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# 'ARCHIVES NOT IN THE SHOW': THE CASE FOR THE UGANDA NATIONAL ARCHIVES

David Luyombya

College of Computing and Information Studies, East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University  
*dluyombya@easlis.mak.ac.ug*

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## Abstract

*This article aims at reviewing the services offered by the Uganda National Archives (UNA) so as to provide a strategy to enhance effective archives utilisation in UNA. Questionnaires were issued to 35 users to UNA for the period June – December 2010 and 30 were returned duly filled. More information was obtained from a qualitative enquiry consisting of in-depth interviews with both the staff and the users of UNA. Findings showed that while UNA has a catalogue in place, access to archival materials is a challenge. Lack of comprehensive finding aids and low public awareness of the services provided are factors hindering UNA services. The existing legislation to support archival services is also not fully implemented. Measures such as updating the catalogue, formulation of access policy, full implementation of the Uganda Records and Archives Act 2001, ICT utilisation, appropriate training of UNA staff, and raising awareness of the public in general on the importance of archival services require serious consideration to improve the provision of archival services at UNA.*

## Keywords

Advocacy, archives services, public programming, Uganda National Archives

## Background to the Uganda National Archives

The Uganda National Archives (UNA) is the repository for the Government of Uganda (GoU) official records of national and historical value determined for permanent preservation (Uganda 1998:19). The prime function of UNA is to preserve all public archives and facilitate access to them (Uganda 2001: Section 13(c)). The objective of this article is to identify the users of UNA, the services offered and the challenges faced so as to provide a strategy to enhance effective archives utilisation in UNA.

The management of public archives is under the Ministry of Public Services (MoPS), where UNA is under the Records and Information Management (RIM) Department (Uganda, MoPS: 2009). GoU Archivist heads UNA and is also responsible for the preservation and development of archives services in Uganda.

In 1955, P. T. English pioneered the archives services in Uganda by establishing UNA in Entebbe. He was replaced by Fowley, who served from 1956 – 1957 when the colonial government abolished the post of Archivist. From 1957 – 1962, a Committee was appointed to look into the possibilities of re-establishing the archival services in the country. After Independence in 1962, GoU appointed a temporary officer in the Office of the President to be in charge of UNA. Subsequently, in 1974 an officer from the office of the President was seconded to be fully in charge of UNA. The first Ugandan Archivist was appointed as a GoU Archivist in the same year (Uganda 1991).

The oldest records in UNA date back to 1890 when Uganda became part of the British Protectorate. There are also records relating to the activities of the Legislative Council and National Assembly of Uganda from March 23, 1921 up to October 8, 1962 (Uganda, 1998:32).

The repository holds other records like the 1900 Agreements between the Ugandan kingdoms that existed then and the colonial leaders. The most valuable are the original bilateral agreements between Uganda and other states.

### **Statement of the problem**

Whereas most countries in Africa have had National Records and Archives Acts for a long time as the basis for managing their public archives, the Uganda National Records and Archives Act (UNRAA) is new having been passed by an Act of Parliament in 2001. Prior to 2001, there was no law governing archives administration in Uganda. There was only a single paragraph in the Standing Orders (Chapter 1: R-d7) that recognised the importance to preserve reliable information regarding the history of GoU (Uganda 1998:32).

Besides, previous surveys of records management in Uganda carried out by the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) in 1998 and 1999 revealed a number of problems affecting the state of UNA such as: the lack of clear controls for archives management (Uganda: 1998:4). UNA management was criticised for not playing a proactive role in facilitating public access to the archives.

According to Magara (2009:3), while UNA holds varied unique records they are not effectively utilised by the research community. Magara (2009:4) notes that large amounts of information, which would be of immediate benefit to researchers, are available at UNA but do not reach them. On the other hand, Luyombya (2010: 16) observes that UNA has remained a small GoU department and its relationship with the other government departments is not clearly defined. It is on the basis of these problems that this study was carried out to establish whether the needs of the users of UNA are effectively met. No study has been conducted before on the services offered by UNA, the missing literature is the gap this study is covering.

### **Literature review**

In archival literature, the term archives mostly refers to those records preserved because of their continuing value (Ketelaar 2001:131, Hamilton *et al.*, 2002:7). This does not mean that archives can only be found in an archival institution: it includes also those records that are still with the record-creating organisation and have continuing value. This view encompasses the idea that an archive will always be the result of recordkeeping activities. The notion of 'continuing value' simply means that archives are kept for some reason. The public archive is a place of authority, which endows records with authenticity overtime.

According to Shepherd and Yeo (2004:243) national archives have the statutory responsibility of providing services to the public and the services of national archives are a fundamental part of their identity. They further state that knowing more about the users of archives and catering for their needs is seen as a way of justifying the existence of national archives. The key concept is to provide users with the information that they need (introducing them to the whole collection and ensuring that they use the finding aids and the records). National archives, therefore, are expected to provide an impartial service to users.

Schellenberg (2003:224) describes national archives as institutions used in many ways by many people as authoritative evidence of past government actions and decisions. Schellenberg (2003) further reveals that national archives preserve valuable public records and make them available for use. As such, the archivist is expected to be an expert in the subject content and the structure of collections he/she is responsible for. In this way, the user is heavily dependent on the

archivist (Schellenberg 2003:225).

According to Ellis (1993:273), to facilitate reference and use of archives, a national archive compiles lists, indexes and inventories to enable the researcher to secure access to the records in the archive. Ellis (1993:274) further states that the use of records in the archives involves the archivists not only in helping researchers to identify, select, and read records but also in such activities as providing a suitable environment for research, answering mail and telephone enquiries and providing reprographic services to assist researchers to obtain copies of records. This is why Hedstrom (2002: 22) describes the role of archivists as intermediaries between the past and present and the way they present archives as part of that interface. Her argument is that the area of presentation to users of what is kept relies heavily on the archivist (Hedstrom 2002: 23).

Kurtz (2004:07) observes that before a national archive provides reference services, it must decide on the framework under which those services can operate. This means addressing basic several questions, such as which records are available for research, under which conditions and who may access them. This enhances proper service provision since services are based on comprehensive coverage of the collection.

A critical view of archival services within Europe and America reveals that an explosion of information and communication technology (ICT) use in the last decade has meant that archives are increasingly becoming linked to the Internet environment and researchers are making considerable use of its numerous facilities. The upsurge in ICT utilisation within national archives has come with precision and networking capacity. According to Wright (2007) and Ellen *et al.*, (2004:185-196), this networking technology is benefiting national archives, in that it provides more comprehensive information services to their users, with access no longer limited to physical visits to the archives.

Mckemmish, Reed and Piggot (2005:159) rightly point out that development in ICT has eased the management of information held by national archives institutions worldwide. ICT has made it possible to convert large volumes of information into machine-readable form as electronic databases that hold the key to improve information accessibility with ease and quickness. With regard to ICT provision in archives, electronic documents/ article delivery and electronic storage of records are real issues for better archives services provision. ICT has revolutionised the way archival information is handled and as such a number of national archives are implementing electronic services due to the benefits associated with it. According to Hofman (2005:156) and Hurley (2004), ICT use offers new capabilities for the storage and dissemination of archives. With ICT, access possibilities have moved from a single descriptive approach to multiple-access possibilities.

## **Methodology**

Data was collected for this study using questionnaires, interviews and observation. The mother population of the study could not be ascertained due to lack of authoritative source. The researcher decided to include all visitors to UNA who came specifically for research from June to December 2010. A total of 35 users were identified within this period and questionnaires were administered to them. Out of the 35 users who were given questionnaires, 30 responded giving a response rate of 85%. The only three existing staff members of UNA were included in the study. The study population therefore comprised of 30 users of UNA and three archives staff making a total of 33 respondents. Since 33 was manageable population, it constituted the sample size for this study.

In-depth interviews were also applied to both UNA staff and the users. The interview questions explored such areas as the level of satisfaction with the services, how archives staff served the users and how archives staff assessed the services offered. The interview method was used as a fact-finding technique.

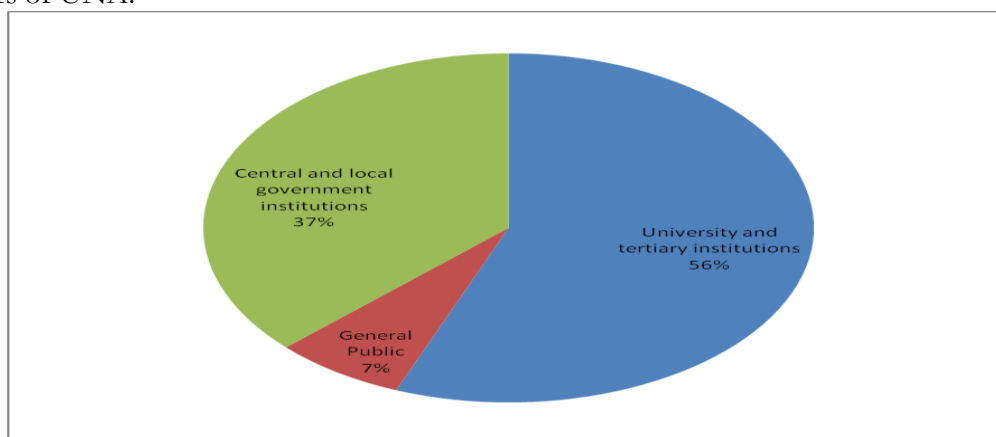
A survey questionnaire was also used to collect data especially from the users of the archives that came from a wider spectrum of background. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts. The first part gathered basic information such as category of researcher and the frequency of visits to UNA for their study and research. The second part was designed to assess archives users' satisfaction by using the five – point Likert scales. The users were asked to express agreement or disagreement on the statements regarding services offered by UNA, and adequacy of UNA collection. The third part had open-ended questions where the respondents had options for comments on the difficulties/ barriers in using the archives and making suggestions for better service provision. An observation was also made on the existing facilities in UNA. Confidentiality and privacy was maintained throughout the study process.

### Discussion of results

The results presented here are from both UNA staff and the users of UNA over the period June – December 2010. UNA staff had 10 years working experience and their opinions are mirrored in their replies. On observation it was noted that the reading room facility is small with a sitting capacity of 16 users. The room has no equipment such as computers and no storage space for users' bags. A photocopier and microfiche reader lay in one of the rooms functioning as a technical/processing room and it was reported that the machine was not working.

#### *Type of users*

The study revealed the category of users of UNA. Information regarding where the users came from was gathered to get a clear picture of the firms and organisations served. Figure 1 illustrates the users of UNA.



**Figure 1:** Users of UNA services

Out of 30 people visiting UNA during the period of this study, 17 (56%) were from university and tertiary institutions but 10 out of the 17 (59%) were coming from institutions outside Uganda. Eleven (37%) were from central and local governments while only 2 (7%) were from the general public indicating that most of the members of the public are not using UNA. This means that most members of the public may not be aware of what is available at UNA. The findings indicate that foreigners or those from outside Uganda make up the majority of the users

of UNA.

Out of the eleven users from the central and local government, 64% identified themselves as Research Assistants who were collecting information on behalf of policy makers in their respective ministries and the 36% were actual policy makers from various government departments, which imply that Research Assistants are the main users from the central and local government.

Frequency of visiting UNA was identified. More than half of the respondents (53%) were using the archives for less than a year. The different users had different expectations from UNA, depending on whether they were intermediate users of the information or the actual end-users. The Research Assistants were occasional users visiting once with specific information needs while the foreigners frequently used the archives for the time they were in the country. The foreigners who were interviewed had been in Uganda for a period ranging between six to nine months. They were visiting UNA for at least three days a week.

Users were randomly selected and interviewed. A total of 10 users participated in the interviews. When the users were asked how they had heard about UNA, those from institutions outside Uganda mentioned that it was from their embassy offices. The largest percentage (67%) of the users from local and government institutions stated that they knew about UNA from colleagues at their respective places of work. A respondent from the general public stated, "*there is a low level of public awareness of the existence of UNA and the services provided.*" One UNA staff mention that, "*UNA is not widely publicised as a central referral point for past government decisions*". This indicates the need to increase publicity of the existence of UNA both internally in Uganda and even overseas. Authors on the topic of raising archives awareness like Keakopa (2007:261) and Thibodeau (2002:176) argue that awareness raising is very critical to the success of any archival activity.

#### *Archives collections*

The study also addressed the adequacy of UNA collections to identify the scope of the holdings. The users were asked to identify their areas of interest or study or what resources they preferred when they visited UNA. This was to get the category of records frequently used. The results indicated that 26 out of 30 (87%) of those who visited the archives (during this study period) chose a combination of sources each time they consulted materials at UNA. One UNA staff member stated, "*users access the archives mainly for land records and information about Uganda as a British colony.*"

It was established that UNA collections consist of some 1,200 boxes of records primarily generated or accumulated from 1890 to the late 1960s. There are also a number of photographs and maps as part of the UNA holdings. One UNA staff reported that, "*no transfer of archives has been done to UNA since the mid 1960's*". Another UNA staff argued, "*no transfers have been made since 1962 and the public archives are lying somewhere outside UNA*". The same staff further stated:

While UNA is expected to have vast and diverse collections, the latest transfers were made in the late 1960s shortly after 1962 when Uganda got independence. The above opinions of the archives staff confirm that most of the records in UNA are those administered by the British in the pre-independence era. No transfer of the archives from the government ministries to UNA has taken place in a number of years.

When asked why transfers of archives were not taking place, it was reported that UNA was full that it cannot take any more records. The staff lamented that UNA was too congested that some

records are kept on the floor. GoU was criticised for not supporting UNA activities. According to staff, UNA was not a priority to GoU since funds are never allocated to facilitate its activities. The lack of a budget for transferring archives grossly affected UNA collection.

*Current finding aids available at UNA*

Views were collected on the type and adequacy of finding aids created by UNA to promote access to its collection. Literature demonstrates that preparation of documentation describing records such as list of holdings, indexes and a catalogue, guides users to the records in custody of national archives (Ellis 1993; Ketelaar (2001); Hofman 2005). The opinions of the users of UNA on the finding aids available varied as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1:** UNA finding aids

Finding aid	No. of users
Lists	No response
Indexes	No response
Catalogue	13
Other	No response

Table 1 reveals that 43% of the users of UNA found or used a catalogue to get what they wanted to read or to access what is available for reading. However, only 2 (15%) of these found the existing access aid useful. This to a large extent has a bearing on how records in the archives can be consulted.

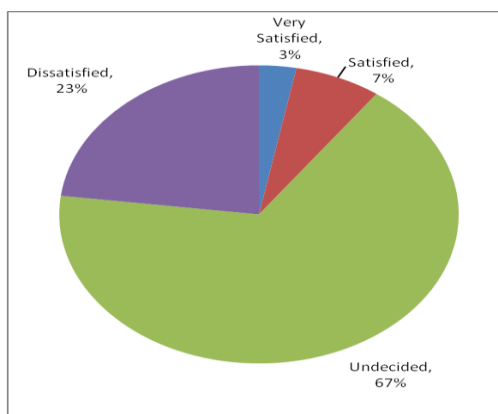
According to some users, the catalogue was not up-to-date. It was difficult to trace the required records, as the catalogue was not sufficient enough to enable easy identification. Foreign users reported absence of a variety of finding aids. The lack of a range of access points in UNA is also demonstrated by the non-responses as indicated in Table 1. One foreign user who had earlier used the archive during research for her PhD on kingdoms in the East African region mentioned that if there was a variety of finding aids at the time of her study, she would have been able to make much deeper inroads into UNA sources. The same user further reported, “it is common to fail to locate information that is actually there”.

This study also established that in some cases researchers are referred to individuals who can undertake research for a fee. This was a situation when users fail to access what they need and are referred to someone who may use other sources to make that information available. Generally, records are hard to access due to lack of a variety of guides to UNA holdings.

*Services offered*

The users were asked whether they are satisfied with the services offered to them. Questions regarding services focused on how UNA staff was making the use of archives possible. This is because archives are not kept merely for their own sake; they are also to be used (Kurtz 2004:226). Focus was on activities involved in providing users with essential information relating to UNA holdings and delivery of records to them.

Figure 2 indicates high numbers in the “undecided” selection, which is shown by 67% of the respondents, while only 3% regarded the services offered by UNA as very satisfactory. Interviews with some of the users revealed that UNA staff has poor public relations.



**Figure 2:** Levels of Satisfaction with service

The users made some general negative comments regarding the service and the quotes in Table 2 reflect the range of responses.

**Table 2:** Responses to the Services offered by UNA

<p><i>“No questioning, listening and negotiation skills”</i></p> <p><i>“Staff simply inundate you with piles of volumes”</i></p> <p><i>“Service would be okay but attitude of manpower”</i></p> <p><i>“Getting a single document takes you a whole day or more”</i></p> <p><i>“Requests are unattended to since items cannot be traced”</i></p> <p><i>“Not possible to contact UNA well in advance of one’s visit”</i></p> <p><i>“Insufficient archival context”</i></p>
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Analysis of the above quotations indicates that the users found the existing services limiting the effective use of records in UNA. All respondents noted that one had to visit UNA physically to request assistance. Telephone enquiries are not available even on UNA web page to facilitate on-line services. The users responded on how they were assisted when they approached UNA with a query and assessment was on a number of issues as indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Quality of services at UNA

Attitudes of staff	No of users	%
Archives staff is polite and friendly	9	30
Archives staff is readily available to provide assistance and respond in a timely manner	4	13
Archives staff is knowledgeable and answers inquiries accurately and clearly	3	10

Table 3 indicates that only 30% of the respondents felt that UNA staff were polite and friendly. More surprisingly, only 13% agreed that the staff members responded to their inquiries in a timely manner. It is also shocking that only very few UNA staff (10%) were knowledgeable of UNA holdings and able to answer queries clearly and timely. The low level of satisfaction was also expressed by suggestions made by the users for changes or improvements in the quality of services offered.

*Staffing at UNA*

The study investigated the availability of human resources in UNA. The aim was to establish whether UNA had enough staff to attend to the needs of its users. The availability of archives human resource in UNA is shown in Table 4. The findings as shown in Table 4 indicate that UNA has only 3 officials designated as archives staff. The figures suggest that UNA is under staffed. Though UNA staff had received formal records and archives training prior to joining UNA as archives officers, most users were concerned by the deficiency in archives skills and



expertise, especially to facilitate access to UNA holdings.

**Table 4:** Archives human resource presence in UNA

Archives human resource	Number of staff	Qualification
Government Archivist	1	MA(Records and Archives)
Principle Archivist	1	BA and Diploma in Records Management
Archivist	1	Bachelor of Library and Information Science
Total	3	

The users who were interviewed were of the view that services were lacking since UNA staff were thin on ground and they did not seem to be properly trained in archival work. The users found UNA staff unknowledgeable about their holdings to be able to direct them to the relevant sources. The users needed “subject specialists” who were not present, which limited the services offered. One UNA staff mentioned that, “*am newly appointed and therefore, not familiar with archives processes.*” Such a person may not serve users effectively.

UNA staff also stated that they needed to gain work experience in processing archives. Among their needs, they cited the metadata required for effective description of archives, their storage and preservation arrangements. This therefore implies that the archives staff did not have adequate training in archives management to ably meet needs of its users. UNA staff need to obtain archives skills in order to be able to efficiently manage and provide services to the users who go to consult records in their jurisdiction.

### *Challenges*

One of the objectives of the study was to assess the challenges faced by UNA in providing archival services. Both the users and UNA staff stated a number of challenges discussed below. All these affected the users in the quest for information from UNA holdings.

- Lack of comprehensive finding aids

A lack of comprehensive Finding Aids continues to be a major concern of the users of UNA. Finding aids introduce the reader to the holdings of an archive (Schellenberg, 2003:195). A user from a Ugandan university stated, “*the catalogue allows to search by subject but lacks an abstract*”. A Research Assistant mentioned that, “*materials are not clearly described*”. He further observed, “*If a card is found, it lacks the context necessary to interpret it.*” All users argued that the catalogue was not logically arranged and itemised for ease of identification of what is in UNA collection. At the same time one staff stated, “*though the catalogue is meant to represent the available items, cards do not exist for all holdings*”. The challenge was that there are limited access points to be used to identify required records.

- Inadequate storage space

The present UNA building does not adequately cater for records accommodation. UNA staff revealed that the present storage space was very small with no space to accommodate any transfers even if they were made. The building management housing UNA also keeps changing. At the time of carrying out this study the building was under the Ministry of Agriculture. It was observed by the staff that UNA has already run out of storage space. There were plans to build a new repository but the project has never been implemented. The challenge was that with no storage space, many public archives are still kept in respective ministries and government departments, which do not possess adequate standards for their safety.

- Delayed full implementation of supportive legislation

It was observed that Uganda did not have an archival legislation up to 2001 and this had an

impact on UNA collection and services. Archives legislation supports the identification, collecting, processing and managing of archives. Renown archives management authors in Africa (Kemoni, Wamukoya & Kiplang'at 2003; Ngulube 2005; Mutiti, 2002) have indicated that without effective legislation, collecting and preserving national archives remains piecemeal and inefficient. Although Uganda promulgated the Records and archives Act in 2001, the legislation has not been fully implemented. For instance, while the Act provides for the establishment of a National Records and Archives Agency (UNRAA) (Uganda, 2001: Part II) to ensure effective management of public archives, this regulatory arrangements has not been implemented, as the UNRAA has not been established. One UNA staff reported, *"the passage of the Uganda National Records and Archives Act 2001 saw official recognition for archives, but transfer of those records of archival value did not follow"*. The challenge was that UNA remains in existence and functions as it did before the Act was passed.

- Lack of Archives Acquisition Policy

UNA staff pointed out that UNA has no policy on acquiring archival records from the creating agencies. This is still so, even after the Uganda Records and Archives Act, 2001 was enacted. UNA has not evolved an effective archives acquisition plan. According to Crush (2008:208), an acquisition policy should guide the efficient development of the archive collection. Lack of collection or acquisition policy indicates that decisions about which records to acquire and how to go about processing and transferring them have not been made. The challenge was to develop a comprehensive acquisition policy for the timely transfer of public archives to UNA.

- Inadequate staffing

UNA is experiencing challenges of staffing. Evidence from the study indicates that there is lack of expertise to effectively provide archival services. Authors such as Katuu (2003:85) and Turner (2003:132) argue that staffing should be a priority in archives institutions for the services to be discharged effectively and efficiently. The three archivists found in UNA could not be blended and distributed across the operational areas. As a result of staffing shortages, effective guidance to UNA collection was difficult.

- Lack of ICT facilities

The lack of ICT facilities was reported as another factor that hampered effective service delivery by UNA. Citing the lack of ICT facilities, one Research Assistant reported that UNA is neither networked nor interconnected with digital systems. A UNA staff member also reported that UNA did not have computers, website and a Local Area Network (LAN). Kemoni, Wamukoya and Kiplang'at (2003:40) recommend ICT use in archives in order to enhance the utilization of information in their custody. A couple of users moaned that in the present ICT age, UNA does not offer online services. There was a challenge to embrace technology at UNA. Users were concerned about the missing ICT facilities such as UNA web page that would allow a more streamlined delivery of records to the current and prospective users.

## Conclusions

This study assessed the services offered by UNA in relation to access, control and usability of the materials. One fundamental conclusion is that the archives were not well managed and hence UNA is not visible as an information-providing centre in Uganda. Responses reflected a high level of dissatisfaction with the existing services. It was noted that UNA lacked in-house archives experts and conducted activities in a rather unprofessional manner. This had implications in respect of the services UNA offered. The provision of services was inadequate as they were few trained professionals with skills and experience needed to address archives services.

Although UNA has been in existence since 1955, the awareness levels of its services remain low within the general public. The low awareness has prevented the users from visiting the repository as many as they would in case of effective publicity.

More significantly, the lack of storage space affects UNA's ability to acquire more records. While UNA staff recognise the role of an archives collection policy in the effective management of archives, no such policy has ever emerged. Poor funding was also a problem. This demonstrates that UNA holdings were weak and patchy since there were no transfers made since the 1960s. Consequently, UNA does not provide access to archives of post-independence Uganda though the last date of transfer was not established.

Comprehensive finding aids did not exist and this affected access to UNA collections and products. Lack of clear sources to guide users to the holdings meant that researching was time-consuming and sometimes frustrating. This could have discouraged UNA users from making frequent visits, as they could not access archival records with ease when they needed them. All too often information needed could not be located quickly or at all – because the single finding aid was poorly organized.

The Uganda National Records and Archives Act 2001 forms part of the overall plan for the development of archives services in Uganda but various actions for which the Act provides have not been implemented. Most significantly no policies and procedures for collecting archives have emerged as specified in (Sections 11, 13 and 18). The legislation is therefore not fully operational but the provision of effective services was seen to be dependent on the full implementation of the Act.

While the increasing pace of ICT utilisation has provided new delivery mechanisms and opportunities for access of archives services in developed countries, UNA staff knew very little about the suitable ICT facilities for managing the archives collection and none claimed knowledge of digital services. The overall utilisation of ICT within UNA was low. All staff desired an electronic environment where archives could be captured and shared electronically.

## **Recommendations**

Without overlooking the invaluable services that can be rendered by UNA, a number of recommendations are given on the basis of the findings of this study as strategies towards improving the services provided.

### *Raising awareness*

UNA should initiate an aggressive campaign to publicise its holdings and services. At times, these documents are not used just because people are not aware that they do exist. Archival staff should also answer courteously and with a spirit of helpfulness all inquiries about their holdings. Open days and seminars for university, tertiary education students and government institutions should be arranged to target different user groups. A series of advertised in-house talks designed to meet the needs and interests of potential researchers should be launched. Such talks should range from using UNA records for beginners to a workshop on indexes and registers.

### *Instituting acquisition policy*

UNA should develop a public archives acquisition policy to address the process by which records are to be obtained from the creating agencies. The policy will set standards for creating

an integrated, coordinated, and well-supported archives acquisition compliance programme. Formulation of the policy will contribute to implementation of the Uganda Records and Archives Act, 2001. The Act requires UNA to arrange the transfer of archives into its custody, which is not yet the case. Regulations are also needed to ensure that this legal provision is not invalidated by non-compliance. UNA should develop a detailed plan for transferring of all archives, thereby, eliminating gaps in coverage.

#### *Finding aids*

UNA should compile comprehensive finding aids to enable researchers to find out what collection exists and to gain access to it. A major initiative is to prepare substantial guides. A variety of finding aids will lead to more ways through which to access the archives. The catalogue should also be updated. Users can be better served, as they are different access points to the holdings. These should be registers, guides, inventories and indexes that establish the physical and intellectual control over the holdings. Unless sufficient varieties of finding aids are in place, it will be difficult to identify and access what is available.

#### *Education and training*

There is an urgent need for archivists who have in-depth knowledge of archives management. There should be a clearly laid out strategy towards human resource capacity building. The transformation in working practices at UNA requires competent staff. UNA should fill the vacant posts in its establishment. Education and training strategies should be given priority to ensure that staff responsible for managing UNA has the requisite knowledge and skills. Staff directly engaged in providing services should receive the appropriate training. All other staff should also be aware of their responsibilities.

#### *Full implementation of the Uganda Records and Archives Act, 2001*

The full implementation of the current Uganda Records and Archives Act to emphasise on building a new repository and offices for the Agency, to establish and implement procedures for the timely disposal of public records and for their transfer, is required as a necessary step to streamline archives services. The goal is to restructure UNA. A new building to re-house the archives should be a priority.

#### *Funding*

GoU should support projects to improve UNA services. Without funding activities to ensure effective acquisition, transfer of archives will not be realised. UNA should also write innovative project proposals to solicit funding from a number of partners both within and outside the country. These could be partnership projects where various bodies sponsor some of the information management activities to ensure effective transfer and utilisation of the national archives.

#### *Integrating ICT*

UNA should embrace ICT facilities in its operations. One area where this would start is in the use of computerised location guides during retrieval and return of archives. With ICT facilities and trained human resource, UNA to design and construct computerised databanks for various subject areas and promote their linkage into network systems locally and abroad for easy and quick access to UNA holdings. To provide as much access as possible to the citizens, UNA

should focus on strengthening the relationship with the public by placing more information online. A World Wide Website should be designed as a strategy to disseminate information about UNA to attract a wide readership. With availability of such a system, UNA would be in better position to effectively manage its records and provide required services.

## Endnotes

1. The International Records Management Trust (IRMT) is a charitable organisation based in the United Kingdom. It assists governments, especially in developing countries to address records and archives management through building reliable systems. IRMT runs consultancies, training courses, hosts seminars and publishes archives management documents. Its activities are designed to spread records and archives professional norms and values and promote records and archives best practices.

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