

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING SKILLS OF ARCHIVISTS IN SELECTED NATIONAL MEMORY INSTITUTIONS OF EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The National Archives are an important part of South African society because they serve as memory institutions. Fulfilling this mandate requires archivists to encourage societal engagement with the archives. This article sought to examine the role of an archivist's knowledge and skills in promoting public archival institutions. Therefore, the perceptions and experiences of the directors of the National Archives, archivists who work at the National Archives and

Executive Board members from the East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) were explored. This was achieved through administering questionnaires to all the directors of the National Archives in the ESARBICA region, and conducting interviews with archivists from this region as well as ESARBICA Executive Board members. The intention was to identify whether archivists from the National Archives in the ESARBICA region thought that they have the relevant skills to conduct public programming initiatives; if public programming was part of the core archival curricula in the region; and furthermore, to determine the availability and awareness of public programming training and education in the region. The study provides an overview of public programming, together with a better understanding of the significance of archivists' skills and knowledge regarding public programming in the mission of encouraging greater use of archives.

Keywords: public programming, access to archives, archives, memory institutions, archivists, archival education, East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives

1. INTRODUCTION

Public programming is described as a function performed by archivists to create an awareness of the archives. Gregor (2001, 1) observes that public programming enables archivists to 'promote the use of archives and educate their sponsors and users in how to use them'. Archives are records of enduring value and, therefore, as reliable sources of information, they can play a key role in day to day decision-making.

Though public archives are memory institutions that offer information services to the public and other interested organisations, very few people utilise these facilities (Kamatula, Mkeni-Saurombe and Mosweu 2013). Ngoepe and Ngulube (2011, 3) argue that 'only a small percentage of the population is aware that archives are open to the public'. Mason (2011) attributes this to the perception of many who think of archives as buildings that store old documents. However, this is not entirely true because archives have an enduring role as these records provide society with information about past events (Ceeney 2008; Mason 2011).

Ceeney (2008, 58) states that, 'the most common role for archives internationally is a combination of record-keeping and access'. However, for some reason, access has been limited to a few researchers and historians with genealogists being labelled as the most favoured clientele. Blais and Enns (1991) argue that extending access to individuals beyond these specialised groups may only happen if archives increase their visibility and accessibility in the societies they serve.

The notion of educating the public about the importance of archives became a contentious issue among archivists in North America during the 1980s and 1990s

(Blais and Enns 1991; Dearstyne 1987; Grabowski 1992). Since then, more and more archivists worldwide have been encouraged to improve public programming (Bradley 2005; Kamatula 2011; Ngoepe and Ngulube 2011; Ngulube 1999; Ngulube and Tafor 2006; Onyancha, Mokwatlo and Mnkeni-Saurombe 2013). For a long time, the main focus of archivists worldwide has been on the acquisition, appraisal, arrangement and description of resources, while raising awareness about the preserved resources was not considered a priority (Blais and Enns 1991; Ericson 1991). Dearstyne (1987), Cook (1991), Grabowski (1992) and Bradley (2005) mention the following as reasons that could have led to the neglect of promoting archives:

- lack of knowledge of users and use (including potential users) and matching them to relevant services;
- archivists being more ‘material centred’ rather than ‘client centred’;
- lack of funding;
- public programming activities or outreach efforts not being prioritised in the strategic plans of the institution;
- non-existent outreach efforts or public programming and lobbying skills that are required to lead such initiatives;
- school and tertiary students not being taught how to use archival resources for research;
- archivists lacking skills on how to make their collections more helpful for non-scholars;
- lack of cooperation between archives and other cultural institutions; and
- invisible archives – no websites for archival institutions or not taking advantage of the opportunities presented by information communication technologies to promote archives.

Noticeably, archivists need to develop programmes and services that may increase the use of the resources they keep (Mason 2011). Information is worthless if it is not accessible and used. In view of this, it is becoming more apparent that public archives need to market their services. Cook (1991) explains that this requires a change in archivists’ mindset and relevant skills that will enable them to study their clientele and devise means of reaching out to them. A lack of skills and training may affect their outreach efforts negatively (Njobvu, Hamooya and Mwila 2012), thereby failing to get more citizens interested in the archives. It is for such reasons that Murambiwa and Ngulube (2011) advise archivists to learn how to evaluate users’ access to and use of archives more meaningfully in order to improve their archival services.

Probably, in line with Murambiwa and Ngulube's (2011) views, the problem does not lie in implementing public programming, but rather with archivists not knowing how to conduct public programming initiatives that specifically target users' needs. Seemingly, the literature highlights the need for more public programming in east and southern Africa (Kamatula et al. 2013; Ngoepe and Ngulube 2011; Njobvu et al. 2012); however, there is limited information on the link between archivists' skills and effective public programming.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Public programming is a function that is of importance to public memory institutions across the world. The scope of this article lies in the public archives of east and southern Africa. Ngulube (1999, 19) points out that the public archives of the East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) offer a range of products and services; however, 'their level of utilisation is low'. As a result of this, Ngulube (1999, 20), along with Blais and Enns (1991), stresses the importance of marketing archival services and products to the people of east and southern Africa. In the same article, Ngulube (1999, 24) reiterates the necessity to understand and develop relevant marketing strategies for public archives in ESARBICA, for without them, these institutions will be deemed worthless. This could affect the posterity of public archives in terms of funding and use.

Public programming could be one of the solutions to this problem. However, effective public programming initiatives require relevant skills and knowledge (Weir 2004). In light of these facts, the current study investigated whether archivists in the ESARBICA region have the relevant skills or opportunities for training and education linked to public programming

Public archives in this region are affiliated to ESARBICA. The 12 active member states of ESARBICA are: Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe (ESARBICA 2011). However, recently Uganda joined the grouping while Rwanda has indicated an interest in doing so as well. Garaba (2010) narrates that ESARBICA originated in Kenya in 1969, and it serves as the regional branch of the International Council on Archives (ICA). Sibanda (2011, 43) further explains that the objectives of ESARBICA are to:

- advance archives through regional cooperation;
- provide a forum for the exchange of professional ideals and expertise;
- carry out the aims and objectives of the ICA; and
- facilitate continuing education through professional attachments, study visits, seminars and workshops.

Archives exist for the people, therefore, archivists must strive to let the people know what is available and alert them to the ease of access to the services and resources. Likewise, Finch (1994, v) explains that the people will only use archives when they understand that ‘archives exist to be used for reasons that affect their lives, property, civic well-being and political influence’.

Low utilisation of archives has been a major concern for ESARBICA (Kamatula et al. 2013; Ngoepe and Ngulube 2011; Ngulube 1999). This was also reflected in the choice of theme for the XXIII Biennial Conference held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe in June 2015, namely: ‘Archives – uses, abuses and underutilisation’.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

McClusland (2007, 18) argues that archives are made and kept to be used. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, archivists for a long period of time have focused on ‘keeping’ records and putting less emphasis on ‘use’ (Blais and Enns 1991; Craig 1991; Ericson 1991; Kamatula 2011; Ngoepe and Ngulube 2011; Ngulube 1999; Njobvu et al. 2012). As much as scholars in certain parts of the ESARBICA region have highlighted the necessity to put measures in place to raise awareness about these records (Kamatula et al. 2013; Kemoni, Wamukoya and Kiplang’at 2003; Ngulube and Tafor 2006), little is known about the archivists’ knowledge and skills of public programming. Moreover, for the purpose of professional advancement, not much is known about whether archivists have access to training on promoting awareness of the archives; nor whether public programming forms part of the core curriculum of archival education in the ESARBICA region.

In an attempt to describe archivists’ knowledge and level of skills about public programming in the ESARBICA region, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. Do archivists from the National Archives of the ESARBICA region have the knowledge and skills to carry out successful public programming activities?
2. In which areas do the archivists think they lack sufficient skills to do public programming?
3. Are there any training programmes for archivists in the ESARBICA region on public programming and outreach efforts?
4. Are the archivists of ESARBICA aware of available training (short term e.g. workshops) on public programming or outreach efforts?
5. Does public programming feature in the core curriculum (e.g. courses) of institutions that offer archival education in the ESARBICA region?

4. RESEARCH METHOD

Babbie (2011, 124) explains that ‘any research design requires researchers to specify as clearly as possible what they want to find out and then determine the best way to do it’. The current study was descriptive and explanatory, implying that it aimed at reporting the archivists’ perspective on their knowledge and skills of public programming and where necessary providing reasons behind their perceptions (Neuman 2014).

Studies that are descriptive in nature have positivist underpinnings (Creswell 2009), therefore the survey approach was adopted. However, as the study intended to give a holistic picture, a variety of data collection methods were triangulated. Zauszniewski (2012, 40) claims that the advantages of applying triangulation in research include ‘providing confirmation of findings, and (obtaining) more comprehensive data, increased validity and an enhanced understanding of studied phenomenon’. Neuman (2014) relates that this can take place either sequentially, in parallel or simultaneously. The quantitative (survey) and qualitative methods (interviews and review of institutional websites) adopted for the study were used sequentially to obtain data that would address the identified research problem. Data analysis of the quantitative data was conducted using Microsoft Excel. The information gathered from the interviews was categorised according to themes that emerged from the discussion.

All 12 consistent ESARBICA members were approached to participate in the study and the directors were requested to complete a self-administered questionnaire. This approach was also used by Garaba (2010) in his study on the management of the records and archives of former liberation movements in east and southern Africa held by national and private archival institutions.

After obtaining written permission from the ESARBICA Executive Board to conduct this research project, the directors of the National Archives who also form the ESARBICA Executive Board were requested to participate in the study at the XXII Biennial ESARBICA Conference held from 3 to 6 June 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. Approaching these individuals at this particular event contributed towards improving the respondents’ response rate. All the directors were in attendance except for the Director of the National Archives of Malawi. The directors from Tanzania, Zanzibar, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, Uganda, Swaziland and Zimbabwe responded, while no responses were received from Botswana, Angola, Malawi and Mozambique. E-mail follow-ups were made after the conference to get responses from these countries, but that did not yield any positive response.

The 12 archivists representing each member state in the ESARBICA region were requested to participate in semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the curricula on the websites of institutions offering archives and records management training in the

ESARBICA region were analysed by means of content analysis to determine whether their curricula included any content relating to raising awareness about archives.

Additionally, three ESARBICA Executive Board members were also interviewed to get the board's perspective on public programming in the region. Two of these participants were the incoming and outgoing ESARBICA Executive Board presidents, while one was a regular member. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants in the study.

Table 1: Summary of the composition of the participants

Member state	Director completed questionnaire	Archivist interviewed	ESARBICA board member interviewed
Zimbabwe	Yes	Yes	Yes
Botswana	No	Yes	No
South Africa	Yes	No	No
Namibia	Yes	Yes	No
Swaziland	Yes	Yes	No
Lesotho	No	No	No
Tanzania	Yes	Yes	No
Zanzibar	Yes	No	No
Kenya	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uganda	Yes	No	No
Zambia	Yes	No	No
Mozambique	No	Yes	Yes
Malawi	No	Yes	No

Notably, participants from all the member countries with the exception of Lesotho participated in the study. Due to the nature of the work of these National Archives in the ESARBICA region, it was assumed that they would provide credible information of value for the study. The focus of the study was on increasing societal engagement with archival institutions; however, users of the archives were not included as participants. This was due to limiting factors, such as logistics and the high costs involved with including users from the 12 east and southern Africa countries. Certain studies that have involved users were done on a much smaller scale, that is, provincial or country wide and not region wide (Ngoepe and Ngulube 2009; Njobvu et al. 2012).

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Nine of the directors of National Archives completed the questionnaire yielding a response rate of 69.2 per cent, which was considered as reasonable (Bryman 2012). Eight (67%) of the 12 archivists approached agreed to be interviewed. Twenty-five higher education institutions (HEIs) were identified through a keyword search online, and from the directors of National Archives who had agreed to list institutions that offered such training. Out of the 25 institutions, only nine of them provided details regarding the courses or modules each qualification in archives and records management entailed. The directors of the National Archives, archivists and ESARBICA Executive Board members were asked a variety of questions to obtain sufficient information to address the research questions. The following themes were used to present the findings and discussion resulting from the study.

5.1. Archivists' skills and knowledge of public programming

The directors of National Archives and archivists were asked whether they thought they have the relevant skills and knowledge to conduct public programming. Five (56%) of the directors were of the opinion that their staff members are adequately equipped with the right skills and knowledge, while four (44%) disagreed. On the other hand, all eight of the archivists who were interviewed were confident that they and their colleagues have sufficient knowledge and skills about public programming. However, these archivists argued that they rarely got the opportunity to conduct such programmes. The reasons given ranged from a lack of facilities and resources to handle huge number of patrons, staff shortages and policies that strictly relegate this duty, to ministerial public relations officers.

ESARBICA Executive Board members were also of the opinion that archivists in the region were aware of what public programming was and what it entailed; sadly, they echoed the archivists' views in that despite having sufficient skills and knowledge, it was not practised effectively in the region. The reason was that in the past decade the main focus in the ESARBICA region has been preservation, conservation and aligning National Archives with records management administration, transparency and accountability. These are valid reasons as most of these actions are performed within the context of administrative and structural reform taking place in most member states. Nevertheless, efforts should also be directed towards encouraging more use or else all of the above actions would have been done in vain.

The knowledge and skills of archivists in public programming contribute immensely to their effectiveness. Therefore, Weir (2004, 74) advises that any archival institution embarking on any outreach initiative should do an audit of staff skills to determine if they have the right expertise to execute such programmes. He refers to skills such as writing press releases and giving presentations as examples. Once these gaps are identified, the archival institution can facilitate training to ensure that

the quality of programmes provided is not compromised. The accounts given by the directors of the National Archives, archivists and the ESARBICA Executive Board members seem to indicate that there have not been enough opportunities to conduct public programming and seriously evaluate the relevancy of their skills and knowledge.

Identifying training gaps is not a new concept; Edwards and Olawande (2001) also conducted a study with the aim of identifying archival training gaps in the United Kingdom. Their findings indicated outreach efforts and how to handle the public image of archives as some of the key areas that required attention. Nesmith (2007, 2) similarly argues the fact that archivists function in a changing environment, which calls for knowledge and relevant skills that may help them adapt or evolve in these changing circumstances. Archivists striving to remain relevant to their societies can therefore not ignore the environments they function in.

5.2. Identifying skill gaps in relation to promoting the awareness of archives

The reviewed literature indicated a variety of activities that relate to raising awareness about the archives (Barret, Canon and O'Hare 2009; Pederson 2008; Weir 2004). The directors of National Archives were therefore provided with a table with these various activities to point out where they felt they lacked certain skills and to what degree. Their responses are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Areas and levels of training required to improve public programmes

Activity	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
Mounting archival exhibitions	3	2	2
Public speaking	2	3	2
Writing promotional material on archives	1	3	4
Developing usable websites	1	4	3
Analysing use of websites	2	5	3
Use of social media to promote archives	1	6	1
Advocacy	1	3	2
Using economic impact assessments to show value of the archives	1	3	1
Fundraising	4	0	2
Public relations	4	2	0
Conducting guided tours	5	1	1
Communicating archives to children	4	3	0

These findings are in line with Nesmith's (2007) argument that archives function in a changing environment. It is evident that most of the directors of the National Archives have seen the need to adapt to changes such as analysing the use of websites and the use of social media brought about by the proliferation of ICTs. Guided tours have been a common feature in most public archives (Pederson 2008); most likely new approaches are required to make this activity more appealing. Children also attracted the directors' attention indicating the need to develop archival patrons at an early age. Cook (1997) argues that children are often forgotten, despite the fact that once they benefit from the service, they will most likely end up being lifetime patrons. Research has also shown that exposure to archival resources helps learners to develop critical thinking skills that are crucial to all spheres of life (Onyancha, Mokwatlo and Mnkeni-Saurombe 2013). Van der Walt (2011, 124) argues that archivists in collaboration with educators and computer specialists can possibly create educational kits that would bring the past to life in an exciting way for children. Van der Walt (2011) also argues that the use of photographs, cartoons, paintings, drawings, recorded interviews, speeches, posters, private letters, government documents and previously published literature based on documents, for example clips of newspaper articles, can help children at school level to develop high order thinking skills.

Worryingly, advocacy and the use of economic impact assessments ranked very low. Brett and Jones (2013) point out that archival organisations function in a difficult economic environment. One way of reassuring continued support or funding is to show evidence to the governing authority of how archival institutions add value to their society. This can be done through economic impact assessments.

Effective and efficient archival services require financial resources and other means of support, but then budget cuts and redirected funding are a reality that archives and other information services are forced to contend with. Wandel (2013), therefore, states that the right influence can help steer such resources in the archives' direction. Brett and Jones (2013) maintain that archival outreach should not be confused with advocacy. According to these researchers, 'archival outreach is a public relations process while advocacy is a political process ... advocacy expounds the value of archival materials and services for communities' (Brett and Jones 2013, 53). Advocacy can lead to the decisions, resources and support required to make public programming happen.

The archivists were given the opportunity in their interviews to indicate areas where they thought they needed training but, as indicated earlier, all of them were of the opinion that they had the necessary skills to conduct public programming.

After relating areas that required attention with regard to training, the study probed the opinion of the directors of the National Archives with regard to the best way to equip their archives' staff with such skills. Figure 1 illustrates their responses.

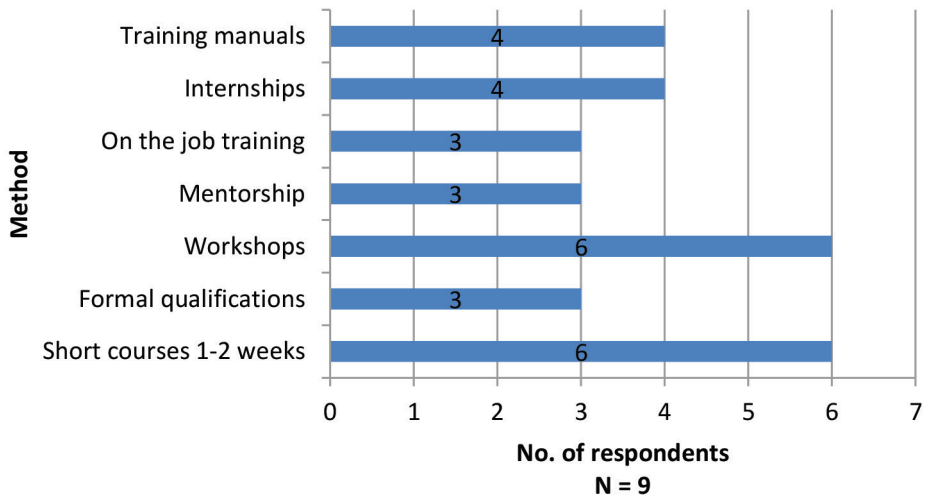


Figure 1: Best methods to equip archivists with public programming skills

As can be seen from Figure 1, six (67%) of the respondents were of the opinion that workshops and short courses were the best way to equip archivists with public programming skills. Seemingly, short courses and training workshops empower people with relevant skills within a short period of time and most likely at a cheaper cost compared to a formal qualification such as a degree or diploma. After determining the preferred methods to acquire public programming skills, the next step in the study was to find out where such training was offered in the ESARBICA region and whether archivists within this region were aware of available training.

5.3. Institutions that offer training in public programming to the National Archives in the ESARBICA region

In an attempt to determine which institutions offered public programming training, the directors of National Archives and the archivists were asked to mention institutions that offered such training or education. Five (56%) of the respondents indicated that such training was provided by universities, while three (33%) indicated colleges and two (22%) mentioned private organisations and in-house training. Basically, local universities as HEIs and research centres have the capacity to offer timely and relevant training that is appropriate for archivists. When asked whether staff were aware of this available training, seven (78%) indicated yes, while two (22%) thought otherwise.

On the other hand, five (63%) of the eight archivists who were interviewed did not know of any available training concerning public programming; two (25%)

indicated that it was taught as a unit within a particular module for a postgraduate qualification; and one stated that his colleagues (newcomers) were mentored by experienced colleagues on issues regarding outreach efforts. Clearly the archivists' opinions contradicted what the directors stated. Perhaps the information from the directors has not filtered down to their staff. Moreover, it would seem that most of the workshops or courses attended by the interviewed archivists did not cover matters relating to public programming.

One of the mandates of ESARBICA is to offer training within the region on matters related to the profession. The ESARBICA Executive Board members were, therefore, asked whether the organisation had offered any workshops or courses on public programming. Their responses highlighted the fact that a number of pre-conference workshops have been offered by different experts on various issues such as preservation, disaster management and others; however, none of these has been based on public programming or outreach efforts.

5.4. Education and training on public programming within the ESARBICA region

Since archival education has been identified as the foundation for the profession (Nesmith 2007; Society of American Archivists 2013), the literature was consulted to determine whether there is a core archival curriculum followed by institutions. The 'core' is described by Kigongo-Bukenya (1993, 359) as 'part of the curriculum that must be taken by all archivists regardless of their specialisation'. In addition to this, the aim was to find out whether public programming is included as a core concept of what every archivist should know. A search on the website of the Society of American Archivists (SAA 2013) indicated that archivists should receive an education that addresses all archival functions. Their proposed core curriculum included: the nature of records and archives; appraisal and acquisition; arrangement and description; reference and access; outreach and advocacy; management and administration; records and information management; digital records and access; and preservation.

The Australian Society of Archivists (2013), which serves as an accreditation body for archival programmes, recommends a similar programme framework to the SAA; however, its framework does not include outreach efforts and advocacy. Michetti (2013) provides an overview of the European archival education framework, which calls for archival education to fulfil three important missions that include: (i) managing archives; (ii) communicating archives; and (iii) running an archival service. To achieve that they argue that archival education should empower professionals to fulfil the following functions: records management, protection, appraisal and disposition, arrangement and description, preservation, appraisal of information

systems and applications, user services, promotion, training and education, research, management and finally administration.

Finding similar information from archival associations in ESARBICA proved problematic. Katuu (2013) argues that seemingly this is an area of research that has been understudied, leading to little or no information on core archival curricula in Africa. Nevertheless, Kigongo-Bukenya (1993, 359) describes how an archival education in Africa should shape archivists to be 'sensitive to users and a strong tradition of service'.

Kemoni, Wamukoya and Kiplang'at (2003) point out that inadequate skill, high turnover of qualified staff and few archival training schools are obstacles to the use of archival holdings. Katuu (2009), however, states that the number of archival education institutions increased in Africa between the 1990s and 2000s. Nonetheless, Katuu (2009) agrees with Kemoni et al. (2003) as well as Mnjama (2005) on that archival training and education needs to adapt to the changing information landscape to improve the competency of archivists.

Though the core archival curricula could not be identified within the ESARBICA region, websites of different institutions offering archives and records management education were visited to analyse their curricula. The intention was to determine whether outreach efforts or public programming, or any other course related to raising awareness about the archives were included. The decision to refer to websites was based on the fact that most HEIs have websites that outline the programmes they offer.

Manzoor et al. (2012, 153) explain that with the proliferation of information technology in society, it is important for any HEI to have a detailed website that is informative for students and other stakeholders. According to these researchers: 'Higher education websites should provide all the information about the courses that would boost a student's career prospects and earning potential ... therefore a website should provide a detailed course catalogue for their students'.

Based on this fact, the researchers were of the opinion that institutional websites would offer sufficient information for the study. An online keyword search and the list of institutions provided by the directors of the National Archives resulted in a list of 25 institutions that offer archives and records management training. However, only nine of these provided detailed information regarding modules or courses offered. These institutions were: Moi University, University of Botswana, Kenyatta University, Uganda Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Makerere University, Mzuzu University, National University of Science and Technology, University of Fort Hare and the University of South Africa. Only one of these institutions had a module on public programming or outreach efforts.

Perhaps other institutions offered outreach as part of other modules as indicated by two of the interviewed archivists. Notably so, the study could not access details of the programmes offered by the remaining 16 institutions; probably they offered

such courses. Nevertheless, the accessible details seem to suggest that outreach and public programming were not clearly outlined as part of the archives and records management curriculum.

Nesmith (2007, 2) explains that archivists function in a dynamic environment, therefore the type of education and training provided for these professionals should empower them to adapt to these changes. He identifies two key features: 'the increase in volume, variety and complexity of institutional and personal documentation ... secondly, greater public awareness of the central and powerful role of records in society'. Consequently, Nesmith (2007, 12) argues: 'Archival education should have archival, historical, conceptual, collegial and research emphases. This will enable archivists to research and tackle changes that happen in the changing archival environment'.

According to Khayundi (2013), the archivists that are needed in sub-Saharan Africa are professionals who are proactive; this will include developing public programming that will make records and archives more visible. Visible archives could encourage more people to interact with and make use of the archives. As mentioned earlier, underutilisation of archives was a matter of concern in this region (ESARBICA 2015). Therefore, more efforts should be directed towards raising an awareness about the archives to boost the use archives. This kind of paradigm shift will require not just the right zeal, but appropriate skills and training too.

On the other hand, Thomassen (2005) argues that there is no archival education institution that is able to teach archivists everything they need to know. Rather, archival education institutions should train archivists to learn things, more than they will need to train them to do things. In line with the views of Nesmith (2007), Thomassen (2005) explains that archivists need to be proactive in identifying problems and proposing solutions. It is this kind of creativity and innovation which will enable National Archives, such as those in the ESARBICA region, to develop contextualised public programming initiatives for their regions.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Seemingly the study findings indicate that public programming expertise is available to a certain extent in the ESARBICA region. According to the directors of the National Archives, areas that required more attention with regard to further training were: the use of social media to promote the archives, and analysing the use of the National Archives' websites. Most of the interviewed archivists (5; 63%) claimed that they were unaware of available training on public programming and where it was offered, while the majority of the directors of National Archives (7; 78%) stated otherwise.

Whereas public programming and advocacy play a pivotal role in archival management, these subject areas do not feature significantly as part of the core archival curricula in many institutions that offer archival education (Freeman 1991;

Kigongo-Bukenya 1993; Nesmith 2007; Tibbo 2006). This was also evident when curricula from nine of the 25 institutions that offer archives and records management education and training were analysed. Furthermore, the ESARBICA Executive Board members also confirmed that public programming has not been a part of the various training programmes facilitated by the organisation.

Though all of the respondents (directors of the National Archives, archivists and ESARBICA Executive Board members) regarded public programming as an important part of archival work, it would seem that the implementation of such programmes is not always a priority. Reasons given for this included staff shortages, lack of space and facilities to host the public, and the absence of events to do so.

Public archives should not be considered as just an option for society, but rather should serve as a significant part of society. Society needs to understand that memory institutions such as the National Archives in the ESARBICA region play an important role in the creation and production of knowledge and not just the acquisition and preservation of records. This will not happen if archivists remain silent and put no effort into raising awareness about the archives and educating the public on how to use and benefit from the records they keep. This is confirmed by Ngoepe and Ngulube (2011, 5):

By promoting the archives, the position of archival institutions in the public domain would be strengthened. As a result, archivists would be less vulnerable when demonstrating the value added by their contribution to society, reviewing their own programmes and budgets, or exploring ideas to improve programmes and services.

There is a need for archival education and training with a strong public ethos to encourage more societal engagement (Eastwood 1997; Katuu 2009, 2013; Kemoni, Wamukoya and Kiplang'at 2003; Khayundi 2013; Mnjama 2005; Wamukoya 2013).

In light of the study findings, it would seem that archivists in this region could benefit from more training programmes related to promoting archives. Such programmes could be organised by ESARBICA or other interested parties. Perhaps, raising this need in forums where the National Archives and institutions that offer archival education and training meet, could lead to more short term public programming training programmes and streamlined outreach courses for diploma and degree qualifications.

Institutions that offer archival education and training in east and southern Africa should strive to develop or review existing programmes to ensure that the archivists they produce are competent and are able to adapt to changes in society. According to Cook (2013), more archival institutions are working towards increased societal engagement with the archives. Qualifications that are offered at these institutions should therefore help archivists to fulfil this demand.

According to the archivists who participated in the study, it is clear that the availability of training opportunities does not guarantee participation. Public programming and outreach training opportunities should be sought for and

communicated widely across any archival institution. Since archives are kept for use, any activity that will help the archives fulfil this mandate should be embraced by the archival institution. The endorsement of these programmes by organisations such as ESARBICA, local archival societies, and others could boost participation too.

Though public programming training and education is important, archivists should also understand that answers to successful public programming do not lie in formal qualifications and training alone (Thomassen 2005); research, creativeness, innovation and the sharing of best practises could also lead to appropriate programmes that will make an impact on society.

Discussions at forums such as conferences, seminars, workshops, webinars, online discussion forums, social networks and others could offer archivists a platform to share ideas, learn, and share best practices. For instance, ESARBICA should be commended for allowing archivists in the region to discuss the challenge of underutilisation of archives at their Biennial Conference that took place in 2015. ESARBICA should therefore continue to foster this discussion via their ESARBICA journal and other online platforms.

Collaboration with private archives, libraries, museums, non-governmental organisations, HEIs and other interested parties could lead to the design and development of relevant training programmes, sharing of expertise, sponsorships to attend programmes, curriculum design and other opportunities that will help archivists in the region enhance their public programming, advocacy and outreach skills.

Archivists should embrace their role to remain relevant in society. For this to happen, archivists must understand what they do and must be able to talk about the role archives play in society. If this does not happen, archivists will only be identified as guardians of the past, yet they play a key role in what happens today and influence the decisions that affect the future of our society.

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