilities available for renting often take advantage and hike charges for rentals which in turn forces learners to spend more time looking for rental fees and thus affecting their projects.

1.2 Course of the Program

The report seeks to give details of the period under review from March 2023 to August 2023. In the period under review the nook successfully completed the following

- 1 goal cycle
- 1 exhibition
- 2 external exhibitions (visitation of relevant institute)
- 1 exchange program (visitation of another nook)
- 1 Psychosocial Support Life skills Community Training Camp
- 3 Stakeholder Sensitisation meetings
- 2 Community Sensitisation meetings
- 34 learners registered and 18 completed their cycle goal
- 2 business management trainings
- 2 ISAL (internal savings and lending scheme) trainings
- Conducted impact assessment
- Training of camp leaders

All the above was done through a process of

- Recruiting learners and introduction of the nook concept
- Conducting a 10 days projects (Early Projects) for learners
- Conducting a 21 day exploration phase where learners are to explore and familiarise themselves in various learning fields.
- Going through the process of Goal Setting and Design week before they commence their goal cycle
- Paired in small groups to work on their projects (3-4 months)
- Showcasing and exhibiting their projects to various relevant stakeholders and community members
- Engagement of local stakeholder, community leadership and all the relevant authorities

1.3 Target Group

In the period under review we registered 34 (male 13 - female 21) learners for the 3rd cycle and we are expecting to enrol 60 learners up to the end of 2023. 18 learners fully completed their goal and took part in the project exhibition. We witnessed a high number of female representation comprising young girls and young mothers compared to the male counterpart. The projects which were exhibited comprised household detergents (Fabric softener, window cleaner, washing powder, liquid laundry), freezits making machine, spinning braai stand, baking, water tank stands, fence making, sewing, wooden coffee table and layers chicken production hence it was not exhibited.

In the same period a total of 213 indirect beneficiaries were reached out to, the indirect beneficiaries comprises of parents, caregivers, family members of the learners, community at large, local business community, local schools, local NGOs and stakeholders who benefited through activities and services offered at the nook such as printing services, free internet services for research, educational purposes and holding online meeting, usage of solar power to charge phones, school laptops and other electrical gadgets, baking services, live screening of various sporting activities, repair and maintenance of computers and phones. We could not reach our target of 30 learners who were supposed to complete the goal cycle due to lack of accommodation as most learners travel long distances and some come from surrounding wards which requires them to have accommodation close by. The program has attracted the attention of more people from outside the area we are implementing in.

The nook helped me a lot, because besides the skills I have learnt, I'm now comfortable to share my problems with others and to be free, be kind to everyone, And also to tolerate other people with their different issues through the psychosocial support activities we do at the nook. - Shalom Shumba (20)

Academically I was not that bright. As a result my O level results were not even good. I then heard about the nook, then came to hear it for myself. Since I am not a fast learner, at first I doubted that I would be able to make it, but after I joined the nook, I realised that Mr Siziba and Mr Rupere will always be there helping us. I like being at the nook because they are helping me achieve my dream of being an international baker. I have always wanted to be a baker but never had the courage to stand for it. Mr Rupere helped in believing in myself and having self confidence. - Brightness Dzivakwi (21)

1.4 Stakeholders and Network

In the period under review the nook has had networks with local NGOs working in the ward, local businesses and relevant Government departments. Such networks resulted in learners being undertaken through the business management training and Internal Saving and lending scheme training by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development. The training will be a 4 four-part stage of which they have completed the first stage, second and third stage will be done in the 4th Goal Cycle. This collaboration will go a long way as it will have more impact in the community we are working in developing business skills within the community of Matibi.

The relationship with Mwenezi Rural District Council which is the local authority has proven to be bearing fruits as they are offering Nook learners an opportunity to get easy access to land which they call workspace at an affordable price after they have finished their projects. With such an opportunity this has proven that the nook concept is slowly being accepted in high offices hence there is still a need to further formalise the collaboration as this will open more opportunities for the nook and entire community of Matibi.

The Mwenezi business community has continued to support the learners through purchasing of products that are being manufactured at the Nook such as various household detergents, various baked goodies, welding services and printing services.

1.5 Opportunities and Risks

The local business community and organisations are in support of the program. This has been seen through various meetings held in the community, with others advocating for contextualization of the concept and willing to support and mobilise learners from different wards to partake. This will potentially expand the program to District or Provincial level as it is a kind of its own and will go a long way in improving lives of underprivileged children, youths and community members who can't afford to pay vocational or tertiary college.

The learners participated at Zimbabwe International Trade Fair which is one of the main exhibitions in the country and during that period they managed to get an invitation to tour one of the biggest manufacturing companies of cooking oil, bath and washing soap. With this invitation, discussions are still underway as they promised to take learners for internship and further support them after finishing. Also this will assist the nook as they are willing to come and assess how best we can have collaboration not only at the nook but in the community especially in the organic gardens. The Mwenezi Rural District Council offered learners an opportunity to acquire small working spaces at a very low price as this will give them exposure to expand on their skills.

There is a risk of local businesses and stakeholders who are well established and have financial muscle of copying or stealing learner’s projects before they are ready for market as the organisation is in the process of opening a company that will manage and protect products that are being produced by the learners. There are red flags on the political side as some players want to take ownership of the nook project/nook building and push a political agenda which is not in line with what the organisation is trying to develop in the community hence the need to keep sensitising all the stakeholders on our main motive of self designing learning and skills development which will create source of income for most of the community members.

1.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation process of the nook is being done through Project Defy and an external evaluation team. Data collection tools provided by Project Defy are in use on collecting learners' project progress, performance patterns and progression analysis of each individual learner. During each cycle there were internal reviews conducted to assess learner’s projects schedule, quality of their projects, community feedback on projects and lessons learnt. Learner’s profiling and success story has been documented and captured during the period under review in form of text, audio and video as a way to analyse the data collected which will help the organisation and its partners to further develop the concept in a way that will have more impact to the beneficiaries and the community at large.

With the nook concept evolving each day, a lot of work is being put into making sure the concept fits within the community and produces results which are satisfactory. The Defy team and the nook fellows are having fortnight meetings in developing the project further. Those meetings also assist the nook fellows to learn a lot from the pool of other nook fellows worldwide. External evaluation process is underway and the findings will be shared after the process has been completed



2. Impact

2.1 Achieved Goals / Outcomes

Achieved Goals / Outcomes reached thus far
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are able to undertake various projects in the safe space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are familiar with using information technology and tools in making different things or solving their own problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are familiarised with self-design learning concepts Learners identify their project's interest Learners acquire different skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are able to produce quality and sellable products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Psychosocial Support (PSS) life skills camp held at Matibi nook hub

- Recognition from local authority, business community, local NGOs through external exhibitions

Learners at Matibi Nook Hub have gone through various projects. This is done through the various stages they go through (early projects, exploration). Apart from the projects they partook in during these stages, the learners pursued their own goals. For example, one learner is now manufacturing detergents to community members and institutions like Matibi Mission Hospital and Mwenezi District Council, and other local stakeholders have started placing orders to try and test the quality of the product. Additionally, the nook has started offering specific skills which will guarantee that the learners will have an income (Solar installation training, drip kit installation, etc) through other projects being done by the organisation (Sustainable livelihood, health and education).

- Community PSS life skills camp held at Matibi nook hub

With the help of learners who were trained to conduct Psychosocial support in 2022, SwiZimAid Trust and United Children of Africa (UNICA) Matibi nook hub hosted its first ever community camp. A total of 47 youths from within and around the community attended the 4-day-camp. During the course of the camp, various sessions were conducted ranging from training on business management and Internal Saving and Lending Scheme (ISALS) which was facilitated by the Department of Women Affairs to Self-Awareness, Sexual Reproductive Health Education (SRHE), and team building activities. The experiential learning concept was being used to implement the camp. The main goal of the camp was to enhance the capacity of youth to be able to cope with challenges they are facing within the community using different psychosocial support tools. Due to budget constraints and making sure the space was ready to host such an event, the camp was limited to 4 days as opposed to the 7 days planned. This camp gave an opportunity to camp leaders to fully share their experience in programming and facilitating of the camp which motivated other campers to join our team of camp counsellors.

2.2 Adaptations and Innovations

During the period under review, it was taken into consideration that besides the skills, people need a way to make some money while still learning. With that in mind, all the learners were taken through training in several skills (solar installation, drip installation, dew ponds, borehole installation, etc) which are in line with the other projects being implemented by FFM. Through this, the learners will be able to get income and potentially create employment for fellow community members from the work they would have done.

Additionally, this will also improve the community's economic situation since the money will now be circulated and kept within the community. The learners, through the assistance from agritex officers, are now keeping broiler chicken to sell as chicken cuts. This initiative came through a few learners who came together and decided to start the chicken project and it is now complementing the feeding program for the learners whenever they slaughter.

To date learners are in the process of installing solar panels and solar stands, making of water tank stands and mounting of water tanks at the Matibi Mission Hospital staff garden which is being supported by FFM through the Sustainable Livelihoods Project. Making use of the welding skills they have acquired at the nook in the last 6-8 months they are managing to make strong and reliable solar and water tank stands.

2.3 Lessons Learnt

1. **Price changes** - Due to the unstable pricing system and high inflation in Zimbabwe we have learnt that our budget should be reviewed every half year.
2. **Mindset Change** - Through the community outreach meetings conducted and also through projects which have been done at the nook we are now witnessing a change in the community on how people understand the nook concept and all its benefits.
3. **Team Efficiency** - Nook fellows and swiss team working hand in hand with the Project Defy team have shown great teamwork and this has made it easy for the team on the ground to work smoothly and in a coordinated manner.

4. **Motivation** - Community members are now being motivated to join the nook by the projects which they see being done by other learners.
5. **Gender disparity** - Over the period of time since the nook opened its doors to the community we have seen a high number of girls, young mothers, and older women participating compared to the young boys and men.

2.4 Outlook into 2024

In the coming year, the Nook is expecting to further improve and create more business opportunities, collaborations with relevant stakeholders, and creating structures for the organisation. Below is how the process will be:

- Implementation and improvement of rural businesses
 - Printing services
 - Baking and food caravan
 - Building community gardens
- Community sensitization through meetings and awareness campaigns
- Opening a company that will manage and market learners projects until they can start their own companies.
- Basic entrepreneurial training to learners for businesses to be officially founded in year 3 of the program.
- Creating structures within FFM and involving learners e.g. Accounting team, fundraising team, procurement team, human resources team as we are in the process of recruiting within the community and strengthening of relationship with the community.
- Open a leisure centre at the space with various activities e.g. live screening of various sporting activities on weekends, volleyball/snooker/pool as this will give the community an opportunity to be part of the activities happening at the nook.
- Offering team building and leadership training for schools, companies, churches, organisations etc. this will act part of the income generating program that will support the nook in the near future.
- Engagement and collaboration with relevant stakeholders at district, provincial and national level as to get more opportunities which are being availed by various stakeholders countrywide.



3. Implementing Organisation

3.1 Major Changes, Challenges and/or Opportunities

The nook came and showed us that challenges are just a way for us to learn new ways of solving problems. Below are some of the challenges we faced:

- The organisation had a major issue with its banking institute due to changes which were made with the local bank. This affected our operations as we could not get funds within the requested time hence we opted to get assistance from SWIZIMAID Trust and use their account to receive funds.
- Lack of learner's accommodation is still a major challenge as people from far places are much interested in taking part in the program. Due to lack of accommodation, we have seen a number of learners stopping to come to the nook as house owners nearby are now taking advantage and charging more than what the learners can afford to pay, resulting in some learners being forced to drop out.
- The organisation is having a serious challenge importing a vehicle for the project with no duty costs as we do not have necessary approval from the government to do so. As per the law, the organisation is supposed to pay import duty fee which is 100% of the total cost of purchasing the vehicle which will negatively affect our overall budget. Several organisations who are in position to import vehicles for

free have been approached to assist the organisation. We are still awaiting a response as it also has legal implications.

- The Zimbabwe government closed registering and making amends of all community trust organisations and private voluntary organisations documents. This has affected the organisation in formalising some collaboration with relevant government departments, local NGOs and other community business sectors as it was in the process of changing its paperwork. Such laws passed do have a long-lasting impact to the community we are implementing in as it will make some political individuals in high places to take advantage of the organisations and require bribery to process organisation's documents.
- Learners who took part in the 3rd exhibition were given an opportunity to apply for small work spaces from the Mwenezi Rural District Council at a low charge as to expand their skills and start manufacturing their products in place. That will give them more exposure and they will be able to make money. The Mwenezi Rural District Council emphasised that the organisation has to formalise the relationship with local authority. This will give more opportunities to the learners and the nook project will get more support from other government departments such as the Ministry of youth sports arts and recreational, ministry of women affairs, gender and development who are in the process of offering financial support to upcoming small to medium entrepreneurial persons.
- Learners who have been at the nook since the inception of the project are now making sellable products such as household detergents, various baked goods which are now getting orders from surrounding business people and the Mwenezi Rural District Council. They are now advertising on their behalf to other government departments as to expand their clientele base and market.

3.2 Capacity Building and Organisational Development

As the organisation is fast growing and developing its structures it has engaged the services of an external Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team and a bookkeeping expert that is based in Zimbabwe with the assistance of the Switzerland team. Both are expected to be working hand in hand with the current staff at Matibi nook hub. This move was taken as a step to make sure the organisation's structures in Zimbabwe are in place and also strengthen the relationship with the community as we will be hiring local community members with necessary skills needed. To date monitoring and evaluation of all the activities is underway and the findings will be included in the next report.

As the organisation is slowly growing and developing, we have taken the initiative of inviting nook learners to come and learn on how to handle office and field work duties such as procurement, bookkeeping, human resource, field work and other duties with a motive of hiring them in the long term. This will enhance the capacity of having staff from the local community who are fully aware and understand the organisation's mission. This will boost the confidence of the learners and of the community as this will also see the continuity of the programs which are being implemented. In this event, the current staff will be reassigned to other duties.

The Matibi nook hub implemented its first ever Psychosocial support skills camp program which birthed the Matibi nook community camps which empower, equip and provide Psychosocial support (PSS) to learners and the community at large, covering all essential elements of positive human development that include emotional, social, mental, physical and spiritual needs. The expected outcome of this program is to have a holistic approach to learning that is imparted to help in coping and developing of each and every learner.



4. Finances

Budget Plan 2023 (April 2023 to March 2024)			
Total of Expenses in the period of April - August 2023			
	04.2023-08.2023 [USD]		
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance
Income			
Own Contribution	55,000	18,187	-36,814
Local Contribution <small>(monetary and/or in kind)</small>	-	-	-
[Third Party Funds by name]	-	-	-
[Third Party Funds by name]	-	-	-
[Third Party Funds by name]	-	-	-
[Third Party Funds by name...]	-	-	-
Requested from LBF	55,000	18,187	-36,814
Carry-forward <small>(surplus or deficit from the previous reporting year)</small>	-	-	-
Total Income	110,000	36,373	-73,627
Expenses			
1. OPERATING COSTS [Area 1]			
International travel for DEFY India team @ \$1500 for 1 person	1,500	-	-1,500
DEFY Local Travel and Food @ \$300 per person	300		-300
Outreach and marketing <small>(printing of Banner,Poster,Brochure, Tshirts, External exhibition)</small>	2,440	1,600	-840
Per diem petty cash	1,500	635	-865
Buffer/Miscellaneous	1,500	400	-1,100
Fuel For Generator @ \$72 p/month	864	326	-538
Gas Refill @ \$107p/month	1,284	428	-856
Nook Food (learners and staff) @ \$250p/month	3,000	1,004	-1,996
Monthly Workshop supplies @ \$500p/month	6,000	2,225	-3,775
Subtotal [Area 1]	18,388	6,618	-11,770
2. NOOK EQUIPAGE [Area 2]			
Tools and material <small>per year</small>	1,500	500	-1,000
First aid kit restock <small>per year</small>	300	100	-200
Kitchen appliances, maintenance, repairs <small>per year</small>	1,500	400	-1,100
Quarterly office supplies @ \$300 p/ qrt	1,200	300	-900
Water system maintenance <small>per year</small>	700	175	-525

	-	-	-
Subtotal [Area 2]	5,200	1,475	-3,725
3. Infrastructure[Area 3]			
construction of nook hostel (25ppl capacity)	-	-	-
Solar Power Installation 10 kva once off	12,210	12,210	-
Subtotal [Area 3]	12,210	12,210	-
4.Adminstration [Area 4]			
Vehicle (purchasing of project vehicle e.g Toyota D4D D/Cab, Toyota Landcruiser D/Cab ,Toyota Hilux GD6 D/Cab, Mazda BT50,Nissan D/Cab NP300) once off	30,000	-	-30,000
Subtotal [Area 4]	30,000	-	-30,000
Capacity & Organisational Development (in case of no expenses, please put 0)			
Technical Capacity Staff Training @ \$400 for 2 ppl	-	-	-
International Exchange programs @ 2000 per person	2,000	-	-2,000
Local Exchange programs @ 400 per person	800	300	-500
Research and Pilot Project inc Meeting Refreshments,Transport,accomodation airtime etc	500	420	-80
Trainings (Psychosocial Support lifeskills camp, kids clubs, support groups ,business management, Internal savings and lending scheme e.t.c)	6,200	3,100	-3,100
Subtotal Capacity Development	9,500	3,820	-5,680
Monitoring and Evaluation (in case of no expenses, please put 0)			
Consultation fee (Planning, designing and development of M & E framework Consolidation of the monitoring results Report on the M & E results including assessing M & E resources , strategy, projects, and impacts)	900	400	-500
Subtotal Monitoring & Evaluation	900	400	-500
Structural Costs (rent, electricity, transportation, salaries, others...)			
Internet recharge	7,200	2,200	-5,000
Solar power maintenance	810	-	-810
Nook Hub Manager	9,000	3,750	-5,250
Lead Innovate	6,600	2,750	-3,850
Accounting Consultation @\$200 p/half year	400	400	-
Security @ \$90 per person x 2	2,160	900	-1,260
Keyholder/ Volunteer Allowance @\$30 pp / per month for 3pp	1,080	450	-630
Vehicle Maintance @ \$300 p/ qrt	1,200	-	-1,200
Vehicle Fuel @ \$210 p/ month	2,250	-	-2,250
Subtotal Structural Costs	30,700	10,450	-20,250
Subtotal all Program-Expenses (without structural costs)	76,198	24,523	-51,675
Total Expenses Program-Expenses + Structural Costs	106,898	34,973	-71,925

Total Income	110,000	36,373	-73,627
Total Expenses <i>(inclusive structural costs)</i>	106,898	34,973	-71,925
Surplus/Deficit	3,102	1,400	-1,702

5. Further Information and Attachments

Link to pictures

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/178aIFZk8bH1irWK1d7K_tmuo3dtzm6rX?usp=sharing