



**NOOLAHAM
FOUNDATION**

An Introduction to
Noolaham Foundation
நூலக நிறுவனம்
ஓர் அறிமுகம்



Tamil Plaque Pic by Anton Croos (CC-BY-SA)



Palm-leaf manuscript in Tamil Pic by Thamizhpparithi Maari (CC-BY-SA)



Jaffna Public Library Pic by Anton Croos (CC-BY-SA)

1. Why Document, Preserve and Archive
2. About Us
3. Mission and Objectives
4. Our Guiding Principles
5. Our Programs and Projects
6. Achievements and Results
7. Vision 2020
8. Our Stakeholders
9. Governance and Accountability
10. Operations
11. Sustainability
12. Join Us

Why Document, Preserve and Archive

Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities hold knowledge as their primary and proudest resource. Learning is intertwined with our way of life. That is why, upon hearing about the burning of Jaffna Library the communities were heart broken. The loss, grief and sorrow that fell upon us will last for generations. We lost parts of our past and parts of our future.

Unfortunately, the burning of Jaffna Library was not the first tragedy. Nor was it the last. Historically, due to casteism, patriarchy, marginalization, colonization and other oppressive factors, the knowledge and cultural ethos of many Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities such as that of Plantation Tamils, Coast Veddhas and Tamil Muslims have not been fully recorded or shared. In recent years, the civil war, modernization and lack of awareness has accelerated the loss of valuable knowledge resources.

In today's digital and knowledge-driven society, open and free access to information is critical for the economic development of communities. To be creative and innovative, knowledge must be rooted in the culture, environment and context in which it is created and used. This tacit, deep and long-term knowledge needs to be built and nurtured from within.

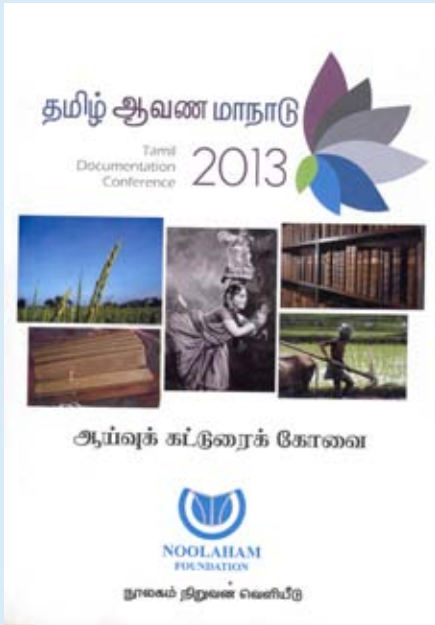
The cultural memory and heritage are vital for social and cultural development. In order to heal and move forward, an honest examination of our past is necessary. To do this, we must truthfully record and preserve our history.

Documenting, preserving and developing all spheres of knowledge related to the Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities is the monumental challenge that Noolaham Foundation has undertaken, hand in hand with the communities. Although it is impossible to fully recover, if we act with urgency and skill we will achieve our mission and objectives.



About Us

Noolaham Foundation is a legally registered (GA 2390), non-profit entity, founded to provide enhanced access to information sources and foster knowledge-based development in Sri Lanka. It maintains an online digital library, facilitates information preservation programs, provides financial assistance and technical guidance for digitization initiatives and actively participates in awareness-raising campaigns. It also coordinates a range of fundraising activities and collaborates with other organizations and individuals.



◀ *Tamil Documentation 2013 Conference Proceedings*

Noolaham Foundation Units and Chapters

Noolaham Foundation currently has eight project operational units. They are located in Malaiyaham, Akkaraipattu, Batticaloa, Trincomalee (in process of being established) and four operational locations in Jaffna. The Head Office is located in Colombo.



Volunteers of Noolaham Foundation have established chapters in various countries to achieve the mission of the Foundation. Currently there are three registered and operational Chapters. They are located in United Kingdom, Canada and Norway. The Noolaham Foundation Chapters of Australia, United States, Switzerland and India are in the formation phase.

Brief History

Noolaham Foundation grew out of the digitization initiatives of Sri Lankan Tamil books. In 2005, based on the lessons learned from previous initiatives, like-minded individuals initiated the digital library project named Project Noolaham. The Noolaham digital library was officially launched on Thai Pongal day in 2006. The first collaborative digitization project began in 2007 with Women's Education and Research Center (WERC).

The Noolaham digital library was officially launched on Thai Pongal day in 2006.

In 2008, pioneers of Project Noolaham in consultation with all the stakeholders formed Noolaham Foundation to sustain the digital archiving initiatives in Sri Lanka. In 2010, Noolaham Foundation was formally incorporated as a guaranteed company. In 2011, Noolaham Foundation invited all stakeholders to participate in a strategic planning process and developed its Roadmap 2020 with the emphasis on institutionalization, global transformation, and observance of ethical and professional standards.



Our Mission & Objectives

Mission

Noolaham Foundation's mission is to document and preserve knowledge, properties and values of all spheres related to the Sri Lankan Tamil Speaking communities, make such knowledge accessible to all and capacitate communities to engage in knowledge building and learning.

Objectives

Document, preserve and digitally archive ethnography and knowledge bases of mainstream and marginalized communities including dialects, belief systems, myths, rituals, folklore, games, indigenous medicine, law and administrative systems, technologies and arts.

Engage in and support preservation and digital archiving of written, print, multimedia and electronic resources related to the Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities.

Provide knowledge and information services to ensure free and open access, thereby supporting educational, research and development endeavors related to the Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities.

Build communities of practice, processes, technologies and standards of archival, library and information sciences through communication, networking and collaboration.



Our Guiding Principles

Unity

Entities of Noolaham Foundation shall exist in different geographical, legal and political territories. Noolaham Foundation always ensures unity in its strategic framework, design, program, budget and communications.

Openness

As the driving force of Noolaham Foundation is centered on open data, open access and open knowledge, it does not charge end-users for accessing its archives. End-users should not use the contents for individual or corporate economic gain.

Transparency

Noolaham Foundation strives to be open and transparent in all of its operations. Our commitment includes detailed accounting, project and annual reports, timely dissemination of information and responsiveness to requests for information.

Unbiased

Noolaham Foundation is an unbiased entity. While it engages volunteers from different political thoughts and parties, it does not allow volunteers to use Noolaham Foundation for their political engagement and leverage. Noolaham Foundation shall take appropriate measures to prevent it from being politicized or labeled.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is the basis for all of Noolaham Foundation's operations. The Annual Work Plan shall be formulated emphasizing volunteer contribution in order to optimize the operational overheads and performance targets for each team.



Noolaham Foundation promotes synergy among similar organizations in digital documentation and preservation, thereby avoiding duplication and repetition of work. Noolaham Foundation shall collaborate with institutions when such collaboration optimizes Noolaham Foundation productivity.

Broadening and strengthening the participation of the stakeholders of Noolaham Foundation is part and parcel of the Noolaham Foundation culture. It consults with stakeholders regarding policies and decisions that affect the business of Noolaham Foundation.



Our Programs and Projects

Noolaham Foundation in accordance with our objectives undertakes projects in the following four program areas-

- Research and Documentation
- Digital Preservation and Archiving
- Knowledge and Information Services
- Building Capacities and Communities of Practice

Projects and Achievements

Noolaham Foundation has successfully completed 43 digitizations, educational and information service projects in the last ten years. Another 3 projects are currently being undertaken.



Noolaham Volunteers at Batticaloa

Our focus is to deliver quality results in accordance with international standards. In recent years, we have grown from a digital library project into a matured archiving institution. The following are brief descriptions of some of our key programs.



Noolaham Foundation Digital Library (www.noolaham.org)



Noolaham Foundation Digital Library (www.noolaham.org) is the largest Tamil digital library on the internet. It contains more than 13,500 resources about various aspects of Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka. It functions as a learning centre by incorporating local knowledge and providing information services contributing towards knowledge-based development in Sri Lanka. It serves students, researchers, historians, activists and the public.

AUTHORS	2,220
PUBLISHERS	1,623
PUBLISHED YEARS	110
PORTALS	11
ARTICLES	100,000+



Cultural Event and Documentation



Collection Development

This program focuses on creating critical mass of collections so that they can be used by students, researchers and general public to fulfill their information needs effectively.

Noolaham Foundation provides digitization and archiving services for schools, non-profits, and cultural organizations with the aim to build open access and inter-operable repositories. We help institutions preserve and share their knowledge bases and memory for the long term. The following institutional repositories projects have been completed to date. Women's Education and Research Centre, International Center for Ethnic Studies Digitization, Colombo Royal College (a DVD was released), Jaffna Hindu College (a DVD was released) and Jaffna Vembadi Girls' High School (a DVD was released).

Noolaham's Special Collections projects aim to provide focus and dedicated resources to support research, documentation, digitization and archiving of materials relating to our communities which faces challenges in preserving their unique and rare resources. Muslim Archive and Malaiyaham Archive are such collections being developed. In addition, Noolaham Foundation has implemented projects to archive complete sets of periodicals including Alai, Tamil Times, Gnanam, Sarinihar, Thinamurasu and Puthiya Poomi.

MUSLIM ARCHIVE	162
MALAIYAHAM ARCHIVE	92
REPOSITORIES	13
PERSONAL COLLECTIONS	13
DVDs	4
BOOKLETS	3



Pallikoodam - Virtual Learning Environments
(www.epallikoodam.org)



Combining formal education with alternative forms of education, Pallikoodam aims to create a virtual learning environments (VLEs) that support and empower students at the grassroots levels within the Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka. It promotes education as an avenue to strengthen the democratic foundations of society. The first phase of the project, which has been successfully launched (www.epallikoodam.org), brings together text based educational resources using the Moodle platform.

MCQs	10,008
STUDY MATERIALS	1,390



Pallikoodam Program being introduced

Reference Resources

Noolaham Foundation collects information and creates encyclopedic reference resources and data sets about people, places and organizations and makes them accessible to all. So far information about more than 600 people and around 3000 organizations has been collected. Future plans include collections of context and community specific open data sets such as information about works, biodiversity, micro-climate, economic data and social indicators.

DATA SETS	2,897
WHO IS WHO	612

Digital Archive

The Digital Archive of Print Publications Program digitizes and preserves all print documents which are related to Sri Lankan Tamil communities. These documents include Books, Magazines, Journals, Newspapers, Newsletters, Booklets, Reports, Souvenirs and Felicitations, Annual Publications, Posters, Flyers and Leaflets, Fact sheets, Invitations, Memorial Publications, Dissertations, Ephemera, Trade and Advertising Publications, and Guides and handbooks. By September 2014, Noolaham Foundation has archived over 14,000 publications.

BOOKS	4,006
MAGAZINES	5,865
NEWSPAPERS	1,987
BOOKLETS	1,504
TOTAL ITEM	13,362



Manuscripts Archive

In Sri Lanka, there exists a vast number of medieval and late modern Tamil palm-leaf manuscripts held by individuals and organizations. These palm-leaf manuscripts cover a variety of subjects including traditional medicine, law, history, technology and religion. Majority of these works have not been published in print. In addition, there exists an array of contemporary handwritten manuscripts such as notebooks, letters and diaries. Noolaham Foundation’s Manuscripts Archive project identifies, catalogues, digitizes and makes these works accessible to the wider scholarly community and the public. Palm-leaf manuscripts need special handling and equipment to be digitized. To date, Noolaham Foundation has completed manuscript archiving projects with Chunnakam and Jaffna Libraries.

OLA LEAVES (SUVADI)	4,850
COINS (PHOTOS)	75



Noolaham volunteer at Manuscripts Archiving training

Multimedia Archives

The purpose of the Multimedia Archive is to collect and archive Images, Videos, Audios and electronic media. This project is in its initial stage. Photos Archive is a pilot project currently being developed. It is expected to be online in 2015.

Noolaham Foundation Publications

Noolaham Foundation publishes books, newsletters, a magazine and a journal. This program is a part of the outreach strategy of the Foundation and contributes towards raising awareness about documentation, digital preservation and archiving. Noolaham Foundation also reprints important, rare and out-of print books. The first issue of Suvadu Journal is expected to be published in 2015.

BOOKS	3
BOOKLETS	8
NEWSLETTERS	23
ANNUAL REPORTS	6

Noolaham Foundation Events

Noolaham Foundation events program focuses on building volunteer communities and educating the wider public on various issues including information literacy, digital library usage and digital preservation. Lectures, seminars, workshops and exhibitions are conducted through this program.



Conferences and Symposiums

Conferences and Symposiums are organized to encourage sharing of information and best practices across disciplines such as information and library science, archival science, museology, history, archeology, anthropology, cultural studies, and linguistics.

The first project of this program, the Tamil Documentation Conference 2013 was held in April 2013. It was the first such conference about documentation in Tamil language. The Proceedings Volume of this Conference was published in 2014 and contains 48 research papers in over 640 pages.



Tamil Documentation Conference 2013 organized by Noolaham Foundation

Achievements and Results

DIGITAL LIBRARY

Authors	2,220
Publishers	1,623
Published years	110
Portals	11
Articles	100,000 +

DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Books	4,006
Magazines	5,865
Newspapers	1,987
Booklets	1,504
Total Items	13,362

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Muslim Archive	161
Malaiyakam Archive	92
Repositories	13
Personal Collections	13
DVDs	4
Booklets	3

MANUSCRIPTS ARCHIVE

Ola Leaves (suvadi)	4,850
coins (photos)	75

PALLIKOODAM

MCQs	10,008
Study Materials	1,390

PUBLICATIONS

Books	3
Booklets	8
Newsletters	23
Annual Reports	6

REFERENCE RESOURCE

Data sets	2,897
Who is Who	612

STAKEHOLDERS

Volunteers	229
Donors	281
Content Contributors	401
Advisors	50
Organizations	18
Friends of Noolaham	22

Statistics as at 31st October 2014



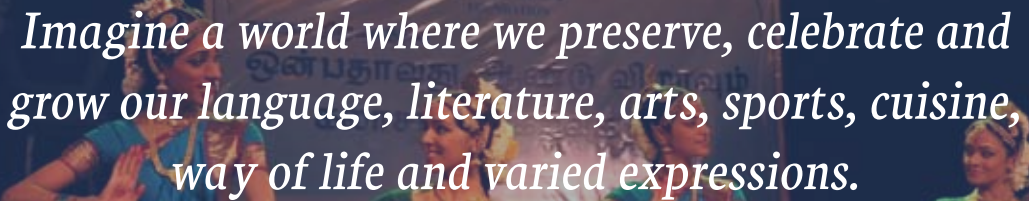
Vision 2020

Imagine a world where our traditional knowledge meets scientific research and innovation methods, pushing both frontiers forward, opening up new economic and social possibilities.

Imagine a world where we preserve, celebrate and grow our language, literature, arts, sports, cuisine, way of life and varied expressions.

Imagine a world, long from now, future generations, looking back to discover and make use of the commons that we help create and share.

Imagine a world where every student will have all the necessary educational resources at their fingertips to help them learn from kindergarten to university in the Tamil language.



Imagine a world where we preserve, celebrate and grow our language, literature, arts, sports, cuisine, way of life and varied expressions.

At Noolaham Foundation, we dream, we imagine, we plan and we execute.

After a wide consultation with all its stakeholders, including content creators, volunteers, experts and the public Noolaham Foundation developed the Vision 2020 Roadmap and Strategy. These documents outline our future goals and action plans in detail.

Visit the following link to view our Roadmap 2020
http://noolahamfoundation.org/wiki/index.php?title=Roadmap_2020



Our Stakeholders

Students, Teachers, Researchers and the Public

Our primary stakeholders are Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka. We serve their educational, informational and cultural needs. Our projects are designed to provide practical, impactful and immediate results to these end users.

Content Contributors

Various information creators such as authors, publishers, editors and media groups work with the Noolaham Foundation by providing content towards Noolaham Digital Library and other projects. We work with content contributors to ensure that their rights are respected, while ensuring long term preservation and open access for all.

Volunteers

From day one, Noolaham Foundation has been a volunteer driven and directed institution. We rely on volunteers for strategic leadership, resource mobilization and expertise. A volunteer contribution can be as small as contributing a photo or as extensive as a multiyear effort in helping to build the infrastructure.

Partners

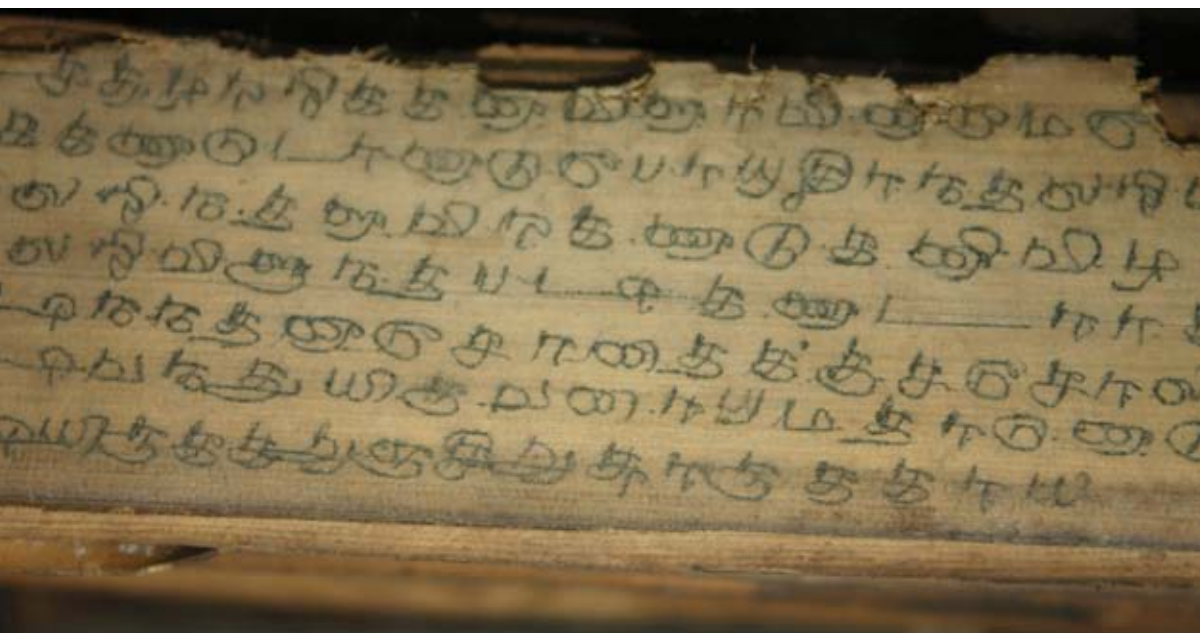
The Noolaham Foundation collaborates with various organizations in project work and in sharing expertise. Our mission is to build strong relationships with cultural and educational institutions and to recruit and support new organizations. The organizations we collaborate with include The Roja Muthiah Research Library, The French Institute of Pondicherry, Jaffna Public Library, Colombo Tamil Sangam and Viluthu - Center for Human Resource Development.



Being a nonprofit organization, Noolaham Foundation relies on the generosity of our donors. Hundreds of well wishers and organizations have donated towards the Foundation.

Noolaham Foundation has a small professional program, management and research staff.

VOLUNTEERS	229	PARTNERS	18
DONORS	281	CONTENT CONTRIBUTORS	401
ADVISORS	50	FRIENDS OF NOOLAHAM	22



Palm-leaf manuscript in Batticaloa museum Pic by Anton Croos (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Governance & Accountability

The Board of Directors of Noolaham Foundation (BOD), Board of Directors of Noolaham Chapters (BOC) and Regulatory Board (RB) are the three layers in the governance. Sector Teams and Volunteers Teams are formed from the resource persons who are predominantly Noolaham volunteers. The Chief Program Executive from Management report to a Designated Director, who is appointed by the Board of Directors.

Board of Directors (BOD)

The Board of Directors (BOD) is the principal and highest governing body of the Noolaham Foundation. The BOD shall exercise all powers necessary for the trusteeship and administration of the Noolaham Foundation. The BOD holds all rights to finalize and approve the decisions received from any source, namely the Regulatory Board (RB), the Boards of Chapters (BOC) or the general membership.

Regulatory Board (RB)

The Regulatory Board (RB) shoulders the responsibility for the smooth functioning and management of the Noolaham Foundation. It acts as the vigilant and advisory body to analyze, appraise and provide recommendations to BOD about policies and programs.

The Regulatory Board is responsible for Strategic Management, Planning, Fundraising, Resource Mobilization, Advocacy and Community Building. Fundraising, Technology, Information Services, Preservation & Archiving, and Advocacy & Community Development are identified as special sectors. The Chief Program Executive (CPE) shall be invited by the RB to document, follow up and implement the actions and resolutions of the RB.



Sector Teams (SET)

Noolaham Foundation shall form Sector Teams (SET) to pool experts to work together in areas critical to the organization. Research & Documentation, Technology, Preservation & Archive, Information Service, Advocacy & Community Building and Resource Mobilization are the five Sector Teams. Each Sector Team will work with a Volunteer Team based in Sri Lanka.

Financial Transparency and Reporting

All of Noolaham Foundation's financial transactions are recorded in accordance with international accounting standards. Detailed financial information is published online in our website and disseminated via our Annual Reports. Regular Audits are conducted using the respected accounting firm Amerasekera & Co., Chartered Accountants. The accounting and finance functions are delegated to the Finance and Administration Officer.



Pallikoodam program discussion



Operations

Operations encompass the following: human resources, logistics, administration, finance, accounting, and procurement. These functions are interrelated and form the backbone of program management and implementation. The Head Office comprises of a Chief Program Executive supported by an Operations Head and staff. The Operational Head manages day-to-day operations. The Finance and Administration Officer and the IT Officer support the Operations Head. The operations of district functional units are managed by respective staff in those units. Functional units report to the Operational Head.

Human Resources

There are regular staff and project based staff. Consultants, volunteers, interns, and resource people will be involved based on project requirements. Noolaham Foundation strives to be a model employer and organization.

Finance and Accounting

As noted above, the accounting and finance functions are delegated to the Finance and Administration Officer. All personnel of Noolaham Foundation are responsible to the Administrator for the regularity of actions taken by them in the course of their official duties. If the guidelines are not followed by Noolaham personnel, they will be personally held responsible and may be financially liable.

Procurement

All non-expendable items procured by Officers are entered in the inventory by the Finance and Administration Officer. Those items are marked with inventory stickers. All equipment provided to the staff members for regular use are provided after issuing a Property Custody Receipt. It is the staff member's responsibility to ensure the safety and proper maintenance of provided equipment.



Noolaham Foundation has adopted an integrated approach to project development and management.

- Noolaham Foundation initiates, plans and implements the majority of its projects.
- Participatory and collaborative approach is used at all stages of the projects with all stakeholders
- Program activities are prioritized in accordance with the needs of the Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka
- Noolaham Foundation project life cycle consists of six overlapping phases: Project Initialization, Project Approval and Agreement, Creating a Project Management Plan, Direct, Manage and Execute Project Work, Monitor and Control Project Work and Project Close.



Valvai Historical Archives Exhibition - 2011 Toronto Pic by Nat Keeran (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Sustainability

As an archiving institution, we are concerned with and committed to the physical, institutional and financial sustainability of our work.

Physical Sustainability

Digital records do have risks such loss of data, security breach and technological obsolescence. The quality of our digital records needs to meet international standards to enable reproduction of the originals and to support future technologies such as Tamil Optical Character Recognition. Noolaham Foundation seeks to ensure physical quality and sustainability through policies, standards and systems.

Institutional Sustainability

Noolaham Foundation recognizes that building a responsive, responsible, civic institution as a must to achieve its long term archiving, educational and community building objectives. By developing transparent governance structures, effective operational units, decision making and conflict resolution mechanisms, Noolaham Foundation seeks to ensure long term institutional sustainability.

We are developing a Resource Mobilization Plan with an aim to improve Noolaham Foundation's financial, institutional and physical sustainability.

Financial Sustainability

Noolaham Foundation has recognized that financial stability and sustainability are critical for long term maintenance of its work. We are developing a Resource Mobilization Plan with an aim to improve Noolaham Foundation's financial, institutional and physical sustainability. We believe, our objectives, demonstrable track record and our transparent and accountable institutional setup will help us reach this goal.



Join Us

Noolaham Foundation is a volunteer led and driven non-profit institution. It depends on range of contributors like you to sustain and grow its activities. We provide many opportunities for anyone sharing our vision and objectives to contribute in small and big ways. The following are just few of the ways you can contribute.

Contribute Content

Noolaham Foundation is dependent upon the support of authors, publishers, photographers, videographers, scholars, librarians, archivists and the public to provide content, sources and information for our projects. We respectfully invite all content creators to join hands in creating the largest digital Tamil repository in the world.

Contribute Expertise

Noolaham Foundation's aim is to be an advanced digital archiving institution in the World. To that end, we rely upon experts from a wide range of fields including digitization, information technology, software development, library and information sciences and archiving science to provide us with input and guidance with respect to standards, methodologies and technologies. Please consider contributing your time, expertise and/or tools.

Contribute Resources

As a nonprofit organization, Noolaham Foundation relies on its network of donors for its ongoing activities and sustainability. You can make small ongoing donations, fund specific projects, contribute to the Noolaham Foundation Endeavorment or provide needed equipment and facilities.



To contact us:

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Head Office

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Project Office

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Program Office

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► noolahamfoundation.org

Document and preserve knowledge and values of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities, make such knowledge accessible to all to engage in knowledge building and learning.