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ACCESS AND USE OF AGRICULTURAL RECORDS AT UGANDA NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS CENTRE

Sylvia Namujuzi & David Luyombya

Makerere University, Uganda

snamujuzi@cis.mak.ac.ug / dluyombya@cis.mak.ac.ug

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Abstract

This paper focused on access and use of agriculture archives at the Uganda National Archives and Records Centre (NARC) in Kampala. The objectives of this study were to identify the agriculture archives at the NARC, establish the number of MAAIF and NARI staff that consult the agriculture archives, assess researcher's opinion on agriculture archives in promoting agriculture research, identify challenges of access and use; and make suggestions for enhancing access and use of agriculture archives at NARC. The study purposively sampled five NARC archivists, seven directors of the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) and 15 heads of departments in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). Data was collected using interviews, observations and document analysis. Data was categorised into themes and the content reported in narrative form. The findings revealed that the NARC had a limited collection of agriculture archives due to the fact that there was no mechanism to collect all agriculture archives from the creating agencies, including MAAIF and NARI. Neither was there a mechanism for promoting access to and use of agriculture archives. The study recommends that the NARC should have a spelt-out budget to carry out documentation, collection and promotion of access and use of agriculture archives.

Key words: archives, agricultural records, access, Uganda National Archives

Introduction

Archives are important sources of information providing traces and touchstones that can be used to construct memories and to produce agricultural histories (Millar, 2006). According to Akotia (2003), archives provide a reliable and authentic knowledge base, which makes it possible for the past to be reconstructed and understood. Millar (2017) argues that archives allow a continuous experience with the past. Without archives, the past activities and decisions would remain largely unknown (Delmas 2001). Delmas (2001) emphasises that the usefulness of archives is realised when they are accessed and used by the targeted researchers. Indeed, Millar (2017) acknowledges that keeping archives is useless if they cannot be accessed and used. Archival institutions strive to ensure that archives are accessible, lest the purpose for which the archives are kept is not achieved (Crockett 2016).

Uganda is an agricultural country where agricultural research is required to boost food production, food security and the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) (WFP 2009). Development in agriculture can be achieved by referring to agriculture archives (Karamagi, 2006). The purpose of this paper was to assess access to, and use of, agriculture archives at the Uganda National Archives and Records Centre (NARC). Agriculture archives refer to records of enduring value deposited with NARC from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal

Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the agricultural research institutes, which are now part of the archives collection at the NARC and are valuable for research purposes (Akita 1979). Blouin and Rosenberg (2014) state that the extent of accessing archives is an indication of users' ease and convenience of access to, and consultation of, available archival records. Use of agriculture archives refers to extent of consultation of agricultural archives.

The agriculture archives have the potential to provide information required to overcome some of the challenges in the agricultural sector and make agriculture attractive and profitable to farmers involved in feeding the world (Epeju 2020). Agriculture archives document decision-making in the areas of choosing plant and animal species, boosting crop yields, drought damage, tracking water, pesticides and improving crop varieties. Consulting agriculture archives provides a basis for understanding the progress of the agricultural sector and shows what worked in the past to inform the future. Of interest is the identification of agriculture archives at the Uganda NARC and how they are used to meet the demands and expectations of the researchers in the agricultural sector. Researchers consulting archives are necessary because the agricultural decisions of the past must be informative when making decisions today regarding issues such as modernisation of agriculture, food security, improved seed breeds and stock materials (AfranaaKwapong & Nkonya 2015).

Agricultural research is required to boost innovation and production, and ultimately enhance sustainable national development. Research gives rise to new technologies that boost yields, drives improved productivity and develops value chains, and, eventually, drives agro-based socio-economic growth (Turyahabwe, Kakuru, Tweheyo & Tumusiime, 2013). The NARC supports agricultural research by collecting agriculture archives and information sharing (Barrett-Gaines & Khadiagala, 2000). However, knowledge of collecting and preserving agriculture archives in the NARC and making it easily accessible is scanty.

Agriculture in Uganda

The agricultural sector has been the most dominant economic sector in Uganda since pre-colonial days. When the British imposed colonial rule on Uganda in 1898, the first visible effort they undertook to modernise the nation was to introduce cash crops, such as cotton and coffee. Since Uganda's independence in 1962 up to now, the agricultural sector has witnessed much transformation, including the introduction of new hybrid crops such as maize, rice, sorghum and bananas (Uganda, 2018).

Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy, employs over 73 per cent of Uganda's population, accounts for 53% of the national export revenue, and contributes 24 per cent of the Growth Domestic Product GDP (GoU 2015). The agricultural sector contributes to wealth creation and employment through agricultural production, agri-business, agro-processing and post-harvest handling. It is also critical to realising Uganda's Vision 2040 (GoU 2013). Vision 2040 recognises agriculture as the major source of livelihood in Uganda and emphasises the need to reinvigorate farming countrywide by supporting farmers, increasing investments in research, technology and market infrastructure and extending knowledge sharing. The Second National Development Plan (NDP11) also recognises the agricultural sector's potential to contribute to increased food security, poverty alleviation and reduced child mortality through better nutrition (GoU 2015).

The government introduced agricultural development programmes, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP 1997-2008), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS 2001), Prosperity for All (PFA 2007) and Operation Wealth Creation (OWC 2015) (Karugonjo & Jones, 2015). The government is also encouraging a gradual shift from rudimentary methods

of agriculture to technological farming techniques to realise zero hunger as stipulated in Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), (UN:2015).

History of agricultural research and its archives

Agricultural research has been ongoing in Uganda since the establishment of the Department of Agriculture in 1898 by the colonial administration (National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) 2017). In 1922, the first experiment station was opened while in 1937, a research division was established in the Department of Agriculture (Tibasaaga & Zawedde, 2018). In 1949, the Cotton Research Corporation was opened. During the period 1950 to 1962, research efforts focused mainly on coffee and cotton to provide raw materials for the industries in Britain and the rest of Europe (Zawedde, Akile, Nakabuye & Sengooba 2012). The period after independence in 1962 ushered in a new wave of agricultural initiatives aimed at staying the tempo of agricultural research for national development (Mukiibi 2001). The late 1990s saw a pivotal change in government policies towards agricultural research and innovations knowledge transfer (Zawedde, Gumisiriza, Tibasaaga, Mugwanya & Muhumuza 2017). The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) (Uganda 2013) and the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) (Uganda 2005) under the umbrella organisation, the National Agricultural Research Organisation, were required to implement the research agenda of the sector (NARO 2017). The seven NARIs are include: (1) the National Agricultural Research Laboratories (NARL), Kawanda; (2) the National Crop Resource Research Institute (NaCRRI), Namulonge; (3) the National Fisheries Resource Research Institute (NaFIRRI), Jinja; (4) the National Forestry Resource Research Institute (NaFORRI), Mukono; (5) the National Livestock Resource Research Institute (NaLIRRI), Tororo; (6) the National Semi-Arid Resource Research Institute (NaSARRI), Serere; and (7) the National Coffee Resource Research Institute (NaCORI), Mukono. The NARIs are mandated to carry out research on crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry, and to ensure that they disseminate the research findings resulting from their activities (Tibasaaga & Zawedde 2018).

Both the MAAIF and the NARIs were established to be responsible for research, knowledge and skills needs of agricultural development and services in the country (Beintema & Tizikara 2002). To emphasize this role, the National Records and Archives Act (GoU 2001) requires MAAIF and NARIs to transfer their agriculture archives to the NARC. The NARC is responsible for managing and ensuring preservation and accessibility of documented agriculture heritage of Uganda and overseeing the national archives. The Act provides comprehensive guidelines for the organisation, maintenance, accessibility and use of Uganda's archives. According to the Act, all public archives with informative, research and educational value from the government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) should be transferred to the Uganda NARC for custody (GoU 2001). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the MAAIF and the NARIs to identify and transfer agriculture archives to the NARC.

Problem statement

Although the Uganda NARC is expected to keep agriculture archives, scanty information was available on the existing agriculture archives; information on who accesses and uses them, and whether there were any challenges to their easy access and effective use. Previous studies on public archives in Uganda (Taylor, Rockenbach & Bond 2014; Luyombya & Sennabulya 2012; Luyombya 2010; McConnell 2005; English 1955) observed that information on access and use of archives in Uganda remains scanty. It was, therefore, necessary to carry out a study on access and use of agriculture archives at the NARC.

Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to assess access and use of agriculture archives at the NARC.

The study objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. to identify the agriculture archives available at the Uganda NARC
2. to establish the number of MAAIF and NARI staff that consult the agriculture archives in the NARC
3. to assess the researcher's opinions on agriculture archives in promoting agriculture research
4. to identify the challenges of access and use of agriculture archives
5. to come out with suggestions for the best practices in promoting access and use of agriculture archives at NARC.

Literature review

Archives are managed by archival institutions. Mnjama (2005) notes that the major goal of archival institutions is to facilitate access to the collections in their care for research purposes. Senturk (2011) and Abioye (2009) affirmed that archives are used mainly for research purposes.

Lack of access to public archives has been repeatedly addressed in literature. Authors such as Arp (2019); Millar (2017); Yusuf (2013); Asogwa and Ezema (2012); Kemoni, Wamukoya and Kiplang'at (2003) note that the factors contributing to access failures included inadequate training of archives staff, shortage of skilled personnel in archives management, lack of funds for collecting archival records from the creating agencies, and missing or misplaced records in public institutions. Mnjama (2006) states that unprocessed archival records are a common occurrence in archival institutions in developing countries, which is a key factor impacting on access and use of archives.

Ngoepe and Keakopa (2011) also observe that national archival institutions in developing countries are not doing enough to raise awareness of their services to the public. Purcell (2019) warns that an archival institution may lose its users if the reference services are insufficient. User education and reader advisory services should be provided regarding the use of archives and archival tools (Reid, 2010). This involves a systematic approach to instructing the researchers on how to consult the collection profitably (Asogwa & Ezema 2012). It requires meeting individual researchers' specific interests. This is because offering reference services is one of the ways through which researchers would be attracted to consult the archival collection (Theimer 2014). The International Council on Archives (ICA) principles on Access to Archives (2012) stress that, through reference services, users get to learn about the institution and its holdings.

Archives are virtually useless to researchers unless comprehensive finding aids, such as registers, guides, inventories and indexes are available or have been developed to lead researchers into the archives (Ravenwood & Zijstra 2017). Finding aids establish physical and intellectual control over the holding of an archival institution and make it possible to retrieve the required archives (Purcell 2019). The more comprehensive the finding aids, the easier researchers will find it to locate the correct records for their research and the less time the archivist will spend on research assistance (Prom 2004). Asogwa (2011) observes that

inadequate finding aids will discourage users as they will need intensive help to use the collection. Kilasi, Maseko and Abankwah (2011) suggest that archival institutions should have staff with both functional and subject-area expertise to develop effective finding aids.

Developing an archives collection policy is the most important problem-solving area that archival institutions should focus on to improve archives access services (Purcell 2019; Millar 2017; Crockett 2016). An archives collection policy will guide the comprehensive development of the collection. It will also set out the detail of what is, or is not, to form the fabric of the archival collection. Decisions about which archives to collect and how to go about collecting them would be simplified when an archives collection policy is in place, leading to enhanced collections (Crockett 2016).

Archives have also been innovated through the use of new media by taking advantage of information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Arp 2019). Various archival institutions use websites so that interested viewers can find what is available in their collection (Taylor et al. 2014). Others use a blog, a place where researchers can post comments on what they see on the website. YouTube is another new forum used where various images from their collections are posted (Senturk 2013).

There are also clear indicators in literature that digitisation solves many problems of scarce resources in archival institutions to promote access to, and use of, the archives. It was suggested that in the event that the manual archives cannot be identified, retrieved or used, or are improperly stored, the digital copies can be consulted (Purcell 2019; Blouin & Rosenberg 2014; Welland 2014). Besides, digital copies can be consulted by many users at the same time (Balogun & Adjei 2019). Otu and Asante (2015) advise that archival institutions should digitise their collections to provide wider access and to protect originals from regular handling. Purcell (2019) observes that digitising archival records is a powerful means of promoting access. However, the questions are: “Does the institution have a sufficient budget and resources to preserve the digital heritage material over the long term?” and “Does the institution have the technical capacity to read, migrate and preserve the digital heritage?” (Ravenwood & Zijstra 2017).

Archivists need to market their services so as to make their collections known to the anticipated users (Kemoni 2002). Yusuf (2013) advises that archival institutions should market their services to both current and potential users. They need to determine their audience by conducting market research, knowing their audience’s needs and how they are going to meet those needs, carrying out activities that meet those needs and assess the success of those activities (Reid 2010).

Keakopa (2010) indicates that archival institutions also have to budget for a variety of outreach programmes and activities, exhibitions, virtual exhibits, tours, television and radio programmes, as part of efforts to promote the use of archives. Archives exhibitions and displays of new additions to the archives collection is a key marketing strategy as it will make researchers aware of archives that have been newly added to the collection (Purcell 2019). The International Council on Archives (2012) suggests events such as an Archives Week, an Archives Month, including posters and booklets on existing archives, as a strategy to reach out to the public regarding the value of archives and how they can and why they should be used.

Research gap

There is a lot of literature on access to, and use of, archives collections but there is limited literature on access and use of agriculture archives in Uganda.

Methodology

A case study design was adopted for the study relying on interviews, observations and document analysis for data collection. A case study is holistic; it exists in a real-life context. Access to, and use of, agriculture archives are a phenomenon that requires detailed description, especially, with regard to archival services offered to users. The study purposively sampled 27 respondents; the seven directors of the NARIs, 15 MAAIF heads of departments and five NARC archivists (the acting Government Archivist, two senior archivists and two archivists). The directors at NARIs and MAAIF HoDs were selected because they comprised key players along the agriculture value chain and were important in influencing agricultural policy. They were responsible for undertaking research in the agricultural sector and expected to be the primary users of agriculture archives. The NARC archivists had the statutory mandate to collect and manage the agriculture archives from the various MDAs and provide access to and enable their use (Uganda 2001).

Qualitative data was collected through the use of structured interviews, observation and document analysis. Raw data was checked for accuracy, completeness and usefulness (Pickard 2013). The responses were checked for legibility using Microsoft Excel to perform descriptive statistics. Tables were used in the data analysis process to show the trends of events. Qualitative data was analysed through aggregating the words or opinions of the respondents into descriptive categories or themes of information and presenting the diversity of ideas gathered during data collection (Creswell 2019).

Findings and discussions

Response rate

Table 1 shows the response rate by category of respondents.

Table 1: Response rate

Title of respondents	Targeted respondents	No. actually involved	Percentage sample size (%)
NARC archivists	05	05	100
NARIs Directors	07	03	43
MAAIF HoDs	15	07	47
Total targeted population	27	15	56

As indicated in table 1, out of the 27 targeted respondents, 15 (56%) showed readiness to participate in the study. The 100 per cent response rate by the NARC archivists shows willingness to participate in the study but a few of the NARI and MAAIF respondents participated in the study.

Agricultural archives available at NARC

The first objective of the study was to identify the agriculture archives available in the NARC repository. Respondents were asked to indicate the types of agriculture archives. Table 3 reveals list of agriculture archives at the NARC.

Table 3: Types of Agriculture Archives at the NARC

Current ref. (A43)	Description	Date range
64	Annual Report – Botanical and Scientific Departments	1907
70	Cash crop– Coffee – Fumigation of infested seeds	1907–1909, 1932–1962
36	Agriculture – Knowledge dissemination to natives	1907, 1932–1960
88	Cash crop – Encouragement of rice growing	Dec. 1907–Jun. 1908
300	Wheat – Types to be grown in Toro district	Sept 1907–Jan. 1908
15B	Cash crops – Various correspondence and papers	
130	Cotton cultivation in Lango	Jan. 1910 –April 1962
688A	Agricultural monthly reports	1913–1928; 1962–63
2326	Cash crop - Sugar mill at Lugazi	May–Jun 1922. 1960–1962
2342	Reports – adaptability of commercial crops; Arabica coffee, rubber, sugarcane, cocoa and cotton	1963-64

Table 3 shows that agriculture archives dating back to 1907 to 1964 were deposited at the NARC. On reviewing the catalogue, the list consisted of reference numbers, file names and descriptions of the content, and the start and end dates in printed Excel spreadsheets. The list proved that there were agriculture archives maintained at the NARC. However, the majority of agriculture archives at the NARC dated before Uganda received their independence in 1962. The presence of agriculture archives at the NARC is also borne out by the works of some scholars (McConnell 2005; Barrett-Gaines & Khadiagala 2000; Akita 1979), who state that agriculture archives were part of the archives collection at the NARC. Besides, observation and document analysis also confirmed the presence of agriculture archives in the NARC collection.

As a follow-up on the types and categories of agriculture archives at the NARC, observations indicated that annual reports and information on cash crops were the most common categories among the agricultural archives. It was also observed that the agriculture archives were arranged by theme and category. For example: Agriculture – cash crops – then type of cash crop such as: coffee, tea, rice, sugarcane, cotton.

During interviews, one of the senior archivists remarked: “We are very much aware of the needs of the users of agriculture archives. We are creating a conducive environment for individual researchers to get the information they are looking for. But we are still battling with a backlog of unprocessed agriculture archives and archives that are still with MAAIF and NARIs.”

The researcher observed that the NARC catalogue was not inclusive, implying that the contents of the NARC’s collections are not fully documented. It was also noted that post-independence agriculture archives did not exist. This implied that the MAAIF and the NARIs had not deposited most post-independence archives with the NARC. When the NARC archivists were asked about which MDAs had so far deposited their agriculture archives, they could not explain which archives had come from the MAAIF or from the NARIs. It was reported by one of the archivist that: “The reorganisation of the pre-independence archives by the former government archivist dropped the creating agency in the catalogue. We cannot

trace the origins of the agriculture archives in the archive.” The reorganisation resulted in the current reference A43 as indicated in table 3.

It was observed that all agriculture archives were in print format. The NARC did not apply ICTs to facilitate access to, and use of, agriculture archives. It did not have agriculture archives on DVDs, audio/video cassettes, website, online databases, online public access catalogues (OPAC) or full-text databases. This concurred with Oweru and Mnjama (2014) who note that although archives have been collected by the national archives in developing countries, there is limited application of ICT in their services.

The MAAIF and NARI respondents were asked to indicate the agriculture archives they consulted in the NARC repository. One of the MAAIF HoDs pointed out that: “Archives are consulted when in need of information on past decisions taken in areas of agribusiness; boosting processing, distribution and breeding of crops; seed supply, marketing and retail sales over years; farm practices and machinery, and application of agrochemicals as well as crop production.”

When the researcher asked the MAAIF and NARI respondents about the adequacy of the agriculture archives collection in the NARC to provide the required information, the responses varied, such as: “When I visit NARC for research on any agriculture aspect, I find the collection inadequate; with only pre-independence collections.” [NARI 1] “Archives of 1907-1963 are provided by the NARC which fail to meet our post-independence needs.” [NARI 2] “To a very large extent, the post-independence agriculture archives are not at NARC.” [MAAIF HoD]

All this implies that the researchers did not find some of the agriculture archives they requested when they visited the NARC. The general feeling among the MAAIF and NARI respondents was that many agriculture archives had not been transferred to the NARC. They were still held in offices in the MAAIF and NARIs. Keakopa (2010) warns that storing of archives in the government departments cannot be considered preservation for the future, because many government departments do not have the capability to locate and retrieve them after a certain period of time.

Number of MAAIF and NARI researchers who consult agriculture archives at the NARC

The second objective of the study was to establish the number of MAAIFs and NARIs that consult agriculture archives in the NARC. The acting government archivist was asked how many MAAIF and NARIs staff sought agricultural archives services in the period July-December 2019 when the study was conducted. The aim of this question was to establish whether agricultural researchers used the agriculture archives. The findings are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Number of MAAIF and NARI researchers who consult the NARC for the period July to December 2019

Period of the year 2019	No. of researchers
July	05
August	02
September	08
October	02
November	04
December	06
Total no. researchers	27

Table 4 reveals that only 27 MAAIF and NARIs researchers registered to use the agriculture archives in six months; ranging between two and eight a month. The NARC visitors' book also proved these statistics.

During interviews, the acting government archivist admitted that: "Not many MAAIF and NARI staff visited and used the agriculture archives in the repository."

One of the archivists suggested that promoting access to and use of the existing agriculture archives was imperative to motivate more researchers to seek the information on past agricultural activities.

NARC services in promoting the use of agriculture archives

The third objective sought the opinions of respondents about NARC services in promoting the use of agriculture archives. The MAAIF and NARIs participants were asked how adequate the NARC services were in promoting the use of agriculture archives (see table 5).

Table 5: NARC services offered to clients consulting agriculture archives (n=10)

Adequacy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very adequate	0	0
Adequate	2	20
Not adequate	5	50
Not sure	3	30
Total	10	100

Table 5 reveals that most of the respondents (5: 50%) pointed out that the NARC services were "not adequate". Only 2 (20%) thought that the promotional services were adequate but 3 (30%) were in doubt. However, none (0%) indicated that the services were very adequate. It was observed that there was a general lack of archives services, and this undermined potential researchers from visiting and accessing the archives. The NARC still had a long way to go to put in place archival services that will promote access to, and use of, agriculture archives.

During interviews, the senior archivist clarified that: "Providing readers' services on how to use the agricultural collection is limited. There are also no ICT services, and this puts off some researchers from visiting the centre." Ngoepe and Keakopa (2011) warn that when insufficient services are provided by a national archive, it will hinder consultation and use of the archives.

Problems militating against full and effective use of agriculture archives at the NARC

The fourth objective of the study focused on challenges that hindered researchers from accessing and using the agriculture archives.

The NARC archivists observed a lack of agriculture archives collection policy. It was noted that there was no written policy to describe and explain the agriculture archives and what MAAIF and NARIs would deposit to the NARC. Worse than this, MAAIF and NARIs had not transferred their agriculture archives to the NARC, but have kept them in their own possession. According to Millar (2017), a collection policy would provide a framework to guide any decision-making in the NARC and thereby encourage consistent planning across archival collections management.

Asked about funding of NARC, a senior archivist reported inadequate funding that had resulted in deficiencies in human resource and archival equipment and supplies. As a result, it proved impossible for NARC to execute its duties. Another senior archivist reported that the insufficient budget resulted in the lack of ICT facilities. He stated that: “NARC lacks ICT equipment and supplies to provide services like online access catalogue and a website, which would show the potential researchers what is available. The retrieval and access systems are also manual and very slow, hindering the provision of equitable access to items within the archives collection.”

Reviewing the Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit’s (BMAU) semi-annual report for the financial year 2019/20 and the Ministry of Public Service’s (MoPS) strategic plan for 2015/16 – 2019/2020 revealed low funding hindering full operation of the NARC. Low funding was raised by the archivists as a key constraint affecting performance of the NARC.

One of the archivists said that if ICT was applied, it would become easier to serve users of the archives more efficiently and effectively when executing the NARC tasks. She stressed that: “These technologies would facilitate the efficient and effective storage of archives in a form that can be easily accessed and used but we don’t have them.”

On converting agriculture archives from paper to electronic format, the NARC archivists indicated that infrastructure was still limited for this role. There was also a lack of facilities for digitising archives. The second archivist observed: “A huge chunk of the agriculture archives collection is in print form, which makes it technically slow to present to the researchers.”

The NARC archivists noted that digitisation would be important in carrying out the NARC’s business functions; it would ensure agriculture archives preservation for future generations.

It was observed that the NARC also lacked adequate mobile shelves and reprographic equipment for maintaining paper-based archives, dust suckers and sprinkles, security systems and the laboratory lacked equipment. All these issues affected the smooth operation of the facility and ability to provide access to and use of the agriculture archives.

The acting government archivist also cited inadequate staffing hindering operations of NARC. He stated that: “The human resource required to serve our clientele is still very thin on the ground. There is only one trained acting Government Archivist, two senior archivists, two archivists out of a total of 34 staff required in the staffing structure of NARC. These are managing huge stocks of unsorted agriculture archives. The limited staff has resulted in work overload, stress and slowed down work productivity at the archive.”

A senior archivist also highlighted the problem of understaffing when they stated that: “Many of our problems crop from the fact that we have limited human resource. The skeleton of five staff have to do the work of 34 staff as per the structure of the NARC.”

The archivist also mentioned the problem of a lack of training in archives management. He pointed out that: “NARC staff need specific training in archives management and to equip them with modern ways of managing agriculture archives for effective service delivery.” NARC archivists also needed training in digitisation of archives; manual systems proved to be time-consuming.

An HoD from the MAAIF suggested that the NARC needed a subject specialist to organise its collection: “There is a lack of qualified personnel to manage the agriculture archives kept. As a result, members of the public often fail to access the archives and others face unnecessary delays in doing so owing to lack of a specialist in agriculture issues.”

A NARI respondent remarked that: “There is no agriculture archives specialist to provide special services to those in need of agriculture archives. Lack of agriculture archives specialists is a challenge.”

A senior archivist indicated that collecting archives from the MDAs is still a problem. He showed concern about ensuring that all agriculture archives are collected and brought to the NARC. He revealed that various government MDAs had kept the agriculture archives past the mandatory time as per the public archives legal framework.

All NARC archivists were aware of the value of getting the MAAIF and NARIs staff engaged and interacting with the agriculture archives collection. However, they were concerned about their agriculture collection being underutilised. The senior archivist said that: “Although our collection is limited, the agriculture archives would be required when making decisions to modernise and boost productivity in the agricultural sector but they are so underused. If the MAAIF and NARIS scientists knew what was here, they’d be in here more to consult these resources. I know they would.”

One of the archivists stated: “Until now, awareness of the importance of public archives has been somewhat slow in Uganda, and the purpose of NARC has also not been sufficiently recognised by the researchers. Besides, marketing of the archives collection is lacking.”

The general feeling among MAAIF and NARIs respondents was that there was limited publicity of what exists at the NARC. It was also observed that marketing strategies and user services were lacking. The NARC had no webpage within the Ministry of Public Service's website, which would be used to post publications and other informational material on agriculture archives. Millar (2017) warns that failure to provide assistance to the researcher in their quest for information from the archives' holdings may discourage current and potential researchers from visiting the archives.

The study clearly revealed that there were limited agriculture archives in the NARC. While national archives are expected to have a wider collection of public archives, the NARC had limited agriculture archives collections dating up to the 1960s. The few collections and the lack of publicity regarding their existence do not promote the use of agriculture archives. This was due to the scarce budget. The NARC is currently funded under the GoU development budget in the Ministry of Public Service, but the limited budget affects NARC operations. This compromises the transversal regulatory role of services provided by a public

archive. This resulted in the NARC not having resources to provide efficient and effective services.

The NARC lacked appropriate institutional structure, and limited training of staff in digital and archival management. There was also a lack of public and political investment in archives management in the country. It was recommended that if problems faced by the NARC were well addressed by both government and other major stakeholders, it would enable the NARC to train and recruit more staff, develop an agriculture archives policy, document the archives collection, embrace ICT and digitise the agriculture archives collection.

Conclusion

Uganda's economy mostly relies on agriculture as its backbone since the pre-colonial period. Agriculture archives would guide researchers on future agriculture management and productivity methods. However, agriculture archives available at the NARC are small and the services provided inadequate. If the NARC budget is increased, all agricultural archives would be collected into the NARC. Services would be improved, and more researchers would be persuaded to use the facility and its collections. There is, therefore, a need for both the NARC and the MDAs to enhance access to, and use of, agriculture archives at the NARC. The management of the NARC has the unequivocal task of making sure that the agriculture archives collection is prioritised. The study recommended the following:

- The Ministry of Public Service should spell out a budget for the NARC. The ministry should coordinate the NARC budget for smooth financial and administrative operations.
- The NARC should develop and implement an agriculture archives collection development policy. The policy will facilitate the timely transfer of agriculture archives from the creating MDAs to the NARC.
- The MAAIF and NARIs staff should adhere to the policy so that all agriculture archives would be regularly identified and submitted to the NARC. The implementation of the policy will enable the NARC to acquire more agriculture archives and address the issues of completeness of the agricultural archives collection.
- The NARC should develop a formal statement about the role and purpose of agriculture archives that is recognised by the agriculture professionals. There is a need for a formal recognition of the role and purpose of agriculture archives by all agriculture professionals in Uganda; MAAIF, NARIs, NARO and all entities involved in agricultural research. A formal statement should be incorporated into key association documents that include a broad definition of agriculture archives, a summary of the role and purpose of agriculture archives in Uganda, and recognition of the value of agriculture archives as an agriculture memory.
- The NARC management should recruit more professional staff to ensure the effective provision of agriculture archives services to researchers.
- The NARC should update and maintain a full documentation of all agriculture archives held at the MAAIF and NARIS. A complete database is a prerequisite for guiding the researchers through agriculture archives in Uganda.
- The list of the existing agriculture archives should be updated and various finding aids devised to help the researchers identify the agriculture archives they are looking for.
- The NARC management should embrace ICT and e-services. These will offer more practical and researcher-friendly approaches when assisting researchers in consulting the agriculture archives.
- The NARC should develop services that market the agriculture archives in their collection through a vigorous public awareness campaign, for example by creating

exhibitions and displays. Both MAAIF and NARI researchers will find out about the agriculture archives deposited at the NARC.

- The Ministry of Public Service should train and continue to update NARC archivists in archives management in order to enhance access to and use of agriculture archives.
- The Ministry of Public Service should also recruit a specialist agriculture archivist to allow researchers to refer to this specialist for agriculture-specific queries. This member of staff will attend specifically to enquiries and provide services to assist researchers seeking information relating to agriculture archives.
- The NARC should digitise its collections and provide electronic access to the agriculture archives. Digitisation has the potential to promote access to, and use of, agriculture archives.

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