

# International Council on Archives

## Africa Strategy

2015 – 2020

by James Lowry on behalf of the Programme Commission  
6<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Adopted by the ICA Programme Commission, Reykjavik 26<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
Endorsed by the ICA Executive Board, Reykjavik 27<sup>th</sup> September 2015

## 1. Introduction

ICA has identified, as a key strategic goal, the need to strengthen its work and impact in Africa. This strategy sets out the strategic aims, how the ICA network will achieve its goals in Africa and the delivery framework. The associated ICA Africa Workplan has been developed to give effect to this strategy.

## 2. Background

The significance of archives and records is highlighted in the Universal Declaration on Archives<sup>1</sup>, which stresses their vital role in business efficiency, accountability and transparency, protecting citizens' rights, establishing individual and collective memory, understanding the past and documenting the present. The Declaration also acknowledges the role of archivists as trained professionals who serve society by supporting the creation of records and by selecting, maintaining and making these records available for use.

The ICA's Constitution states that the ICA's aim is to 'promote the management and use of records and archives, and the preservation of the archival heritage of humanity around the world, through the sharing of experiences, research and ideas on professional archival and records management matters, and on the management and organization of archival institutions'. The ICA has recognized that it must do more to pursue that aim in Africa. Similarly, the Constitution sets out the objectives of the ICA:

### **Advocate**

Encourage and support the development of archives in all countries, in co-operation with other organizations, including international agencies, governmental and non-governmental.

### **Professionalise**

Promote, organize and co-ordinate best practice, the development of standards and other activities in the field of records and archives management.

### **Connect**

Establish, maintain and strengthen relations between archivists of all countries and between all institutions, professional bodies and other organizations, public and private, wherever located, which are concerned with the administration or preservation of records and archives, or with the professional training of archivists, especially through the exchange of information.

### **Promote**

Facilitate the interpretation and use of archives by making their content more widely known and by encouraging greater access to them.

### **Take action**

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<sup>1</sup> Developed by a special ICA working group and adopted by the 36th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO on 10th November 2011.

Undertake any relevant activities which support its aim.

Statements by African members as well as the work of PCOM and FIDA clearly indicate that ICA is not achieving these objectives in the African regions.

Furthermore, ICA's *Strategic Direction 2008-2018* identified the need to encourage participation by African colleagues, in pursuit of 'a more balanced representation of the world's different cultures at all levels in ICA'. ICA could do more to encourage such participation.

Therefore ICA's Programme Commission (PCOM), while recognising that Africa is a large continent with a diversity of cultures, languages, ethnicities and record-keeping traditions, decided, at its April 2014 meeting, to develop a strategy to guide ICA's professional programme work throughout Africa. The Forum for National Archivists (FAN) immediately supported this decision and undertook to lead on advocacy work. Since then, FAN has established an Africa Strategy Task Force and PCOM an Africa Strategy Working Group (ASWG).

### **3. Vision**

The ICA's vision for Africa is one in which those managing records and archives have a clear voice and the confidence and resources needed to ensure that:

- organisations manage and preserve records as evidence for good governance and accountability
- individuals have access to trustworthy information for the protection of their rights, and
- archives are empowered to preserve those records as the documentary heritage of all peoples and cultures.

### **4. The Needs of African Colleagues**

As a preliminary to articulating ICA's Africa Strategy and to ensure it responds to the real needs of African colleagues, the ASWG conducted an initial broad-brush assessment of the challenges to good record-keeping in Africa, the needs of African archivists and records managers, the priorities for ICA intervention, and the provision of archival education.

The results, based on a five question survey and an open consultation session at ICA's East and South Africa Regional Branch (ESARBICA) conference in June 2015 revealed:

- There is not enough support, including budgetary support, for archives and records management or enough investment in the workforce to deliver effective record-keeping
- Advocacy work is needed in order for policy-makers to better understand the significance of archives and records

- Workforce training is an urgent requirement
- Archival education is under-developed and needs support and strengthening
- African colleagues recognise existing ICA tools as valuable resources in supporting the development of archives and records management in their learning and working environments

These findings, together with a review of the history of international collaboration in supporting record-keeping in Africa, discussions in PCOM meetings and correspondence and discussion with African colleagues, form the basis of the Africa Strategy. These documents are available from the ICA Secretariat.

## 5. Strategic Aims

ICA identifies **Advocacy** and **Training and Education** as its two key strategic aims in implementing a plan of action to strengthen record-keeping and improve the profile of archives and records management in Africa.

As an international organisation representing the archival profession, the ICA has a responsibility to serve as a strategic leader; its interventions should be general, strategic and powerful, rather than specific, uncoordinated and of limited global impact. Gearing its efforts to supporting advocacy and training and education, the ICA will make best use of its strengths (its leadership role and profile, and its network of experts) and pursue the greatest possible impact; advocacy and training and education are most likely to affect long term change. Specific archival development projects will have a place where they support and build on the key strategic aims.

## 6. Achieving ICA's Goals in Africa

The ICA will work to:

- Strengthen national archives to establish them as key advocates for record-keeping and the archives and records management workforce, and as leaders in good practice.
- Build on ICA's branch structure (working with the current review) to ensure local and regional challenges and requirements are being identified and met, recognising and ensuring that strong regional branches are one of the necessities for sustainable development.
- Plan and deliver ICA's 2018 Annual Conference in Africa, using it as both a showcase of African achievement in the field and as a way-marker in the six year plan.
- Support African archival educators in curriculum development.
- Develop a training plan (particularly with respect to digital record-keeping) to build capacity amongst African archival educators, so that new knowledge can be incorporated into existing educational programmes.
- Build partnerships to support conservation and preservation education and training
- Strengthen old and establish new partnerships to build on existing initiatives and develop new projects and products and to leverage funding.

- Continuously review and improve the strategy and workplan to ensure that they are fit for purpose, African colleagues own them and there is performance measurement and reporting in place.

## **7. Delivery Framework**

ICA needs a plan to deliver ICA goals in Africa. To do this, it needs to ensure its activity in Africa meets real needs as expressed by African colleagues, deploys ICA and any other funding and resources in a strategic manner in order to have the widest and most lasting impact possible, and is sustainable such that in six years' time we can see positive results with colleagues being more self-supporting and increasing their own valuable contribution to ICA in the international arena.

The VP Programme, Chair of PCOM, is ultimately responsible for the delivery of ICA's Africa workplan in accordance with this Strategy.

PCOM and its Africa Strategy Working Group will:

- develop a workplan to give effect to the Africa Strategy
- coordinate the work of ICA entities
- play an active role in partnership development and work
- identify where and what kind of action is needed
- liaise with FAN on advocacy (FAN President serves on PCOM, Advocacy Expert Group reports to PCOM)
- liaise with the ICA Secretariat as necessary, particularly on financial matters, communications and volunteer resources
- keep the Africa Strategy and workplan up to date

FAN and its Africa Taskforce will:

- lead on the advocacy components of the Strategy and workplan, including identifying and fostering partnerships in support of the aims of this Strategy
- share information and liaise with PCOM as necessary, particularly on professional programme activity
- encourage cooperation of and communication with African national archivists

### ***7.1 Roles and Responsibilities***

The general roles ICA expects its constituent bodies and partners to play are given below. Specific responsibilities for delivering concrete actions and projects are detailed in the Africa Strategy workplan.

#### ***PCOM***

PCOM is the lead body in the delivery of professional programme work in Africa. It will prioritise projects that meet the goals of the Africa Strategy and workplan and

develop products that meet African needs and have a wide application. Through the ASWG, PCOM liaises with ICA bodies to establish the rationale and need for action. As a first priority, it will support the development of an archives and records management good practice benchmarking tool, to include the range of issues from high level strategic ones to detailed technical matters. PCOM will receive regular progress reports on Africa Strategy work.

### *Expert Groups*

Expert groups will offer advice and expertise as needed to support the Africa Strategy and workplan and may volunteer or be called on to develop specific products and/or support education and training delivery and development.

### *Sections*

The sections will work with PCOM and other ICA bodies to identify and deliver projects, products and other initiatives in Africa to meet the goals of the Africa Strategy and contribute to the workplan.

### *FIDA*

FIDA will continue to work with PCOM and other ICA entities to ensure that the funding grants disbursed in Africa meet FIDA's criteria. It will continue to exchange information about the needs expressed by funding applicants where these are better addressed by PCOM or ICA more generally.

## **8. Gauging the Success of the Africa Strategy**

ICA will measure the success of the Africa Strategy and workplan throughout the six year timespan. Before 2020, there will be a framework for assessing their impact, not only judging by project completion but also through collection of quantitative and qualitative data.

## **9. Timeframes**

**2015:** The Africa Strategy will be approved by the Executive Board at its meeting in Reyjavik in September 2015.

**2018:** The Africa Strategy Working Group will conduct an assessment of progress to date, reporting to PCOM, the Executive Board and African stakeholders at the time of the African Annual Conference.

**2020/21:** PCOM will report on the success of the Africa Strategy to the EB and ICA membership.