

## RE-THINKING AND RE-POSITIONING ARCHIVES: TAKING ARCHIVES TO THE CHILDREN

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### Abstract

*The archival profession is in the process of re-orientation towards a post-custodial identity. One issue that is involved in this re-orientation is the "opening up" of archives to the public and attracting current and potential/new users. South African archives have done much during the past seventeen years to address the barriers to access created by the historical past, and the alienation from archives of most South Africans during the apartheid era. Public programming, or "outreach", however, is still not playing an important enough role in South African archives, especially when it comes to exposing children to archives. The importance of becoming involved in outreach towards children, and in particular, the importance of educational programmes for children is highlighted in this article. Reference is made to possible ways in which this can be addressed.*

**Keywords:** Archives, Children and Archives, Educational Programmes, Public Programming, Outreach

### Introduction

All organisations are from time to time forced to look at their mandates, aims and objectives. This is also true for professions and even if they are not forced to, it is good to voluntarily look at, and if necessary, re-define the foundations of the mandate, the objectives of the professional work, the clientele they strive to serve and professional groups they have partnerships with (Stout 2002:10; Cook 1997: 103).

In South Africa, almost all organisations and professions have been analysing, investigating, rethinking, reformulating and repositioning themselves for the last 15 years and the process is still continuing. The archival profession in the country has also actively been involved in post-apartheid transformation of archives. Some of the results of this repositioning has found its way into the National Archives of South Africa Act and the Promotion of Access to Information Act. In 1998, the University of the Witwatersrand together with the National Archives and other archival institutions conducted a fascinating project called “Refiguring Archives”. As an extension of the project a book was published with the same title (Hamilton *et al.*, 2002).

The website of the National Archives of South Africa refers to the process “of re-thinking of archives to re-position themselves in a search for a new and post-apartheid identity” (About the National Archives ... n. d.). In other words,

This process of reconstruction is taking place within the discourse around re-defining professional identity and functions in relation to users and the creation of records. The archival profession is in a process of re-orientation towards a post-custodial identity. Implicit in this definition of identity is the challenge of opening up the archives to the public and drawing in or creating new users, and of designing the National Archives’ public programming as the condition for an interaction and interface between the public archives and society. In post-apartheid South Africa this has meant that the objectives and content of public programming have to be aligned with societal imperatives (About the National Archives ... n. d.).

If one takes all these “words” as a yardstick, and also the numerous articles published through the years by archivists such as Verne Harris in local and international journals, it may seem as if the South African archival profession has submitted itself to some serious soul-searching. We may believe we are in the forefront because even in a country such as Canada, that is generally seen as a forerunners as far as archivism is concerned, criticism is sometimes levelled at the fact that not enough soul-searching has been done. Stout (2002:10) laments:

I don’t sense any strong impulse to re-imagine ourselves for the future – do we lack imagination; are we too content with the

status quo, or frozen because of the oncoming information technology?

However, the South African archival profession is still very far from that stage where we can sit back and say: we have re-imagined and re-positioned ourselves. There is still much to do – it is an ongoing process. Harris (2000:27) for instance refers to the fact that archives do not do enough to provide ready access to their holdings and be responsive to their users' needs. South African archives have done much during the past fifteen years to address the barriers to access created by our past, and the alienation from archives of most South Africans during the apartheid era. However, more needs to be done. Archivists must become creators of users and have to take the archives to the people (Harris 2000:27).

Petersen (2002:33) concurs in his contribution to *Refiguring archives*:  
 There are many possible ways in which the staid nature and inaccessibility of archives ... could be freed and rendered more dynamic and interactive with a range of communities who do not ordinarily visit the archives.

In this article, the opening up of archives for the general public, and more specifically, for children, will be discussed. This will be done in terms of focussing on one of the functions of archives that often does not receive sufficient attention, namely outreach or public programming.

### **Public programming**

Public programming, or outreach as it is sometimes referred to, refers to that group of activities whereby archival institutions “ensure responsiveness to users, secure user participation and promote the use of archives” (Harris 2000:26). Archives have been doing this for decades but it often still seen by some archivists in terms of exhibits, lectures, slide shows, historical brochures, etc - the type of activities that are often used by archives to demonstrate the use of the records and informing the audience of the variety of what is available in the archives. As Stout (2002: 12) says: “We are simply reaching out to entice them in for the real purpose – to get them doing research” Cook (1990-91: 123) concurs and refers to the aim of public

programming as “making the incredible richness of archival holdings available to more users and to a greater variety of users, in more interesting and effective ways”. However, Cook (1990-91: 123) goes further and also refers to the elevating of the profile of archives and educating the public, or making them aware that archives are essential societal institutions worthy of its support.

In spite of these idealistic views, public programming or outreach is still not perceived to be one of the most important functions in archives. Unlike museums and libraries, visits to archives is not a feature of early life or education and most people do not come in contact with primary records, and for that matter, with archives in general, before university studies, and then also only if they are involved in doing a research degree. Few people know what an archive is, what sort of work goes on there and why the work is important. This lack of knowledge is already reason for outreach or public programming.

One of the reasons for this lack of knowledge, according to Wilson (1990-91: 96) is that archives for too long tended to emphasise the record and to focus their energies on arranging, describing and conserving it. The public service and exhibit functions seemed to be an afterthought. In museums, on the other hand, exhibitions provided crowds of visitors, attention and economic justification that allowed the scholarly and scientific activities of the museums to “flourish quietly behind the scenes”. Wilson (1990-91: 99) pleaded for a broader public knowledge of archives, their role in society and an intrinsic interest of their holdings. According to him archives should learn from museums and develop a range of archival experiences structured to address the interests of different audiences. If not, if the users, current and future, are alienated from or ignored by archives, their relevance will keep declining and budget costs and other administrative penalties may follow (Cook 1990-91:125). In Maryland, USA, the Maryland State Archives developed an outreach programme, “Internship” which allows college and high school students to learn about archives and become interested in historical methods and research. They even have the Governor of Maryland teaching a grade one class on what it means to be a citizen of the state (Mason n. d.)

Ericson (1990-91:114) also refers to the fact that the archival profession has fallen short of the mark in promoting the use of archival materials. According to him outreach is unique among the archival functions in that:

we invariably think about it only in terms of its atomic components: publications, exhibits, lectures and the like. In our minds outreach has become a series of projects, with an identifiable beginning and end.

Instead of short term, individual projects undertaken as time and money permit, it should be an ongoing, long term programme which may consist of components such as workshops, brochures, guides, displays, news releases etc (Ericson 1990-91:115). It should be treated as part of the normal day to day work and not as an added responsibility. Outreach should be balanced and integrated with the other activities in the archives (Ericson 1990-91:114).

Ericson (1990-91:120) further mentions that outreach activities should be built on four important pillars: more should be learnt about the users; it should enhance the image of the archives; promote awareness of the archives and educate people about the archives. What it boils down to is that there should be greater emphasis on the “public face” of archives and that the goal of an archival institution must be to identify its potential users and to match its service to their needs also and not only to the current users (Cook 1990-91:124). It is important that archival work be understood and appreciated by the wider community.

The environment in which archives function has changed. Originally archival services were structured for a predominantly scholarly clientele, to respond to the needs of academic researchers, and other types of users were expected to adapt. Wilson (1990-91: 97) further noted that by continuing to do this and for the comfort of the traditional clients, archives “have erected systemic barriers to limit demand – keeping archives visible but not issuing a genuine invitation to visit them for fear of being overwhelmed”. And yet, the clientele has changed: the academic researchers are only part of the users today. Genealogists, authors, school students, journalists and others have joined them and archives do not often get the credit for this “wider” use. Wilson (1990-91: 95) therefore remarks that archives must devise ways to ensure that they get full credit, in eyes of their

sponsors. One way of doing this is to emulate museums and to provide structured, even entertaining, historical experiences for visitors “...with less staff intensive, exhibitions and publications, guides to using different source materials, and classroom teaching kits” (Wilson 1990-91: 94).

The Talana Museum in Dundee, South Africa, for example organises a series of events for visitors, amongst others the Gandhi Walk on 6 August to commemorate the involvement of Mahatma Gandhi in the area and on 20 October on the anniversary of the Battle of Talana (South African War) a guided walk up Talana Hill in the footsteps of the British troops (Talana Museum n. d).

As it is suggested by the different authors referred to above, archivists will not easily dispute the importance of public programming (perhaps while they are grudgingly thinking: as long as I am not involved). However, there are many concerns and worries. Terry Cook (1990-91) as cited by Cook (1997: 104), for instance, notes that the special knowledge of the archivist (based on scholarly research into history and evolution of records, their creators, their recording media, and their originating information systems) should be conveyed in its full richness, as is appropriate to the needs of varying clients. It should “not be dumped down by public programming initiatives as some kind of fast-food McDonald’s of Heritage Information”. The archival mission should never be less custodial because it has to be promotional (Cook 1997: 104). Archives will never become an economical factor in society, nor a tourist attraction, and he further notes that “we have to remember that we do what we do for a narrow slice of the population” (Stout 2002: 13). Archives should therefore strive for greater support and acknowledgement of its role in society and our culture, we need to democratise our users, but we need to be realistic. The core mission of archives is not to be a venue for people to see something, as tourist or visitor sees an exhibit. For Stout (2002: 12), archives are there to facilitate the world of research: “The more we emphasise displays and attractiveness of specific items in the archive – the less right we have to put “archives” on our door.”, and Wilson (1990-91: 93) stresses that we have to remember that our holdings are unique and not replaceable.

However, archives do not have a choice – they have to reach out. Every honest archivist will have to agree that outreach is often last on the list of priorities, something that may receive attention when all the rest of the work has been done. According to Harris (2000:26) public programming is perhaps the clearest manifestation of archivists having embraced the notion that use is indeed the goal of their endeavours. In South Africa, for instance, public programming is enshrined in the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (1996) where Section 5 sets out the parameters of outreach and public programming: special emphasis has to be placed on activities, strategies and programmes that are designed to open up the archives to, and include, the less privileged and previously marginalised members of our society, and to ensure that these activities make the information contained in the archival holdings known to the public. Ultimately then, public programming strategies should lead members of the public to the realisation that the archives is an invaluable community resource (Public programming 2008). See Appendix 2. To achieve this, archivists will have to create encounters between the archival material and different communities and non-traditional users of archives.

### **Public programming, education and children**

An important non-traditional user group is children. In some cases school groups are included in the outreach programs of archives. The easy option is to invite school groups to exhibitions in the archives and sometimes they are catered for by means of the occasional lecture, slide show or by publishing historical brochures. The purpose is primarily illustrative - demonstrating the use of the records and the work done in the archives. Very few archives, however, see public programming as an important daily activity.

People involved in the archival profession are used to the role of the archivist as a historian and as a records manager, but there is another role for the archivist and that is the archivist as an educator. This role of the archivist generally receives little attention and when it is, it is generally seen as supporting scholarly research. The archivist does not ordinarily perceive the education of the public to be his job (Cook 1997:106). This is, once again, in contrast with museums which make it their priority to reach the public in general and schools

in particular by means of education and extension services. As Freivogel (quoted by Cook 1997:106) mentions, to the museum educator the term museum education means education of the public. To the archivist, archival education means the education of other archivists. This may be a generalisation but it is clear that a mindset shift is necessary. However, there are positive signs. In 2002 a resolution was accepted by the XXXVIth International Council of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA) that all national governments should consider the importance of raising awareness of the function of archives in society among young people as future citizens. National archives, in partnership with ministries responsible for education, were requested to establish education programmes or services for schools (Archivists stress importance ... 2002).

In the South African context, the failure to get involved in education (and this is said in spite of the lack of resources) denies schools (and the educational system in general) of an important resource for improving the quality of teaching, especially in history and social studies (Osborne 1986-7: 17). Osborne also refers to the fact that archivists deny themselves of the possibility of building, and benefiting from the support of a future knowledgeable and sympathetic public. The social and cultural importance of the archivist's role is also at stake. As Bower says "archives are the memory of our species" (cited by Osborne 1986-7: 17). Children are the adult citizens of tomorrow and getting involved with them creates the opportunity that they can appreciate and benefit from the archival evidence and records upon which the sense of individual and national identity and continuity depends.

However, the archivist's educational role is more concrete than creating good citizens who are sympathetically inclined towards the archive. The obvious example is the role that archives can play in supporting the teaching of History at school. Traditionally history at school was all about the memorising of facts, but nowadays an important priority in the teaching of history is the development of the learner's skills: skills of research, investigation and analysis. The attention has shifted to the development of higher-order thinking skills, document analysis and understanding of the historical process rather than the content (Osborne 1986-7: 21).



These are the aspects that are addressed in the Social Sciences (History) Learning Outcomes of the South African Department of Education. The History Learning Outcomes in the *Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9* have to promote the following (Revised National Curriculum ... 2008):

- Learning Outcome 1: Historical Enquiry - The learner will be able to use enquiry skills to investigate the past and present.
- Learning Outcome 2: Historical Knowledge and Understanding - The learner will be able to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding.
- Learning Outcome 3: Historical Interpretation - The learner will be able to interpret aspects of history.

Student-centered education requires that learners in any classroom should be provided with a wide range of resources with different levels of difficulty and type and that the interest of the learners can be matched to promote learning (Cook 1997:107). And on a more mundane level: history and social studies teachers are always looking for ways to make their classes more interesting. Learners are supposed to learn how historians work (Osborne 1986-7: 21). Learner-centred activity-based methods include discovery or inquiry, discussions and student involvement. In other words, the emphasis lies on skills and research, trying to work like historian, the emphasis lies on investigating and analysing of issues. This has led to the view of the history curriculum as a series of problems to be investigated and various problem solving procedures and methods of inquiry to use in this investigation (Osborne 1986-7:21). Educators often struggle to cope with the demands of this changing and sophisticated curriculum. Archives on the other hand are well matched to meet some of the pedagogical demands. They host a range of documentary sources, while there is a lack of primary source material for schools (Cook 1997:108). Teachers lack skills in finding historical documents, while archivists can play a major role in locating, collating and publicising relevant sources. They are not expected (and supposed) to attach pedagogical strategies to the sources, that is the role of the teachers.

In his article, "Archives in the classroom", Ken Osborne (1986-7) discusses different approaches that have been used to bring schools and archives together:

- Teacher-education projects and activities.
- Classroom units of instruction on the work and role of archives.
- Exhibitions and visits.
- Projects involving students in archival research.
- The production of archives-based teaching kits.
- The use of students to identify and collect material of interest to archives.
- The formation of school-based archives.
- The establishment of organisational linkages between teachers and archivists.

The educational involvement of archivists should be seen as a partnership with educationalists. In actual fact, an educational programme has no hope of success if it is not developed by a team of archivists and educationalists. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss each of the above-mentioned activities. The development of an educational kit will serve as one example of what can be done. There are archives that took on the challenge of developing educational kits, and the developing of such a kit can be taken as an example of the cooperation that has to exist between archives and educationalists. The team responsible for developing the kit should ideally consist of an archivist, educational consultant who is well grounded in curriculum design, and preferably someone who is knowledgeable about programming, developing websites, computer games, etc. (Cook 1997:109). It is the task of the archivist to look after matters of accuracy, provenance and interpretation while the educational consultant will apply the pedagogical principals to archival resources and develop research-based assignments that will hold the interest and attention of the children; and the computer or programming specialist will use the materials to create simulation exercises (Cook (1997:109). Cook also refers to the importance of preparation, prior consultation and joint planning. Depending on the success of the cooperation, the end product will most-likely be a teaching educational kit that can be used at different levels and may include 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.

As is the case with libraries and museums, educational programs should naturally extend from and enhance other archival work – research, preservation and collecting. As a result of the ongoing lack of resources, staff and finances, planning is of the utmost importance. It is important that archivists should anticipate commemorable events so that they can prepare for them and not react on the last moment. By planning well in advance the educational and other outreach programmes that are developed can coincide with existing interest and this is of course much easier than to be forced to build interest from nothing. If the programme, or display, or educational kit is scheduled to coincide with an external event such as historically important day, anniversary or community festival, the archives, “can tap into a reservoir of latent interest” (Ericson 1990-91:119).

The opportunities are there, and in the case of South Africa, they were there the last few years - there were many celebrations, exhibitions and publications regarding former President Mandela’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2008; the commemoration of 15 years of democracy in 2009; the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FW de Klerk’s announcements of political changes and Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners’ freedom in 2010. These events could have served as ideal platforms to reach out and introduce children to archives, and with the development of an educational kit, children all over the country could have been reached. South African archivists could have followed the example set by some overseas archivists, namely that material from existing exhibitions developed as part of their mainstream activities are reworked, with additional primary sources into educational programmes (Cook 1997:107).

In addition to the fact that archives can contribute greatly to rendering history less abstract for school children, it will also create a positive image, awareness and appreciation - in other words, doing something about its sometimes low profile. By extending access to the school community (and this does not necessarily mean taking children to the archives - many archivists are allergic to the idea of bringing “noisy, ignorant and uninterested” children near their workplaces – but taking the archives to the children, as the development of educational kits illustrates) has the obvious advantage for archives in that potential users and potential ratepayers and tax payers are educated about the value and potential use of the archives. It helps to create a

knowledgeable and sympathetic public, and in particular, educational community. It will stimulate interest in the activities and holdings of archives and may make it easier for archives to claim financial support.

Funding is of course always problematic, even when carefully budgeting is done well in advance. In some Western countries corporate sponsorships are used for the development of educational programmes, a practice that can be followed in South Africa and other developing countries. Many companies will in the name of social responsibility, like to see their names associated with an educational kit that will be distributed to schools (or another educational project) – especially if it deals with “safe” topics such as the Freedom Struggle or an icon such as Nelson Mandela. One merely has to think of exciting events an archive in Cape Town can develop by combining copies of archival material of Robben Island prisoners and actual visit of school children to Robben Island. The Robben Island Museum Education department is already mandated to “interpret, curate and conserve this tangible and intangible heritage” (Education at RIM n.d.). They do this through well researched programs directed at different audience groups with different learning abilities. A link to the archives cannot be too difficult.

Although the South African National Archives developed an educational kit and the South African History Archives produced a series of booklets for Grade 12 learners and teachers, “SAHA in the Classroom”, in general, until fairly recently, not much has happened in South Africa as far as the producing of coherent or prominent programmes for education – in spite of the importance of this user group for the archives and the very important contribution archives can make to the educational life of the country. The progress made by South African History Archives during the last year or so needs to be mentioned.

The vision of “SAHA in the classroom” is to support history education in South Africa, as well as making the resources of the South African History Archive accessible to the public. Eighteen booklets about different aspects of the South African history are made freely available in PDF-format on the SAHA website (Singer 2010). For more information about the topics, background, vision and goals

covered by the Project see Appendix A. This is still very much “work in progress” as a first 'pilot' educators' workshop with 40 educators of the Gauteng Department of Education took place in October 2009. The educators were generally positive about the impact that the booklets would have and appreciated the resource as a tool to enrich the quality of their class plans (Singer 2010).

SAHA's support to education goes wider than making print sources available. Another of their projects that enable educators to utilise archival material is 'Voices from the past'. Born out of the Sunday Times Heritage Project (STHP), it includes a series of radio documentaries bringing together personal testimonies and historical audio clips from the archive that focus on key figures and moments in the struggle for democracy in South Africa. Copies of the CD have been distributed to schools and other educational organizations in 2008 and 2009. A 'Guide for Educators' has also been developed to help educators to use these documentaries in the classroom to support history education in secondary schools (Singer 2010). Lastly, the 'Meeting History Face-to-Face' Project, which includes a book and accompanying DVD, is seen as a mechanism to introduce oral history methodologies and assist secondary school students and teachers to prepare for the Nkosi Albert Luthuli annual oral history competition. SAHA was by the time of writing this article finalising the content for an educational virtual exhibition on oral history methodology aimed at learners and educators. The exhibition makes reference to SAHA's Department of Education Nkosi Albert Luthuli Young Historians' Collection, which is made up of learners' and educators' portfolios from previous Luthuli Oral History Competitions (Singer 2010).

### **The use of the Internet in reaching out to children**

Archives have been involved with the Internet for a number of years as a way of publishing collections of on-line brochures, photo exhibits and historical information, and especially for providing access to collections through on-line finding aids. In many cases this is done by means of scanned images of archival records, etc., (Stout 2002:14). Mason (n. d.) mentions that archives will win the respect that they deserve if they start with something as simple as the development of a website explaining how the archives work and what kinds of

information sources may be found within the archives. It is however, doubtful whether archives will ever be able to emulate museums which have for a number of years been involved in providing access to their collections by means of virtual museum visits. It will be difficult to duplicate a visit to the archives on the Internet, in spite of sophisticated electronic finding aids. According to Stout (2002:15), the expert system that is between the ears of the archivist will always be necessary, especially in the case of inexperienced users.

The Internet, however, enables teachers and learners to access information and resources that were previously tucked away in archives. Moore (2000:35) mentions that the skills, approaches and attitudes that are taught in history are the vital ones for teaching pupils to use the Internet. An archive can for instance start children material related to aspects in their school curriculum. She claims that no one else teaches them as directly, as systematically and with such attention to progression across the 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> year as history teachers do. The Internet had a positive influence on the accessibility of resources and it changes attitudes about the access to resources because it allows easy publishing. The other side of the coin is that it also makes publishing too easy, and Moore (2000:38) mentions quite rightly that this will challenge future historians. "How do you sort good from bad, which sources are reliable, how do you stop children from downloading pages and pages from the web and CD ROMs without really reading or thinking about it., how do you prevent the young user from getting lost among the masses of sites?" (Moore 2000:38).

Earlier in this article it was mentioned that corporate sponsorships of educational programmes could limit the costs to archives. The same applies as far as the development of educational programmes on the Internet is concerned. The big advantage of such programmes on the Internet is that they can reach a much wider audience. Educational programmes that are printed and distributed remain, as Cook (1997:105) indicated, "strictly local in orientation". Very often schools in the vicinity of the archives are targeted. The Internet breaks the geographic limitations and the benefits of such a programme can be spread much wider. Although just as much work goes into the development of an educational programme that is electronically available than the more traditionally produced ones, making them available will at the end be cheaper because distribution costs will be

saved. It is also easier to broaden the scope and add new additions and sections and whole new programmes on the Internet than in the traditional print format. This will be important to educators who would like to have some consistency build into the archives educational plans before they develop study units based on the archival materials made available through the educational programmes. The traditional educational programmes very often tend to be once-off projects.

## Conclusion

The importance of becoming involved in outreach towards children, and in particular, the importance of educational programmes for children, should not even be a debatable point. Whether it is practical and manageable for all archives to get involved in such activities is another matter, especially if a lack of funding and other resources is taken into account. With a bit of imagination, some creativity and a lot of enthusiasm every archive should be able to develop and/or be involved in at least one project – even if it only targets (initially) a small and localised user group.

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## **Appendix 1: SAHA in the classroom**

This series of booklets was developed for Grade 12 learners and teachers to support the practical implementation of a source-based study of South African history from 1976 - 1994. Many teachers are inadequately trained in using sources to study history in the classroom and there is only a limited range of sources relating to this period in South Africa's history in most current textbooks.

The SAHA in the Classroom booklets are intended to fill this gap by presenting learners with a broad range of primary sources from SAHA collections and encouraging the critical analysis of key aspects of this period of history. Each source booklet focuses on a different phase or topic from this period and provides background information, reproductions of primary sources and accompanying questions following the format prescribed by the Department of Education, thus preparing learners for the source-based National History Examination.

There is a booklet for teachers to accompany each source booklet, with suggested answers to the questions in the related source booklets and advice for educators on how to use the sources in a classroom. The source-based activities are linked to the Learning Outcomes (LO) and Assessment Standards (AS) of the History curriculum. Tips on how to analyse different kinds of sources, how to deal with issues of bias, reliability and usefulness, are included, as well as how to analyse visual materials such as photographs and cartoons. The educator will then be able to pass these skills on to their learners.

The SAHA in the Classroom booklets are used in SAHA workshops with educators on using primary sources in the classroom. PDFs of the booklets are available as free downloads from the website: [http://www.saha.org.za/projects/saha in the classroom.htm](http://www.saha.org.za/projects/saha%20in%20the%20classroom.htm)

Booklets available:

- Introduction to the SAHA in the Classroom series
- The 1983 Constitution
- The United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum
- Formal repression in the 1980s

- Covert repression in the 1980s
- Resistance in the 1980s - civil society
- Resistance in the 1980s - militancy
- Resistance in the 1980s - international pressure
- The move to democracy - negotiations
- The move to democracy - the role of violence

## **Appendix 2: Public programming**

The profound political and social changes in South Africa since the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 have led to our country seeking to overcome its international isolation and becoming integrated into the global community. For the archives community these changes have afforded it the opportunity to re-think archives and to re-position itself in its search for a new and post-apartheid identity. This process of reconstruction is taking place within the ambit of ongoing international archival discourse around re-defining professional identity and functions in relation to users and the creation of records. One of the most powerful theories of re-definition that is moulding South African thinking is the discourse initiated by F Gerald Ham, namely that the archival profession is in a process of re-orientation towards a post-custodial identity. Implicit in this definition of identity is the challenge of opening up the archives to the public and drawing in or creating new users, of designing the National Archives and Records Service' public programming as the condition for an interaction and interface between the public archives and society. In post-apartheid South Africa this has meant that the objectives and content of public programming have to be aligned with societal imperatives.

Against this background public programming calls for active outreach - "taking archives to the people"- as the popular slogan goes. Section 5 of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996) determines the parameters of outreach and public programming: special emphasis has to be placed on activities, strategies and programmes that are designed to open up the archives to, and include, the less privileged and previously marginalised members of our society, and to ensure that these activities make the information contained in the archival holdings known to the public. Ultimately then, public programming strategies should lead members

of the public to the realisation that the archives is an invaluable community resource.

The main activities of public programming are guided visits that target various social groups, exhibitions, publications, open days, public lectures and services to the public which includes an introduction to genealogical research, or advising on establishing a private archives.

An important aspect of public programming is the educational and training functions that are executed by the National Archives and Records Service. Staff are involved in the designing of curricula for Archival Studies, lecturing in this field, providing placements for practical training for students of Archival Studies, providing practical training for archivists and records managers from other African countries as well as providing expertise in the fields of electronic record keeping and advising on legislation pertaining to information technology. The National Archives and Records Service has also designed an archives educational kit which is geared towards senior high school students.

At an international level the National Archives and Records Service has established many ties. The South African State Archives Service (as the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa was called then) was admitted to the International Council on Archives (ICA) in 1991. Special efforts are focussed on nurturing sound professional relationships in the Southern African region, most notably with the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA). In 1992 the State Archives Service was admitted to membership to ESARBICA. The levels of interaction with the international archives' community have led to the National Archives and Records Service hosting international gatherings. It will be hosting the Round Table Conference of the ICA (CITRA) in the year 2003. The new understanding of being part of the international archives community has borne fruit, exemplified by the National Archives and Records Service returning to Namibia records that had been removed from that country by South Africa immediately prior to Namibia gaining its independence. (Source: <http://www.national.archives.gov.za/>)

I want to conclude by giving you an idea of what is being created for children by archives, the Learning Curve site of the National Archives @ <http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk>.

- Local history: identify local structures, sites, events or individuals for which there is sufficient documentation in the archives.
- Design projects to document community life on a continuing basis combining photography, oral history and archival research.
- By developing educational activities for learners an archives serves the community as a regional learning center.
- Primary source research exercise for high school students – preselected and high interest topics, sift through certain records to answer list of questions, information packets with information about certain topics.
- Developments of films, explaining exhibits, do it in fun way – helping children to develop greater understanding – information that can be used in schools not necessary to visit archives.
- Treasure hunts displays – questions, incentive for class visits to look at exhibits.
- Information folders
- Seminars for teachers on how to best teach with primary documents
- Field trips: work with teacher
- Research papers written on based on archives holdings
- Professional storytellers
- Hosting of history teaching seminars and conferences
- School based archives