

# Crosscultural cooperation in broadcasting archives

**Yola de Lusenet**

**Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision**

**Netherlands National Committee for UNESCO**

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## I. Introduction

The Archives at Risk project (<http://www.archivesatrisk.org>) is a global initiative to safeguard endangered audiovisual archives. Apart from lobbying activities and developing a website with information, guidelines and standards, the project encourages cooperative projects between organizations. The underlying idea is that organizations that are planning for audiovisual archiving or have just started out doing so can profit from the experiences of those that have been involved for a long time in audiovisual archiving, preservation and digitization.

In these cooperative projects professionals will be working together with different cultural backgrounds. As they all work in audiovisual archiving, they may share professional expertise to a greater or a larger extent, depending on the archival traditions and training systems from which their knowledge comes. But even if they can rely on a common professional framework, they will presumably not be familiar with the cultural environment in which their partners live and work. For their project to be successful they will have to develop a sensitivity to differences in social codes, styles of management, forms of communication, and societal structures. Without awareness of differences any cooperation between partners in different countries will turn out to be frustrating rather than rewarding.

What partners bring to a project will be different in every individual case, and for Archives at Risk it is not possible to provide a recipe for success. However, to give potential partners some hints of what may be involved, we present two case studies of cooperation projects, one between partners from Sweden and Botswana, the other between partners in Thailand and the Netherlands.

As a preamble we offer some very general remarks that may set you thinking about preparing for your own project. The best advice we can offer is of course to talk to someone who knows the situation from direct experience. This whole project is about sharing experience, and for this aspect too the surest way to gain some insight is sit down with a colleague who knows a few things and talk about it.

### Background

This brief study is a contribution to the Archives at Risk project from the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision and the Netherlands National Committee for UNESCO. In 2007 these organizations set up a project together looking at the ethics of crosscultural cooperation between broadcasting archives.

At a seminar in Hilversum, the Netherlands, on 8 and 9 February 2008 about 25 participants discussed their experiences with ethical issues and cultural differences, particularly in cooperative projects. Some presentations of this meeting are available as downloads.

### HIER PRESENTATIONS FEB 2008 -LINKS

As a next step it was decided to write up two cases studies on intercultural cooperation between audiovisual archives and combine them with a short general introduction. These cases were discussed at a special session at the FIAT Conference in Copenhagen on 20 September 2008. Yola de Lusenet (independent consultant, Amsterdam) was then commissioned to prepare the final text.

### Acknowledgements

The materials for the case studies were made available by Eva-Lis Green (Botswana), and Irmgard Noordhoek and Kannika Chivapakdee (Thailand). For the context and general introduction input was provided by Annemieke de Jong (Sound & Vision), Kara Van Malssen (New York University), René Teijgeler (Culture in Development) and Vincent Wintermans (Netherlands National Committee for UNESCO).

## 2. Some hints

### General

Audiovisual archives and broadcasters do not exist in a vacuum. To work effectively with colleagues in another society, it is important to have some basic knowledge of their country and its history. Politics, standard of living, linguistic situation, climate, infrastructure, economy and social system, crime, health, availability of mail, internet, email, computers, software - all these are points that may affect what can be reasonably be accomplished, and may influence the scope of work you plan. Although some may seem to be far removed from, say, digitization of U-matics, consider how things can be related in everyday life: economic aspects translate into wages of staff, motivation, career prospects; infrastructure translates into time to travel to work, possibilities to maintain contacts, efficiency of mail and telephone systems, access to internet. These things in their turn affect the working environment, the possibilities, and the resources available in your project.

It shows respect for your partner to have taken the time to find out a little about their country. People are usually pleasantly surprised if a foreigner apparently takes an interest (and is open to learning more from them). Learning a few words of the local language is also a good idea.

Pay some attention to how things work in this society and how to behave. It is not a matter of trying to get everything exactly right, but rather of being careful not to offend others unintentionally. Small things that cost nothing can make all the difference. Courtesy can make communication effective, and understanding conventions may save you from dilemmas that divert your attention from work. And if you have no clue of political sensitivities and of topics to avoid, you may also run into awkward situations.

In particular you will need to know a little about the code of conduct in a work environment: how hierarchical is it, how competitive, how are decisions made? Is everything formalized, in written documents, or are things arranged informally? Can you ask for information, can you request that something is done? What does it mean when someone says 'yes'? Is it a firm promise? Or rather to be polite and not to seem uncooperative? Or a way out, to avoid embarrassing questions or having to ask or for clarifications?

Try to figure out how you yourself will be perceived: as a guest, a foreign expert, a colleague, an outsider, a co-worker, an intruder? This will affect your relationships and communication with others: will they take what you say for granted, how direct and open can your communication be?

Check the internet, read a book, take a course on intercultural cooperation, take a language course, and talk to people who have firsthand knowledge. Try to find a contact in the country, through an embassy, cultural institute or some network, who speaks the language and whom you can ask for advice during your stay.

### Archives and media

Although all countries have archives, and many have audiovisual archives, the archival environment varies a lot. It is not difficult to see that archives as agencies that document the

activities of the government will have different positions in different political systems. Archives may be associated with power, and in countries with a history of colonization this may extend to association with oppression by the former colonial power that created the archival system. Archives may be strictly organized and closely tied to a strong bureaucracy. Conversely, they can be quite weak if literacy is not widespread and/or cultural traditions are largely oral. There may also be differences in that some cultures value (the documentation of) the past more highly than others.

As audiovisual archives are associated with broadcasting, the position of the media determines their position as well. Are media free, independent, state-owned, controlled? Are media regarded as serving information needs, education, democracy, or primarily as entertainment?

A basic understanding of the archive and media landscape will help to grasp the possibilities and obstacles in your project. How is the sector funded and organized, are there related organizations, and who does what? What kind of professional training is available, for archivists or media professionals? Are there active professional organizations? How is the profession valued and are jobs well paid?

### **Project and partner**

For projects in unfamiliar situations, it is often recommended to make a 'stakeholders analysis'. You may be building up a relationship with one or two colleagues in your project, but do you know what (or who) makes the project move? Who are the stakeholders in the project, how important are they for its success, and what are their goals? Remember that the goals of the guys at the top may be different from what the (wo)man on the floor is trying to achieve: while the latter is hoping to get part of the catalogue in order, the former is trying to forge strong ties with a partner institution abroad. How influential the stakeholders are, which agenda they have, who decides - all this may impact on your project. Talk to the stakeholders if possible. Provide them with your assessment of the situation and how it can be improved, and seek their input.

You also need to know where the partner archive stands: is it recognized, is there a supporting environment? Do other organizations or departments understand what its role is, and does the archive have authority or legal responsibilities?

Whether you regard this as stakeholders' analysis or a description of the structure of the organization, either way it will help you appreciate the restrictions and obstacles your colleagues have to deal with. It will give you a clearer idea of which things are in their power to change and which aren't. And it may give you clues as to key persons in other parts of the organization whose support is indispensable to keep things moving.

### **Sharing knowledge and experience**

You are partners in a project to discuss and compare your experiences and learn from this. The knowledge and insights of partners are always complementary: visiting consultants may be the greatest specialists but always know less than their hosts about the collections, the history and the organization of the archive. Abstract knowledge dissociated from its context will in itself not lead to success. Success comes when knowledge can be applied in a given situation and practical experience builds routines that make the work run smoothly.

If goals remain in the distance, moving away from you like the horizon, it is easy to get discouraged. It is more motivating to break up the work in small, manageable tasks that can be completed within a reasonable amount of time. Then the project can also show others what has been achieved. Keep your focus firmly on what *can* be done, rather than wasting energy on things that cannot be changed (or becoming overwhelmed by all that still needs to be taken care of).

Don't expect everything to happen in the same time frame that it would at home. The level of staff training, availability of equipment and materials, and cultural norms of work (how many hours in a day people actually work, regardless of how much time they spend at the workplace) all can affect what can be accomplished in a given time frame, or change the timeline of a project.

Make sure you are communicating, and be aware that the way you express yourself and the way you behave may affect communication more than your actual words and meaning. If you find yourself in a position in which you are training others, try to figure out how they prefer to learn. Consider that communication in a foreign language is not always effective. Perhaps you can use visualization, instructional film or video, or demonstration. Also ask yourself how you can get group members to ask questions and respond: student-teachers relations may make certain exchanges difficult, or students may not like to speak in front of a group especially in a foreign language.

Most important: be flexible, use your creativity, and enjoy the experience.

#### References and links

##### [Archives at Risk](#)

Arfanis, Peter, [Archives at Risk in Cambodia: The National Archives of Cambodia and the Role of the Foreign Advisor](#). Paper presented at the Australian Society of Archivists 1999 Conference.

CCAAA Policy Statement on [Sharing of Heritage](#)

Jackson, Pat, [Archives in Kiribati](#). Paper presented at the Australian Society of Archivists 1999 Conference.

New York University, [Moving Image Archiving and Preservation](#), cooperation with Ghana.

Overseas Development Institute, [Research And Policy in Development \(RAPID\)](#) website. In particular [Tools](#) and [Toolkit for Successful Communication](#) (includes Stakeholders Analysis and Problem Tree Analysis).

PrestoSpace [Preservation Guide](#), PrestoSpace [AV Archive Digitisation and Storage Guide](#), and the [general PrestoSpace website](#).

UNESCO pages on [Audiovisual Archives](#)

## 3. Thailand

### Introduction

In 2007 a project was set up by the PRD Museum and Archive (part of the Public Relations Department of the Royal Thai Government, Bangkok, (see [http://thailand.prd.go.th/thailand\\_illustrated/content.php?s\\_id=317](http://thailand.prd.go.th/thailand_illustrated/content.php?s_id=317) and [http://thailand.prd.go.th/about\\_prd/](http://thailand.prd.go.th/about_prd/)), and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision (Hilversum). The objective of the project is to develop a plan for safeguarding television heritage kept at the PRD Archive, including a strategy for securing the necessary funding.

The project is also a pilot for the Archives at Risk, a worldwide initiative for rescuing endangered audiovisual archives. The cooperation between PRD and Sound & Vision should provide insight into the methodology for projects in which organizations with experience in digital media management partner with organizations that are just starting to create a modern (digital) archive. More concretely, tools for preservation planning were tested in this project, to determine whether they should be included in the toolbox and information packages offered in the framework of Archives at Risk.

The head of the PRD Archive and Museum, Ms Kannika Chivapakdee, worked with several staff members of Sound & Vision. In 2007 the Director of Sound & Vision, Edwin van Huis, visited Bangkok to discuss the scope and schedule for the project. Early in 2008 Ms Chivapakdee prepared a report summarizing the situation of the PRD Museum and Archive in which she set out the various issues. This was then discussed at a meeting in Hilversum and served to prepare for a working visit to PRD Museum and Archive during which the next steps in the project would be carried out by staff from the two partners. In August 2008 Ms Irmgard Noordhoek of Spund & Vision spent two weeks working with Ms Kannika Chivapakdee; they presented a report on this visit at the FIAT conference in Copenhagen (20 September, 2008).

The inventories and tests for digitization of sample materials that have been done so far are the basis for the next stage. Now that insight has been gained into the type and conditions of materials, the next steps concern setting priorities, making a preservation plan, cost estimates and budgets, and identifying funding sources.

### Background

The history of the Public Relations Department goes back to 1933. Ever since its establishment the department has been involved in broadcasting. The agency is responsible for Thailand's public relations through all forms of media, still pictures, moving images, sound and printed media. In the 1930s, when radio was first introduced in Thailand, the PRD first managed the contents of radio broadcasts, later also the technical infrastructure. Television was introduced in Thailand in 1951 and there are now many different channels with different orientations: commercial, public, national, regional, educational, entertainment, information etc. There are 147 radio stations, one national television network (Channel 11) and 11 regional television stations

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<sup>1</sup> [http://thailand.prd.go.th/about\\_prd/content.php?id=4](http://thailand.prd.go.th/about_prd/content.php?id=4)

that now broadcast under the umbrella 'National Broadcasting of Thailand' or NBT, an independent unit.

PRD is the largest and oldest producer of audiovisual materials in Thailand, but in spite of its long history and extensive operations, there was never an archiving service for PRD audiovisual materials. In 2000 Ms Kannika Chivapakdee submitted a proposal for a 'PRD Museum and Archive', which would have two main tasks: documenting the history of the PRD and of broadcasting in Thailand, and maintaining an archive of audiovisual materials.

In 2005 the Broadcasting Museum was opened to the public. It is housed at the oldest of the PRD buildings, constructed in 1955 as the first television studio.<sup>2</sup> The museum has exhibits of equipment, audiovisual carriers, books, posters and documents, as well as a multimedia corner with access to historic recordings. It is open to the public every day.

The other part of this organization, the archive, is located in the main PRD building. It collects and preserves audiovisual objects and related materials, primarily the history of PRD agencies. The PRD archive is open to PRD staff and other researchers. The project with Sound & Vision concentrated on the audiovisual materials kept in the PRD Archive.

Set up as an archive for PRD materials at its main premises in Bangkok, the archive serves the regional radio and television stations in the PRD network only in so far as they are interested in such cooperation. In principle, these stations keep their materials themselves. There is no national policy in Thailand for archiving audiovisual materials and often recordings are stored with the producers.

### Activities

In 2007 and the first half 2008 several steps were taken to lift the organization of the audiovisual materials to the level of a properly managed archive. These activities focused on three aspects: inventory, storage, and cooperation with regional tv stations.

For both the film and video collections kept at PRD in Bangkok inventories were made in simple spreadsheets. These inventories consisted of list of tape numbers and a brief indication of what is on the tapes. The spreadsheets served as the basis: to come to priorities for preservation and reformatting, data would have to be added on how much material there is, in which formats, and in which condition. A spreadsheet was chosen because it is a handy entry-level tool, a stepping stone towards a more sophisticated catalogue database. A database with interfaces tailored to specific input, feedback and controlled terms is more difficult to develop and to use, and the functionality it offers becomes interesting only when there are a lot of fine-grained data to deal with.

In order to determine priorities for the archive, about 10% of the film collection was tested to check its condition and to decide whether it could still be played and digitized. Sound & Vision arranged for digitization of three fragments, to study quality issues and come to specifications for digitization.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://thailand.prd.go.th/thailand\\_illustrated/content.php?s\\_id=317](http://thailand.prd.go.th/thailand_illustrated/content.php?s_id=317)

In 2008, airconditioning was installed for store rooms for film and tapes in the main PRD premises (not yet in other departments), so that deterioration of materials is slowed down and the time path for digitization can be a little longer.

The cooperation with PRD agencies in other provinces is important to come to a national network for archiving and preservation. For one partner storage and inventories of the video collections were arranged, whereas with another cooperation was started to digitize materials and then deposit a copy in the PRD Archive.

In this cooperation, it is not only the concrete results that matter, but also the intangible spinoffs. In the course of joint work on concrete activities a shared view on audiovisual archiving and an awareness of professional standards may evolve. As there is no archive school in Thailand, the profession formally does not exist. Consequently the only way to establish an archival system is for those managing materials to create it together by agreeing on procedures and tasks. From such a support base it becomes possible to promote the principle of audiovisual archiving with producers and broadcasters. At the moment, not even the PRD Archive has a retention policy, and broadcast materials are not saved systematically.

In February 2008 Ms Chivapakdee paid a visit to the Dutch partner to discuss her report on the collections and needs of the archive. Together with the preparation in the first year, this paved the way for the working visit of Ms Irmgard Noordhoek to Bangkok in August 2008. The schedule for the two weeks included further work on the inventories of tv materials, studying web resources, and visits to other departments at PRD to understand the infrastructure on which the PRD Archive may rely. Throughout the two weeks of intensive discussion, the process of mapping out needs, requirements and resources served to define a feasible approach for the PRD Archive.

In particular, attention was devoted to the web tools developed by the PrestoSpace project: the Preservation Guide (<http://wiki.prestospace.org/>), the tools for calculations (<http://prestospace-sam.ssl.co.uk/>), and the general website (<http://www.prestospace.org/>). These tools help collection managers to answer basic questions about the archive, make assessments and set priorities on the basis of calculations. Before a preservation plan can be drawn up, several rounds of estimating quantities and costs, assessing value and condition, prioritizing and selecting, testing and defining specifications are necessary. PrestoSpace has used experience from audiovisual archives that have gone through this process to make tools that support others in doing the same. Working with them at the PRD Archive yielded some ideas of how the tools can be improved for use by others.

The differences between the two partners are considerable, and work processes and procedures established at Sound & Vision cannot be copied by the PRD Archive. But discussions of how things are handled in The Netherlands contributed to an understanding of the possible roadmap for the PRD Archive. This is not only a matter of concrete tasks to be done within the archive that a manager can list and prioritize. It also relates to the context in which the archive operates, cooperation and support from other agencies, funding streams, larger technical infrastructure, availability of expertise that can be hired, etc. With insight in the circumstances in

which the archive functions it becomes easier to distinguish between what must be done, what can be done, and what could be done.

## Results

Kannika Chivapakdee and Irmgard Noordhoek spent a lot of time working together and developing plans for the future, but unfortunately the scheduled visits to the production and news departments had to be cancelled: in this period, there were large demonstrations in Bangkok that changed priorities and made local travel difficult.

After the working visit Kannika Chivapakdee and Irmgard Noordhoek prepared a report together. This outlines the priorities and the next steps, and also shows how important it is to create the right conditions for the archive. In Thailand practitioners have to familiarize themselves with professional approaches somehow on their own, without the support of formal training. At the same time, basic computer skills are not so widespread either. This means that practical work (e.g. working with office software to enter data in a computer) is hampered even if one has the staff who could do it. Similarly, a condition for a successful functioning of an archive is a supportive environment in which its role is recognized by management and colleagues in other departments. It takes time to build such an environment..

Meanwhile, the partners in the project aim for concrete results and focus on activities that can be carried out more or less independently, such as:

- working on inventories and cataloguing
- labelling audiovisual carriers
- locating equipment (for tests and access)
- testing carriers and defining specifications for digitization

Within the archive itself, staff members would perhaps find it easier to see what is expected if the responsibilities were more clearly described. Opportunities for individuals to expand their computer skills would motivate them and make the team more productive. These are points for improvement that the archive staff and management will consider.

## Observations

To set up an archiving service where none existed before in the 75-year history of a large government organization is no mean task. As seen so often, it depends on a few committed individuals to keep the process going. But no amount of dedication can instantly bridge the gap in experience and resources between the 'starters' and organizations that have been building their archives over dozens of years.

Cooperative projects should recognize the need to think and work in small steps over an extended period of time. It is not just a matter of investing money. to purchase equipment, bandwidth, or supplies, but of creating lasting structures. Changes in mentality, ideas, awareness, education level are necessary just as well to get to a point at which the archive can fulfill its task. Each organization has to determine how the archive fits into the chain of work processes, and this will be different in every individual case.

Exchange of experiences with other organizations may speed up this process. It is illusory to think that starting archives can easily find their own way if only the information is put on the web. There is still a lack of easily accessible, basic information that directly speaks to newcomers. Linguistic problems are too often underestimated by those fluent in English. Even so-called introductory texts on the web often assume too much - in terms of command of the language, of organization, or of technical expertise and infrastructure. Moreover, all too often readers cannot relate to a written text because it makes assumptions about the context in which they work that do not make sense to them. The organizational structures, (work) culture, social conventions, and cultural values that to a large extent determine what can be said and done do not figure in the professional literature. The context that is silently assumed as a 'normal' working environment is in fact foreign to a great many professionals working outside mainstream Western institutions. Translating written information into practical applications then becomes more complicated.

In the end, it is more effective to have staff exchanges between organizations, in which those with some experience work side by side with those that are just starting out. Ideally these exchanges are organized in both directions, so that each comes to know the other's work environment. The web can offer tools and reference texts that complement such collaboration and also enable partners to continue their exchanges when they are geographically apart but it cannot take the place of personal contacts and discussions between professionals.

Finally, as was clearly stated by Kannika Chivapakdee at the FIAT Conference in Copenhagen (September 20, 2008), the PRD Archive and Museum will have to do the work and find the resources themselves. Cooperation with Sound & Vision has helped to decide on a course of action, make a plan, and know what to ask for. But ultimately it is up to the PRD Archive and Museum to make sure things will indeed happen. And they are confident that they will.

## 4. Botswana

### Introduction

In 2005 three partners set up a project for capacity building for public broadcasting in Botswana:

- Botswana Department of Broadcasting Services (DBS, a department of the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology)
- Swedish Media Development Office (MDO)
- Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

The Botswana partner was the owner of the project, which ran for three years and included several activities. In charge of the activity were MDO Coordinator Per Helgesson, in cooperation with the management at Botswana Television (BTV) and Ms Eva-Lis Green (consultant from Swedish Television). For the specific activity discussed here, which related to the archive, Ms Eva-Lis Green had Ms Tryphina Kwgadi (head of Archives, and employed by the National Library) as the major contact person.

The project, 'Capacity building for a public service broadcaster', covered several different areas that BTV wanted to have included, and the scope was defined by the management at BTV and the project leaders. One of the activities focused on developing media asset management at Botswana Television and strengthening the role of the television archive. The objective was to come to a systematic approach for managing media assets. This involved making an inventory of needs and use of archive materials at BTV and exploring how the current work processes could be streamlined. These were steps towards a plan for a system for digital archiving of TV footage.

To find out which criteria such a system should meet, the consultant organized meetings and training sessions in December 2005 and December 2006. These were meant to help define needs and take steps towards the implementation of a new system and new workflows. The information and ideas generated through these meetings were the building blocks for a plan on which staff of BTV continued to work in the following period. Several concrete improvements in the work processes were made in the meantime. These are not part of the system itself, but prepare the way for the final goal: a fully implemented digital archiving system that will make it possible to consult television materials on line.

Due to changes in management, the project slowed down in 2008 and in the end it was not prolonged.

### Background

Botswana has a relatively short history of television production and broadcasting. Botswana Television (BTV) started as a state-funded national television channel only in 2000. Before that only foreign transmissions (from South Africa) were available in Botswana. Housed in modern premises in Gaborone, BTV is the first station in Africa to fully use digital technology and its signal is transmitted through a large part of the continent by satellite.<sup>3</sup> A national radio station

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.viptours.info/gaborone.htm>

has been in existence since 1966, when Botswana became independent. There are now two public radio channels and a couple of commercial ones.

Television provides a mix of BTV productions - particularly news, current affairs, talk shows, children's programmes, music, and sports - and foreign productions (films, documentaries, sitcoms). English and Setswana are the official languages of Botswana and programs are transmitted, dubbed or subtitled in both languages.

The radio archive dates back several decades and has extensive holdings, especially of phonograms, and an important collection of traditional recordings (music, oral history) and spoken word. The activities described here relate to the TV archive, which has been in place from the start of television broadcasting in early 2000. Most in-house productions are archived, and some other materials, but there is no official archiving policy.

The archive as well as the reference library of BTV are managed by a head of archives employed by the national library (but the reference library still belongs to BTV). The tapes are kept in good order in an office, registered with unique numbers. The catalogue is basic and provides general information on the tapes that are held. This is on the level of the complete tape, without details on individual items. There is playback equipment available in the archive to watch material, and there is a simple system for administering loans.

The television archive is in principle accessible to researchers and students but in practice it is mostly used by the staff of BTV working on new productions. The television archive employs about 3 staff (a similar number work at the radio archive) and holds 10,000-15,000 videotapes.

To strengthen broadcasting services, a systematic approach to media asset management is important. The project activities were meant to bring out how the production side and the archive could work with a media asset management system and how this could improve work processes.

### **Training activities**

The training activities took place on consecutive days for 4 to 6 days (three different groups). The groups were small and the setting informal. The training was set up so that participants were invited to describe and analyse their own work processes and organization, in order to identify areas for improvement. The consultant's primary role was to structure and facilitate the discussion so that a complete picture would emerge. It had been discussed and agreed beforehand that the main purpose of the training was to come to a definition of the media asset management system. Ideally such a system is the backbone of the whole broadcasting organization, but these training sessions concentrated on the archive and its relationships with other departments.

The consultant also provided practical advice and background information on general topics selected during the preparation phase. This involved transfer of basic knowledge on audiovisual archiving and materials. These explanations as well as the hands-on training sessions were always closely related to issues that the participants brought up. The consultant's experience at Swedish Television was used to clarify particular approaches, but the aim was not to teach a

model used by another organization. It was more a matter of exploring together how methods and tools that are employed in one situation (SVT) could be used in another (BTV).

As main problem areas were identified:

- incomplete descriptions of archived materials, due to lack of procedures and a system to pass on information from one department to another
- absence of cataloguing system and rules in the archive
- suboptimal storage of materials on tape (no climate control)

Problem analysis helped to make clear where change could be brought about and who was in a position to do so. For the archive staff, there is no point concentrating on solving the problem with climate control, as the decision to install this or not was up to the management.

Organizational change can be promoted, but not brought about by an archivist single-handedly, it requires cooperation of others and takes time. To come to grips with the situation in the archive, it helps to determine what you can do yourself, without being dependent on the help of others, so that you can indeed take action and achieve quick results.

An example of an issue that could be improved immediately was labelling of tape boxes (and the tapes). Devising a system for this that enables one to see particular information at a glance (e.g. distinguishing between inhouse productions and licensed materials by using colours on the labels) is a low-cost solution that improves efficiency. It is expected that it will take considerable time before the content on existing tapes is converted to digital format. When an electronic information system is introduced, it will first of all be used for keeping track of programmes, footage, rights etc, and for storing new productions perhaps. So the tapes will be used for quite some time and a handy labelling system will not become superfluous with the introduction of the information system.

Similarly, matters relating to cataloguing, keywording, use of controlled terminology, thesaurus etc need to be sorted out by the archive staff in any case and are elements in the design of an information system. Experience with cataloguing was limited to library materials and in the training sessions a lot of time was spent on describing visual materials. This was done by looking at examples, working together on descriptions of actual materials at BTV, and studying thesauri and keywords. This showed that existing lists could not be used just like that: a system of keywords for television materials should fit the sociocultural context like a glove, and discussions of existing systems revealed that these do not reflect the realities of Botswana society. So they were used as a basis for a custom-built keywording system.

In the training sessions on cataloguing the need to pass on information from production and acquisition to the archive surfaced in a pronounced way. Especially because the archive is partly a responsibility of the National Library, there was a tendency not to see it as integral part of the BTV organization. This is not exceptional, for often in broadcasting organizations the role of the archive for production is underestimated as it tends to be regarded as an end station for materials that are no longer used. Such a situation affects communications with other departments: they are not aware of requirements of the archive or neglect them.

Ample attention was therefore given to involving others, both those in management positions and those at the production side. In the second year one of the training activities was developed specifically for BTV management. Both years staff from production attended some meetings and visits to other departments were included in the training programme.

Assignments with different groups helped everybody see the dependencies between the different parts of the organization. By asking individuals to list the people or departments they were working with and those they relied on for information, it became clear that the organization is a tightly-knit structure of lines going back and forth. This process showed that procedures for communication and sharing information would have to be established to make the introduction of a media asset management system successful.

If information about transmissions that is available in the production department is not transferred to the archive -whether on paper or through a database system- the materials cannot be properly catalogued and retrieved. The introduction of automated systems will in itself will not solve this problem if awareness of the need to share information is low. By looking at the whole information chain it became clear how important it is to keep information from earlier stages for easy retrieval of footage at some point in the future. The archive could obviously function more efficiently and effectively if it had the information at its disposal that is generated at the acquisition or production stage.

Talking about these processes with various groups at BTV clarified the position of the archive in the organization. It also offered an opportunity to emphasize its potential as a wonderful resource for new programmes, provided that materials were well described and easily accessible.

The training necessarily switched between different levels. The participants represented a very broad spectrum of broadcasting knowledge. The divergence in specialisms was very helpful for the initial inventories and drawing up the specifications of the information system. Some participants had academic training but none had training or experience with audiovisual archiving. Hence the discussions could be at a high level of expertise one moment, and turn to the very basics of audiovisual archiving the next. None of the participants had a real overview of all aspects involved. This is why assignments that looked at the workflow as a whole were important to help people see how the pieces fit together.

## **Observations**

Good preparation by all those involved definitely contributed a lot to the success of the training activities. The training activities were planned well in advance and discussed with partners in Botswana by email. The consultant was briefed by colleagues with first-hand knowledge of Botswana who also produced their own 'Botswana handbook' with lots of information considered useful for someone from Sweden.

Yet, in both years, in spite of extensive contacts beforehand, the training activities could not take place exactly as agreed. Participants had other duties to attend to and could not always be present. In cooperation projects like these flexibility is of the essence and any plan should be robust enough to accommodate last-minute changes.

The scope of the training had been defined beforehand, and this proved to be very important: there were many different things that came up and could have caused the group to wander off in all directions. The consultant had the role of facilitator and also of expert on audiovisual archiving, but the programme for the training was developed together with BTV.

Part of the success of the training lies in the combination of different goals. There were both practical short-term goals -like labelling of tapes- , longer terms plans for the information system, and awareness-raising in the organization, with the expectation that this would have an immediate effect on the functioning of the archive.

Long-term commitment makes it possible to define a goal at some point in the future and start working towards it in small steps. Small improvements were not presented in isolation, but as leading up to larger changes, which is more motivating. It was a pity that the consultant could not go back one or two more times to help keep this process of gradual change going.

The training activities could only scratch the surface and made abundantly clear that there is some way to go before a media asset management system can be fully implemented. There is IT expertise, but those who would have to work with the system lack experience with audiovisual archiving and basic computer skills (Word, Excel). The lack of experience with computerized systems also makes it hard to fully grasp the potential and functionality of an extensive information management system.

The commitment and enthusiasm of the staff made the project a success. It achieved very concrete results in that in response to the needs expressed during the training the management created two more positions in the archive. With the extra staff the archive can now be developed further.

The situation at BTV is favourable for cooperation projects with colleagues from North-West Europe. Botswana is a modern African country, Botswana society is open and democratic, with the usual red tape but no paralysing bureaucracy. Governance of BTV is straight from the Ministry but its independence is recognized and by and large it functions as any small broadcasting company, with some resources to invest in equipment or software. The national language is English, BTV staff are well educated and knowledgeable in their specialist field, and do not hesitate to formulate their own views, which facilitates communication. They have access to internet and email and information on the web.

The differences with North-West Europe are huge, in terms of climate, economic activity, standard of living, and the crippling presence of HIV/Aids. If the politics, the hierarchy and decision processes are mystifying to a visitor from abroad, the hospitality and relaxed way of going about things are a healthy change for those coming from a work environment obsessed with businesslike efficiency. Doing things differently in no way implies a lack of ambition, as the principles of BTV show: 'with all our advantages of investment, the latest technology and skills, we must not be satisfied until we have created the best television service in Africa, that is admired by the rest of the world.' It is the spirit that makes it possible to overcome obstacles and move ahead: 'The mood of the country is upbeat, confident and forward-looking. That

should be the tone of the Channel' (BTV website, Guiding principles, [http://www.btv.gov.bw/guiding\\_principles.html](http://www.btv.gov.bw/guiding_principles.html) ).