ESARBICA NEWSLETTER

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20th **Implementing and integrated Electronic Document and Records Management System** Convened in Cape Town by i-Forest website: http://www.forestgroup.info/events
27th **Implementing and integrated Electronic Document and Records Management System** Convened in Johannesburg by i-Forest website: http://www.forestgroup.info/events

Feb 2005

3rd **Understanding and complying with ISO 15489 Records Management Standard** Convened in Cape Town by i-Forest website: http://www.forestgroup.info/events
10th **Understanding and complying with ISO 15489 Records Management Standard** Convened in Johannesburg by i-Forest website: http://www.forestgroup.info/events

Mar 2005

10-11th **Electronic records management conference** Convened in Johannesburg, South Africa by Knowledge Up-grade. Contact Vanessa Phone +27117840888 Fax +27117849091 Email: sales@knowledge-upgrade.com

April 2005

"**Expectation and realities in managing electronic records**" Conference convened in Gaborone, Botswana by Long sight in conjunction with Department of Library and Information Studies. Contact Richard; Phone +27113393300 Fax +2711 3393325 Email richard@longsight.co.za **Website** http://www.longsight.co.za

May 2005

3rd **annual Expectation and realities in managing electronic records**" Conference convened in Johannesburg by Long Sight Communications. Contact Richard; Phone +27113393300 Fax +2711 3393325 Email richard@longsight.co.za **Website** http://www.longsight.co.za

July 2005

XVIII Bi-Annual ESARBICA General Conference on Archives and Records in the Information Society: The African Agenda Convened in Gaborone Botswana hosted by the Botswana National Archives and Records Services. Contact Dr Patrick Ngulube, E-mail: ngulubep@nu.ac.za Fax +27332605092

Sept 2005

1st – 3rd The 2nd International Conference on History of Records and Archives (I-CHORA) titled **Archival Affinities: Adapting and Adopting Archival Cultures** to be held in Amsterdam at the University of Amsterdam's Archiefschool. See http://www.fis.utoronto.ca/research/I-chora/home.html

ESARBICA NEWSLETTER

Call for papers

a) The XVIII Bi-Annual Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) General Conference on Archives and Records in the Information Society: The African Agenda will be hosted by the Botswana National Archives and Records Services (Gaborone) in July 2005. Accommodation, travelling and subsistence are the responsibility of the paper presenters.
For more information visit http://www.geocities.com/esarbica/conf.html

b) 2nd International Conference on the History of Records and Archives (I-CHOAR 2) titled **Archival Affinities: Adapting and Adopting Archival Cultures** to be held in Amsterdam between the 1st and 3rd of September 2005 at the University of Amsterdam's Archiefschool.

The conference will focus on intercultural and cross-national influences on record keeping and archival theory, the dissemination and reception of theories and ideas on archives and record keeping etc

Topics within this framework include:
- record keeping by colonizers and colonized, occupants and occupiers etc
- post-colonial and post-communist record keeping in relation to former record keeping regimes
- merging of indigenous and foreign theories, methodologies and practices, national influences on record keeping of international and multinational governmental and non-governmental organizations
- records professional and record keeping systems immigrating into other countries and cultures
- cross-national networks of records professional and archivistics scholars and their impact on globalisation of archival systems, theories and cultures

For more information contact p.j.hosrman@archiefschool.nl or visit http://www.fis.utoronto.ca/research/I-chora/hom.hmtl

New Guidelines

IASA (International Association for Sound and Audiovisual Archivists) has just published **Guidelines on Product and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects**, which it hopes will provide guidance to audiovisual archivists on a professional approach to the production and preservation of digital audio objects,

The **Guidelines on Product and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects** can be ordered at 25 Euros per copy from Ilse Assmann (SABC Media libraries) email: assmanni@sabc.co.za, tel: (27) 11-714-4041, fax (27) 11-714-4281, Postal address PO BOX 931, Auckland Park, 2006, South Africa

Supporting Distance Learning and Self-Study in Records and Archives Management

By Laura Millar

There is a growing trend around the world towards self-study, distance-based, and open learning for adult education and training. Governments in particular are realizing the difficulties of providing education for capacity building, particularly by sending employees abroad for long periods. Sending students overseas can remove them from their work environment for an extended time, leaving a significant gap in the organization's operations. And when students return, many inevitably become highly valued employees who may end up being promoted rapidly or leaving the public sector for other opportunities. And sometimes, unfortunately, other students don't return home, finding better opportunities abroad. While no government wants to limit the personal aspirations of its employees, there is a real cost associated with providing training and then losing the benefits.

Distance-based education and training seem like an ideal alternative to long-term training or attachments abroad, especially for governments and institutions in developing countries. Distance-based study allows individuals improve their skills and knowledge, while allowing the institution to benefit from the increased capacity that comes to the organization. Most importantly, flexible and open learning opportunities can allow governments or agencies to improve the capacity of their staff while not losing individual employees to overseas training or attachments for weeks, months, or even years. After all, the loss of a capable practitioner for a year or more can seriously undermine the ability of the agency to continue its operations.

While there are still only a handful of opportunities around the world to study records, archives, and information management by distance, more and more governments, organizations and institutions, particularly in developing countries, are looking for such programmes for staff training. This brief article aims to highlight some of the issues that agencies such as national archives, university archives, and government records administrations might consider as they investigate educational and training opportunities for their staff, and especially as they consider options for distance-

based learning. It is hoped that these few suggestions might help both employers and employees make the most of a distance learning experience.

Finding the best programme

As more and more distance-based records and archives programmes are developed, it is possible that institutions will have to decide which offerings best suit their organizational needs. It is not always enough to ask a potential learner to investigate different courses and come back with a list of options. Organizations should make decisions about education and training, including which programme is best, as part of a larger strategic plan. For example, a particular course or programme may seem affordable, but it may not address the very real needs of that institution or that country. Similarly, another course may seem to address needs in another part of the world, but the principles covered may still be relevant despite the geographic differences. As governments, institutions, and individuals consider which programmes might suit their needs, they should consider questions such as the following.

➢ Does the programme offer suitable credentials or is it promising more than it can offer?
➢ Is the programme recognized by a reputable accreditation agency?
➢ Are the instructors well qualified and well experienced in the subject and the method of instruction?
➢ What do previous graduates of the programme say about its value?
➢ Are the admissions requirements too easy, suggesting the programme may be attempting to "cast too wide a net" for students?
➢ Does the programme rely on technologies or methodologies that would be difficult to support, such as continuous computer access?
➢ Does the programme cater to students in its own country, which may make it difficult for students from another country to meet assignment deadlines or participate in course activities?
➢ Is it possible to have the programme or any of the courses within it tailored to meet the specific needs of the institution's own learners?

Choosing the best candidates

All government agencies have well-developed and active human resources departments, whose job includes fostering staff training and development in order to achieve the best results for employees and for the agency as a whole. The remarks here are not intended to contradict the extensive knowledge of human resource and personnel managers. Rather, the suggestions below are drawn from particular experience with the challenges of distance-based education, particularly in the public sector, especially with regard to choosing the best candidates for distance-based study.

Not all adults will be successful in distance-based programmes without a great deal of support. Many working archivists or records managers in developing countries, for example, may not have completed secondary school or may have left school as early as age 15. Although they may be quite senior in their positions, and very capable at their day-to-day tasks, their formal qualifications may be limited. If they take courses that demand a greater level of previous education, they may fall behind and not feel they can complete the work. And if their instructors are based in other countries, they may not be able to support the students adequately to help them finish.

Younger employees may sometimes have more formal education, but they may also find the courses challenging. For example, they may not have enough on-the-job experience to give them the overview needed to make the most of training courses. If the institution is seeking capacity building and not just individual training, it may want to give younger employees a year or two more "on the job" before enrolling them in distance courses.

Distance education and training can also be used to "filter" knowledge through the organization. For example, a senior officer may seem the most suitable candidate for professional training in terms of his or her responsibilities, but that employee may be facing retirement in three years. The institution may not want to invest in training for this employee, knowing he or she will not be with the organization much longer. But there is another alternative, which encourages a strategic approach. What if the institution allowed the senior officer to pursue the courses on the condition that his or

her job description is altered to add the role of in-house education officer? This person could then combine his or her newly gained training with the long and varied experience that comes with twenty or more years on the job. This employee could become the institution's key trainer, using the last years of his or her active service as a leader: offering workshops or seminars or perhaps mentoring other employees through similar training courses, thereby improving their chances of success and expanding the capacity of the institution.

Here is another scenario that can be handled strategically. What if an institution has three junior officers on staff, each with bright prospects but little on-the-job experience. Sending only one of the three for overseas training may increase the organization's capacity, but there is the inevitable risk that the newly trained staff member may move on. But sending all three out of the country is financially impossible. One consideration might be to consider having all three students work together to complete a distance-based programme instead of sending only one abroad. While the costs of training three employees by distance could still be higher than training one overseas, the long-term benefits to the institution may be greater. The organization will be building in redundancy and preparing for the possibility that one of the staff may leave the institution – which is eventually inevitable. Many distance education providers are open to the idea of creating customised courses; institutions do not have to choose only from formally listed programmes.

In both the scenarios discussed above, who should receive training and how are decisions that should be made based on the strategic objectives of the institution, recognizing the need for redundancy and succession planning, even at the level of line managers and working-level staff. Most national archives already conduct such human resources planning when considering promotions and job descriptions; such foresight can be equally beneficial when considering priorities for training and education.

Supporting employee learners

Once decisions have been made about who will pursue distance-based studies, the institution can play a critical part in ensuring the success of those studies. Learners need motivation, guidance, and encouragement, especially when they are working

independently. Some adult learners may not have the skills, experience, or personal and family support needed to work in a self-study environment. When other priorities and pressures arise, these students may have trouble focusing on their studies, and they may have difficulty establishing the discipline and routine required for completion.

The sponsoring institution can support learners through their studies. Consider the following suggestions, which can help create a supportive and productive environment for learners and, at the same time, increase the immediate and long-term benefits to all staff.

➢ Identify a set time of the day or week – perhaps four to six hours a week – when the student will work solely on his or her studies. If the institution officially sanctions the studies through the establishment of formal study times, it helps to create a supportive and structured framework, encouraging the student to develop self-discipline and focus.

➢ Provide a physical and organizational environment where the student can study without interruption during the assigned hours. For example, if the student works in an open office and is subject to disruptions, perhaps he or she can relocate to the library, reference area, or an unused office to study. Other staff can be advised that the student should not be interrupted, and his or her duties, phone calls, and other tasks should be rotated among other staff during the study time.

➢ While many students might opt to study at home, the institution should consider such requests carefully. A truly supportive institution, seeking a successful outcome, would be better advised to allow the student time and space at work to pursue courses. Working at home can sometimes mean juggling studies and family obligations, and the student may achieve better results by studying in his or her work environment, as long as colleagues are supportive and respectful of the long-term benefits for everyone if the student succeeds in his or her courses.

➢ Encourage the student to move ahead with his or her studies by requiring

periodic reports on progress, including clear statements of work completed, work still to be done, and difficulties encountered. If the learner has an obligation to report to his or her superior on the progress of studies, then he or she is more likely to integrate study tasks more firmly into the work day and so more likely to succeed. And constructive criticism, monitoring, and positive feedback are invaluable to supporting the student's efforts and energies.

➢ Ask the student may also give workshops or seminars on topics of relevance to the rest of the staff. For example, if a student has to prepare an assignment on a work-related topic, he or she might be asked to "present" the assignment at a staff meeting or lunch-time seminar. The student then has an opportunity to discuss his or her ideas with staff and has a chance to practice organizational and presentation skills. And if the staff presentation happens before the paper is due, the student also benefits from gaining input from staff as he or she is formulating ideas. Other employees also benefit from the knowledge shared.

➢ Identify a mentor in the institution who will provide ongoing support to the student, monitoring progress, identifying difficulties, and working with the student to overcome obstacles. Such a mentor may be someone who has already taken the course or it may be the direct supervisor or another senior employee. Either way, the mentor can be supportive and interested but also firm in his or her commitment to help the student finish the required work. Like the student, this mentor should be allowed a set amount of time per week to work with the student. In that way, both people have the official sanction of the agency to work together, but they also have a sense of time limitations so that they can remain focused on the key objective: successful completion of the program.

Ultimately, distance-based training and education can be a valuable contribution to the development of a career path in records and archives, particularly in developing countries. The educational experience can also allow employees to develop their ability to study, meet deadlines, and achieve results, all valuable skills in the work place. If such training and education is conceived as part of an institutional strategic plan, then the organization can work towards greater professional and institutional

capacity while supporting the different personal aspirations of individual employees. Ultimately, increased access to diverse forms of education and training for records care will not only increase the capacity of individual practitioners but will also improve the quality of records care within institutions and so within countries. This capacity building is critical to increased public accountability, transparency, and openness and the continued growth of records and archives institutions around the world.

About the author

Laura Millar is Canadian archival and information management consultant who specialises in developing and delivering training, education, and capacity building programmes, particularly for developing countries. She has enjoyed working with many ESARBICA colleagues over the years, and she is also active in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

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Additional information

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1. http://www.col.org/. The Commonwealth of Learning is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. COL is helps nations improve access to quality education and training.

2. http://www.icde.org/. The International Council for Open and Distance Education aims to promote and support distance and flexible learning around the world. In 2003-2004, ICDL has been active in developing capacity in open and distance education in Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The ICDL website also provides information about regional and national professional associations devoted to open and distance learning, including organizations in such African countries as South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. See http://www.col.org/resources/weblinks/associations.htm.

3. http://www.ica-sae.org/.The ICA's Section on Archival Education and Training is a key agency to contact about issues related to education and training in records and archives management. It is presently carrying out a survey of distance education for archives and records management and will publish a report identifying individual programmes around the world.

Whither archives and records management education and training

By Shadrack Katuu

While training of archivists and records managers within Sub-Saharan Africa has only lasted four decades, elsewhere the profession has a history lasting several centuries. In Europe, specifically, archivists have been in existence since the 17th century.

Luciana Duranti (1993) demonstrates that between the 17th and 19th centuries, different scholars engaged in systematic exposition of archival doctrine to the extent that by the late nineteenth century it was referred to an autonomous science.[1] Oddo Bucci, while discussing the archival education tradition in the University of Macerata, highlights this evolution of the science from a "fragile, incoherent body of material to an autonomous discipline of systematic character."[2]

The school in France, the Ecole des Chartes, founded in 1821 provided one of the earliest formal education programs in Europe.[3] As an independent institution, its mission was not only to produce archivists but proficient research scholars as well.[4]

In Germany, Angelika Menne-Haritz notes that the nineteenth century archivist was trained as a historian.[5] This was due to the needs of research to exploit older records. However, significant changes were made after the wars of the 20th century. These were the direct result of the huge masses of records that swamped archives and necessitated an immediate response. There was a need to create a new breed of professionals who would be able to handle the practical activities of archival functions, while the historian-archivists would maintain their purview of scholarly research. In addition, there was the creation of independent professional training

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[1] Luciana Duranti,, "The Archival Body of Knowledge: Archival Theory, Method and Practice, and Graduate and Continuing Education", Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, Winter (1993) pg. 9 - 10

[2] Oddo Bucci, "The Evaluations of Archival Science and its Teaching at the University of Macerata" in Archival Science on the Threshold of the Year, 2000 (ed.) Oddo Bucci pg. 17

[3] The other being the Bayerusche Archivschule Munchen (Munich) quoted in Cook "Professional Training," pg. 77

[4] William Orr, "Archival Training in Europe." American Archivist 44 (1981) pg. 29

[5] Angelika Menne- Haritz, "Archival Training in Germany: A Balance Between Specialization in Historical Research and Administrative Needs" American Archivist Vol. 57(1994) pg. 401

offered at the Archivschule Marburg.[6]

Archival training in the UK developed through in-service programs for the staffs of the national archives and some of the larger institutions.[7] Since the Second World War, different universities have offered one-year postgraduate course to prepare these personnel.[8] What is apparent with this model is the lack of scholastic and research oriented traits that would be found in other countries in Europe. Perhaps that may be the reason why such programs have found it relatively easy to design courses that would accommodate foreign students. It is therefore not surprising that several prominent archives and records educators and professional in Africa have gone through one or other program in the UK rather than elsewhere.

While Europe has been the cradle of the profession, North America seems to be the epicentre of contemporary research. The North American landscape is often characterised by various dichotomies. On the one hand, Richard Cox notes that there are two schools of thought when it comes to the issue of education. There are those who believe in the pragmatic way of learning and are workshop oriented, while the others are more focused on education in theory and methodology.[9] On the other, the continent paints a contrasting picture of two nations that started formulating guidelines for education in 1977 with a common purpose but have significantly different results in their present version. While Canada has had 17years within which it has developed multiple graduate level programs, the US is yet to develop an entirely autonomous self-contained graduate program.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the most significant period in the establishment of archival education in SSA started in the 1970's. The International Council of Archives (ICA) and Unesco were involved in establishing regional training centres to cater for the training needs of archivists in SSA. They established two centres, one for Franco-phone countries in Senegal (1971) and another for Anglophone countries in Ghana

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[6] Ibid. pg. 402-403
[7] Nayani Samarasinghe "Developing a program to educate archivists in Sri Lanka" unpublished Masters thesis, University of British Columbia 1994, pg. 37
[8] Orr "Archival training in Europe". pg. 34
[9] Richard Cox, "Education and the Archivist: View and Reviews" American Archivist Vol. 55 (1992) pg. 526

(1975).[10]

The centres were seen as a more cost-effective way of instructing archivists rather than sending them overseas. At that time, newly independent states were in great need of skilled human resources to staff and manage public and private institutions.[11] According to Mwiyireri, by 1988, these centres had met more than thirty percent of the training needs in SSA.[12] However due to lack of continued funding these centres have since degenerated into national programs.

The need for skilled labour did not recede, and consequently individual nations set up their own programs to cater for the increasing demand for trained personnel. Kenya started a program for the paraprofessional in the national polytechnic in 1979.[13] Other countries followed suit establishing courses and training workshops as well as university programs.[14]

According to education commentators, the scenario in African universities is plagued by low numbers of qualified staff, virtually non-existent research, poor quality of education materials and outmoded programs, education methodologies based on the model of rote memorization that does not encourage critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.[15] This scenario cannot be expected to produce graduates that will face the challenges of a profession that is elsewhere redefining itself with much success.

The danger in this type of academic environment is to view students as embryonic archivists rather than as academic creatures who primarily assimilate and analyse concepts and by extension are competent to determine the connections between

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[10] See S Mwiyireri "Archival training in developing countries: Africa," pg. 170 -171; Frank Evans "The Organization and Status of Archival training: An historical perspective" Archivum 34 pg. 75 -91

[11] William Saint, "African Universities: Strategies for Revitalization" Technical paper no 194. Technical department, Africa Region. Washington D.C: World Bank http://www.worldbank.org/aftdr/findings/english/finl0.htm accessed on 26th August 1998

[12] Mwiyireri "Archival training in developing countries: Africa," pg. 171

[13] Ibid. pg. 179

[14] ICA **Directory of schools and courses of professional training for Archivists** ICA Section on archival education and training Studies 6, Koblenz 1992

theory and practice.[16]

Roy Schaeffer contends that education provided in a graduate setting is essential to "develop a compelling and coherent body of theory and to make education in this theory relevant to…practice."[17] It is therefore for reason that we congratulate the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana that has introduced a fully-fledged Masters in Archives and Records Management. It is hoped that with this introduction and further development of similar programs within the region we will see, to quote Schaeffer, upcoming scholars that will be "participants in the definition and expansion of the archival discipline, and should be encouraged to view their work, particularly in this stage of the profession's evolution, as critical to the emergence of stimulating and significant ideas."[18]

About the author

Shadrack Katuu is an information analyst at the South African History Archives (http://www.wits.ac.za/saha) located at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Additional information

1. http://skatuu.8m.com/e-guide.htm Education and training opportunities in Africa
2. http://informationr.net/wl/ Education and training opportunities worldwide

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[15] "African Virtual University **-** Project concept" pg. 2
http://www.avu.org/english/about/concept.htm 26th August 1998
[16] Roy Schaeffer" The Knowledge Base and Archival Professionalism in North America: A Political History" unpublished Masters thesis, University of British Columbia 1997, pg. 76 **-** 77
[17] Schaeffer" The Knowledge Base and Archival Professionalism" pg. 73
[18] Ibid. pg. 77