

நூலகம்

www.noolaham.net

Project Noolaham

Digitising at WERC, 2007 Project Report

Draft summary version

**Author : T. Kopinath
Created on : 06.03.2008**

© Project Noolaham

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Project Description
4. Project Outcome
5. Project Impact
6. Conclusion

1. Introduction

This report is on the digitising project carried out by Project Noolaham (PN) and Women's Education and Research Center (WERC) in 2007 to digitise the publications of the latter. It was the first collaborative project undertaken by PN collective with another organisation. The results achieved and experience gained are elaborated in this report.

The target audience of this report are the Board of Directors of WERC and all stakeholders of Project Noolaham. These stakeholders include but not limited to PN volunteers, funders, authors, publishers, media, policy makers, internet users and the general public.

This report does not include any lists of publications digitised or technical details of procedures followed. These details are available online at www.noolaham.net.

2. Background

Project Noolaham is a non-profitable, collective and voluntary endeavor aimed at preserving Sri Lankan books and magazines in e-format in order to make them available to and for the benefit of all those who are able to access the internet. Noolaham therefore is a digital library which provide free public access of ebooks online. The notion behind the entire project is to make information and knowledge available to future generations that will base internet as one of primary source for intellectual resources.

Women's Education and Research Center is a Colombo based non governmental organisation focusing on gender issues. It conducts and supports various activities such as research, publication of books and journals, seminars and information services.

In April 2007, PN volunteers met Dr. Selvy Thiruchandran and Ms. Mahesh Vairamuthu of WERC to discuss the possibilities of digitising the publications of WERC. The proposal was wholeheartedly welcomed by WERC and the project was started in May.

3. Project Description

The objective of this project was to digitise the publications of WERC and Dr. Selvy Thiruchandran. It was coordinated by G. Shaseevan of PN.

WERC provided the publications, the computer, computer maintenance and a space in their research library to carry out the scanning. PN paid for the labour and scanner. The first phase included scanning and correcting human errors in scanning.

This first phase of the process was completed during May, June and July of 2007. The second phase consisted of removing the impurities caused during the scanning, creation of ebooks, finalising and uploading. Cleaning the scanning was a paid activity and others were done by volunteers.

PN couldn't get sufficient funds in time to carry out that activity as soon as possible. Thus the second phase was delayed until 2008. In February 2008 the second phase was finished and in March 2008 the ebooks were online.

4. Project Outcome

140 publications were digitised during the process. 133 of them were made available online.

The scanned images were double checked by volunteers and human errors were corrected by scanning those pages again. But a few machine errors such as poor image quality were not corrected as sophisticated equipment was not affordable for PN.

5. Project Impact

One of the biggest advantages of information and communication technology is the possibility of distributed knowledge based activities. Without sufficient digital content, the users cannot utilise this possibility.

This project has enabled all who have internet connection to access a substantial collection of gender related information. One of WERC's objectives is to “disseminate information relating to women and create awareness and increase consciousness on feminist issues”. A big collection of information created by WERC is online now to cater the information need of all.

For PN, this can be a starting point for similar projects. The potential of collaborative effort is realised and similar projects will be undertaken to create digital content.

6. Conclusion

A project in collaboration with another organisation was a new and challenging experience for PN volunteers. For the first time in PN history, funding was utilised for scanning. Some standard practices were selected from this experience. PN volunteers who worked on this project agreed on the following:

- The PN should work on realistic budgets and plans to avoid any delay.
- English publications should be converted into text using optical character recognition softwares.
- The publications missed out should be scanned when resources are available.
- PN should collaborate more and more with other organisations and groups in creating digital content.

Note: The opinions and views conveyed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions and views of PN, WERC or related parties. A pdf version of this report can be downloaded from www.noolaham.net. Those who want printed copies mailed to them may contact noolaham@gmail.com.