

# A different take on life

<https://maartedu2020.wordpress.com/2020/07/10/a-different-take-on-life/>

By Urooj Shahab

“

Life:  
Everything we  
do is in one  
place. That is life

---

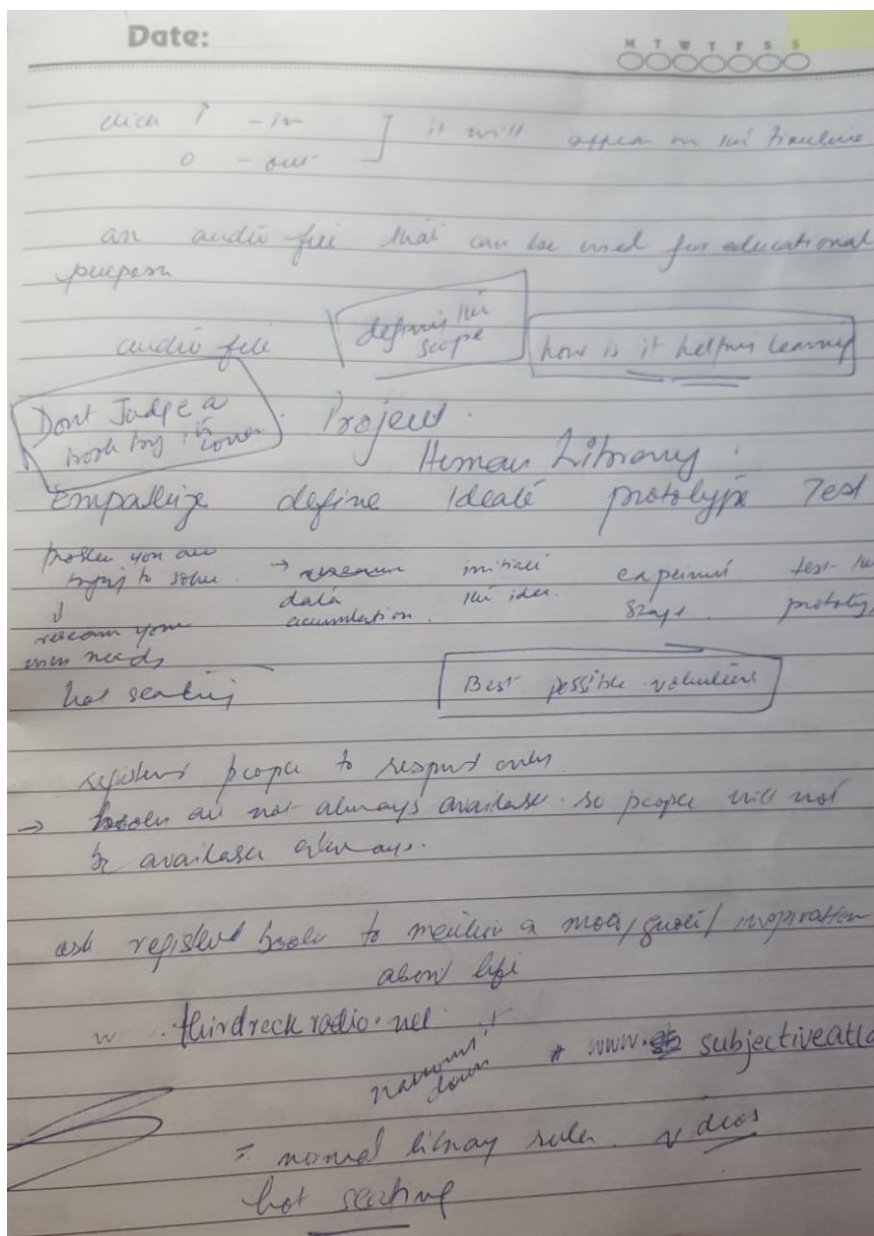
AUJ ADEEL- 12 YEARS

## Beginning

The only hurdle for a thinker like me is to contain the thoughts. I being a dreamer get so enthusiastic about my ideas that they go everywhere and my excitement elates and so do the boundaries. When the task of sharing a concept that is technology viable was assigned I came up with a small bank of ideas to begin with.

- Virtual Museums of Lahore
- A collaborative platform for educators to share their best practices
- A writing club for all ages and genders
- Local talent- a platform for craftsmen to showcase their work
- Self learning – Inspired by the project 'Hole in the wall' by Sugata Mitra
- Human Library

After a few discussions, I felt drawn towards the last idea, that of recreating a 'Human Library' for my community.



## My Personal Connection



### *The Human Touch*

I believe I am a very common person, someone who observes the environment keenly, relate to the things happening with my beliefs and learn every day. I have learned about life immensely by living it not from an expert, not from any book but living each day every day. Being an educator has taught me how to learn. Working with ladies and gentlemen has taught me to respect the space of people, appreciate them and get along with them. Dealing with younger generation taught me how much of an adult these beings are and how much they deserve the respect and dignity as we all expect to get. In short, when I want to know about something, I simply look around me. A simple human touch in my life is enough to set ripples.

## The Background Story



*The Writing Club ( photograph was clicked by me)*

With all these simple connections of life, I started a writing club with the name, 'The Writing Club'. This club has become my baby, It brought the people in it closer to each other like they never could when working under the same roof. The idea was given shape during the pandemic era caused by COVID 19. The loss of human connection outside our families was brimming and soon we realised that we needed to be heard to feel the comfort we were deprived off. The club offered simple soul searching topics and people poured their hearts out, so beautifully woven with their emotions and feelings. During the process many of us felt healed in the wounds which we thought were ours only. This gave me an understanding of how communication is so important for people who breathe. It also established a fact that when you see things from the perspective of others, you find your own solutions.



My next plan that has stemmed from this club is to establish a platform out of the virtual world and bring it to life. The idea is not new, but the initiatives are very less. I searched and discovered a few of such places in Lahore and Karachi ( *cities of Pakistan*). To name a few


**T2F** ( The Second Floor) This space has provided a platform to many common people as well as people belonging to media and revolutionaries to share their stories, ideas and achievements. The platform has initiated collaborative projects and has given respite to many by just connecting.

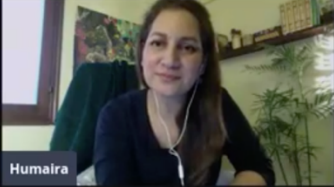



**The Crows** - A story told so simply. Along the way so many of us could connect with the feelings, emotions, memories, if nothing else, the listeners must have left the room with a firmer believe in love.


Such forums are very little in number, and small groups of people have access to it. Reason being the non-feasibility of time, place and distance.


The entire programme in my mind started shaping up when ideas for a project were asked by our Tools & Technology in Art Education instructor. I referred to the idea of a Human Library, as it came closest to what I wanted to do.

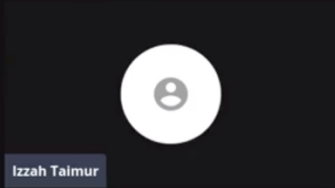
Powered by  
  
StreamYard


  
Humaira

  
Zarina



  
Omar

  
Aiman Haroon

  
Izzah Taimur


  
Ambreen Saleh

Test call

 **The Crows** was live.  
21 June · 

933 views


28 Likes 86 Comments 2 Shares


 Share


Zarina Raza, Anila Riz, Zehra Raza and 25 others like this.


Real-time comments ▾


2 shares

 **Sundus Rasheed** · 3:15 Hahaha  
10w

 **Shazaf Haider** · 2:48 I have covid stories  
9w

 **Sundus Rasheed** · 2:36 Hello beautiful people!  
10w

 **ReGi John** · 2:19 Good to see all of you  
9w

 **Natasha Khalid Umer** · 2:16 Assalamu Aliekum  
10w



Saeeda Fancy

22 views · Apr 15, 2019

0 0 SHARE SAVE ...



**The Crows**  
11 subscribers

A Love Story by Saeeda Fancy

SUBSCRIBE

**The Human Library**



**HUMAN LIBRARY®**

*unjudge someone.*



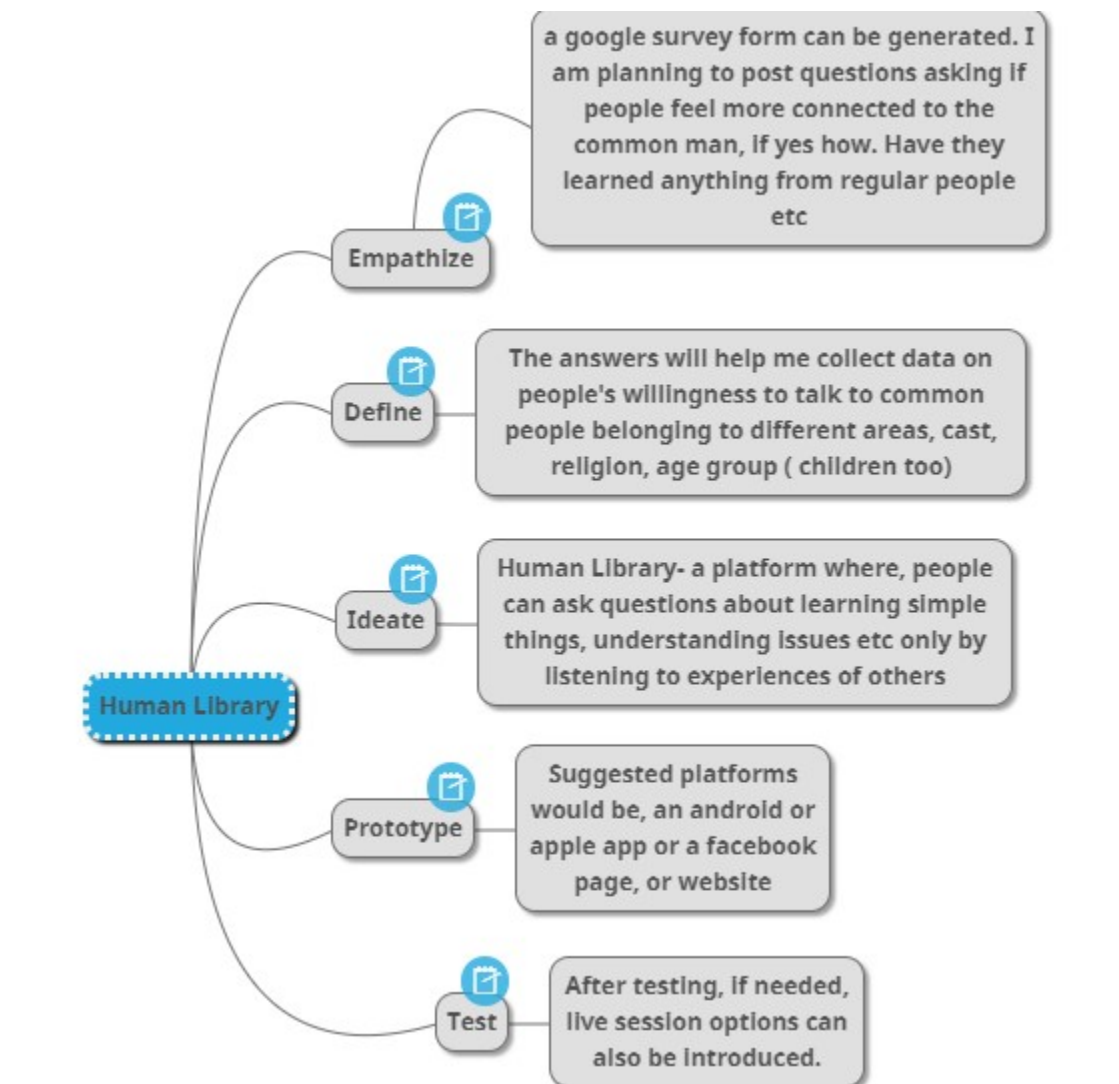


## The Plan and Design Thinking



In order to shape up my idea, I decided to lay out my thinking and let it process through the design thinking process.





### *Brainstorming on Mindmap*

To go into further detail, I added my rationale to each stage of design thinking.

### ***Empathize***

Through my personal experience, I feel I have majorly learned about life by experiencing. I never had to look up to a qualified person to resolve my issues, I have always found solace and reasons for doing and not doing things from my surroundings. I have learned so many things from my own children. I feel people can learn from common people and don't necessarily need experts. Common people can be experts.

### ***Define***

It is important to involve people a) to be confident about your plan b) to create a hype about something new coming up

### ***Ideate***

The idea is not to give away advises, it is to read people's life and make your own meaning out of it. Just like when you read a book and make sense of things on your own.

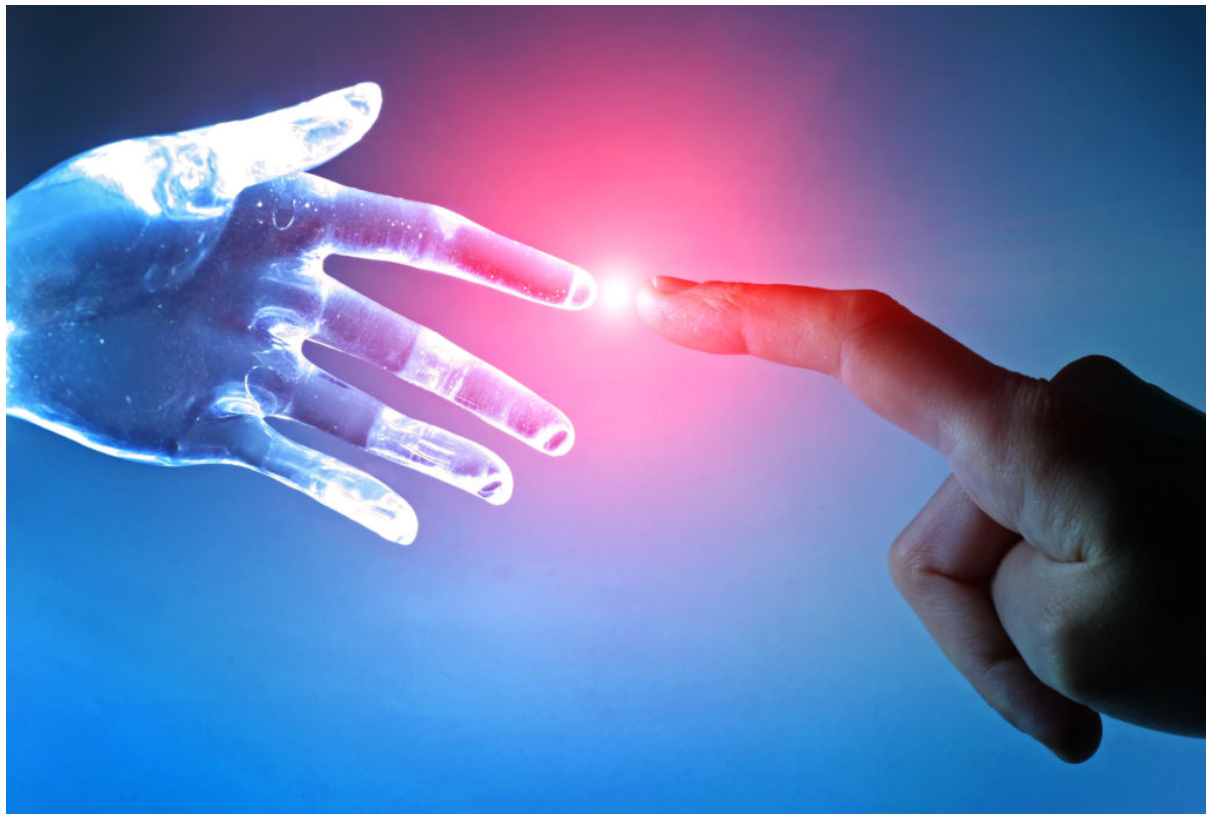
### ***Prototype***

An app or website are just suggested ideas, however, I can practically work on creating a Facebook page where people will be registered to become the books. Only they will be asked to post their thinking, stories, experience in response to pre-decided areas of interest. Viewers/readers will only be allowed to read the ones that they want to.

### ***Test***

Testing can be done again by sharing google questionnaire in order to take feedback on the whole idea. If this is accepted, then live sessions can also be introduced later on.

### **Struggle- The Virtual Saga**



In order to bring the idea of a Human Library from a tangible format to a virtual platform, I needed to understand the form and function of the setup.

### **Why?**

When viewing the idea from my cultural perspective, I strongly feel that it is not easy for people to open up and speak, ask or read about issues or knowledge. They either look up to the public figures or national heroes to find clues of what they think might be the answer they are looking for. I feel the need to develop such a culture, where all common people become inspirational and worth looking up to.

### **What?**

In order to make it accessible for a greater population, I want this project to be in its virtual state, to begin with. This will give the project access to volunteers from around the nation or maybe the globe in some time.

### **How?**

Either a Facebook page or an application. Before concluding my idea, I had several discussions with people, friends and colleagues. We brainstormed multiple options. To work on its basic structure, I looked for the very basic rules of a library. Some of them are:

- Do not take any book or other library material out of the library without following the borrowing procedures.
- Make sure to return the borrowed items by the due date.
- In case any of the borrowed items being lost, damaged, or destroyed, you are required to replace the lost /damaged/destroyed item with a new one.
- Never write in books or cut pages out of them.
- Return books/materials to their original location on the bookshelf.
- Practice good manners!





Now to bring this huge, iconic human library onto your palms, or fingertips, a colleague suggested creating an interactive game-like application, where people can click on the type of book they want to read and that person can make thyself available for dialogue. Not that it is impossible, but making registered members as books of the library available at any time could be a challenge.

### Hot Seating Activity Approach

My idea was now moving towards its feasibility for having a live interaction with the registered members, just like a 'Hot Seating Activity'. This is a very common learning engagement for drama lessons. Many educators also use it to emphasize on storybook characters.



Usually, **Hot Seating** is a strategy in which a character or characters, played by the teacher or a student, are interviewed by the rest of the group. This **activity** invites students to recount a specific event, explore motivation and multiple perspectives/experiences related to a theme, topic, event, or idea. But for my project, it could be the registered member, answering questions by the readers in their own perspective.

### Defining the Scope

Now to narrow down the big plan into workable stages, my proposal includes

## **Registered Volunteer Writers ( various age groups)**

Invite volunteers through social media and immediate circle of acquaintances. These people will register themselves under a discipline and genre such as, sports- water sports, music- classical, drama-street theatre, arts- visual artist, humanitarians. These people should also be willing to write and record their responses to frequently asked questions.

Young children will be an exclusive part of this club. My strong faith is in the simplicity of thoughts the younger most have. Their perspective may appear linear but you can find deep meanings there.

### **A Platform**

A Facebook page or a website to make the written excerpts available for readers to choose the book they want to get connected with. It will also provide details of virtual meetings timings and availability of the book.



## **Virtual book of different perspectives-( young, middle age, old contributors- A different take on life)**

For offline reading, a virtual book of various perspectives will be launched. The book will contain, very simple ideas of life, seen from various angles. These angles will be from the eyes of a child, a person belonging to middle years, and elder generation, who have been there, and done that. To quote some examples, I did a brief survey and asked my immediate family, friends and colleagues to give their thoughts on 4 very important aspects of life. Life, Love, Happiness and Loss. The quotes mentioned in the beginning of the blog are original thoughts.

## **Weekly virtual meeting setups**

In progression to the online forum, the same platform can organise and arrange for virtual gatherings. Many virtual meeting applications are available for such gatherings

## **Documentaries**

Some video captures of stories shared by common people will be uploaded. This will allow people to get the insight of the world they can relate to.

## **How is it helping Learning?**

The project 'A Different Take on Life' will help people see things in light of various perspectives, exactly the way good books do to people. As recommended, books should be read to find out about context, similarly, knowing people without judgement explains a lot about simplicity of life and things that takes place in it.

from <http://www.humanlibrary.org>

## **Conclusion**

I am proposing this project for the welfare of my community. It is not so difficult to get medical help for unhealthy lives, but focus on mental health is not usually catered for. This initiative will give an opportunity to many to open their life as books and allow themselves to exhale. In return it will be inhaled by so many who feel suffocated and have been waiting to breath.

Online tools used: Mindmup and Canva

DON'T  
JUDGE  
A BOOK  
BY IT'S COVER