AF01 Curriculum Alignments at Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa: Preparing Professionals to Manage Records Created in Network Environments – Literature Review

A. Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a survey of existing literature related to the archives and records-management education and training landscape in Africa. Some woefully inadequate past attempts have included:

- Historical developments through the work of regional centres by the International Council on Archives (ICA);
- ICA surveys through the education directory project; and
- Other studies in scholarly publications.

The InterPARES Trust project—"Curriculum Alignments at Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa: Preparing Professionals to Manage Records Created in Network Environments" (Code AF01)—aims to provide the first extensive study of archival and records-management education and training in Africa.

The need for education, training, and research in archives and records management cannot be overemphasized, especially in this era of technological development. Education, training, and research in this area can help to empower archivists and records managers to tackle the challenges of governance in electronic environments, as well as to formulate research agendas to address societal challenges such as lack of accountability, high rates of litigation, bad audit results, and absent or poor service delivery emanating from breakdowns in record systems (Katuu, 2009, p. 133). Records-management systems in the public sector in several African countries are in a state of disarray. Until this point, research and training in archives and records management has received little attention in many sub-Saharan African countries, a deficiency that this study hopes to mitigate.

This project will investigate the curriculum taught at higher education institutions in Africa in an attempt to discover how successfully they are preparing students for a future in the archives and records-management field. The basis for this literature review is consultation of tracer studies and other research including five book chapters, 50 articles, two dissertations, and six conference papers. Its focus is on archives and records-management education programmes and initiatives in Africa, but also includes research from leaders in the field in Africa, North America, and Europe.

This review first discusses the historical context of African archival-education programmes and the regional and national contexts in which they operate. It then describes key curricula and structural concerns for education programmes, and discusses their iterations in African contexts. Identified concerns include the location of archival and records-management programmes within educational institutions; types of programmes; theoretical vs. practical training; harmonised vs. specialised programmes;
and inclusion of training in information and communication technology (ICT) training. The review also describes several tracer studies that show the career trajectories of graduates of archival, records-management, and other information-management programmes. It asserts the importance of increased engagement with professional associations and standards. Finally, the review touches on the lessons learned from other regions and international partners, and shows the potential for an international curriculum for archives and records-management training.

B. Historical Context

B.1 A History of African Archival Education

Several articles provide historical context for archival education in Africa. Katuu notes that when discussing education and training in African countries, it is essential to acknowledge their complex national and regional sociopolitical contexts. Failure to do so results in oversimplification, stereotyping, and a tendency to speak of nearly a billion people making up 54 countries as a single entity (Katuu, 2015, p. 97). As of 2015, 61 archival education programmes across 16 African countries consisted of undergraduate, certificate, diploma, higher certificate, graduate, doctoral, postdiploma certificate, and postgraduate diploma programmes (Katuu, 2015, pp. 140–141). An earlier survey in 2002 acknowledged that Africa’s many different types of archival education programmes, including preappointment education and on-the-job introductory education and training, as well as postappointment continuing education and training, resulted in a lack of standardization across the profession (Katuu, 2015, p. 101). As such, there is also a lack of professional consensus on the best design and implementation of the various education programmes (Katuu, 2009).

The current array of programmes consists of a legacy of colonial recordkeeping and varied national and regional efforts after independence. During Africa’s colonial period, colonial administrators were responsible for recordkeeping and made little effort to train the indigenous peoples of Africa (Katuu, 2015, p. 99). After the colonial period, colonial archives and records-management (ARM) professionals provided recordkeeping education, or individuals went to Europe or North America for training (Katuu, 2015, p. 99). The colonial legacy in Africa included colonialist always informing librarianship (including archives and records management), and curricula developed in colonialists’ countries providing the substantial basis for curricula in Africa (Aina, 2005, pp. 165–166). Unfortunately, education in Europe and North America catered to an archival environment that was not especially suitable to the situation in Africa. In response, some leaders of European education programmes, such as those from the School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies at University College London (UCL), organized study tours, workshops, and training opportunities to help African nations address their records backlogs and inadequate records systems. Further, UCL amended its programme curriculum more than once to better accommodate international students hailing from African and other postcolonial countries (Mnjama, 2014, p. 23).
African countries have had comparatively few education and training opportunities. As a result of the slow development of archival-training opportunities in African countries, ‘[m]ost archivists who practiced before mid-1980s either did not have any training or were trained overseas’, arguably in programmes not tailored to the needs of African students (Khayundi, 2011, p. 63). The International Records Management Trust (IRMT) was instrumental in creating solutions for developing countries. The IRMT has developed guides, teaching materials, and tools, and established knowledge-sharing initiatives, but it has not solved the wide expertise gap between developed and developing countries, due to poor funding and limitations in the programmes it can offer (McDonald, 2014, p. 239). The most significant period in the establishment of archival and records management in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) started in the 1970s, when the International Council of Archives (ICA) and UNESCO worked to establish regional training centres to educate archivists in SSA. They established two centres, one in Senegal in 1971 for Francophone countries, and another for Anglophone countries in Ghana in 1975 (Katuu, 2015, p. 136). Lacking continued funding, these centres have since degenerated into the national programmes seen today. In a 1994 study, Aina found that the majority of Library and Information Science (LIS) educators had studied in either the UK or the USA, despite the encouraging establishment of a Masters in Library Studies (MLS) and a PhD programme at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1969 (Aina, 1994, p. 105).

By 1998, programmes for archives and records management were few and barely recognizable compared to today’s programmes. Records-management education was almost nonexistent in sub-Saharan Africa, where the discipline was only beginning to emerge. Archival programmes were more well established in the region, fostered through their affiliation with the Eastern and Southern African Branch of the ICA (ESARBICA) (Mazikana, 1998, p. 78). National archives offered or encouraged national programmes such as the National Diploma in Archives Service (South Africa). Kirkwood (1998) described the evolution of the Diploma with relation to the skills required of archivists in the public sector in South Africa, at the time the largest employer of archivists. While entry-level positions were open to applicants with a relevant three-year bachelor’s degree, promotion required on-the-job formal professional training toward the postgraduate National Diploma, later provided by Technikon SA. This method of postappointment professional qualification was considered the standard for some time (Kirkwood, 1998, p. 120). Saleh (1998) called for a strong professional association to represent archivists in South Africa, and asserted that training programmes should reflect an increasing trend toward ‘multi-skilled’ information workers, including training in records management, electronic recordkeeping/archiving, audiovisual archives, archives of oral history, preservation and conservation, and digitisation and the World Wide Web (WWW) (Saleh, 1998, p. 103).

Looking forward, Theron (1998) described the proposed programmes for the education of archivists at UNISA, South Africa, starting in the year 2000. The author notes that the preferred method of teaching at UNISA is education that involves instilling the capacity to learn, as distinct from training that refers to ‘drilling’ or transfer of skills or specific techniques. This difference would become important in the differentiation of theory from
practical skills, and programme objectives that reflect the aim of equipping graduates to become archivists, records managers, information managers, and knowledge workers for the changing job market (Theron, 1998, p. 114).

B.2 Challenges in the Field in Africa
Several factors work against a thriving archives and records-management field in Africa, including but not limited to the education environment, lack of professional visibility, and lack of national and regional support.

Education Environment

Graduate-level education, generally the experts’ preferred form of archives and records-management education, is difficult to execute in Africa due to ‘low numbers of qualified staff, virtually non-existent research, poor quality of educational materials and out-moded programmes, [and] educational methodologies based on the model of rote memorization that does not encourage critical thinking, problem solving and creativity' (Katuu, 2009, p. 138; Katuu, 2015 p. 107). Many current programmes suffer from these shortages and shortcomings. Studies of existing programmes such as the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana argue that there is significant need for restructuring and modernization of facilities and programmes to improve access to learning technologies, incorporate varied and modernised teaching methods, and ensure ongoing accessibility and availability of qualified educators (Wamukoya, Zulu and Kalusopa, 2013, pp. 68–72).

Other criticisms of the education environment include concern over importing curricula ‘wholesale,’ without attention to the local context or regional and national needs. This issue compounds problems with shortages of locally trained professionals to act as educators, and inadequate knowledge and training for educators in computer technologies (Aina, 1994, p. 105). Clearly, the education environment makes it increasingly difficult to prepare graduates for the challenges they will encounter in the field.

Lack of Professional Visibility
Several problems in the field in Africa stem from an unclear understanding of who should work in archives and records-management jobs. Some organisations advertise for librarians when the job’s key responsibilities suit an archives and records-management professional (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 206). An underlying lack of understanding about the nature of certain documents results in some organizations trying to manage all of their files in the same manner (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 206). Additionally, in some cases records management is simply not even considered. The records environment in Namibia suffers mostly from ‘a glaring absence of the use of classification schemes, retention schedules, and the systematic disposal of records resulting in heavy congestion of offices and poor retrieval of information’ (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 207). Many employees in institutions are unaware that a records registry even exists for them to use, and the introduction of email and electronic records complicates
the records scene even further (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 207). These issues point to a need to develop professional identity through education and professional associations.

**Lack of National and Regional Support**

Despite the importance of records management to good governance, significant barriers exist to effective recordkeeping in local, regional, and national governmental contexts. Bakare and Issa (2016) show that without adequate support from local and regional governmental bodies, records-management efforts of local government councils in Nigeria suffer from inadequate funding, lack of equipment and materials, poor maintenance culture, erratic power supply, lack of skilled personnel, inadequate storage facilities, and lack of management planning. These archives require support in the form of a records-management policy, improved storage facilities, establishment of adequate financing, and integrated and comprehensive records-management programmes (Bakare and Issa, 2016, pp. 61–62).

Okello-Obura (2009) discusses the issues prevalent in Uganda. He states that Uganda had no records legislation until the National Records and Archives Act of 2001, and that there are many problems with the records environment in the country. His study explains that researchers often cannot use archival information due to inadequate finding aids, poor arrangement and description, understaffed records and archival services, and inadequate retrieval tools (Okello-Obura, 2011). He also notes that laws and legislation are a major inhibiting factor to good records and archives management, along with little effort to engage legislators and policy makers in changing this.

In Botswana too, national legislation concerning the library and archives institutions limits the career opportunities for graduates of archives and records-management programmes (Wamukoya, Zulu and Kalusopa, 2013, pp. 68–72).

Khayundi noted in 2011 that 'most of the current practicing archivist and records managers cannot be assumed to have had the necessary archives education and training. A number of them have learned on the job or have attended short workshops which hardly [provide] the required education background and competencies' (Khayundi, 2011, p. 63). While there are certainly many obstacles to overcome in the archives and records-management field in Africa, improved archival education programmes offer an avenue for improvement and continued professionalization.

**C. Archival Education Programmes—Structure and Curricula**

Here we discuss the form and character of African archival education programmes. Information collected from relevant literature focuses on the content and structure of certain archival education programmes. Tracer studies—research tracking the career paths of information-programme graduates—also provide additional insight into the successes and failings of certain programmes.

**C.1 Where to House Archival and Records-Management Programmes**

Considerable debate surrounds where archives and records-management education programmes should exist within larger institutions, an issue that leading professionals in
the field all over the world discuss. According to Karen Anderson (2015), university-based archival education programmes often are associated with history or library programmes (p. 43). She also notes that some reside within schools of information technology or computer science, and that many have become part of Information Schools. Jimerson (2010) further explains that ‘because the archives profession grew out of the discipline of history, much of the early focus was on historical training and knowledge of history’ (p. 2) Despite many debates on whether history or library science was the preferred path of entry into a career in archives, by the early 21st century, there were far more archival education programmes based in library and information science than in history or any other discipline (Jimerson, 2010, p. 3).

Close association with library programmes is the norm for archives and records-management programmes in African countries. Theron (1998) considered it entirely appropriate to place archival education within a library school due to available resources, shared goals and functions, and opportunities for fruitful cooperation (p. 115). Thus, it is not surprising that so many information, archives, and records-management programmes nest in departments or schools of library and information science. However, these departments and schools are part of a range of academic units that include UNISA’s School of Arts/College of Humanities (South Africa); Kabale University’s Faculty of Arts/Social Sciences (Uganda); Makerere University’s College of Computing and Information Sciences (Uganda); Uganda Christian University’s Faculty of Education; and the University of Pretoria’s School of Information Technology, Faculty of Engineering. (Okello-Obura, 2012, pp. 85–86).

Changing global contexts provide opportunities for new academic alliances such as these. In Uganda, Makerere University’s East African School of Library and Information Science merged with the Faculty of Computing and Informatics Technology to respond strategically to the changing global knowledge environment and to its institutional context. Okello-Obura (2012) found that this offered great benefits, such as greatly improved ICT infrastructure available to archives and records-management students, as well as increases in staff capacity, graduate programmes, and student population (Okello-Obura, 2012, p. 94).

C.2 Types of Programmes

Debates on the format of archives and records-management education in Africa and the lack of standardization amongst various programmes have resulted in many different programme structures across the continent. The Botswana Library School began by offering a certificate and a diploma in librarianship, but now has eight different programmes in the department, including certificate, diploma, and bachelor’s and master’s degrees in library and information studies (Aina and Moahi, 1999, p. 215). A tracer study discovered that students concerned over the length and the duplication between the diploma and the certificate suggested harmonising the two programmes (Aina and Moahi, 1999, p. 229).

Other schools also offer many degrees of varying duration and qualifications. For example, the East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS,
Makerere University, Uganda offers a Certificate in Library and Information Studies (CLIS), a para-professional course; a Diploma in Library and Information Studies (DLIS) to train mid-level information workers; a Diploma in Records and Archive Management (DRAM) to educate and train students in the Archives and Records-Management fields; a Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) to provide students with knowledge and skills in managing different types of information institutions; and a Master of Science in Information Science (M. Sc [Inf. Sc]) to cater to information specialists and managers (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004).

The University of Zululand (South Africa) offers several different programmes as well, with most respondents (36 of 50) from Shongwe and Ocholla’s 2011 tracer study having studied Information Science to the bachelor’s level. Respondents also had studied Library and Information Sciences (14 of 50) at the undergraduate level; 3 out of 50 respondents had taken the Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Sciences; and a small number had studied up to Honours (5 of 50) and Master’s (2 of 50) levels (Shongwe and Ocholla, 2011, p. 230).

The Department of Information and Communication Studies at the University of Namibia currently offers Diploma of Information Studies, and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Library and Records Management; or BA in Media Studies (Nengomasha and Chiware, 2009). Nengomasha explains that for Namibia’s situation, ‘harmonisation of the curricula for the three professions, namely librarianship, archives and records management with an opportunity for specialization in the different disciplines seems the most logical way to go’ (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 208). The programme operates this way so that students can get training in all three areas, as they often end up managing their organization’s current records and archives, as well as running the libraries (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 208). Nengomasha also discusses offering short courses and workshops to current information professionals in Namibia, many of whom do not meet the entry requirements to register for the University’s programmes (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 213).

This variety of programmes available for training and education in the archives and records-management field in Africa has resulted in a lack of standardization. This can result in fragmentation and an inability of students, educators, and employers to establish expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding (Ngulube, 2001, p. 156). Respondents from various tracer studies all seem to express some dissatisfaction with the structure of their programme, whether it be over redundancy between different certifications, or lack of clarity about the objective of their training. This great variance in training also challenges employers in the field to know what to expect from graduates. One employer noted that the majority of graduates hired at his place of work assume new responsibilities with very little support, making their education especially important (Nengomasha and Chiware, 2009, p. 9).

Notably, national governments have the potential to impose standardization on archival qualifications. Ngulube (2001) viewed the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa as an opportunity to establish the knowledge, skills, and understandings that students should have the ability to demonstrate in specific
contexts; and to promote teaching practices and strategies to achieve these content and performance standards in students (pp. 163–164). The newer Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (2007) in South Africa is one such programme that insists upon uniformity of qualifications. This is useful for determining qualification equivalence between countries, and for students between phases of their learning, but threatens to disrupt the established understanding between educators, students, and employers by removing old and unfamiliar qualifications. Minishi-Majanja (2009) writes that this is a process that must be undertaken with the support of a strong professional association to bridge the gap between LIS education and practice (p. 157).

Based on the literature, it seems that some degree of standardization amongst the various training programmes in Africa would benefit both students and employers. A standardized international curriculum is a potential solution to this problem discussed later in the literature review.

C.3 Theory versus Practical Training

Theoretical education versus practical training emerged as a major theme in the literature survey. While all research indicated that graduate-level education is preferable when it teaches students to think ‘archivally’ rather than just teaching them to practice a craft, graduates surveyed in tracer studies overwhelmingly responded with a desire for less theoretical content and more practical training in their curriculum. According to Jimerson (2010), until the mid-1980s, North American archival education emphasized practical skill development rather than an integrated theoretical foundation. Eventually, growing numbers of archival educators taught with an emphasis on archival theory rather than practical experience (p. 3).

Katuu (2009) notes that many African programmes address training rather than education, and that ‘several regional commentators have, through their publications, demonstrated the tendency towards skill building rather than the development of a professional mindset’ (p. 136). Katuu explains that the danger in an academic environment such as this is ‘to view students as embryonic professionals rather than as academic creatures who primarily assimilate and analyze concepts and by extension are competent to determine the connections between theory and practice’ (p. 138).

An archival education that focuses on practical training with no relation to theory can be problematic. As Ketelaar explains, this type of structure ‘[wins] the battle to provide day-to-day archival services, but without a research base [there is] danger of losing the war to save the profession’ (as quoted in Shepherd, 2012, p. 175). Ngoepe, Maluleka, and Oyancha (2014) establish the need for increased emphasis on research in archives and records-management education, and recommend creating opportunities for collaborative projects between novice and established researchers, with a view toward mentoring and transferring research skills, thereby increasing the research contributions of African scholars and professionals (pp. 132–133). These authors also establish that research in archives and records management has the potential to ensure that the profession can keep up with and respond to changing societal needs (Ngoepe, Maluleka and Oyancha, 2015, pp. 147–148). In his 2008 article, Kemoni establishes the
value of theoretical framing for graduate-records management research and demonstrates that an understanding of theoretical models should inform the research experiences of graduate students (p. 106).

While preference for graduate-level education with heavy theoretical emphasis seems to be the consensus among archival experts, the tracer studies consulted and discussed later in this review present a contrary opinion. Students overwhelmingly advocated a less theoretical education and desired more practical skills and training-oriented education. For instance, respondents from the East African School of Library and Information Studies complained that a theoretical curriculum was problematic because graduates lacked important practical skills and had to undergo lengthy inservice training before starting their new jobs. This was a serious issue because many of the new graduates gained employment in one-person libraries and had to resort to learning new skills by trial and error (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 106). A curriculum with a balance between theory and practice, rather than exclusively dedicated to one or the other, would benefit graduates with both the conceptual and practical skill set needed to thrive in the field (Noko and Nglulube, 2015, p. 281).

In accordance with the desire for a more balanced education, tracer study respondents overwhelmingly requested more opportunities for practical training in their various programmes. Some respondents suggested making practical work a compulsory programme component. Only one tracer study yielded the response that practical training was not relevant to the programme, but this was acknowledged to be an issue with the duration of the placement, since changed from one day per week for one session to three weeks at full time (Aina and Moahi, 1999, p. 224).

This data suggests that programmes must carefully navigate the balance between theory and practice with attention to international, national, and regional needs. Katuu points out that inadequate and ineffective educational environments plague graduate education in Africa, resulting in less research and fewer opportunities for the development of practical skills (Katuu, 2009, p. 138; Katuu, 2015, p. 107) Additionally, the development of curricula in African programmes must take account of national and regional needs and expectations. From this perspective, the curricula of programmes in Africa should not simply mirror the curricula of programmes in North America or Europe. Rather, the curricula should meet the needs of their specific area to ensure that graduates have the professional competencies required by employers (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 101).

C.4 Specialised versus Harmonised Programmes
The idea of harmonisation of the curricula may give positive direction to archives and records-management training and education in Africa. A similar structure exists in New Zealand. According to Chawner and Oliver (20120, the courses that comprised archives and records-management qualifications at the Victoria University of Wellington were also available to MLIS students as electives. In 2008, a proposal was made for a revised qualification, a Master of Information Studies (MIS), with two specializations:
library science, and archives and records-management (Chawner and Oliver, 2012, p. 62). As of 2012, this was considered well placed to cater to the needs of both groups.

In African contexts, implementing harmonisation constitutes a positive change for curricula that may suffer from duplication of content across courses, poor structuring of courses, and resource constraints (Mutula, Wamukoya and Zulu, 2005, p. 77). In the University of Botswana’s LIS programme, an offering of overly specialised core courses did not cover essential aspects of information literacy or archives and records-management foundational principles. Recommendations to the university urged harmonising the courses to remove duplication and ensure that the core courses for both LIS and archives and records-management programmes included essential knowledge and skills (Mutula, Wamukoya and Zulu, 2005, pp. 89–90).

However, the importance of specialisation picks up on an important theme: the need to offer practical skill sets. Graduates responding to one tracer survey almost universally expressed a need for more specialisation within their various programmes. Sixty percent of respondents from the EASLIS advocated specialisation in the curriculum, primarily because graduates struggle once they have gained employment working in specialised libraries (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 105). The authors suggest that programmes should be 'market driven', so that students gain specialised experience in areas where employers will potentially hire them, such as records and archives centres, banking institutions, and registries (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 106). They also suggest that the EASLIS should offer specialised courses to help graduates work nationally and internationally as subject specialists and consultants (Lutwama, 2004, p. 106). Nengomasha (2006) agrees that incorporating more specialisation into programmes benefits students and employers, and suggests that specialisation could address the records and archives-training issue in Namibia. She says introducing specialisation within the broadened curriculum could work to include a strong focus on electronic records management (p. 214). Specialisation is important because it gives students purpose and goals. Many students at the University of Zululand felt that their programme lacked focus and the objective of their training was unclear (Shongwe and Ocholla, 2011, p. 234). Specialised modules would help students by providing them in-depth training and direction in their studies and help employers by producing qualified and experienced professionals.

C.5 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Training and Other Curriculum Changes

The addition to current curricula that graduates desired most, aside from more practical experience, was increased training in Information Communication Technology (ICT). In 'Dodos in the archives: rebranding the archival profession to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century within ESARBICA', Francis Garaba (2015) shows that the Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) has historically followed models of inservice or 'on the job' training programmes, and suffers from a lack of IT-related skills and competencies such as digital curation, digital preservation, audio-visual and digital archiving, and digitisation, to name but a few. A heavy bias toward traditional theory has kept archival programmes
behind, leaving archival graduates with ‘only cosmetic practical exposure, spiced with little dosages of digital technologies’ (Garaba, 2015, p. 217). Unfortunately, Garaba shows that desirable changes are not implemented due to lack of financial and personnel resources to support a digital curriculum. Educators trained in the traditional school are ill-equipped to provide digital competencies (Garaba, 2015, p. 217).

The need for increased technical resources echoes throughout the literature and yet proves to be a persistent problem. In 2003, Minishi-Majanja identified an established need for greater representation of ICTs in LIS course content and diffusion of ICT competencies to students. She found that schools suffer from poor ICT infrastructure and inadequate ICT capacity in learners and educators (Minishi-Majanja, 2003, p. 159). In 2004, she further found that although ICTs have become central to LIS education, their application in teaching and learning in South Africa suffered from lack of resources. Although used for administration, ICT was not widely available to students and researchers, and access to computers and to the Internet was quite limited (Minishi-Majanja, 2004, p. 151). These conclusions were echoed in Minishi-Majanja and Ocholla’s findings in a study of Kenya’s LIS education, where inadequate facilities, software, and network access were identified as barriers (Minishi-Majanja and Ocholla, 2003, p. 260). Building on this understanding, Minishi-Majanja and Kiplang’at (2005) later found that ICT constituted a high relative advantage to LIS education; was acceptably compatible with the value systems of LIS; and would result in visible changes to LIS education (pp. 221–222).

Tracer studies, discussed in further detail below, also show that graduates are keen to acquire digital competencies. Eighty-seven percent of respondents from the East African School of Library and Information Studies (EASLIS) were not satisfied with what was available (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 104). Respondents noted that training in this area was mostly theoretical and delivered by inexperienced lecturers, forcing many graduates to seek extra training in ICT skills outside of the EASLIS (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 104). Noko and Ngulube (2015) agree that programmes should expose their students to more practical technology work and infuse more ICT modules into the curriculum (p. 281). Employers in Uganda listed computer skills among the most desired employee qualities and considered the ability to use a computer a basic skill (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 100). Additionally, the introduction of e-government into the African public-service sector requires professionals to ‘understand trends and developments in technology, keep up with changes in the field, and . . . [have] enough expertise to communicate with technology experts (as quoted in Nengomasha, 2006, p. 214). One suggestion for improving the current state of ICT education is to create a laboratory to introduce students to new technology (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 102). Whether in the form of a laboratory for hands-on experience or some other initiative, information-management programmes in Africa require major revisions to the curriculum to meet the information-technology needs of the profession.
Other Curriculum Changes for African Contexts
Other desired curriculum changes reflect the need for programmes to respond to the local, regional, and national contexts of schools and graduates. For example, Aina (2005) asserts that the curricula of African library schools do not meet African library and information needs, and describes a curriculum based on the four pillars of LIS, ICT, archives and records-management, and information for the rural community. The focus on information for rural communities reflects the need for LIS schools to increase reading and information literacy among disadvantaged groups (Aina, 2005, p. 184–185). In a 2003 study of 11 South-African LIS programmes, Murray (2003) found that preservation education was quite limited. Although a necessity for stemming the degradation of valuable cultural materials, preservation is not adequately addressed in the schools studied. As a result, graduates may still be untrained in skills such as basic book repair, environmental control and monitoring, disaster preparedness and recovery, binding options, staff and user education, traditional reformatting (including microforms and photocopying), and digitisation (Murray, 2006, pp. 101–102).

Other relevant courses for records and archives management respond to changing national and global contexts. For instance, Dewah and Mutula (2016) assess the reception of the National University of Science and Technology’s (NUST) ‘infopreneurship’ education course for the B.Sc. in Records and Archives Management programme. Students viewed the course as relevant and enriching their education, as well as expanding their employment opportunities after graduation (p. 1). Ondari-Okemwa and Minishi-Majanja (2007) also found that the discipline of knowledge management was increasingly essential to LIS education in South Africa (p. 136).

D. Tracking Success

D.1 Tracer Studies
A collection of tracer studies describes the success or failure of education programmes to meet the needs of students, institutions, and employers. A tracer study is an empirical study for the evaluation of an institution’s education and training programme. The feedback such analysis provides enables educational institutions to validate their educational programmes in terms of the labour market; expose pitfalls in the programme; create a network for alumni; raise awareness of needed skills, knowledge, and attitudes; determine the perception of the programme by graduates; assess career outcomes; plan future activities; and review and revise curricula.

These surveys aim to assess the career paths of graduates of the indicated programmes, and they generally include such concerns as the relevance of the curricula to current positions, difficulties in finding employment, nature of employment, and an assessment of where, when, and how graduates found employment.

As previously mentioned, there are comparatively few tracer studies that address the graduates of archives and records-management programmes. Because LIS programmes often include archives and records-management content in the absence of dedicated ARM programmes, the present study has expanded its scope to take these
into account. Table 1 describes the cited tracer studies, and their countries and universities of origin.

Table 1: Tracer studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Year tracer study was published</th>
<th>Subject areas covered</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kigongo-Bukenya, I.M.N. and Lutwama, E.</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Makerere University: East African School of Library and Information Science</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>School of Library and Information Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shongwe, M. and Ocholla, D.N.</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>University of Zululand</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Department of Library and Information Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aina, L.O. and Moahi, K.</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>University of Botswana</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Department of Library and Information Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikwa, L. and Mugwisi, T.</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>National University of Science and Technology</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>MSc in Library and Information Science</td>
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<td>Noko, P. and Ngulube, P.</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>National University of Science and Technology</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Department of Records and Archives Management</td>
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<td>Nengomasha, C. and Chiware, E.R.</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>University of Namibia</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Department of Information and Communication Studies</td>
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D.2 Employment Areas for Graduates

One of the primary goals of the tracer studies consulted for this literature review was to deduce where students secured employment after graduation.

Overwhelmingly, the public sector (including academic institutions) has been a major recipient of graduates from LIS, ARM, and other information programmes. In Botswana, a tracer study of the University of Botswana's Department of Library and Information Studies programme showed that only 7.8% of respondents had worked in non-public-
sector institutions. Graduates from the Botswana Library School generally worked in national libraries or university libraries (Aina and Moahi, 1999). Similarly, academic institutions and in government organizations employed the majority of East African School of Library and Information Studies students (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama 2004, p. 103). Graduates from the National University of Science and Technology’s MSc-LIS programme in Zimbabwe were predominantly employed in academic institutions after graduation (Hikwa and Mugwisi, 2015, p. 177). Graduates from the University of Zululand were primarily employed in the public sector, mainly in national, provincial, and municipal libraries (Shongwe and Ocholla, 2011). Generally, most graduates had secured full-time employment in their field. Most were doing library work that involved tasks like collection development, shelving, management and supervision, cataloguing and classification, reference work, circulation, interlibrary loans, and training of users.

It should be acknowledged that the tracer study conducted by Noko and Ngulube is the only study that traces archives and records-management programme graduates specifically. All other tracer studies survey library programme graduates, which may or may not offer some form of archives and records-management training. Graduates from this programme were mostly employed in parastatals (public sector) and the private sector, with the NGO sector employing the fewest number of graduates (Noko and Ngulube, 2015, p. 277). For ARM graduates, options such as records consultancy services for the private sector have emerged but have not yet reached their potential. (Dewah, 2016, p. 8).

**D.3 Skills and Competencies**

The tracer studies consulted show that a few themes can be discerned across many programmes—in particular, the need for increased training in information technologies and specialisations, and better balance between practical and theoretical training. In a study of graduates from the University of Botswana’s DLIS programme, the authors found that a majority of respondents would have preferred to gain skills and competencies beyond the traditional offerings, such as business management, research, publishing, financial management, specialised IT applications, general management, knowledge management, legal information, media, and procurement management (Wamukoya, Zulu and Kalusopa, 2013, p. 63). The authors recommend that DLIS incorporate these skills and competencies through practical application tools and software in related courses such as preservation and records management.

Other tracer studies echo the emphasis on management skills, media, and IT applications. Respondents to the tracer study of MSc-LIS graduates from Zimbabwe’s National University of Science and Technology cited poor support for IT skills development during their education and highlighted the need for the programme to be responsive to technological and industry change (Hikwa and Mugwisi, 2015, p. 181). A tracer study of University of Namibia graduates showed that limited technology education was a main point of contention (Nengomasha and Chiware, 2009, p. 9). Graduates of Zimbabwe’s National University of Science and Technology echoed the same desire for more training in information technology and noted further deficiencies in
‘industrial attachment’ and exposure to practical training (Noko and Ngulube, 2015, p. 270). In a study of EASLIS graduates, respondents suggested that the programme incorporate more management skills, practical training, and opportunities for specialisation (Kigongo-Bukenya and Lutwama, 2004, p. 106).

In their study of archivists and directors of the East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the ICA, Saurombe and Ngulube (2016) also found that education in public programming should be expanded. Archives need to extend access to underserved groups by increasing their visibility and accessibility in the societies they serve, but a lack of skills and training may negatively affect public programming outcomes (Saurombe and Ngulube, 2016, p. 37). The ESARBICA member archivists, directors, and Executive Board members who responded to the study had a variety of training and experience in public programming, but it was significantly limited in archival curricula and institutional budgeting (Saurombe and Ngulube, 2016, p. 38).

D.4 Professional Engagement
A common theme throughout archival literature, both specific to Africa and internationally, is that the profession struggles with a sense of identity. Generally, it seems that professional associations are a substantial part of the solution to this problem. In 2005, the only professional association available to information professionals in Namibia, librarians dominated the Namibian Information Workers Association (NIWA) (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 205). In North America, archivists and records managers have their own separate professional associations, such as the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) and the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA). This is not possible in Namibia because archives and records management do not exist as two distinct professions; professionals often provide both archival and records-management services to their employer (Nengomasha, 2006, p. 205). While separate professional associations for archivists and records managers may not be possible at this time, a records-specific professional association would be a major source of support for providing guidance on archives and records-management issues, in addition to establishing a professional identity.

Another step toward establishing a professional identity is defining educational and professional standards. Professional associations are often responsible for regulating or monitoring education programmes (Anderson, 2015, p. 43). Clear education and training standards would help to establish a professional identity and help ‘both students and employers to know exactly what they were getting from a program’ (Bower, 1977, p. 8). The Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) discussed above provides an opportunity for standardized qualifications to establish understandings between educators, students, and professionals, in national contexts and across borders (Minishi-Majanja, 2009, p. 157).

In a study of the Kenya Association of Records Managers and Archivists (KARMA), Ambira (2012) shows that professional engagement is essential to ensure the ongoing development of archives and records management. The article describes KARMA, formed in 2010 in response to concerns about the profession’s perceived
underdevelopment and lack of engagement in information management and good governance in Kenya. The association intends to work with stakeholders toward records-management and archives education, curriculum development, and training. It also hopes to implement quality-assurance protocols for records-management consultants, in order to stem the flow of ill-advised and ill-managed efforts undertaken by those without any professional training. (Ambira, 2012, pp. 118–119). The literature suggests that countries without a functional professional association should form one, and that current professional associations should become more involved in education through the establishment of standards accreditation systems.

E. Global Comparisons

E.1: Knowledge Sharing and Lessons from Other Regions

Knowledge sharing between countries with similar and differing records needs may also be part of the solution to archives and records-management deficiencies in African countries. McDonald (2014) urges that the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) may assist in ‘building the bridges’ between developed and developing nations, allowing for the sharing of experience, transfer of expertise, and capacity building (McDonald, 2014, pp. 241–242).

For example, African countries may perhaps look to New Zealand for advice on how to establish graduate programmes in archives and records management. Chawner and Oliver (2015) note that developing academic programmes in an isolated country like New Zealand can be difficult, and in this case, professional associations took the lead in establishing the need for formal programmes (p. 64). Lack of consensus between records managers and archivists resulted in significant delays in establishment of programmes, and limited demand for qualifications in this area meant that early initiatives failed to attract enough students. Based on this study, a graduate qualification is indeed possible over time, but will take extensive commitment from the parties involved.

In a study on the development of education in library, archives, and information services in Iraq up to 2002, Johnson (2016) attempted to draw some conclusions that may inform the process for developing and established countries. He identified several factors that positively affect the establishment of LIS education, such as state funding commitments to the development of public services; expansion of the higher-education system; financial support allowing the nation’s students to gain skills and experience abroad; contributions of foreign resident consultants to the development of programmes; early and increasing participation of national educators; and the contributions of individuals advocating for developments in LIS and LIS education (Johnson, 2016, p. 9).

Further, a tracer study of archival graduates in the United States shows that American schools have suffered from many of the same problems that face African programmes and graduates. For example, respondents noted issues related to lack of qualified instructors and imbalance between theory and practical training (Bower, 197, p. 24). Although regional and national contexts are quite different, McDonald argues that
sharing this knowledge through international professional associations would contribute positively to the development of the profession in developing countries. 

Higgins and Bunn (2013) show that international collaboration is increasing and appears to have had positive effects on the archives and records-management field. They describe collaboration in the field by focusing on digital curation training at two of the universities that currently run ARA-accredited courses: University College London (UCL) and Aberystwyth University. In attempts to become more ‘digitally aware’, UCL implemented the pilot project entitled ‘Digital Scenarios in Archives and Records Management’ (DiSARM), in which students develop documentation for accessioning born-digital material. UCL noted that by placing digital curation within its own module, it will have a space of its own in which to develop, while still a part of broader archival practice (Higgins and Bunn, 2013). UCL also began seeing digital curation as an international practice and has collaborated with Simmons College (Boston) and Mid-Sweden University to create a Digital Curriculum Laboratory for partners to share. Aberystwyth University developed the distance-learning International Archives, Records and Information Management degree in 2011, in response to demand from overseas students. The flexibility of this degree allows students to specialize in digital curation. There are also plans to develop an M.Sc. in Digital Curation, testament to the serious steps the archives and records management profession in the UK is taking to address the profession’s need for digital curation training. International collaboration allows professionals to learn from each other and make the profession more advanced and well rounded.

E.2 International Curricula

Another possible solution to some of the issues in archives and records-management education—not only in Africa, but all over the world—has emerged in the form of an international curriculum. Anderson, Bastian, and Flinn (2013) operate with Maria Guercio’s idea that the ‘new competencies required for managing records and data were not confined to any one nation . . . but spanned the world’ (as quoted in Anderson, Bastian and Flinn, 2014, p. 2). The researchers argue that archival education requires both universality and specificity, and archivists must learn to work between two paths, ‘one documenting the culturally and nationally specific, the other operating within a universal technological environment where records and data are created across cultures and nations, time and space’ (Anderson, Bastian and Flinn, 2014, p. 2). The researchers also acknowledge that literature from developing countries indicates that perhaps they need to establish archival education directly specific to their own local needs, and that some have expressed concern over losing cultural specificity if an international curriculum were to be introduced to the archival field.

The researchers approached this idea in three stages. First, they identified common archival core content in their own universities and documented the development of each programme over time to describe the history and influences that contributed to the current content of the three programmes. The second approach involved a survey given out at the 2013 ICA/SAE conference to collect the views of archival educators on the possibilities for and the barriers to developing and sharing courses internationally. Through the questionnaire, the authors could discern that an international curriculum
would need to include traditional activities such as appraisal, arrangement and description, records management, preservation, reference, outreach, and electronic recordkeeping. Respondents positively received the idea of a common marketplace and educational space potentially delivered online. The third approach to this study involves a description of the collaboratively designed and delivered course 'The Recordkeeping World: International Perspectives on Archives and Records'. This online course demonstrates that international collaborative courses in archival education are not only a possibility, but a reality, and aims to prepare students for working in an increasingly digital and global environment. The authors acknowledge that while there are many benefits to an international archival-education programme, some areas will always require national or cultural focus, and programmes may differ in some areas.

Other international curricula, such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) Records Management in Service of Democracy (RMSD) programme, attempt to increase the records-management capacity of participants in developing countries. Justrell (2007) describes the RMSD programme and its 2006 focus on southern and eastern Africa, including coursework and project work in the participants' home countries and organizations. The author considers this programme successful, describing the increased competencies, professional affiliation, and knowledge sharing between professionals; initiation and completion of RM projects in home organizations; and initiation of new regulations aimed at transparency and accountability for public records on local and national levels (Justrell, 2007, p. 35).

F. Conclusion

This literature review reaffirms how important it is to consider Africa’s complex sociopolitical history when discussing the continent. The authors note great depth and variance between countries, and warn against the gross oversimplification of generalising conclusions for a continent of 54 countries and over a billion people. This literature review aims to rectify the severe gap in research in archives and records-management education in Africa. Though literature in this area is indeed limited, consulting the identified resources offers an insightful look at the current archives and records-management education situation in Africa. Current research in the area is far from adequate, and this document is by no means a full solution to this problem. Lamentably, most tracer studies included in this literature review survey Library and Information Science programmes, reflecting the notable absence of data from archival and records-management programmes. However, this review surveys the information available and hopes to draw attention to the severe need for more research into archives and records-management education in Africa.

The existing literature, though limited, provides useful data on a variety of issues. The several information studies programmes in Africa vary significantly between countries. Programmes range from certificates and diplomas to degrees at both the bachelor’s and master’s levels. Some programmes stand on their own while others exist in history departments or library schools. As a result, very little standardization between programmes, seems to cause difficulties for both students and employers.
A major theme in nearly every source consulted was the ratio of theory to practical training in programme curricula. While archival experts repeatedly stress the importance of a theoretically based archives and records-management education, preferably at the graduate level, students opposed this model. Tracer study respondents overwhelmingly favoured a more practical approach to education and frequently commented on too much theory and not enough practical work in their programmes. After consulting extensive literature in this area, it seems that the preferred method of records education, models used in the North America and Europe, may not be appropriate for the field in Africa. The archives and records-management field in Africa certainly requires change; nonetheless, forcing the values of other cultures onto the African records scene is not a worthwhile endeavour.

Other issues that regularly appeared in the literature were a need for more technology and specialisation in African curricula. Computer skills are incredibly important to employers, and with the increasing presence of electronic records and e-government, graduates of information programmes must be able to confidently and competently navigate the digital realm.

The literature presents potential solutions to some of the major issues dominating the records environment in Africa. Professional associations should be formed and encouraged to take a more active role in records education in Africa. Additionally, some researchers have proposed the idea of an international archives and records-management curriculum. Such a programme would require just the right amount of cultural specificity, but could potentially regulate the records field across the world.

Many of the issues brought forth by the literature review are not exclusive to the situation in Africa. Limited sense of professional identity, debates on theory versus practical training, and lack of standardization across certifications are issues that the archives and records-management field faces across the world. In response to this, international collaboration has emerged as a proactive approach that allows records professionals to share knowledge and learn from each other. While the records environment in Africa could certainly benefit from assistance from more established records programmes in other counties, Africa also has much of offer and would make a good addition to future international partnerships.

While the literature review provides valuable information on the archives and records-management education environment in Africa, there are still far more questions than answers. Much of the research available is severely out of date and requires follow up and further research. One thing we can definitively say, based on this literature review, is that there is a major deficit in research on archives and records-management education in Africa, and the area warrants more research.
References


