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Building capacity for archives and dissemination of information in Uganda: a case study of Uganda Broadcasting Corporation and Directorate of Information

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Abstract

In today's information age, knowledge has become the gold standard. A great deal of information is being generated every day in central and local governments and this is likely to increase with the continued empowerment of the population. In Uganda the government has been for a long time committed towards building an integrated, self sustaining and independent national economy. For instance, there have been a number of attempts to enact laws and policies in Uganda regarding access to and protection of information including the National Records and Archives Act, 2001, the Access to Information Act, 2005, the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, 2006, The Press and Journalist Statute, 1995, the Electronic Media Statute, 1995 and the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Act, 2005. These laws been not properly utilised, nor have proper guidelines for building capacity for storage, archiving, utilisation, dissemination and use of information been put in place. Building capacity in any organisation requires considerable effort, covering restructuring systems, development of human resource and institutional capacity, and organisational structure. The aim of this study is to review the current state of the audiovisual records and materials in the Directorate of Information (DOI) and the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), to provide a digitization strategy to enhance effective information dissemination in Uganda.

Introduction

Knowledge societies are only equitable if all people can access, share and use information on the documentary heritage in all forms of intellectual life for education and cultural development. Despite colonial and global influence many African countries are struggling to safeguard their natural and documentary heritage. Within the convergence of an information society and the globalisation era, African societies are substantially and increasingly building capacities to acquire, store and access information. A strategy to archive such information is required in this country.

In Africa, colonial administration was determined by the dominance which agencies of foreign control were able to assert over African indigenous structures to transfer skills and resources to the indigenous population (Brett, 1973: 21). In the post-modern world, according to Meyer (2004:160), the control of the structures (process and places) is particularly what archiving entails. Alegbeleye (1993:1) describes the major challenge associated with African archives as a documentary deficit. According to Alegbeleye, this documentary deficit is associated with the

storage of recognised documentation in written and material fields, which covers colonial rule, Christian and Arabic manuscripts and graphic records. Such a deficit has contributed to the outstanding book famine in African countries and the crisis of information provision and lack of serious attention to preservation and conservation of archival materials. Archival records are preserved for their research value as a source of information, for their re-use value; their legal value or as a business (core value); and as an historical and heritage charter requirement (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2004). So the major goal of archiving records must be to find joint solutions to preservation and access problems (Wright, 2007). In fact, libraries and archives grew and developed in civilised societies when man began to make and keep records (Sengupta, 1981). The invention of sound recording and the development of wireless gave greater significance to the keeping of audio and visual records that originate from radio, cinema, television and computers (Feather, 1994). This has changed the archival methodology, thus necessitating the shift in techniques for the storage, organisation, provision, maintenance and dissemination of records, including audiovisual records.

Archives provide first-hand information about the past to researchers, scholars, students, journalists, lawyers, and others who want to know about people, places, and events. A documentary deficit is a major challenge facing developing countries' archives. Such a deficit has contributed to the high profile "information famine" in African countries, the crisis of information provision and lack of serious attention to preservation and conservation of archival materials. Strategies for developing technologies for ensuring cost-effective preservation and ensuring access to records and dissemination of information should be developed. This requires a strategy to build capacity to ensure sustainability in the capture, storage, use, conservation and preservation of national archival records and resources, and the exchange and sharing of information and experience among communities in the country.

Since the mid-1980s, African governments, including that of Uganda, have shown renewed interest in building the institutional and human capacity of Africa. According to Wubneh (2003:165), capacity-building is a concept which has become elusive owing to lack of consensus on the meaning and the scope. To Wubneh, building capacity has been associated with technical assistance, civil service reform, private sector development, skills enhancement, macro-economic management, policy analysis, and institutional development. He thus presents a general framework and describes the salient features of capacity-building. According to him, "building capacity is the process of transforming a nation's [organisation's] ability to effectively implement policies and programmes for sustainable development." He describes the four important elements of building capacity as the restructuring of value systems, the development of human capacity, the transformation of institutional capacity and the modification of organisational structures. This element emphasises the need for a strategy to develop the human capacity of a nation or an institution through better recruitment and retention practices, effective utilisation of personnel, enhancement of incentive systems and decentralisation of decision-making. Therefore any attempt to build capacity in an organisation must address all these elements as shown in figure 1, (below, final page). The underlying premise is that building capacity is a qualitative transformation of the capacity of a nation or organisation to implement policies and programmes.

Background to the problem

Since attaining Independence, on 9 October 1962, Uganda has experienced political instability, leading to economic breakdown (Mudoola, 1997). As a result, since then the state of information management in the country has been facing a number of challenges. This has threatened the quality, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of most government departments and the private sector, including the information sector, concerning the dissemination of information. For instance, in its Vision 2025 (Uganda, 1999), Uganda aspires to have an effective, well-developed and countrywide national depository, library and records system, to collect, preserve and conserve its intellectual and documentary heritage and the development of human, professional and expert capacity in information management. The need for this becomes more pronounced in the light of the current efforts by the government since 1997 towards improving literacy levels through Universal Primary Education (UPE), and Universal Post-Primary Education and Training (UPPET) with effect from 2007, in an attempt to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in fighting poverty and ensuring good governance in the country through the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). The right to government information is concomitant to democratic privileges. Relevant and timely information disseminated to the right audience has great potential to impact on government service delivery (Nsaba-Buturo, 2004:1).

In Uganda, various government departments, including the Directorate of Information (DOI), Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), the National Archives, the National Documentation Centre, the National Library of Uganda and related organisations, store and generate much information and many documents in the course of discharging their duties. It is not unusual, for example, to find important official documents scattered in offices, stores and corridors, or in the streets and markets, where they are used to wrap items. Furthermore, total access to government information is not possible. Cases have been reported of junior staff stealing records and the contents of records and selling them to market vendors (Uganda, 1999). For example, during the 1970s and early 1980s, neglect and mismanagement of public records was prevalent in Uganda. A case in point is the loss of records and equipment through looting that Uganda Television (UTV) and Radio Uganda suffered during the confusion of the 1978-79 war and shortly thereafter. In that period, it was common to find government records being used in markets for wrapping merchandise. A lot of historically and professionally important information and data in the economic, political and social-cultural areas have been lost irretrievably as a consequence (Uganda, 1999:139).

In other cases, officers who do not have good records connive with records staff and remove incriminating documents from their files. Nevertheless, the right of access to information has been legalised in various countries, including Uganda. In Uganda, the Access to Information Act (2005) provides for the right to access to information pursuant to Article 41 of the Constitution of Uganda (Uganda, 2005). It is hoped that this law will empower the public to access timely and accurate information. Increased accessibility to government information will exacerbate the problem of information overload. Furthermore, such a system creates new problems of access and diminishes the significance and usefulness of the new right. The challenge is how to manage a qualitative change in the nature of records, notwithstanding the new options available for recording and storing information in digital formats. Strategies for developing technologies

to ensure cost-effective preservation and access to records and dissemination of audiovisual information should be developed. This requires a strategy to build capacity to ensure sustainability in the capture, storage, use, conservation and preservation of national archival records and resources, and the exchange and sharing of information and experience among communities in the country.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to develop a strategy for building capacity in the archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda, with reference to of the audiovisual records in the Directorate of Information (DOI) and Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC). To achieve this, the specific objectives of the study were:

- To establish the status of archiving in Uganda;
- To analyse the challenges in the management of audio records and dissemination of information in Uganda;
- To provide strategies for documentation, archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda.

Methodology

With support from the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM), a phenomenological qualitative research design identified the nature and characteristics of archiving of audiovisual records in both UBC and DOI. Two districts in Uganda from different regions (Masaka, representing central Uganda and Bushenyi, representing upcountry stations) were also selected, to establish the status of archiving in the districts. The two local governments (Bushenyi and Masaka) were selected to examine the extent of the challenges of archiving in the country and to give a true reflection of the archiving status in the country. The study also involved identifying and carrying out the requirements for archiving, in order to develop an implementation strategy. Document analysis on government policies on the information sector was the main focus of data collection. This paper thus attempts to explore existing policies and legislations for archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda, so that strategies may be provided for archiving and dissemination of information in the country.

The development of the information sector in Uganda

The development of information dissemination has been addressed in the objectives and plans of the Government of Uganda since independence in 1962 (Magara, 2006). During the 1970s and early 1980s neglect and mismanagement of public records was prevalent in Uganda. For instance, during the confusion of the 1978-79 war and shortly thereafter UTV and Radio Uganda suffered loss of records and equipment through looting, as indicated above. A lot of historically and professionally important information and data in the economic, political and social cultural areas have been lost irretrievably (Uganda, 1998:139).

When the National Resistance Movement (NRM) took power in 1986 it emphasised social infrastructure (including information) in its plan, code-named the Uganda Economic Policy Package. This package was guided by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Economic Policy Package aimed at the rehabilitation of TV services, among other priorities, and at providing quality and functional-level

services for the information sector, depending on the availability of funds. This was later implemented with assistance received from West Germany, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the 2nd IDA Reconstruction Programme (Uganda, 1988: 377).

With support from UNESCO, the International Development Research Council (IDRC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Government of Uganda financed a project for the development of a National Information System (NIS) during the 1989-90 and 1990-91 financial years, in an effort to ensure the flow of government information in the country (Uganda, 1993:247). This project aimed at developing a coordinated network of information sources, systems and services in Uganda for planning, problem-solving, decision-making, research and technological transfer activities in the priority area of socio-economic development. The project proposed a bill with a provision to establish the National Information Policy and Coordinating Agency (Uganda, 1992a) whose objectives and/or functions were to:

- Develop and manage a national coordinated network of information sources, systems and services;
- Provide information and data to the public and private sectors;
- Improve, integrate and coordinate resources systems, services and activities in Uganda;
- Provide appropriate and timely information to the public and private sectors;
- Coordinate, promote and monitor information activities, systems and services in Uganda;
- Acquire, promote, develop, preserve and make available all publications produced in Uganda about Uganda; and
- Enhance information sharing, exchange and co-operation within and outside Uganda.

However, the bill has never been presented nor has a progress report on the committee ever been tabled (Mugasha, 2000:89). This could have been the turning point in the development of a national information system to enhance information dissemination in the country. Establishing such a system would have facilitated information management in the country.

Reflecting on the national information system (NIS) strategy that did not materialise, the Department of Information in the Office of the President, with support of UNESCO, conducted a study on the development of a National Communication Information Policy (Uganda. President's Office. Department of Information, 1999: 37-39). The study reflects development priorities that include basic education, health care, modernisation of agriculture, good governance, and the policy of decentralisation. Using the study, the Department of Information drafted the Communication and Information for Development White Paper (Uganda. President's Office. Department of Information, 1999: 4-5), which was guided by the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, specifically by Article 29 (Right to freedom of expression) and Article 41 (Right of access to information). It also drew on the human rights principles outlined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO 1994:4-14). The major objective of the White Paper was to ensure the provision of information for development in the country. It sets out the following principles:

- To develop/stimulate the awareness of national identity in pursuit of social-economic, political and cultural goals;
- To be human rights-based and guarantee freedom of expression and of information;
- To increase people's means of accessing communication and information;

- To ensure that the whole population benefits from communication technology;
- To reflect high standards of moral and ethical integrity.

(Uganda. President's Office. Department of Information, 1999:12.)

The White Paper proposals include the right of access to information. They also provide a basis for the development of the communication and broadcasting services in the country. The decentralisation strategies provided in the implementation structures are fundamental to the development of an information system in the country. The White Paper also formed a basis for the information and communication infrastructure in the country, as will be discussed later in this section.

Highlights of progress in the development of the information sector include an attempt by government to mobilise and involve local communities in the planning, implementation and maintenance of information management strategies. In terms of quality, the government has consistently increased its funding and support to the information and communication sector. For example, following the liberalisation process, the Government of Uganda in 1994 drafted the National Science and Technology Policy. One of the outcomes of the policy was the enactment of the Uganda Communications Act in 1997 (Uganda, 1997b). This Act established an independent regulatory body, the Uganda Communications Commission (Communities and Information Society for Africa, 1997:5). The Act also provided for the incorporation of Uganda Telecom Limited (UTL) and Uganda Posts Limited (UPL). In the same year, the first rural community telecentre pilot project in Uganda was opened in Nakaseke, supported by UNESCO, Uganda Posts and Telecommunications (UPTC) and the Public Libraries Board. One important benefit of the liberalisation of the telecommunication services is that it has enabled private sector companies to provide mobile cellular phone networks and paging services that facilitate information transfer in the country.

In an attempt to develop, promote and integrate science and technology (S&T) in the national development process, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (2000) carried out an assessment of the technological capacity of different sectors of development. The data obtained showed that Uganda's technological capacity was still low. Taking up the existing challenges and opportunities that had demonstrated the need for proactive policies regarding technological capacity, the Council (2002:6) developed a National Information and Communication Technology Policy Framework. The vision of the policy framework is to have "a Uganda where the national development is sustainably enhanced, promoted and accelerated by efficient application and use of ICT, including timely access to information" (Uganda National Council for Science..., 2002:36). The aim of this policy framework is to promote the development and effective utilisation of ICT in Uganda. Objective 7 of the policy framework provides for the facilitation of access to information in the public domain. To achieve this objective, the policy framework specifies certain strategies that include:

- The establishment of appropriate mechanisms and structures through which various government ministries and departments will provide information at the lowest possible cost and with the fewest restrictions possible in order to maximise access to and use by all citizens; and

- The codification of the right to universal access, by all Ugandans, to public domain information, without compromising individual or national security

(Uganda National Council for Science..., 2002:40).

The policy framework recommends a national ICT coordinating agency to be in charge of the coordination and implementation of the ICT development objectives in the country (Uganda National Council for Science..., 2002:45). The policy framework provides an institutional framework for the management and coordination of information in Uganda. The structure for this policy framework provides an environment that is conducive to the designing of an information management system. This is why it is important to provide a strategy for ensuring utilisation of a digitization environment to ensure archiving and dissemination of information in the country.

Existing legal framework for archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda

The policies and regulations affecting development of the information-sector strategies are discussed below:

The right of access to information

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for "the right of access to information in the possession of the State or any other organ or agency of the State except where the release of information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the State or interfere with the right to privacy of any other persons" (Uganda, 1995a: Article 41(1)). Section (2) of the same article provides for Parliament to make laws prescribing the classes of information referred to in Clause (1) of the same article, and lays down the procedure for obtaining access to that information. These provisions reflect the principles underlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO 1994:5-14), that countries should promote the free flow of ideas by word and image. Article 19 of the Declaration states that: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion without interference to scarce, relevant and important information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." However, Article 9(1) of the Public Service Act, 1969 and Article 22 (12) of the Education Service Act, 2002, Act 6, No. 4, criminalise the disclosure of information by public servants (Uganda, 2002a). For example, the Public Service Act specifies that:

> It is an offence for any member or officer of the Commission [*government department or organisation*] and any other person to knowingly publish or disclose the contents of any document, communication or information whatsoever that has come to his notice in the course of his duties in relation to the Commission without the written permission of the Minister (Uganda, 1969b, Chapter 277, Article 9).

Those provisions enforce the public service standing orders in which it is stipulated that, on assumption of office, every civil servant subscribes to an oath of secrecy that he will not directly or indirectly communicate or reveal any matter to any person, which shall be brought under consideration or shall come to his knowledge in the discharge of his official duties. The only exception occurs when such a communication or revelation is necessary for the discharge of

his/her official duties or where the president has specifically directed it (Uganda 1991, Article 19).

Furthermore, the fourth schedule of the Constitution on the Oath of the Minister states:

> I, being appointed a Minister of Uganda, swear in the name of Almighty God, solemnly affirm that I will at all times well and truly serve the Republic of Uganda in the office of a Minister; and that I will support and uphold the Constitution…and that I will not directly or indirectly reveal any matter as shall come to my knowledge in discharge of my duties and committed to my secrecy. [So help me God]
>
> (Uganda, 1995a, Fourth Schedule).

In fact, the Leadership Code Act (2002), Article 14 (1), prohibits the misuse of official information. It states:

> … a leader shall not directly or indirectly use or allow any person under his or her control to use for furthering any private interest, whether financial or otherwise, any information obtained through or in connection with the office of the leader and not yet made available to the public
>
> (Uganda, 2002b, Article 14(1)).

Furthermore, the Inspectorate of Government Act (2002 Act 5), Acts Supplement no. 4, in line with Chapter Thirteen of the Constitution, and in particular as required by Articles 225, 226, 232 of the Constitution, provides the Inspectorate with powers to enforce the Leadership Code of Conduct. Article 23 of the same Act empowers the Inspectorate to disseminate information on the evil and dangerous effects of corruption on society, and the Act proclaims that information in its possession is privileged. It states:

> Subject to any law which enjoys the disclosure of classified information, anything said, information supplied, document, paper or thing produced in the course of inquiry under this Act shall be privileged in the same manner as if the inquiry were a proceeding of court of law, and a report of the Inspectorate shall be privileged in the same manner as if it were a record and judgement of a proceeding in court.
>
> (Uganda, 2002c, Article 23).

Subject to this Act, the Inspectorate may:

> Summon any person who in the opinion of the Inspectorate is able to give information… and to furnish and produce any documents, papers or things that may be in possession or under the control of that person
>
> (Uganda, 2002c, Article 26(1) (a)).

The Access to Information Act (2005) provides for the right to access to information pursuant to Article 41 of the Constitution; prescribes the classes of information referred to in that article;

and also prescribes the procedure for obtaining access to that information and related matters. The purpose of this Act is to:

- promote an efficient, effective, transparent and accountable government;
- give effect to Article 41 of the Constitution by providing the right to access to information held by organs of the state, other than exempt records and information;
- protect persons disclosing evidence of contravention of the law, maladministration or corruption in government bodies;
- protect transparency and accountability in all organs of the state by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information; and
- empower the public to effectively scrutinise and participate in government decisions that affect them.

The procedures for access to information and records specify the use of a manual of functions, an index of the records of any public body, the need for a directory of information, and the duties of information officers. The Act is intended to promote freedom and security of access to information. The provisions of the Act regarding the manual of functions and index (Article 7), and the directory (Article 9) are fundamental when developing a strategy for the archiving and dissemination of information. The right of access to information (Article 5 and 6) lays a foundation for the development of such a strategy. In addition, a preservation of records (Article 21) and protection of information (Article 26) are clear indicators (parameters) of an effective archival and dissemination strategy. It is expected that organs, including the Ministry of Information and National Guidance, the UBC and local governments produce guidelines on access to information.

Currently, the Local Governments Act (1997), in line with the Constitution, gives effect to the decentralisation and devolution of functions, powers and services at all levels of local government to ensure good governance, democratic participation and controlled decision-making by the people (Uganda, 1997a). In essence, as head of the public service in districts, the Chief Administrative Officer shall have custody of all documents and records of the Local Government Council (Uganda, 1997a: Article 65 (2(f))) to enable easy access to information. Although this Act has been amended a number of times, including the Local Governments (Amendment) Act, (2001), Supplement, Act 13, Supplement No. 10, and Act 17, and Local Government (Amendments) Act (2005), Act 20, Supplement No. 10, there is no defined strategy for the archiving and dissemination of information in local governments.

National records and archives information systems

The findings of the 1987 census of public servants showed that there is a lack of reliable records in the country. For instance, it was noted that there are cases of loss of records through theft and other malpractices, common among government departments (Uganda. Ministry of Public Service 1990:144). The National Records and Archives Act (2001), Supplement No. 10, provides for the rationalisation of the management of all government and other public records and archives under one single authority. The Act provides for the preservation, utilisation and disposal of such records and archives. It repeals the Records (Disposal) Act, 1963 and other connected matters, and established the National Records Agency (NRA) that performs various functions, which include (Uganda 2001, Article 5):

- Establishment of records centres for the maintenance and provision of official access, and to preserve and make available public archives;
- Ensuring that organs of state follow practices in managing public records containing information in all media or formats, including those in electronic formats;
- Establishing and implementing procedures for the timely disposal of public records of no continuing value and for the transfer of public archives, in other archival repository under the control of the Director or in a place of deposit established under Section 16 of this Act;
- Preserving and making available for consultation public archives selected for preservation in the National Archives or in any other archival repository under the control of the Director (Uganda, 2001: Article 5).

According to this Act, the Director [of the NRA] shall, in consultation with chief executives of local governments, establish branch repositories of the National Archives to serve groups of neighbouring local governments and to preserve and make available for public inspection, archives transferred by them under Section (1) of this section (Uganda, 2001: Article 15). No specific provision of the Act specifies the management of records in local governments as per the Local Governments Act (1997). Furthermore, each organ of state shall deposit in the National Archives a copy of each publication which it issues, whether for sale or otherwise. The provisions of this Act reflect the management of records in their physical format. The existence of the National Records and Archives Act, 2001 provides a legal foundation for any developments of strategy in the use, management, storage and dissemination of information in the country.

Information protection and preservation

For any strategy to succeed there must be a system to control and protect its operations and the quality of data. The Patents Statute 10 (1991), amended by the Patents (Amendment) Act (2002), provides for the protection of scientific inventions and innovations through patents and utility certificates, and sets the criteria for protection by patent. The Trademark and Service Law, and the Copyright Act of 1964, on the other hand, protect the trademarks, service marks and copyrights of individual works, respectively. The amendments of 2002 were aimed at using the provisions of the Patents Co-operation Treaty signed in Washington in 1970. The administration of the Patent Statute is the responsibility of the Registrar General, in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (Uganda, 2002d: Article 24E:5).

To preserve the national culture and intellectual output of Ugandans, the National Library Act (2003) established the National Library of Uganda to act as a repository for publications published in Uganda, by Ugandans and on Uganda (Uganda 2003, Article 4(m)). Some of the functions and powers of the National Library are to:

- acquire and organise for use, a comprehensive collection of library materials published in Uganda, by Ugandans, and on Uganda;
- act as a depository for the national and foreign governments' publications as well as for the United Nations and other international organisations for purposes of promoting research and scholarship and for the preservation of published national culture and intellectual output; and

- act as a national agency for national, regional and international information systems.

This Act, although performing some of the functions offered by the Makerere University College (Deposit Library) Act (1958) (revised 1964) and the Deposit Library and Documentation Centre Act (1969), did not repeal or replace them.

To enhance the protection of intellectual property rights, Uganda enacted the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act (2006), which repealed and replaced the Copyright Act (1964). It provides for the protection of literary, scientific, and artistic intellectual works and neighbouring rights. According to the Act, it is the duty of the rights owner to indicate on the literary work the author's name, the title of the work, year of publication and the distinguishing mark of the producer or publisher (Uganda, 2006). Furthermore, it is the duty of the Registrar of the National Copyright Information Centre (NCIC) to keep evidence of ownership of the rights, identification of works and authors, and maintenance of records of rights. Maintenance of such rights requires a well-coordinated system in the country to disseminate information in the country. According to the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act (2006), it is an offence to do any of the following without authorisation of or licence from the copyright owner or his/her agent:

- To publish, distribute or make copies of the work
- To perform a work in public
- To broadcast a work
- To communicate a work to the public
- To import into Uganda any work that infringes copyright
- To obstruct an inspector in the discharge of his/her duties or to fail to give him/her support in him/her duties

The laws on copyright, trademarks and patents, and the National Library, recognise and protect the intellectual property of Ugandans. The recognition and registration of intellectual rights is a strategy that is crucial for any information management system. The structures provided in the Acts, for example the National Libraries Act, 2006 that coordinates community and public libraries and information centres, are instrumental in sustaining a national information system in the country. The Acts put in place fundamental legal backing for the protection of intellectual property that forms the basis of any information system in Uganda. Hence, it is important to identify the information to be protected in any information system.

The government also protects its information through its gazette, published by the Uganda Printing and Publishing Corporation (UPPC). The UPPC was established by the Uganda Printing and Publishing Corporation Statute (1992). According to the statute, “notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection (1), the Minister, after approval by Cabinet, may by Statutory Instrument, direct any Ministry or department to have its printing and publishing work done by the Corporation”. The corporation prints and publishes all government legislation and documents, and acts as the chief advisor to the government on all printing and publishing matters.

National statistical information system

The Government of Uganda aspires to an institutional framework that operates at all levels of government (central and local) for the efficient coordination of statistics in the country. In 1998, the Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, established the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) (Uganda 1998). The bureau, formerly the Department of Statistics in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, is responsible for the collection of data in and compiling the main statistics concerning the economy. The UBOS is mandated to coordinate, monitor and supervise the entire statistical system comprising data from government ministries (Uganda 1998, Article 4(2)). The Bureau conducts censuses and surveys that provide economic, social, and demographic statistics. In addition, the Bureau also undertakes regular collection of data on industrial production, consumer prices and external trade (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2001:1). The bureau is assisted by various agencies in conducting and compiling statistics in the country.

The Ministry of Local Government has established planning units at district level for managing district databases of statistical information, including district educational statistics. Computers have been provided to districts and plans are underway to train staff in computer skills in order to enhance the acquisition of statistics in the country. To coordinate statistics in the country, standards for their capture and storage must be maintained. Properly identified data will provide reliable statistics in the country. The structures that are provided for the coordination of statistics at national level and in local governments also create an important framework for information dissemination in Uganda.

Mass and electronic media and broadcasting services

To address the code of conduct regarding access to and provision of information, the Press and Journalists Statute (Uganda, 1995b) was passed to provide for the freedom of the press. The Statute also provides for a Council for the regulation of the mass media. The Statute repeals the Newspaper and Publications Act, and the Press and Censorship Act. Article 5 of the Statute provides that "a person may have access to official information subject to the provisions of any law in force relating to national security, secrecy or confidentiality of information". Article 10 of the same Statute establishes a Media Council (Uganda, 1995b, Article10) to:

- regulate the conduct of and promote good ethical standards and discipline amongst journalists;
- arbitrate disputes between the public and the media; and the state and the media;
- exercise disciplinary control over journalists, editors and publishers;
- promote generally the flow of information; and
- censor films, videotapes, plays and other related apparatuses for public consumption

In addition, the Statute establishes the National Institute of Journalists of Uganda (Article 14), whose objects include establishing and maintaining professional standards for journalists. Thus, the professional code of ethics is provided in the First Schedule of the Statute, some of whose provisions are:

- No journalist shall disseminate information or allegations without establishing its correctness or truth

- No journalist shall disclose the sources of his information and shall only divulge them in the event of an overriding consideration of public interest and within the framework of the law of Uganda;
- A journalist shall not originate or encourage the dissemination of information designed to promote or which may have an effect of promoting tribalism, racism, or any other form of discrimination.

However, in no circumstances does the Statute specify how the information collected and disseminated by the journalists should be archived and preserved to ensure continued protection and dissemination.

To ensure effective and regulated broadcasting in the country, the government enacted the Electronic Media Statute (1996). The Statute provides for the setting up of a Broadcasting Council to license and regulate radio and television stations and to license television sets, among other responsibilities. The functions of the Broadcasting Council established under this Statute include (Uganda, 1996: Article 11):

i. Coordinating and exercising control over and supervising broadcasting activities;
ii. Being responsible for the standardisation, planning and management of the frequency spectrum dedicated to broadcasting and allocating such a spectrum resource in such a manner as to ensure the widest possible variety of programming and optimal utilisation of those spectrum resources;
iii. Coordinating communication on the electronic media with the relevant national and international organisations;
iv. Setting ethical broadcasting standards;
v. Arbitrating in consultation with the Media Council, on disputes between operators of broadcasting stations, and between the public and operators of broadcasting stations.

The Statute defines the regulation of video and cinema operators (Article 21), which requires that:

> for a person to operate a cinematograph theatre or a library for hiring out video tapes or cinema films he/she should possess a licence in respect of that theatre or library, upon making an application made in writing to the Council.

The Statute also requires that video or cinematograph operators register with the Council. In its First Schedule, the Statute gives minimum broadcasting standards. The Statute does not in any way specify how the electronic media could be archived and for how long the broadcasts should be maintained and preserved in the stations.

The Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) was established by the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Act (2005). The corporation is a successor to the State media known as Uganda Television and Radio Uganda. This Act provides for the establishment of the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation, its functions, powers and its administration; for a successor corporate

body to Radio Uganda and Uganda Television; and for connected purposes (Uganda, 2005b). The corporation is wholly owned by the government, whose objectives include:

i. Developing the broadcasting bodies into a public national broadcasting centre of excellence, for the purposes of providing electronic media and consultancy services that educate and guide the public
ii. Achieving and sustaining comprehensive national radio and television coverage
iii. Achieving and sustaining a common carrier status

In pursuit of the above objectives (Article 5(1)), the corporation performs the following functions:

i. Ensuring a sustainable system of gathering, analysing, storage and dissemination of information to the public;
ii. Ensuring quality indigenous programming and adapting foreign programmes to suit indigenous needs;
iii. Establishing a system of accountability and enhancing profitability in running public broadcasting services;
iv. Maintaining a responsible editorial independence and setting national broadcasting standards through exemplary performance;
v. Ensuring protection of public interests in rendering broadcasting services;
vi. Providing electronic media and consultancy services that educate and guide the public.
vii. Acquiring and applying modern broadcasting equipment and design and a good organisational structure and putting in place responsive and skilled personnel in line with technological improvements; and
viii. Ensuring accurate, timely and reliable reporting of events and presentation of programmes.

The UBC is obliged (Article 5(3)) to maintain a research and development programme in pursuit of its general objectives, which it may operate both within the corporation and in collaboration with relevant institutions, businesses and others as it deems fit. In carrying out its functions, the Act specifies the Editorial Policy (Article 22), among others, as involving:

i. Collecting, processing, analysing and propagating news and comments truthfully, honestly, and fairly without jeopardising peace and harmony in the country
ii. Ensuring that the corporation does not broadcast any material which is indecent, obscene, or offensive to the public morals, religious convictions or is likely to prejudice the safety of the state or public order between sections of the population

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Developments in ICT have dramatically changed the way information is collected, stored, processed, disseminated and used, thus making it the most powerful tool for modernisation and development. This has among other things, brought about liberalization in the various social and economic sectors that have led to an impressive economic performance.

Following the approval of the Telecommunications Policy in 1996, the Communications Act (1997) was passed (Uganda, 1997b), to increase the penetration and level of

telecommunication services in the country through private sector investment rather than government intervention. The objective of this Act (Article 3) is thus to develop a modern communications sector and infrastructure by:

i. Enhancing national coverage of communications services and products, with emphasis on provision of communication services;
ii. Expanding the existing variety of communications services available in Uganda to include modern and innovative postal and telecommunications services.
iii. Encouraging the participation of private investors in the development of the sector;
iv. Introducing, encouraging and enabling competition in the sector through regulations and licensing competitive operators to achieve rapid network expansion, standardisation as well as the operation of competitively priced quality services.

The Act established a body known as the Uganda Communication Commission (Article 5). Some of the functions of the Commission include

i. Monitoring, inspecting, licensing and regulating communication services.
ii. Allocating and licensing the use of the radio frequency spectrum and processing applications for satellite orbital allocations.
iii. Setting national communications standards.
iv. Ensuring compliance with national and international communications standards and obligations laid down by international communications agreements and treaties to which Uganda is party and issuing certificates of compliance in relation thereto.
v. Promoting research into the development and use of new communications techniques and technologies, including those which promote the accessibility of hearing-impaired people to communication.
vi. Safeguarding the rights of operators and enforcing the performance of their obligations.

This Act defines the requirements for radio communication and telecommunication licences and those for postal services licences and other related provisions. The Act also defines the incorporation of Uganda Telecom Limited (UTL), Uganda Post Limited and Post Bank Uganda Limited.

UTL took over the telecommunication services of the former Uganda Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (UP&TC), which until 1995 was the only telecommunications operator in Uganda. Uganda Telecom was privatised in 1996 with the Uganda Government retaining 49% and with 51% of shares being held by a consortium comprising Telecel (from Switzerland), Detecon (a subsidiary of Deutsche Telecom of Germany) and Orascom (from Egypt) (Uganda, 2002e:16). Uganda Telecom has three divisions, namely Landline, Mobile and ISP&Data. The other national private operators include Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN), which was launched in 1998, and Celtel Uganda Limited, which was the first mobile operator in Uganda, 1995. Two more telecommunication networks launched at the time of this study are HITS Telecom and WARID Phone Company.

The ICT industry has led to the convergence between media and telecommunications. For instance, with a multimedia computer system, one can read a newspaper, watch television and listen to radio stations, hence the development of a National Information and Communication

Technology Policy (2002). One outcome of the development of this Policy was the establishment of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies**.**

The Internet has radically changed the mode of acquiring, transmitting, storing and applying knowledge. Intellectual inquiry has also not escaped the revolutionary effect of rapid advances in ICT, a vehicle for e-governance in the country. There is an initiative to construct a submarine cable, a project called East African Submarine System (EASSy), to provide optic fibre connectivity between eastern Africa and the global optic fibre network. This initiative is envisioned as resulting in high-capacity connectivity within Africa and with the rest of the world. As a corollary of this initiative, it is anticipated that there will be a boost in the growth of voice, data and Internet services. Strategies for utilising this infrastructure in the country are important to ensure effective information dissemination.

Challenges of archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda

One of the objectives of the study was to assess the challenges of archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda. To achieve that, data was collected from both UBC and DOI and the two selected districts, as indicated above.

Audiovisual records kept in Districts

It was observed that in Districts, there audio-visual records are hardly kept, apart from VHS 120 tapes. Districts keep information regarding proceedings of council meetings, sponsored programmes, district functions, including public activities, independence celebrations and special visitors, except functions involving the President, which they are not allowed to record. Most of these records are stored on open shelf. They are kept by the District Information Offices. Out-of-date records were kept and there was no clear policy on archiving. There was no collection development strategy that is mutually agreed between districts and the UBC for integrating audiovisual records in the day-to-day operations of the districts.

Physical state of audiovisual records in UBC and DOI: Observations and interviews show a number of records in UBC and DOI as given below

Audio records

- Compact cassette tape
- Reel tape ¼ inch magnetic audio-tape
- Vinyl record disks – 45 rpm
- Vinyl record disks – 33 ⅓ rpm
- Vinyl record disks – 78 rpm
- Compact digital audio disks

Video records

- Betacam Short Play (SP) tapes
- U-matic & U-matic SP, ¾ in. low and high band tapes
- Video Home System (VHS)
- DVCAM (Advanced Metal Evaporated Tapes C/1/16K and Mini DV tapes)
- 16 and 35 mm film reel

- 2" Tape

Photographs are also kept in both UBC and DOI. Photographic materials which had been in the custody of the Directorate of Information for a number of years were also noted. No agreed retention schedules were being followed to guide the appraisal and destruction of records. Findings indicated that the staff in the UBC had the freedom to decide to destroy an audio record:

- which was deemed to have poisonous information;
- that contained pornographic information, or homosexuality, which is not considered acceptable to the culture/target audience;
- if the tape, however good its contents are, was bound to put the life of the machine in danger;
- for political reasons, where particular parties dictated that they did not want to see such a tape on air;
- in cases where the information was time-bound. For instance, you cannot air information as news after four days.

It was also noted that UBC has separate TV and Radio libraries. Currently, there is a Weed Trade Services (WTS) project, a grant to improve on transmission in the UBC. Staffing was a problem with four positions on the establishment but only two occupied. The following are some of the challenges:

Identification, access and archiving procedures

At the time of the study it was noted that there were a number of audiovisual record formats stored in both the UBC and the DOI, most of which lacked access points. There was inadequate storage space and inadequate equipment to store those records. Absence of identification and access procedures and a policy on preservation and archiving have significantly affected the records. It was noted that UBC, DOI and Districts had no policy of archiving audiovisual records, despite the Access to information Act, 2005. There were also intellectual property, copyright and legal issues observed with regard to the use of records.

Human resource development

It was noted that there are no competencies to manage audiovisual records at the UBC, to professionally preserve, conserve, restore and digitize the records. There is no guaranteed on-the-job training among the records management staff within the corporation. There is therefore a need for enough time to be made available to teach current staff the new technologies of managing audiovisual records. This however required collaboration, and partnership initiatives have helped develop human resource capacity in organisations.

Coordination of information and linkages

It was noted that there are many players in the dissemination of government information in the country including the Broadcasting Council, the UBC, and the Electronic Media Council; the linkage is not clear. For example, the President's Office has the Presidential Press Unit (PPU), the Vice President and the Prime Minister.

Migration of data

It was observed from the study there records available in various formats. The biggest challenge may not be embracing technology, but rather building a common mark-up language. Metadata standards are also required to ensure that digitization addresses technical descriptions, structural and information and rights restrictions.

Provision of adequate storage facilities and infrastructure

From the study, it was observed that space currently available for storing audiovisual records is not designed to the standard required for keeping archives. In addition, the audiovisual storage equipment at the UBC is inadequate to facilitate the storage, use and dissemination of the records. Furthermore, absence of a central place or facility for coordinating government audiovisual records results in limited dissemination of information in the country. It thus requires development of a sustainable infrastructure to ensure effective information dissemination.

Observations

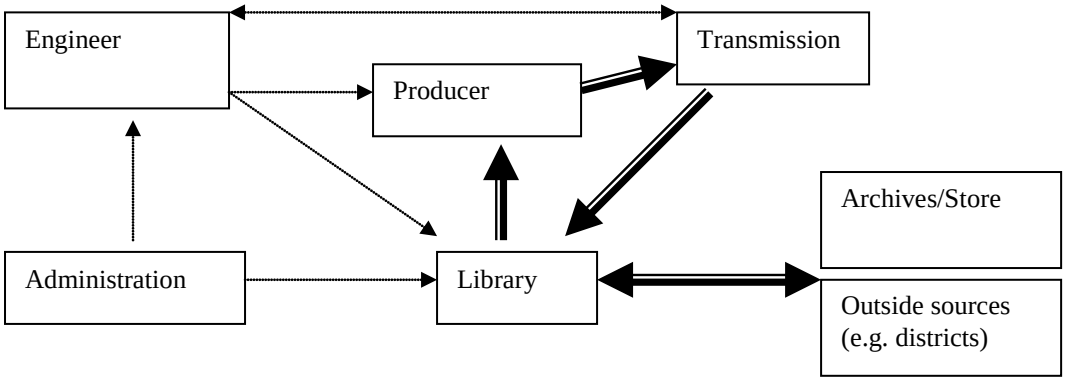
Building capacity for archives and dissemination of information suggests not only that the technology is available, but also that it is appropriate for the promotion of the dissemination of information in the country at the moment. There is the need first to develop a society that is information-conscious as well as informed, to ensure preservation and archiving of the national heritage. The restoration of destroyed records and proper arrangement of existing records are essential before the adoption of digitization. In a globalized era such as ours, changes in technology require a system that ensures provision of equipment and technologies that are appropriate for ensuring effective digitization of audiovisual records. Provision of adequate equipment, software and materials, however, requires support systems such as indexing systems, human resources and infrastructure development

Recommendations

Digitization will require a library management system.

This will involve the use of a computer system in a networked environment. In a library one should get a schedule for a day, and enter it into a system through a networked environment, with terminals on various entries. The information will then be sent to the destination based on the programmes used. The figure below shows the networked environment between various terminals.

Figure 1: Library management system



Key:

Data flows *Instructions or signals*

In addition, a producer anywhere can send edited work as an attachment to the system.

The basic architecture of the archiving software could ensure the online operations with a central database (on hard disk).
The software developed should maintain the index about the contents; handle management modules and Web interface and other offline database systems on, for example, CD-ROM, digital audio tape (DAT), and digital linear tape (DLT, (previously called compact tape). The online database contains all data files and metadata as well as the standardised means to access them. The off-line database is a set of storage media (CD-ROMs, DAT or DLT) containing all data which cannot be held online owing to limited online storage capacity. There are however various record storage formats (data, video and audio), packaging accessories, expendables and printing supplies, infrastructure development and human resource development, to enable effective archiving of records.

Establishing of a media Archives Centre will enhance the archiving function and dissemination of information.
This requires policy and a master plan to guide the selection of records, conservation and restoration, indexing and development of metadata systems. This is why it is important to provide costing of equipment, software and materials as an input at the start of the project. It is also important to cost for infrastructure development with regards to network installation, servicing, connectivity, website design and internal and external design of archives. In addition there is a need for developing a digitization policy and master plan, metadata, staff development and the conservation and preservation of records kept.

Strategies for building capacity for archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda

Creating an information-conscious and informed society in the country

- **User education**: The UBC and DOI should ensure sensitization of all stakeholders on the need for archiving to ensure effective dissemination of information in the country. User education on the security of information should be given high priority, especially for people in top management. There is a need to build a more positive attitude among the professionals to promote the preservation and archiving services.
- **Curriculum review and development in management of audiovisual records:** Library and Information Science (LIS) training institutions should work closely with the DOI, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and/or National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and other stakeholders to review their curricula in order to develop tailored courses in preservation and conservation of audiovisual records, with emphasis on the digitization process of those records. LIS training schools should start short courses for the management of the audiovisual records. There is a need for curriculum review and

development at all levels of the educational system in Uganda. Schools should introduce simple preservation techniques for records and archives at various levels. The institutions that keep and store audiovisual records should organise sensitization seminars and workshops to promote their use.

- **Evolving an internship programme:** The UBC needs to develop an internship policy for students from higher institutions of learning to enable them to work with the institution in the classification and maintenance of information services. In such a situation, students will be good ambassadors for the activities of the media houses and will promote the industry. LIS schools need to establish a formal linkage with UBC to effectively implement this programme.
- **Human resource development:** Training is considered to be an issue of primary importance in the management of audiovisual records. All professionals participating in the processes of conservation and management should acquire appropriate skills to understand and perform the necessary procedures of digitization. Such training should be provided in both formal and informal ways. There is need for more training in ICT and management of on-line collections. Knowledge relating to website design, usability and navigation, accessibility guidelines, audience, publicising of sites, and keeping statistics, is also crucial in the digitization process.
- **Access to information:** Media houses, and UBC in particular, should provide packaged information about the availability of records both in print and online. This will provide access to all people who want to know about the records at the UBC. A website portal with access points on the audiovisual records is essential. Occasional brochures, newsletters and bulletins regarding information updates are essential.

Creating an environment conducive to the enactment and maintenance of legislation and policies for protecting and safeguarding effective archiving and information dissemination in the country.

- The importance of balancing the right of access to the national heritage with the need to respect intellectual property rights (IPR) and the privacy of the individual, is recognised. For this reason, the adoption of all the available technical and legal instruments to improve accessibility and overcome legislative and normative barriers is encouraged. Dialogue between IPR experts, companies implementing digital rights management solutions and the content industries should be encouraged as well.
- The DOI should quickly implement the Access to Information Act, 2005 and the enforcement of regulations to operationalize the Act. The DOI should deliberate on the issue of open access and the possibility of sharing audiovisual records on networks.
- Essential steps and standards in digitizing audiovisual records should be developed. A manual is required to enable implementers to follow up on the issues of the essentials needed for digitizing such as equipment, software, hardware, personnel and housing, and locating training and online resources, among others.
- It is recognised that knowledge of the national heritage is essential for taking decisions concerning its digitization and for interpreting the digitized resources. For this reason, inventorying and cataloguing should precede or accompany the digitization of audiovisual records.

- Accessibility is recognised as a fundamental issue for all citizens, irrespective of age or level of technical understanding. Special priority should be given to people with special needs, including the visually impaired. Attention should be paid to the protection of human rights, pornographic cases, piracy, privacy, and ethical conduct in the management of the records.

Ensuring a sustainable infrastructure and funding for archiving and dissemination of information in Uganda

- **Establishment of a media resource centre in the country**: This requires proper planning for its housing, personnel, hardware and software. Development of a business plan is required for national archives, including audiovisual records, to generate money through their use. Through obtaining money from user fees and tourists, it is possible to sustain the use of audiovisual records at the UBC and DOI. The centre should provide a library, and an exhibition and demonstration facility for users who want to watch or listen to information available from the archives. Attempts should be made to ensure that all media centres deposit any records broadcast on government programmes or activities. This will require such a centre to put in place its publicity strategy to ensure the public is aware of its resources and services.
- **Funding:** The UBC and DOI should write an innovative project proposal 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 utilization of the records. Linkages with other media organisations such as the BBC and CNN could be sought to ensure effective implementation of digitization exercises. There is need to involve staff in collaborative projects and make them understand the need for these projects, for finding partnerships, and for being aware of the guidelines and tips for working with other funding partners. In such a case, capacity needs to be built in costing projects, cost recovery and managing collaborative projects.

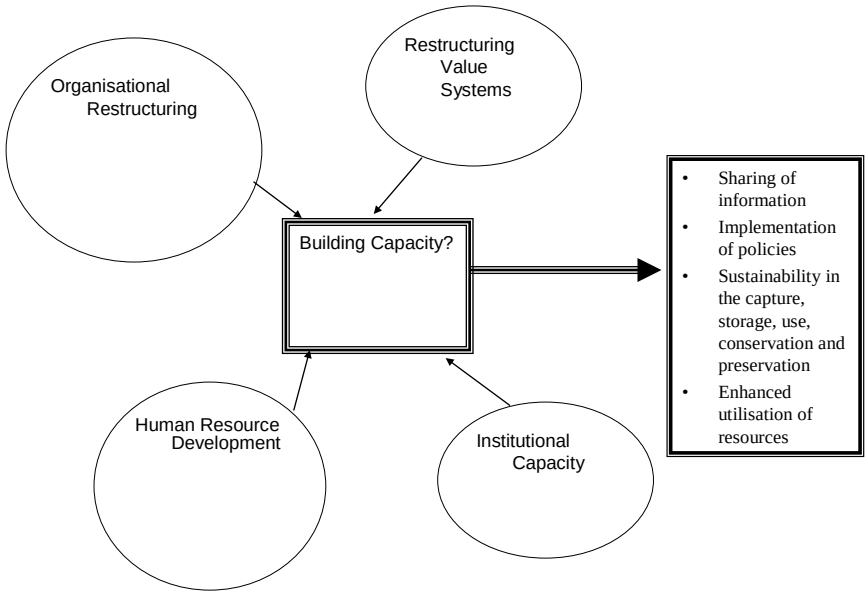
Ensuring effective coordination for archiving and information dissemination in the country

- A centralised unit/bureau in the Ministry of Information and National Guidance should be created. A clear management structure to link the information sources at the DOI, the President's Office, and the Vice President's Office is required. There is also a need to link the DOI, the UBC and the District Information Office.
- There is a need to link the information and archival and documentary heritage in the country to facilitate tracking of information. The institutions which require linking include those involved in dealing with the preservation or protection of Uganda's documentary heritage, such as the National Library of Uganda and other legal deposit centres, the Uganda Museum and the National Archives. Such coordination will facilitate the collection, preservation and dissemination of information materials, and the national intellectual and cultural heritage to empower the UBC, the DOI and districts to make informed decisions. In future the government should think of developing a directorate of Libraries, Archives and the Museum. This will promote the dissemination of information in the country.
- Within the decentralised system of governance, each district should serve as a depot of national archives and a springboard for information dissemination in the country. Such a depot should serve as an archival repository service in the districts for purposes of

preserving records of permanent value on the districts. A Standing Order or Statutory Instrument within the framework of the National Records and Archives Act, 2001 and/or Access to Information Act, 2005 should be given to enforce the maintenance of records – including audiovisual records – by government departments.

- The Government of Uganda should build portals for audiovisual records in the country. Such archive portals would represent a very important component in the development of an inclusive information society. These portals need to be built on a firm foundation of good quality and interoperability, to meet the real needs of learners, tourists and citizens, as well as the cultural and creative industries. A multitude of different actors, with different skills, interests and economic resources are required to meet the common goal of implementing sustainable services of public interest.
- Cooperation at local, national, regional (e.g. East African), and international (e.g. Commonwealth) levels is fundamental in ensuring effective support for preservation, access to and promotion of the national heritage.

Figure 1:



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