

**THE ROLE OF OUTREACH SERVICES IN ENHANCING THE USE OF  
ARCHIVAL MATERIALS AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF NAMIBIA**

A research project report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in Records and Archives Management (Honours) to the University of  
Namibia, Faculty of Education and Human Sciences, Department of Social Sciences

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2022

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## **Abstract**

Various scholars have stated that archives remain an asset that is underutilised and misunderstood. The general public is unaware of the importance of archives and the information they can get from it. It is against this background that archivists are encouraged to develop outreach programmes because without outreach, their publics will not know what the archival institution does and offers. The study used the theory of soft power to in order to illustrate the role of outreach services for the enhancement of the National Archives of Namibia. A qualitative study informed by an interpretivist paradigm was adopted using semi-structured interviews to collect data. The population of this study were staff members of the National Archives of Namibia as well as any relevant documents. From the findings it is clear that the NAN did not have a planned outreach programme but would conduct outreach activities based on yearly commemorated dates. The study revealed that the NAN used a passively solicited customer feedback mechanism through emails, Facebook and the website and there was a lack of active effort from the NAN staff to obtain feedback from users on a regular basis. Research findings also indicate that the occasional outreach activities carried out by the NAN had increased the number of users that would visit the Archive as well as provided opportunities to collaborate with other partners. The benefits to the users were that it made them more aware of certain issues or topics that they did not have full information on before. The results show that lack of sufficient staff and lack of funding made it difficult to implement an outreach programme. One of the recommendations from the study is that the NAN staff should develop an outreach programme with objectives that are specific, measurable, and contain activities that are designed to achieve them.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my family who continue to motivate me, my friends who encourage me and lastly, I dedicate this work to myself as a reminder that PhD is the ultimate goal.

## **Acknowledgements**

This study would not have been possible without the Lord Almighty who gave me life and carried me through to this day.

This research assignment was finished on schedule and with the highest level of quality thanks to the encouragement, dedication and the emotional support of my supervisor, Prof. Nengomasha.

It is important to thank my parents for their financial and emotional support, as well as the encouragement and support from my friends and family. I also want to thank the NAN for letting me conduct my research at their facility, and last but not least, the University of Namibia for providing an environment for academic success.

## **Declaration**

1. Plagiarism is wrong, and I recognise that. Using someone else's work while claiming it to be your own is plagiarism.
2. For citation and reference, I followed the guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA). I have acknowledged, cited, and referenced every quotation from the works of others that is included in this research endeavour as well as any substantial contribution that I have made.
3. This work is my own work.

Signature: Candra M Date: 24/11/2022

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### **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

ICA – International Council of Archivists

MAN – Museums Association of Namibia

NAN – National Archives of Namibia

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives an introduction to the topic under study. The orientation of the proposed study, statement of the problem, the objectives guiding the study, the wider significance of the study, its limitations, delimitations, research design and methodology as well as a definition of key terms are provided in this chapter. The chapter ends with a proposed chapter layout of the research report.

#### **1.2 Orientation of the proposed study**

According to Hagedon (2011, p.250), “Outreach focuses on activities designed to inform potential users of a collection and to encourage use of the collection – activities traditionally recognized as part of the archivist's job description”. The International Council on Archives, (n. d., p.1) concurs that “Outreach, access and learning services is about engaging users with archives”. From the above mentioned, it is safe to conclude that access and full utilisation of the archive depend on the outreach services an archival institution has in place to reach out to the general users. It is therefore important to look into the outreach services the National Archives (NAN) on Namibia has in place.

Hagedon (2011, p.251) states that “Archival outreach programmes serve a key role in the preservation and promotion of public history” and that “community-based educational programs sponsored and implemented by archival repositories allow actual, as well as potential, patrons to learn about their local history and to familiarize themselves with archival materials”. Cohen (2012, p.186) states that “the term "researcher services" implies, with

justification, that research use of archival records is at the heart of what the archival community does. The author adds that “archival records are identified, acquired, arranged, described, and preserved in order that they may be used by people with information needs.”

Bowden (2013, p.4) states that “Increasing awareness of archives collections may help to increase overall use of archival materials, something that is essential if archives wish to remain relevant both to academic scholarship and to society at large”. One way of increasing awareness is through outreach programs an archival institution establishes and implements.

Roberto (2019) states that there are various tools that can be used to carry out outreach services which include printing brochures; speaking at forums; submitting articles to the media; presenting seminars/workshops with specific broad community appeal; developing information packages to distribute at community events and venues and setting up a portable promotional display unit to use at community events and venues. It is important to see which tools are being used if any by NAN.

According to Sabina (2020, p.6), “Not all outreach programs are to get more attendance at institutes but outreach programs can also be used for acquiring records”. Outreach programmes can help with collection of archival materials, such as the case with Kent State University’s Department of Special Collections and Archives whose outreach programme is to gain records for their collection (Sabina, 2020). It is of utmost importance for an archives to have an outreach programme in place that then attracts not only those in need of information but potential donors of materials as well.

The NAN is a division within the National Library and Archives Services (NLAS) Directorate under the Ministry of Education, Arts and culture. It is regulated by the Archives Act 12 of 1992 to provide for the custody, care and control over archives in Namibia including records in their current and semi current state (National Archives of Namibia., n. d).

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Manson (n. d., p.1) states that “a small percentage of the population is aware that archives are open to the public, especially historians and those involved with genealogical associations”. He states that “archives are not the first thing that comes to mind when there is a need to find out something, and that is the inherent problem of operating such an institution” (p.1).

It can therefore be said that if those in need of information do not have an idea of the existence of an archival institution and its materials, they will not be able to access and use the materials housed by the institution. The study could therefore contribute to the enhancement of the use of archival materials at the NAN.

### **1.4 Objectives of the research**

This study aims to determine the need for an outreach programme at the NAN. The objectives of the study are:

- 1.4.1 To determine the nature of the outreach programme if any at the NAN;
- 1.4.2 To find out the benefits of an outreach programme for the NAN;
- 1.4.3 To establish challenges, if any, of establishing or running an outreach programme; and
- 1.4.4 To come up with recommendations on how to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of an outreach programme.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The findings of this study can inform policy and procedures on establishing or running an outreach programme at the NAN. This could result in better visibility of the NAN and in turn, access and use of its collections.

## **1.6 Limitations of the study**

The population of the study excluded users whose views could have been useful to mitigate any bias from the staff, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings. However, the researcher included questions in the interview guide, which corroborated answers provided by the staff.

## **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

This study did not involve users of the NAN or the general public. The study's population is limited to National Archives staff only.

## **1.8 Research methodology**

This study adopted an interpretivist paradigm, which according to Fossey, et al. (2002, p.717) “focuses mainly on recognising and narrating the meaning of human experiences and actions”. A qualitative research approach, applying a case study research design was employed. Data was collected and analysis methods were thematic analysis and an inductive approach respectively. The research methodology is discussed in Chapter 3.

## **1.7 Definition of key terms**

**Archive** – A place where people go to find information (Society of American Archivists, 2007)

**Outreach** – A program to promote services and facilities provided. (Halim & Abu, 2017)

**Preservation** – A term referring to the passive protection of archival materials in which no physical or chemical treatment to the item occurs (Miller & Roper 1999, p.34).

**Promotion** – The entire set of activities, which communicate the product, brand or service to the user so as to awareness, as well as to attract customers (The Economic Times, 2022).

## **1.8 Chapter layout**

The research report consists of five chapters. Chapter one presents the orientation of the study; the statement of the problem; research question; significance of the study; limitations and delimitations of the study; research design and methodology; and definition of key terms.

Chapter two is on the literature review. The chapter presents and discusses the theoretical framework as well.

Chapter three presents the research methodology. It justifies the research methodology aspects used for this study as well as presents ethical issues and how they were addressed.

Chapter four is on data analysis and presentation and discusses the findings as well.

Chapter five summarises the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for further study.

## **1.9 Chapter summary**

This chapter gave an introduction to the topic under study. The orientation of the proposed study, statement of the problem, the objectives guiding the study, the wider significance of the study, its limitations, delimitations, research design and methodology as well as a definition of key terms are provided in this chapter. The chapter also gave a proposed chapter layout of the research report. The next chapter will look at literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives the literature view on outreach. It explains what literature review is, it explains what an outreach programme is, it explains different outreach activities, it explains the benefit of an outreach programme. It also explains planning of an outreach programme as well as the challenges of an outreach programme. The chapter explains the theoretical framework as well as the concept of soft power. The chapter ends with a summary of the chapter.

#### **2.2 What is Literature review?**

Various authors who include Bell (1993), Kothari (2011) and Cooper (1998) have attempted to come up with a comprehensive definition of what literature review is. The above authors generally agree that a literature review is a systematic, comprehensive and close process of looking at what previous researchers have written about one's current area of study. On the importance of literature review, Magadza (2015) states that "it assists the researcher to identify research gaps that the current researcher's work might help to close" (p.39). He adds that literature review "assists a researcher to support or dismiss his or her arguments" (Magadza 2015, p.39). This researcher read books, peer-reviewed journal articles and internet sources to appreciate what others scholars have written about outreach services in archival institutions.

#### **2.3 What is an outreach programme?**

Dunford (2015, p. 250) states that "Outreach focuses on activities designed to inform potential users of a collection and to encourage use of the collection". According to Cross (1997) "outreach is closely linked to reference because it is seen as a way of meeting user needs that



cannot be satisfied effectively by one-on-one interaction at the reference desk”. He adds that “it can also be used to encourage use and promote the archival mission”. The mission of the National Archives of Namibia is to provide an optimal service to the people of Namibia including future generations by preserving Namibia's historical record and making them accessible to the nation at large. There is need to assess if outreach services are being used to provide optimal services to the people.

Halim and Abu (2017, p. 37) state that in library terms, ‘outreach’ “refers to the academic library effort and program to promote its services and facilities that are being provided to the library users”. Weir (2004, p. 71) further illustrates that outreach is “a range of activities that includes publications, exhibitions, media work, education and liaison with users, stakeholders, depositors and other domains, such as libraries and museums”.

#### **2.4 Nature of outreach programmes**

As Given and McTavish (2010, p.27) point out that a major focus of library and archives professions needs to be "the interplay of technology, culture, education, and people". This is important as a way of remaining relevant in a world that is advancing in technology.

In the current digital era, Chaterera (2015, p.1) states that “museums and archival institutions are increasingly encouraged to exploit Web 2.0 technologies to reach out to their potential clientele”. Henjyoji (2012, p.2) concurs that “new web-based technologies and applications, such as social media, can not only attract new users but also “bring them back repeatedly, building loyalty” and ultimately creating an engaged audience eager to pursue opportunities offered by digital libraries and archives”. It is important to see the extent to which the National Archives of Namibia has utilised its social media platforms or website for the purpose of delivering outreach services.

For archives concerned about staying relevant and reaching new audiences for their collections, it would be wise to stay abreast of trends in Web 2.0 and to work proactively to develop a social media strategy” this was assented by (Mason 2014, p.166). Based on the foregoing, it is clear that the nature of outreach programmes can be based on traditional methods of delivery or can be delivered through various social media platforms with the use of the internet, it is also clear that archivists need to move from traditional methods of engagement to making use of the internet to deliver outreach services.

## **2.5 Outreach activities**

An outreach programme may include publications, exhibitions or radio and television broadcasts (Roper & Millar, 1999). Outreach activities as concurred by Roberto (2019) may also include printing brochures explaining archives, records management and the profession as well as speaking at community forums, preparing feature articles and submitting them to the media, developing information packages to distribute at community events and venues, setting up a portable promotional display unit to use at community events and venues.

### **2.5.1 Publications**

Publications encompass a wide range of materials which include newsletters, annual reports of accessions, inventories, guides to collections, topical research guides, pamphlets, documentary publications, magazines and reports of new acquisitions (Pairo, 1982). “The key to a publication's effectiveness in an outreach programme is the way it is distributed. Frequently, reports of new accessions are only sent to journals which are read primarily by archivists and historians” (Pairo, 1982, p. 8).

### **2.5.2 Exhibitions**

Some outreach activities, in particular exhibitions are important because they have the potential to reach large audiences, encourage spin off outreach activities and dramatically alter the target

audience's perception about a particular person, place or event in history (Nicholls, 2001, p.68) This is supported by Roper and Millar (1999, p. 143) who argue that "Exhibitions are often an effective way of arousing interest in the archives and in creating favourable publicity", the author emphasis on the importance of using copies of original documents if possible to mitigate risk of damage to materials.

### **2.5.3 Radio and television broadcasts**

Another way archivists can use to reach out to the public by booking slots on local television and radio channels like Energy 100 FM and One Africa Television to educate the public as well and encourage them to make use of the materials.

### **2.5.4 Seminars, workshops and conferences**

Seminars, workshops and conferences conducted both locally and regionally can play a tremendous role to market archives.

## **2.6 Benefits of an outreach programme**

An outreach programme has various benefits to an archive which include but are not limited to increase use of material (Manson, 2004), brings awareness (Saurombe,2021), allows you to understand your users (Bowden, 2013), and may attract funding (Kamatula, 2011).

### **2.6.1 Increases use**

It is necessary for archivists to create services and programs that educate the public about their holdings and reference techniques if they want to see a rise in the use of their facilities (Mason, 2004, p. 1) argues that. Pederson (1993, p. 306) correctly noted out that:

*"All of us who keep archives and other historical materials have two equally important responsibilities. The first is to identify, acquire and preserve records of lasting value. The second is to make these materials and the information they contain available for use".*

Ericson (1990, p. 117) echoed the same sentiments when he stated that “if after we brilliantly and meticulously appraise, arrange, describe and conserve our records nobody comes to use them, then we have wasted our time”. From the above mentioned, it is important to reiterate that an archivist’s role to ensure use of archival materials and outreach is one way of promoting use and reaching to a wider audience that is in need of the valuable information housed in archives but are simply not aware. Once they know that some of the answers to their research questions lies in archives, they will use the materials more.

### **2.6.2 Brings awareness**

Saurombe (2021, p.25) states that “research in Eastern and Southern Africa indicates that most citizens are unaware of archives and rarely use them. Apart from financial constraints, this is often associated with inadequate outreach programs”. Kamatula (2011, p. 75) concurs that the general perception is that archival institutions are places where only researchers and genealogists can obtain useful information. He adds that it is rare to find other members of the society seeking for information from the archives. Similarly, Sabina (2020) states increasing community outreach initiatives is one strategy for solving the issue of underuse and unawareness of archival resources. She adds that the importance of the collection and the institution can be made known to communities through archivists' constructive community outreach, which can counteract any unfavourable perceptions. From the above mentioned, it is evident that an outreach programme informs the targeted community about the existence of archival materials that can be of benefit to the users. People do not make use of things that they are not aware of.

It is safe to conclude that awareness starts with educating the staff members on the importance of outreach services and the effect they have on the utilisation of materials so that the staff are in a better position to come up with an effective outreach plan that can be implemented and sustained successfully.

### **2.6.3 Understands users**

Bowden (2013, p.10) states that “Outreach can be a productive method of identifying current “non-users” who have the potential to benefit from the information contained within an archive.

Shaffer (2009, p.17) concurs that “A key part of rehabilitating the profession’s image and facilitating use was identifying the physical and psychological barriers to access faced by users, and then lowering or removing them altogether”. It can therefore be said that an outreach programme is the key to understanding the publics you serve based on their unique needs and what may hinder them from accessing archival materials as well as those who may have many misconceptions or lack of knowledge about archives altogether.

### **2.6.4 Attracts funding**

Kamatula (2011, p. 75) states that “The more the society is aware of the value of its archival holdings, the greater the support the archival institutions will expect to receive”. Lekaukau (1993) agrees that if the services are made more widely known, budgetary decision-makers may be persuaded to give the archives more funding so it can implement programs that directly assist the average person. This suggests that a lot of the problems around insufficient funding may simply be due to low use of the materials, when the society is not putting a demand or making use of certain services altogether, government may not see the need in investing where there is no demand. This will lead to low resource allocation or resource allocation coming in as an afterthought.

The aforementioned view is in line with Kamatula (2011, p. 76) who stressed that “outreach programmes should be seriously implemented because archivists are operating in an age of great competition where every government function must be justified”. He adds that “It is a way of justifying their existence which in a way will ensure them of receiving continued government funding” (p. 76).

## **2.7 Planning an outreach programme**

Roper and Miller (1999) state that an authorised officer of the archival institution should be in charge of an outreach programme. The officer should conduct study before starting any specific initiative to see whether the proposed programme is likely to be well-received or successful.” Pairo (1982, p. 5) alludes that “Development of a sound outreach program includes an analysis of the outreach needs of the archives, a statement of objectives for the program, planning activities to meet those objectives, implementing the plan, and evaluating the results of the objectives”. From the above mentioned, it is clear that an outreach programme requires a programme leader to take charge and ensure that a market research has been conducted so that that everything else that follows is specific to the needs of the targeted users. Appointing a programme leader can be vital to ensure that there is accountability of the programme and clear demarcations of duties towards the implementation of the programme.

Cross (1997) states that a successful outreach plan should be centred on the archive’s mission and should relate to its goals and that of the parent institution and that a successful outreach program must first identify the publics it serves and their needs, groups that may be underserved and holdings in the repository that may be underutilised. He adds that services and products can be created to address those needs once they have been recognised, with the goal of each unique service or product being clearly outlined. Then, publicity for the repository's offerings is organised and put into action. The programme is then assessed to determine whether it achieves its goals and whether it needs to be sustained or improved. From the above mentioned, it is safe to conclude that if an archive does not have a profile of their users which outlines their unique needs and challenges, all outreach efforts may go amiss. This also suggests that it is important to constantly review the profile of those targeted users in order to keep up with their changing needs so as to amend the outreach programme accordingly. This is also expressed by Nengomasha and Nyanga (2015, p.92) that “when planning outreach

programmes, archivists are encouraged to focus on specific user groups, determine users' needs and tailor programmes to meet those specific needs".

Bowden (2013) states that if archivists are going to conduct more thorough outreach activities, they need to have a greater awareness of both the methods they can use to do so and the specific goals they hope to achieve. Sinaclair (2012) concurs that more than a set of projects, outreach should always be a continuous endeavour. This suggests that archivists need to be intentional and consistent in their outreach services and should incorporate it into their daily activities.

## **2.8 Challenges of an outreach programme**

Having an outreach programme is one thing but successfully implementing one is another and there are different factors that may hinder an archive from having and successfully implementing an outreach programme which include but are not limited to funding Hagedorn (2011) as well as lack of trained staff or understaffing (Keakopa, 2006).

### **2.8.1 Funding**

Hagedorn (2011, p.7) states that "Archival repositories have nearly always struggled to secure adequate funding for all of the programmes they sought to develop, even the repositories which have been known to remain stable, state agencies for example, are buckling under massive financial cutbacks and considerable downsizing of personnel". This is consistent with Yusuf (2013) who claimed that lack of funding is a significant issue for archival management in Africa. Funds are required not only to store records but also for the effective training of staff, streamlining technology in archival institutions, and developing effective access systems, among other records information management requirements. Based on the aforementioned, it is clear that lack of funding may lead to many archivists seeing outreach activities as a luxury as they will be struggling to keep other departments within the archive functioning with minimal resources available to them.

### **2.8.2 Lack of trained staff or understaffing**

Pairo (1982, p. 5) states that “Few archivists have been trained to function as educational archivists. Thus, it may be necessary to pool the talents of several staff members to develop an effective outreach program or to seek outside professional assistance with the program”. Keakopa (2006) conducted a study which revealed that there was a shortage of fully trained archivists and records managers in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. This suggests that if there aren’t enough trained archivists, the ones available will be too occupied with other duties that may not include outreach.

### **2.8.3 Theoretical framework**

Babbie (2004) and Flinders and Mills (1993) state that theory shapes, directs and focuses a study discipline. The authors add that it encompasses the rules of procedure that guide research and the knowledge so acquired. Nengomasha (2009) states that “in records management, the rules that guide investigation of researchers into issues, problems or concepts are determined by records management theory and methods”. In order to illustrate the role of outreach services for the enhancement of the National Archives of Namibia, this study will use the concept of soft power as framework.

### **2.8.4 Soft power**

According to Mukwevho and Nguluble (2022), soft power can be defined “as an appeal of one’s ideas or ability to set the agenda, persuade and bring forth positive liking in order to attain a desired outcomes or change the preference of others”. Hurn (2016, p.80) concurs that “it is a form of civil persuasion as opposed to hard power which uses force, intimidation and aggressive threats” and last for a relatively short period of time (Rao 2016, p.8). From the above definitions, soft power can be used to persuade the general public to make use of the archives to ensure that a wider audience has access to archival information and materials.



According to Garaba (2016, p.74) the concept of soft power “can be associated with visibility of a programme which is key in influencing people in order to change their attitudes and behaviour”. The characteristics of soft power, according to Mukwevho and Ngulube (2022), include being less expensive, appealing to people, and providing insight and better understanding of issues affecting visibility and accessibility of public archives. These qualities make the concept user friendly and worth looking into from an archival outreach perspective.

Purushothaman (2010, p.3) points out that “the organisations with the most access to multiple channels of communication and which are more influential over how issues are framed are in a good position to gain soft power in the information age”. Ngai, Tao and Moon (2015, p.35) acknowledge the significant influence that mass communication exerts on people’s behaviour. Ludwing (2015, p.124) concurs that “increasing prevalence and accessibility of social media communication and online discussions, together with their powerful influence on purchase decisions and product/service evaluations, have become central driving force for marketing decision makers”. It is therefore safe to conclude that archivists can make use of social media platforms to reach out to people including researchers in other countries to inform them about the materials they have available in their holdings and persuade many to come.

## **2.9 Chapter summary**

This chapter gave the literature view on the role of outreach services in enhancing the use of archival materials at the National Archives of Namibia. It explained what literature review is, it explained what an outreach programme is, it explained different outreach activities, it explained the benefit of an outreach programme. It also explained planning of an outreach programme as well as the challenges of an outreach programme. The chapter explained the theoretical framework based on the concept of soft power.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research methodology, the data collection methods, the population, sample, research instruments, trustworthiness of the findings, the procedure, the data collection methods, data analysis and also the research ethics. McCombes (2022) clarifies that the methodology chapter, is a crucial component of any research paper as it details what you did and how you did it so that readers may assess the validity and reliability of your study (McCombes, 2022) .That is what this chapter seeks to achieve. The chapter concludes with a discussion on research ethics, well as how the current study complied with them.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research paradigm used was interpretivist. According to Fossey, et al., (2002, p. 717) an interpretive paradigm focuses mainly on recognising and narrating the meaning of human experiences and actions. Similarly, Reeves and Hedberg (2003, p. 32) note that the interpretivist paradigm stresses the need to put analysis in context and that the interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals. The authors state that it uses meaning as opposed to oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. This paradigm allowed the researcher to have a detailed understanding of the outreach situation at the NAN.

The approach of this study was qualitative study. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that qualitative research seeks to intensely comprehend a research subject rather than predict results. Similarly, Ahmad et al., (2019, p. 2828) state that “qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their

natural setting. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives". A qualitative approach resulted in generation of insights that were specific to outreach services and patterns linked to it. It also enabled the researcher to understand why there may not be an outreach program at NAN in the event that it does not exist. The study also applied a case study research design.

A case study research design is defined by Yin (1984, p.23) "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Miles et al., (2014, p.28) state that "A case could be an individual, a role, a small group, an organisation, a company, or even a nation. From the above mentioned, it is safe to conclude that a case study is one that focuses on a specific group or population so as to gather relevant information. It enables the researcher to focus on a specific area of interest. The NAN was the organisation that was focused on for this case study.

### **3.3 Data collection methods**

Conboy et al. (2012) state that qualitative research aims to analyse a variety of phenomena through qualitative data from a diverse number of sources, such as interviews, observations, design efforts, interventions, and archival materials. This study also employed semi structured interviews and document review as data collection methods.

George (2022) states that a semi-structured interview is a data collection method that depends on asking questions within a pre-established thematic framework. He adds that the questions do not follow a particular order. Similarly, DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019, p.1) state that "Semi-structured interviews are an effective method for data collection when the researcher

wants to collect qualitative, open-ended data; to explore participant thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a particular topic; and to delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues”.

According to Busetto et al., (2020) document review can include annual reports, guidelines, policy documents, diaries or letter. Going through guidelines for conducting outreach services or an outreach policy in the even that it exists, provided key information that helped this research.

### **3.4 Population**

Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010) define a population as the whole group from where information should be established or learned. Similarly, Bhandari (2021) states that a population is the entire group that you want to make an informed judgement about. It is safe to conclude that a population is the group a researcher selects that is relevant to their research topic and this group can be comprised of people or objects. The population of this study was staff members of the National Archives of Namibia as well as the documents.

### **3.5 Sample**

This research used purposive sampling technique. According to Etikan (2016, p. 2) purposive sampling technique “Is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants”. The author states that “the researcher chooses what must be known and sets out to discover individuals who can and are willing to supply the data by ideals of information or experience” (p.2). This research therefore targeted archivists in charge of access and policy at the National Archives of Namibia as they were be in a better position to answer questions on outreach services due to their expertise in dealing with users and policy matters. The researcher also purposively sampled relevant documents on outreach services, which may be in the form of policies, drafts or guidelines.

### **3.6 Research instruments**

Teachers College, Columbia University (n. d., para.1) defines a research instrument as “a tool used to collect, measure, and analyse data related to your research interests”. Similarly, Collins (2021, para. 4) states that “the tools have to be able to gather the data that pertains to the research topic and they should help you to test the hypothesis or answer the research questions being investigated. From the above mentioned. Research instruments are what enables a researcher to gather data needed for the research.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide for face-to-face interviews and a document review checklist to collect data. The interviews were held at the NAN. The reason for using individual interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the participant’s experience and their own understanding of the type of outreach services they do, how often they do them and how effective they think the outreach program is. This allowed the researcher to see if there was a mutual understanding and awareness of the existence or nonexistence of the outreach program within the staff members and identity gapes.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness of the findings**

Moran (2021, para. 1) states that “trustworthiness in qualitative studies is about establishing the credibility, or how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the research study’s findings”. Similarly, Pilot and Beck (2014, p.487) concur that “Trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study. From the above mentioned, trustworthiness can be said to be the authenticity of the research findings which would have come as a result of honest procedures. To ensure this, the researcher ensured that participants understood the purpose of this study by explaining to them before they participated. The researcher made use of triangulation of data collection methods by ensuring that all archivists from different departments within the NAN were interviewed to be able to compare data from all archivists. The researcher also carried out a

member check or respondent validity to assess if participants can resonate with the data outcome. This was done by presenting the data to them and having a focus group discussion about the results.

### **3.8 Procedure**

The first thing the researcher did was to get permission to conduct the research. The researcher obtained a letter from the University of Namibia which assisted with getting that authority. Semi-structured interviews were used to capture data. The face-to-face interviews were appointment based. The researcher scheduled appointments with staff of the National Archives and gave them an option to be interviewed telephonically.

### **3.9 Data collection**

According to Bhandari (2020, para. 1) data collection is “a systematic process of gathering observations or measurements” and that “data collection allows you to gain first-hand knowledge and original insights into your research problem”. Similarly, Dudovskiy (n. d., para. 2) states that data collection is a “process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes”. The researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews with archivists at the NAN and documents review. As stated earlier, George (2022) states that a semi-structured interview is a data collection method that depends on asking questions within a pre-established thematic framework whereas Busetto et al., (2020) explains that document review can include annual reports, guidelines, policy documents, diaries or letter.

### **3.10 Data analysis**

According to Schensul et al. (1999) research data analysis is a process used by researchers to transform data into a narrative and analyse it to draw conclusions. The authors state that the data analysis method aids in breaking down large amounts of data into more manageable and meaningful pieces. Similarly, Marshall and Rossman (2006, p.150) describe data analysis as

“a creative and fascinating process through which a mass of collected data is being brought to order, structure and meaning”. It is safe to conclude that data analysis is what makes it possible to obtain meaning from data collected through various research methods and instruments. This research used thematic analysis and an inductive approach to study the common themes and experiences from participant’s responses that appeared repeatedly. The data analysis described the participant’s perceptions and analysis in relation to records an archives management practices. Coding was also used to organise information and responses from participants and it was then presented in descriptive narrative.

### **3.11 Research Ethics**

As part of research ethics Qamar (2018, p. 1503) states that “voluntary informed consent is one of the first responsibilities, performed prior to research, in which a participant has to be made understood and agree to participation without coercion”. Considering that this research was qualitative and relied mostly on interviews, the researcher explained the purpose of the study as well as the information required from them before they participated. The researcher also requested participants to sign a consent form to signify their willingness to take part in the study. Qamar (2018, p.1503) also states that research ethics include “confidential and anonymous treatment of participants”. In that regard, no names were used or any other personal information so as to maintain anonymity. The researcher replaced names with codes when data was reported. Under research ethics, various authors such as Rensik (2020) and Dooly (2017) have stated that fabrication of research by the generation of misleading data or other methods is unacceptable. Therefore, the research ensured that all information and data analysed was authentic and trustworthy. Data was stored on google drive cloud storage and only authorised persons will have access to the data.

### **3.12 Chapter summary**

This chapter discussed the research methodology, the data collection methods, the population, sample, research instruments, trustworthiness of the findings, the procedure, the data collection methods, data analysis and also the research ethics. The next chapter presents the data collected.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings of the role of outreach services in the enhancement of the NAN conducted during October 2022 at the NAN. According to Statistics Canada (2015), developing answers to questions through the investigation and interpretation of data is a well-known definition of data analysis.

This chapter is structured into headings drawn from research objectives, as well as subheadings which emerged from the data analysis. These are indicated below.

- Interaction channels used by NAN
- How users value archives
- Outreach programme at NAN
- Feedback mechanism (s) on outreach
- Outreach target
- Benefits of outreach activities
- Challenges of establishing or running an outreach programme
- Overcoming challenges in outreach activities

A document search on the NAN website where did not yield any results on anything around outreach policies or guidelines in place at the NAN as there are no written down polies or guidelines around the matter.

#### 4.2 General information of the respondents

Data was gathered from the archivists at the NAN who were in charge of access. The details of the participants are listed in the table below.

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Years at NAN</b>
Archivist	A1	7
Archivist	A2	7
Archivist	A3	11

Table 4.1: Number of interviews and codes

The participants comprised of two archivists and one acting chief archivist. Two had seven years of experience as an archivist as well as seven years of employment at the NAN. One had 11 years of experience as an archivist and ten months as an acting chief archivist with a total of 11 years of employment at NAN. For confidentiality reasons, all three will be referred to as Archivist one, Archivist two and Archivist three (A1, A2 and A3) without singling out the Acting Chief Archivist.

### **4.3 The nature of the outreach programme at the NAN**

#### **4.3.1 Interaction channels used by NAN**

The respondents were asked the channels they used to interact with their users. All the participants indicated that they interacted with their users through the telephone, Facebook, emails and face to face when users come to the Archives. A3 stated that through social media, the website and exhibitions. A3 added that they interacted with users through initiatives and collaborations that they at times came up with other institutes.

#### **4.3.2 How users value archives**

A1 stated that through the help they gave to the users when they found the information that they needed led to them appreciating the archive as well as through outreach programs targeted

at the youngsters who did not know about the existence of archives and then get to know about it.

A2 stated that by explaining the uniqueness of the records and telling them how to handle fragile records, users get to appreciate the archival materials more.

A3 stated that by getting users involved through exhibitions and opening up internships to students in the field of records and archives management.

### **4.3.3 Outreach programme at NAN**

When asked if there was a predetermined schedule for outreach activities A1 and A3 stated that they did not have a schedule apart for Heritage and Archives week which were done yearly. Both stated that some were done promptly when a client had booked or requested for a tour around the Archives for exhibitions.

With regards to the question above, A2 said that there was no predetermined schedule for outreach activities.

Respondents were asked about their outreach activities and A1 stated that with Heritage week it varies from year to year at times they produce publications or reach out to schools. “This year we reached out to schools and invited a story teller to do interactive story telling which was based on the resources we have and highlighted the importance of using archives through the story telling. It also provided a platform for learners to share their talents, one gave a poem”.

A1 and A3 stated that they also gave tours to the institution for users to get an overview of what happens.

A1 and A3 mentioned that they advertised the week and the institution through radio, Facebook and a broadcast with the information centre.

#### **4.3.4 Feedback mechanism (s) on outreach**

Respondents were asked about the mechanisms in place to receive feedback from users to enable them to determine if their outreach activities were having the desired effect. Both A1 and A3 stated that they had user satisfaction surveys which they did as well as emails as most users would send reviews through email. A3 added that they at times interacted with users on social media pages where they would respond to inbox messages and were open to feedback and any criticism. A2 stated that they had no mechanisms in place to receive feedback from users which brings forth a contradiction which will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### **4.3.5 Outreach target**

Respondents were asked who they target with their outreach activities and why. A1 stated that the Namibian people and high school users as most users were academics from abroad so they wanted more local users. A1 also added that “we want high school kids so that they can know which career path to take, we try to let them know about the field of records and archives”.

A2 stated that it was the whole nation, students, researchers, both local and international.

A3 stated that the scope was still very small and depended on whatever theme came out that year.

### **4.4 Benefits of outreach activities**

#### **4.4.1 Benefits of outreach activities to users**

Respondents mentioned that users became more informed and knowledgeable about certain topics. A1 gave reference to heritage week and stated that users got educated on the difference between a library and an archive and many children admitted it had been eye opening.

A1 added that one specific user approached her and said “she had so much hatred with regards to the Herero genocide and it was always a sensitive topic but after the heritage week event she felt such a relief and got healed”.

A2 said that it was a nice question which they would think about it.

A3 stated that about two years back the NAN was not so present on the digital space and now they have seen increase in new users who get to see what the NAN does though the digital space. A3 also added that through digital platforms researchers across the nation can know when to come or not.

#### **4.4.2 Benefits of outreach activities to the NAN**

All the archivists stated that there had been an increase in users. A3 added that there had been more relationships built with other institutions.

#### **4.5 The need to advocate for outreach activities**

All the respondents stated that outreach was the root of what the institution is about. The archivists stressed that outreach should be amplified and reach more people because without it people won't understand the nation's history or where it is coming from. A1 stressed that "we will be a lost nation and this is the institution that preserves the nation's history so it's important for people to know about its existence and make use of archives".

A3 added that outreach is almost like marketing and it is what gets people to become interested in the collections.

#### **4.6 Challenges of establishing or running an outreach programme**

##### **4.6.1 Funding outreach activities**

All archivists stated that it could be donors or the government.

A1 specified that for heritage week there were grants given by the Museum Association of Namibia.

#### **4.6.2 Challenges in setting up and implementing outreach activities**

All the archivists stated that they had not managed to set up and implement outreach activities because they had no funds as well as were understaffed and could not send people do outreach activities outside the archives. A1 stated that even when they got some funding it was not enough to cater for all the people they would have liked to reach so it limited the number of people they want to participate in events like heritage week. A3 their scope is limited to Windhoek due to lack of funds and whereas there are many who could benefit outside Windhoek.

#### **4.6.3 Overcoming challenges in outreach activities**

All the archivists mentioned that they made use of the website and Facebook. A1 gave reference to heritage week and stated that they targeted few people which they can cater for when they have events like heritage week. A1 and A2 mentioned that they did live broadcast on all free platforms like radio stations and the government information centre as well as share pamphlets to those that can't come.

#### **4.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the data that resulted from the interviews conducted at the NAN. The data was a result of interviews done at the NAN among three archivists. The data presented revealed that there NAN did not have an outreach programme but occasionally carried out outreach activities on a yearly basis. The data also showed that the NAN had a website and Facebook page where they would interact with users. Lastly, the data presented various challenges that the NAN staff faced when it came to implementing an outreach programme. The next chapter discusses and summarises the findings, as well as give conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study findings.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS.**

**5.1 Introduction**

The research findings are discussed and interpreted in this chapter. The discussions are organised under the following subheadings: the nature of the outreach programme at the NAN; feedback mechanism on outreach; outreach target; benefits of outreach activities; the need to advocate for outreach activities; challenges of establishing or running an outreach programme; conclusion; and recommendations regarding the study.

**5.2 Discussion Findings**

The discussion section's goal is to analyse and explain the importance of your findings in connection to what is already known about the research problem being studied and to explain any new knowledge or insights that have evolved as a result of your research (Annesley, 2010).

The discussion is under the following subheadings in line with the thematic issues from the content analysis:

- The nature of the outreach programme at the NAN;
- Feedback mechanism on outreach;
- Outreach target;
- Benefits of outreach activities;
- The need to advocate for outreach activities; and
- Challenges of establishing or running an outreach programme;

**5.2.1 The nature of the outreach programme at the NAN**

The findings show that the NAN used both traditional and technological platforms to conduct outreach services. These included the telephone; emails; face to face interactions; social media platforms such as Facebook; the website and exhibitions as means of interacting with their users. These channels they used are in line with what Roper and Millar (1999) listed as channels which an archive could use in their outreach programme, the authors said an outreach programme could include publications, exhibitions or radio and television broadcasts. Similarly, Roberto (2019) listed printing brochures explaining archives, records management and the profession as well as speaking at community forums, setting up a portable promotional display unit to use at community events and venues as ways of conducting outreach activities. From the findings it was clear that the NAN did not have a planned outreach programme but would conduct outreach activities based on yearly commemorated dates.

The researcher went further to look at the NAN website and Facebook page to see how outreach activities were being conducted on the two platforms and noticed that the website was very outdated and the events section on the website did not contain any information regarding past events or upcoming events that could be expected during the year.

The Facebook page had a few recent updates but there was no consistency. A study by Hager (2015), revealed that many types of archival organizations can utilise Facebook as an explanation tool of their collections and the information they hold. The author further explains that using Facebook as an outreach tool is a fantastic idea for organisations that are less well-known or that are located in places where archives are uncommon.

Hager (2015)'s study also revealed that Facebook is an effective fundraising tool because promoting the archive's activities and events, potential donors are able to see that their money will go to a worthy cause. Additionally, current donors can track the results of the work they



have supported. It is against this background that the researcher urges the NAN staff to post frequently on their Facebook page.

### **5.2.2 Feedback mechanism (s) on outreach**

A contradiction arose during the analysis of data collection as A2 stated that that the NAN had no mechanisms in place to receive feedback from users whilst the other two archivists stated that they had mechanism in place. However, the website had a feedback box and this indicated that there were indeed some forms of mechanisms in place to receive feedback.

The two archivists who mentioned the NAN used user satisfaction surveys prompted the researcher to have a look at the form and the form was insufficient as it turned out that the form was created for a specific interview and that form has not been used since and the staff could hardly remember when last they used the form.

The existence of a social media page or a website feedback box does not guarantee feedback from users as this is seen as according to Sampson (1996), a passively solicited way of receiving feedback as it is left to the users to initiate meaning a suggestion box could sit at a desk for months without users dropping any suggestions and same applied to the social media page. Manson (2014) agrees that archivists need to go beyond making use of Web 2.0 technologies but should work proactively to develop a social media strategy. Lack of proactive act from the staff NAN leads to passively solicited customer feedback.

The contradiction therefore could be explained by the existence of a passively solicited customer feedback mechanism and a lack of active effort from the NAN staff to obtain feedback from users.

### **5.2.3 Outreach target**

The study's findings show that there was not a specific scope for outreach activities. It depended on whatever theme came out from the Annual Archives Week from the International Council of Archivists (ICA) and Heritage Week theme which would come from the Museums Association of Namibia (MAN). Outreach target at the NAN also ranged from the whole nation, students, both local and international researchers. Nengomasha and Nyanga (2015, p.92) state that “when planning outreach programmes, archivists are encouraged to focus on specific user groups, determine users’ needs and tailor programmes to meet those specific needs”. Outreach should not be done haphazardly but time should be taken to ensure that needs of various users are met and specific methods are tailored to meet the needs of the users for it to be successful.

### **5.2.4 Benefits of outreach activities**

Research findings indicate that outreach activities had benefits not only for the institution but to the users as well.

The benefits to the institution were that it increased the number of users that would visit the Archive as well as led to more corporate relationships with other institutions which resulted in funding from those institutions. These findings concur with Sabina (2020) who argues that when an archive increases community outreach initiatives it leads to an increased use of archival materials and a general increase in the number of people that visit the archive.

The benefits to the users are that it makes them more aware of certain issues or topics that they did not have full information on before.

### **5.2.5 Benefits of outreach activities to users**

Findings indicate that users became more informed and knowledgeable about certain topics and it changed their way of thinking. Findings also revealed that through digital platforms

researchers across the nation can know the operating times and closed days of the archives which saves them from coming to the archives on days that it is closed.

### **5.2.6 The need to advocate for outreach activities**

As advised by Kamatula (2011) that outreach programmes should be seriously conducted. The findings show that despite difficulties in putting outreach programmes into action, NAN staff members understood the value of outreach programs since they all agreed that outreach was at the heart of what the organisation stood for. According to the findings, outreach needs to be strengthened and expanded for the institution to continue to be relevant.

### **5.2.7 Challenges of establishing or running an outreach programme**

The results show that establishing and maintaining an outreach programme as well as broadening their outreach scope were difficult due to a lack of funds. The NAN was also found to be severely understaffed, which made it difficult to have staff people in control of the outreach program. The results support Yusuf (2013), Hagedron (2011) and Keakopa (2006) who claimed that a major issue facing archive administration in Africa was a lack of funding as well as understaffing.

## **5.3 Summary of findings**

- **The nature of the outreach programme at the NAN**

From the findings it is clear that the NAN did not have a planned outreach programme but would conduct outreach activities based on yearly commemorated dates.

- **Feedback mechanism (s) on outreach**

The findings revealed that the NAN used a passively solicited customer feedback mechanism through emails, Facebook etc. and there was a lack of active effort from the NAN staff to obtain feedback from users on a regular basis.

- **Outreach target**

The study's findings show that there was not a specific scope for outreach activities. The target ranged from the whole nation, students, both local and international researchers.

- **Benefits of outreach activities**

Research findings indicate that outreach activities increased the number of users that would visit the Archive as well as provided opportunities to collaborate with other partners. The benefits to the users were that it made them more aware of certain issues or topics that they did not have full information on before.

- **The need to advocate for outreach activities**

The NAN staff members strongly advocated for outreach to be strengthened and expanded for the institution to continue to be relevant.

- **Challenges of establishing or running an outreach programme**

The results show that lack of sufficient staff and lack of funding made it difficult to run an outreach programme.

## **5.4 Conclusions**

The objectives of the study have been met and these were:

### **5.4.1 To determine the nature of the outreach programme if any at the NAN;**

The nature of outreach programme at NAN is not according to best practice as there is no staff member assigned to manage outreach and there are no written goals and objectives towards an outreach programme despite the yearly conducted outreach activities they carry out.

#### **5.4.2 To find out the benefits of an outreach programme for the NAN;**

The study established that outreach services had benefits to both the users as well as the institution. Due to exposure to information they had not previously known, users gained knowledge on a variety of issues and increased user numbers and a platform for collaboration with other institutions were advantageous to the NAN.

#### **5.4.3 To establish challenges, if any, of establishing or running an outreach programme;**

The challenges that emerged from the study were a lack of sufficient staff and lack of funding.

#### **5.4.4 To come up with recommendations on how to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of an outreach programme.**

The study has come up with recommendations which can be seen bellow.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

Recommendations are made in line with findings of the study and the researcher recommends that the NAN does the following:

- I. The NAN should develop an outreach program with objectives that are specific, measurable, and contain activities that are designed to achieve them;
- II. The NAN should exert all of its influence to get OPM to make it possible for them to update their website frequently;
- III. The NAN should post short educational videos on both the Facebook page as well as the YouTube channel;
- IV. The NAN should have user satisfaction questionnaires that they give to users as often as possible so as to receive feedback more frequently because when there is no constant feedback there will be no way of knowing if the benefits of their outreach initiatives; and

- V. With regards to the problem of understaffing which the Archives was facing, the NAN should constantly inform the action officers of the dangers of working while they are understaffed and compile a thorough record of the tasks that have been put on hold because of a lack of employees.

### **5.6 Areas for further research**

Given a gap in the literature, the study suggests additional research in the field of outreach initiatives at African archival institutions. Additionally, it's important to consider how archives might use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to increase their visibility and engage with their audiences.

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## Appendix 1: Permission letter

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Department of Information and  
Communication Studies

29 June 2022

To Whom It May Concern

### **Re: Request for Permission to Conduct Research**

We wish to introduce to you Ms Andra Magadza, a fourth year student conducting research in partial fulfilment of the B.A. in Records and Archives Management (Hons). Her research project is titled “The role of outreach services in enhancing the visibility of the National Archives of Namibia”. Please find attached the research proposal.

We are requesting your assistance by granting the student permission to conduct the study on your institution. We rely on the support of our stakeholders for the success of our programmes.

Her contact details are [andiemgz@gmail.com](mailto:andiemgz@gmail.com) Tel. 0818933499.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Nengomasha".

Prof C.T. Nengomasha

Supervisor, Department of Information and Communication Studies

Cell: 0812787617; Office: 2063641; email: [cnengomasha@unam.na](mailto:cnengomasha@unam.na)



## Appendix 2

### Interview Guide for Archivists at National Archives of Namibia

**Research title:** The role of outreach services in enhancing the use of archival materials at the National Archives of Namibia

#### General information

1. Position or job title of the respondent
2. Number of years in the position
3. Number of years in the NAN employment

#### Section A: To determine the nature of the outreach programme if any at the NAN

1. Through which channels do you interact with your users?
2. How do you get your various users to appreciate the nature of the work that you do?
3. Do you have a pre-determined schedule of outreach activities?
4. If your answer to three above is in affirmative, can you kindly provide a few examples of the activities that you do under your outreach programme?
5. What mechanisms are in place to receive feedback from your users to enable you to determine whether your outreach activities are having the desired effects?
6. Typically, who do you target with these outreach activities and why?

#### Section B: To find out the benefits of an outreach programme

1. In what specific ways have your outreach benefited your users?
2. How has the National Archive benefitted from outreach activities?
3. What changes have the outreach activities brought about at the National Archives?
4. What would you say to someone advocating for an end to outreach activities?

#### Section C: To establish challenges, if any, of establishing or running an outreach programme

1. Who funds your outreach activities?
2. Have you experienced any challenges in setting up and implementing outreach activities that could be related to human resources, finances and transport or even time?

3. How have you overcome the challenges that you have outlined above?