

Problem Statement (Eruku Mesi North America)

Members of the community from the Eruku village, in Nigeria, are seeking an easier and more effective means of communicating with one another and keeping their prominent culture alive. As many of the former inhabitants of the village have emigrated to other continents and rarely have the opportunity to visit Eruku, a feeling of closeness needs to be kept between individuals who are physically distant. Maintaining a sense of togetherness is a key factor in preserving the culture that originates within a particular community, which is of high priority to the Eruku people. Diminishing culture and personal relationships within the Eruku diasporas remain a significant cause for concern. Without a common solution that unites the entire Eruku village community, communication remains fragmented and it is difficult to maintain a shared culture among separate diasporas worldwide. In addition, there is a great need for support and donations to build schools, hospitals, and other important infrastructure and resources for the village, which rely on the presence of a stronger global community to make such collective contributions.

The Eruku village carries a rich, distinctive culture that originates from its ancestors, who originally migrated from Oyo Ile and Ile Ife, many of whom were great warriors, farmers, hunters and warlords. Originally with 11 distinct clans and a thriving cultural identity in its early days, the village was raided and sold to white slave traders before being reduced to just ten people and one dog (Archive, n.d.). Eruku has since been heavily focused on rebuilding through self-development projects, with the limited resources that the government can provide, to construct roads and rail networks, hospitals and health centers, primary and secondary schools, a police station, a water dam, and many others. These efforts are constrained unless there is a stable economic climate to fund these ongoing projects and support new businesses that are currently struggling (Olawajun, n.d.). Present-day Eruku villagers carry a strong sense of ethnic pride and strive for personal growth and various opportunities to help improve their community. Members of the Eruku diaspora are quite willing and readily available to provide their time and resources toward rebuilding their communities but there still remains so much to be done (Ajibade, 2017).

Communication is difficult between members of the Eruku community who are located in different parts of the world. Since the community members are geographically distributed, establishing stable communication channels for them has remained to be a challenge. Effective means of communication need to be established for individuals who are in the same region (intra-region communication channels) and communities from different regions need a way to interact with each other (inter-region communication channels). Both the intra- and inter-region communication channels will help strengthen the bond among community members.

Further, using such channels would allow the community members to share information about their family with other members living in the same region or connect with members living in different regions. These channels will also allow the Eruku community to share information about events with each other, raise funds for them, and invite other members of the community to attend these events. Funds for these events could be arranged from region-specific communities or could be contributed by members living in different regions. Until now, building a united force among the next generation of Eruku descendants in specific regions such as North America has remained to be a struggle. With the above-mentioned communication channels, this problem can be overcome.

Since the dispersal and emigration of Eruku members took place gradually over time, there is no exact date as to when this problem specifically began. Rather, it is an issue that gradually progressed over several years. However, as an increasing number of community members left their homeland, it provided a greater incentive for remaining members to leave their homeland and be with those who have already left the village. This self-compounding effect further exacerbated the problem and influenced more emigration. As Eruku villagers continue to seek better opportunities and living conditions in other parts of the world, the need for streamlined communication and global support for the village remains an ongoing concern.

Cultural displacement is often felt by members of the Eruku community who have left their homeland, after recognizing that they are no longer living in a community that celebrates or acknowledges their cultural beliefs and

traditions from Eruku. For example, many emigrants from the Eruku village may find that their new communities do not publicly celebrate their holidays or observe their traditions. Although there are some overlapping holidays, such as Easter and Christmas, there are other holidays that are not recognized in Eruku outside of the Eruku community. Additionally, current inhabitants of the Eruku village require moral and financial support for ongoing development projects, which remains limited with most current solutions. This sense of loneliness and disconnection from their community is therefore continually observed by the members of the Eruku diaspora.

With the increasing need for a standard and commonly accessible platform for communication among inhabitants of Eruku and its various diasporas worldwide, a highly feasible option is to use software. A worldwide target audience needs direct access to a solution that is centralized and publicly available. Software can enable direct interaction between users and facilitate conversations across its wide audience of people from Eruku. Additionally, software can notify users of local events, disseminate information about Eruku culture and identity, and encourage financial support for ongoing development projects far more effectively than physical, in-person options. Software products are easily maintainable in case of additionally requested features in the future, and are easily transferable if the project needs to be later continued. Software would therefore be the most viable option to solve this issue.

Establishing a greater sense of togetherness between members of the worldwide Eruku village diaspora serves to gradually bring this community back to its ethnic roots. After much generational struggle to rebuild their community and streamline communication, following the events that broke the village down from its thriving origins and the later dispersal of people to various other continents, the goal to fully restore the strong cultural foundation of the Eruku people remains. While many cultures are slowly diminished when spread across smaller worldwide diasporas, the Eruku people have an opportunity to sustain their culture by a central means of software.

References:

Archive. (n.d.). Retrieved October 01, 2020, from <http://erukumesinorthamerica.org/archive/>

The Short History of Eruku. (n.d.). Retrieved September 30, 2020, from <http://erukumesinorthamerica.org/history/>