Noolaham Foundation
Project Report

Project Title	Organizational Datasets Pilot Project
Project Number	NF/PG/2011/0001
Project Location	Up-Country of Sri Lanka
Sector	Reference Resources - Organizations
Implementing agency and contribution	Noolaham Foundation (NF)
Grant Agency and Contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Total Budget and Expenditure	
Project Period	2011 - 2012
Responsible Stakeholders	Mr. Ganeshananthan Shaseevan (Team Leader) and Various organizations

Summary

The **Organizational Datasets Pilot Project** was carried out by Noolaham Foundation in 2011/12 to locate resources about organizations and websites related to Sri Lankan Tamil communities. The scope of the project was to identify and index the information about Sri Lankan Tamil speaking community based organizations, links to other related datasets and websites, and to make all entries available online without any access restrictions under a Creative Commons license.

Through this pilot project, details about 2987 organizations and websites were gathered, and indexed. The information was collected from many organizations such as Tamil Libraries, Educational Institutions, Publishers, Places of Worship, and other Institutions like political parties, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), NGOs, and Websites. A web portal named Noolaham: Tharavuthalangal (நூலகம்: தரவுத்தளங்கள்) was also created at Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library at www.noolaham.org. This portal will enable effective and speed searches of the required information.

Introduction and Background

The World Wide Web provides access to vast amounts of information of many different sorts. Finding information online is easier now than it ever has been – identifiable information is absolutely present everywhere now, and with just a few minutes of research (and sometimes a small fee), you can get detailed information and personal data on practically anything you want. There are a number of different methods for getting this information, but one of the easiest and most effective places to start is searching websites.

Over the years, numerous data sources were compiled and updated. At the moment, developed countries such as the USA, Australia and most of the European nations have unbelievably in-depth reference services and information retrieval facilities and mechanisms to obtain information from a collection of information resources with ease. Nowadays

number of programs have been launched in this connection in developing countries like India. Unfortunately, there are no such comprehensive programs or databases on Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities. Only a few hand books, directories and few yellow pages have been published over the years and Tamils rarely use printed directories. And small number publications about educational institutions, places of worship and other institutions are available. But they are not compiled into comprehensive reference sources. Now it is the duty of the present day Tamil speaking community to find an acceptable solution to fulfill this thirst.

The growing demand for digital access is having a profound impact on this connection. NF also feels that such a process is best channeled through the digital media. Hence Noolaham Foundation has decided to help Sri Lankan Tamils find and use resources relating to Sri Lanka and maintain information resources through a digital library that could be accessed by all.

Objectives and Achievements

The objective of the Organizational Datasets Pilot Project was to provide information services to ensure free and open access through reference resources. The scope of this project was to integrate and index information related to Sri Lankan Tamil speaking community based organizations from 16 districts where the Tamils live.

During the project NF was interested in the following 16 districts: Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara, Kandy, Matale, Kegalle, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Ratnapura, Colombo and Puttalam. The data collection was divided into five discrete portions. They are Tamil Libraries, Educational Institutions, Publishers, Places of Worship, and other Institutions. Related information was collected from phone books, social networks, marketing lists, business sites, and other public sources. The process resulted in a board-level data set of about 2987 organizations and websites that would be directly comparable across districts (Annexure 1). The collected sets of information are composed as separate elements and manipulated as a unit by a computer. The data set archived at the Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library at www.noolaham.org.

Constrains / Challenges

- The development of information data has not been entirely satisfactory because there is no description about the organization was provided. The descriptions should be developed for every organization in the future by NF.
- There are several challenges that need to be addressed regarding data collection on what is available now, old, outdated public record information, clarity of data, relevance, accuracy and geographical comparability of the data.
- Due to the large diversity of information, the process of developing and improving the templates for the datasets was a big challenge.
- As entries were made separately for organizations and websites, separate datasets were entered when the organizations had web sites.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- More involvement on the part of the stakeholders throughout the project process starting from planning will help towards the effective functioning of the project.
- Noolaham Foundation should extend its existing networks and relationships with Tamil community and collaborate more and more with other organizations and groups in creating and locating digital content.
- Entries about websites should be combined with that of organizations. This will result in a reduced number of entries.

Annexure: Tamil Libraries a sample Portal

நூலகம்:தரவுத்தளங்கள்

கல்வி நிறுவனங்கள் · வெளியீட்டாளர்கள் · வழிபாட்டுத்தலங்கள் · பிற நிறுவனங்கள்

தமிழ் நூலகங்கள்

நகரசபை நூலகங்கள்

வடமாகாணம்

யாழ்ப்பாணம் · வவுனியா · மன்னார் · கிளிநொச்சி · முல்லைத்தீவு ·

கிழக்கு மாகாணம்

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கொழும்பு · புத்தளம் ·

பிரதேசசபை நூலகங்கள்

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