



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS IN KENYA

HENRY N KEMONI

School of Information Sciences, Moi University, Eldoret,
Kenya
hkemoni@yahoo.com

PATRICK NGULUBE

Information Studies Programme, University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
ngulubep@ukzn.ac.za

ABSTRACT

The article presents the findings of a study which examined the role of Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service (KNADS) in the management of records in 18 government ministry headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Data was collected (in 2005) through questionnaires sent out to 157 registry staff, and through interviews conducted with 10 senior government officers and six archive personnel from Nairobi Records Centre and KNADS headquarters. The research findings revealed that, even though KNADS provided records management advice to government departments, the record creating agencies did not adequately implement this advice.

The study established that KNADS faced various challenges in providing records management advice to government departments and that this may compromise public service delivery and the effective management of government information. The challenges that were identified included: inadequate human and financial resources, lack of support from senior government officers, low priority accorded to records management in government departments, lack of regular follow-ups on recordkeeping practices in departments, and inadequacies in existing records and archives legislation. The study concluded that KNADS had not effectively helped record-creating agencies to properly manage their records (largely owing to the constraints it faced). Among the key recommendations of the study is that, given the limited resources available, there is need to review existing records and archives legislation in order to divide responsibilities for recordkeeping between KNADS and government departments.

KEYWORDS:

Kenya, National Archives, Public records, Records Management, Public Service Delivery, Recordkeeping

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In many countries, including Kenya, national archival institutions are mandated by records and archives legislation that stipulate the proper management of records in the public sector. Thurston (1996:187) underscored this point by observing that national archival institutions in Africa had a statutory responsibility for records management in the public sector and thus, any attempt to understand the development of records management in the public sector in Africa needed to focus on the national archives.

National archives are involved in the management of public sector records, since records management is the key to performance in the public sector. For example, effective records management improves service delivery, supports efficient information exchange, facilitates evidence-based policy making, supports administration of data protection principles, supports the effective implementation of Freedom of Information legislation, encourages accountability, and improves decisions and knowledge management across sectors of government (Blake 2005). This partially explains why Ngulube and Tafor (2006:57) claimed that records and archives contain information that is, in effect, the cornerstone of government accountability and good governance.

A literature search indicated that archival institutions worldwide were involved in the management of public sector records. In the United Kingdom, the National Archives (2004) advises government departments and the wider public sector on best practices in records management while in Australia, the National Archives (2004) provides advice to government agencies by developing policies, standards, guidelines, and providing training and advice about modern recordkeeping. In the United States of America, the National Archives and Records Administration (2004) helps to preserve the nation's history by overseeing the management of all federal records. The key mission of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (2004) is to foster national identity and protect human rights by promoting efficient, accountable and transparent government through the proper management and care of government records. The National Archives of India (2005) is currently engaged in streamlining the management of public records.

The government of Botswana (2007) points out that the mission of the Botswana National Archives and Records Services Department is to provide efficient and effective economic management of all public records throughout their life cycle (from creation

to disposition), and to preserve those public records of archival value for posterity and access purposes. On the other hand, the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services (2000), in line with its mission, advises public offices on the proper management of records. The records management responsibilities of KNADS are further spelt out in the existing archival legislation. According to section 4 (1) a of the Public Archives and Documentation Service Act Chapter 19 (of the laws) of Kenya, the Director of KNADS or officers under him/her, have a mandate to examine public records and advise on their care, preservation and custody.

The records management advice provided by national archives to government departments is important, since recordkeeping facilitates effective management of recorded information throughout its life cycle, and may lead to both socio-political and economic development. Recordkeeping may also help in the attainment of the renowned United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs). According to the United Nations (2005), the eight UN MDGs include: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. Access to complete and accurate records partly holds the key to the achievement of some of the UN MDGs. Well-managed information is critical to sound decision-making and socio-economic development.

Good recordkeeping practices may also lead to the attainment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) objectives. NEPAD is a continental strategic development programme initiated by African leaders such as President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Abdelasiz Bouteflika of Algeria. It is a collective action to solve Africa's economic problems and recognises the need to meet the UN MDGs and targets adopted by the United Nations in September 2000 (Okumu 2002:227; Ilorah 2004:223-224).

2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Public sector record management programmes in Africa are plagued by various problems due to the ineffectiveness of registries and national archival institutions (Mnjama 2005; Ngulube & Tafor 2006). Central to the problem of managing public records is the fact that archival and records legislation is not conducive to records management development; also, the tradition of organisational support for recordkeeping systems is weak. Consequently, many public offices in Africa have experienced record management problems.

In Kenya, for example, reports of lost files, missing and the misfiling of records were described as a common feature in many government departments (Obudho 1999:2). The Office of the President (1999) noted that cases of missing and lost records were a common experience in public offices. That was caused by poor record management practices in government departments. Terer (2000:1), the then Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Vice-President and Ministry of Home Affairs, pointed out that missing and lost files and documents resulted in delayed service to the citizens, and projected a poor image of the public service. In recognition of the key role that national archives play in the management of government records, Terer (2001) virtually implored citizens to make formal complaints, in writing, to the Director of KNADS whenever services they required were unduly delayed as a result of missing or lost files and documents. The Director of KNADS was required to submit quarterly reports of such cases for further action.

As records management practices continued to deteriorate, the Government of Kenya appointed a Task Force in 2003 to investigate the causes of poor record-keeping in government departments. According to a draft document from the Office of the President, Directorate of Personnel Management (2003a:2), some of the Task Force's terms of reference included analyzing the records management situation in government departments, analyzing the role played by registries in the management of records in the public sector, establishing the constraints that influenced the performance of registries; and preparing an action plan on how to address all the constraints identified. However, the terms of reference of the Task Force did not completely put KNADS under the spotlight.

The unsatisfactory state of recordkeeping in the Kenyan public sector was also highlighted by Musila Musembi (2004), and the then Director of KNADS during the ESARBICA Executive Board Meeting held in Maputo in 2003 (ESARBICA 2003). The unsatisfactory record management situation resulted in delayed and poor service delivery, frustrations on the part of the public, and also encouraged corruption. What is the cause of Kenya's poor records management practices? Are registries failing to play their role as gatekeepers of the management of government information? Or is it that KNADS is failing to effectively fulfil its mandate?

In view of the prevailing state of recordkeeping in Kenya, the study investigated the extent to which KNADS effectively carried out its mandate in relation to assisting registry staff to properly manage records throughout the records continuum. The study was guided by the following four research questions:

- What type of record management advice does KNADS provide to government departments?
- Do government departments implement the records management advice provided by KNADS?

- What challenges does KNADS face in providing records management advice to government departments?
- How can the identified challenges be addressed?

3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study is significant in a number of ways. Records provide evidence of human activities and transactions, underlie the rights of individuals and states, and are fundamental to democracy and good governance (ICA 2004). In view of the role of records management in enhancing democracy and good governance, the study examined the role KNADS played in providing recordkeeping advice to government departments. KNADS' contribution is vital, since recordkeeping underpins all aspects of public administration.

Very few studies in records and archives management reported in the literature are based on empirical evidence (Ngulube & Tafor 2006:58). In this regard, the study findings are significant because they are based on empirical research. The findings would be of use to all record and archive management scholars, educators, consultants, researchers and students in Africa undertaking studies related to the role of national archives in the management of public sector records. This study also supplements previous research within the East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) (of which Kenya is a member) that have explored the role of national archives in managing public sector records. It will thus provide useful comparable data for scholars and researchers alike.

The findings also offer valuable lessons to other archival institutions in the ESARBICA region on the need to effectively manage government information, irrespective of format. This study will also add to the literature and data on record and archive management, and make some contribution towards records management theory, practice, methodology and policy formulation.

4 SHORT RESEARCH STORY

The study utilised a survey research methodology to investigate the role that KNADS played in managing records in government ministries' headquarters in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. The study was based on the assumption that the records management practices at the headquarters of government registries were a good indicator of how those ministries managed their records at all levels of government.

Survey research appears to be a popular method among researchers in Library and Information Science (Ngulube 2005:131). In conducting a records management survey, researchers may use existing documentation, direct observation, questionnaires and interviews as data collection methods (Penn, Pennix & Coulson 1994:59; Shepherd & Yeo 2003:33-35). Data was collected through the use of an interview schedule, a questionnaire, and direct observation (which supplemented data obtained from interviews and questionnaires). These data collection strategies were also used by Wamukoya (1996) to determine the impact of records management on administrative reform programmes in Kenya. The data collection methods used in this study were therefore deemed to be appropriate.

The researcher conducted a survey of records management practices in 18 out of 24 government ministries headquarters as constituted before February 2005. No sampling of government ministries was done. The remaining six ministries were not covered in the study because of the lack of research endorsement by the respective accounting officers. The target population of the study consisted of 173 respondents who consisted of 157 registry personnel, 10 senior government officers who were directly involved in the management of records in their various ministries, and 6 archives personnel from Nairobi Records Centre and KNADS headquarters (which is the watchdog of the management of government records in Nairobi). Questionnaires were administered on registry personnel while interviews were conducted with senior ministerial officers and archives personnel. The observation technique was employed to collect data from the registries, and was used to verify data obtained from senior government officers and registry personnel.

The data obtained was both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative data that were obtained from the questionnaires was processed with the use of SPSS® version 10.0 and presented with the use of tables. The qualitative data that were obtained from the interviews with senior government officers and archives personnel were content analyzed. Content analysis involved quantifying and tallying the presence of a concept. After identifying the categories, the data was coded. The coded data offered some evidence about dominant categories and trends. Some of the data was presented in narrative form or was integrated into the quantitative data by means of questionnaires.

5 MAJOR FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Starting with the nature of records management advice provided by KNADS, the following discussion presents major research findings and the analysis of the results.

5.1 NATURE OF RECORD MANAGEMENT ADVICE PROVIDED BY KNADS

The study findings indicated that all 157 (100%) registry personnel were aware of the existence of KNADS. When asked to indicate if they received professional records management advice from KNADS, all 157 (100%) indicated a “yes” response. Senior government officers were asked to state if they sought assistance and collaborated with KNADS. All 10 (100%) indicated that they collaborated with, and sought assistance from, KNADS. Typical responses as to whether they sought assistance from KNADS were as follows:

“...yes we do contact Kenya National Archives to assist in managing our records...”

“...various government circulars from the Office of the President and Directorate of Personnel Management have been encouraging us to liaise with Kenya National Archives to improve recordkeeping in our ministries...”

Registry personnel were also asked to specify the nature of records management advice they received from KNADS and their responses varied, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Nature Of Records Management Advice Received From Knads Archives Personnel (N=157)

Advice received	Frequency	Percentage
Registry management	144	91.7
Records preservation	127	80.9
Files management	113	72
Records security	106	67.5
Reports management	43	27.4
Forms management	43	27.4
Disaster management	37	23.6
Directives management	32	20.4

Table 1 indicates that the most cited records management advice received from KNADS was registry management with a score of 144 (91.7%) followed by records preservation with a score of 127 (80.9%). The least cited advice was on directives management and disaster management, accounting for 32 (20.4%) and 37 (23.6%) responses respectively. Furthermore, all the 157 (100%) respondents reported that they did not have a forms management programme. Various forms are used in government ministries (eg in recruitment, training needs assessment, claiming retirement benefits, accounting for use of resources and procurement of supplies and equipment). This meant that registries

did not have a comprehensive records management programme. A complete records management programme includes a multitude of components, including forms, reports and directives management (Penn, Pennix & Coulson 1994:5).

When asked about the means they used to contact KNADS, respondents gave different replies, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Means Used By Registry Personnel To Contact Knads (N=157)

Means used	Frequency	Percentage
Correspondence	124	79
Personal visits	97	61.6
Telephone	71	45.2
E-mail	33	21
Fax	6	3.8

It is evident from Table 2 that the most cited means used to contact KNADS was correspondence, which accounted for 124 (79%) of the responses. The least cited means was the use of fax and e-mail, which accounted for six (3.8%) and 33 (21%) respectively.

Respondents were asked if they faced any problems when seeking professional advice from KNADS. One hundred and eight (68.8%) did not face any problems, while 49 (31.2%) indicated that they did face problems when seeking professional advice from KNADS. The 49 (31.2%) respondents who indicated that they had faced problems when seeking professional advice from KNADS were asked about the nature of these problems. Thirty-six (73.5%) cited delays in response, while 13 (26.5%) cited non-response from KNADS. All respondents pointed out that KNADS always avoided dealing with electronic records when asked for assistance by government departments. Registry personnel did not therefore see how they could influence the management of electronic records in their respective departments.

On their part, all six archive staff confirmed that they provided record management advice to government departments. They indicated that the areas of professional records management services that they provided to registry personnel in government departments were: designing and implementing registry management policies and procedures, conducting records surveys and appraisals, preparing record retention schedules and records disposition and, finally, providing records management training to registry personnel and heads of departments.

Respondents were also asked to provide statistics indicating the nature of professional records management advice they had provided to government departments in the past five years. Three out of the six archives personnel provided the statistics indicated in Table 3. Although the statistics provided by the three archives personnel may not have

reflected all the offices visited in the period concerned, they nevertheless provide an indication of some of the offices that were visited (and the advice that was given).

Table 3: Records Management Advice Provided By Knads To Departments In The Last Five Years

Advice	Ministry/Department	Year
Developing records management policy	Foreign Affairs	2004
	Finance (Kenya Revenue Authority)	
	Tourism and Wildlife	
	Energy (National Oil Corporation)	
	Trade (Kenya Bureau of Standards, Kenya National Trade Corporation)	2003
	Wildlife (Kenya Tourist Development Corporation)	
	Information and Communication (Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, Postal Corporation of Kenya)	
	Water and Irrigation (National Irrigation Board)	
	Agriculture (National Cereals and Produce Board, Kenya Tea Development Authority)	2002
	Labour and Housing (National Housing Corporation, Export Processing Zone, Investment Promotion Council)	
	Gender, Culture and Sports	
	Energy (Kenya Pipeline)	
Records classification	Justice and Constitutional Affairs (Governance and Ethics Dept)	2005
	Vice-President and Ministry of Home Affairs (Probation Dept)	
	Planning and National Development (HQ)	2004
	Office of the President (State House, Provincial Administration)	2003
	Finance (HQ)	2001
File indexes	Justice and Constitutional Affairs (Governance and Ethics Dept)	2005
	Vice-President and Ministry of Home Affairs (Probation Dept)	
Records survey and appraisal	Planning and National Development (HQ)	2005
	Planning and National Development (HQ)	2004
	Health (HQ)	
	Office of the President (State House, Provincial Administration)	2003
	Vice-President and Ministry of Home Affairs (Prisons Dept)	2002
	Finance (HQ)	2001

Records disposal	Labour (HQ)	2004
	Office of the President (Department of Defence)	
	Education, Science and Technology (Kenya Literature Bureau)	
	Energy (National Oil Corporation)	
	Trade (Kenya Bureau of Standards, Kenya National Trade Corporation)	2003
	Wildlife (Kenya Tourist Development Corporation)	
	Agriculture (National Cereals and Produce Board, Kenya Tea Development Authority)	2002
	Labour and Housing (National Housing Corporation, Export Processing Zone, Investment Promotion Council)	
	Gender, Culture and Sports	
Energy (Kenya Pipeline)		
Training registry staff	Planning and National Development (HQ)	2004

Table 3 illustrates that archives personnel from Nairobi Records Centre provided records management advice in the last five years to various government departments and state corporations (parastatals) within various departments (eg the Kenya Tea Development Authority). Overall, the nature of advice provided included:

- records classification and index systems;
- records survey and appraisal;
- records disposition;
- developing records management policy; and
- training registry personnel.

Certain trends and patterns can be observed from Table 3 regarding the record management advice provided by KNADS to government departments in the last five years. For example, in the year 2001, few institutions were visited and the range of records management advice was limited to filing systems and records survey and appraisal. However, in the subsequent three years, that is, 2002 to 2004, the number of visits by KNADS archives personnel to government departments increased, as did the range of records management advice provided. For example, advice was provided in areas such as records disposal, developing records management policy, file classification and training of registry personnel.

The emphasis on records surveys and appraisal and records disposal by KNADS archives personnel in the years 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 may be attributed to the various records management circulars issued by the Office of the President and Directorate of Personnel Management. These circulars referred to the fact that many ministries had semi-current and non-current records mixed up with current records, thus making it impossible for registries to provide accurate records and the information needed for quick and timely decision-making.

The circulars advised government departments to seek the advice of KNADS in order to streamline their registry management practices as a way of improving public service delivery. For example, between 1999 and 2003, the government issued four record management circulars. The issuing of record management circulars may have led to government departments seeking more professional advice from KNADS on how to manage their records.

During the period 2001 to 2005, the Government of Kenya was carrying out public sector reform programmes and records management was identified as being one of the critical factors that would determine the success of the reform programmes. As a result, government departments sought a great deal of assistance from KNADS. On the other hand, KNADS was keen to provide record management advice to government departments as a way of not only justifying its central role in the successful implementation of public sector reforms, but also as a way to market its services within the Kenyan public service.

All six archives personnel pointed out that they conducted records surveys. As far as the issues covered when conducting records surveys, were concerned, four out of six cited reviews of filing classification and indexing systems, types of records created/received, record storage conditions, developing record disposition schedules and reviewing record distribution systems. The remaining two respondents also cited training needs assessment in records management. When respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they conducted records surveys, their responses were as follows:

- “according to our work programme”;
- “records surveys are not conducted regularly”;
- “once every three to five years depending on the workload”;
- “according to need in public offices vis-à-vis our resources”; and
- “as and when we complete one provenance (ministry/department)”.

Records surveys are essential. They help national archives to manage records created by government throughout their life cycle and to develop sustainable records management programmes. In other words, record surveys are the keys to establishing, maintaining and improving records management systems (Ngulube & Tafor 2006:62). It would be very difficult for KNADS to effectively monitor and improve record management practices in the public sector in the absence of a clearly defined records survey programme supported by adequate human resources. For instance, the size of the staff compliment influenced KNADS’ capacity to deliver services such as records surveys and appraisal (ESARBICA 2003).

It was established that all six archives personnel conducted records appraisal and that they used the value and functional based appraisal approach. One respondent cited

“uniqueness of information contained in the records” as an additional appraisal criterion used by archive personnel. All six indicated that they provided assistance to registry staff on the development of retention schedules and disposal of redundant records.

It is evident from the foregoing that government departments had not been given advice on managing electronic records. Indeed, all six archive staff indicated that they had neither undertaken a survey to determine the amount of electronic records generated in the public service nor provided advice to registry staff on how to manage electronic records. They further said that they did not have an electronic records management programme for public sector records. All six archive staff provided multiple responses stating the challenges they faced in relation to the management of electronic records in government departments (see Table 4).

Table 4: Challenges Faced By Archives Personnel In Managing Electronic Records (N=6)

Challenge faced	Total
Lack of adequate staff	6
Lack of adequate information technology training	6
Lack of adequate financial resources	5
Not determining amount of electronic records created	5
Inadequacy of existing records and archives legislation	5
Defining the role of system administrators and managers	5

Table 4 shows that the most cited challenges were lack of adequate information technology training and inadequate staff, with a score of six each. The next challenges mentioned were being unable to determine the amount of electronic records created, lack of adequate financial resources, inadequacy of existing records and archives legislation, and the undefined role of system administrators and managers (score of five). In short, one is obliged to conclude that KNADS was not playing any meaningful role in advising government departments on the management of electronic records at a time when government websites were proliferating, and government business increasingly being conducted electronically.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF KNADS’ ADVICE

Archives personnel were asked to indicate if registry staff implemented the advice that they received relating to the management of records. Four said they did not, while the remaining two recorded a “yes” response, but added that this varied from office to office. The four respondents who indicated that registry personnel did not implement the advice provided relating to the management of their records were asked to state reasons for non-compliance from a list of options provided. Their multiple responses are indicated in Table 5.

Table 5: Reasons For Non-Compliance With Records Management Advice Provided To Registry Personnel (N=4)

Reasons for non-compliance	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of support from senior government officers	4	100
Lack of trained registry staff	3	75
Constant transfers of registry staff	3	75
Non-enforcement of the provisions of Chapter 19	3	75
Public Archives Act Chapter 19 not giving record creators more responsibility to manage their own records	3	75
Low priority accorded to records management in government departments	2	50
Lack of regular follow-ups by Nairobi Record Centre staff	2	50

Table 5 shows that the most cited reason was lack of support from senior government officers, while the least cited reasons were low priority accorded to records management by government departments and lack of regular follow-ups by Nairobi Record Centre staff. The registries staff agreed with archives personnel, and added that the other problems that led to non-compliance with KNADS' advice was constant transfer of staff and low morale of registry personnel. According to these respondents, morale in registries was low because, in their own words:

- “Registries are neglected units in the ministries”;
- “Record management is a neglected area in the ministries”;
- “Registry personnel are ignored in the ministries”;
- “Recruitment and deployment of registry staff not based on experience and qualifications”;
- “Registries are viewed as dumping grounds for problematic staff”;
- “Few opportunities for training”;
- “Poor scheme of service”;
- “Health and safety of registry staff not taken into account”.

Perhaps all this at least partly explains why the current state of record keeping in the Kenyan public sector is far from satisfactory, a state of affairs noted by Musembi (2004). He observed that the state of record management in many public service delivery departments was appalling because of irregular visits to departments by KNADS and the low morale of registry staff.

The problems faced by KNADS in managing government records were once common in Botswana. An investigation by Kenosi (1999:119-127) on record management practices in the Botswana public service found that the national archives faced problems in the management of active, semi-active and non-active records in the public service.

These included inadequate record centres, lack of a blueprint for the management of electronic records and inadequate retention and disposal schedules.

Other problems that archival institutions face and which influences their programmes relate to insufficient funding caused by many government officials' failure to recognise records and archives as evidence. According to Millar (2004), governments in many parts of the world, and particularly in developing countries, perceive archives as relics of the past, that is, ephemeral materials kept for their historical value, but not as evidence of the rights and obligations of governments or citizens. As a result, there was often limited financial and organisational support for archives programmes, and national archives in many developing countries were marginalised, with insufficient resources, deficient physical facilities, and an inadequate infrastructure. Similarly, the lack of adequate resources has greatly undermined the work of KNADS.

The non-existence of concrete departmental policies regarding the manner in which registries are run, delegation of records management duties to junior officers who are not trained in records management, and a distinct lack of enthusiasm in record management by senior officers (whose portfolio includes the management of registries) was observed by Wamukoya (1988:7-8). The study finding which indicated that registries were not highly regarded in government departments also concurs with Millar's (2004) view (2004), who noted that there was a general lack of recognition of the importance of records as evidence. Millar also made the point that senior officials often tend to fail to recognise the need for, or value of, effective records programmes. The support of senior management of record management activities in Kenya may lead to increased funding and assist in the implementation of the record management advice provided by KNADS to government departments.

The need for senior management to support record management activities was emphasised by Makhura and Du Toit (2005:224). Discussing their experiences (based on a records management and information user behaviour study at South African National Parks), they observed that senior management needed to support the concept of a well-run record management programme and vigorously enforce a record management culture, thereby ensuring that all employees were familiar with agreed procedures for all types of records.

5.3 CHALLENGES FACING KNADS

Six senior government officers stated that they faced challenges in collaborating with KNADS, while the remaining four responded in the negative. The challenges they faced included inadequate advice on managing electronic records, inadequate retention and disposal schedules, slow response to requests for records surveys, delayed feedback

on records surveys and inconsistent record management advice. They attributed these problems to insufficient funding, lack of human resources and an inadequate legal framework. Archives staff concurred with senior government officers on the problems that affected their performance and added that the weakness of the Public Archives and Documentation Service Act Chapter 19 also contributed to their woes. All these problems resulted in KNADS failing to adequately provide professional leadership and guidance on matters concerning the management of public sector records.

This partly explains why Mnjama (2003:91-101) pointed out that the factors that contributed to the poor state of recordkeeping in Kenya not only related to problems within the public institutions, but also related to KNADS' failure as the main advisor to the government in the management of public records. However, any attempt to find sustainable solutions to the problems of managing public sector records in Kenya must involve KNADS (Wamukoya 1996).

In the absence of regular records management advice from KNADS, it would be difficult for public offices to do any of the following: create, classify and index records, have in place efficient records access and use practices, ensure good records storage conditions, conduct environmental monitoring and control, devise disaster management and security plans, survey, appraise, and prepare retention schedules to guide records disposition (irrespective of format). It would also be difficult for archives personnel to make follow-up visits to government departments to monitor and ensure that the advice they provided to them was being implemented if human and financial resources are limited. Archives personnel would therefore not know the problems record creators faced in implementing the advice they provided and would therefore be unable to seek possible solutions to these problems.

Archives staff noted that the Public Archives and Documentation Service Act Chapter 19 did not give record creators enough responsibility in managing their own records. Secondly, four out of six archives staff indicated that Chapter 19 did not stress the continuity of records care during their entire life cycle. Five out of all six archives personnel indicated that nor did the Act establish a partnership between record creating agencies and KNADS. The problem of record creators not implementing advice provided by national archives personnel is not unique to Kenya. In France, Barbat (1999) noted that establishing the responsibility of record creators was the most problematic area of record management. The improvements made in France since the end of the 1960s were due to the appointment of government ministry archive curators. Appointing officers in charge of record management by the national archives within departments was a worthwhile initiative, since it gave the archivists at national level someone to speak to in the government agencies (ie someone who knew about questions connected with records and who was responsible for the care of records).

In this regard, one way of addressing the problem of creators not implementing record management advice provided by archives personnel would be the recruitment and deployment of a record management cadre in government departments that was answerable to the National Archives. Other countries which have deployed record management officers in government ministries with specific record management responsibilities include India (The Public Records Act of India 1993) and Botswana (Chebani 2005; Mnjama 2005). For instance, Chebani (2005:139) indicated that Botswana National Archives and Records Service faced problems in managing records prior to the introduction of a records management cadre in the public service. Before that initiative, government records were managed by arbitrarily nominated administration staff who used inconsistent record management methods and practices.

Four out of two archives personnel indicated that the Public Archives and Documentation Service Act Chapter 19 did not give the Director of KNADS authority to conduct research with a view to improving recordkeeping in the public service. They also said that the Act did not give the Director the mandate to manage electronic records or to collect and disseminate information on technological developments relating to record management in public agencies. An example of a technological development is the application of computers in the conduct of government business. On-going government e-governance initiatives in the public service would lead to increased use of computers in government departments. In other words, electronically generated records may be lost if registry staff are not kept informed of such developments.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Even though archives personnel provided record management advice to registry personnel in areas such file classification and indexing systems, records surveys and appraisal, records disposition, and developing a record management policy (see Table 3), the advice was not provided on a regular basis owing to the constraints they faced. One key finding of the study was that registry personnel indicated that they did not receive advice on reports and forms management 114 (72.6%), directives management 125 (79.6%) and disaster management 120 (76.4%). These findings show that KNADS need to diversify the scope of professional record management advice provided to registry staff to include these areas.

These findings suggest that, although KNADS played a key role in advising public agencies to manage their records effectively as mandated by the Public Archives and Documentation Services Act Cap 19, it had not sufficiently carried out this mandate. It can therefore be concluded that KNADS had not effectively helped registry staff to manage records, irrespective of their format and during their continuum, as a result

of resource constraints, and that this may have compromised public service delivery (since trustworthy decisions are based on well-managed information).

The advice provided by KNADS archives personnel did not cover other areas of record management such as the management of electronic records and disaster management. KNADS archives personnel possessed inadequate information technology skills. In fact, record management advice was fragmented and inconsistent. Registry staff did not implement advice that was provided relating to the management of records. Some of the reasons for non-compliance included constant transfers of registry staff, lack of trained registry staff, lack of support from senior government officers and public archive Act Chapter 19, which did not give record creators enough responsibility in managing their own records. Furthermore, the Act did not provide the national archives with adequate powers for the management of electronic records.

However, all is not lost in Kenya in relation to the effective management of public records. Mnjama (2005) noted that Kenya, along with Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania, Zanzibar and Zambia, was one of the archival institutions that had made considerable progress in managing non-current records. Kenya may build on the existing strengths in managing non-current records to effectively manage its current records.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it is commendable that KNADS continues to provide record management advice to record creating agencies to improve public service delivery, it is strongly recommended that this advice be provided on a regular and continuing basis. It is also recommended that the scope of records management advice provided to record creating agencies be broadened to include other components of a records management programme, namely reports, forms and directives management, records preservation and security and disaster management.

Even though KNADS provided record management advice to record creating agencies such advice was not, in most cases, implemented, particularly as far as the disposal of valueless records was concerned. To ensure the implementation of record management advice provided to records creating agencies and enhance public service delivery, the researchers recommend that the KNADS lobby the government to appoint departmental record officers who will work closely with KNADS archives personnel, to improve recordkeeping policies and ensure the implementation of the records management advice provided. In order to raise the profile of record management in the public service, staff in the registries should be recruited and deployed on the basis of their record management qualifications and experience. Furthermore, archives personnel should be

equipped with information technology skills to enable them provide advice to record creating agencies on how to manage electronic records.

The study recommends that KNADS review its current approach regarding its records management role in the Kenyan public sector. Given the KNADS limited financial and personnel resources, the researchers believe that there is a need to review existing archives legislation to provide record creating agencies with more responsibility in the management of their own records. This would improve the management of records and this, in turn, would lead to enhanced public service delivery. Giving records creating agencies more responsibility over their records also helps in the management of electronic records, since many national archival institutions do not have the infrastructure to manage electronic records.

The study also recommends that, in order to improve public service delivery and the management of records in departments, KNADS, in conjunction with the Office of the President and the Directorate of Personnel Management, needs to organise seminars and workshops to sensitise senior ministerial officers on the strategic importance of records management in public service delivery and good governance. Such a sensitisation programme should be aimed at encouraging senior officers to take a direct and personal interest in ensuring that the record management advice provided by archives personnel from KNADS is implemented. Thus the concern expressed by the Office of the President, Directorate of Personnel Management (2003b), that some top administrators in government departments did not understand or appreciate the vital role played by registries, and therefore did not give the registries the necessary support and guidance, would be at least be partially addressed.

The study also recommends that Chapter 19 be reviewed, to give the Director of KNADS the power to ensure compliance with standards that apply to the management of public records. The Act should be reviewed to facilitate the sharing between government agencies and the National Archives of the responsibility for recordkeeping, as is the case in the National Archives of Australia (2004). Archival legislation should also give KNADS a clear mandate to manage electronic records.

The study established that KNADS had not undertaken a survey to establish the growth of electronic records generated in the public service. It is recommended that research be undertaken to establish the amount of electronic records generated in the public service. Such a study would also need to establish the conditions under which electronic records are generated in the public service and investigate how the existing electronic record management situation in the public sector would impact on e-government initiatives. Additionally, similar research may also be conducted in other countries in Africa in order to establish the role that national archival institutions play in the management of records, and to obtain data for comparison purposes.

REFERENCES

- Barbat, P. 1999. Discovery of records management in France and its consequences. Paper presented at the 1999 Archives and Records Management Seminar in Melbourne, Australia. Available: <http://www.caldeson.com/RIMOS/barbat.html> (Accessed 13 May 2006).
- Blake, R. 2005. National archives. Complying with the records management code: evaluation workbook and methodology. Consultation draft. Available: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/pdf/record_management_compliance.pdf (Accessed 22 May 2005).
- Chebani, B. 2005. Merits and challenges of the integrated records services in the public service – a case of Botswana. *ESARBICA Journal* 24:139-156.
- ESARBICA. 2003. Minutes of the ESARBICA Executive Board Meeting held in Maputo, Mozambique, 22-23 July.
- Government of Botswana Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. 2007. Botswana National Archives and Records Services. *Mission statement*. Available: http://www.gov.bw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id. (Accessed 16 July 2007).
- ICA. 2004. Welcome to ICA. Available: <http://www.ica.org> (Accessed 7 September 2004).
- Ilorah, R. 2004. NEPAD: the needs and obstacles. *African Development Review* 16 (2):223-251.
- Kenosi, L. 1999. Records management in the public service and the Botswana's national archives and records service. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science* 9(2):119-127.
- Kenosi, L. 2005. Official secrecy and the management of security records in the global age of terrorism and information. *ESARBICA Journal* 24:45-51.
- Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service. 2000. *Mission statement*. Available: <http://www.kenyarchives.go.ke/mission.htm> (Accessed 12 December 2005).
- Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service. 2000. A word from the director. Available: <http://www.kenyarchives.go.ke/director-main.htm> (Accessed 12 December 2005).
- Makhura, M & Du Toit, A. 2005. Records management and information user behaviour at SANParks: a case study. *Mousaion* 23(2):213-229.
- Millar, L. 2004. *Authenticity of electronic records: a report prepared for UNESCO and the International Council on Archives*. Available: http://www.ica.org/biblio/study13_2Erev.pdf (Accessed 23 May 2006).
- Mnjama, N. 2003. Archives and records management in Kenya: problems and prospects. *Records Management Journal* 13(2):91-101.
- Mnjama, N. 2005. Archival landscape in eastern and southern Africa. *Library Management* 26 (8/9):457-70.
- Musembi, M. 2004. Introduction to records management. Paper read at the Directorate of Personnel Management Training Workshop for Registry Supervisors on Records Management, Machakos, 21-24 August.
- National Archives of Australia. 2004. Commonwealth recordkeeping – an overview. Available: <http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/overview/new-approach.html> (Accessed 29 July 2004).
- National Archives of Australia. 2004. Recordkeeping standards and advice. Available: http://www.naa.gov.au/about_us/about_us.html (Accessed 27 July 2004).

- National Archives of India. 2005. Role in records management. Available: http://www.nationalarchives.nic.in/record_mgmt.html (Accessed 22 August 2005).
- National Archives and Records Administration. 2004. What is a record? Available: <http://www.archives.gov/records-management/> (Accessed 27 July 2004).
- National Archives and Records Service of South Africa. 2004. About the National Archives and Records Service. Available: <http://www.national.archives.gov.za.aboutnasa-content.html> (Accessed 23 June 2004).
- National Archives UK. 2004. Records management. Available: <http://www.nationalarchive.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/> (Accessed 27 July 2004).
- Ngulube, P. 2005. Research procedures used by Master of Information Studies students at the University of Natal in the period 1982-2002 with special reference to their sampling techniques and survey response rates: a methodological discourse. *The International Information and Library Review* 37:127-143.
- Ngulube, P & Tafor, V. 2006. An overview of the management of public records and archives in the member countries of the East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA). *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 27(1):57-83.
- Obudho, M. 1999. Speech by permanent secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage, during the official opening of the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service Senior Staff Bi-annual Seminar. Nairobi, Kenya, 25-29 October.
- Office of the President. 1999. *Permanent secretary to the cabinet and head of public service circular OP.39/2A on cases of missing and lost files and documents in the public service*. Nairobi: Office of the President.
- Office of the President. Directorate of Personnel Management. 2003a. *Terms of reference for a task force to improve the performance of registries in government ministries/departments*. Nairobi: Office of the President.
- Office of the President. Directorate of Personnel Management. 2003b. *Circular DPM.4/10A (9) on streamlining the performance of registries in government ministries, departments, local authorities, provinces and districts*. Nairobi: Office of the President.
- Okumu, W. 2002. *The African renaissance: history, significance and strategy*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Penn, I, Pennix, G & Coulson, J. 1994. *Records management handbook*. Aldershot: Gower.
- The Public Archives and Documentation Service Act Chapter 19 Laws of Kenya (Revised). 1991. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- The Public Archives (Amendment Act), 2 of 1990. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- The Public Records Act, 69 of India. 1993. Available: <http://www.nationalarchives.nic.in/public-record93.html> (Accessed 24 August 2005).
- Shepherd, E & Yeo, G. 2003. *Managing records: a handbook of principles and practice*. London: Facet.
- Terer, J. 2000. Cases of missing and lost files and documents in the public service. Press release. *East African Standard* 12 May: 1.
- Thurston, A. 1996. Records management in Africa: old problems, dynamic new solutions. *Records Management Journal* 6(3):187-199.

- United Nations. 2005. *The millennium development goals report*. Available: <http://www.unstats.un.org/unsdd/mi/pdf/MDG%20Book.pdf> (Accessed 21 May 2006).
- Wamukoya, J. 1988. Significant steps towards the betterment of the service of the Kenya National Archives. *ESARBICA Journal* 10:6-12.
- Wamukoya, J. 1996. Records management and administrative reform programmes in Kenya. PhD thesis, University College London.