

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) IN ZAMBIA: THE ROLE OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES IN THEIR ATTAINMENT

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the role played by records and archives in the attainment of each of the eight (8) MDGs in Zambia. A number of studies have examined the role of records and archives in development. However, few studies have investigated the link between the MDGs and Records and archives. This paper provides a critical review of studies on the role of records and archives in the attainment of the MDGs. The paper begins by highlighting the eight (8) MDGs. In addition, the paper discusses records and archival information. The paper further discusses the contribution of records and archival information in the attainment of the MDGs. Finally, it discusses why records and archives are under-utilised in many regions and the way forward.

Keywords: Millennium development goals, archives, records, information management, Zambia, sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

The role of records and archives in development cannot be over-emphasised. It is difficult to attain development without records and archives. It is only by looking at our past that we can understand our present and be able to plan for our future development as a country. Records and archives support government's efficiency, transparency, accountability and good governance. Essential government decisions and activities including fundamental rights and obligations are documented in records and archives. However, the critical role of records and archives in national development is often overshadowed by many competing priorities in national development. Consequently, records and archives are often missing links in most developmental work especially in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In most cases, short term and inefficient solutions are implemented which results in loss of evidence, threatens rights, make audit difficult and allows corruption to occur.

It is now eleven (11) years since the declaration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the United Nations was made in 2000. However, one wonders as to how far countries such as Zambia have gone in terms of implementing these MDGs and the strategies that have been put in place to attain these MDGs by 2015. The United Nation Communications Group in Zambia (2008) claims that a number of African countries have made remarkable progress towards achieving the MDGs by 2015 and that Zambia is on track in meeting some of the MDGs. However, there is still need to scale up efforts to ensure that

the MDGs are met by the year 2015. Thus, as a nation, there is need to incorporate different strategies in the quest to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Records and archives as evidence of accountability and as shared memory for governments and their citizens are a force to reckon with in the attainment of the MDGs. Although their significant role in national development is often overshadowed by many competing priorities in national development, records and archives support government's efficiency, transparency, accountability and good governance. They also document essential government decisions and activities including fundamental rights and obligations, (Mulauzi, 2009).

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The MDGs are a set of eight mutually reinforcing development goals contained in the 2000 Millennium Declaration. They are predicated on the need to initiate action to fight the human development deprivation facing the majority of nations in the world. The President of the Republic of Zambia is one of the 147 Heads of state that signed the declaration (Republic of Zambia & United Nations Country Team, 2008). This was a clear indication that the Zambian government was committed to address and eventually overcome developmental challenges. However, Zambia ranks low on the UN Human Development Index and faces major challenges to overcome poverty and meet the human development targets set out in the MDGs (Mphuka, 2005). The eight MDGs include the following:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop global partnerships for development

RECORDS AND ARCHIVAL INFORMATION

Information is the key to the success of any development effort, be it at individual or national level. Individuals can neither act nor make well informed decisions affecting their lives and that of society without information (Ochieng, 1999). Without relevant information, individuals cannot perform well (Rasmussen, 2001) and a nation cannot successfully achieve sustainable and equitable development. Access to information subsequently results in an informed citizenry. It empowers individuals to form opinions, to act and transform conditions which assail them and thus lead to better quality decisions (Mulauzi & Albright, 2009). Information also enables individuals and the nation at large to take rational decisions socially, politically and economically. Overall, it provides knowledge for development of individuals and nations at large (Adamu, 2002; and Republic of Zambia, 2005).

Information especially that which is held in records and archives is the foundation for supporting all government programs, policies and services. This is so because records and archives carry information without which it would not be possible for government to operate effectively and efficiently resulting into a nation achieving development. Archives are used as gateway into the past and pave way to sound decisions and actions (Mulauzi, 2009). They document and protect legal rights and obligations. They present long term memory and enable better planning by providing for continuity, access to past experiences, expertise and knowledge including historical perspectives. Additionally, they are vehicles of communication and interaction (Mckemmish in Ellis, 1993). They also provide the basis for transparency and accountability and are largely essential to achieve a creative, vibrant and

responsive society – qualities that are absolutely crucial for fostering public sector reforms in any nation.

Records have been defined by the International Standardization Organization (ISO 15489: 2001), as “information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business”. In the same vein, Emmerson in Kennedy and Schauder (1994;4) defines a record as “all those documents, in whatever medium, received or created by an organization in the course of its business, and retained by that organization as evidence of its activities or because of the information contained”. On the other hand, Schellenberg (1956: 16) defines archives as “those records of any public or private institution that are judged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or selected for deposit in an archival institution”. Maher (1992: 5) adds on to say that “archives are non-current records of an organisation related for their continuing value in providing (i) evidence of the existence, functions and operations of the organisation or institution that generated them, or (ii) other information on activities or persons affected by the organisation”.

Information based on records and archives is fundamental in national development. Both records and archives provide the ultimate proof or evidence of the activities being undertaken either in the organization or the nation at large. Smith in Ellis (1993) contends that evidence is primarily concerned with the acceptability of documentary sources such as records and archives by a court of law. Thus, records and archives can be used as strong reference points especially in courts of law as proof of rights, obligations and entitlements (McKemmish in Ellis, 1993) both at individual, organizational and national level. Important documents that may be used as proof include: wills which are kept as proof of inheritance; title deeds kept as proof of ownership of land or of mineral rights; registers of births, marriages and deaths are kept as evidence of our identity and are needed for a whole range of purposes from passports to pensions; and maps and plans might be used to identify boundaries, contaminated land or old mines that could cause building subsidence.

Additionally, these documents would require validation at one point or the other. And validation of such documents including payments need records and archives to be confirmed. Without records and archives, these activities become susceptible to frauds, forgeries, money laundering, tax evasion, negligence and deception which can impair a revenue collection system. It is in this vein that organizations use records and archives to guard against fraud and to protect their rights and assets (Shepherd, 2006). Further, McKemmish in Ellis (1993) supports the above view by stating that records and archives can also be used to support information reporting, audit, review, accountability mechanisms, including the role of society’s watchdogs. Thus, as tools for accountability, records and archives provide the ultimate proof of activities undertaken in the past and present by providing answers to questions such as what, when, where, who, why, how in the organisation and the nation at large thereby providing for continuity and accountability. They provide evidence of the organisation’s functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations and other activities. In addition, they give us a glimpse of what activities can be planned for the future. Ward (1990) expresses the relationship between archives and accountability by stating that “Without records and archives, there can be no demonstration of accountability. Without evidence of accountability, society cannot trust in its public institutions.”

According to Willis (2005), records and archives are an indispensable element of transparency, both within the organisation and externally. This is so because records are

what make it possible for people who have a right or an obligation to know what has been done, what exactly has been done, when was it done and how it has been done. As in the words of Senator John Hogg in a speech to the National Conference of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group at Parliament House, Brisbane on 15 July 2000: "...decisions . . . must be transparent, with the decision-maker able to demonstrate that a fair and systematic process was followed. If transparency cannot be demonstrated, then Parliament risks the taxpayers' disenchantment" (Ibid).

Records and archives help organisations or a nation to look back in history on what was done including why, when and how it was done (Shepherd, 2006). This is important because they would help accomplish a number of things. To start with, records and archives would help organisations including nations to learn from past mistakes, thus preventing the duplication of mistakes. Organisations or nations can predict or make future forecasts since one can envisage the future by looking back to the past. It is only by looking at our past that we can understand our present and be able to plan for our future. It is in this vein that (Ambrosini, 1969) argues that past and current records are used as a basis for planning future activities. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives would have conducted a market research to determine at what times of the year most rural people are prone to food insecurity in the country. However, if the findings from such research were not available it would be impossible to make future forecasts and to even monitor the trends in food security. It is important to note that such information would not only benefit the ministry but also facilitate research work for the general public. For instance, students, organisations and government would use the same information for research purposes. On the part of government, this information could be of help in enabling it determine the purchasing power of its citizens and then come up with the right policies to improve the situation especially in situations where present policies are discovered to be faulty. Thus records of past and current activities become the basis for policy formulation.

The importance of records and archival information in monitoring trends in industry can be seen from the example of past statistical education records that can be used to show trends in education over a period of time. This information could include: enrolments patterns nationally, regionally, by district or local area; staffing patterns; examinations performance patterns; funding patterns, etc. This information could be used to correct weaknesses or imbalances, maintain strengths, etc in the education system by decision and policy makers.

Emphasising the importance of records and archives to the research community, Ward (1990) amplifies that they can also provide a stimulating and exciting learning environment - for schools, universities and for the lifelong learner. They help to enrich and enhance teaching at all levels. They can also be of utmost importance especially in the field of Science and Technology by providing scientists and researchers of the day with information on the brains of those that existed in times before them without having to have lived in the same lifetime. This can be achieved through recorded findings preserved with at most earlier discoveries and inventions so as to learn and improve the already existing technologies and invent more sophisticated technologies. Researchers and scientists of the day can learn from the mistakes of the past and pick up from where they left.

Records and archives also form part of the cultural heritage of the nation. Thus, to Mckemmish in Ellis, (1993), they are a long-term memory, enabling better quality planning, decision-making and action by providing for continuity, access to past experience, expertise

and knowledge, and a historical perspective for a nation. They also facilitate informed planning and decision making and support continuity, consistency and effectiveness of human interaction. Just as a person without a memory cannot function, so is a country without records and archives to provide a historical perspective of the country. Past records are also an important source of information upon which an authoritative history of various sectors of national life can be based. Throughout the ages, knowledge and experiences have been passed on from generation to generation through records and archives. Therefore, preservation of records and archives ensures the success and survival of future generations because they provide the foundation upon which to build on.

Decision making is a process that entails the assembling of information and an analysis of the implications of the various courses of action and the selection of the best alternative among many given certain constraints. For this process to be effective, it requires a lot of information. Records and archives document decisions and activities of governments and private institutions and serve as a benchmark by which current and future activities and decisions are measured. And where decision-making is questionable, records and archives of the decision making process will allow aggrieved parties to challenge the decision, seek review and, where appropriate, obtain redress (Willis, 2005).

The importance of records and archives in supporting continuity can be seen when it comes to change in an organisation or nation at large. Records and archives smooth the handing over of offices or activities from one group (or person) to the other and by also providing the foundation upon which new people who have taken over can build upon (Wamundila, 2009). Further, it is impossible to effectively undertake the activities involving project formulation, implementation and evaluation without a record of what was set out to be achieved, what has actually been achieved and how the activities were performed. Records and archives are also often needed for personal reasons, in instances such as were one is trying to establish the circumstances surrounding the death of a loved one or for tracing missing members of a family. It is a well known fact that at times of natural disasters there are cases where a member(s) of the family can be displaced for a long time only to be discovered years later as to their where about through documentary sources.

To this end, the importance of records and archival information cannot be overemphasised. This is so because they contain information which is unique and in most cases irreplaceable as well as valuable to personal, organisation and national development. It is for this reason that access to records and archival information is paramount not only by creators of the records but also by other individuals and society at large for a variety of current and future social and organisational purposes (Hamooya, 2009).

THE ROLE OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES IN MEETING THE MDGS

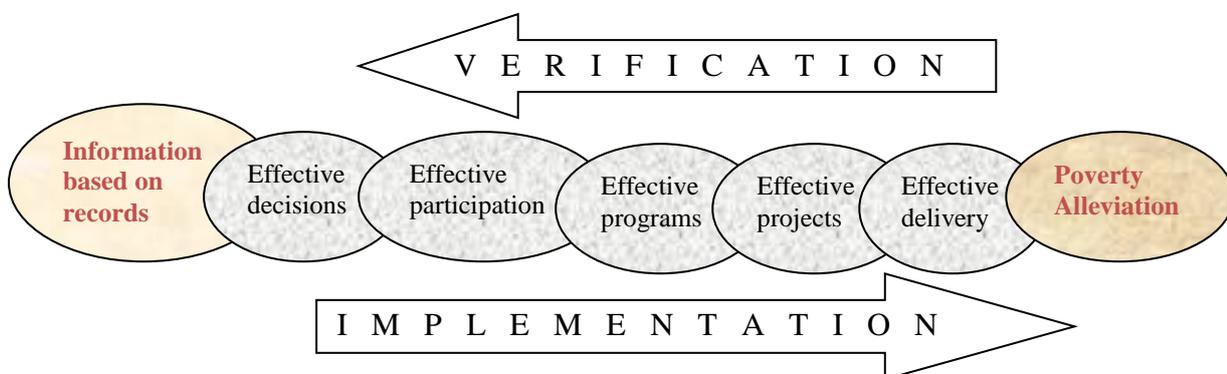
Information based on records and archives is critical in the attainment of each of the MDGs not only in Zambia but also the world at large. The Republic of Zambia (2006a) in its vision 2030 admits that even though information is a resource that plays a key role in the development process, the majority of the Zambia population lack access to information. In this regard, it is imperative to look at the role records and archives can play in the attainment of each of the MDGs in Zambia.

MDG 1: Poverty alleviation: Simler (2007) claims that a widespread consensus exists that poverty which stands at the rate of 68% is a severe problem in Zambia. About 73% percent of Zambians live below national poverty line, with rural poverty rates standing at about 83%

and urban rates of 56% (Human Development Report, 2006). Food poverty still exists and food security remains a challenge in various parts of the country (Republic of Zambia & United Nations Country Team, 2008).

Reducing poverty is a fundamental concern of the Zambian government. Developing and implementing effective anti-poverty policies is one necessary ingredient for reducing poverty. However, effective policies largely depend on a solid base of information (Simler, 2007). Records and archives are fundamental in developing and implementing poverty reduction policies. Records and archives serve as a benchmark by which current and future policies, decisions and activities are measured. They can be used to inform more effective poverty reduction policy. This includes using the information based on records and archives to refine the targeting of programs, to inform resource allocation decisions at the local or national levels, and to improve poverty monitoring systems. A good example is poverty data, which can provide a wealth of information about poverty, welfare levels, and other individual and household characteristics which can form the base for poverty reduction interventions at present and in the future, (Simler, 2007). In fact, records and archival information for instance, on the viability of development plans in the current development efforts prompted the Zambian government in 2006 to re-introduce these plans which were done away with in the Second Republic.

Supporting the above point of view, Prati (2007) states that information based on records and archives facilitate the making of effective decision, policies, and programs projects including effective delivery of services that in turn may result in alleviation of poverty as illustrated below:



Source: Prati (2007)

Further, past records can be used by decision and policy makers to understand past governments and policies, which have affected every sphere of life in both domestic and foreign environments. Records and archives can also be used by development planners to understand a nation's past national economic performances in terms of what has been done so far, how it was done, and what it achieved so as to develop effective development policies. Thus, records and archives should be used by development planners as the basis for any economic policy that would lead to poverty alleviation and national development because it is only through records and archives that they can understand past government decisions and policies and determine how the government of the day can learn from the past in the development and implementation of current policies. However, Simler (2007) claims that policymakers whether at the national or sub-national level in most cases lack sufficient information to make sound decisions and policies. Information based on records and archives

can be used by individuals to create earnings, opportunities, improve access to basic services or increase the impact of education and health interventions (World Bank, 2000).

Given that records and archives are used in the ways described above, then we will be meeting MDG 1.

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education: The Zambian government has been working towards universal primary education provision to children. As such, in the period 2000-2008, an evaluation of education showed that enrolments in grades 1-7 increased by 53% from 1.6 million pupils in 2000 to over 3 million in 2008. The completion rate at grade 7 stood at 97% (Republic of Zambia, 2009). Despite the above, the Ministry of Education admits that disparities in the completion rates between boys and girls have continued over the years at all levels. Thus, the completion rates for boys have constantly being higher than that of girls across the levels (Ministry of Education, 2008). The Net enrolment ratio in primary education stood at 97%, (Ibid).

In today's information society, the importance of information in the provision of education cannot be overemphasised. It is critical in ensuring an educated populace in any society (Kenny, 1995). This is so because it has power to overcome illiteracy and ignorance (Mulauzi, 2008). In most cases, people especially the disadvantaged are not aware of the available educational opportunities to participate in accessing education. Nor are they aware that education can considerably widen their horizons and improve their quality of life and contribute effectively to sustainable socio-economic development. For instance, people especially in rural Zambia may not be aware of the bursary schemes for vulnerable children, re-entry policy that support girls that fall pregnant to return to school, the school feeding programme for needy children, free basic education policy including the HIV/AIDS workplace policy. In fact, the MOE admits that few orphans access the bursary support and that few girls who fall pregnant respond to the re-admission policy after giving birth (MOE, 2008). Information based on records and archives documenting such policies can be availed to the disadvantaged children particularly orphans and vulnerable children, parents, caregivers, girls and children with special educational needs in order for them to participate in accessing education. Accessing such information would also facilitate their understanding and learning of the social, cultural, political and economic environments. In addition, it would enable them gain knowledge of available options or opportunities and the risks involved in taking those options. Thus, if records and archives are used in the ways described above, as many disadvantaged children as possible will participate in accessing education in Zambia thereby achieving the MDG2.

Similarly, policy makers can use past statistical educational records and archives that show trends in education over a period of time. Such information could include: enrolment patterns nationally, regionally, by district or local area. They can also include staffing patterns; examinations performance patterns; funding patterns, etc. This information could be used to correct weaknesses or imbalances, make sound decisions and policies and maintain strengths in the educational system. In this way, attaining the MDG 2 will become a reality.

MDG 3: Gender equality and the empowerment of women: While there has been a significant increase in the enrolment of female students in most tertiary institutions, women in Zambia are predominantly illiterate (at 75%) as compared to their male counterparts (at 65%) and are the poorest of the poor (Republic of Zambia, 2006b). In addition, 24% of females out of the total population have never had any formal education as compared to 20%

for males and more males attain secondary school level or above than females (Republic of Zambia, 2006a). Inadequate or lack of education contributes to the low status of women in national development. High illiteracy levels are linked to high dropout rates among rural girls due to early marriages, poverty and HIV/AIDS. Consequently, the lower levels of education among women have resulted in lower levels of participation in decision making and economic development. Thus although the country remains committed to achieve gender parity in decision making positions, available statistics indicate that Zambian Parliament has twenty-two (22) elected female Members of Parliament out of a total of one hundred and fifty (150). Out of the eight (8) nominated members, only one (1) is female. There are three (3) female ministers at Cabinet level out of twenty six (26) Cabinet portfolios representing approximately twelve percent (12%) of female representation. At Deputy Minister level, only seven (7) positions out of thirty-three (33) are occupied by women representing approximately twenty-one percent (21%) of female representation, (Republic of Zambia, 2009).

It is clear from the available research that the majority of women face the worst form of poverty in today's information society-*Information poverty* to enhance their contributions in all aspects of development. In fact, Primo (2003) claims women's access to information is a major global concern and the third major problem facing women globally after poverty and violence against women. Therefore, if left unattended, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women will remain a dream in the pipe line. In as far as achieving gender equality and empowerment is concerned, information based on records and archives is a tremendous force to reckon with. Women in most instances lack knowledge or information on existing laws including their rights and obligations i.e. their freedoms and entitlements such as equal rights and influence in key decisions, right to speak and to be heard, right to equal participation in decision making, right to equal pay and for equal value, right to access land, right to live free from violence and right to equitably access education and skills (Republic of Zambia, 2009). They also lack information on how to secure essential and basic resources such as health and nutritional services, education, physical and financial capital and land; social and economic structures promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. Women's access to this information would increase their participation and contributions to overall development process substantially. As Ochieng (1994) puts it "information is a prerequisite for human empowerment for it is critical in the attainment of socio-economic and political development including democracy and human rights". For decision and policy makers, available statistical records and archives and also understanding the deep rooted beliefs and traditions that undermine the empowerment of women can help develop policies and laws that are responsive to women's needs. Utilising records and archival information as in the ways described above will enable the country to achieve MDG 3.

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality: The rising rates of child mortality over the years are a major concern in most countries including Zambia today. Millions of children under the age of five die every year in Zambia. While under-five mortality rate in 2007 stood at 119%, infant mortality stood at 70%. The proportion of one year olds immunized against measles stood at 84.9% (Republic of Zambia & United Nations Country Team, 2008). Information based on records and archives is fundamental in reducing child mortality rates. In most cases, the rising child mortality rates are due to lack of information on the part of mothers. Mothers require much more information pertaining to child care, more especially on the importance for them to take infants for immunisation, growth monitoring and avoid Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS among other things. Records and archives are a force to reckon

with in as far as sensitising mothers on child care is concerned. Records and archival information can also form the basis for decision and policy makers to know the current child mortality rates, compare the statistics with past records. Such information is critical in not only policy formulation but also in providing a strategic direction on reducing child mortality in Zambia and the world at large. Records and archives can also be used by decision and policy makers to understand the causes for the rising child mortality rates over the years and how child mortality was prevented in the past and come up with sound decisions and policies aimed at reducing child mortality. If information on child mortality is used as in the above description, then it will be possible to attain MDG 4.

MDG 5: Improve maternal health: High rate of maternal mortality is also a major concern for the Zambian government. Maternal mortality rate stood at 449 per 100,000 live births in 2007 (Republic of Zambia & United Nations Country Team, 2008). The Republic of Zambia (2006a) admits that the increasing maternal mortality ratio among other things is attributed to unskilled home deliveries, low postnatal care, prenatal and post abortion complications and limited access to health facilities.

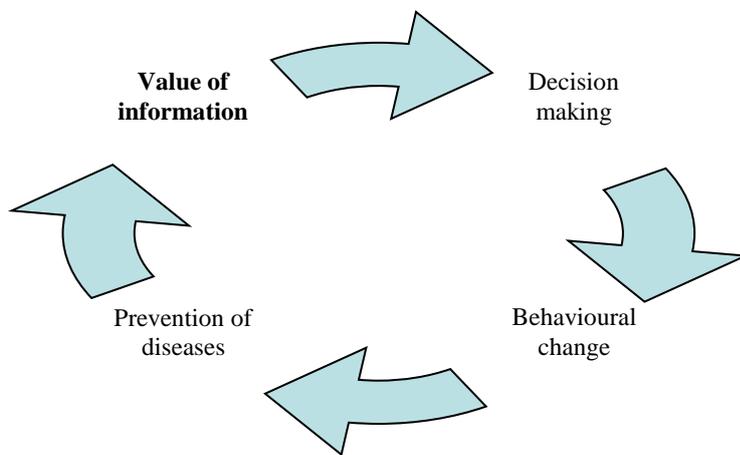
The above challenges arise due to women's lack of information or knowledge about the availability and benefits of accessing such health services during pregnancy. For instance, women in most cases are not aware of free ante-natal services, basic essential obstetric care, comprehensive essential obstetric services and safe delivery and postnatal care. Records and archival information can be used to sensitise, educate and empower expecting mothers on the dangers of not accessing health services and take preventive measures against diseases such as malarial and anaemia during pregnancy. As the old saying goes, "prevention is better than cure" (Bartle, 2007). It is possible to prevent expectant mothers from the dangers described above. However, it is difficult if not impossible to protect expectant mothers from dying if exposed to the dangers of not accessing health services during pregnancy. With access to information, the knowledge state of expectant mothers about health matters during pregnancy is enhanced (Mulauzi & Albright, 2009). A healthy populace contributes effectively to poverty alleviation in terms of increase in productivity and wealth creation, disease prevention, access to safe drinking water, knowledge of proper disposal of wastes, hygiene and nutrition- "much more than clinics, doctors and drugs, which are costly curative solutions than prevention against disease" (Bartle, 2007). For decision and policy makers, records and archival information on past statistical maternal mortality rates, national health policy documents and guidelines including programmes that cover expectant mothers can help them understand the trends in this area and make effective decisions and policies for reducing maternal mortality. It is through the ways described above that we can attain the MDG 4.

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases: Women in Zambia are more vulnerable to major diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria including cholera and diarrhoea diseases. The national HIV prevalence rate among adults aged 15 to 49 years stood at 14.3% in 2007. The infection rates are much higher among women at 16.1% than men at 12.3%, (Republic of Zambia & United Nations Country Team, 2008).

The importance of information based on records and archives in the war against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases such as Tuberculosis and cholera in Zambia cannot be overemphasised. In most cases, women tend to be ignorant about diseases and treatments as well as health promotion and protection, preventive health care, determinants of health and access to health care and family planning techniques to lower fertility rates. Records and archival information is vital for decision and policy makers to understand the diseases

mentioned above, their causes, nature, symptoms, impact, consequences and prevention to those infected, affected and those working on the problem and come up with decisions and policies that would help curb the spread of these diseases. Without this knowledge and information, it would be practically impossible to combat HIV/AIDS, malarial and other diseases. Both the affected and the infected can access information on anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs), how they work and where they can be accessed including other essential drugs for treatment of opportunistic infections, nutrition, and also be able to fight stigma and discrimination, provide care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS including orphans.

Supporting the above point of view, Musoke (2005) reveals that when provided with health information, individuals use it in the prevention and treatment of diseases, know the causes of illness, promote good health, make decisions, make choices, overcome constraints and misconceptions, cope with illnesses, support the community/self-help, change behaviour, change attitude, participate in information awareness raising and for general health knowledge. Musole summarised the importance of health information as shown below:



Source: Musole (2005)

Therefore, if health information is used in the ways described above, then MDG 6 will be met by 2015.

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability: Zambia has abundant natural resources such as water, arable land, minerals and bio-diversity resources. As the population continues to grow, estimated at 13.3 million in 2010 (Republic of Zambia, 2011), the Zambian government is concerned biological resources that are under severe pressure. Many habitats and ecosystems are being destroyed leading to decrease in natural regenerative and buffering capacity and poor quality of the natural resource base.

Information is an indispensable resource that raises awareness and changes people’s moral values and attitudes towards their environment. Statistical and descriptive records and archival information would enable individuals gain knowledge and skills on the state of the environment, damaging effects to the environment and how to effectively manage and conserve their natural resources, fight desertification and deforestation, avoid pollution and ensure the preservation of biodiversity among other things (ITU, 2006).

Records and archives are critical in informing decision and policy makers on the state of the environment and its interaction and reach the level of knowledge and understanding needed for developing sound decisions and policies and for successful environment programme

planning and service delivery. Information based on records and archives is also critical in helping decision makers in identifying alternative and environmentally friendly technologies in sub-sectors of the environment including emerging and agriculture (Republic of Zambia & United Nations Country Team, 2008). Accessing information would also help different sectors of society to appreciate and mitigate possible environmental impacts. Using records and archival information in the ways described above would enable the country attain MDG 7.

MDG 8: Develop global partnerships for development: According to the Republic of Zambia & United Nations Country Team (2008), Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product has been declining from 22% in 2002 to 5.2% in 2006. As a share of the budget, ODA has also been declining over the same period from 42.7% in 2003 to about 25% in 2008. In order for Zambia to develop sustainable global partnerships for development, the decision and policy makers need to understand government's past relations with other countries world over. For instance, how have been Zambia's relationships at national, regional, and international levels? Have they been sustainable relationships aimed at building the nation? If not, what can the country learn from these past relations? Thus, accessing foreign records and archival information, it would be possible for decision makers and planners to come up with a proper system for policy dialogue including appropriate representation that would built not only comprehensive and sustainable global partnerships for development but also address real issues or specific needs of the country. In that way, MDG 8 will be achieved.

REASONS WHY RECORDS AND ARCHIVES ARE UNDER-UTILIZED

It is however important to also mention that in as much as the value and importance of records and archives to individual and national development have been stressed, records and archives in most instances are under-utilized. One contributing factor to their under utilization is the fact that the archival sector suffers from a very low public profile (Oxborrow-Cowan, 2002). A number of ramifications arise from this situation such as narrow user base and ignorance of the archival roles by decision makers (Ibid).

In fact, Hamooya (2009) argues that society in most cases holds mixed feelings about archival information and archival institutions. On the one hand, archival records and archival institutions are viewed by the general public as just piles of useless papers and places for keeping piles of useless papers respectively. On the other hand, they are viewed as records or institutions that can provide decision makers and planners with any urgent information as soon as possible (Boriak, 2002). In fact, Romer-Kenepa (2002) contends that people tend to consider archival institutions as places for keeping dusty papers. For these reasons, Hamooya (2009) argues that it is only when people know about records and archives that they will start looking for them and use them. The more the public knows about archives, the higher the degree of utilization and understanding of the nature and content of archival work (Fumin, 2002) and records and archival information itself. In addition, the fact that in many records creating institutions, records/archives management is a job performed by junior lowly paid staff (Adem, 2002) is a clear indication that the value of information based on records and archives is in most cases undermined.

It is in this regard that archival institutions should embark on awareness programmes through exhibitions, televisions, radio and newspapers on their functions and services. Using the above channels brings people face-to-face with archives, generating an enthusiasm which if properly nurtured will develop into a continuing relationship of mutual appreciation,

(Pederson in Ellis, 1993). In fact, Akakandelwa (2000) points out that the availability of materials in an information institution does not mean the users know about their existence and that they are accessible. If users are aware of the availability of materials, then they will be able to access them.

Hamooya (2009) further in his study concluded that most individuals prefer using other information providing institutions such as libraries and documentation centres to meet their information needs because they provide open access to their service provision compared to a records and archival institution that usually have restrictions on information access.

Another contributing factor to the low utilisation of records and archives is the availability of most of the information from print to electronic media in English and not in local languages (Republic of Zambia, 2006a). There is need for some of the valuable documentary evidence to be available in local languages.

THE WAY FORWARD

As we implement Zambia's vision 2030, the country should make use of the rich information based on archives and records in developing and implementing policies and programs to realise this vision. However, the image of archival institutions in society needs to be changed through publicising their functions and services. While development entails investing in institutions that support good governance such as the National Archives, Fumin (2002) argues that archival institutions should achieve public support through their work of archival advocacy. These institutions should be supported in terms of training and provision of adequate financial resources because maintenance of records and archives is expensive. And if records are to be accessible at present and in the future, they must be maintained properly. There is need to provide suitable storage facilities for records and archives for posterity. In addition, qualified library and information professionals should be engaged in the management of records and archives.

Due to rapid change in technology, the medium of archives will also need to change so that archives can remain accessible in future and also be made more accessible to the general public. This calls for national archival institutions to digitize valuable collections. Archival institutions should further come up with electronic records management strategies to ensure long term preservation of growing prominence of valuable, evidentiary and permanent electronic records to avoid loss of access (Mulauzi, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Records and archives are fundamental in the realization of the MDGs not only in Zambia but in any nation worldwide. They can contribute to social, economic, cultural and political development of society. Information based on records and archives has the potential to empower individuals to make informed choices and actions. Organisations or governments can only act and make decisions if adequate information is available at their fingertips. It is impossible for any country to develop in the absence of archives and records. In fact, the absence of evidential records in most cases results in short term and often unproductive solutions to be implemented which in turn permeate corruption, threatens rights and make audit difficult. Archival institutions therefore, play a significant role by providing access to archives and records irrespective of time, location and remembrance of contemporary witnesses. In an effort to attain the MDGs, government and organizations should be guided by important information based records and archives to formulate decisions and policies that would lead to their attainment.

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