

**Noolaham Foundation
Final Report**



Project Title	Initialization of Moodle for Sri Lankan Tamil speaking students
Project Number	NF/PG/2013/0007
Project Locations	Northern, Central, Eastern & Uva Provinces
Sector	Virtual learning environment
Implementing agency and contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Grant Agency and Contribution	Visions Global Empowerment
Total Budget and Expenditure	Budget- LKR 335,000.00 Expenditure – LKR 470,506.20 Total grant received- LKR 335,810.00 NF contribution – LKR 134,696.20
Project Period	August 1, 2013 – January 31, 2014
Responsible Stakeholders	Uva Wellassa university Tamil students, Zonal Education Directors and School expertise teachers
Prepared by	Program Officer

Summary

Pallikoodam Program of Noolaham Foundation supports the educational needs of the Tamil speaking students using digital technologies. It is an educational initiative of Noolaham Foundation aimed at creating an alternative, community-centered educational system among the Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka. The virtual learning environments made possible by emerging Internet based educational technology provides a great cost-effective opportunity to bring and link quality educational resources to students and youth. It helps a student who has access to the Internet to proceed his/her studies anywhere and anytime. Virtual Learning will help those who are in need of self-learning and those want to share their knowledge through the Internet. Therefore, Noolaham Foundation collaborated with Visions Global Empowerment aiming at the initiation of a “Moodle” system and introducing to students communities. Moodle system is an e - learning interface and contains educational resources in an online platform.

Visions Global Empowerment, a non-profit organization which motivates children through education development programs, joins hand through collaborating with this project. Moodle system and active forum are the outcomes of the project. The official virtual learning website for the virtual learning platform powered by the ‘Moodle’ system was launched on 4th of January 2014 at the Noolaham Foundation’s ninth year annual celebrations held at Ramakrishna Mission Hall, Wellawatte, Colombo with more than 800 spectators. The students and beneficiaries can view the portal at www.epallikoodam.org. Noolaham Foundation conducted introductory sessions in 44 centres for 103 schools with approximately 4,000 students’ participation (see annexure I). Also Noolaham Foundation facilitates students with 10,008 number of multiple choice question bank (see annexure

II). Tamil Students of the University of Uva Wellassa, University of Moratuwa and volunteers carried out introductory secession in the Northern, Eastern, Central and Uva provinces in Sri Lanka.

Introduction and Background

Pallikoodam Program aims at presenting a virtual learning environment, where all the stream of studies can be followed by Tamil speaking students in Sri Lanka. Building a virtual learning environment with open and free access seems to have an impact on the targeted beneficiaries as a bunch of intellectual people can coordinate through interactive learning. In its broadest sense, e-assessment, e-learning are the use of information technology for any subject-related activity.

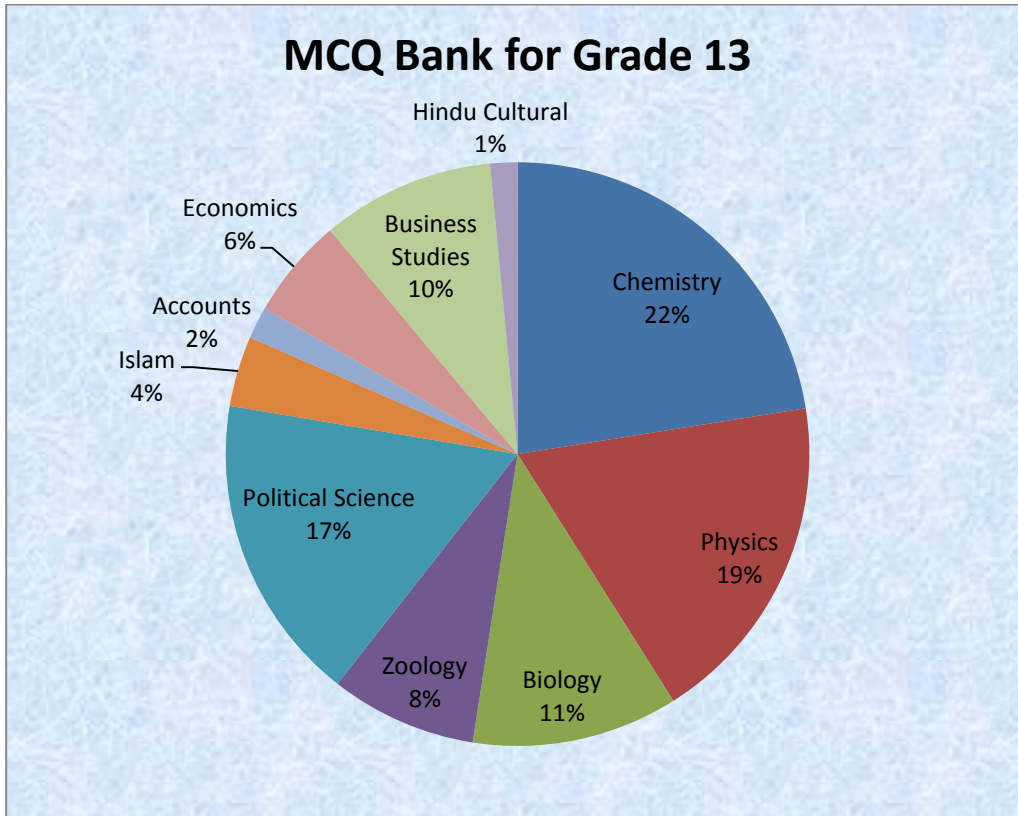
Since October 2012, Noolaham Foundation has been digitizing educational materials such as model papers, textbooks, past papers and tutorials. But those materials needed a proper Learning Management System so that the students can make use of them efficiently. On Aug 1, 2013 Noolaham Foundation with the collaboration of Visions Global Empowerment, which is an organization engaging in the activities of empowering education worldwide, began to create a virtual learning environment based on Moodle software.

This Initialization of the Moodle system was a massive success and there were special appreciations came from the school societies. School principals and students are very much interested in receiving knowledge from this service. Noolaham Foundation conceives that this Moodle system would improve the performance of the students in the G.C.E Ordinary Level and Advance Level examinations in the future. Noolaham Foundation is sure that this project will be a great resource for those students and this website will be introduced to the Tamil speaking students all over the world so that they can meet in a common platform and quench their educational thirst.

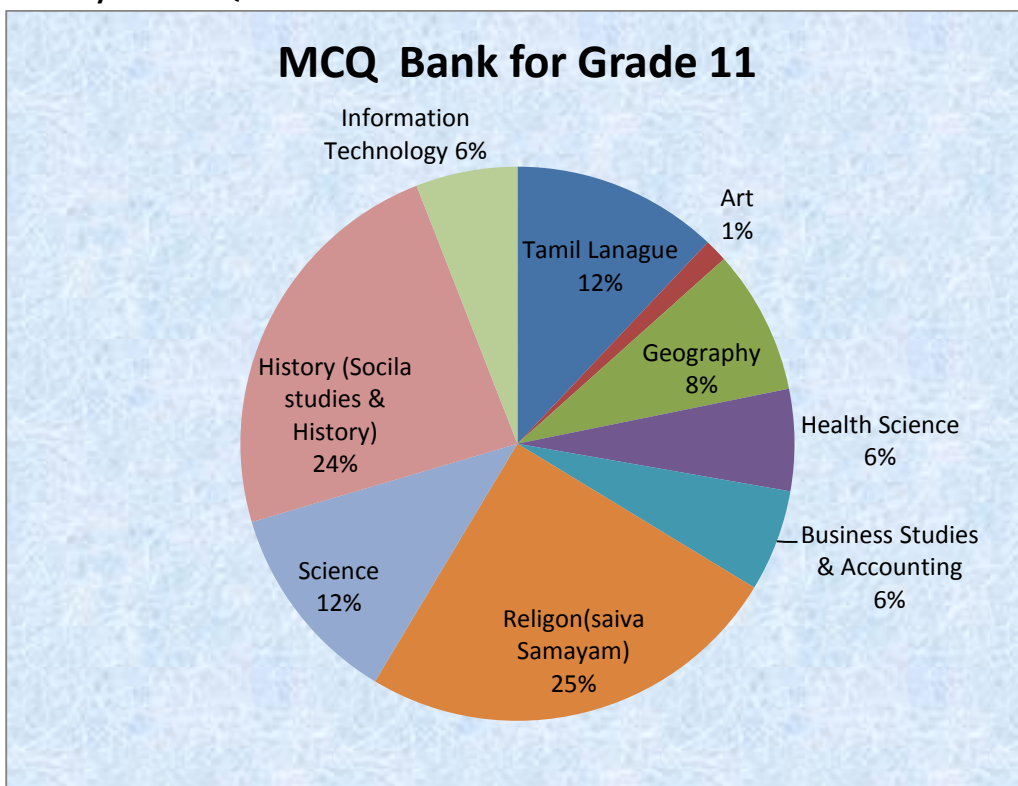
Goal, Objective, and Activity	Achievements
Goal 1: Initialize the virtual learning platform	
Objective 1: Map digitized educational contents into the platform	
(I). Two employees were assigned with the ability of handling educational	Two staff were assigned and provided knowledge on the objective of the project, its implementation method and resource identification. They carried out their duties at the program office which is located at Jaffna, Sri Lanka.
(II). Organizing digitized materials stored in local storage	The general exams of G.C.E Advance Level and Ordinary level are conducted by the Sri Lankan education department every year. The general exams question papers for GCE O/L, GCE A/L classes and model exam papers were identified from 1978 to 2012 and stored in Noolaham Foundation, Colombo. Please see the annexure III. These are the basic digitizing materials.
(III). Meta data collection of digitized documents	Meta data relevant to handle digitized documents has been collected and stored in spreadsheets.
(IV). Domain allocation and implementing database structure for storing documents	As this programme needs a domain to host the virtual environment, a domain has been allocated. Storing the structure was implemented. This structure reflects the same structure maintained in the local storage as well.
(V). Uploading digitized documents	All the documents have been uploaded into an already built structure.
(VI). Customizing Moodle system environment	As already stated, Moodle system is used to create the virtual learning environment. Domain installation was done by Noolaham Foundation; it was customized so that it can capture the requirements of the environment.
(VII). Constructing basic course structure	Each grade subjects were considered as a course. For advanced level, a framework was made with the help of local teachers.
(VIII). Mapping each documents into courses	After the completion of course designing in Moodle system, all the digitized materials have been mapped into course blocks. Students, who enroll to the particular course can download it or check it online. Blocks type of course content management is adapted as this learning methodology is not limited to any time period.
Objective 2: Provide open access to the communities	The Moodle system website has been released and guest can access it and get the knowledge. The URL is http://epallikoodam.org/?lang=en . This website was introduced to the Tamil speaking students all over the world to meet in a common platform and quench their educational thirst. Student can find and learn new information

	and extract from them needed knowledge
Goal 2: Introduce the platform to Tamil speaking student communities	
Objective 3: Introduction event in 103 schools and children homes	Exposing the project to the beneficiaries was vital. As intended earlier, introduction sessions have been done in 103 schools from different districts on appropriate level so that students could understand the project and its outcome. Volunteers of Pallikoodam program were involved in those activities.
Objective 4: Form a group of students in schools to enhance the effectiveness of the environment	Schools where the program has been done are capable of maintaining a student group. Contact details have been gathered so that the project team can coordinate with them for collecting materials from respective schools. Through that person, a group of students were formed for further activities of the project. It was a sustainable body to continue the dialogue within students' societies.
Objective 5: Achieve an active discussion forum in the platform	Rural students can access the system only during the school hours. It is a major issue in the particular student society. Therefore we formed active forum for the students. Active forum got feedback from them and took necessary arrangements to get access to the system regularly. Another benefit is quality intervention of students' communication within the course. If it is needed, the teacher takes a part in this communication channel too. In addition, the teachers can control this consultation remotely by means of forums and he/she has quality feedback from most of his/her students at the same time. On following illustration it is possible to evaluate the way of the flow of information.
Goal 3: Integrate the platform with online self-evaluating facilities	
Objective 6: Facilitate students with a rich question bank for self-evaluations	Question bank reference materials have been uploaded and published successfully. This targets at prepared past papers and model M.C.Q questions with answers. The uploaded system was tested in a user friendly manner. Almost ten thousand (10,008, see annexure II) MCQ questions and answer were completed. Self-directed learning greatly increases the probability that those students will be good at making sound, intelligent, self-affirming choices when the stakes are high. In most cases, self-directed learning provides the opportunity for students to be exposed to a far wider range of interests than is permitted in a school situation.

An analysis of MCQ for Grade 13



An analysis of MCQ for Grade 11



Constrains and lesson learned:

- **Time management/ Lack of Participant**

- Uploading the MCQ couldn't be completed in the proposed time due to lack of human resources and inadequate fund. These activities (question collection, separation for subjects, typing, proofing, finalizing, and uploading relevant material on the system) took long period of time. Typing costs were much higher than Noolaham Foundation expected.
- Due to lack of awareness, most of the societies negatively perceive the free orientations (introduction sessions), and fail to aspire the actual value of these free orientations. This also observed among the student level as well. This orientation also provided as a free of charge that why few number of students were turned down to attend the orientations.
- These orientations held on weekend and during holiday periods when students have personal classes and other activities. Noolaham Foundation identified that the students had some issues to get in the orientation on the proposed time.

- **Administration support and other facilities**

- The selected schools are mostly in the remote areas of the targeted districts. There are no existing buildings with sufficient facilities to held orientations for large number of students. Organizing-team members faced difficulties in making those arrangements on time. Travelling time and cost were much more in some areas as we expected due to the bad condition of the roads and poor public transports facilities.
- To get official permission from the zonal education office and school principal to conduct orientations were not a big deal as most of the officials welcome this services especially to remote location and villages.
- Normally Sri Lankan government secondary schools get 20 - 30 computers for their lab users, but some rural schools don't have those facilities. That why students can't frequently access this technology for their educational development in the above schools.

- **Forum activation**

A team has already been built to effectively achieve the forum in the Moodle system. The group includes students from various local universities in Sri Lanka. They are about to start contributing to the forum by discussing interesting topics. This would help to include school students rapidly as they might find some motivation.

- **Preparing instructional design of each subject seems difficult.**

Instructional design prepared only for Mathematics and science in the ordinary level. And it was decided not to prepare instructional design for rest of the subjects in ordinary level as it doesn't have a big impact on learning.

- **Variety of digitized documents**

As it seemed to a cluster, each document had to be checked for organizing and collecting Meta data. Proofing and categorization were taken more time as we expected.

Suggestion and Recommendation:

- It is strongly recommended conducting the orientations in upcoming years also for entire appropriate students. Noolaham Foundation found that by conducting the orientation, the skills, attitudes and knowledge of students improved. It is great an opportunity for gifted students to advance further.
- Adequate budget and human resources to enable quality evaluation and reporting. It will help in the future planning.
- Providing adequate training (training, upgrading of staff positions, adequate number of staff, encourage more volunteer work of the university students) will help task finish in proposed time.
- Use of evaluation report for strategic decision making such as planning and organizing the project in the near future can help effective implementation.

Case Stories / Quotes

"This orientation event was very useful and explanations were very clear. Especially it is a great opportunity to improve my knowledge myself. I'm appreciates who are provide the service and students of Moratuwa university Uva Wellsa university".

A.Damsila, K/Killinochi Central Vidyalayam, Killinochi.

"I got a lot of benefit of this introduction session. I had a clear of my doubts on using the internet. I'm very happy and appreciate this service of students who are facilitating this learning flat form"

-Dhatshana Sivanatham, J/Anthiyaar Hindu College, Neerwali-

"The introduction session is very useful for our self-learning. This is first time to participate something like this event. We are thankful to Noolaham Foundation for done this introduction for us. It's should continue in future for good progress."

S.Dinoja, K /Thiruvaiyaru Maham Vidyalayam, Killinochi.

"I am Mr Ponniah Aravinthan, Principal, Katkivalam MMTMS. I am using Noolaham Foundation education material through website for a while. It is very useful for me and our community. Now I am taking these education resources to other school teachers and principals. And also we are providing appropriate training to our school students to access the Noolaham Foundations resources properly and easily. I am glad of these services from Noolaham Foundation and its much appreciated activity. I will definitely help these activities as I can."

Note: He contacted Noolaham Foundation through Chapter head U.K by phone.

"I'm in grade 11 and I had participated for orientation event was organized by Noolaham Foundation. It was very useful to get the good education resources from internet our self. It is very helpful to In future. We got much use of this event."

G.Jagapriya, B/Passara Tamil Maha Vidyalayam, Badulla.

Photos: 'MOODLE' system was formally launched on 04.01.2014 at Ramakrishnan Mission.



Photos of introductory events





Annexure I : Orientation attendance details

District	No of Centers	No of participated Schools	No of Students
Jaffna	20	46	1795
Killinochchi	04	04	325
Mullitheivu	04	08	397
Mannar	03	05	159
Vavuniya	01	02	87
Trincommale	02	07	212
Batticalo	02	09	309
Ambara	01	04	119
Mattale	02	04	86
Nuwara Eliya	01	03	120
Badulla	04	11	397
Total	44	103	4,006

Annexure II: Details of Multiple Choice Question Bank

Establishment of online MCQ bank for Grade 11 and Grade 13 Students			
Subjects	Year	Grade	No of Question
Chemistry	1979 - 2012	Gr 13	1493
Physics	1992- 2012	Gr 13	1231
Biology	2000 - 2012	Gr 13	759
Zoology	1986 - 1992	Gr 13	539
Political Science	1998 - 2012	Gr 13	1133
Islam	2003 - 2012	Gr 13	259
Accounts	2006 - 2008	Gr 13	118
Economics	1999 - 2008	Gr 13	370
Business Studies	1999 - 2009	Gr 13	637
Hindu Cultural	1998 - 2007	Gr 13	100
Tamil Languge	2008 - 2012, Six Model paper	Gr 11	406
Art	2002 - 2011	Gr 11	45
Geography	2001 - 20012	Gr 11	284
Health Science	2008 - 2012	Gr 11	200
Business Studies & Accounting	2008 - 2012	Gr 11	200
Religion (Saiva Samayam)	1988 - 2012	Gr 11	839
Science	2000- 2012	Gr 11	399
History (Social studies & History)	1989 - 2003	Gr 11	796
Information Technology	2008 - 2012	Gr 11	200
Total			10,008

Annexure III: Details of the documents digitized and uploaded in the Moodle System.

Grade	English Medium (Total no of Documents)	English Medium(Total no of pages)	Tamil Medium (Total no of documents)	Tamil Medium (Total no of pages)
Gr-06	25	94	103	2985
Gr-07	17	88	108	3432
Gr-08	18	82	98	2348
Gr-09	15	68	73	2786
Gr-10			45	5331
Gr-11	44	133	100	5595
Gr-13 (Science)	33	286	542	5085
Gr-13 (Commerce)			25	1367
Gr-13 (Arts)			132	6702
Gr-13 (GIT)			3	20
Gr-13 (General English)			8	64
Gr-13 (General Knowledge)			1	6
Total	152	751	1238	35721