

OCTOBER 2021

# SMARTHANDS PROJECT WRITE UP



## BRINGING NATURE CLOSER TO YOU

National Productivity and Competitiveness Council

# Table of Contents

01

Introduction

02

Problem  
Definition

03

Objective  
Definition

04

Projet Plan  
Implementation

05 – 06

Data Collected  
/Analysed

07 – 09

Innovativeness of  
the solutions  
selected

10 – 12

Activities

13 – 14

Stakeholders  
Involved

15

Difficulties/  
challenges  
encountered

16

Results  
achieved/  
Testimonies

17

Continuity of the  
project

18

Team Members  
& Co-trainers

## 01

# INTRODUCTION

## Who are we?

SmartHands is a group of four young leaders that paired up together for a mission: Bringing Nature Closer To People through the means of technology.

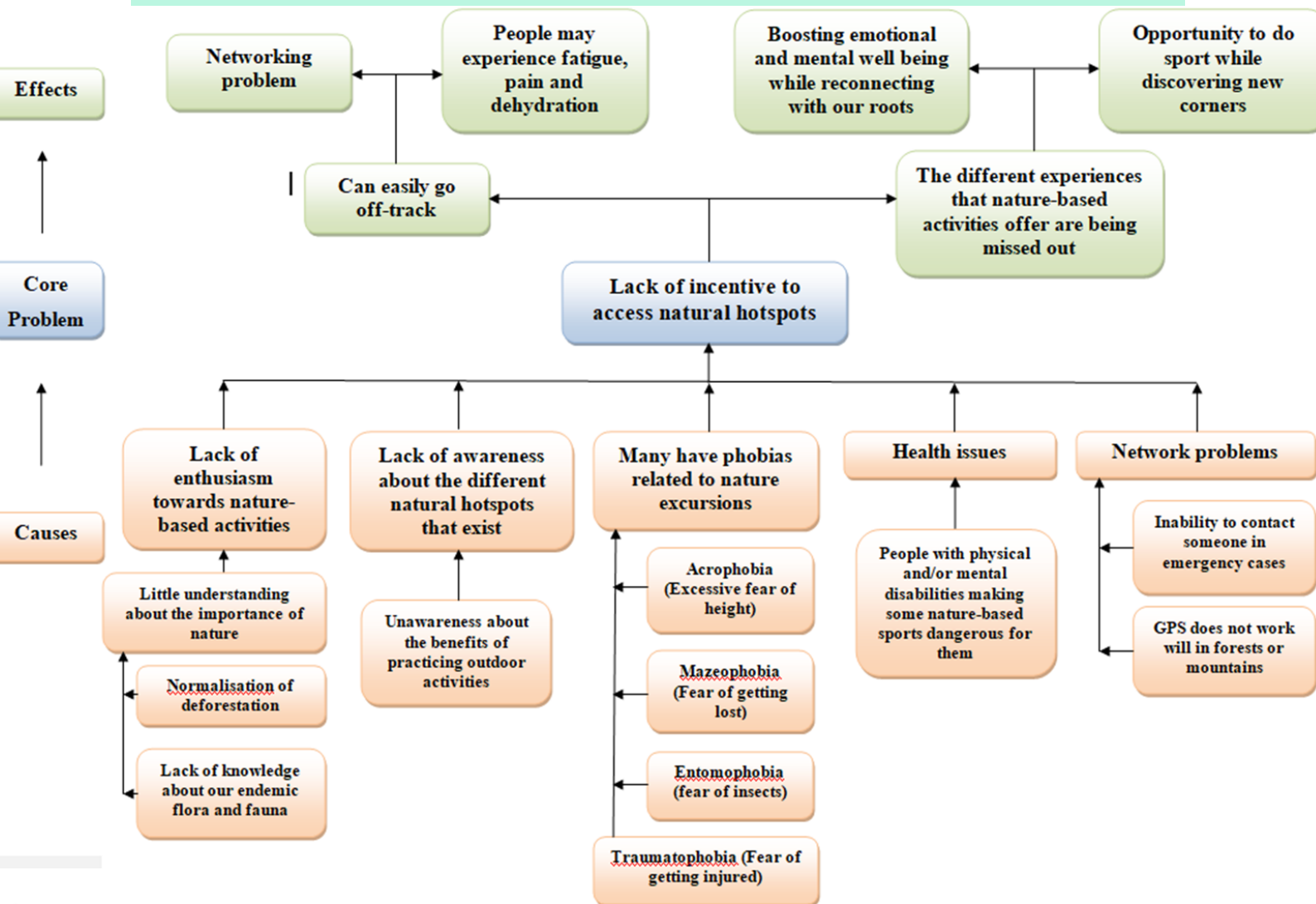
## What do we observe?

Due to some health conditions, phobias and lack of incentives to access natural hotspots, much of the Mauritian population are unable to enjoy the outstanding natural landscapes that our island has to offer.

- To understand what fraction of the population cannot enjoy our island amazing natural scenery, SmartHands has taken into consideration the percentage of old people and invalid persons that has been recorded by the department of social security of the state; that is approximately 20% of the population.

## 02

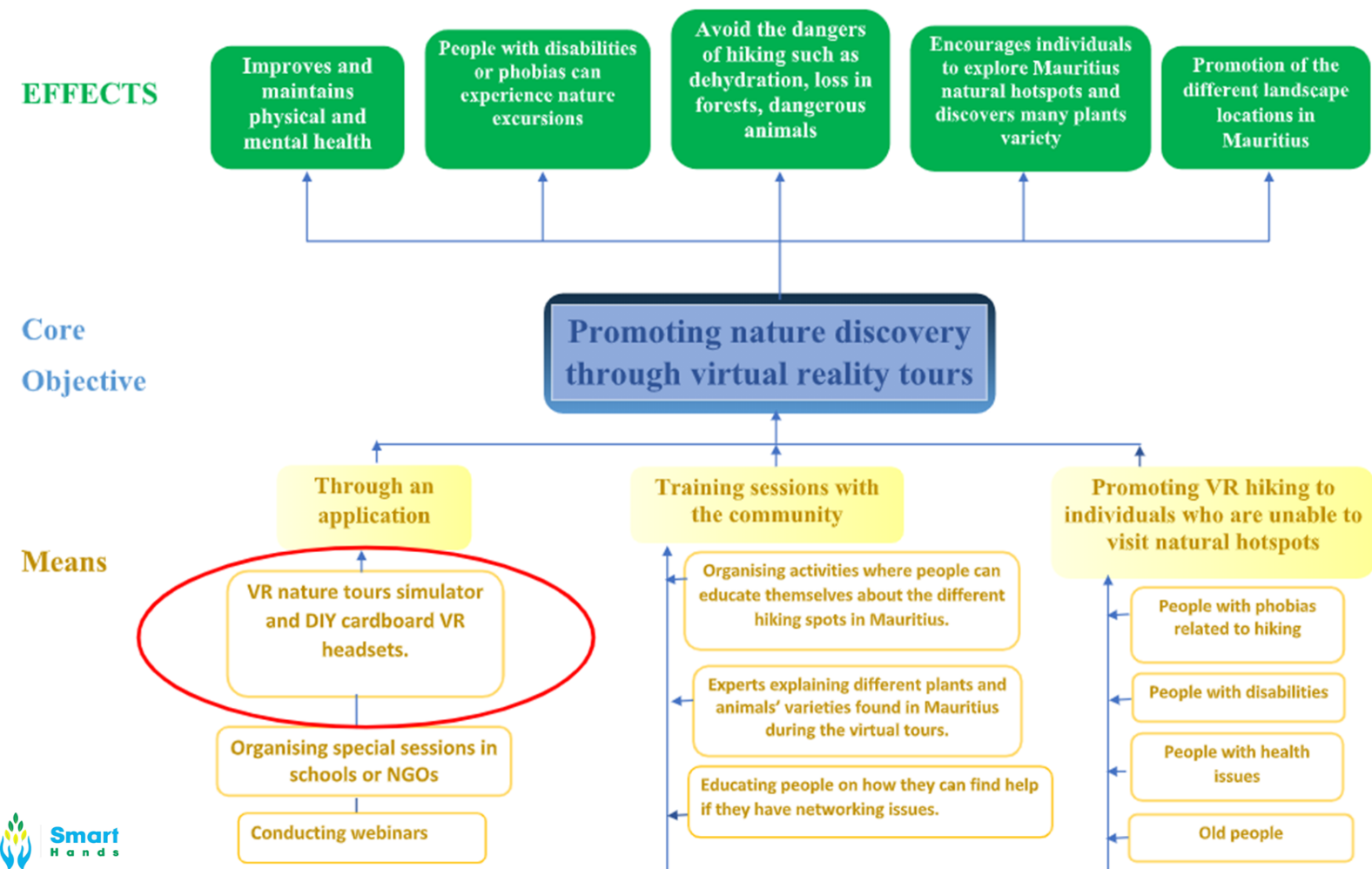
## PROBLEM DEFINITION



Mauritians frequently have misleading conceptions about hiking since some paths can be dangerous due to the lack of route markers, and individuals can easily become hurt and disoriented. Furthermore, hiking is not for everyone due to age, phobias, or disabilities.

## 03

## OBJECTIVE DEFINITION



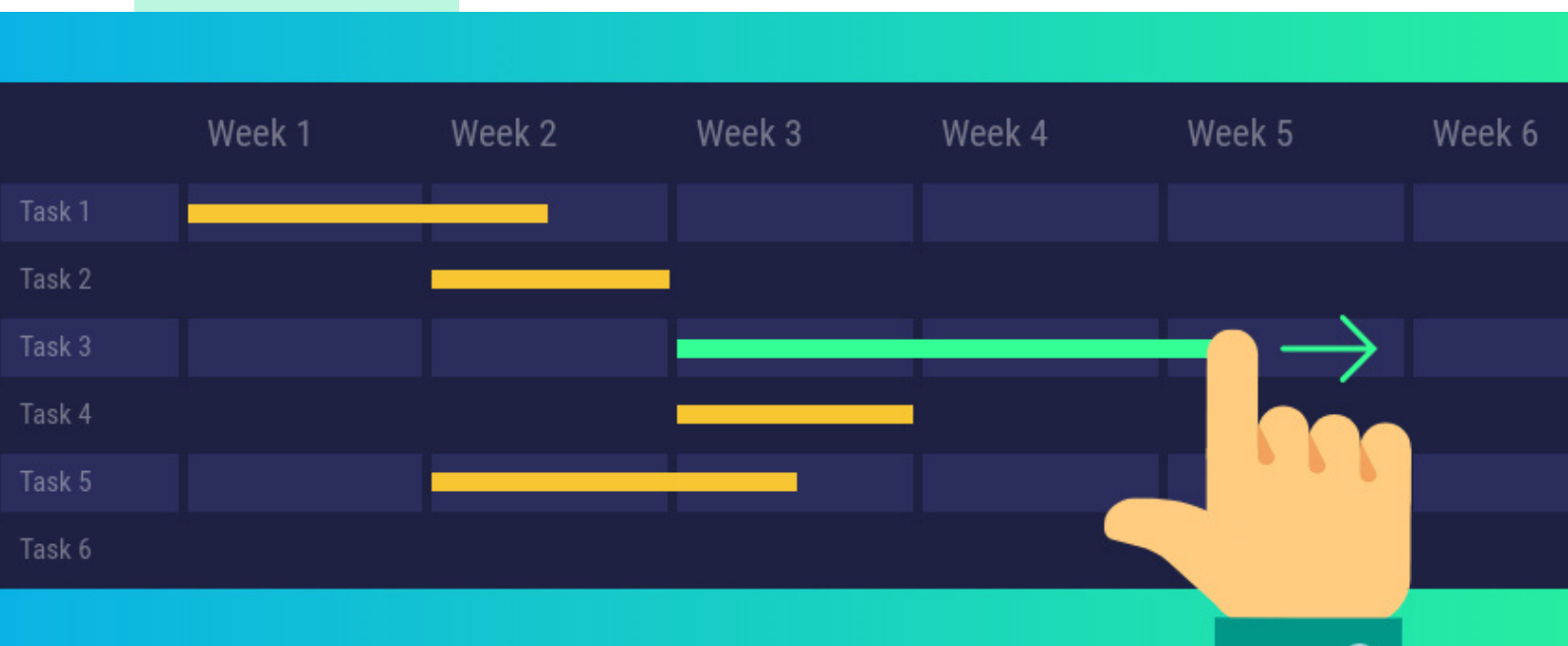
In the short term, the project's goal is to make hiking accessible through VR without the dangers associated with actual trekking. As a consequence, individuals will be able to enjoy the amazing pleasure of hiking anytime they choose, especially those with restricted ability. SmartHands expects that the application will bring people's attention to hiking and its various benefits in the long run.

## 04

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Use of a Gantt chart

SmartHands has been using a Gantt chart to break down the project into the distinct steps necessary to properly implement the project, therefore, ensuring that we are on track with what needs to be done. Moreover, with the implementation planning, it has been easier to organize and divide the many tasks that must be completed among SmartHands members.



05

## DATA COLLECTED/ANALYSED

### STRATEGY TWEAKS AND NEW INITIATIVES

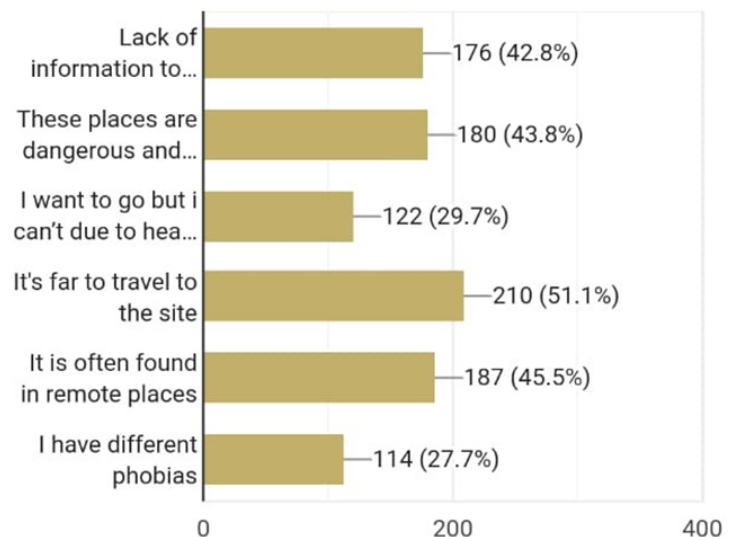
*In order to clearly understand the population perception of virtual reality tours as a way to "Bring Nature closer to each individual", SmartHands has created and shared an online survey questionnaire.*

*Google form was used in this process owing to its shareability, its potential to record and store a huge set of data, as well as due to the availability of an updated automatic analysis of the responses which helped us to decide whether the target is reached or not and whether further research methods should be implemented. 411 responses have been obtained.*

Through this survey, SmartHands observe that indeed many individuals are unable to visit the various natural hotspots of our island due to several barriers such as the remote location of these sites (51.1%) and how dangerous these spots are (43.8%).

What are the barriers that prevent people from going into the different natural hotspots present on the island namely Nature reserves, mountains and botanical gardens. (You may choose one or more)

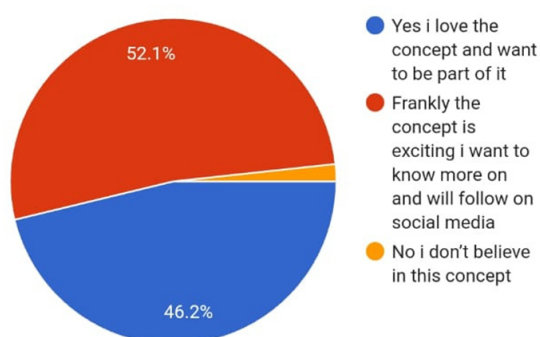
411 responses



## 06

Do you value the concept of “bringing nature closer to you” through 360 degree videos as part of virtual reality, a valuable asset for educating people, raising awareness and building ecotourism in Mauritius for tourist attraction?

411 responses

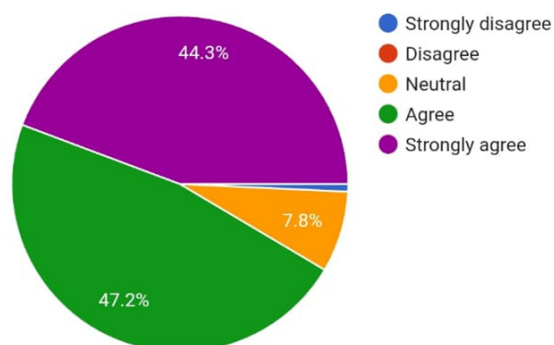


We were able to observe several responses to our project. In fact, we have noted how more than 98% of our responders have felt that a community-based project with the aim to bring nature closer to people through technological means would be beneficial to both the community and the people living in it.

Moreover, it has also been noted that the concept of SmartHands, which is creating 360-degree videos of the different natural hotspots in Mauritius can help people who have disabilities to attend those places by visualising these videos, has been greatly agreed by our responders (91.5 %).

To what extent do you agree to the following: Visualising 360 degree videos of the different natural hotspots in Mauritius can help people who have disabilities to attend those places?

411 responses



07

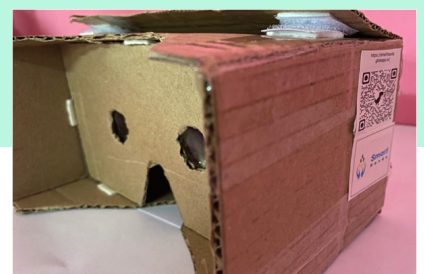
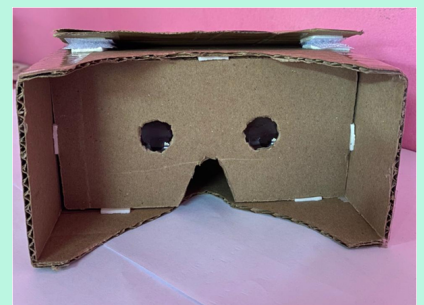
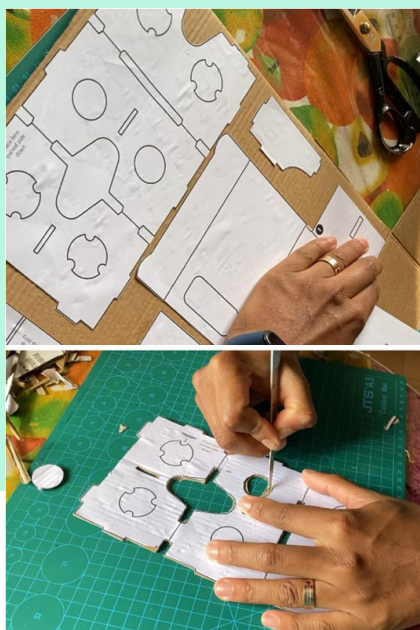
# INNOVATIVENESS OF SOLUTIONS SELECTED

## TURNING PAPER TRASH INTO VIRTUAL REALITY HEADSET

Packaging paper is often discarded in the bin where it ends up in landfill, we as lovers of the environment we have decided to bring a special touch of recycling to the community based project by using packaging carton that can be found at supermarkets or shops.

The idea of making Virtual Reality Headset from packaging carton is to promote of concept of 'Three R's : Reuse, Recycle, Reduce . This concept really merges in our project, by Reusing these packaging carton we are at the same time Reducing the environmental impact on the landfills in Mauritius hence promoting Recycling.

The DIY Virtual Reality Headset is easy to make, it don't necessarily needs specific qualification to do it, you will find a video on our mobile App that will show you all the details of how to build up the headset.



## 08

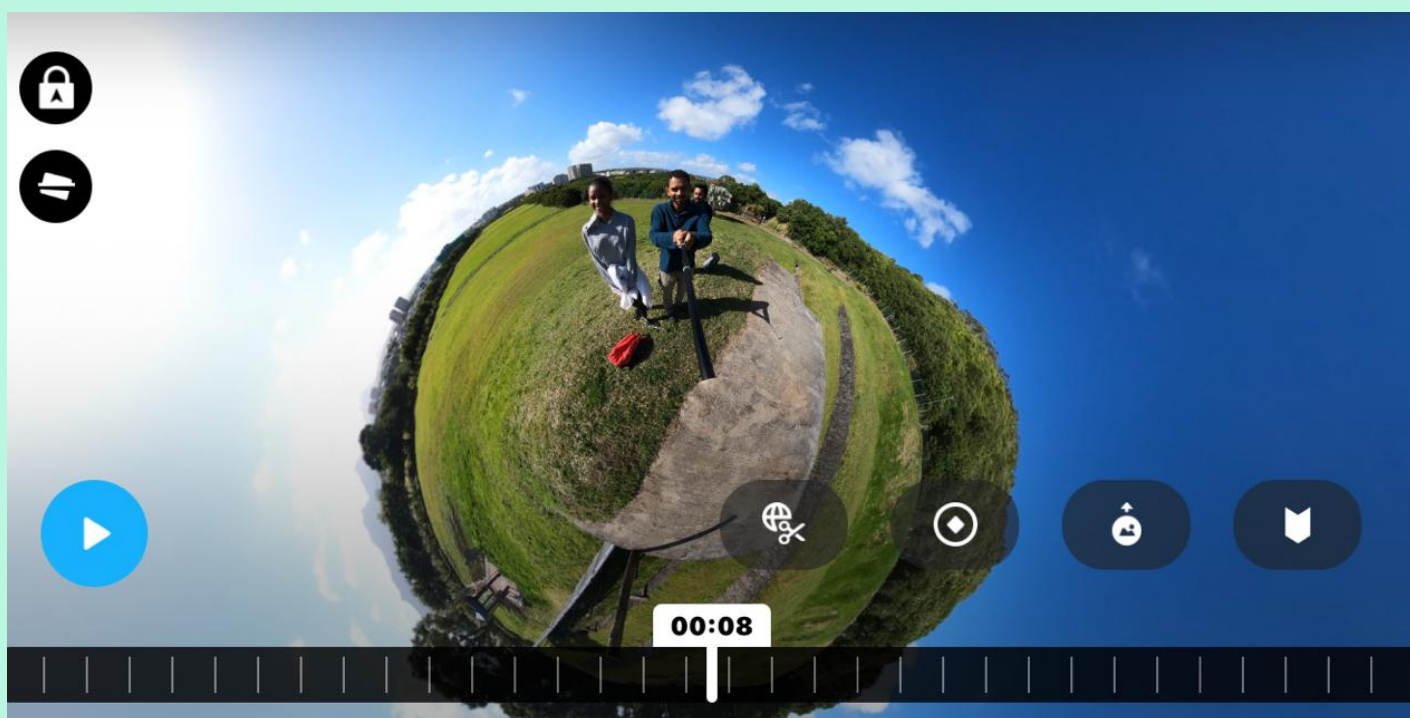
# INNOVATIVENESS OF SOLUTIONS SELECTED

## IMMERSIVE 360 DEGREE VIDEOS

Nowadays with the help of technological gears we can have the same experience of a hiking as if we were on the field, this is what 360 degree camera is made for with its six microphone it also captures the sound which surrounds these beautiful scenery.

For this community-based project we used a Gopro Max to record all the beautiful scenery in a 360 degree angle with an interesting resolution of 5.6 K making those video looks natural with all the magnificent colours which resides in the different scenery which we explored.

We have captured the best sites in Mauritius to make nature more accessible through technological means.



# 09 INNOVATIVENESS OF SOLUTIONS SELECTED

## MOBILE APPLICATION

To support our vision, we developed an application called SmartHands, which was realized with the help of the Glideapp system. The application can be shared as a link or by using a QR code, which can then be downloaded and installed on the user's mobile device or simply opened in a web browser and used as a webpage.

The application's main feature provides users with a list of all the places that we covered, along with a description, photos, and 360-degree video, as well as the location of the place, and the application supports Google Maps, which the user can access directly from the application.

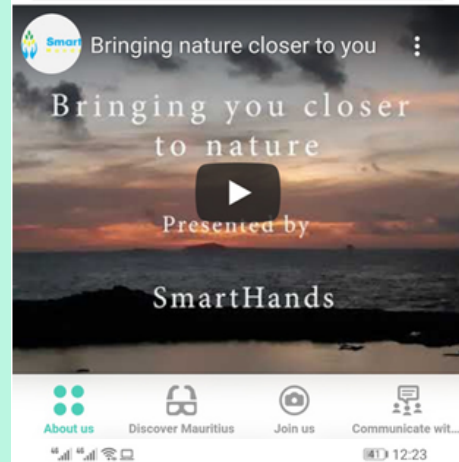
The application is a platform where only the SmartHands team will be able to share videos and images, as well as add any type of communication. The use of a cloud system keeps all data safe and eliminates the need to spend money on expensive hardware to backup.

≡ About us



### Bringing nature closer to you

SmartHands is a team driven by dynamic and motivated youngsters, trying to bring a change in the community with the help of technology.



← Discovering the Morne Brabant - ...



### Le Morne Brabant Mountain

UNESCO World Heritage site-Cultural Landscape



Discovering the Morne Brabant - The slave route The Morne Brabant is a mountain of the south-west of Mauritius, on the peninsula of the Morne. Declared World Heritage site by UNESCO since July 6, 2008, the site is a sanctuary for runaway slaves and is a strong cultural and patrimonial symbol for every



## 10

# ACTIVITIES

## Actions taken by team members

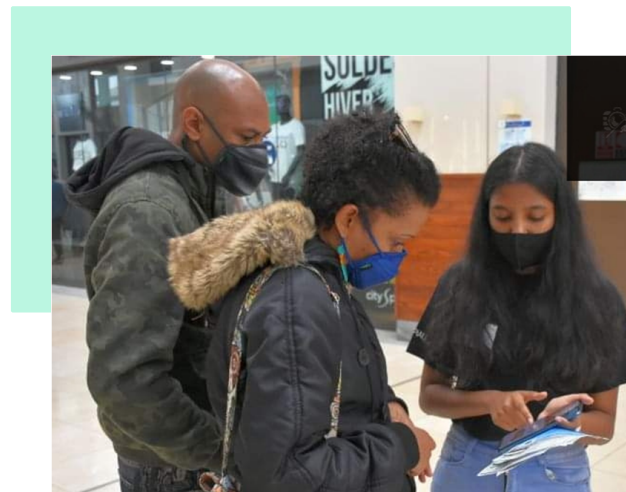
- **Creating videos**

One of the main activities in the project was to discover the different places and capturing 360-degree videos of different fascinating places to be able to share and make everyone live the thrilling experiences. Despite the various challenges, the team brought forth videos of Candos Hill, the Botanical Garden of Curepipe as well as Le Morne Mountain. To add, our team has already worked on a list of places to be captured and made available to people based upon the request of followers as well as depending on the story behind the places or their natural and historical importance such as Appravasi Ghat, a landmark in the history of Mauritius.



- **Workshops**

SmartHands' first event had taken place on Saturday, August 28th, at the Phoenix Mall which has as theme 'Discovering nature from another lense', we, SmartHands, have presented our initiative to the community. In addition, our mobile application has been launched online during this workshop. We were able to reach out to more than 150 people during the few hours and conduct face to face interviews with them. The event was a huge success and we got a lot of positive feedbacks such as it is a good initiative and that we should charge for our VR headset or that it should be launched at a large scale.



# ACTIVITIES

## Creating Awareness through Different medium

- **Social Media**

Social media is about building a community and create an opportunity for the community to learn about the project. We created a page on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok as 73.1% of the total population in Mauritius uses these platforms and we pay attention to our engagement statistics to see how much visibility and interactions each of our posts have and adapt our post to encourage followers to share our posts and thus increase awareness about the project. Our page is SmartHands on Facebook and SmartHands\_mu on Instagram and Tiktok. We use our Facebook and Instagram accounts to promote the project and the different events that we host through sponsored posts and we also engage with the community by responding to comments and messages. We use Tiktok to show behind scenes of the project so that people are aware of how we build and use the VR headsets and mobile application as well as the “best moments” of our events.

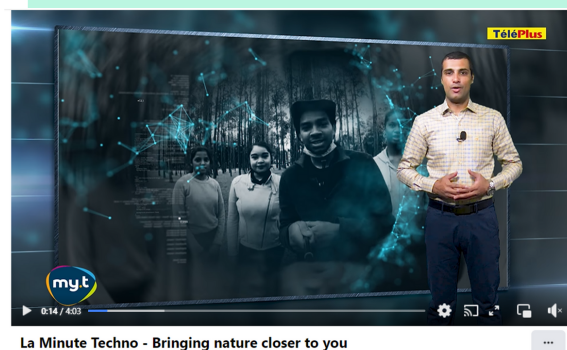
## 12

# ACTIVITIES

## Creating Awareness Through Different Medium

- **News Release**

Press releases are a good way to get instant exposure and we have contacted the press and got articles in Defi-media and L'express. Furthermore, we have interviews in November with other new outlets such as Scope Magazine and La Sentinel to further promote the project.



- **Online Advertisements**

We reached out to several young Mauritian influencers to become brand ambassadors of SmartHands to promote the project and we also did sponsored advertisements on our social media pages to create awareness about our event.



- **Media**

We look forward to conduct several webinars to better implement the project in the community and we are also reaching out to MBC and RadioOne to have an interview so that we can promote the project through television and radio.

## PROGRESS INDICATORS

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

- **SOCIAL MEDIA**

We created our social media pages in August and started a YouTube channel also. We are enthusiasts as we are gaining followers every day as in less than a month, we reached more than 500 followers and have more than 1000 views on our TikTok videos.

- **COLLABORATIONS**

We collaborated with different stakeholders and are currently working with different 10 young Mauritian influencers to become our brand ambassadors and promote the project among the community. We are also collaborating with a foreign vlogger that helps us to record videos abroad.

## 14

# STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

---

## SPONSORS



The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation provided the one of the rewards for our fund-raising activity.



Phoenix Beverages provided us beverages during our events.



Pepsi provided us beverages during our events.



Kotpiale is one of our sponsors who offered us t-shirts for the group.

---

## COLLABORATORS



L'express is an news outlet that did a press coverage of the project.



Defimedia did a press coverage of SmartHands and the project "Bringing You Closer To Nature" and we were also featured in one of their programs "La Minute Techno"



Phoenix Mallgave us the opportunity to host our first workshop and we are still in collaboration with them for future events.

---

## INDIVIDUAL BODIES



Mr Daniel Arequion



Mr Antoine Riviere



Mr Kishan Narraido



Ms Ruchama Eranah

# 15

## DIFFICULTIES/CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING IMPLEMENTATION

### WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

- Choosing the right project

It was difficult to choose the right project that merges all members ideas which are SMART(Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Time-Bound) and innovative to implement in the community.

- ·Looking for sponsors

Due to the covid-19 economic impact on businesses, we had several refusals to help us implement the project and thus had to finance 70% of the project ourselves.

- ·Import of raw materials

We tried to make the focus lenses ourselves using plastic and glue but the lenses were blurred, therefore we ordered the lenses from China which took time to come and had high shipping and customs costs.

- ·Size of VR headsets

We followed a layout to make the VR headsets but it did not fit all smartphones' sizes thus we had to adjust several of the VR headsets to fit in all sizes of phones.

- ·Events

We had difficulties hosting some events and workshops in schools, homes etc as we were restricted access to those places due to the Covid-19 sanitary restrictions.

- ·Editing

As we use a 360 ° camera to capture the videos, we had to find the appropriate editing software and uploading high-resolution videos on our Youtube Channel was sometimes difficult.

- ·Meetings

Most of our meetings were held online as each team members live far from one another and it was challenging to find the right time to meet as some had work or classes on Saturdays.

**Working with people in a team can be very challenging and SmartHands faced some challenges for the implementation of the project but with NLE's training sessions and each members efforts we were able to overcome every challenge that we faced.**

## 16

## RESULTS ACHIEVED

## TESTIMONIALS/ OUR NEWS PRESS RELEASE

*" A really thrilling project! SmartHands' initiative is an innovative one; mostly for the seniors like me who like adventures and that unfortunately because of some health issues are unable to explore the various nature spots in Mauritius."*

- Kishan Narraidoo

- We made 100 VR headsets and distributed 50 during our workshop to some children with disabilities and other people who love hiking but have restrictions to do so.
- We are collaborating with Bagatelle Mall and Phoenix Mall for future events for the rest of the year.
- We have been in several press releases and we have another press release at launching by Scope Magazine.
- We have been given positive feedback from our workshop and from our followers and stakeholders.

## 17

## CONTINUITY OF THE PROJECT

We have already launched all the procedures to register as a local NGO as moving in this direction will help us to apply for funding both from local or international parties.

We are intending to make this opportunity accessible to all Mauritians to make them discover the beauties of the local fauna and flora.

Using the concept of virtual reality in line with immersive 360 degree is also considered as an educational tool, with this we will work in collaboration with many environmental NGO to develop toolkit for schools in order to tackle environmental issues such as coral bleaching, climate change, deforestation and many more.

On a long-term running we are also interested to develop a professional website to make all these material accessible for both local and international users, this will definitely play a role in promoting eco-tourism in Mauritius.

On a final note we want to expand our connection abroad, to promote the concept to other countries where we can make people travel the world through 360 degree videos and photos.

# 18

## TEAM MEMBERS & CO- TRAINER

- Ashvin Soorjee (Co-trainer)
- Dominique Baho (Team Leader)
- Yogeshwari Devi Bheekarry (Co-Leader)
- Céline Modeste ( Secretarial Leader)
- Anastasia Arequion ( Communication Leader)

