

EverythingHarar Current Activities, Progress , And Plans

1. Introduction

Harar, with its diversified rich history and unique attributes such as culture, language, and Islamic religion, if properly studied, can serve as a model to the local and international community at large. It has high credentials based on the way it has sustained itself through indigenous social structures thriving in unique environment and historical context. Moreover, it contributes its part to the rest of the world's cultural diversity demonstrated by UNESCO credentials. Among the several essential components of its socio-economic system, one example is the maintenance of its rich cultural roots through historical manuscripts, traditional artifacts, and incredibly beautiful city-wide architectures.

East Africa's historical record is marked with the footprints of interesting and impressive Harar and Harari social events, facts, and processes that prevailed in different periods. However, some of the issues facing Harari society are similar to those faced by countries with small population, while some aspects are specific to the society. This paper presents EverythingHarar on-line library setup as a viable endeavor, explains the main challenges facing the team, presents activities that have been delivered to mitigate the challenges and make the endeavor a sustainable and worthwhile team effort.

2. The case for Harari On-line Library

Our forefathers and mothers have done very well in maintaining our precious Harari tangible and intangible values, however, for many Hararies and the world at-large, access to the rich cultural heritage remains out of reach. Most of historical publications and studies on Harar are kept by individuals, researchers and some at museums which can only be accessed by on-site visits. The core issue is addressing the maintenance of our history, heritage and pass it on to the future generation,

On-line Libraries, serving different needs and interactions between members of educational institutions, have been in existence in developed countries for many years. They serve as the most economical and efficient way of sourcing and distributing knowledge and skills, materials, and services. However, information is scant on their application on heritage conservation.

Here are some of the reasons for the need for EverthingHarar on-line library.

- ✓ Lack of access to important publications by the community at large
- ✓ Lack of central point for accessing information about Harar
- ✓ Widely dispersed historical information
- ✓ No discussions pro and against specific publications
- ✓ No educational resource on Harar (History, geography, economics etc)
- ✓ Difficulty in Information sharing
- ✓ Difficulty in accessing research materials

- ✓ Practically nil linkages between community members world wide

EverythingHarar aims to solve the above problems by creating linkages as described below.

3. Linkages serving as sustainable model of Everything Harar

EverythingHarar, in general, is an endeavor to create linkages between information producers (such as researchers, museums, writers) and the general public and share information.

Most linkages are made in the form of teams comprising sourcing activities between EverthingHarar and individuals. They take various forms, formal and informal. Formal arrangements include written agreements such as licensing agreements; Informal arrangements can include collaboration in information gathering and transfer,

As EverythingHarar is conducted just for the love-of-Harar and community betterment by team members, it is difficult to quantify realistically the cost and added value. However, up to now, **+400** publications have been posted with **7000** number of users accessing the website.

Having said this, EverthingHarar is often used as a source in various levels of our society because it is accessible to all members of the community without geographical limitations. A typical example is the Atlas of Harar which was downloaded 360 times all over the world. The Atlas was officially made available to us by the Harari Regional Government.

But without access to publications, proper quality and quantity standard deemed by the society, these benefits cannot be utilized. The following are some amongst the many constraints faced by EverythingHarar:

- ✓ Inadequate awareness of the use of community on-line library
- ✓ Limited number of information providers to the on-line library
- ✓ Lack of research material on Harar
- ✓ Lack of research institutions
- ✓ Inadequate physical infrastructure in Ethiopia (Bandwidth issues)
- ✓ Geographical or educational gaps between information producers and potential users
- ✓ Technical aspects of the management of the website

The following are the kind of linkages setup by Everything Harar to mitigate the above problems:-

- Researcher Linkages: In this linkage with further cooperation between local and international researchers has been carried out.
- Museum Linkages: In an effort to increase Online library appeal and source, Abdella Sheriff Museum was incorporated to the website which will enable easy access to heritages for the user
- Organizational Linkages: Linkages between educational institutions and NGO's such as Peace

Corps volunteers to Harar.

4. The way forward

Our commitment is demonstrable to the level with which we have tried to make the impact on Harari society more sound through our own initiative rather than waiting for tangible input from any other stakeholder.

However, it is essential that every Harari to get engaged in this viable and sustainable model for on-line library for our society. The task cannot be left to one stakeholder alone, but requires a relentless effort by all Hararies, though the primary initiative and drive should come from team members. It is the role of the EverythingHarar team first to create a favorable environment for the on-line library to thrive as a whole.

The team extends its invitation to interested Hararies to participate in the nonstop effort of digitizing Harari information and motivate others to join us in this arduous and historical journey.

5. Acknowledgements

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b) Honored Contributors:

- 1) Joe CuiffiniUSA
- 2) Meftuh Shash.....Canada
- 3) Zaki Sherif.....USA
- 4) Abdurahman Abdulahi.....USA
- 5) Abdela Sherif.....Harar

c) Contributors:

- 1) Eskender Meftuh.....Harar
- 2) Jonathan Miran.....USA
- 3) Ilaria Sartori.....Italy
- 4) Jemal Mohammed Ismaeel...Australia
- 5) Mohammed Ibrahim.....USA
- 6) Jemal Kortu.....Canada
- 7) Abdulaziz Adem.....-Harar

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e) Chat room and Forums

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- 1) Ameshna Paltalk Room
- 2) Harari revival forum
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- 4) Harar connection

Everything Harar

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EverythingHarar Core team members:**

- Abdurahman Abdulkadir-----Administrator (USA)
- Mohammed Abdulkadir-- --- IT and support (Addis Ababa)
- Samira Sherif-----IT and support (Canada)