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Review

The place of oral history and palaeography in indigenous knowledge management education: Makerere University—EASLIS experience

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Over the years, people have applied indigenous knowledge in their day to day activities for socio-economic and community development. This has aimed at integrating IK values into the environment in which learning takes place. For this to be effective, it requires a body of knowledge, skills and competences to optimally exploit the existing IK into the Nations development programmes with information management support. This paper explains the IK in the African cultural context and the Uganda's higher education. This paper also defines the IK management and places oral history and palaeography therein. The paper shares experience of EASLIS in addressing the IK management needs through training in Oral History and Palaeography courses. It also provides the experiences students go through in undertaking this course and also shares feedback in promoting IK education. The paper concludes that the use of oral history research is appropriately placed in IK education as a tool which when utilised will help to increase the sustainability of the learning process for lifelong learning.

Keywords: Oral History Management, Palaeography, Indigenous Knowledge Education, EASLIS, Makerere University

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, people have applied indigenous knowledge in their day-to-day activities for socio-economic development of societies. Furthermore, age, gender, education, occupation, environment, socio-economic status, experience, history and division of labour within the family, enterprise, or community contribute to the type of indigenous knowledge (IK) in a given environment and this has important implications for socio-economic development of the society. There has also been evidenced by the collections of IK information that show that writing is a heritage of man's entry into historical time (Sengupta, 1981:13; Feather, 1995) that characterises the documentary deficit (Alegbeleye, 1993:1) – a shortage of recognised documentation in written and material forms. Little attempt has been made

to document IK, especially that which addresses the indigenous communities and cultural values, practices and norms, an area that needs to be exploited to enhance knowledge transfer.

The integration of IK management skills into the university system will provide a mechanism for democratising access and raising awareness of its significance to the achievement of national and community objectives. This paper defines IK management within the knowledge management (KM) environment and places oral history therein. The paper shares the experience of Makerere University – EASLIS in addressing the IK management needs through training in Oral History and Palaeography courses. It also provides the experiences students go through in

undertaking this course and also shares feedback expressed by the communities in promoting IK education in Uganda.

The place of oral history in indigenous knowledge management

Throughout history, knowledge has been viewed from multiple perspectives – as abstract, philosophical, educational, religious, practical etc. Thus the concept of knowledge invites various interpretations and definitions, many of which offer valuable perspectives and insights. For example, Beckman (1998) contends that knowledge is organised information applicable to problem-solving, and consists of truths and beliefs, perspectives and concepts, judgements and expectations, methodologies and ‘know-how’. To him, knowledge portrays learning as a practice and as belief that fall into two categories – tacit and explicit knowledge. Whereas explicit knowledge is formal and written, tacit knowledge is personal knowledge based on an individual’s experience, insights and intuition (Mchombu, 2006:3). Transformation of such knowledge requires knowledge management techniques with a holistic approach that addresses aspects of creating and using knowledge in a knowledge management environment by using appropriate technologies in a given society (Rasyalakahmi, s.a). The purpose of KM is to:

- connect people with people;
 - connecting people with information;
 - enable conversion of information to knowledge;
- and
- encourage innovations and creativity through the nurturing of the knowledge environment.

Knowledge is always bound and validated in the context of application (Maponya, 2004:128) within a given community. Consequently, the knowledge that is held by communities and peoples within a particular environment is what is referred to as indigenous knowledge (IK). IK is highly valued in traditional African societies for its practical value and implications for life as characterised by Africa’s great reliance on cultural heritage through oral history that in turn depends on live memory and the spoken word. In addition, IK plays a critical role in economic growth, poverty eradication and also enhances development.

Indeed, many scientists and social researchers, including Muswazi (2001), Van Wyk (2004) and Laloude (2005) have recognised the positive role of IK in the national development process, including in higher education. However, Van Wyk (2004:2) asks: How can IK and scientific knowledge best be integrated, in the interest of sustainable development? According to Van Wyk, the integration of IK into scientific knowledge may

be in the form of formative interaction, modifying interaction, reinforcing interaction or sometimes confusing interaction. He emphasises that the process of integration of pre-existing knowledge counteracts the erosion of their prior knowledge. This is why Mchombu (2006) asserts that the way to harness the knowledge management deficit in Africa countries requires “build[ing] capacity of the population to absorb and apply knowledge through universal basic education, adult literacy and life long learning and tertiary (higher) education”. In fact, Kasozi (2003:48) emphasises that the higher education curriculum needs reform to make it more relevant to the economic needs of society, the graduates and the market. For many years, IK has been preserved and maintained by various institutions and systems worldwide, including libraries, museums, research institutions, literary societies and cultural/traditional institutions (Sengupta, 1981:27) in an effort to link communities with research and education, among other functions. The indigenous peoples have preserved their knowledge through traditional songs, stories, legends, methods and practices as means of transmitting specific human elements of tradition knowledge with the use of oral history.

Therefore, oral history can be an invaluable source of evidence for understanding individual experiences, within a certain historical period, a testimony that will reveal and illuminate both the individual’s experience and the historical period (University of Northern Carolina, 2007). In addition, oral history has a proper place in systems of evidence, experience and analysis that produce reliable history. To Wise (1985:247), as cited by Magara (2002), oral history is the most effective tool for collecting and preserving accounts, descriptive opinions and reminisces relating to areas of indigenous history. For this to be effective, it must be grounded in sound analysis and a through knowledge and understanding of other available and pertinent sources. Consequently, oral history has become an integral part of the research techniques used to preserve the past experiences and to impart that experience to young ones (Everett, 1992:1). Therefore, preserving documentary heritage is a crucial factor in positioning any community’s presence in the memory of the world. Indeed, documented, collective memory of peoples of the world that represents the world’s cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2002:2). Thus, to bridge the documentary gap, it is important to bridge the gap between the knowledge and skills available in higher education and that available in the communities by ensuring the optimisation of existing oral history techniques to enable learners in higher education to appreciate and enhance the sharing of experiences and best practices in IK management – a strategy that will sustain information service delivery.

Indigenous knowledge management in an African cultural context

In traditional African society, there is a significant effect of modern education and the attitudes it inculcates towards cultural and community practices, including work, medicine, morals, money and economic activities (Sharkey and Welch, 1979). A look at economic opportunity among black men demonstrates “the shame and frustration that comes from not being able to provide for one’s family, which has contributed to the erosion of black families and that has significantly contributed to loss of African memories (Barack Obama, 2008). Actually, Henri Lopes (2007:23) contends that the original identity of an African links up with the ancestors of his native land. However, in most cases, not much has been said about it. Consequently, as Pal Ahluwalia (2007:59) believes, the idea of Africa as the cradle of humanity, a home to people rather than a wilderness suitable only for safaris and wildlife-viewing and escape from hyperrealism, is beginning to take centre stage. According to Joseph Ki-Zerbo (2007:97), “without identity, we are an object of history”. To him, Africans cannot be satisfied with the cultural elements/values that reach them from abroad, and IK is unique to a given culture or society, which can be defined according to who knows what in the community.

This is why one of the greatest problems of Africa is the struggle for equitable cultural exchange, where most cultures rely on the rich information among its people, particularly that held within families (Linda, 1997), as a core source of indigenous knowledge. In this regard, educational environments for acquiring IK range from family, clan, village/community to economic, leisure, political and spiritual environments. It is important to integrate such frameworks into the environment in which learning takes place, for example in a university. Furthermore, IK assumes a special role in cultural transformation, and has a considerable impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There are some attempts at protecting the indigenous knowledge systems (IKSs). For example, the Republic of South Africa (2008) has developed a policy framework for the protection of IK through the Intellectual Property System. The framework guides the recognition, understanding, integration and promotion of the country’s wealth of indigenous knowledge resources. One of the areas of action identified by the policy framework is protecting the holders of such knowledge against exploitation. This situation requires a careful approach to ensure that the IKSs are integrated into university teaching and learning but remain relevant to the needs of the community.

Indigenous knowledge management in Uganda’s higher education

There is a growing need among the various governments to utilise IK in various aspects of technology, culture, environment, and its transfer process. Consequently, national governments throughout the world have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. The main element of this aspiration is “a heritage that is free of negative cultural values, practices and traditions” (Government of Uganda, 1999:43). This requires developing capacities and competences within the country to document and manage such IK for proper access, utilisation and use. This is why, since the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), with the support from the World Bank, explored the potential of utilising IK in the health sector, it is currently promoting the adoption African tradition healing system to involve the people in health care delivery and the fight against HIV/Aids (Gorjestani, s.a:1). Emphasis is on the area of traditional medicines and on pure herbalists, spiritualists, diviners and magicians, mixed-activity practitioners, bonesetters and traditional midwives (Magara, 2005b).

Indeed, Article 41 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda specifies that “Every citizen has a right to information in the possession of the State or any other organ...” In order to ensure the effective management of information in the country, the Government of Uganda enacted various laws, such as the National Records and Archives Act (2001), the National Library of Uganda Act (2003) and the Access to Information Act, 2005. For instance, the Access to Information Act, 2005, provides for the right to access, classes of, and procedure for obtaining access to information. On the other hand, the National Libraries Act entails the preservation of the documentary heritage of Uganda. In the light of the current generational gap in our societies today, preservation and conservation of the national heritage is very important. This especially applies to the current efforts by the government to address literacy levels through Universal Primary Education (UPE) since 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) since 2007 with a view to achieving the MDGs through the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), designed to fight poverty, ensure gender mainstreaming and good governance in the country. PEAP promises to deliver substantial improvement to Uganda and to the poorest people (especially women) by the year 2017.

The goal of education in knowledge management is to develop professionals with the knowledge and skills required to provide services that satisfy the information

needs of information seekers through effective management of information and knowledge resources, including IK (Chester and Neelameghan, 2006). However, future development largely depends on the quality of human resources in order to realise rapid socio-economic development. Significant investment in education is required in order to address such strategies as improved quality of standards of training, to provide specialised education and training programmes and to enhance the management and administration of education at national, district and educational levels. Such aspirations cannot be attained without improvements in the quality of the human resources being trained. This is why Uganda today points out the need to evolve a society that is literate, informed and creative, and well educated (Uganda, 1999). In Uganda, some of the cultural values have changed due to the integration of people as a result of migration, intermarriages, and changes in the educational environment.

Indeed, the Government of Uganda, through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), has attempted to address such IK needs through the development of the thematic curriculum by integrating oral literacy skills aimed at building the capacity at lower primary of utilising mother tongue as a facilitator of literacy acquisition (Kateeba, 2008). The thematic curriculum for primary schools in Uganda is aimed at ensuring early breakthrough to literacy, mastery of skills, empowerment in the use of life skills, providing a head to the acquisition of higher order thinking skills and development of basic language skills for lifelong learning (Bitamazire, 2006). Similar efforts are required in higher education within specialised knowledge areas, which should be adapted to the needs of economic and social life to cater for the many aspects of lifelong education in the broadest sense, especially at university level. In fact, a study conducted by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) (2005:18) on the state of higher education and training in Uganda indicated that most academic programmes were academic and literary and of no immediate relevance to the evolving of Ugandan job market. The report called for curriculum review to make it relevant to community needs. Through a supply-and-gap analysis, a survey on the Uganda Library and Information Workforce Planning Project established the IK competence and skills gap. The data gathered from LIS personnel working in Uganda observed that LIS programmes need to ensure a balance between different types of skills that address a number of information environments, which should address local needs by using local examples, working with community libraries and resource centres and putting emphasis on how to deal with community information (Kigongo-Bukenya and Kiyangi (ed.), 2006:52).

The role of a university is important in seeking and cultivating new knowledge, in interpreting IK and beliefs

in the light of new needs and discoveries, in striving to promote quality and social justice, and in reducing social and cultural differences. Indeed, Makerere University (2007:87) has provided a quality framework for curriculum review in its Quality Assurance Policy Framework. To aim at high quality, the policy specifies that the “curriculum is designed to provide students with the elements of a liberal education by encouraging the development of broadly informed, reflective, and literate minds capable of independent and critical thinking”. This requires strategies to take advantage of the opportunities within our communities for synthesis, application and integration of knowledge within and between disciplines. There are some institutions and organisations that attempt to store and promote the use of IK. In some cases such institutions and those that can make use of IK simply do not have the information management skills that would enable its utilisation for research and higher education. Some attempts, for instance, have been made to capture historical information by various institutions such as governments, university libraries, church libraries, museums, public libraries, private libraries, historical and research institutions, literary societies, and national archives, through such media as books, records, audiovisual, and digital. There is thus need for a body of knowledge, skills and competences to optimally exploit the existing IK for the socio-economic development of the country.

Makerere university—EASLIS experience with indigenous knowledge management education

Makerere University (MUK) has been the apex of Uganda’s education system since it was founded in 1922. Furthermore, Makerere University works with other appropriate bodies (including Ministry of education, NCDC, NCHE) in the planned development of higher education in the country. Since Makerere University is a reservoir of the country’s intellectual elite, within its pledge to meet the country’s social, political and economic needs of the society, the university has to lead the community in influencing public policy, strategies and programmes. Therefore integration of IK management needs will enable the community benefit better from university education. This is in line with Makerere University’s core principle of the development of curricula and programmes that respond to the needs of the communities by various faculties and teaching units. Makerere University (2006) has put in place various frameworks, including the Investment Policy (2006), the Research and Innovations Policy (2008a) and the Intellectual Property Management Policy in 2008. For instance, the Research and Innovations Policy aims to strengthen research capacity and output and to increase the contribution of Makerere University (2008a) to the world of knowledge and innovation. On the other hand,

the purpose of developing the policy on management of intellectual property is to assist researchers, research managers and Makerere University (2008b), being the only research-led institution of higher learning in Uganda, in ensuring that they have access to best practices for the identification, protection and management of intellectual property and, therefore, that they maximize the benefits and returns from public investment in research. These policies work within the Makerere University Quality Assurance Policy Framework (2007). The aim of Makerere University's quality assurance policy is to enhance the effectiveness of its core activities of learning, teaching, research performance, research training and management. The policy addresses all areas of the university's activities focusing on their contribution to and in alignment with the university's Strategic Goals. According to the policy, academic units, including the East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS), are expected to align their academic programmes to meet the standards expected by stakeholders and to ensure that graduates have attained skills and knowledge that are valued by stakeholders. All these academic units are guided by the three pillars of the Makerere University Strategic Plan: Teaching and Learning; Research and Innovation; and Knowledge Transfer.

The East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS), a teaching unit at Makerere University, has been at the forefront of training in information management and records and archives for more than seven decades. EASLIS has been at the centre of the development of information services in the country since its inception in 1963. Since 1963, EASLIS has attempted to play its role of education and training in information management, a discipline that is concerned with knowledge generation, organisation, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination. EASLIS runs a number of academic programmes at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Currently, EASLIS offers two undergraduate diploma programmes, two bachelor's degree programmes, one master's degree and one PhD programme. EASLIS is concerned with information management in various aspects of managing information such as classification, cataloguing, indexing, abstracting, information organisation and processing, among other skills. EASLIS has taken the lead in addressing the information management training needs, which started with a certificate course in 1964, a diploma course in 1965, an undergraduate degree course in 1989, a master's degree course in 1997 and a PhD course in 2003. For instance, EASLIS has been guiding students in conducting research in which individual students have been selecting topics related to IK and oral history.

Attempts have been made to integrate IK preservation and conservation into its diploma and bachelor's degree programmes. In a recent curriculum review done at EASLIS, efforts were made to integrate IK skills through a

number of courses, including information, gender and society, community information services, museum management, and publishing and book trade. In all the programmes, preservation and conservation forms a core part of the programme. A component of the Master of Science in Information Science course is the Indigenous Knowledge Management System. Some efforts are also being made at EASLIS to integrate some aspects of IK management skills into the subjects of oral history and palaeography. For instance, since 2008 Oral History and Palaeography Management have been taught as subject areas in two programmes: Diploma in Records and Archives Management and Bachelor of Records and Archives Management. Since 1999, EASLIS has been teaching Oral History and Palaeography under the diploma programme in Library and Information Science. The next section reviews the experience of EASLIS in addressing IK through teaching of oral history and palaeography.

Teaching of palaeography and oral history management at EASLIS

One of the objectives of this paper is to provide the experience of EASLIS in addressing the IK management needs through training in Oral History and Palaeography courses. An attempt has been made to review the contents of what has been taught from 1999 up to the present regarding the oral history. A review of the course outlines, teaching notes, question papers and student feedback mechanisms have informed this paper. This section thus describes the content covered in the course, and the students' experience and feedback, which will enable deducing the implications for the future of oral history and palaeography in addressing IK.

Content of Palaeography and Oral History

Below is the description of what is covered in the course:

Understanding the concept and application of palaeography

The course exposes students to the concept of palaeography as a science that has acquired a veneer of scientific style, classification and ordering, and enables participants to understand its role in enhancing communication in society – a science that studies writing as a technology for communication. The course also explains to the participants the palaeography functions at different levels: first as a decoding process, which allows a modern student or researcher to read what someone has written at an earlier time, even though the communication code has changed over the centuries.

The course draws on the fact that palaeography is history in itself characterised by the changes in styles and forms of writing over the centuries that reflect historical and social change, and writing as a craft and as a communication skill for cultural development, including the indigenous cultural strategies such as modes of communication and representation. Consequently, the course attempts to enable students to recall the history of writing, libraries, records, archives and knowledge of ancient systems. The course thus places palaeography as an activity involving utilisation of literacy as a strategic weapon for domination in African societies. This course discusses the various sources of palaeographic information and the institutions that keep such information. Consequently, attempts are made to explore important documents such as legal documents, e.g. deeds, charters, diaries, inscriptions and scripts, manuscripts, etc. This module is concluded by exhibiting the documentary deficit that reflects the need for oral history research.

The Concept of Oral History

This part covers the science and art of recording, preservation and interpretation of historical information, based on personal experiences, especially audio recording or transcripts which results from planned oral interviews with individuals by students. The course provides step-by-step guidelines on oral history research as an important source of information to be created and preserved for use by researchers and historians. In this module, students take evidence from the spoken words of people who have knowledge of past events and traditions. The course involves collecting interviews with ordinary people aimed at getting their stories about their participation in events. This fills gaps in written records and reflects facts and stories spoken from one person to another. It reviews the practice or tradition of passing cultural or familiar information on to later generations by word of mouth through storytelling, proverbs, dance and drama, riddles, and legends. Here, emphasis is put on the uses of traditional knowledge systems as the best method of sharing one's history, culture, and traditions. Students are always given a project where interviews with individuals are usually tape-recorded or videotaped, where they will tell personal stories, the story of their life. The focus here is on giving an account of something passed from one generation to the next by word of mouth – on the grounds that oral history is history that is told verbally – not written down. As the adage “When an elder dies, a library burns” emphasises, this course details traditional knowledge systems and their use to the native people, comparison between indigenous and scientific knowledge, the role of various stakeholders – including women and children – in traditional knowledge and the structure of local systems of native knowledge. The

course covers the historical perspective of oral history that the people who sat around an evening fire and told of their experiences and those of their ancestors as far back as they could remember. In this way, students are enabled to appreciate that history was passed on and, in many instances, legends began. It thus connects oral history and palaeography by emphasising the need for writing as well as documentation. Consequently, the best skills intended to be imparted in this respect is the skills of oral history research. Here, students are equipped with the methodologies of collecting good oral history, how to use research methods like conducting an interview, how to prepare and ask questions, listening skills, audio- and video-taking techniques, and how to read between the lines (make an insight) regarding the stories collected.

Palaeography and Oral History Management

Under this, students are exposed to some of the techniques of documenting oral history. A highlight of institutions that keep IK information and the records kept about IK covering the content, formats and attributes is discussed. This module enables students to understand various institutions that house and manage such information. Some of the institutions explored are: cultural institutions, archives, research institutions, universities, indigenous communities, inscriptions on buildings, tombs, stones, etc; churches, mosques, temples, theatres, galleries, libraries, museums, historical sites, and government institutions/departments. The module also enables students to explore the tools that have been widely used in the documentation of such information, including a diary, the *Guinness Book of Records*, bibliographies, autobiographies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, memoirs, *Who is Who*, and almanacs. In all these, attempts are made to explain the meaning, the historical development within the international context and the local context, applications and the documentation skills required. Attempts are also made to enable students to understand the processes of compiling or creating an oral history record. For instance, the course enables students to acquire knowledge and skills as biography makers, through understanding the stages of writing a biography and the traits of effective writing. Here students are always required to identify a preferred prominent person based on political, social, or academic, etc and using the principles gained in class, they write a biography about that person. Students are also enabled to appreciate the earliest histories contained in the Bible, the “The Book of Kells”, or the Quran as the written collections of these earlier oral histories to enable them to appreciate today's varieties of sources including books, newspapers, photographs, and other printed records of our civilisation. The knowledge given is also intended to enable students to develop skills as perfect oral historians in their communities. Collecting oral histories

can teach many skills including researching, interviewing, active listening, organising material and also appreciating the variety of the roles played by librarians and archivists in the management of documentary heritage.

Preservation of Documentary Heritage

In the last part of this course, emphasis is put on the preservation of documentary heritage. This module highlights the type of documentary heritage as being housed in libraries, archives and museums with regards to oral history and palaeography. It bases its discussion on the *Memory of the World: General Guidelines* to safeguard documentary heritage as developed by UNESCO (2002). Emphasis here is put on the core strategies of identification of documentary heritage, raising awareness, preservation, access, structures, status and relationships. An overview of various programmes through the world in an effort to preserve documentary heritage is conducted. This module is consolidated with the role of the trinity of libraries, archives and museum as a professional challenge in the knowledge society (Magara, 2005a). It also addresses digitisation of documentary heritage is also discussed in detail (Magara, 2005b). This session links the palaeographic and oral history practices with indigenous knowledge management systems and provides a framework for digitisation of such heritage, including metadata and standards, the multimedia technologies and structures for access to and use of IK.

Students' Experiences and Feedback

The course is taught through interactive sessions and in particular through question-and-answer sessions with the students. Some of the teaching is through group work discussions, individual assignments and essays that are answered within two weeks to a month. In addition to physical teaching in class, E-learning (using MUELE) is utilised to enhance course delivery. This is mostly used to post comments, assignments, notices, and in the discussion forum. At the moment, students have a chance to either submit coursework on the platform or hand it manually to the lecturer.

Individual Assignments

Students are required to take on individual assignments. Here questions are given within the time of course delivery and the date for handing in the assignments within a particular semester is indicated. For instance, in one of the classes which discussed the history of writing, students were required to choose a type of writing and trace its historical development. In another assignment,

students were required to reflect on the history of books, writing, libraries, and archives. Most of the students demonstrated knowledge of the concept of palaeography, and were able to identify the related events chronologically. Students were also expected to reflect on their current practices as experienced in their social setting to appreciate the role of oral history. In one of the classes in 2010, the following question was given:

Recall any oral history you have ever been told and that is not written anywhere. Write that story and give an insight into that story. In this assignment, students were expected to identify a story, write the story as he/she was told and give an interpretation of the circumstances.

Table 1 below shows some of the selected best stories that attempt to explain the performance of the responses:

When they finished telling these stories, the students noted that in many cases, they could not remember what they were told. Some could not remember the date the story was told and the circumstances in which it was told. Most of the students affirmed a need for keeping records and a diary of activities and oral history research. Observations indicated that the majority of the stories were told by the students' grandmothers and mothers and the rest were told by fathers and grandfathers. In most cases, the stories were told during visits by the students to their grandparents and in some cases as issues come up in their day-to-day lives.

Another common assignment was associated with the writing of a biography. Here, students were required to use the science of biography writing to write the biography of an individual of their choice. Consequently, students were asked to reflect on the knowledge acquired in class work and write a biography of the personality they had chosen. The table 2 below shows the analysis of the personality chosen for the biography written.

The observations above indicate that the majority of the students identified politicians (36 – 24%) as the best personality to write a biography on. Most of these were Members of Parliament and sitting and past presidents. This category was followed by religious leaders (15 – 10%) and fathers (14 – 9%). Some of the religious leaders include Sheik Kakooza and archbishops like Nankyama, Kivengere, and Luke Orombi. Few chose to write the biographies of librarians and other information professionals (9 – 6%) and musicians (9 – 6%). The clustered information professionals included artists, book writers, publishers, journalists, editors, news readers and actors. On the other hand, as for the musicians the focus tended to be on indigenous actors, including Cinderella and Juliana Kanyomozi. Coming close on the heels of the musicians were mother (4 – 3%) and grandmother (4 – 3%). Although the students recalled that most of the stories they wrote were told them by their mothers and grandmothers, few of them wrote a biography about

Table 1

Title	Circumstances of the story	Facts in the story	Lessons regarding the subject
Weird Ways of Men	A family gathering to know the children of their father Mr. Mukasa who had children not known in the family	Story told by grandmother of Nalusiba Juliet, an idea brought by an elder sister	Family gathering as a communication means to solve problems Learning of cultural customs and beliefs and passing the messages on to the next generation
The Co-Wives Who Met in a Shrine	A mother-in-law told Olodriku Paskaline while visiting her in her village	A rich man who had two wives, Nankya and Nabisere, who one time met a witch doctor's premises	Faithfulness to partners
A Story of the Brave Girl	Ninsima Babrah asking her grandfather why men take themselves to be stronger than women	A grandfather assures the her with a story of a gorilla that lived in Nambole, and in the same village lived a girl and boy that were friends	Teaches young people to love faithfully Gender mainstreaming
To Love and Marry a Stranger	Told by late Mzee Mesech Bitama during Oyesigye L Kuteisa's visit to him	There lived a family that was feared and respected	
The Ungrateful Woman	As grandmother Akisa told Aiyanga Zaibab	In a village Mella, there lived a big family of Imoos which was well respected but because of lack of respect, the family was no more	Be respectful to every little thing
Cost of Wisdom	The king who had three sons and asked them who loved him most	The young one said he loved him like salt and the king ordered him to be killed but he later became a king in another kingdom	There are different ways of looking at things in life. Never underestimate the responses given in whatever circumstances.

Table 2

Personality	Frequency	%age
Political	36	24%
Civil servant	7	5%
Mother	4	3%
Father	14	9%
Other family members	7	5%
Religious leaders	15	10%
Teacher/Professor	11	7%
Social and community Leaders	10	7%
Family friend	10	7%
Grandfather	4	3%
Grandmother	4	3%
Librarians and other information-related professionals	9	6%
Other professionals	3	2%
Musicians	9	6%
Business tycoon	5	3%
Total	148	100

these people. There is therefore need to address gender issues in an effort to promote IK in the country.

In other cases, students were required to conduct oral history research. For example, a scan of the archives of oral records work reports done in 2005 shows that some of the common areas in which research was done and

records made regarding IK include Lango culture, the importance of children among the Buganda, wife inheritance among the Iteso, how a marriage ceremony is carried out among the Kikuyu, traditional medicine, marriage tradition in Buganda, the importance of the grandmother and the aunt among the Baganda and the

kuhingira tradition in Ankole. The students had recorded their research on audio tapes, CDs and DVDs and had labelled them accordingly. The labels included; the correspondent, the interviewer, location, time and date.

b) Class Participation

The course delivery involved class participation as one of the ways to enhance teaching and learning. In one of the class participation exercises, students were required to give the challenges of traditional knowledge in passing on knowledge from one generation to another. Some of the challenges identified by students include the generational gap, migration, and modernisation, low levels of documentation of knowledge, fading memories of witnesses, human rights, language barriers and difficulty in tracing identity. Another type of class work that students participated involved giving factors that affect cultures and traditions. Some of the highlights made include: the naming, meaning, tribes, clan and clan members, taboos and norms. The students' responses attempted to explain the theories learnt in class with its applications within the African context. For instance, reference was made to one of the articles on naming in the *Sunday Monitor* of 24 October 2010 (Mutunga, 2010) in which students were required to relate it to their class work. They were also enabled to reflect on the current programmes related to what they are studying that appear in the media/press. For instance, students were given a chance to reflect on the Refugee Law Project that is establishing a museum in the northern Uganda to tell the North story (Khisa, 2010) and were required to advise with regard to the oral history and palaeography component of the project. These reflections help students understand and appreciate the relevance of oral history and palaeography to their future lives.

c) Group Discussions

A group discussion also forms part of the teaching methodology. In forming groups, at least four or five students are given an area and are required to present the result of their research to the rest of the class. In one of the classes that informed this paper, a question was given to students requiring them to choose an area and one of them tell the group an oral history using any of the oral history tools including singing, dance, proverbs, rhymes, etc. The groups are always given time to reflect and share knowledge. For instance, in one class a group of about five people was made to reflect on the ways of transferring traditional knowledge through singing, dancing, storytelling, proverbs, drama, riddles and poems. Students were selected from groups and

presented their stories to their fellow colleagues. Those students who presented stories got feedback and some of the lessons learnt from their stories included the power of information, trustworthiness, transparency and the roles of various people – including parents, children, girls and women – in society. Other lessons learnt urged students to take their duties seriously. Some of the guidelines include: 'Try and fail but never fail to try'; 'Be an active listener'; and 'Better be honest'. The other group discussions dealt with the explanations of sources of information and institutions. The following are the related information identified by the discussion groups: cultural institutions, archives, research institutions, temples, universities, communities, inscriptions, churches, the internet, indigenous people, the government, mosques, the press and media, art galleries, and museums. The feedback from the group is always supplemented with class visits to the selected institutions.

d) Seminars and Guest Speeches

In order to enrich the course delivery, seminars are always organised where students at higher levels are invited to speak to students as well as outsiders. One of these topics are: 1. Understanding Oral History through Symbolic Communication by Dr. Julia Duany (2005). Julia's presentation reflected on the effect of oral history in the insurgency in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. At the end of her presentation, students were required to evaluate and give feedback accordingly. A more recent seminar was that of a PhD candidate who presented a topic on "Indigenous Knowledge Techniques for Disseminating Sexuality Information in Secondary Schools in Uganda" by Nina Olivia (2010). The seminar attempted to examine the key agents involved in the dissemination of IK, analyse indigenous knowledge techniques and establish information gaps in the area of IK and sexuality education of adolescents. In all these lectures/seminars, students are required to comment on the delivery, the applicability of the lecture to their subjects, the content, and to give comments and ask questions. For instance, after Nina's presentation, students required more knowledge of the concept IK, the relationships between IK and sexuality, and the existing legal and institutional framework in Uganda regarding the subject. The students also made many comments on the existing infrastructure, such as the newspapers and cultural institutions, which promote cultural information. Students appreciated the fact that most of the issues presented had been discussed in class during teaching, group work and class discussion, which enabled them to enjoy the lecture and had hope for its applicability in their professional life.

Implications

Oral history is an invaluable tool in promoting the use of IK in any learning environment. Limited access to oral history records implies the dearth of written material about the history of any community and consequently limited palaeographic usefulness, the implication of which is a documentary deficit. Absence of such documentary materials limits the opportunities of the future generation to access the IK of their communities. Such IK would be optimally exploited with information management support. This requires a strategy to equip information professionals with extensive theory (knowledge) and training (competence and skills) in order to effectively manage IK in any environment. Considering that most of the IK is not documented, and that it is not easy to access, there is need to integrate IK management skills into the education system. It is also clear that IK is an integral part of culture and history, especially in traditional African society, that requires alternative knowledge management approaches. This is why there is need for a system of learning from local communities to enrich the modern learning process currently used in the education sector. This would adopt approaches that would utilise the existing indigenous institutions and appropriate technologies to capture such IK through a learning process. Therefore, the use of oral history research is appropriately placed here; a tool which when utilised will help to increase the sustainability of the learning process for lifelong learning, even when the students leave school. The tool also facilitates the IK integration process owing to the simultaneous and reciprocal knowledge transfer process between the communities and the education system. Indeed, globalisation, liberalisation and the move to the knowledge society have cured higher education institutions of the 'ivory tower' syndrome. Utilising oral history research is the only way for universities to sustain this trend. However, it is important that learners become part and parcel of the learning process for them to be able to understand the usefulness of what is being learnt in the knowledge transfer process. Therefore, the diversity in the methodologies of delivery discussed in this paper and the relevance of the level of participation, discussions and assignments significantly contribute to a successful learning outcome. The feedback mechanism integrated into the course delivery of oral history enables learners to place the subject of study within their environment and this builds confidence in their future professional and career life in knowledge management.

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