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Marketing and public programming of the services at the national archives of Zambia

BENSON NJOBVU

The University of Zambia Department of Library and
Information Studies benson.njobvu@gmaiL.com

CHRISPIN HAMOOYA

The University of Zambia Department of Library and
Information Studies chrispinmooya@yahoo.com

PRECIOUS CHITUNDU MWILA

University of Zambia
Department of Library and Information Studies
cmvvila@unza.zm

ABSTRACT

The high levels of poverty in most developing countries mean that very few citizens attempt to access the services offered by the National Archives in different countries, including Zambia. As a result, the uptake of National Archives services, including e-services, is minimal. This results in a lack of appreciation for the role the National Archives play in nation building. The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of strategies to market the archive services at the National Archives of Zambia. Current marketing strategies to create greater awareness and attract more prospective users, as well as the challenges encountered by the National Archives in marketing then content and services, are given attention. The study reveals that, although marketing is done to some extent, much more needs to be done to promote the level of awareness among Zambian citizens to ensure greater utilisation of the archives. This research further revealed that currently, the National Archives has no marketing plan in place. The majority of staff at the National Archives needs training in marketing for the marketing programmes to be implemented effectively. Another major challenge being faced by the National Archives is the lack of adequate funding.

The study also revealed that much remains to be done to market the electronic resources created in the recent years by digitising certain elements of the collection. It

is recommended therefore, that muhiple methods of marketing be used to market the services. Additionally, training programmes should be put in place to equip members of staff with the necessary skills in marketing. Government and other cooperating partners should provide adequate funding to financially support the operations of the National Archives, including the marketing activities.

KEYWORDS

Advocacy, marketing of archives. National Archives of Zambia, outreach, public programming

1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that Zambia has been classified as a lower-to-middle income country in 2011, many Zambians are still Hving under very poor conditions. The majority of the citizens are more preoccupied with everyday matters such as food, shelter, clothing and health than with gaining access to information. Consequently, visiting the archives to access information in whatever form, is a low, if not a non-existent priority for most citizens. On the other hand, Kamatula (2011) states that archival institutions are "treasure houses of information held on behalf of society" in the form of original documents, including items such as letters, reports, photographs, maps, plans etc. McKemmish (in Ellis 1993:8), contends that archival information acts as a long-term memory, enabling better quality planning, decision-making and future actions in providing for continuity, access to past experiences, expertise and knowledge, as well as a historical perspective. It may thus be argued that archival information is useful as it enables informed plaiming and decision-making and supports continuity, consistency and greater effectiveness of human endeavours. This means that professionals working in the archives have an important task to market the services to ensure that the public becomes more aware of these important documents.

Kotler (2000) defines marketing as a "social managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want, through creating and exchanging products and value with others". Along similar lines, the Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing [sa] as "a process responsible for identifying and satisfying customer requirements profitably". Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (2008) argue "that designing a programme of archival services without paying attention to public relations, is like planning a party without inviting guests". They further say that regular interaction with client groups is as important as any purely archival activity, if not more so. They suggest that marketing can be done through publications, souvenir items, exhibitions, user education, conferences, and activities for students.

2

WHY THE NEED TO MARKET ARCHIVES?

Archives are very important to our modem society as we cannot expect to plan the future if we do not know where we came from. Bettington et al (2008) say that archives are an asset to an organisation, the community, the state, or the nation, when they are managed well. Archives, in all its various forms, such as official government documents, letters, emails, manuscripts for books, word-processed documents and other digital content, will inform future generations about the actions taken today. Archives also support accountability and transparency.

The National Archives of Zambia hosts priceless documents, such as the various districts' notebooks generated by the administrators of the British South African Company (BCSA) between 1896 and 1964. These notebooks, which have now been digitised, are a source of historical, political, administrative, ethnographical and anthropological information to Zambians. In the past, as well as at present, many government officials, chiefs and ordinary Zambians, have used these documents to settle succession wrangles that have arisen. Other valuable archives housed by the National Archives of Zambia, include photographs, illustrating graphically various aspects of the historical development of the country, as well as pre-independence newspapers, such as the *Mutende Newspapers.* Citizens need to be aware of the existence of these archives in order to make use of them. Marketing is therefore critical in ensuring that the archives are well-known by prospective users.

In the competitive world we are living in, marketing will ensure that the archives justify their existence by proving to fimders that they tmly add value to society. Moreover, marketing will create awareness among prospective users of the archives, thereby increasing the usage of materials. Increased usage would lead to wider support and appreciation of the archives by funders. Williams (in Kamatula 2011), suggests that appropriately marketing the work done by the archives would ensure their survival, particularly when there are frequent budget cuts and rationalisation of programmes. Mohamedali (1999), commenting on the need for marketing library services, which bear a similarity to archives, says that marketing improves the image of the organisation, thus ensuring that the services are sustainable.

3 BACKGROUND OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Hamooya (2009) says that the management of archival information in Zambia is the mandate of the department of National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), which falls under the Ministry of Home Affairs. This mandate is derived from the *National Archives Act,* 1995, Chapter 175, prescribing the Laws of Zambia. The Act is meant to provide for the

preservation, custody, control and disposal of public archives, including public records in Zambia. As described in the Act, public archives entail all those public records that are specified by the Director of National Archives of Zambia as being of enduring value, and have been placed in the custody of the department. Additionally, in terms of the Act, public records entail any government records that have been transferred to the National Archives of Zambia. The Act also stipulates that public records include any records generated by a corporation, by society in general, by any association, institution or organisation, as prescribed by the Minister in terms of the existing statutory instrument, and which are held by these organisations, societies, associations, institutions or organisations.

To better understand the origins of archival information in Zambia, it is important to highlight the historical development of the country in terms of the various administrations which were involved. Zambia was a colony of Great Britain, and the process of colonismg Zambia started with the BSAC. The BSAC was granted a charter in 1891 by the British Government, which led to the formation of North-Eastem Rhodesia, located in South Central Africa. As indicated by Graham and Halwimdi (in Hamooya 2009), this development led to the creation of the office of the administrator under the North-Eastem Rhodesia Order in Council of 1900, which formally placed the North-Eastem Rhodesia under the administration of the BSAC. In this regard, the civil service as such, was established imder the Rules and Regulations of the Civil Service of North-Eastem Rhodesia by Government Notice 1 of 1901. Additionally, North-Western Rhodesia, located in South Central Afi-ica, was formed and administered from 1891 onwards. In 1899, the North-Westem Rhodesia Order in Council was passed, which formally established the administration and gave statutory rights to the Company. The BSAC amalgamated North-Westem Rhodesia with North-Eastem Rhodesia to form Northem Rhodesia in 1911. Before the arrival of the BSAC, the administration of the territories was in the hands of the various chiefs whose authority depended largely on personality and military strength. During this time, information was passed on orally from one authority to another, and this continued with each successive generation. The arrival of the BSAC administration resulted in the imposition of direct rule over many areas that formerly, had been controlled by the traditional chiefs. It is at this stage that we begin to see the emergence of written records.

The BSAC administration of Northem Rhodesia came to an end in 1924, when power was transferred to the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office took over the administration of Northem Rhodesia and introduced a system of indirect mle. Numerous records were created as the administrators managed the affairs of the territories. It thus became imperative for a system to be put in place that would ensure that the records where managed in accordance with acceptable standards. This led to the initiation of a legal fi-amework that would assist with the management of records in a more streamlined maimer.

Mukula (1981) states that the origin of Zambia's modem records management programmes can be traced back to 1953, when the National Archives of the then Southem Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was inaugurated. In 1946, the Government Archivist of Southem Rhodesia was empowered to exercise the same fimctions in Northem Rhodesia and Nyasaland as was the case in Southem Rhodesia. This was legalised through Northem Rhodesia's Ordinance 21 of 1946. This ordinance was intended to formally establish a Central African Archive Service, and to provide for the preservation of the public archives of the territory. In terms of this ordinance, public archives referred to all records, documents and other historical material of any kind, nature and description, which may have been in the custody of any of the government departments, or which may be created subsequent to the date when the ordinance came into effect, and specified that such records should be transferred to the archives office. The ordinance gave powers to the Government Archivist to have care, custody and control of public archives. The Govenmient Archivist was mandated to examine any public archives which were in the custody of any government department, and would advise such departments as to the care, custody and control of these records. Furthermore, the ordinance provided for the examination, disposal or destruction of any records which were not of sufficient pubhc value to justify their preservation by the archives office. The ordinance also provided for the transfer, to the archives office, of all public archives in the custody of any government department.

Additionally, in 1948, the Northem Rhodesia destmction and disposal regulations were enforced through Chapter 24 of the Laws of Northem Rhodesia. The ordinance was known as the Disposal of Records Ordinance. This ordinance provided specific guidelines on the disposal of court records.

In the year 1953, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was put in place. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, also knovwi as the Central Africa Federation (CAF), was established with the aim to create a middle-way between the newly independent and socialist black independent states, and the white-dominated govemments of South Africa, Angola, and Mozambique. The Federation was a semi-independent state ui southem Africa, comprising the former British protectorates of Southem Rhodesia, Northem Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

With the formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, a new act was put in place in 1955, known as the *Archives and Judicial Records Act,* Chapter 24, of the Laws of Northem Rhodesia. The act transferred the powers of the Government Archivist to the Federal Archivists. The Federation officially ended on 31 December, 1963. In this regard, the records pertaining to Northem Rhodesia (now Zambia) that were held in Southem Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) remained in Southem Rhodesia. However, in later years they were microfilmed with the support of UNESCO, and the National Archives of Zambia retains the microfilmed copies of those documents.

Currently, the mission statement of the National Archives of Zambia is to effectively manage and preserve public records, archives and printed publications, and to facilitate the lawful access of information by all stakeholders in accordance with fundamental human rights, and to ensure effective government administration. In order to achieve its mission, the department has set certain objectives to guide its operations, and these include the development and implementation of records management programmes in order to improve accessibility and the retrieval of records, to provide adequate and suitable facilities for the safe custody of documents to prolong their life-span, and to ensure continued accessibility as well as to publicise the operations of the National Archives in an attempt to promote the services of the department (Ministry of Home Affairs 2002).

Services offered by National Archive of Zambia at its headquarters where this research was conducted, include reference services to all materials under their care. They also provide access to electronic services for all materials that have been digitised to date. Further, takmg into consideration the expertise they have gained in the digitisation process, the National Archives offer its technical expertise of digitising archives to other organisations within the various government departments. To date, they have assisted the Livingstone Museum in digitising part of their collection. Other off-premises services provided by the National Archives include record centre services whereby they give advice to govenmient agencies on the professional management of records, from creation to disposal.

4   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Available statistics at the National Archives of Zambia show that there are currently around 120 registered users. This means that the majority of the population is still not accessing Zambia's memory bank. This situation is a cause for concern as Zambia has a population of thirteen milUon people, and Lusaka, where the National Archives is located, has a population of around two million three hundred people. Additionally, Lusaka hosts a concentration of universities as well as research institutions. Clearly then, one would expect a relatively high number of visitations to the archives. However, even after digitising some of the collections, very few people access the collections. It is imperative, therefore, to determine whether the National Archives market their services effectively.

5   OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of strategies to market the archives at the National Archives of Zambia. The study also investigated the various ways in which marketing has been conducted thus far, and to identify the problems faced by the National Archives of Zambia in marketing their services. Lastly,

the study aims to recommend ways in which the National Archives can market their services effectively.   - ¡

6   METHODOLOGY

This research was done at the headquarters of the National Archives of Zambia. The research population comprised 120 registered users of the archive, as well as 24 members of staff with a national certificate in library records management or archival studies as their minimal qualification. A number of research instruments were used to conduct this research. Firstly, questionnaires were used to get the views of respondents. These interviews, as well as the literature review, were done to collect information for the research. The data collected was analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data was analysed using an SPSS package, and quantitative data was analysed using descriptive notes taken fi-om open-ended questions and interviews.

7   PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

7.1   HOW THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZAMBIA ARE CURRENTLY MARKETING THEIR SERVICES

In their response to the question relating to how the National Archives of Zambia currently marketed its services, the majority of staff (80%) indicated that the only method used to market services was through exhibitions during the commemoration of the World Archives Day, as well as during the Library week. At these exhibitions the National Archives of Zambia show-case their services. Hamooya (2009) notes that the National Archives of Zambia implement the objective of publicising the operation of the National Archives of Zambia by holding an annual exhibition and invite members of the public to view the holdings of the department. This event normally lasts a week. It is at this event that the documentary heritage of the nation is displayed, and explanations are given pertaining to the value and usage of archival information. The 2012 annual exhibition was held on 8 June. The event was attended by the Minister of Home Affairs, representing the home ministry of the National Archives of Zambia.

The study also showed that the majority of staff (90%) believed that more needed to be done to market the services of the National Archives. They suggested that the National Archives of Zambia could be involved more in various user-education activities, conferences and workshops to educate the public about the archives. Intense activities involving students would also help to market the services. Staff, however, expressed their concern that for such activities to be possible, substantial additional fundmg would be required.

These findings are in agreement with Bettington et al (2008), who listed such activities as part of publicity activities. They argue that archival organisations need to convey this fact in an accurate, well-presented and tunely manner. Other activities recommended, include the use of websites and emails to make prospective users more aware of the services. They also agreed that most of these activities require funds, which may not be easy to come by.

The study showed that the majority of staff members noted that there was low turnout of users, primarily for the following three reasons: the lack of marketing the services, the prevailing poor reading culture, and high access fees being charged for access to electronic resources.

The study also revealed that the National Archives of Zambia currently had no concrete marketing plan in place. It is important for the National Archives to plan their marketing activities, because the planning process itself would enable staff to identify what resources they would need. Plaiming also clarifies whether the services currently on offer to users were actually on demand, whether the location where the services were being offered was a suitable venue, and to determine whether the staff themselves were adequately trained for the challenges of marketing. Njobvu (2008) says that the planning process also helps staff in coming up with promotional strategies which are adapted to users' needs.

7.2   AWARENESS AMONG USERS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZAMBIA'S SERVICES

Hamooya (2009) says that it is only when people are familiar with the archives that they would access and use them. When users were asked about how they heard about the National Archives of Zambia's services, the majority of the users (68%) indicated that they had heard about archival information through channels other than television, the radio and newspapers, chaimels which are mostly used by institutions providing information about products or services. These results were contrary to Pederson, in Ellis (1993), who advocates the use of the above channels for user education. The argument is that if television, newspapers and many other channels were used in user education programmes, people would be brought face-to-face with the archives, thereby generating enthusiasm, which if properly nurtured, could develop into a continumg relationship of mutual appreciation.

The study fiirther revealed that the majority of the users (65%) understood the importance of archives. However, the research showed that the majority of researchers used the facilities of the National Archives to a minimal degree. The study further revealed that the information obtained from the institution was regarded as useful to the majority of researchers. These results are in line with McKemmish (in Ellis 1993:8), who states that archives are important because they help to support the continuity, consistency and

effectiveness of human actions, as these documents provide the basis for accessing the experience, knowledge and historical perspectives of others.

This research fiirther showed that the majority of users (67%) were less aware of the electronic services offered by the National Archives of Zambia, while 33% said they were not aware of these services at all. The fact that the majority of the users were not aware of the services, means that utilisation of the service is not maximised. This is problematic in terms of obtaining the necessary funding to digitise more archives. Most sponsors would want to see evidence that these digital archives were appreciated by users. This state of affairs is unfortunate as electronic access is the most frequently used mode of access to information in archives in our modem society. If the majority of users were not aware of the existence of these services, then they are denied one of the most popular modes of accessing archives.

7.3   PREFERRED METHODS OF MARKETING RECOMMENDED BY USERS

Users were asked their opinion about the most effective methods of marketing the new services of the National Archives of Zambia. The majority of them recommended advertisements, articles in newspapers and current awareness bulletins, in addition to exhibitions, which were currently the most prominent method of marketing. These recommendations by users were in line with the recommendations of Bettington et al (2008).

7.4   CHALLENGES FACED BY NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZAMBIA IN MARKETING THEIR SERVICES

The greatest challenge to the effective marketing of services identified by members of staff was the availability of sufficient funds. Staff also indicated that they had little training in marketing the services offered at the National Archives of Zambia. These findings are in line with Steadley (2003), who suggested that information managers often do not promote their information services due to a lack of training and an inadequate knowledge of marketing. Steadly (2003) also maintains that, despite the growing literature on the marketing of information services, there is still a lack of familiarity with marketing strategies among librarians. The University of Zambia's Department of Library and Information Studies, recently introduced a full course in marketing to ensure that graduates were well-grounded in this regard.

8   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENIDATIONS

In conclusion, the study recommends that the National Archives of Zambia should do much more to ensure that users, and prospective users, are aware of the valuable collection of archival material at the archives. There is no doubt that the archives will become more appreciated once citizens start using the services. Inadequate fimding of the programmes of the National Archives of Zambia was identified as the greatest barrier to the marketing of the archives, however, with additional efforts fi-om staff, much more could be done even now to ensure that there is a greater awareness of the archives. The study fiulher revealed that members of staff needed training in the marketing of archives. Such a training programme would ensure that staff would have the necessary skills to market the services. It was established that the National Archives of Zambia, as an information provider, is utilised by a limited number of people in Zambia, but that its services were meeting the needs of users to a certain extent. However, much more needs to be done in terms of creating greater awareness.

In harmony with the above, it is therefore recommended that Government, in being the primary source of fimding, should substantially increase the level of fijnding to the institution. Additionally, training programmes should be designed to enable staff to gain the necessary marketing skills. The National Archives of Zambia should have more fi-equent exhibitions and conduct other awareness programmes to properly market its products in terms of value and benefits to would-be users. The National Archives should use multiple marketing methods to ensure that their awareness programmes reach as many people as possible

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kelvin Joseph Bwalya is a senior lecturer in Information Systems at the University of Botswana. His research interests lie in information systems (e-govemment, databases, business process modelling, semantic information retrieval and analysis, etc). Kelvin holds a PhD in Information Management from the University of Johannesburg, with the focus on e-govemment systems.

Forget Chaterera is an assistant lecturer at the Midlands State University of Zimbabwe. She is currently reading for her Master's degree by research in Information Science (Archival Science) at the Department of Information Sciences at the University of South Africa. Her research interests focuses on records management and archival administration.

Precious Chitundu Mwila is a lecturer at the School of Education in the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Zambia. She holds a Master of Science degree in Information Technology Management and Organisational Change (ITMOC) from Lancaster University, England, and a BA in Library and Information Studies from the University of Zambia. She has been engaged in consultancy work for various organisations, including the United Nations Investment and Development Organisation (UNIDO) in Zambia, where she served as National Consultant for Survey Sensitization. Currently, she is participating in a consultancy with the World Bank relating to HIV in Zambia. Ms Mwila has presented papers at both national and intemational level. She has also published some articles in proceedings as well as in journals.

Tanya du Plessis (PhD) is a senior academic at the Department of Information and Knowledge Management, University of Joharmesburg, and specialises in legal research, competitive intelligence Tools and Techniques and VLE content integration. She is also involved in CI projects at the Centre for Information and Knowledge Management. She holds a D Litt et Phil (Rand Afrikaans University, South Africa), with the focus on information and knowledge management in support of legal research in a digital information environment.

Chrispin Hamooya started work at the National Archives of Zambia in 1991 as an assistant archivist, and rose through the ranks to become the Director of the National Archives of Zambia (2002 to 2004). He has been a lecturer at the University of Zambia in the Department of Library and Information Studies since 2004. Chrispin specialised in Records Management and Archives Adminisfration. He holds a Master's degree in

Library and Information Management from Sheffield University, UK, obtained in 2002. Chrispin also did his BA in Library Studies *with* the University of Zambia in 1998. He has written several articles in the area of digitisation and public programming.

Karen Harris (PhD) is a professor in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria, as well as Director of the University of Pretoria Archives. She holds a DPhil in History and her interests include the study of expatriate Chinese citizens currently living in Southern Africa.

Victor Kabata is a records manager with the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Information Sciences from the Moi University, and a Master's degree in Records Management and Archives Adminisfration from Kenyatta University.

Gwakisa Kamatula is a lecturer and consultant in Archives and Records Management at the Tanzania Public Service College in Tabora, Tanzania. He holds a Master's degree in Archives and Records Management from the University of Botswana, and a BA in Education from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. As a lecturer, Kamatula has published several articles in the Archives and Records Management. His areas of interests are elecfronic records and the general management of public records throughout their life-cycle.

Lorette Jacobs (PhD) is a Library and Information Science consultant working closely with, inter alia, the Unisa Department of Library and Information Science in promoting post graduate academic excellence. She holds a D.Litt et Phil degree in Information Science from the University of Johannesburg.

Mercy Mlay Komba is a PhD candidate at the University of South Africa. She is also an assistant lecturer at the Mzumbe University in Morogoro, Tanzania. Her research interests include e-govemment and knowledge management.

Ndakaitei Makwanise is a lecturer at the National University of Science and Technology in the Business Management Department. He holds a Master's degree in Peace and Govemance (MPG) from the Africa University. He obtained his BA degree at the University of Zimbabwe where he majored in History, Economic History and Archaeology. He is now involved in fraining programmes in conflict transformation skills.

Sikhulumani B. Mangena (PhD) is a Computer Science lecturer in the Department of Computer Science at the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe (NUST). He taught Computer Science for 22 years, both at NUST and at the University of Zimbabwe. He holds a PhD in Software Engineering from the University of Warwick in the UK, and has a Master's degree in Cybernetics from Belgrade University. His research interests include distributed systems, concurrent high performance computing, intelligent agency, artificial intelligence and computing curricula.

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