



Netherlands
National Commission
for UNESCO



Archives@Risk

International Expert Meeting
“Ethical-Cultural Guidelines for Development Cooperation between Audiovisual Archives”

Hilversum, 8 and 8 February 2008

1. Introduction

In 2005, the *International Federation of Television Archives* (FIAT) launched the *Archives at Risk* (AAR) project. This initiative raises awareness, both among the public and policy makers, of the immediate dangers facing our audiovisual heritage. Amongst the members of the *Inter-organisational Group on Archives at Risk* are FIAT, UNESCO, the *European Broadcasting Union* (EBU) and the *World Broadcasting Unions* (WBU).

As part of its work for AAR, the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision has set up a project with the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO that aims to develop guidelines for specialists who are embarking on cooperation projects with threatened archives. These guidelines will concentrate on ethical and cultural aspects of this kind of cooperation. The finished guidelines could be presented to UNESCO with a view to their adoption as an official UNESCO manifesto.

The first activity in this project was an international expert meeting, organised at the Institute for Sound and Vision in Hilversum in February 2008. 25 experts from 12 countries met for two days in order to present their experiences and to reflect on a number of ‘cultural’ and ‘ethical’ issues that can come up in international cooperation projects. Examples came from Botswana, Cambodia, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mozambique and Uruguay. Five of the case studies were instances of north-south cooperation; the Uruguay case was an example of south-south cooperation, with Chili. (see annex I for the Programme)

UNESCO was represented at the meeting in the person of Mr Jonas Palm, chair of the Memory of the World Programme Sub-committee on Technology; FIAT was represented by its president, Mr Edwin van Huis and by its vice president Dominique Saintville; AAR by its executive coordinator Sue Malden.

2. Five points

Prior to the meeting, the organising committee had drawn up a position paper to introduce the subject of the conference to the participants (annex 2). The cultural and ethical issues were presented in the framework of five themes:

- position of the institution
- selection of materials
- storage
- provision of access
- use & availability

This same arrangement has been kept in this report.

2.1. position of the institution

Two issues can be distinguished: (a) the position of the archive in the society in which it functions; and (b) the position of an archival department within an institution, for example a broadcaster, that is not a primarily a heritage institution.

In the first case, very broad cultural issues can come into play. From the projects presented it became evident that different societies make very different estimations about the value of history for today's life, and therefore in some countries archives will have to explain their role to the public in order to be useful to society, and to politicians to secure their existence in the long run. Even in cases where legal frameworks are in place that give the archive its official role, support of the authorities or producers of audiovisual materials is often lacking.

In countries where politicians *are* aware of the importance of archives, the actual involvement of the government in the daily work can be very direct or very remote. Because archives are often politically sensitive institutions, chances of success for international cooperation projects are significantly increased if there is commitment on the highest level. In Hilversum some projects presented were initiated at the ministerial level

Concerning the second point, it is clear that archival departments often have to fight for their 'place under the sun', and that the primary concern of the archivist, who feels responsible for long-term safeguarding and the heritage aspects of the materials, can run counter to the short-term (mercantile) interests of managers and producers of materials. This state of affairs will have a negative impact on the chances of an international project, although a case was presented in which the involvement of foreign experts had the side effect of raising the prestige of the archival department within the institution.

2.2. selection of materials

An extreme, but not uncommon selection problem, was presented from a former dictatorship, where archivists' professional standards conflicted with official instructions to destroy materials.

The differences of perspective between archivists and management hinted at in 2.1. is often a problem of selection.

Efficient selection is also hampered by lack of information. Archives sometimes waste their small resources in rescuing materials that are well kept somewhere else. Clear divisions of responsibility within the country and between countries is of course the answer to this, but projects will have to deal with all imperfections that exist in reality.

2.3. storage

From the discussions it transpired that in the practice of audio-visual heritage preservation, it seems possible to find pragmatic solutions to the problem of storage, the position of originals and ownership of materials that due to a history of colonization have ended up in other parts of the world. The recent Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archive Associations (CCAAA) policy statement on this subject, *Sharing of heritage* speaks about the right of every country to access its audiovisual memory, but this can be achieved 'regardless of where the material has survived or been archived'. In the audiovisual field, due to technical reasons, the difference between original and copy is not so important as in other heritage fields. CCAAA speaks about 'shared moral

ownership' and the 'shared interest in the preservation and accessibility of such material' in stead of 'repatriation'.

2.4. provision of access

Several examples of complications were presented that are connected with cultural and linguistic differences in describing materials. Regime change can bring about the necessity of changing metadata. This area requires at least thorough preparation, flexibility and sensitivity from both partners, and this could be an argument for seeking cooperation with partners with whom there is a shared linguistic and cultural context.

Obsolescence of hardware and physical deterioration of carriers are well known reasons that make AV-projects urgent; another obvious, but seldom mentioned argument for haste came up in the discussions: the people who can identify persons and situations on the materials (social tagging) are getting older and die.

2.5. use & availability

When use is discussed, inevitably the problem of copyrights will turn up. Not only do copyright laws differ in different countries, but the attitude of people towards these laws varies considerably. This attitude can range from excessive prudence, that brings all activities to provide access to a standstill, to almost complete neglect. In that last case, a foreign partner included counseling on copyrights in the training provided.

There is another rights issue, not legal, but moral: documents of oral history are made on the basis of trust; amateur productions often have a sensitive content, and sometimes archivists should think carefully before broadly distributing these materials, even if the people depicted have said that they had given consent.

3. Questionnaire

A majority of participants has handed in the questionnaire in which they could propose themes for the next stages of this project. Some of the points mentioned were:

- identification of critical factors of success and failure;
- rights and property issues (most frequently identified issue);
- long term storage of collections after digitization has taken place; investigate if FIAT/UNESCO should play a coordinating role here;
- obsolete machinery;
- training;
- mobilization of reserves;
- sharing experience between developing countries;
- language issues;
- guidelines for scopes and targets of projects.

Annex 1: programme

Venue : Institute for Sound and Vision (Beeld en Geluid), Mediapark Hilversum, The Netherlands

Moderator : Mrs. Yola de Lusenet (International Advisory Committee Memory of the World UNESCO/European Commission for Preservation and Access)

Day 1 9.00 – 17.30

9.00 - 9.30	Registration and coffee
9.30 - 9.40	Welcome by Mr. Edwin van Huis, chair of the Project group
9.40 - 9.50	Welcome by Mrs. Els Jacobs, Secretary General of the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO
9.50 - 10.00	Introduction to the project by Mrs. De Lusenet

Case study Africa

10.00 – 10.30	Mrs Eva-Lis Green - Sveriges Television (STV),Sweden
---------------	--

10.30 – 10.50	Q&A , discussion
---------------	------------------

10.50 – 11.30	Coffee/tea break
---------------	------------------

Case study Caribbean region

11.30 – 12.00	Mrs. Maureen Webster-Prince - National Library of Jamaica
---------------	---

	Mrs. Sue Malden - International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT), United Kingdom
--	--

12.00 – 12.20	Q&A, discussion
---------------	-----------------

Case study : South-East Asia

13.30 – 14.00	Mrs. Samia Gest – (repr.) Bophana Centre, Cambodja
---------------	--

	Mrs. Agnes Senemaud - Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA), France
--	--

14.00- 14.10	Mrs. Kanneeka Chivapakdee - Museum and Archive Broadcasting museum, Thailand
--------------	--

14.10 – 14.30	Q&A, discussion
---------------	-----------------

14.30 – 15.00	Coffee/tea break
---------------	------------------

Case study : Latin American region

15.00 – 15.30

Mrs. Amira Arratia - Televisión Nacional de Chile (TVN)

Mrs. Cecilia Panniza - Centro Municipal de Fotografía (CMDF), Montevideo, Uruguay

15.30 – 15.50

Q&A, discussion

Day 2 9.00 – 14.00

9.00 - 9.30

Registration and coffee

9.30 - 9.45

Presentation Memory of the World Programme UNESCO

Mr. Jonas Palm – Memory of the World Program Sub-committee on Technology, Sweden

9.45 - 10.00

Presentation Archives@Risk Project

Mrs. Dominique Saintville – International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT), France

Case study : Africa

10.00 – 10.30

Mr. Samoa Anguilaze -TVM, Televisao de Mozambique (*to be confirmed*)

RAI speaker, Italy (*name to be confirmed*)

10.30 – 10.50

Q&A, discussion

Case study : Asia

10.50 – 11.20

Mr. Djoko Utomo - National Archive Indonesia

Mr. Ted Steemers - Nationaal Archief The Netherlands

11.20 – 11.40

Q&A, discussion

11.40 – 12.15

Coffee/tea break

12.15 – 13.00

Final discussion and wrap up by Mrs. Yola de Lusenet

Annex 2: position paper

1. Introduction

Archives at Risk

The International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT) initiated *Archives at Risk* during the *World Electronic Media Forum* (WEMF), an event that was part of the second phase of the *World Summit on the Information Society* (WSIS) in 2005. Under the slogan 'Saving the world's audiovisual archives for the 21st century and beyond' *Archives at Risk* seek(s) to address the threats to which audiovisual archives around the globe, but especially in developing countries, are exposed due to the obsolescence of equipment and the deterioration of carriers. *Archives at Risk* raises awareness around the globe and seeks to help staff at archives to prepare projects to save their collections.

Therefore, the Inter Organisational Group on Archive at Risk, of which the Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision is a member, is compiling a toolkit that can support archivists in developing countries to plan digitization of their holdings and to apply for support from donors from the public and private sector. As a pendant to this, it wishes to set up practical guidelines for specialists from developed countries who are embarking on cooperation projects with threatened archives. These guidelines will concentrate on ethical and cultural aspects of this kind of cooperation.

Role of UNESCO

The United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) with its mandate to 'maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge by assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science' (Constitution, Article I.2.c) has pointed to the fragility of audiovisual archives at an early date: it adopted a *Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images* as early as in 1980. Since 1992 the *Memory of the World Programme* (MoW) provides capacity building, standard setting and awareness raising in the field of documentary heritage. Not surprisingly, UNESCO has been involved in *Archives at Risk* since the very beginning.

For the development of the practical guidelines mentioned above, the Institute for Sound & Vision will collaborate closely with the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO. The Commission recently installed a project group of specialists from the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* (National Library of the Netherlands), the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), the *Nationaal Archief*, the European Commission on Preservation and Access (ECPA) and the Institute for Sound and Vision to coordinate the work on these guidelines in its initial stages. For the writing of the guidelines it foresees the creation of an international writing group.

2. International workshop for development of guidelines

As a first step, the project group plans an international workshop on 8 and 9 February 2008 that will discuss ethical and cultural problems that can arise when archivists with completely different training & skills, financial & technical possibilities and institutional & cultural backgrounds meet to cooperate.

The project group has identified the following interconnected themes that should be a part of the proposed guidelines and therefore need to be discussed in the international workshop:

(A) Position of the Institution

No preservation or digitization policy can be established if the archive in question has no clear understanding of its tasks, responsibilities and goals. The legal/institutional position of audiovisual archives in many countries is often less firmly established than their 'paper counterparts'. Sometimes they are solely appreciated as ancillary institutions for the broadcasting institution, without much

attention being given to their independent cultural value. The citizens' view to the institution will vary, as well as the self-image of the archive.

If archivists are not sufficiently aware of the particular ways in which their sister organization is embedded in society, they may find it difficult to comprehend why things are different abroad.

(B) Selection of Materials

Even the archives in the most affluent countries have to cope with the fact that budgets are never enough to fulfill all wishes; so the need for selection seems a universal one. But institutions who have had no budget for safeguarding collections at all, have never had to deal with this problem, so here strategies for selection will be not be in place. This looks like a field where archivists could learn from the experiences from colleagues, but difficulties abound. As cultural-historical contexts vary immensely, it can never be the case that strategies can be mechanically copied. Selection can only be the responsibility of the country itself, but the sister organization should be able to explain the different methodologies for appraisal and selection that exist, and point to all ethical and practical implications of the strategy chosen. Appraisals will vary, depending on the outlook chosen: historical, cultural, national, international and re-use value.

One can easily imagine the dilemmas in which the specialist can find himself/herself if his/her colleague makes choices that seem to run counter to his/her own professional standards.

(C) Storage

Notions of authenticity are not the same all over the globe and vary according to type of institution as well; a film museum will normally attach greater value to preservation of the analogue carriers after digitization than a television archive. Project partners will have to be aware of these and other differences.

The decision to share copies between institutions with a view to protect collections against unintentional loss is another field where ethical dilemmas can come up. In our networked world, temporary or permanent storage of digitized materials outside the archive itself, or even outside the country where they belong, is a possibility that may have many practical advantages, especially in situations of natural disaster and conflict. But such a solution can only be envisaged if questions of ownership and responsibility are adequately answered. It will need a long-term commitment from both partners, and even if all the rights of the owner are well guaranteed, then still the subjective, but real problem of the 'feeling' of loss of ownership will demand very delicate handling form.

(D) Provision of Access

The kind of metadata that will be added to the audiovisual materials seems to be at first sight a technical question for which standard answers are easily available. For the formal aspects this might be true, but for content the issue is more complex. Local situations prohibit global solutions, and here again differences in cultural background have to be taken into account. Labeling materials means judging its value, and this can be a delicate matter.

Other relevant issues are the integrity of data and the documentation of mutations.

(E) Use and Availability

Materials that were lying unused when only analogically available, can get a new economical value when digitized. What are the decisions that have to be taken about rights and exploitation before a project starts, and what is the role of the foreign partner? The not unreasonable wish of the institution to earn some of the costs for digitization back has somehow to be balanced with the public domain status of old material.