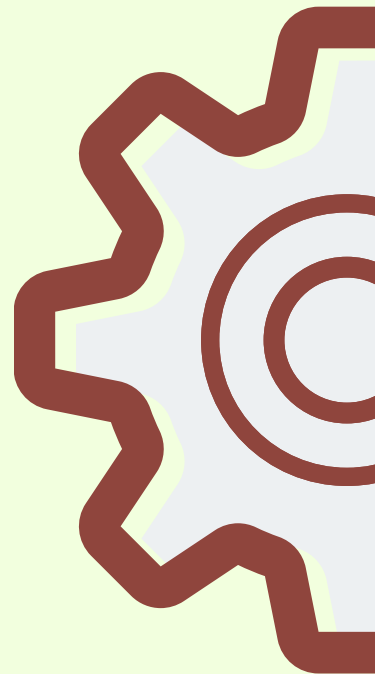
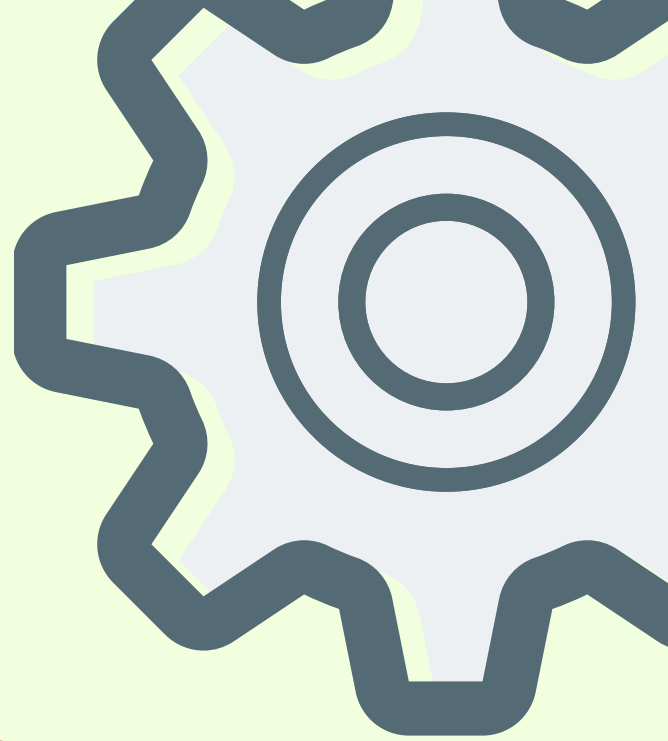


# SHIVAJI NAGAR NOOK



# ENTRY INTO SHIVAJI NAGAR

Shivaji Nagar is an old settlement of Bengaluru. There is a mixed population of civilians from all over India, with the majority belonging to the Muslim faith. Over the centuries, it has turned into a bustling commercial centre, catering to the market needs of the Bengaluru-East and -North residents. Russell Market, established in the British era, has lakhs of people thronging its stony path, every day for all their home requirements. Due to the dense population, the hygiene and living standards have been compromised. Always bristling with activity 24/7, rather chaotically, the men folk are the predominant bread-winners, as women working outside the home is not very common. As a result of the locality being a trading area, its literacy level is low. Generally, many children discontinue their studies and begin working at a very young age. The community has grown to accept its school and college dropouts, as long as they can earn a living.

Therefore we need to put in sustained and unrelenting effort to build a rapport, and break through their conservative mindset and build a willing group with collective aim to self learn.

We need to work to become part of the community, initially it may seem very closed, but day after day you can build good relationships and trust with them.

The quality of life of a social context can improve if the relationships between people generate identity and fidelity bonds. The sense of belonging to a group or to a community is a powerful motivation that drives them people to take part in collective construction processes and this is also the sense of a nook to Shivajinagar. Feeling part sets in motion acknowledgments, feelings of affection, collaboration, discovery, from which one thinks that “together we can do”.

# PROCESS

To start the project ground processes were planned and implemented as part of our efforts to reach out to the community at Shivaji Nagar. We started the process by studying the geographical dimensions of commercial establishments, residential areas and institutions. We identified that there were three wards of residential areas and we planned a door to door campaign of meeting people personally and appraising the goal of our project. The door-to-door visits were made to places in and around the locality as a part of the Community mapping process. Covering houses from HKP Road, Old Cemetery Road, Pension Mohalla Lane, Cockburn Road, HBS Hospital, Tasker Town, Queen's Road towards Indian Express Circle and Police Quarters.

The area has many Government and Private schools, religious places, several small shops, tea and bakery shops, and garages situated side by side in a single stretch. During the survey, the residential areas were the first to be covered. We interacted with the individuals who introduced us to their local community, where we held group discussions in every lane. During the discussions, we highlighted the existence of the Library, the current facilities and the new facilities that were being introduced; and how individuals could inculcate new skills and better themselves. After this discussion, some of the residents expressed their interest in visiting the Library, while some others registered for its services on the spot.

The community group discussions and door-to-door campaigns yielded good results and are an ongoing process of the Nook. The conversations with the community members at different locations in Shivaji Nagar were elaborate and gave



insight into several community learning needs. The large number of school drop-outs was one of the prime issues that emerged through the discussions.

The digital aspect of the project gained a lot of attention in the community. Computers were introduced at the library, as a means of encouraging self-directed learning. Some responses of the users are recorded here:

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*“The digital learning provided here is the best and the most necessary aspect, at present. Many students will benefit from this, because at schools there are over 50 students in a class and the Computer Science period lasts for 40 minutes with only a few computers available at the school. Within this span, students don’t really learn anything practically, because the theoretical explanation takes a long time. The children here mostly cannot afford a system at home. So, this project has helped in increasing the knowledge of our children.”- Mr. Rehaman, local community member.*

*“We can learn about computers and use it at the library. We learnt that we can use the Internet to transfer money, for bill payments, purchases, etc. Not only by means of computers, but we can do it through mobile phones too.”  
- Mrs. Gulab, local community member.*

# HOW THE NOOK LOOKS LIKE



# INDUCTION PROGRAMME

On 6th Feb 2018, the 15 day induction programme commenced with the selected 16 learners. Following the Nook induction programme, the learners were led through the introductions of the space, tools, computers, Internet, basic operations, and various computer applications. Learners were introduced to Search engines, Google Translate, YouTube, Arvind Gupta Toys and Wikipedia. The learners spent several days doing projects from the above websites. The projects involved using trash and waste materials to make articles using plastic bottles, sticks, rubber, rope, paper, cardboard, pencils, boxes, old CDs, magnets, bottle caps, rubber-band, etc., The outcomes were some simple toys and experiments like balloon bangles, balloon inflater and fans made of the plastic bottles.

The learners also showed keen interest in learning to speak English fluently. Some were given tasks like storytelling, essay writing, public speaking, etc., Moving onto the next step, the learners were asked to identify and discuss long term action plans to find their short term goals.

The learners were guided in identifying one short-term goal of their choice. In the very next session, they came back with their interests. They were then guided to plan and execute them. The interests were mostly in make-up and hair styling, fashion designing and dress making and some even chose interior designing. The majority of the participants were women. They were then guided to work on the material requirements, accessories, raw materials, tools etc., within a given time-line.

# SETTING THE NOOK

The space is allocated in the Broadway Road Library, the place was cleaned and spruced up. The layout was planned for accommodating PC's and other facilities, with logistics support from Atkins the main sponsor. The groups enrolled their initiated into induction program and the learning session were started. The learners were asked about their dreams and goals in life based on that they were guided into learning appropriate profession. They were given the task of budgeting their project and provide their monetary and material needs for starting their profession. They provided the seed amount and the materials they asked for, the candidates completed the course from P.A Group and individually and became self reliant. Few of them have already have got employment and earning, others are on the verge of landing good jobs and few of them continued to come to the library.

Summer camps were held in various school students at Shivajinagar and when the children seem interested they were told if they wanted to continue they can come to the NOOK. As the summer camp being organised more children came in due to leisure of time. This helped in more children being enrolled and parents showed interest, with the large number of children coming they were divided into three groups of 20 students each. With three groups new children also got enrolled and we had a collective joint induction program for the children. they were interested in various activities including creating creating craft from waste materials, electronic gadgets, Trying hands on innovations, cultural activities like music, dance, singing and playing games. Every second saturday all the staff of the Headstream the sponsor, the library participated in an event called "Potluck" here they swapped

Date	Batch Number	No. of participants
06.02.2018	1	16
08.02.2018	2	8
06.03.2018	3	11
27.03.2018	4	15
24.04.2018	5 & 6	25
25.05.2018	7 & 8	26
20.06.2018	9	12
17.07.2018	10	14
04.08.2018	11	13
11.10.2018	12	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>156</b>

Table : The table shows the number of participants in each batch in the different Induction Programmes across the year.

Details of Induction Programme	No. of Individual
Mobilising of community outreach programme	Over-500
Registering of walk-ins for Induction Programme	256
Total No. of people attended Induction Programme	156
Total No. of people completed Induction programme	122

In the first batch, eight learners submitted their budgets. Finally, five individuals were coached on how to plan, budget, make purchases and handle a project. After a few interactions, a realistic budget was worked out. Based on the learners budget, they purchased the materials required for their short term goals, and began working on them. They were given some guidance and insight on how to make this a business venture. The enrollment process continued and new candidates joined for the induction programme, which is a continuing process.

and shared the food they bought with others this was followed by various games in which everybody participated ensuring good times and liberation of mind. People from various corporates institutions visited us and interacted with the learners exchanging views and learning new ideas that will help reach out to people such as steampunk event wherein new product were made from scrap automotive material. Members from one of our project partner Defy had an interaction session with all NOOK Managers in various centers of Bengaluru along with the learners, imparted and exchanged happenings and various ideas about setting up goals and achievements. Thereby achieving the motto of headstream in their endeavour of promoting self learning process. In NOOK Shivajinagar the activities continue the learners and children continue to proceed with their learning.

Members from various institutions and organizations continue to come and contribute to our cause. New enrollments are also happening with steady flow of children and less number of learners.

## FLUCTUATION

After the outreach programme and door-to-door campaigns, more than 60 individuals applied and 37 applicants came for the initial interview for the free Nook programme. Of these, 16 candidates fulfilled the criteria and were selected for the 1st batch of the Nook Induction Programme. On 24th January 2018, we started the “Taster Session” with selected learners and other interested individuals. The session started with introductions and a brief on the objectives of the space and its purpose. An electronics project that involved PCBs, Sensors, LEDs, soldering and batteries was done by the participants.

We asked our protagonists exactly why they come here, what drives them to come, what they find different from the regular places of teaching. Many were literally afraid of their ‘teachers’, they fear them and said they did not have room at school to learn new things from the regular subjects. Here, they could learn to use computers and browse YouTube to start researching and experimenting creatively but free of cost. This is what drove them to come here, a safe place to be free, to be curious and looking, but above all to be able to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes.

There being no other similar learning centre where they could direct their own learning and receive guidance for starting on a new career path, they were inclined to join the group. The freebies available in terms of material for projects with no charges for entry and use of the facilities, was another incentive. In some cases, individuals heard through word of mouth about the centre through their friends and relatives and came and enrolled themselves.



# LEARNING

Some of the features of the Nook space has been: People sharing their skills and talents, peer group learning, starting their own projects, making the library more efficient, people donating their upcyclable materials, participating and visiting the library on the regular basis and conducting workshops.

**Learners Goal Setting:** The 1st and 2nd batch of learners have completed their 3-month goals. The 3rd and 4th Batches are in the process of setting their goals for the next 3 months. The interest has once again been mostly in make-up, hair styling, fashion designing and dress making, with the presence of pre-dominantly women learners. They too have been guided to work on the material requirements, accessories, raw materials, and tools, etc., under a time-line.

**The Learners and Project Materials Supporting:** Learners who have set their goals have been provided with necessary kits. Additionally, practice head with long locks of hair, make-up kits, hair-styling tools, hair sprays, combs, pins and other accessories, fabrics, sewing kits, lace material and threads and mehendi cones were purchased.

The Library center also saw learners doing several innovative projects after the Induction Program with paper, cardboard, motors, fans, batteries, LEDs, etc., Several learners got their e-mail IDs created and were introduced to Documentation on Libre Office Writer and Libre Office Calc (Excel). Three of our learners, Ms. Afreen, Ms. Asha and Ms. Seema have secured jobs with skills they picked up at the NOOK.

# CAREERS SHAPED BY NOOK

Ms. Afreen, completed her 2nd PUC and then a computer course. She did not land herself a job, and therefore, joined a tailoring course. At the Library Nook, she chose Make-up and Hairstyling in the Beautician trade as her long term goal. Then she approached us with regards to her interest in Management, as a Library Center Manager. For the past 7 months, she is working as a Library Nook Manager.

Ms. Farheen, another learner from the first batch, completed her Pre-University. She is interested in Fashion Designing. She trained in Tailoring and Sewing and has now upgraded to piece-work. She tailors frocks and blouses and makes an earning for herself, working from home.

Ms. Asha had completed her Diploma in Fashion Designing in Davengere, Karnataka, and did not pursue a career on completion of the course. She lacked confidence because of her poor English speaking ability and very limited Digital skills. She joined the Nook in the first batch, within a couple of months, she had learned to use the computer and harness information from the Internet. She slowly started to freelance with her skills to add value to sarees and started to come up with unique designs. She procured some orders and began earning a small amount of money. All these factors gave her the confidence to start looking for jobs online. She applied for an opening in a Garments Export company and landed herself a job in Karle International, Yeshwanthpur, Bengaluru as a trainee in the Purchase department.

Ms. Seema, another learner from the first batch, has landed herself a job in a Beauty Parlor in Shivaji Nagar, close to her residence. She's a 9th Std school dropout and was unemployed, who had done a run-of-the-mill tailoring course that most people in her community opted to do. At the Nook Centre, she chose Hairstyling, Haircut & Mehendi design and Beautician as her long term goal. Having completed 4 months at the Nook Centre, she was confident enough to seek jobs in Beauty Parlors in and around the locality. She approached 'Aliya Beauty Saloon for Women', impressed by her self-taught skills, the owner hired her as a trainee in facials, makeup and hairstyling.

Mr. Bharath and Ms. Misbha were recruited at Call Center and have been successfully employed for a few months. They joined the Centre with little to no knowledge in using a computer and is now well-versed by self-taught lessons.

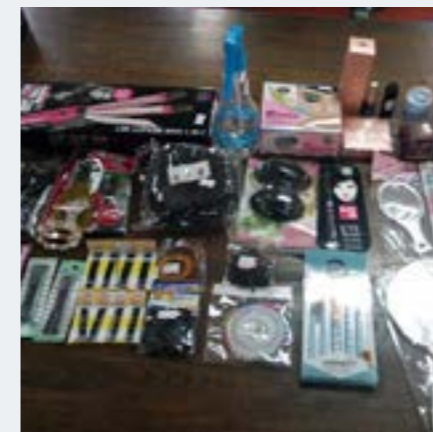
Mrs. Firdose Begum, is now a teacher at school and home tutors. With her experience at the Centre and the skill-set she learned, she is now mindful of her lessons as she imparts knowledge to students.

Mrs. Nagma, wife of a physically challenged man and a mother of an infant she completed her Induction Program. She works at a Alma's Salon where she makes Rs. 5000/-, where she is simultaneously being trained on other skills necessary at the Salon.

Mrs. Mamtha, is a bold woman who has made a career for herself. She purchases sarees from wholesale stores and is a retail seller who makes a profit of Rs. 50-100/- per saree that she sells. She is very creative and doesn't let her lack of good education impair her abilities to make a livelihood.

Mrs. Vijayalakshmi, was a learner from the first batch. On completing her Induction program, she immediately filled out her resume. She looked for a job on her own and now makes Rs. 12,800/-, working in an Insurance Company.

A few learners are still at the stage of goal setting and finding jobs outside or work from home. Most of them have completed their Induction Programs, and face a lot of difficulty in goal setting as they are restricted to have to work too far from their locality. Filling out and updating their resumes is still an ongoing process that is happening simultaneously.



A waste/reusable items collection drive within SNC-Lavalin Atkins India resulted in receiving several items like telephones, headphones, mobiles, clocks, watches, toys, cables and wires. The theme selected for the workshop was "STEAMPUNK." Headstreams and Defy procured automotive and engineering materials such as, gears of various sizes and utilities, shafts, pipes, chains, chain sprockets, engine parts, rubber hose belts, piston rings, connectors and laid them out for the participants to pick. Participants had to form teams along with learners and use their imagination to make any working or non-working model, within a stipulated time of 3 hours. The results were some interesting versions of Steampunk, different types of motorbikes, Gramophone, etc.



Overall, the Library Nook has garnered traction and has set a pace for itself through regular outreach programs or community engagement discussions, induction programs, goal setting, events and other activities. The subjects that the women and girls have taken up are mostly enterprise driven – hairstyling, beautician, tailoring and dress designing, mehendi and jewelery designing. Most of the school children and some of the college boys have taken up science projects – Physics, Electronics and Electromechanical related, while others have taken up doing Arvind Gupta Toys and projects with instructions.

The first and second batches of learners have become the ambassadors of the space and we constantly have new enrollments. The new learners are receptive to the previous learners at the Centre. They communicate with each other and do collaborative projects. The previous learners take the time to teach the beginners, and preach to them the opportunity they have at hand. This shows how they are forming a community and learning to co-exist. They are much more open to receiving the advice of the instructors at the Centre, and give their key inputs on how they want to make their projects. They work with new materials, judiciously, so as to not spoil it for the ones coming later. They have also developed a keen creative mind to make do with the available materials during a shortage.

## CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY

As anticipated, nook is a fundamental place for the community, especially for women and children. In many women who say they have a way out of the house because they come here, it is a way to get permission to go out alone, to discover new passions and hypothetical jobs. They come out from their usual routines in the house. This is one of the main objectives of the nook in shivajinagar, this to make this thing more and more frequent and the participation of more and more women.

Several women, especially in the beauty sector have started to transform the passions and skills acquired during their stay in the nook in a real job and a way to earn a little. The Muslim community is a particular place and a space like this open the doors of hope to children and adult.

Centers like ours is essential for the simple reason that such centers are not available in every locality. The people including children who do not have any other avenue to learn skill and upgrade their other knowledge and draw out enterprising girls and boys from the confines of their own and impart them various career and learning objectives. In the process offering them an opportunity to be exposed to various developments in the emerging world with no habit of reading newspapers or listening to news they remain isolated from the emerging world events. Here via the social media they can garner knowledge and learn the latest communicating channels like Whatsapp, Facebook and Youtube. Therefore ensuring enhancement on all fronts of life.



# FEEDBACK FROM LEARNERS

“The best experience, not just in terms of fun but equal learning. I can analyse a problem and make my own decisions now. I feel independent, because of my skills and how the NOOK Centre has helped me use it to make myself better.” – Mrs. Firdose Begum

“The NOOK Centre should be open on Sundays too, with more things to learn. Students are busy with homework and projects during the weekdays, and are only free on Sundays and Govt. holidays, hence the Centre should be open for more hours and on holidays.” – Ms. Nabeel Banu

“Previously, I used to watch music videos or trailers on YouTube, but after enrolling at the Centre, I have begun using it to learn new skills. Now, with an android phone, I browse Google to clear my doubts, for cookery tips, spell checks and many more.” – Ms. Farheen

“I enrolled myself at the NOOK Centre and learnt many skills. Now, I come to the Centre to clear my doubts by browsing the Internet. When confused, I ask for help, with the guidance of the Instructor at the Centre, I weigh my pros and cons before making a decision.” – Ms. Misbah

“Although I am irregular to the NOOK Centre, I learn what I came for, thus being productive. I am oriented towards the Fine Arts, and hence watch videos about different Ghazals and email myself the link to learn later. I think the Centre should have uniquely talented people coming over during the weekends and holidays to teach different techniques and work on different models. With a hectic school schedule for higher grade children, coming

regularly isn't an option.” – Mr. Sadatt

# KEY OUTCOMES

Here are some of the key outcomes for the last year:

- 400 - 500 houses visited in the nearby communities, including schools and religious places
- Amateurs and regular users have increased in the library manifold from 5 walk-ins per day to around 30 walk-ins
- A total of 120 applications for the Nook programs were received
- The Nook has helped change the course of life for over 122 learners
- 12 induction programs were conducted in the last year
- More than 100 beginner level projects have been completed
- 6 intermediary level projects are underway
- With the guidance of the NOOK staff, 10 learners have been able to acquire jobs after the NOOK programme and 6 learners were able to find placements on their own
- 4 potluck sessions were conducted with NOOK learners and SNC-Lavalin Atkins employees.
- Learners have understood the purpose of the space and are open to learn what they want and do activities they have never done
- Learners can make rational decisions based on their choices
- Their computer proficiency has improved
- Their ability to interact and voice opinions has increased
- They are more open to suggestions and constructive criticism
- They have begun building their own network with other learners and individuals within the community