

**Noolaham Foundation**  
**Final Report**



Project Title	Digital Documentation Discussion Series 2011
Project Number	NF/PG/2011/0006
Project Locations	Colombo and Jaffna
Sector	Noolaham Events - Lectures, Seminars, Workshops
Implementing agency and contribution	Noolaham Foundation (NF)
Grant Agency and Contribution	N/A
Total Expenditure	Not recorded
Project Period	April 2011– October 2011
Project Beneficiaries	Tamil speaking community in Sri Lanka.
Responsible Stakeholders	Volunteers of Noolaham Foundation, Tamil speaking Scholars, Colombo Tamil Sangam, and Students of Computer Science and Engineering society of the University of Moratuwa

### Summary

In 2011, Noolaham Foundation successfully conducted five presentations and workshops with volunteers on under the initiative of 'Digital Documentation Discussion Series 2011'. These events were held from April 2011 to October 2011. These discussions were conducted in collaboration with the Computer Science and Engineering Society of the University of Moratuwa. They were facilitated by key scholars and activists from the Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka as resource persons. The events named **Eedu** (ஏடு) and **Panaiyoolai** (பனையூலை) and targeted at creating awareness about digital opportunities, preservation and about the Foundation's activities.

More than 150 participations and nearly 15 key persons participated and were benefited by this project. *Puthiya Noolaham* newsletter was introduced and distributed during these events. Furthermore, a video presentation "Kadanthu Vantha Paathai" created by volunteers was presented at the final seminar held on the 02<sup>nd</sup> of October 2011. It was a valuable documentary about the Foundation's overall activities.

### Introduction and Background

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. Noolaham Foundation collaborates with various organizations in project work and in sharing expertise. Noolaham Foundation's mission is to build strong relationships with cultural and educational institutions and to recruit and support new organizations.

Noolaham Foundation was initiated as a volunteer initiative in January 2005 to digitally document information sources related to the Tamil speaking communities of Sri Lanka. Even though paid staff members were recruited over the years, volunteers play a significant role in implementing Noolaham Foundation's initiatives. Noolaham Foundation encourages voluntary contribution and over the years lots of volunteers have joined hands and lots of them were students.

Research reveals that students, researchers and general peoples look online first when they need information because of the speed and convenience made available by online sources. They prefer remote access to electronic resources rather than having to go to a traditional physical library. Most people often turn to a digital library web site or electronic resources when they need information. Students and general people tend to start with popular Internet search engines like Google because these search engines are more convenient and easier to use than libraries. People believe the information they find on the Internet is good enough for knowledge building.

Thus it was not surprising that a large number of university students contribute towards Noolaham Foundation's initiatives. While they were contributing towards documentation activities, new volunteers did not get much education regarding documentation. Thus a discussion series was needed to increase the awareness about documentation and to recruit new volunteers.

This project provided its users with knowledge about digitization and preservation and created awareness among youngsters and other interested stakeholders and aimed to communicate their importance particularly most young volunteers participated from universities because of their social respect. Scholars who were attached to higher educational institutions also shared their observations and experiences during these workshops.

### **Objective/s and Achievements or Results**

The main objective of this project was to build a sustainable volunteer base through communication, networking and collaboration. As part of the foundation's objectives, these Seminars and workshops were conducted by NF for the betterment of the Tamil speaking communities. Fifteen identified scholars among Sri Lankan Tamils facilitated this project. And about 150 volunteers participated in these documentation series.

**Details of recourse persons:**

Name of Scholars	Positions
Prof. Rajaratnam Sivachandran	Professor, University of Jaffna.
Mr. Pakiyathan Akilan	Senior lecture, University of Jaffna.
Mrs. Manokaran Kosalai	Lecture, University of Jaffna.
Mr. Kanagaratnam Saddanathan	Writer
Mr. Jeganathan Thivatharan	University of Colombo.
Mr. Ganesalingam Kumaran	Director of Kumaran Publishers.
Prof. Sabharatnam Jeyarasa	Writer, Professor, University of Jaffna.
Ms. Nila Loganathan	Law College, Colombo.
Mrs. R. Kayathri	Ashoka Foundation

Most of the events were organized in Colombo during this project period. Table below shows the details of the events' venue and dates.

Seminar No	Date	Venue
01	09 <sup>th</sup> of April 2011	Colombo Tamil Sangam, Colombo.
02	29 <sup>th</sup> of May 2011	Tamil Refugee Relief Organization (TRRO), Jaffna.
03	05 <sup>th</sup> of June 2011	Vinothan Hall, Colombo Tamil Sangam, Colombo.
04	11 <sup>th</sup> of September 2011	Vinothan Hall, Colombo Tamil Sangam, Colombo.
05	02 <sup>nd</sup> of October 2011	Vinothan Hall, Colombo Tamil Sangam, Colombo.

Moreover the news Letter "*Puthiya Noolaham*" (புதிய நூலகம்) was introduced on the 09 of April 2011 event and other monthly publications were distributed during the events to the participants. It contains NF news, valuable articles on the digital world, introductions to published books and details about events organized by the foundation and NF's reports and etc.

At the last event held on the 02<sup>nd</sup> of October 2011, a video presentation *Kadhanu Vantha Paathai* (கடந்து வந்த பாதை) was presented and it was a document on the history of the Foundation made by volunteers. Also every special guest shared their valuable comments with NF volunteers in seminars in a friendly manner.

**Constrains / Challenges:**

- The biggest challenge faced by NF during the project period was poor awareness among community on the preservation and archiving of documents and moral assets and it was unsure even when it was shared by volunteers too among the community.
- Foundation faced another challenge with regard to peer group of participants. Volunteers who came from computer Science and engineering society of the

University of Moratuwa took major part in these seminars. It would have been an added strength if students from the different faculties of the other universities had also participated. Because it would be useful to receive knowledge from and share knowledge between people coming from different backgrounds.

- These seminars were facilitated by identified resource persons from the Sri Lankan Tamil communities. Some participants suggested that NF arrange similar seminars and workshops including various resource persons not only from Sri Lankan Tamil community but from other communities as well.
- Due to lack of awareness, most societies negatively perceive these free seminars, and fail to understand the actual value of these free seminars. This also observed among the students as well. Participants did not have to make payment in order to attend these seminars.
- Organizing-team members faced difficulties in getting this project arranged on time and gather a good number of participants.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

- Foundation could initiate more and more seminars besides this project among communities with various groups of peoples and by getting key persons who have respect among them to facilitate them.
- When foundation is going to organize a seminar among the educated sections of the community such as university volunteers, foundation could collaborate with various resource persons from different countries. It will create different kinds of interest among volunteers to continue their activities successfully with NF.

### **Acknowledgement**

Noolaham Foundation would like to thank all facilitators, resource persons and participants for joining us in these events despite their busy schedule and Noolaham foundation is very proud of their keen interest and dedication for our society. NF hopes to collaborate with them in more and more events in future.

Relevant attachment:



The invitation for the seminars

<p><b>நூலக நிறுவனம்</b>  <b>நூலகம் :: கொழும்பு</b>  <b>"பகைவரகால"</b>          ஆவணப்படுத்தல் செயலம்ர்வும்          மாதாந்த ஒன்றுகூடலும்</p> <p>காலம் : 05.06.2011 (சனி) (ஒய்) (கொழும்பு)          நேரம் : 3.00 பி.யு.          இடம் : விநாயகம் மண்டபம்          கொழும்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்</p> <p>தலைவர்  <b>திரு.ஜெ.தீவாதரன்</b>          (கொழும்பு பல்கலைக்கழகம்)          இணைப்பாளர்          நகலகம் :: கொழும்பு</p> <p>பிரதம விருந்தினர்  <b>திரு.க.குமாரன்</b>          அதிபர்          குமரன் புத்தக இல்லம்</p> <p>சிறப்புப்பேருரை  <b>பேராசிரியர் சபா. ஜெயராசா</b>          உய தலைவர்          கொழும்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்</p> <p>பயனர் உரை  <b>செல்வி. நூலா லோகநாதன்</b>          (கொழும்பு சட்டக் கல்லூரி)</p>	<p><b>"பகைவரகால"</b>          ஆவணப்படுத்தல் செயலம்ர்வும்          மாதாந்த ஒன்றுகூடலும்</p> <p><b>நிகழ்ச்சி நிரல்</b></p> <p>மௌன கிருச்சலி</p> <p>வரவேற்புரை  <b>திரு.க. சரவணன்</b>          (பேராதனைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம்)          தலைமையுரை</p> <p>செய்திடயல் வெளியீடு          பிரதமவிருந்தினர்  <b>திரு.க.குமாரன்</b></p> <p><b>"பகைவரகால"</b> -- இணையத்தள வெளியீடு</p> <p>பிரதம விருந்தினர் உரை  <b>சிறப்புப்பேருரை</b></p> <p>பயனர் உரை          பங்களிப்பாளர் உரை  <b>திரு.க. துவாரகன்</b>          (கொழும்பு பல்கலைக்கழகம்)</p> <p>நன்றியுரை  <b>திரு.சி.பிரகாஷ்</b></p>
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நேரம் - பீய 4.00 - 6.00  
திகதி - 29.05.2011 ஞாயிறாழ்வாராதிருந்திழை.

இடம்- அகாதிக்கள் புறர்வாழ்வு நிறுவனம்,  
(TRRO)  
106, 4ஆம் குறுக்குத்தெரு,  
யாழ்ப்பாணம்.

### அன்புடன் அழைக்கின்றோம்

பேராசிரியர் இராசிவசந்திரன்  
திரு.சிவசுந்தரத்தி சேரன்  
(முதல் நிறுவனத்தின் அங்கம்)

இல. 07 இரத்தினம் ஒழுங்கமை,  
கே.கே.எஸ் வீதி,  
யாழ்ப்பாணம்.  
தொ.இல. 021 2223274

## மாதாந்த நூலக ஒன்றுகூடல் யாழ்ப்பாணம் 2011



**NOOLAHAM  
FOUNDATION**

அழைக்கீழ்  
Invitation

29.05.2011 - ஞாயிறா பீய -4.00