Issues and prospects of digitizing liberation movements' archives held at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa

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Abstract

The paper gives an empirical assessment of the digitization work done so far to preserve and promote access to information held in the liberation movements' archives housed in the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. In view of the fact that the bulk of the world's 20th century audiovisual heritage is now lost, and much more is slipping beyond recovery the University of Fort Hare embarked on a six month project to digitize liberation archives in order to preserve and promote access. The question arises: What issues have arisen from the liberation movements' archives digitization programme and the way forward? From a practitioner-based inquiry perspective data were collected through observation, questionnaires, interviews and analysis of institutional reports on the progress of the digitization process that commenced in 2011. The major findings were that all the ANC audio material has been successfully digitized through the Multichoice funded digitization project though a lot of work has to be done on creating metadata. Locating the copyright owners before the footage is availed for user consumption is one challenge that has emerged. Access to other liberation movements' audiovisual material remains an Achilles hill due to non-availability of the playback equipment. Reel to reel, audio cassettes, VHS, microfilms cannot be accessed. These challenges make liberation sound archives inaccessible to users. The study concluded that digitization is expensive and time consuming and as such a funder has to be sourced to financially backup the project. The study recommends that donors of the liberation archives should relax their preset conditions in order to improve access of information in the liberation archives. The digitally-born resources at this cultural heritage institution were found to be fragile, vulnerable and in need of constant attention and as such, NAHECS must convince the South African (SA) government that it is a fund worthy mission to protect the South African history and the critically endangered audiovisual heritage whose pace of deterioration is increasingly leading to the extinction of this vital collective memory.

Keywords: digitization, NAHECS, liberation archives, digitally born, audio-visual

Introduction and background to liberation archives

Archives are generally records of enduring value that are kept for posterity because of their historical value. The University of Fort Hare's NAHECS building is home to fine art collection, heritage archives and liberation movements' archives. This genre of archives (liberation archives) are archival materials that were created by liberation movement organisation and solidarity non-governmental and governmental organisations during the South African liberation struggle. The liberation archives collection found in this building include African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA), Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), New Unity Movement (NUM) Sport and liberation Collection. ANC has the largest group of archives. The liberation heritage archives is an assortment of material that was produced in exile by the participants pertaining to the execution of the armed struggle and include manuscripts, bulletins, posters, photographs, tapes, video

recordings documents, interview transcripts (Garaba and Ngulube, 2010). The ANC had offices in various countries and the majority of archival records from all these countries were repatriated.

The liberation audio-visual material media range from optical discs, photographs, tapes, films to obsolete nitrate reel to reel film evidence dating back to many years of liberation struggle (Khayundi, 2010). Of all the political organizations it is the ANC that has the largest collection of the liberation archives at the NAHECS followed by PAC. The ANC recognised the importance of preserving its struggle history/heritage so its archives were gathered from exile and repatriated to South Africa. The ANC had offices in various countries and the archival records from all these countries were repatriated. NAHECS Fort Hare is the official custodian of ANC archives and those at the Mayibuye Centre in the Western Cape are copies of the originals housed by NAHECS. Luthuli House assists with collection development and processing some materials. Once the processing is done they deliver the consignment to Fort Hare for archiving and utilization by researchers

The choice of Fort Hare among other places to house the liberation archives was politically and historically motivated given its origins and rich history. Having been established in 1916, the university nurtured the political lives of former African nationalist leaders that included Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Robert Sobukwe, Prince Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, Reverend Makhenkesi Stofile, Chris Hani, businesswoman Wendy Luhabe, Eastern Cape former Premier Noxolo Kiviet, Livingstone Mqotsi, Z K Mathews, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana, Mokheahle of Lesotho and Professor Lule of Uganda and others. While Mandela noted that the ANC history was interwoven with the University of Fort Hare Mbeki supported and argued that it was "incontestably… the natural home" of the liberation archives. The

majority of the liberation archives at Fort Hare date back to the 1960s and they are paper based materials. Archives pertaining to the formation period of ANC in the 1900s are unavailable and yet researchers want to use them to create documentaries for early ANC leaders/presidents. Unfortunately it is a gap to be filled.

Brief histories of liberation Movements

a) The African National Congress (ANC)

The ANC is the oldest liberation movement in SA that was established to fight the unfair voting rights, racism and all inequalities that the colonisers imposed upon black Africans. It was formed on 8 January 1912 at a Wesylan Church in the Free State province in Bloemfontein and Rev John Langalibalele Dube was its first president (1912-1917) succeeded by Sefako Mapogo Makgatho from 1917-1924. Zaccheus Richard Mahabane served the ANC presidency for two terms between 1924-1927 and 1937-1940. However in between, Josiah Tshangana Gumede was the president from 1927-1930. The others were as follows: Dr Pixley Isaka Seme from 1930-1940, Dr Alfred Bitini Xuma, 1940-1949, Dr. James Sebe Moroka 1949-1952, Chief Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli 1952-1967, Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo 1967-1991, Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela 1991-1997, Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki 1997-2007, and Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma from 2007 to date.

In the Defiance Campaign of 1952 the ANC led the people in which they openly defied unjust laws. In the Freedom Charter of June 1955 the ANC played a leading role in the Congress Alliance that brought together people from diverse groups. The Congress of the People was fighting the non-racial cooperation. Most of the ANC leaders were arrested and imprisoned for creating the Freedom Charter. This Treason Trial (1956-1961) brought resistance leaders together. On 21 March 1960, demonstrators against the pass laws left their passes at home and presented themselves at police stations to

invite arrest. In what became known as the Sharpeville Massacre the police shot and killed 69 demonstrators and wounded 189 in the process. In response to this Nelson Mandela and Albert Luthuli burnt their pass books in public and called for a nation-wide stay-at-home. Through the Unlawful Organisations Act of 1960 both the ANC and the PAC were banned and they went underground. The ANC was now operating from exile in such countries as Swaziland, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Tanzania just to mention a few. In 1961 Mandela suggested the formation of an armed struggle-Umkhonto weSizwe (spear of the nation) and was launched. The MK and ANC leaders including Mandela were then arrested and given life imprisonment in the famous Rivonia Trial of 26 November 1963 to 12 June 1964.

In January 2012 the ANC turned one hundred years and celebrated its first centenary.

b) The New Unity Movement

The NEUM (Non-European Unity Movement), predecessor of the New Unity Movement was formed in 1943. At that time the ACC (All African Convention) made a call on all organisations of the oppressed to unite against dispossession of their land and the further denial of political rights. The ANC and SAIC (South African Indian Congress) were among the organisations invited, but they did not see their way clear to joining NEUM, mainly because the ANC could not accept the policy of non-collaboration and the SAIC did not see the demand for the full franchise as more important that the trading rights of a few merchants. The NEUM was the first political organisation in South Africa to apply the policy of non-collaboration and the boycott as political weapon. It was also the first organisation to prosecute the struggle on the basis of a definite programme of minimum demands (the 10-Point Programme).

From 1960 to 1985 the NEUM did not function as a public organisation, but its policy, programme and traditions were continued by various organisations in various ways. In 1985 the New Unity Movement (NUM), successor to NEUM, was constituted as part of the Broad Laboratory Movement.

Digitization

To Jimerson (2003) archival records derive reliability and authenticity as evidence and can convey emotional and intellectual links to people and events of previous eras. From the liberation archives collection in the NAHECS paper based and image records account for a large portion of the liberation movements' archival memory. Since they are vital documents of intangible heritage and giving a history of the liberation struggle that culminated in the democracies and independence these records are of immense value to the South African people, political parties, local and international researchers, legal researchers, local history buffs, politicians, journalists and reporters, academic scholars, high school and college students and many more. The value of these liberation archives differs between the different communities of users and as such what may be useful to a politician may not be useful to a legal researcher. The University of Fort Hare NAHECS as a custodian of the liberation archives is struggling to provide access to the documents generated during the struggle for independence in SA especially the sound and image collections which are in both analogue and digital formats. Garaba (2012) seem to suggest that archival institutions, such as Fort Hare, that house liberation papers strive to maintain visibility on the internet by digitising their liberation material. The paper-based records have deteriorated due to poor quality of media used and also due to poor housekeeping and storage while the sound records are posing serious access challenges. The preservation of sound and image materials is complex and requires highly trained staff to provide technical guidance and skills. The

infrastructure should be readily available for the digitization project to succeed. There is growing influence of digital technology in the management of historical records and archives (Garaba and Ngulube, 2010). Digitization promotes wider access of archives let alone the liberation archives which are in demand by historical researchers. Layton (2013) avers that digitization serve a dual purpose of preservation of heritage under threat and provision of universal access to resources that are currently largely inaccessible. However, some researchers view digitization as a form of heritage theft and making it more accessible to foreigners than local citizens (Breckenridge, 2014). Studies indicate that many institutions lack required expertise for digitization exercises to take place.

Digitization has now become the approach to copying audio-visual material to ensure long term preservation and access to selected archival materials (Mnjama, 2011; Pymm, 2006; Edmondson, 2004). Besides being a way of preserving archival material digitization promotes access to archives. Millar (2010) defines digitization as the transfer of analogue or manually created items such as documents or photographs into digital form for electronic access and use. Digitization is a preservation strategy that protects a document or image from constant handling and as such it reduces wear and tear of original documents thus extending the life of such archival material. The born-digital archives are however, the most vulnerable items than those created as a result of digitising analogue materials because if they are lost there is no original to return to (Williams, 2006). By making a document available electronically digitization allows remote access by users and promotes outreach raising awareness of the existence of an institution's holdings (Millar, 2010). However, some critics of digitization view it as another form of intellectual imperialism thus sustaining established imperial structures of knowledge and power (Breckenridge, 2014; Garaba, 2012). The

other concerns are associated with what is regarded as politicization that has been synonymous with the process, especially on issues to do with access and copyright restrictions (Garaba and Ngulube, 2010). Some of the issues are of ethical nature and these include use of English on the web, displacing orality, promotion of US culture (Peters and Pickover, 2002).

Metadata

Metadata also known as data about data is defined as data about the object that describes its context, content and structure (Millar, 2010). Millar goes further to say metadata identifies an electronic textual record as textual, not graphic, and identifies the structure and content of an electronic visual image such as a photograph. Metadata allows archivists or other information professional to manage, control, understand and preserve other information sources. Different types of digital representations have different values to the end users managers and managers where digital documents are concerned. Williams (2006) identifies six types of metadata namely; administrative, descriptive, structural, technical, use and preservation. Regarding descriptive metadata Dunlop and Hart (2005) are of the view that scanning assistants should be hired on the basis of excellent attention to detail and language skills rather than on perceived technical ability and familiarity with software. Metadata are valuable in understanding and verifying the reliability of records and supports processes of validating the authenticity of the record (Ross, 2006). NAHECS has digital finding aids for all the collections but have not been accessible because the centre is in the stage of designing its website where they will be loaded. However, all the ANC digital finding aids are available in ANC archives website, www.ancarchives.org.za.

Digitization projects

As observed by Breckenridge (2014) Digital Imaging South Africa (DISA) had conducted digitisation activities of struggle papers in South Africa from 1997 but in 2002 the project was in ruins, its relationship with its primary funder wrecked, the staff dispersed and its technical capacity decaying. Breckenridge (2014) has noted that there are some important digitising projects currently under way in South Africa. The essence of digitization projects is to preserve and provide access to archival material in the cultural heritage institutions such as that at the University of Fort Hare NAHECS building. Millar (2010) is of the view that any digitization programme must be planned so that it is efficient, cost effective and sustainable. She goes further to say archivists must thoughtfully and deliberately select items for digitization and present them to the public. Celebration of the centenary of the existence of the ANC is one other factor that informed selection of materials to be digitised at the NAHECS. Carrying out a digitization project requires clarification of the nature and scope of the digitization exercise first. This is necessary in order to balance the initiative against the institution's core mandate. Millar (2010) suggests that digitization programme should be based on a long-term vision and not on immediate pressures.

Digitization of archives is not without its challenges. Through digitization archives can be damaged and the information gets lost. Besides, an archival image for instance can only be scanned once so archivists must ensure the longevity of digital information by reformatting or converting digital products every three to five years to ensure their continued preservation (Millar, 2010). The digitized copies and originals (sound recording, photographs, documents original records etc) need to be preserved and protected from harm.

The digitization process must ensure technical quality of material being digitized in order to capture the integrity of the originals. This can be achieved through following the required digitization standards and guidelines. In order to address issues of authenticity and copyright the archivist need not edit the digitized image in order to improve its quality or usability (Millar, 2010). The archivist also needs to let the public know which archives can be accessed virtually and why certain archives were not digitized since some archives may be restricted (Millar 2010). In the case of the NAHECS liberation archives high value content was prioritised in the selection of materials to be digitised. Institutional priorities and resources also determine which archives can be digitized. In spite of all the complexities and the costs involved, digitization of existing audio and video tapes collections has become a necessity to make the information stored accessible (Pymm, 2006). Some of those materials assisted in the formulation of the ANC archives website.

Digitization procedure

While there are a couple of digitization procedures or strategies that are commonly used this paper will discuss emulation, migration, refreshing and technology preservation approaches. Reed (2006) noted that emulation involves preserving the original digital object in the software and technical environment in which it was created, and, when required, a program is written or invoked in the current operating environment which emulates, or imitates, the operation, functionality and look of the original object. However, it is expensive and the originals do not perform well.

The other digitization strategy is refreshing. Refreshing is when data is copied to a new carrier of the same type, thus digital information is carried from one long term storage medium to another of the same type. The appearance of the content remains the same (Williams, 2006).

Migration on the other hand is designed to achieve the periodic transfer of digital materials from one hardware/software configuration to another or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation (Smith, 2007). According to Reed (2006) migration copies and upgrades the digital resource into formats which can be read in the new versions of software or into software that will operate in new environments. The major challenge with migration is that data and functionalities may be lost over the generational changes of software. Migration therefore requires a continual attention and monitoring of formats and versions of software (Reed, 2006). NAHECS settled on the migration strategy to digitise the liberation movements' archives. The task of managing the digital archive is outsourced to Africa Media Online.

Technology preservation involves preserving the original technical environment that ran the system, such as the operating system hardware and the original application software (Williams, 2006). Williams further argue that the major disadvantage is that for an on-going solution keeping all the necessary dated equipment to do this may be expensive and unrealistic. In Layton's (2013) view information technologies are evolving in such a way that many of the electronic and digital records of 10 to 100 years ago are inaccessible, thus presenting a problem that demands urgent attention in the recovery of older data and other recordings.

Why digitize liberation archives

The aim is to promote access and provide proper/better preservation strategy of these fast deteriorating important records. In 2012 the ANC was commemorating centenary (100 years) in existence. The history of the organization is in its archives that are at Fort Hare. To reach a wider audience in educating people about the operations of this huge political party and their ideology there was need to migrate information into

easily accessible format. Minter (2009) has observed that there has been a number of projects dedicated to preserving elements of South Africa's liberation history and making them available to scholars, students, and the wider public. At the University of Fort Hare the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) have been consulting the ANC liberation archives a factor that indicated that the liberation struggle ideology was appealing to the youth. The ANC realised that the majority of the SA youthful age use modern technology to access and disseminate information so it was recognised that it was noble and wise to use the language and format that they are used to hence the digitization project. Breckenridge (2014) rightly pointed out that the introduction of smartphones and cost-effective data packages tailored to the southern African market has seen a significant growth in internet usage amongst the population and digitization has coincided with increased internet usage by the young people in South Africa. Preservation of original formats could be achievable if surrogates are used. In a workshop report on the documentation of liberation struggles in Southern Africa, Svard (2009) reported that Carin Norberg welcomed the participants by reminding them of the need to preserve archives because of their importance in promoting social memory, harmony and providing the people with a sense of national identity.

Research problem

The bulk of the world's 20th century audiovisual heritage is now lost, and much more is slipping beyond recovery, therefore there is need to digitize audio-visual material that is deemed archival for posterity. There is need to retrieve digital files in older media and formats or the conversion of physical, electronic or magnetic recordings in to a modern digital form (Layton, 2013). Operations of liberation movements were kept underground for security reasons and that seemed almost impossible to create and

disseminate information in written form. The move to exile of some of these liberation movements and establishing offices all over the world meant that they could create records without fear of being persecuted. This resulted in the accumulation of records that were later repatriated to South Africa as their archives. Little is known about the liberation heritage archives and yet the Liberation movements generated a lot of records during the protracted struggle. The total number of boxes housed at NAHECS is 5991. Out of these, 5499 boxes are from the liberation archive while 492 boxes are from the heritage archive. The ANC liberation archives are accommodated in 5050 boxes. While the majority of the records are paper-based sound archives, photographs and audiovisual archives form part of the collection and are in danger of slipping. Part of the ANC liberation archives has been digitized. The question then arise: What issues and lessons have arisen from the liberation movements' archives digitization programme at the University of Fort Hare (UFH)? Specifically the study sought to address the following objectives:

a) To determine the progress of the liberation archives digitization project and the materials digitized so far
b) To establish the source of funding the digitization project
c) To find out the state of archival material and the storage conditions
d) To establish the issues that have arisen pertaining to this digitization project embarked upon at the University of Fort Hare
e) Determine the way forward for liberation archives

Research methodology

From a practitioner-based inquiry perspective data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, observations and analysis of institutional reports on the progress of the digitization process that

commenced in 2011.The most important thing about this method is that it is self-reflective and critical. Participants in this study included the Director of NAHECS, three archives practitioners (Assistant Archivist, Archivist, and Senior Archivist), and seven Africa Media Online digitisers. The director and three archivists participated in this research. These participants' experience in managing the liberation archives spanned some years back. While the two Archivists had been with the ANC archives for 7 years the Senior Archivist managed them for 21 years. The respondents' characteristics give credit to the value of information that they gave to the researchers.The methodology was chosen because all participants were actively involved in the project so would provide reliable information.

The researchers observed that there were no alterations made on the migrated materials so the integrity of the original materials was maintained. Using a qualitative research design (practitioner-based inquiry) data were collected through observation and analysis of institutional reports by the two researchers. Eleven (11) participants completed questionnaires while two interviews were held with the Senior Archivist and the Director on the progress of the digitization process that commenced in 2011. The following section presents the findings thematically:

Findings

The progress of the liberation archives digitization project and the materials digitized so far

Data gathered through interviews and questionnaires revealed that all audio/sound recordings materials were digitized off site by International Library of African Music (ILAM) in Rhodes University, Grahamstown. Africa Media online developed a software that was used and were contracted to digitize paper-based materials and photographs including slides

and negatives. DOXA digitized VHS videos. Creative Spark developed the ANC archives website. Africa media online is responsible for managing the digital archive. Although the project managed to digitize all audio materials, there was a shortcoming with regard to metadata creation. Time will have to be dedicated to continue with metadata creation.

A complete collection of the Oliver Tambo archive papers, all the Mandela photographs as well as the London Mission photographs, the ANC video and audio (oral History) collections have been digitized. The digitized material can be accessed from www.ancarchives.org.za. Interviews and reports revealed that much work is to be done in creating metadata for the liberation papers digitised so far. This confirms what Dunlop and Hart (2005) rightly pointed that inaccurate metadata can throw the whole project off target resulting in wastage of valuable time. The study further revealed that a large quantity of ANC archives in other formats is yet to be digitised. It can be revealed that it is only 10% of the ANC archive that has been digitized. In contrast Layton (2013) argues that digital repositories should not be based upon a single type of heritage resource, but should rather enable the storage of all types.

Funding the digitization project

Interview data and study of institutional reports indicated that Multichoice was the sole funder for the African National Congress (ANC) digitization project at the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre. This confirms studies done elsewhere that digitization initiatives especially in Africa are donor driven who in any case have their own interests (Garaba and Ngulube, 2010). The project to digitise the legacy content of the ANC was an ANC initiative. They approached locally based South Africa Multichoice to assist with funding and Multichoice, as part of corporate social responsibility, agreed to assist the ANC to achieve its objectives with money to the tune of ten million rand (R 10 000 000.00). Three companies and

NAHECS steered the project. Africa Media Online (publishing specialist) digitised paper-based materials, slides and negatives while International Library of African Music was sub-contracted to conduct digitisation of audio material while Doxa Productions digitised the rest of the audio-visual materials. NAHECS, as the custodian of the archives, assisted with selection of materials to be digitised.

The storage conditions of the liberation archives

A number of archival institutions utilise inadequate structures in housing their collections. Such buildings are inadequate, adapted and may be rented accommodation (Murambiwa, et al 2012,: Dewah and Mnjama, 2013).The researchers observed that NAHECS is a purpose-built archives building that has the required environmental conditions for the storage of archival material. This is in compliance of Section.8.3.3 of ISO 15489 which requires that records should be kept in appropriate storage environment and storage media, physical protective materials, handling procedures and storage systems among other conditions. The researchers observed that NAHECS building has a well maintained HVAC system in place. The housekeeping, light, temperature and humidity are monitored to preserve the archives. Buildings provide the first line of defence to archives in view of climatic and weather threats.

Before the digitization project resumed, NAHECS staff only preserved the audio visual materials to prevent them from being damaged without knowing the content inside. In most cases they relied on the cover on the covers or enclosures to make assumptions about the content which is misleading. The digitization project assisted in content appraisal of the audio-visual material. The team had to go through all the material to verify content relevance. Duplicate tapes were appraised and the tape with the best footage would be digitized. Due to time constraints other audio

materials like gramophone records were not digitized.

Issues that have arisen pertaining to this digitization project

Minter (2009) has rightly observed that the project to digitise South African history has faced significant obstacle and the digitization of ANC archives has had its own share of problems. Institutional reports and as confirmed by the interviews revealed that the challenge of accessing ANC audio-visual archives has been partly addressed. Since this six month Multichoice funded digitization project was restricted to the ANC liberation papers only it became clear to researchers that accessing other liberation movements' archives remains a serious challenge. Interviews revealed that reel to reel, audio cassettes, VHS, microfilms cannot be accessed. There is no playback equipment to make access possible. Because of these challenges the other liberation movements' audio-visual materials are useless and inaccessible as of now.

Data from the institutional report, questionnaires and interviews revealed that during this project there was a challenge in locating copyright owners for the audio visual materials. Garaba and Ngulube (2010) are of the view that overcoming the subversion of copyright regulations remains one of the greatest challenges for information professionals. It is necessary for this task to be done before the information/ footage is made accessible for public consumption. Physical ownership does not automatically mean that an institution owns the rights to reproduce it.

Interviews and the director's report indicated that digitization is expensive and time consuming. With reference to scanning, Breckenridge (2014) reveals that it is an exercise that takes place at a glacial pace while Layton (2013) insinuates that a digitisation strategy should ideally look 10 to 20 years into the future.

The way forward for liberation archives digitization

Interviews revealed that NAHECS and the other stakeholders involved in the project are planning to embark on the second stage of digitising liberation archives. This stage intends to digitize everything (every collection) left out on the first phase thus the remaining ANC and other movements' liberation archives that were left out in the first stage. This would increase visibility and accessibility of liberation archives through the university (UFH) website. The young generation is regarded as the 'net generation' and 'digital natives' implying that their lives are driven and dependent on various technologies (Tapscott 2009; Prensky 2001 cited in Vesisenaho et al. 2010). The available budget will inform the amount of content that will be selected for the digitisation process to continue. Lack of funding for the whole digitization project is what Breckenridge (2014) referred to by saying that even the universities have ad hoc plans for the ongoing preservation of digital materials. Therefore it is an on-going project to ensure that this rich history of research value and materials is brought to the people. Digitisation projects heavily rely on donor funds (Garaba, 2012) and as such another funder may chip in to financially back up the noble project. Other liberation movements (BCMA/AZAPO, NUM and PAC) may take the initiative to look for funds to enable the digitization of their archival material so that they can be preserved and accessed widely. However, Garaba and Ngulube (2010) suggest that government must devise national policies on digitization of the heritage sector in order to regulate the expropriation of cultural property. Breckenridge (2014) thinks that weaknesses of policy, funding, administrative capacity and the collapse of a single important project influence the crisis of digitization of archival records.

Conclusion

The study aimed at assessing the digitization work done so far to preserve and promote access to information held in the liberation movements' archives housed in the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. It sought to address the following research question: What issues have arisen from the liberation movements' archives digitization programme and what could be the way forward? In light of the findings, the study concluded that NAHECS need to lobby for human and financial resources to give digitization of liberation archives the priority, train audio-visual archivists and improve its staffing in order to preserve all the archives in its custody. By prioritizing digital projects, allocating funds, cultural institutions provide added utility to collections. For foreign donor driven digitization projects, UFH NAHECS can negotiate possibilities for long-term technology and skills transfer. Participating in digitization projects, allow for professional development as staff gains new skills, knowledge and expertise.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions the study recommends the following:

a) It is recommended that UFH NAHECS should have a station for digitizing audio materials to cut costs on outsourcing experts. (The previous digitization of that format was done offsite)

b) The study revealed that digitization is an expensive endeavour. Therefore, UFH NAHECS need to engage and lobby the government (private sector as Multichoice has proved that such partnership is possible) and the countries that the Liberation Movements formed solidarity with and assisted South Africa in realizing a free and democratic South Africa, for funding to complete the digitization of the remaining ANC and other Liberation Movements' archives in order to protect this very important part of South African history.

c) The leadership of various liberation movements should be implored to take initiatives (just like what ANC did) to digitize liberation heritage.

d) Once the digitization process is complete UFH NAHECS/ANC may create its own website to promote access of digitized archives by international researchers. The same website would also serve as advocacy for the physical archive. For the archival materials that are yet to be digitized, finding aids maybe uploaded so that researchers may make decisions on what to consult before they physically visit the archive.

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