CLIMATE CHANGE AND LATIN AMERICAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES: DIAGNOSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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OBJECTIVES

01 Explore the level of institutional awareness and adaptation to climate change in Latin American National Archives (LANA).

02 Display a diagnosis about current perceptions and actions about this phenomenon within these archival institutions.

03 Analyse LANA’s emergency plans to evaluate their capacity to face climate change.

04 Share a set of recommendations to introduce green/ecological practices in archives.
RESEARCH AND SOURCES

01
A survey was conducted to 16 Latin American National Archives between April and July 2023

02
An analysis of six emergency plans belonging to Latin American National Archives
PCOM PROJECT TEAM
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

1. Climate change is a profound violation of human rights as it threatens a wide range of fundamental guarantees.

2. It is an unavoidable and real problem - supported by abundant and irrefutable scientific evidence.

3. Although not all countries and human beings contribute equality to global warming, all of us who inhabit the planet will feel its negative effects.

4. We join efforts to adapt and attempt to mitigate Climate Change as professionals committed to creating a more sustainable world within our means.
“Sustainable archival practice means making present-day archival choices that enable future archivists to carry out their jobs and ensure survival of cultural heritage”.

“Creating a culture of sustainability within a single repository can begin with one archivist advocating for the purchase of green cleaning products”.

Main results

- **50%** of Latin American National Archives have experienced some form of disaster in recent years.
- **81%** of Latin American National Archives are concerned about climate change at the institutional level.
- **69%** of the National Archives of Latin America are highly concerned about climate change.
- **56%** of National Archives of Latin America consider that they are adequately prepared to respond to climate change.
- **81%** of the National Archives of Latin America have drafted emergency plans to prevent and respond to disasters.
- **58%** of National Archives in Latin America have implemented green practices to control climate change.
Factors Explaining the Level of Concern on Climate Change

01. 8 of the 16 National Archives - that is 50% - have suffered some catastrophe attributed to this phenomenon in recent years.

02. Threatens to destroy the infrastructure of archives buildings in the region.

03. May increase the budgets of Archives.

04. Might produce serious negative effect on the health of archives staff.
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF LATIN AMERICA LOCATED IN AT-RISK AREAS

1. National Archives and Library of Bolivia
2. National Historical Archive of Ecuador
3. General Archive of the Nation of the Dominican Republic
4. National Archive of the Republic of Cuba
5. General Archives of the Nation of Puerto Rico
6. General Archive of the Nation of Uruguay

- BOLIVIA
  "It is located in the historic centre of Sucre in an area susceptible to heavy hailstorms. In fact, in recent years, rainstorms have put the building at risk. In addition, it has underground water underneath that can collapse when there are heavy rains."

- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
  "The building is at risk of flooding due to constant cyclones and given our location in the Caribbean region."

- PUERTO RICO
  "The location of the building places the institution in a tsunami zone."

- URUGUAY
  "In 2019, the building suffered a roof collapse due to increased rainfall volume."
DO YOU THINK THE ARCHIVE IS PREPARED TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES AND RISKS?

Our Archive is prepared to face Climate Change: 56.3%
Our Archive is not prepared to face Climate Change: 43.8%
ANALYSIS OF EMERGENCY PLANS

VARIABLES
(1) country
(2) date of creation or last update
(3) level of scope (national, regional, institutional)
(4) objectives
(5) risks or emergencies for which it was designed
(6) team or creation unit.

MAIN FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS
• None of the emergency plans of the six National Archives consulted explicitly mention climate change.

• The real capacity of these institutions to plan, prevent and react to new disasters caused by climate change is almost non-existent.
LIST OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RISKS IN THE EMERGENCY PLANS OF LATIN AMERICAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**Internal factors**
- Gas leaks
- Fire due to faulty electrical system
- Flooding due to defective water system or water main breakage

**External anthropic factors**
- Explosive attacks
- Entry of mobs into the archive
- Theft and robbery of documents
- Warlike actions

**External environmental factors**
- Earthquakes
- Fire forests
- Acid rains
- Gusts of wind
- Tsunamis
- Tropical storms
- Hurricanes
- Floods
What are currently doing National Archives?

**TYPES OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN LATIN AMERICA**

- **5 (32%)** Paper Recycling
- **3 (19%)** Efficient Use of Resources (Water and Electricity)
- **3 (19%)** Use of Natural Ventilation
- **2 (13%)** Increased Use of Daylight
- **2 (13%)** Change in Electrical Installations
Costa Rica y Salvador

The National Archive of Costa Rica has a work plan with well-defined goals and indicators provided by its Environmental Management Commission.

The General Archive of the Nation of El Salvador stated that it has designed "an environmental impact regulation aimed at generating best practices in the exercise of its functions".
Feasibility

10 National Archives (62%) indicated that it was very likely to implement four types of green practices in the next five years:

1. Reducing the use of polluting materials in archival processes
2. Reducing unnecessary use of electrical energy
3. Reducing water usage levels
4. Recycling paper used in the work
RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONTROL CLIMATE CHANGE

Most recommendations were drawn from those archival institutions that are currently implementing this set of actions.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

- Reduce paper printouts
- Recycle paper
- Sorting waste for easy recycling
- Reduce unnecessary water consumption
- Reduce the use of electricity and increase the use of natural light
- Reduce the use of polluting materials
RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONTROL CLIMATE CHANGE

These proposals are based on international experiences that were regarded with a high level of enthusiasm among the survey participants.

LONG-TERM ACTIONS

- Create a strategic plan to transform the archive into a green institution
- Assessing environmental impact with annual targets and indicators
- Encourage staff to use cleaner means of transportation for commuting to work
- Create catalogues on environmental and ecological issues to encourage research on these topics
- To carry out dissemination and education activities to promote the importance of environmental care among different audiences
Conclusions

Climate change has been progressively impacting the National Archives of Latin America.

However, this is not enough to cope with the catastrophic consequences of climate change projected for Latin America during the 21st century.

One issue where the National Archives of Latin America has made strong progress is in the introduction of ecological practices to try to control climate change.
THANKS!

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