

Archival Education and Training Opportunities in Malawi:

After 50 Years, Why Have We Not Done Well?

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Delegation of the European Union to Malawi, Malawi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter provides an overview of archival education and training opportunities in Malawi. In the chapter, the author also presents a historical background to the development of archival education and training in the ESARBICA region, and how training opportunities for archivists and records managers evolved with support from ICA and UNESCO. It is also indicated in this chapter that when funding from ICA and UNESCO severed, individual countries established their own training institutions, but not all ESARBICA member states have done well. In view of the foregoing, the researcher conducted a study to establish why Malawi had not done well as compared to other member states in the region. The findings of the study revealed a number of challenges as highlighted in this chapter. The author also provides some propositions on how the situation could be addressed in Malawi and other ESARBICA member states.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of archival education and training opportunities in Malawi as compared to other countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) region. The discussion begins with a background to archival education and training in the region, and how Malawi has fared over the past fifty years. Informed by relevant literature, the author also looks at the caliber of archivists and records managers practicing in Malawi and the challenges they face in their quest to access professional education and training opportunities to advance their career.

The study was conducted with a view to establish why Malawi was lagging behind in the provision of formal education and training in archives and records management in relation to other countries in the region. The findings of the study revealed a wide range of issues which affect Malawi's efforts to establish archival education programmes. In this chapter, the author makes some recommendations on how the situation could be addressed in the country and other ESARBICA member states sharing similar experiences to Malawi.

The overall objective of this chapter is to share Malawi's experiences on how the absence of formal archival education and training opportunities has affected the professional development of archivists and records managers in the country, and what could be done in order to reverse the situation in the country and the region as a whole.

BACKGROUND

The story of archival education and training in Malawi came into limelight in the late 1980s when one of the most revered Government Archivists named Steve Simon Mwiyeriwa published an article in a journal which was called *Archivum*. In the article entitled: *Archival Training in Developing Countries – Africa*, Mwiyeriwa (1988) described how archives and records management systems evolved in Africa since the early years of colonial emancipation. Mwiyeriwa (1988) further explained how archival education had developed in the continent, particularly the ESARBICA region following the establishment of two regional training centres in Senegal and Ghana in 1971 and 1975, respectively.

According to Mwiyeriwa (1988), the two regional training centres were established with support from the International Council on Archives (ICA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organisation (UNESCO) to cater for the training needs of archivists for the newly independent African states. Prior to the story in Mwiyeriwa (1988), Rieger (1972) also spoke highly about some of the main factors

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