

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



Collection development issues of oral history at the National Archives of Zimbabwe.

By

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
BA (Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum studies)**

In the Department of Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my exceptionally amazing mother and children.

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ABSTRACT

Documenting oral history in societies is important because it helps to fill the historical and social gaps in the history of a nation. For effective and efficient documentation of oral history it is important to have stipulated guidelines on what to do and how to do it. These guidelines are found in a collection development policy. . So for effective and efficient documentation of oral history archives ought to have a collection development policy which becomes the foundation upon which their activities are done. The research aimed to establish the good practices that can be employed by NAZ to ensure effective documentation of a total oral history collection. The major research questions were what guides NAZ in documenting oral history. What professional and skills requirements are pre requisite for oral history documentation. The study made use of qualitative research and employed the explanatory design. The author gathered that NAZ has no collection development to guide them in oral history documentation. I also gathered that the unit is facing human resources, financial and equipment challenges because it is a unit which is supposed to cover the whole country. If the National Archives does not formulate a collection development policy they risk being criticised for not effectively documenting oral history. This study concludes that NAZ has not been successful in creating a total oral history archive. Therefore they need to have an oral history collection development policy and find means to raise funds to see to the effective operation of the oral history unit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL FORM.....	iError! Bookmark not defined.
RELEASE FORM.....	iii
DECLARATION FORM.....	iiiv
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
CHAPTER 1	x
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the study	2
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.3 Aim of the study.....	3
1.3.1 Objectivesof the study.....	3
1.3.2 Research questions.....	4
1.4 Limitationsof the study	4
1.5 Assumptions of the study.....	4
1.6 Breakdown of the study	5
CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.0 Introduction.....	6
2.1 Collection Development	6
2.2 Purposes of Documenting Oral History	7
2.3Professional and skill requirements for oral history	11
CHAPTER 3:RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	14
3.0 Introduction.....	14

3.1 Research Design.....	14
3.2.1 Study Population.....	14
3.2.2 Sampling.....	15
3.3 Data collection techniques.....	15
3.4 Ethical considerations.....	16
CHAPTER 4:DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	17
4.1 Introduction.....	17
4.2 Interview Response Rate.....	17
4.3 Professional and Skills Requirements.....	17
4.3.1 Provision of training and seminars.....	19
4.4 Identification and Filling of Gaps.....	20
4.5 Collection Development.....	22
4.6 Procedures for Documenting Oral History.....	23
4.7 Challenges being faced that are affecting the documentation of oral history.....	25
4.7.1 Lack of human resources.....	25
4.7.2 Political bias.....	25
4.7.3 Financial constraints.....	26
4.7.4 Death of informants and slow pace of oral history documentation.....	26
4.7.5 Lack of cooperation from targeted informants.....	26
CHAPTER 5:DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	27
5.1 Introduction.....	27
5.2.1 Professional requirements.....	27
5.2.2 Provision of training and seminars.....	28
5.2.3 Purposes of documenting oral history.....	28
5.2.4 Identification and filling of gaps.....	29
5.2.5 Collection development.....	29

5.3 Research Conclusions	30
5.4 Recommendations.....	31
REFERENCES	32
APPENDICES.....	37

List of Appendices

Description	Page
Appendix A Questionnaire for Provincial archivists.....	37
Appendix B Questionnaire for Assistant archivists.....	38

List of Tables

Illustration	Description	Page
Figure 4.1	Academic Qualifications.....	20
Figure 4.2	Provision of training programmes.....	22
Figure 4.3	Areas covered and not covered by oral history.....	23
Figure 4.4	Subjects covered and not covered by oral history.....	24

List of Acronyms

NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
UZ	University of Zimbabwe

Definition of terms

The following terms were used by the researcher in this research project. These terms are defined here and contextualised to this study so as to give a general understanding of what this study is all about.

Collection Development

Collection development refers to the functions within an archive or other repository that establish policies and procedures used to select materials that the repository will acquire, typically identifying the scope of creators, subjects, formats and the other characteristics of influence the selection process (Pearce- Moses 2012).

Collection Development Policy

Collection development policy is a written statement that defines the mission and scope of the collections and also assists in setting priorities and providing guidelines for making decisions and their implementation (Ngulube,2012).

Oral History

Oral history is a method of obtaining historical reminiscences by interviewing people who were participants in or witness of matters they describe and recording their recollection verbatim on magnetic tape. (Lance 1996).

Archives

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary an archive is a place in which public records (such as documents) are kept. It also states that the materials stored in archives can also be referred to as archives.

National archives

National Archives according to the Thesaurus dictionary is an independent agency that oversees management of federal government records

Total Archives

A total archives is a strategy to document the historical development and all segments of a community by acquiring both official and administrative records as well as the related personal and corporate records (Society of American Archivists , 2002).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Collection development is a function within archives and other repositories that establishes policies and procedures used to select materials that the repository will require, typically identifying the scope of creators, subjects, formats and other characteristics that influence the selection process. It is the backbone of building comprehensive archival collections. Ngulube (2012) posits that the development, organisation, availability, access and preservation of an archival collection greatly depend on a well-crafted and researched collection development policy. He further stipulates that a collection development policy is the pillar of an archival institution that governs what to and what not to collect as an archive. Oral history as a collection development strategy therefore, should be guided by a written collection development policy. Without it, it would be difficult for the archival institution to identify the gaps that they have in their archival material and consequently plan on how the oral history documentation programme will fill these gaps. Situations whereby other subject areas are less represented, other voices totally marginalised and other ethnic groups largely represented are the results of the absence of a documented collection development policy in archives. Therefore, collection development policies are essential in oral history documentation as they ensure a systematic collection programme and an effective system.

Collection development is the part of collection management that primarily deals with decisions about the acquisition of materials. Thus we can say collection development is a planning function. The process includes selection and deselecting of current and retrospective materials, planning of coherent strategies for continuing acquisition, and evaluation of collections to ascertain how well they serve user needs. Johnson (1992) attests that the goal of any collection development organization must be to provide the institution with a collection that meets the appropriate needs of its client population within the limits of its fiscal and personnel resources. So for effective and efficient documentation of oral history archives ought to have a collection development policy which becomes the foundation upon which their activities are done. Collection development strategies should consider the issues around the collecting of oral history and provide the best opportunity of acquiring appropriate and high value collections for users.

Moss (1988) defines oral history as a deliberate and systematic recording of oral testimonies, which are based on human memory and human experience. Lance (1996) states that the main objective in the field of oral history is to create a fuller record by supplementing existing records and recording the hitherto unrecorded. From these definitions it is clear that an oral history inquiry and the responses it generates are recorded to remedy deficiencies in written records. However for oral history to efficiently augment history there is need for proper and efficient collection development. Collecting policies should be open to change and development, to reflect the evolving needs of archives and the communities they serve and represent.

1.1 Background of the study

Documenting oral history in societies is important because it helps to fill the historical and social gaps in the history of a nation. Primitive societies have long relied on oral tradition to preserve a record of the past. In western societies the use of oral history goes back to the early Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides who made extensive use of oral reports from witnesses. The modern concept was however developed in the 1940's by Allan Nevins and his associates at Columbia University. Although a professional historian Nevins's interest was primarily archival in the sense that by recording he was capturing and preserving information which otherwise would be irrevocably lost. Lance (1996) states that the main objective in the field of oral history is to create a fuller record by supplementing existing records and recording the hitherto unrecorded. Raleigh (2005) contends that as a social history, oral history fills in historical and social gaps, gives voice to otherwise hidden people, enriches and potentially corrects the official record. For effective and efficient documentation of oral history it is important to have stipulated guidelines on what to do and how to do it. These guidelines are found in a collection development policy. In this context, lack effective collection development policy frameworks that are clear and documented contribute to the deficiency of the historical collection held at NAZ. Ngulube (2012) buttresses this point by stating that there is clear definition of the role of collection development policies in collection development at NAZ but there however is a lack of acquisition guidelines or comprehensive collection strategies.

Constantly arising in the field of oral history is the question of who should do oral history within an archival setting. Today evidence from practical examples in archives has shown

that both archivists and historians should get involved in the process of documenting oral history Swain, (2003).Mazikana and Moss (1996) stipulate that oral history has a significant impact on archival work and as such archivists must be prepared to accommodate and master this material.

The National Archives of Zimbabwe was established as an act of parliament to oversee the acquisition, preservation and maintenance of archival materials including the collection of oral history on behalf of government and the nation at large. The oral history unit at NAZ, as noted by Njovana (1992), was originally established in 1968 and it sought to fill the historical and social gaps that existed in the archival material by collecting the under documented and undocumented history.Njovana (1992) says that the oral History unit specialises in the collection and preservation of oral history interviews from a wide diversity of people whose contribution to Zimbabwean history and development has been significant, but largely undocumented or under documented. It is however disturbing that some cultures are dying a natural death as smaller ethnic groups are being marginalised as is reflected in the NAZ's collection imbalances where large ethnic groups are well documented at the expense of smaller ones.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is no collection development policy that guides the collection of oral history at the National Archives of Zimbabwe, which in turn is resulting in collection imbalances. These imbalances are reflected by their focus on larger ethnic groups at the expense of smaller minority groups.

1.3 Aim of the study

To establish the collection development strategies of oral history at the National Archives of Zimbabwe.

1.3.1 Objectives of the study

- To establish how NAZ identifies gaps in their oral history collection development.

- To ascertain the professional and skills requirements for the people responsible for collecting oral history.
- To examine how successful it has been in filling out the gaps through oral history.
- To ascertain the challenges being faced by the National Archives of Zimbabwe in oral history collection

1.3.2 Research questions

- 1) How does NAZ identify gaps in their oral history collection development?
- 2) How successful has oral history been in filling these gaps?
- 3) To what extent do the oral historians at NAZ meet the professional and skills requirement for documenting oral history?
- 4) What are the challenges being faced by NAZ in collecting oral history?

1.4 Limitations of the study

Due to recent changes within the organisation I was not able to get permission from the Director of the National Archives to interview him and the head of the oral history unit Miss Rudo Karadzandima. This greatly affected my research because these two were supposed to be my primary sources of information.

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

The research assumes that the National Archives of Zimbabwe has a total oral history collection. This means that they document the historical development and all segments of our country by acquiring both official and administrative records as well as the related personal and corporate records. The researcher also assumes that oral history collection at NAZ is being guided by a stipulated collection development policy. For oral history to be able to fill out gaps in history as intended there is need for proper collection development which acts as a framework upon which the oral history collection is developed. Thus it is most probable that the researcher also assumes that the oral historians at NAZ meet the professional requirements for documenting oral history. It is only then that collection of oral history can

be done efficiently. If oral history is given due respect and consideration, future researchers can benefit from the accessibility of more balanced research material.

1.6 Breakdown of the study

The dissertation comprises of five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction to the study, background of the study, problem statement, research questions, aim, objectives, and justification of the study, limitations, and the assumptions of the study. Chapter two focus literature review from different scholars concerning archival collection development and the importance of documenting oral history. Reviewing literature enabled the researcher to analyse past researches and create a basis for the current research. Chapter three provides methodology employed by the researcher. These include instruments and design used by the researcher to collect information from the public. Chapter four focused on presentation and analysis of research findings gathered during the study. Information obtained from interviews, questionnaires and observations was be presented and analysed. Chapter five is the last chapter and it consists of the discussion, summary, conclusions and recommendations basing on findings obtained from the research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a review of a body of literature on oral history that is relevant to this study together with knowledge that supports the present study. This study reviewed literature on the purpose of documenting oral history, collection development and also the professional and skills requirements for oral historians. The sources consulted for this literature review include textbooks, journals and also internet sources.

2.1 Collection Development

Collection development is a utility within archives or other repositories that establishes policies and actions used to choose materials that the repository will acquire, classically identifying the scope of creators, subjects, formats and other characteristics that influence the selection process, Society of American Archivists (2010). Ngulube (2012) posits that the development, organisation, availability, access and preservation of an archival collection greatly depend on a well-crafted and researched collection development policy. He further stipulates that a collection development policy is the pillar of an archival institution that determines what to and what not to collect as an archive. Ngulube (2012) however asserts that there is lack of acquisition guidelines or comprehensive collection strategies at NAZ.

Situations where some subjects or areas are less represented, other voices entirely side lined and particular ethnic groups largely represented are a result of the absence of a documented collection development policy. Therefore, collection development policies are crucial in oral history documentation as they ensure a systematic and effective collection programme. Saurer (2001) avers that written collection development policies are advocated as a way of ensuring that collections have a consistent and well defined focus. According to Saurer (2001) collection development tools and direction have to be developed by an archive in order to help them in reviewing and developing their collection, identifying gaps and risks and managing their collections. In the same vein, oral history as a function has to be guided by stipulated collection development strategies to ensure that various aspects of both old and

modern life are represented within archives. This in turn guarantees active collections with both cultural and evidential value.

NAZ therefore, having a mandate to collect oral history, has work hand in hand with local and specialist communities to ensure that the records of a diverse range of activities are represented for the future and should visualize and implement the concept of a collection development policy. This is so because institutions that have active and effective collection development policies proactively eliminate gaps in their collections and document society effectively Ngulube, (2012). Sauer (2001) also avers that collection policies explain what will be collected and also how collecting will be done. These policies should be open to change and upgrading to cater for the developing needs of archives and the communities they serve and represent. Therefore, the oral history collection at NAZ should be guided by a collection policy that outlines what must be collected so as to complement the documentary heritage. This way NAZ will be able to augment its collection efficiently.

Reviewed literature in relation to this subject has showed that collection development is a basic component of collecting and documenting history within an archive. However, the subject is covered in piecemeal fashion in archival literature. Ngulube (2012) avers that collection development is a derelict area of archival theory on the sub-continent. It does not feature in theory and practice and, standard textbooks that have been written hardly cover the topic Ngulube(2012). Disregard for the collection development policy however has serious consequences on archival collections including oral collections. Thus, the development, organisation, availability, access and preservation of an archival collection greatly depend on a properly drafted and researched collection development policy.

2.2 Purposes of Documenting Oral History

Documentation of oral history is a complicated activity in an archival setting. An outstanding issue that comes from various writings on oral history is the fact that it is a tool for filling the gaps that exist in the documentary sources within archives. Oral history investigation and the responses that come from it are recorded to complement written records that have been found wanting in some measure for historical analysis Mazikana and Moss, (1996). Apart from

filling gaps, the documentation of oral history also serves various purposes as will be highlighted in this review.

Oral history usually touches on matters hardly touched on by written documents, and by so doing; fill in the gaps of records that make up early historical documents (Keakopa, 1998). It can be said that documenting oral history helps to add more information to the written record by including those matters that were overlooked in historical papers. Thus, oral history makes the written account more comprehensive by providing some kind of clarification and further detail pertaining to the subject matter. Many archival institutions have adopted the idea of collecting oral history as a way of creating a complete record. This is because in many cases archival collections have been found deficient as far as totality and comprehensiveness is concerned. According to Njovana (1989), given that information found in public archives may be incomplete, oral history interviews complement the official account. Thus, he states that the objective of the oral history unit at NAZ is to fill gaps in and supplement the nation's historical record by capturing Zimbabwean history and development that is largely undocumented or under documented. Additionally Murambiwa *et al* (2012) concur that oral history was established at NAZ so as to fill the gaps that existed in the archival material.

Archives house the public heritage and these characterize the identity, history and memory of a society. Archives should be able to reflect all the aspects of the society. However, it has always been revealed that written archival collections are extremely incomplete hence the need for documenting oral history so as to compliment, augment and fill the gaps that exist in the archival material. Lance (1996) states that most historians have come to the apprehension that documents archived and often written by those in power were subject to propaganda and discriminatory editing, therefore, do not guarantee a total picture. Upon this apprehension, they have engaged the documentation of oral history as a way of remedying these past oversights. Oral history documentation therefore has to build a complete record by telling the stories of underrepresented minority groups and thereby building a total archive where every voice in the society is heard in the archival collection. Chaterera and Mutsagondo (2015) carried out a research investigating why the National Archives of Zimbabwe Oral history unit has failed to make a national impact. They state that although NAZ has embraced oral history as a matter of policy, the Unit has suffered from lack of national vibrancy and national visibility, as it has hitherto remained a pale shadow of itself. This research however went further to unearth the challenges being faced by NAZ which in turn answers the question as

to why they are failing. This failure inevitably has a lot to do with collection development so this study intended to ascertain where their collection development procedures are lacking.

Zimbabwe is amongst some of the British colonial countries that have deficiencies within its historical collection due to racial marginalisation and also political mayhem Murambiwa, (2009). According to Murambiwa (2009) various crucial papers were removed from the National Archive's records centre during the period 1978-1979 and were burnt by the Rhodesian government during the conversion to majority rule. Murambiwa *et al* (2012) also state that before independence documentaries mostly ignored African stories in favour of the British colonial occupation. Thus oral history has been adopted by NAZ as a way of convalescing lost material and also to reimburse for the African heritage that was never documented during the colonial era, thus filling wide gaps in the historical record. Vansina (1985) notes that Zimbabwe's public archives and manuscripts were not only incomplete but were also Eurocentric. His focus was on identifying the deficiencies of the oral history collection at NAZ. This research however focused on identifying the cause of the imbalances in the collection.

Raleigh (2005) states that oral history documentation is key to obtaining knowledge on a society. It complements and supplements the written record. Thus the oral history programme helped in the fulfilment of the National Archives of Zimbabwe's mandate of acquiring, preserving and giving access to the documentary heritage in any form as it augments archival sources. Lance (1996) stated that it is wise not to take orally transmitted information as absolute fact unless it is supported by other sources. This statement shows a common approach to using oral history as a method to fill gaps in the historical record. Thus the major purpose of documenting oral history as stated by various authors is to document societal processes that have been ignored by public archives in the past.

Oral history often reveals unknown events or unknown aspects of known events. Thus the documentation of oral history also serves the purpose of providing new revelations and casting new light on unknown areas of the daily life of the non-hegemonic groups. According to Thompson (1988) oral history is used to introduce new evidence from the underside by changing the focus and opening new areas of enquiries. Oral history also brings our recognition to significant groups of people who had been left out in the official document

Thompson, (1988). In this regard, oral history helps in revealing new aspects of certain areas that were left out in the documentary heritage.

Portelli (1991) states that the origins of oral history are rooted in archives and libraries. This emphasis on the use of oral history to complement and explain information in existing archival collections is one of the major purposes of implementing an oral history collection regime. Oral history collection thus serves an essential purpose in the historical aspects of a society, enabling future generations to understand the past clearly. Oral history is therefore, of supreme importance to the building of a total archival collection as it assumes the greater role of filling the gaps that exist in written material giving greater detail to events and societal developments of significance to the Zimbabwean society.

Another purpose served by documenting oral history as noted by Portelli (1991) is to reveal unknown events or unknown aspects of known events. He claims that oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing and what they now think they did. Its importance therefore, may lie not in its devotion to fact, but in its difference from it, as imagination, symbolism and desire emerge. Thus, it goes without saying that oral history is a rich source of historical information as it takes into account those issues that in most cases are left out by written records and gives first-hand information from those people that were involved or were eye witnesses of a particular subject in question.

Raleigh (2005) concurs with Portelli that oral history is distinct from general history as it allows the historical actors to speak for themselves, providing new insights into choices people made in the past and allowing historians to create a more unified, multi-vocal understanding of historical change. She further asserts that because projects often involve less-prominent figures, oral history also provides new voices to historical events, sometimes transforming folk histories to more dominant narratives. Thus, oral history has the ability to show what the facts and figures of history meant in people's lives. This way oral history overpowers the bias in historical documents.

2.3 Professional and Skill Requirements for Oral History

Continually arising in the field of oral history is the question of who should collect oral history within an archival setting. Evidence from practical examples in archives has shown that both archivists and historians should get involved in the process of documenting oral history Swain, (2003). However, there have been concerns also on whether or not there are enough technical and theoretical considerations in the actual process of documenting oral history to in fact warrant the establishment of an oral historian profession, strictly for the field.

Documenting oral history in an archival setting involves processes such as background research, interviewing, recording, transcribing, translating, typing, cataloguing, copying, indexing and also preservation Njovana, (1990). From this, there is need for a particular skill set, qualifications and also ethical standards to be considered in ensuring a successful oral history documentation programme. A number of scholars however, are of different views regarding this issue, thus this review will highlight some of the views and the various oral history requirements noted by these scholars. Swain (2002) asserts that subject proficiency is the key not whether the interviewer is an archivist or historian. He is of the idea that archivists are the most knowledgeable on collection deficiencies and can best fill in the gaps. Thus from this statement Swain singled out the identification of gaps as one of the fundamental skills that is prerequisite for documenting oral history. According to Swain the person who best qualifies for this job is an archivist.

However, Dryden (1981) is of the notion that active involvement of archivists in oral history is a dangerous departure from the traditional role of the archivist. He states that archivists can identify gaps in their collection, but they do not have the expertise, or the time needed to conduct extensive research or anticipate the questions of future researchers. According to Dryden a rich historical background is the most fundamental skill required for documenting oral history. He believes that other archival activities such as reducing backlog and establishing active acquisition programmes are far more important to the archivist than creating records of secondary value. Thus from his assertions, the historian is the best man for the job. Lance (1996) concurs with him by stating that an oral historian should be a holder of a history degree.

Shifting the focal point of the debate from the two professions that is the archivist and oral historian, Swain (2003) stipulates that technical skills play a considerable role in the

documentation of oral history. This is because the documentation process involves quite a number of technological equipment including cameras, tape recorders for recording the interviews, microphones, memory, computers, computer software programs for secondary editing and also archival discs amongst others. The operation of such equipment therefore, requires technical expertise not historical knowledge or even archival knowledge. Swain (2003) also states that interviewing skills and communication skills are also a requirement if one is going to collect oral history. This is because obtaining adequate and comprehensive history requires someone who is skilful in probing questions and communication.

The question of who best qualifies as an oral historian within an archival setting is indeed a contentious one. Various authors pose different notions when it comes to this discussion. Some advocate for historians while others for archivists and yet other scholars strongly believe that the two professions are of importance to oral history programme in archives and can absolutely work together each of them complementing the other. Mazikana and Moss (1996) stipulate that oral history has a significant impact on archival work and as such archivists must be prepared to accommodate and master this material. To do so they must have as full and precise an understanding of oral history like they have of other more familiar archival sources. Thus, archivists are relevant in the field of oral history but should familiarize themselves with the requirements of oral history so as to facilitate an effective oral history collection programme.

In discussing the skills and personnel requirements within the oral history programme, Swain (2003) also highlights a shift in this field in terms of its human resources. He states that archivists should embrace opportunities in oral history taking full advantage of their strengths as curators, appraisers and researchers to help historians in bringing to the fore issues concerning collection development. From this statement the role played by archivists in the collection is very significant in light of the fact that collection development is a concept of paramount importance within an archive. For this reason, it is invaluable for archivists and oral historians to create synergies that augment their different but complementary roles. In addition Swain (2003) also brings the idea of librarians as appropriate personnel in the field of oral history. He states that oral history interviews are recorded, transcribed, translated and edited by historians. However, cataloguing and indexing these interviews is normally the duty of the librarian. Thus, the issue of oral history personnel continues to be disputatious since there is no consensus on what constitutes a suitable oral historian.

In the final analysis the impact of oral history in the twenty first century will to a larger extent, depend on archivists and historians' willingness to work together and to collaborate with other disciplines in documenting and providing access to a people's oral heritage. Thus, archivists and historians should assume an active role in oral history discourse, collaborate with each other and colleagues in other fields and be attuned in order to attain total archives.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is on the methodology that was employed by the researcher in the study, these were revealed in numerous ways, techniques and skills that were engaged by the researcher to collect and record the data which is useful to the researcher and its elaboration and analysis. The study adopted explanatory research design because it sought to make discoveries and get insight on oral history documentation at NAZ. The study population was purposively sampled to get information from relevant people. Personal interviews were also conducted for data collection because they allow for probing.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it includes the plan for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. This research employed the explanatory research design. With the explanatory design emphasis is on the discovery of insights and ideas. The focus of this research was on discovering oral history documentation procedures and getting ideas of the challenges that were likely being faced by the people responsible for collecting oral history. This made this design applicable for this study because it seeks to get an insight on the collection development procedures at NAZ.

3.2 Study Population

Population refers to the entire aggregate of cases that meet the set criteria of the study variable. Ngulube (2009) concurs that it is important for one to carefully and completely define the population before collecting the sample, including a description of the elements to be included a description of the elements to be included. This research was limited to a small population of two provincial archivists and their two assistants at NAZ. Since the aim of the research was to assess the collection development of oral history the two provincial archivists were chosen because they are the ones who initiate oral history documentation in their

provinces. These were chosen because they are people who spearhead oral history documentation at provincial level. Thus they provided in-depth and first hand information.

3.3 Sampling

The purposive also known as deliberate or non-probability sampling method was used to select oral historians and archivists involved in the oral history programme. This was to ensure that only relevant respondents who could provide in-depth information participate in this study. This sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the population for constituting a sample which represents the population. The researcher thus deliberately chose the archivists because they are the people who spearhead oral history documentation in their respective provinces. The deliberate sampling technique was employed because the researcher wanted to obtain conclusive and first hand information. The nature of the study also influenced the selection of the deliberate sampling technique because it sought to get insight and ideas from the people who document oral history themselves. The research also employed the snow balling sampling technique where the head of the oral history unit at NAZ referred me to people who are involved in oral history documentation at NAZ

3.4 Data collection techniques.

This study employed the interview techniques to collect data. Interviews were relevant for this study because they are one of the most inexpensive and flexible ways of gathering data Leedy and Ormond , (2005). The interview questions were prepared very carefully to ensure that they collected relevant information.

3.4.1 Interviews

The researcher conducted personal interviews. This allowed me to follow a rigid procedure and seek answers to a set of pre-conceived questions through the interview. This method of collecting data is usually carried out in a structured way where output depends upon the ability of the interviewer to a large extent. The interview was also used because interviews allow probing so as obtain more adequate and in depth information, which was very imperative for this present study. Face to face interviews gathered information on the situation on the ground from the archivists. The researcher asked questions pertaining to the

availability of a collection development policy that guides the collection and documentation of oral history. The interview proved to be highly effective because the researcher was at liberty to repeat a question when the response indicated that the respondents had misunderstood. The researcher was also able to adjust and simplify some of the questions and coded them in such a way that the respondents could understand and correctly answer. Thus chances are high that the researcher obtained desirable results at the end of the interviews.

3.4 Ethical considerations

An approval form from the Midlands State University was used as introduction to participants. This was so they knew my research was for academic purposes and to also prove that I had permission from the institution to carry out my research. Permission to interview National Archives staff was sought from the Director. An explanation to participants of the objectives of the study and why the respondents were chosen and the benefits of the study to them were made. This was so as to make sure that the respondents understood the purpose of the study and were not reluctant to give honest and truthful responses

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the results from an assessment carried out by the researcher on the oral history programme at NAZ. The data was obtained through interviews. This chapter further presents an analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Data is largely presented in narrative form whilst tables were also used for quantitative data.

4.2 Interview response rate

A total of four interviews were conducted, giving out a response rate of 100%. Judging from this very high response rate it can be asserted that the results obtained were accurate, valid and conclusive. This shows that the responses were conclusive to support the fact that oral history is under documented at the National Archives of Zimbabwe

4.3 Professional and Skills Requirements

This research sought to find out the extent to which the people who execute oral history at NAZ meet the professional and skills requirements of documenting oral history. From the interview findings, the researcher first discovered that there is only one designated oral historian in Harare. She is the one who heads the whole oral history unit and is present at all oral history documentation projects in all provinces. However at provincial level the chief archivists are the ones that assume the roles oral historian and are also referred to as oral historians. It is them that spearhead oral history documentation in their different provinces. However, the main drive was to find out if the people responsible for the oral history unit meet the necessary requirements. The study revealed that NAZ meets the requirements as there are both historians and archivists.

The Chief archivist in Bulawayo when asked of his opinion on the professional requirements for oral historians in an interview was of the opinion that a historical background is the basis

for a good oral historian. However, he stated that there is need for coordination between archivists and historians for an effective oral history programme because archivists are well vested in the issues of collection and identification of gaps and historians more on the historical side. Table 4.1 illustrates the academic qualifications of some of the people responsible for collecting oral history.

Province/ Town	Designation	Academic qualification
Harare	Oral Historian	B.A in Archaeology , Cultural Heritage And Museum Studies
Bulawayo	Archivist/Oral historian	B.A. in Archaeology and Ndebele
	Assistant Archivist	Bsc. In Library and Information
Gweru	Archivist/Oral historian	B.A in History and Philosophy

Table 4.1 Academic Qualifications

Table 4.1 shows the academic qualification of the oral historians at the National Archives of Zimbabwe. These results clearly indicate that the oral historian and the other people who carry out oral history documentation are qualified because they either have the required archival or history background.

This study was also interested in finding out whether the National Archives of Zimbabwe involves other external parties in the process of documenting oral history and whether the parties meet the necessary requirements and if they also receive training. The two provincial archivists both stated that in a number of cases, they have involved other external parties in the collection of oral history. Some of these parties over time have included The National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe, local teachers, cultural officers and also war veterans. Basic training is normally provided for these part time oral historians. However, the study revealed that from time to time these part time researchers do sub standard work. This

is an indication that the elementary training they get is not enough to ensure an effective oral history documentation programme.

The chief archivist in Bulawayo also highlighted that some of the pre-requisite skills for oral history collection include operating recorders, transcribing skills, research skills and also linguistic skills. With this in mind he alluded to the fact that all the oral historians at NAZ possessed these kinds of skills. However, the chief archivist in Bulawayo expressed grievances as far as the linguistic skills area concerned. These skills are fundamental in oral history documentation. He stated that historians from other provinces that would participate in interviewing people in this region were Shona speaking with the exception of few participants from the Bulawayo archives. This greatly created a language barrier which is one of the biggest hindrances to the collection of oral history because people respond better to someone who speaks their language.

4.3.1 Provision of training and seminars.

The study also sought to find out if NAZ provides in house training programmes and seminars for the oral historians so as to advance their skills and knowledge. From the findings one out of four respondents investigation on the availability of training programmes from the interviews conducted revealed that these training programmes are no longer being conducted as frequent as they used to be in the past. For example, the chief archivist in Bulawayo revealed that for the past four years they never had a training session or seminar particularly on oral history and collection development. Table 4.2 below shows results pertaining to the provision of oral history and collection development training programmes and seminars for oral historians at NAZ.

	Ever been trained	Percentage	Never been trained	Percentage
Number of respondents	1/4	25%	3/4	75%

Table 4.2 Provision of Training Programmes and Seminars for People Who Carry Out Oral History Documentation

The results shown in table 4.2 reveal that NAZ rarely makes provision for training programmes and seminars on oral history and collecting development. The one respondent who stated that there was provision of training and seminars on oral history and collection development could not remember the last time a training programme had been carried out. This was because it had been long since a training programme had been done. Therefore, the study revealed that there are great inconsistencies in the provision of training programmes and seminars, hence a low staff development rate.

4.4 Identification and Filling of Gaps

The study also sought to find out how NAZ identified gaps that existed within the archival materials and how successful the documentation of oral history has managed to fill these gaps. From the findings all the respondents agreed that gaps do exist in the archival collection held by NAZ and cited that they were able to identify these gaps using various methods.

Three quarters of the respondents cited that the most common method of identifying gaps is through the analysis of researcher's inquiries and feedback. The archivist at Gweru Records Centre stated that when a researcher makes an enquiry on information concerning a particular subject and the archives is unable to meet the particular need; it means that there is a gap within the documentary collection. The Bulawayo Chief archivist also cited stock taking as another method that can be used to identify gaps within the collection. She stated that every year in March they carry out a stock taking process which identifies and missing archival collection. These missing materials are what they also refer to as gaps. However, this only refers to material that the archives once had but has since gone missing.

It was also of interest to the researcher to find out if the gaps that existed within the archival materials reason enough for collecting oral history and how successful collection of oral history has been for filling those gaps at NAZ. All the respondents agreed that oral history seeks to fill the gaps or in the Directors’ words “complement the official account”. The chief archivist at Gweru records center also said “it is there to document un-documented and under-documented historically relevant events.” This implying that it is not only there to document missing information but also inconclusive information.

The researcher further made an enquiry on how successful the collection of oral history has been in filling these gaps. The interviews carried out then gave the researcher a more clear understanding on how successful the collection of oral history has been in filling these gaps and the reasons therein. From the finding the researcher noted that most respondents regarded the oral history programme unsuccessful because of the limited areas and subjects that it has covered since its onset. The respondents stated that as much as oral history has made progress in its collection much is still lacking in terms of coverage and subject areas. Table 4.3 represents the areas that have been covered and those not covered by oral history and Table 4.4 illustrates the subjects that have been covered and those that have not been covered yet by oral history.

Province	Areas Covered	Areas Not Covered
Bulawayo	Bulawayo urban, Plumtree, Tsholotsho and partly Binga	Nkayi, Insiza, Luapane, Hwange, VictoriaFalls, Gwanda, Matobo, Umzingwane and Umguzu
Gweru	Gweru Urban, Gokwe, Mberengwa	Chirumhanzu, Kwekwe, Redcliff, Shurugwi, Zvishavane,

Table 4.3 Areas Covered and Not Covered By Oral History

Subjects covered	Subjects not Covered
Colonial administration, the liberation struggle, Chieftainship (partly), politicians, Ndebele settlements, Ndau history, Shona migration and also rain making (Njelele)	The San people of Tsholotsho, the Venda people, the Sotho of Gwanda, Civic issues, , Traditional marriage, Independent churches, industry and agriculture,

Table 4.4 Subjects Covered and not Covered by Oral History

From the two tables above, table 4.3 and 4.4 it is clear that though the national archive has put in great effort to fill in gaps in history it has not been very successful. A lot of areas and subjects have not been covered. Thus it can be asserted that gaps still exist in the archival material at NAZ and that the oral history unit still has a long way to go in filling the gaps.

4.5 Collection Development

This research was based on the foundation that NAZ does not have a collection development policy in place to guide the collection of oral history and other archival materials. The findings from the respondents concurred with this premise to a larger extent because all the respondents agreed that there is no collection development in place

However the respondents initially stated that there is a collection development policy in place; but they were referring to the National Archives of Zimbabwe's mission statement and also the national Archives of Zimbabwe Act which is the main legal framework that guides the management of archives and public records. They regarded these as guiding tools to the collection of oral history because from the mission statement the mission of NAZ is to acquire, preserve and provide public access to Zimbabwean documentation in whatever format in an efficient and economic manner. On the other hand the act calls for the storage and preservation of Zimbabwean heritage NAZ Act (1986). Thus, because the mission and the act obligate the archives to acquire, store and preserve and Zimbabwean documentation,

they regarded these as guiding tools in the collection of anything of documentary heritage including oral history.

The researcher also sought to find out how NAZ goes about in collecting oral history. The findings revealed with regards to oral history, the main strategy cited by the respondents was the identification of gaps within the documentary collection that is the official records. These gaps are identified from the researcher's inquiries and informational needs. Here, the archivists and oral historians identify the kind of information sought by the researchers and determine if the information sought is available within the archival collection to meet the needs of the researcher. If the information is not available then it means there is a gap therefore, they target the gap and collect oral history to fill the gaps. This strategy has been successful in developing the collection.

4.6 Procedures for Documenting Oral History

One of the objectives of this study was also to determine the procedures of documenting oral history at NAZ. The findings from the interviews indicated that each province has one individual responsible for it and the respondents indicated that this was not adequate for the effective documentation of oral history.

From the interview findings, the researcher discovered that the same individuals responsible for documenting oral history were also responsible for other duties. For example, the archivist from Gweru stated that besides oral history documentation, he is also responsible for records administration and asset control. However, this being the case, the researcher also discovered that when NAZ gets involved in major projects, for example, the one which occurred in 2003 under the theme "Capturing a fading memory" all oral historians from across the country got involved in the project including other stakeholders for example the National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe. Thus, during such projects oral historians did not have to work on their own because they got support from a large number of people.

This study also sought to find out how frequently oral history interviews are conducted by NAZ. The findings revealed that under normal circumstances interviews are conducted quarterly per year which means four times a year. However, from the interview results the researcher observed that due to financial constraints and shortages of resources, there have been inconsistencies in the process of interviewing, for example, the oral historian from

Gweru stated that from the year 2010 and 2011, no interviews were conducted at all and the past three years only two interviews have been done.

The researcher also further inquired on the actual procedures followed in documenting oral history at NAZ. Quite a number of ambivalences were raised from this question with some respondents stating that the programme of documenting oral history was coordinated by the Harare National Archives which is where most of the instructions came from on what to do in terms of collecting oral history. However, some respondents particularly the Gweru archivist stated that they identify the gaps provincially and then seek for permission to collect oral history for the particular gaps from NAZ Harare.

The Chief Archivist from Bulawayo stated that the whole process of documenting oral history begins by training the oral historians and those that would be assisting, for example, the teachers and cultural officers. After training, they conduct preliminary interviews with the local authorities for example chiefs then the actual interviews are then conducted, interviews are recorded on tapes, the tapes are accessioned into the archives, they are indexed, transferred to the records center audio visual section transcribed and then translated to English if the language used is vernacular. However, from the response given by the provincial archivist from Gweru, what precedes the collection of oral history is the identification of gaps that exist in the archival collection and these communicated to the Oral historian in Harare whom after much analysis and consideration comes up with the most practical subject and then develops a programme for the documentation of that particular subject.

The results obtained from the Bulawayo provincial archivist revealed that the transcribing and translation of recorded interviews is done provincially and then the final transcripts, together with the tapes are transferred to Harare. However, the archivist in Bulawayo he went on to reveal that there is no stipulated instruction as to what to send to NAZ Harare and as a result, some tapes at NAZ Bulawayo have been transcribed and some have not and some oral interviews were transferred to Harare and some were not. These results are an indication that the procedures in each province are not uniform and it can be said that the process of documenting oral history is done in a un uniform manner and that there is lack of clear coordination between the headquarters and its provincial offices

4.7 Challenges being faced that are affecting the documentation of oral history

This study was also interested in the concept of total archives, as such the researcher sought to find out the challenges the National Archives is facing when documenting oral history which might threaten the totality of its collection. In this context, a total archive refers to the total representation of the Zimbabwean society in NAZ's oral history unit and the whole archival collection.

4.7.1 Lack of human resources

From the findings four respondents stated that with the availability of adequate resources to conduct as many oral interviews as possible and acquisition of the necessary equipment and infrastructure to store information in various format are what make total archives a possibility. These respondents also mentioned that today NAZ has all the professionals that can contribute greatly to this concept that is archivists, librarians, records managers, IT specialists historians and also archaeologists. With these human resources in place they believe that a total archive is possible. The chief archivist in Gweru however said that these human resources ought to be distributed evenly and there is need to elevate the oral history unit from being a unit to a section so that it has wide coverage throughout the provinces.

4.7.2 Political bias

One respondent stated that the concept of total archives is not possible and they cited various reasons. One major reason cited by the respondents was that the archives had a political bias hence the collection of oral history on the liberation struggle and political individuals mainly from the ruling party, excluding anything that gives a bad picture of the ruling government for examples issues on Gukurahundi. One of the reasons cited was that as long as the National Archives restricts itself to the collection of records only from government organizations, other organizations (private) will always be excluded hence total archives cannot be achieved. Another reason was that other formats are excluded in the archives for example electronic records and since a total archive is also measured by the availability of various storage formats, NAZ cannot reach this standard. Moreover the same respondent stated that total archives cannot be obtained because the actual selection or appraisal process is characterized with subjectivity. This is so because the archival collections are influenced

by the desire of the government; hence successive generations will find gaps and inconsistencies.

4.7.3 Financial constraints

Another challenge that was brought to the attention of the researcher is that of unfair allocation of funds within the ministry of home affairs which sees a pitiable allocation being granted to the national archives. They are failing to buy vehicles which are supposed to come in handy during oral history documentation. There are also no funds to pay for the subsistence of those who would have gone into the field to collect oral history and this is why there is little progress.

4.7.4 Death of informants and slow pace of oral history documentation.

Death of potential informants was also highlighted by the responses as another challenge being faced by the oral history unit. For instance the unit is still documenting the liberation struggle and independence which was 35 years ago and it is most likely that the people who took part were at minimum 15 years of age meaning they are now around 50 years old now. So it is almost inevitable that by the time oral history tries to reach them these people would have been long vanished from the scene. So this goes down to the fact that the pace at which oral history is being documented is too slow and there is a danger that important archive will be totally lost because of that. One historian also cited that new grey areas are constantly emerging and as much as existing gaps are being filled, new ones will continue to emerge, thus, NAZ can never reach that stage of totality in their archival collection.

4.7.5 Lack of cooperation from targeted informants

The researcher also found out that there is also another problem of lack of cooperation from the targeted informants who ask for remuneration for their participation. According to the chief archivist in Bulawayo some people are hesitant to cooperate because they think that what they disclose may implicate them and land them in serious trouble with the government. This in turn slows down the process of documentation because the historians will be dealing with unsatisfied respondents.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the research in relation to the findings obtained from the interviews conducted. It also presents the conclusion of the study and asserts that NAZ has to a large extent not been able to fulfil its mandate. The recommendations of collecting a total oral history archive at NAZ are also discussed in chapter.

5.2.1 Professional requirements

As stipulated by Njovana in the literature, someone with an archival background and an appreciation of history is the best person to qualify as an oral historian in an archival setting. Mazikana and Moss (1996) are of the view that archivists are the appropriate professionals when it comes to collection development and filling gaps. Swain (1993) however highlights both archivists and historians should collaborate in oral history documentation. The study revealed that NAZ meets this requirement as there are both historians and archivists.

The research revealed that in a number of cases NAZ has involved other external parties in the collection of oral history. Some of these parties over time have included The National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe, local teachers, cultural officers and also war veterans. Basic training is normally provided for these part time oral historians. However, the study revealed that from time to time these part time researchers do not meet the necessary requirements and this was also highlighted in the Director's report by Njovana (1993) when he expressed disappointments in the cultural officers because most of the interviews they had conducted were poor quality. Swain also stressed that in order to carry out oral history documentation one has to have an archival and historical background thus these people are not fit for oral history documentation. This is an indication that the elementary training they get is not enough to ensure an effective oral history documentation programme. The researcher is of the view that the National Archives of Zimbabwe is on track when it comes

to employing people with the requisite professional qualifications but should go on to ensure the efficiency of external participants involved in oral history documentation.

5.2.2 Provision of training and seminars

This research revealed that there is no provision of training for oral historians at the National Archives of Zimbabwe. The researcher was also interested in finding out whether the oral historians had the necessary skills and experience to operate effectively as oral historians. These skills ought to be obtained in-house through training programmes facilitated by NAZ. The researcher understood that some of the necessary skills for collecting oral history include technical skills, interviewing skills and also communication skills Swain, (2003). The oral chief archivist in Bulawayo also highlighted that some of the pre-requisite skills for oral history collection include recorders, transcribing skills, research skills and also linguistic skills. Because he went on to complain that there is a problem of language barriers it suggests that the people responsible for documenting oral history do not have these prerequisite skills. So if they provided consistent in-house training for these people they would be fully equipped for documentation of oral history. This is so for it is important for people to be trained for interviewing and how to interact with informants. From my own point of view the people responsible for collecting oral history should be trained and equipped with skills like communication skills and public relation skills for these are fundamental in oral history documentation and NAZ should do that.

5.2.3 Purposes of documenting oral history

The Directors' reports informed the researcher that the oral history unit was established for the purpose of filling gaps. Kamba (1983) stated that the objective of the oral history programmes at NAZ is to acquire oral history through interviews so as to complement the documentary materials. Njovana (1989) also concurred that given that information contained in public archives may be incomplete; the oral history unit seeks to supplement the official record by doing oral interviews. To further buttress these points all the respondents agreed that oral history seeks to fill the gaps or in the Directors' words "complement the official account". The chief archivist at Gweru records center also said "it is there to document un-documented and under-documented historically relevant events." This from my own understanding implying that it is not only there to document missing information but also

inconclusive information. So NAZ is moving in the right direction as their objective for the oral history unit is to acquire oral history to supplement the existing records. They have in every way possible tried to effectively document oral history.

5.2.4 Identification and filling of gaps

The most common method of identifying gaps is through the analysis of researcher's inquiries and feedback. The research also revealed that NAZ also uses stock taking to identify gaps within their collection. Adopting these two methods is highly effective because the institution also considers the needs of the people they are documenting oral history for. It becomes meaningless to acquire blindly without assessing if their audience is satisfied. Not much has been said by other scholars regarding this issue but the researcher is of the view that the methods being adopted by the oral history unit are efficient and effective. In as much as they have not been able to cover all areas the problems that are hindering progress are that of financial constraints and lack of human resources not that they do not know where the gaps are. In my own view NAZ has adopted effective method of identifying gaps. I also applaud them for being audience sensitive because it is the people they are documenting oral history for.

5.2.5 Collection development

When asked if there is a collection development policy for oral history the respondents initially stated that there is a collection development policy in place; but they were referring to the National Archives of Zimbabwe's mission statement and also the national Archives of Zimbabwe Act. They regarded these as guiding tools to the collection of oral history because from the mission statement the mission of NAZ is to acquire, preserve and provide public access to Zimbabwean documentation in whatever format in an efficient and economic manner. However, the researcher understood that the NAZ Act and the mission statement are not collection development policies. A collection development policy according to Peace Moses (2012) defines the extent and content of the collection, provides a basis for evaluation decisions and establishes standards to guarantee consistency in the collection of archival materials for preservation. Henceforth NAZ officially does not have a collection development policy for oral history and needs to put one in place to ensure the effective collection and documentation of oral history.

5.3 Research Conclusions

The study revealed that the documentation of oral history at NAZ is to a large extent ineffective. The issue of insufficient manpower seems to be hindering the progress of the Oral History Unit of NAZ. Lack of training programmes and seminars meant for oral historians has a bearing on the rate at which they conduct oral history documentation and the quality of their documentaries. They lack prerequisite skills such as communication skills and public relations skills and this has had a great negative impact on the oral history collection. The current status it has as a unit is also greatly affecting its operations because after considering the area to be covered by oral history it has to be turned into a section. As a section it can be allocated more human resources which will see to its effective operations. This research therefore, established that there was a great need to staff the oral history unit adequately in all provinces and to also provide training programmes so as to enhance the skills of the oral historians.

The results of this study also revealed that the presence of a collection development policy is the best strategy to ensuring effective collection of oral history. A collection development policy will also enable the effective identification of gaps within the archival collection and ensure that every society that was marginalized in the previous programmes is included in the documentation process. The inclusion of every society in the documentation of oral history will drive NAZ towards a total archives where every voice is represented in their collection. In additions, the presence of a collection development policy would also equip NAZ with a tool for benchmarking and reviewing its oral history program so as to facilitate the documentation of uncovered areas and subjects.

This study also revealed that the documentation of oral history at NAZ is deteriorating since its establishments. The main reasons cited for this were the lack of resources to carry out interviews for example transport, up to date recording equipment and also proper facilities in all provinces for the effective preservation of tapes and other archival materials. Hence there is a great need for the provision of its rightful and adequate funds to cover for all the necessary resources required in the documentation of oral history. It then is fair to conclude that the oral history unit has tried its level best to capture the nation's oral history but has to a large extend failed.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are a result of the conclusions drawn by the researcher. The recommendations are directed to the oral history unit at NAZ. These are regarded by the researcher as the best strategies of improving the documentation of oral history at NAZ.

Upgrade the oral history unit from a unit to a section.

The oral history department is a unit in the National Archives of Zimbabwe. Because it is a unit it is very small and centralized. It also does not get allocated to it much human resources because of its status. Thus the researcher thinks it is of great importance for the unit to be promoted to being a section. This means its human resources allocation will increase to cater for its effective running. Oral history is of great importance and its documentation is being slowed down because there is inadequate human resources. All five provinces need to document oral history but there is only one oral historian to head oral history documentation because a unit can only have one head.

Provision of staff training programmes and seminars.

The National Archives of Zimbabwe should embark on staff training programmes designed for oral historians to advance their skills in the oral history field. It is important to have professional requirements but skills are also of great importance in the documentation of oral history. NAZ therefore has to embark on regular skills training programmes for the oral history unit staff to ensure effective documentation. These skills include recording, interviewing, transcribing, cataloguing, and communication skills. This is so because to obtain comprehensive information it requires someone who is skillful in probing questions and responses. Thus it is vital that NAZ provides training in house for its staff for the effective running of the unit.

Develop a collection development policy

The researcher after discovering that the oral history unit has no collection development policy recommends that they put in place one and document it to facilitate the effective identification of gaps and collection of oral history for the less covered areas and subjects. Collection development policies are important because they define the scope of collection ensuing effective and efficient collecting.

Oral history documentation.

NAZ has to speed up their pace of documenting oral history so as to capture the voices that are undocumented and under documented and also make up for lost time. Up to date Zimbabwe's liberation struggle has not been fully documented and it has been 30 years now. It is obvious that some important information will be completely lost because the people who took part in the struggle have since vanished from the scene.

Funding

In order to counter financial constraints the National Archives of Zimbabwe must resort to seeking donor funding. They can also get assistance through partnering with major and well established archives from all over the world through partnerships and mergers.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE: PROVINCIAL ARCHIVISTS

1. What is oral history?
2. Why is it important to document oral history?

3. Within the Zimbabwean context how important is oral history documentation?
4. How do you identify gaps before going out to document?
5. What areas have you covered as yet?
6. Is there a collection development policy that guides the oral history documentation?
7. Is there enough staff to ensure the efficient operation of the unit?
8. Do they have the required professional and skill requirements?
9. Is there a staff training programme for the oral history unit staff?
10. What challenges are being faced by the oral history unit?
11. Do you think these challenges are a threatening the integrity of the collection.
12. Do you think oral history has successfully augmented the existing written documents?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE: ASSISTANT ARCHIVISTS

1. For how long have you been taking part in oral history documentation at NAZ?
2. What kind of exercises have you taken part in?
3. Are you a professional historian or archivist?
4. Did you take part in the process of identifying the gaps that needed argumentation?
5. Did you follow any stipulated procedures during the exercises?
6. What challenges did you face during the process of documenting oral history?

