

**ROLE OF KENYA NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN PROVIDING ADVISORY  
SERVICES**

**TO RECORD CREATORS IN GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Kenya National Archive and Documentation Service was formed through an act of Parliament in 1965 and given the mandate to ensure proper management of all government records due to the crucial role records play in government ministries. Extant literature reveals that despite continued advice, management of records at service delivery points has remained unsatisfactory. This study investigated the role played by the Kenya National Archive and Documentation Service in providing advisory services. The main purpose of the study was to determine the advisory services requirement for record management practices in government ministries and whether they conform with the legal framework .The specific objectives of the study were to: establish the nature of contact the KNADS has with record creators in the



ministry; determine the type of advisory services the KNADS provide to the record creators in the ministries; establish the strategies put in place to promote the implementation of the advisory services in ministries; establish the challenges faced by KNADS and ministries in the process of providing advisory services and make recommendations for mitigating the challenges. The study used survey and combined quantitative and qualitative data as a means of triangulating results. The study established that KNADS is performing its advisory role to the satisfaction of data creators in the ministries. As is expected not all participants are satisfied at the same level as evidenced by the 60.5% of respondents being satisfied. This on its own indicate that KNADS still has room for improvement. Much more improvement is required in follow up in monitoring and evaluation to assure full compliance on the part of record creators in implementing advisory services which are anchored in legislation. To the extent that KNADS officials claim the legislations and regulatory framework are not enough, it is necessary to negotiate with legislators in improving these. The extent of professionalism evident in high professional qualification of KNADS office holders make it possible for KNADS to seek and achieve the desired improvements. The study made recommendations on steps that should be taken to improve advisory services and further studies to extend knowledge.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### [1.1 Introduction.](#)

Chapter one of the study focuses on the role of Kenya National Archive and Documentation Service (KNADC) in providing advisory services to record creators in government ministries. National archives are the centralizing institutions tasked with storage and preservation of public records to facilitate enduring access for prosperity as explained by Ngulube and Tafor (2006). A similar definition can be gleaned from other authors (Milligan,

2005; Berger, 2013). Milligan (2005) describes evolution of archives in Europe. Berger (2013) in his article 'The role of national archives in constructing national master narratives in Europe' articulates how archives were used for legitimizing nation states in the pre-modern society. The records in archives have been used by rulers to reflect on a nation's past and thereby construct the future aspirations of the nation.

Post independent Kenya government modelled her archival system in the European style. Nevertheless, very little improvement has been made on the borrowed model which has resulted in poor records management in the archives (Nengomasha, 2013; Kemoni&Ngulube, 2008). Indeed, a taskforce that was established in 2003 identify the causes of poor record keeping in Kenya revealed so much about advisory services provided by KNADS Yet the implementation of the recommendations has remained pending. The Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage depicts an excellent understanding of value of records in public sector management (Ngulube & Tafor, 2006) but has not lead from the front in implementing recommendations on modernization and improvement of records management in Kenya. Many studies (Joseph, 2010; Shadrack, 2015) have lauded modernization particularly in terms of making irretrievability of documents easier as an indicator to good records management.

One would be tempted to think that Kenya would keep a tab on improvement on archival systems in Europe where she borrowed her practices soon after independence. Kenya National Archives and Documentation Centre has retained its original role of preserving materials for the government in such a manner that retrieval is made easy to facilitate referencing for planning and activities. Kemoni and Ngulube (2008) consider this aspect as significant contribution to efficient service delivery in a nation. In many countries in the world over, formation of National Archives arose from needs to maintain proper documentation of records for prosperity (Krishna & Walsham, 2005; Gaddis, 2005; Mc Kemmish, Faulkhead, & Russell,

2011). According to the Association of Commonwealth Archives and Records Managers (2007) the effective management of records and archives throughout their life cycle is a key component of national development. According to Okello-Obura (2011) unorganized or otherwise poorly managed records mean that government does not have ready access to authoritative sources of administrative, financial and legal information to support sound decision making or the delivery of programme and services.

The process of compiling fiscal budget in government requires both past records and future projections. Such records help the government to hold itself accountable for what it has done or upholding the rights of its citizens. Unless there are proper record management systems put in place for records managers, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep and maintain accurate records, have confidence for planning purposes, set budgets for personnel expenditure and process pension and other benefits payable to employees just to mention a few attendant challenges. As other studies have pointed out (see for example Calisir & Calisir, 2004; Su & Yang, 2010; Ngulube, 2007), records are indispensable tools for planning. Records play a vital role in providing the information needed by ministries to manage and pay their staff members, plan their workforce requirements and monitor staff performance (IRMT, 1999). Ultimately, any ministry's development and sustainability will depend on sound and effective advisory services and the approaches it chooses to follow will be derived in part from an analysis of the information contained in personnel records. Other key objectives of advisory services are to support transparency and organization's accountability and to enable accurate audits by creating and protecting records as reliable evidence. According to Mat Isa (2009), the proper creation, capture, distribution and preservation of juridical evidence in the form of records can help avoid the problem of governments becoming non-transparent to the citizen. This is also

echoed by Wamukoya (2007:15) who asserts that records management constitutes a form of management policy which ensures that records are part of a system in which information flows logically and systematically within the ministry, satisfying the needs of creators, users and custodians.

Kenya, like other countries, public sectors record keeping systems is weak and has collapsed to the point that it barely functions IRMT (1999:39). Thurston (2007:190) contends that most African countries developed and implemented records management policy on an *ad hoc* basis. Records management has remained a neglected area of public sector reform. The current study seeks to bring to light the advisory services the Kenya National Archive provide to the record creators and the role they play in promoting effective record management in the ministries. It is claimed through the findings by the task force done by the ministry of interior that Record Management have deteriorated that the advisory role of KNADS has deteriorated so gradually that it has gone largely unnoticed as a development issue. This situation is particularly common in countries that were once part of European-dominated colonial regime.

The study therefore had set out to investigate the role of Kenya National Archive in providing advisory services to the record creators in the ministry with the aim of identifying gaps which when filled, should improve the support given to record creators in ministries.