

Disaster Preparedness and Management at the National Archives and the National Library of Namibia

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Abstract

This paper is based on a study, which investigated whether the National Archives and National Library of Namibia (NANLN) had put into consideration issues of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in their Disaster Management Plan (The Plan). The study was guided by the disaster management cycle made up of four phases, namely prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The population of the study consisted of NANLN management, librarians, archivists, housekeeping staff, security personnel, the accountant and users, as well as personnel from support institutions. Applying purposive sampling technique, 40 respondents were selected to take part in the study. Data collection methods included interviews, focus group discussions, direct observations, and document analysis. The main finding is that the Plan lacked most of the major components that make an ideal disaster preparedness plan. The study concluded that the Plan would be ineffective in the event of a disaster

as it was incomplete. The recommendations include: staff awareness of the Plan and training; coming up with a comprehensive list of stakeholders and an updated list of contacts; acquisition of emergency supply kits; development of a security management plan; further development and regular reviews of the Plan.

Keywords: Archives, Disaster management, Disaster planning, Disaster preparedness, Libraries, Namibia

Introduction

All institutions are at risk of a disaster, be it natural or man-made. According to Eden and Matthews (1996), a disaster is any incident that can harm or threaten safety to buildings, collections, equipment and systems. The first step before drawing up a disaster plan is to identify the potential hazards. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) (2004 as cited in UNISDR 2005: 1) explains hazard as:

A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. Hazards can include latent conditions that may represent future threats and can have different origins: natural (geological, hydro meteorological and biological) or induced by human processes (environmental degradation and technological hazards).

Grau (2000) identified fire and water as the most common hazards for archives, museums and libraries. However, Fullerton (as cited in Hlabangani and Mnjama 2008) argued that archives and library disaster prevention should not only be restricted to water and fire threats. Fullerton's observation is supported by Hlabangani and Mnjama (2008), who argued that information institutions ought to prepare for all types of disasters and security problems. Among the well documented library and archives disasters are the Florence Flood of 1966 which destroyed cultural materials in the *Bibliotheca Nazionale Centrale* (Feather, 1994); terrorist bombing of the Pentagon Library in the USA in 2001 (Buchanan, 2002); and destruction of 60% of monarchy documents in the Iraqi National Library and Archive whose collection suffered three fires during the United States of America invasion in 2003 (Mustafa, n.d.). The Institut d'Egypte was burnt in 2011 in a public uprising and thanks to public assistance, 30-40,000 books and manuscripts were rescued (Mustafa n.d.). Alegbeleye (as cited in Issa, Mulikat, Adegboyega and Akangbe (2012) highlighted some disasters, which occurred in Africa. These include National Archives of Swaziland in 1984 where a hurricane destroyed some archives, and fire damage to the records of the Secretarial Office in Nairobi, Kenya in 1939. As a result of these disasters, documentary heritage was destroyed. Over 3000 books were destroyed at Bindura University in Zimbabwe due to floods (Hayes, 2015). In December 2015, Mzuzu University Library in Malawi lost about 45 000 books in a fire that completely destroyed the library building (Hayes, 2016). The National Archives and the National Library of Namibia (NANLN) are not exceptions as they are equally at risk to all forms of disasters. Such disasters in Namibia include the Ministry of Education's Ondangwa East Regional Office (Namibia) that had all its human resources records and 2000 library materials burnt in 2003 (Shivute, 2003); and a fire that destroyed the Eastern block of Outjo Municipality offices (Namibia), reducing all municipality files to ashes in 2009 (Namibia Press Agency (NAMPA) (2014).

From the foregoing, it can be argued that disasters are part of human existence, and as such there is need by archival and library institutions to put in place disaster management plans to control them. Ngulube (2003) pointed out that disaster

planning or emergency preparedness is fundamental to the preservation of records and archives. He further pointed out that the phases of disaster planning are as follows:

- Before the disaster (preventive and preparedness): implementing measures to remove or reduce danger as well as being ready by having resources, materials, services and procedures in place to deal with problems when they occur;
- During the disaster (response): knowing how to respond to minimise damage quickly and efficiently; and
- After the disaster (recovery): knowing what to do to recover damaged material.

Statement of the Problem

A study by Nengomasha (2009) established that in the event of a disaster such as fire or flood, the public service of Namibia would not be able to protect its records. The National Archives of Namibia tasked with the mandate of providing a records management service in the public service of Namibia had not issued a disaster management plan at national level, and there were no institutional plans. Nengomasha (2009) recommended further research in this area. No studies had been conducted on disaster management in the context of records and archives management at the time this study. As far as the researchers were aware no such study had been conducted at the time of writing this paper. This study was partly a reaction to that call. The NANLN have a thirty-paged Disaster Preparedness Plan, which was produced in 2001 (Namibia Library and Archives Services, 2001). The study investigated whether the Plan covered the basic components of a disaster preparedness plan meant to address phases of the disaster management cycle, namely: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (see literature review).

The purpose of the study was to come up with recommendations on how disaster preparedness and management at NANLN could be enhanced. The main question, which this study aimed to answer, was: "Does the Plan at the NANLN address all the phases of the disaster cycle?" This was addressed by providing answers to the following sub-questions:

1. How comprehensive is the current disaster plan of the NANLN?
2. What potential threats do the NANLN face which are likely to cause a disaster?
3. What measures are in place to minimise the impact or avoid a disaster at the NANLN?
4. How has the NANLN reacted to near disasters or disasters?
5. What are the solutions to problems identified if any?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Disaster management ensures minimisation of occurrences of disasters by taking preventive measures; reduce the impact of disasters through preparedness, which in turn leads to swift response and effective recovery. This study was informed by the disaster management cycle which "illustrates the ongoing process by which governments, businesses, and civil society plan for and reduce the impact of disasters [prevention and preparedness], react during and immediately following a disaster [response], and take steps to recover after a disaster has occurred [recovery]" (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) (2005).

Measures must be put in place to remove conditions that would encourage the likelihood of a disaster after the potential threats have been identified so as to minimise the possibility of occurrence of a disaster. This study aimed to establish whether this disaster preparedness step (i.e. risk analysis) was carried out before the Plan at the NANLN was written. According to Grau (2000), in the preparedness phase, the institution is getting ready to cope with a disaster. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (n. d.) describes the preparedness stage as comprising of the following activities: developing a written plan; making provision for its testing; selection of a disaster management team; training of the team and all staff members and making them aware of the plan and its contents; preparing and keeping an up-to-date set of documentation; distributing the plan and documentation to appropriate locations on- and off-site; and instituting procedures to notify appropriate

people of the disaster and assembling them rapidly. Grau (2000) also revealed that communication and chain of command of the disaster team must be put in place beforehand to avoid confusion in a real disaster situation. Response is the phase of the disaster plan that addresses actions that have to be taken when disaster actually strikes. Buchanan (2002) mentions that it covers the instructions for the immediate actions after a disaster. Söderlund (2000) advises that disasters have to be dealt with immediately. The study sought to establish how the situation has been normalised after near disasters at the NANLN.

The basic components of a disaster management plan will vary according to an organisation's needs, size and resources (Lindell, Prater and Perry, 2007 as cited in Kostagiolas, Araka, Theodorou and (Bokos, 2011) but should include the following:

- List of vital records, particularly significant or vulnerable holdings, location and control documentation;
- List of equipment and materials available for use in disaster salvage and recovery; The function, composition and chain of the salvage and recovery team and their contact information;
- Procedures for identification and declaration of a disaster situation and initiation of the disaster response chain of command by the normal business operation; provisions for training and current awareness of the team;
- List of sources of back-up resources, including expertise, trades people, materials, equipment, vehicles and accommodation;
- Procedures for updating and testing the plan; simple technical information on handling of damaged material, directed towards establishing priorities for early action (Government of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, 2007).

These components of the disaster preparedness plan have also been acknowledged by the ICA (1997), Connecticut State Library (1997), International Records Management Trust (1999), Northeast Document Conservation Center (1999), Söderlund (2000), ICA (2001), Ngulube (1991), Ngulube (2003)

and Western New York library Resources Council (2003).

Halsted, Jasper and Little (2004 as cited in Kostagiolas et al. (2011) highlighted the following steps of coming up with a disaster management plan: setting up a disaster response team; assessing the risk; establishing a disaster communication network; ensuring access to financial resources; reinforcing building security; creating lists and collecting supplies for cases of emergency; defining weak points; creating an evacuation plan; drawing up a disaster management plan; conducting disaster exercises (preparedness exercises); and reviewing and updating the disaster management plan.

A disaster management plan should be supported by:

- A clear policy statement that mandates the plan and defines responsibilities;
- Vital records and risk assessment and analysis;
- Copies of current ongoing contracts (such as vital storage, pest control, emergency equipment and supplies and contact details); and
- Arrangement for reviewing risks and contracts, and revising procedures (Government of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, 2007, p. 18).

As indicated above, a risk assessment and analysis should support the development of a disaster management plan. Ngulube and Magazi (2006) conducted a study on measures taken by public libraries in KwaZulu Natal to control or minimise the impact of disasters. Their findings suggest that the libraries did not place much importance on risk assessment. "Seventeen (34%) libraries had conducted a hazard survey; although only 14 of these libraries used some of the information from the risk management exercise to formulate written disaster plans" (Ngulube and Magazi, 2006). The same study also showed that the libraries were very weak in terms of instituting preventive measures to mitigate disasters. "Six (12%) libraries never inspected or tested their fire extinguishers, and 30 (60%) libraries had not trained staff in the use of fire extinguishers. Only 11 (22%) libraries had fire detection systems and 10 (20%) of these libraries' fire detection devices were connected to a central monitoring facility. Nine of these libraries used smoke sensors

for fire detection" (Ngulube and Magazi, 2006).

A study in Greece by Kostagiolas et al (2011: 522) identified the following most prominent factors arising from disasters: collection damage (32%), data loss (19%), system damage (15%), equipment damage (14%) and building damage (14%). The same study established that 90% of the libraries did not have formal disaster management plans. A Nigerian study also identified a lack of disaster management plans as a factor hindering disaster management (Echezona, Ugwu and Ozioko, 2011). Rutto and Otike (2016), in addition to some of the factors mentioned here, identified a lack of policy framework as hindering effective disaster management. The reasons given by the directors of the libraries in the study in Greece for not coming up with disaster management plans included: other priorities (29%), not their authority (23%), not aware of the existence of such a plan (17%), and cost (17%). The hazards, which were identified by the same study as most likely to cause a disaster, were: earthquakes, construction omissions and deficiencies, fire caused by human negligence, flood attributed to inside causes such as leaks, and inadequate collection protection. Kostagiolas et al. (2011) made the same argument as Ngulube (2003) that theft as a hazard that can lead to a disaster is usually overlooked. Kostagiolas et al. (2011) argued that the library directors viewed "a disaster as something that has very grave consequences such as earthquakes and do not actually grant a similar "significance" to smaller in consequences but frequent in occurrence risks, such as incidents of vandalism, torn and smudged pages, minor thefts, etc." (p. 525).

Methodology

The methodology comprised a case study research design, with interviews, focus group discussions, direct observations, and document analysis as data collection methods. Interviews were conducted with the following personnel at the NANLN: management, librarians, archivists, housekeeping staff, security, the accountant, users, and personnel from support institutions. Two focus group discussions were administered, one each for the National Archives and National Library of Namibia. One-on-one face-to-face interviews were conducted with representatives from IT, Fire Brigade, Police, City of Windhoek/Municipality, and Office of the Prime Minister's

Disaster Management Division. The respondents were purposively selected. The data collection instruments used included an observation checklist and separate interview guides for NANLN management, support institutions, and NANLN users. The Plan was analysed against basic components of a disaster management plan as highlighted in the theoretical framework and literature review section below. Data was analysed using the content analysis technique and presented in descriptive narrative.

The study had 40 respondents. From the NANLN, data was gathered from 25 respondents comprising management staff, librarians, archivists, clerks, housekeeping staff, and security officers. The 10 users ranged from students to researchers. From the support institutions (stakeholders), data was collected from one police officer from City of Windhoek Police; two disaster management specialists, one each from City of Windhoek Disaster Management Unit and Office of the Prime Minister Disaster Management Directorate; and one officer from City of Windhoek Fire Brigade.

Presentation of Findings

Data from different data collection methods and sources (the NANLN, Namibian Police, City of Windhoek Police, Fire Brigade, Office of the Prime Minister's Disaster Management Directorate, and Ministry of Works) have been integrated within the following thematic areas: Comprehensiveness of the current disaster plan at the NANLN; Potential hazards to the NANLN; Measures in place to minimise the impact or avoid a disaster at the NANLN; and Reaction to near disasters or disasters by the NANLN.

Comprehensiveness of the Current Disaster Preparedness Plan at the National Archives and National Library of Namibia

In order to establish the comprehensiveness of the current disaster preparedness plan at the National Archives and National Library of Namibia the researchers asked the National Archives and National Library of Namibia respondents the following questions: "Are you aware that the National Archives and the National Library of Namibia have a joint written disaster preparedness

plan?", "Does your institution have a preservation policy?", "Who do you think must be in the institution's disaster management committee?", "How much support does the disaster management committee have from management?", "How much money do you budget for disasters?", "Have you received any training in emergency procedures and on how to use emergency equipment?", "What institutions do you think you would need for help and advice in disaster related matters and partner with during disasters?", "How often do you test your disaster preparedness plan?", "How many times has your disaster preparedness been reviewed?" and "What emergency supplies are already in your stores?"

The following are the responses to these questions.

Awareness of Disaster Preparedness Plan

Three members of staff of the NANLN were aware of the existence of the disaster preparedness plan while 22 were not aware. These included two senior staff members one each from the National Archives and National Library, and the remaining members of the disaster management team. All respondents from support institutions were not aware. Those aware of the existence revealed that the other members of staff were not aware of its existence that the plan had not been implemented or tested. One of the senior members of staff who was aware of its existence had not seen it. "I'm aware of its compilation but it never got operational. Members of staff are not aware of its existence and it's not accessible". Those who were not aware of the plan's existence felt that it was very important for them and all other members of staff to know the existence of the Plan and its contents. What one of the archives respondents' said reflects the general sentiments: "I think we all need to know if the document is in place simply because this will help us to actually manage a disaster. It is actually of importance that everybody knows that there is a disaster preparedness plan for us to know how to tackle disasters as well and know where to go for assistance".

Existence of a Preservation Policy

Although the NANLN had vision and mission statements, the study established that none of the

two institutions had a preservation policy. The study also established that both had no conservators on their structures. The contents of the National Archives and National Library disaster preparedness plan revealed that it had no provision for a policy statement that mandates the plan and defines responsibilities.

Disaster Management Team

The Plan at the NANLN had a list of disaster team leaders drawn from all subdivisions (National Archives, National Library, Educational Library, and Community Library). The composition of the team leaders catered for all categories of staff and cut across (senior staff, librarians, archivists and clerical staff). The total number of the team leaders was 20. The composition of the team was as follows: four emergency controllers; four deputy controllers; three communication controllers; three evacuation leaders; three first aid leaders; and three fire leaders. However, interviews with the management of the NANLN revealed that all the 20-team members apart from one had over the years left the institutions. The study also revealed that the plan was silent on who was the overall team leader. Two respondents felt that the Head of the National Archives should be the team leader; one respondent felt that the caretaker must be the head of the team, and one respondent felt that the Records Manager must be the team leader.

Management Support

The only remaining member of the disaster management team revealed that the team and the disaster preparedness plan had no management support and backing right from the inception. However, one senior manager revealed that management would be willing to give the team and The Plan 100 percent support if the team was reconstituted.

Budget

The findings were that there was no budget for disasters and that there had never been one. The reasons given by the NANLN senior management staff were that there has been no disaster before; they had never thought about it, because of ignorance

about disasters, there has been no request and that they felt that it was not their responsibility. "There is no budget. It never came up and it was never discussed and the building was previously managed by Ministry of Works and we thought it was their duty to run their building and keep it safe. Further, it has never happened before and due to lack of knowledge". Another responded: "There is no budget because it has never been there, it was never requested for. I would say the reason why there is no budget for disasters is because people who are supposed to request for it have never seen the need to request for it".

Provisions for Training

One of the objectives of the study was to find out whether the plan had provision for training on fire drills, simulations and how to use emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, packing wet materials and evacuation procedures. All members of staff responded that they had not received any training at all. "I have not received any training I don't even know how to use fire extinguishers". Another responded: "We need training to save lives because we cannot wait for the Fire Brigade who will come after 30 minutes or so when we could have saved lives and users. While waiting for the Fire Brigade, we should take the first initiative".

Stakeholders List

The following institutions were listed in the disaster preparedness plan with contact phone numbers: Police, Fire Brigade, Four hospitals, and an Electricity company. In addition to the above institutions that were listed on the Plan, respondents suggested that the following institutions must be added to the list: Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate of Disaster Management, The Red Cross Society of Namibia, The Namibia Defence Force, City of Windhoek Disaster Management Unit, City of Windhoek Police, Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Education, Commercial storage and archiving companies, Refrigerator/Cold storage companies, and the Ministry of Justice.

Of the above-named institutions, the following were part of the population for this study, Namibian Police, Office of the Prime Minister (directorate of disaster management), City of Windhoek (Disaster

Management Unit, Fire Brigade, Police), and Ministry of Works and Supply. One of the objectives of the study was to find out what role these stakeholders played during the formulation of the disaster preparedness plan at the NANLN and what role they would play in an event of a disaster. Respondents from these institutions were asked the following specific questions: "Are you aware that the NANLN have a joint written disaster preparedness plan?", "Explain the role your institution played or would have played in formulating the disaster preparedness plan at the NANLN?" and "What role do you think your institution can play in the event of a disaster at the NANLN?"

Respondents from all the stakeholders expressed ignorance of the existence of the Plan at the NANLN.

The following presents responses by each of the stakeholders.

- Ministry of Works and Transport respondent also stated that they would have played an active role by giving advice in terms of technical issues related to structural building, health, safety and technical issues that might be required had they been consulted or asked to contribute towards the formulation of the plan. He further added that in an event of a disaster, they would carry out a technical investigation and establish the real cause of the disaster. "We would also help to decide if the building can be used after a disaster or advise on erecting a new one".
- Namibian Police respondent stated: "In the event of a disaster, the Namibian Police's role would be to immediately study the situation and the levels of damage caused by the disaster, as well as provide guidance in the following areas such as evacuation routes and evacuation of injured; calling ambulances and fire brigade; alert hospitals; identifying victims and damage to materials; take photographs of the scene; and guard against looting".
- City of Windhoek's Disaster Management Unit was pleased to hear that there was a Plan at NANLN and looked forward to collaborating with them to strengthen the Plan and advise on its implementation. The respondent made the following remark:

The other thing would be public awareness for the staff members of the Archives themselves, for the public within the vicinity of the city of Windhoek as well as the stakeholders in terms of how essential the documents, treasure that is kept by the National Archives. We would sensitise the community on the importance of taking ownership. That would be important in case there is an emergency – issues of communities wanting to loot could be minimised.

- Fire Brigade respondent stated that in terms of building safety they would assist with evacuation plans as well as educate and create readiness for any eventuality. The respondent also revealed that the Fire Brigade has a training centre that offers courses in fire training and first aid for external institutions.
- City of Windhoek police respondent said: "It is the duty of police officers whenever there is a disaster to ensure that the place is secure from looting. We must secure the place as the property belongs to the state. During the disaster, the City Police would block the road to avoid other accidents to happen. Way has to be cleared for fire engines. All this can only be possible if we know The Plan and get involved or are consulted".

Testing of the Plan

The study wanted to find out whether the Plan has been tested since its formulation. The findings were that it had not been tested before. It was also found that it had no implementation date.

Review of the Plan

With the passage of time, new hazards can occur and people come and leave the institution. It is therefore imperative that a disaster preparedness plan must have a review period; if possible it must be reviewed regularly. It is against this background that the researchers wanted to establish whether the disaster preparedness plan at the National Archives and National Library of Namibia had a provision for its review. The findings were that the Plan had no

review date, and it had not been reviewed since it was drawn.

List of Supplies

A disaster preparedness plan must have a list of a disaster response kit and must indicate where the supplies are stored. The study sought to find out if there were supplies in store already bought and whether they were listed in the Plan. The findings were that there was no list and there were no supplies that had been bought. Further, there was no list of suppliers for supplies and services.

List of Vital Records

The study established that both arms of the NANLN had vital records. However, it was also found that there was no deliberate policy identifying them; and as such, there was no list incorporated in the disaster preparedness plan. Further, it was found that the Plan had no priority list for salvaging materials in an event of a disaster. A senior member of archives staff responded: "There has never been a deliberate effort to identify vital records, for example, catalogues and databases are considered as vital records but there was no back up in form of offsite storage".

Potential Hazards to the National Archives and National Library of Namibia

This study aimed to identify the hazards that could cause disasters at the NANLN. Based on what the NANLN had experienced over the years the respondents highlighted some, such as water damage, fire damage, deterioration of archival and library material, overheating of NANLN building, malfunctioning of facilities in the building, damage and destruction of archival and library materials, theft and mutilation of archival and library materials, loss of equipment, and loss of vital records.

The following are some of the statements that were made by the respondents:

- "Water is dripping in the electricity boxes. Water and electricity do not get along, and lives could be lost. There are always short circuits from the main electricity supply box especially during the rainy season and also power loads and surges".
- "Members of staff smoke within the building something that should not be allowed in the Archives".
- "The plugs can cause fire in this building. In winter once we connect heaters and kettle you see sparks, smoke and power goes off".
- "As a result of leakages from the cooling plant, it is hot and moist in the National Archives. I'm aware of government gazettes on level two which were destroyed by these leakages in December 2011, on level two in repository, two thousand photos were heavily damaged due to fungal and mould infestation". The study confirmed the presence of mould through observation.

A look at the Plan highlighted the following potential hazards: water, fire, and bomb threat. Observation identified water leaks, rust water and air conditioning system pipes.

Reaction to near Disasters or Disasters by the NANLN

One objective of this study was to find out how members of staff of the National Archives and National Library of Namibia had reacted to near disasters or disasters. The following questions were posed to the NANLN members of staff: What do you understand by the term disaster? Has your institution experienced a disaster? Explain the extent of damage the disaster caused to archival and library materials and human life. Explain the procedures that were used to salvage affected materials? Explain how the materials were treated. Explain the procedures that were followed to come back to normal.

Some of the answers that were given by the respondents as the definition of the term, disaster, were as follows:

- "A disaster is any event that leads to serious damage to either the institution, its holdings or to any person who is working or present in the building".
- "A disaster is an unfortunate mishap that can cause extensive damage to the library materials, equipment and anything that is housed in the library".

- “A disaster is something that comes unexpectedly; it disrupts and destroys infrastructure, buildings and natural resources around the place”.

flood, mould infection, fire, mutilation of books, stealing of books and burglary, as well as computer crash. See Table 1 for a summary of the hazards and the damages caused.

The study revealed that the NANLN had suffered near disasters, which included among others

Table 1: Hazards, damages and reactions by NANLN

Hazard	Causes	Damages	Reactions
Flood	Leaking Pipes, Leaking Roof and Leaking Cooling Plant	Damage to some court records	No reference was made to the existing disaster plan and no expert advice was sought on what to do with the soaked materials. Some records were saved by air drying
Mould attack	Moist conditions	Damage to photo album	Unaffected photos were digitized only to be lost as the computer on which they were saved crashed
Fire	Overheating fan	No damage	Smoke was seen coming out of the ceiling of the National Library of Namibia, which caused panic among users and members of staff. There was a near stampede as library users and members of staff were running out of the library using one exit door. The Fire Brigade was called, who later normalized the situation.
Computer crash	Hardware failure	Loss of statistics; digitized records and working documents	Attempts to recover the data failed. Anti-virus software was upgraded.
Burglary	Members of the public	Computers and loss of valuable documents; and surveillance cameras	Security was beefed up through security services.
Mutilation and Stealing of Books	Users and Members of Staff	Loss of books	Procedures were put in place to stop users from bring in books; search users and staff when leaving; and not granting staff access to the premises after working hours.

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings under the same thematic areas as for data presentation.

Comprehensiveness of the Current Disaster Plan at the National Archives and National Library of Namibia

The study revealed that the Plan at the NANLN was not comprehensive as it lacked some basic components. The Plan was not backed by a preservation policy, as it was not in existence. The disaster management team members' list had never been updated, and members who had left the institution had not been replaced. There was no overall team leader, and some roles such as press and public relation matters in the event of a disaster had not been assigned. There was also no provision for a budget and training of staff members most of whom were not aware of the existence of the Plan. The list of stakeholders and their contact phone numbers and addresses had not been updated. There were neither formal nor informal arrangements with stakeholders for cooperation and assistance before, during and after disasters. Review of the Plan which had never been tested had not been provided for. Other omissions were list of vital records; building floor plans had not been attached to the disaster preparedness plan and The Plan had no implementation date.

Preservation Policy

The NANLN did not have a preservation policy, which is a cause for concern as preservation is a core function of heritage institutions such as national archives and national libraries. According to Ngulube, Modisane and Mkeni-Saurombe (2011: 244) "Preservation policies are a fundamental ingredient of accountability as they justify why certain decisions are taken, demonstrate how funds were spent and facilitate the development of preservation strategies and plans".

Disaster Management Team

The study revealed that only one of the 20-team members listed in the Plan was still with the NANLN. All those who had left had not been

replaced. The Disaster preparedness plan did not have a provision for an overall team leader. The implications are that in the event of a disaster, there is no disaster management team to spearhead the management of a disaster at the NANLN. Key to a disaster plan and ultimately recovery is the personality and skills of the disaster manager. Eden and Matthews (1996) identified three key roles in disaster management, the disaster manager, disaster reaction manager, and disaster recovery manager. A leader should be appointed ahead of time to avoid confusion during a crisis (Ngulube, 2005).

One of the findings of the study was that the disaster preparedness plan at the National Archives and National Library of Namibia did not make provision for someone to deal specifically with the media in the event of a disaster. Institutions are advised that there should be a member tasked to provide information to the media and present the institution in a good light (Ngulube, 2005; Schneid and Collins, 2001).

Budget for Disaster Management

The study investigated the existence of the budget for disaster management. There was no budget allocation for disaster management at the NANLN and there has never been one. The reasons given by senior management staff were that there had been no disaster before; they had never thought about it, because of ignorance about disasters. They also expressed the sentiment that it was not their responsibility. Davis, Smith-Hunt and Kern (2010) advised that a disaster management plan should include procedures on how to access funds for disaster management activities. A budget determines the supplies and equipment required to respond effectively to a disaster.

Testing of the Plan and Staff Training

All members of staff that were interviewed responded that they had not received any training at all. Similarly, the study revealed that the disaster preparedness plan had not been tested before and that it had no implementation date. Without training the most likely result would be chaos, which would lead to more damage to archival and library materials, injury and even loss of human life. Testing of the disaster preparedness plan would reveal where the

disaster preparedness plan is weak and needs strengthening long before the actual disaster.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

Although the NANLN Plan had a list of stakeholders with their contact details, the stakeholders expressed ignorance of the existence of the disaster preparedness plan at the NANLN. None of the stakeholders was consulted or invited to assist during the formulation of the Plan. All the respondents from the stakeholders expressed willingness to have contributed to the formulation of the Plan at the NANLN, had they been invited. It was also discovered that there were no running service contracts between those institutions (Police, Fire Brigade, four hospitals and Electricity Company) listed on the Plan and the NANLN. There were no formal or informal arrangements with any external institution or individual regarding the role they could play either to mitigate against a disaster or during and after a disaster.

The NANLN need the input and expert advice from external institutions and individuals during the risk identification and analysis, leading to the writing of the disaster preparedness plan and formation of the disaster management team (volunteers). External institutions such as the Office of the Prime Minister of Namibia (Directorate of Disaster Management) and the City of Windhoek (Disaster Management Unit) would play a coordinating role in the event of a disaster (pulling resources and identifying other stakeholders), while the Namibian Police and the City of Windhoek Police would provide security to avoid looting of archival and library materials, control traffic and assist in putting in place a security strategy. The Fire Brigade would help to combat fire, offer medical services, evacuation and rescue operations in the event of a disaster. The Ministry of Works and Transport would carry out a technical investigation to come up with a fact finding of the real cause of the disaster and would have played an active role at the prevention and preparedness stage by giving advice in terms of technical issues related to structural building, health, safety and other related issues that might be required, had they been consulted or asked to contribute towards the formulation of the Plan. A water pipe burst at the National Archives of Namibia in 2014, which damaged some materials, was confirmed by the

Ministry of Works and Transport to have been caused by a pipe, which could not hold water of a certain pressure due to the materials used (Namibia Press Agency (NAMPA, 2014). This damage could have been avoided had the Ministry been roped in as a stakeholder to mitigate against such a threat. As Matthews (2005) observed, it is unfortunate that much cooperation only happens in the immediate aftermath of a disaster through the assistance of institutions in the vicinity.

Review of the Plan

With the passage of time, new hazards can occur and people come and leave the institution. It is therefore imperative that a disaster preparedness plan must have a review period; if possible it must be reviewed regularly. The Plan had no review date and it had not been reviewed since it was written. Members of the disaster management team, who had left the institutions, had not been replaced. Stakeholders' contact addresses and telephone numbers that were listed in the Plan were outdated. This situation makes the Plan irrelevant to the current operating system in the event of a disaster. The regular revision of disaster management plans will address outdated contact details, identify flaws and omissions and incorporate technological changes (Buchanan, 2002; Hlabaangani and Mnjama, 2008).

Vital Records

It is good practice to identify which records are vital in order to protect the records that are essential for continuation of operations. The list of vital records must be included in a disaster preparedness plan. Both the National Archives and the National Library of Namibia had vital records. However, there was no deliberate policy identifying them and as such there was no list incorporated in the Plan. Further, it was found that the Plan had no priority list for salvaging materials in the event of a disaster. This is what one of the senior managers had to say regarding vital records: "There has never been a deliberate effort to identify vital records, for example, catalogues and databases are considered as vital records but there is no backup in case of offsite storage".

Vital records should be main priorities of salvage efforts when a disaster occurs (Government of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, 2007,

p.28). This view is acknowledged by Hlabaangani and Mnjama (2008) who argue that it is critical that information centres should identify their vital records so that their services would not come to a halt if they were to be struck by disasters.

Reaction to Near Disasters or Disasters by the NANLN

The study revealed that there were near disasters at the National Archives of Namibia as a result of water leaks from the cooling plant, leaking pipes and a leaking roof. The December 2011 incident was the most significant, which resulted in the destruction of some appraised court records while some were air-dried. The study also revealed two incidents of near disasters involving fires. One of the incidents was in the National Archives of Namibia while the other one was in the National Library of Namibia. The disaster preparedness plan at the National Archives and National Library of Namibia has instructions on how to react to both fire and water disasters. However, the study revealed that in both instances no reference was made to the disaster preparedness plan during the disasters and no expert knowledge was sort on how to deal with soaked records.

The Plan had a clause which clearly stipulates: "In the event of flooding, leaking or water damage after a fire, the wet books must be freeze-dried" (Namibia Library and Archives Services, 2001). Despite this clause, the study revealed that only air-drying was applied. While the National Archives members of staff must be commended for air-drying some records, it is the view of the authors that if both methods had been applied some of the soaked records that ended up being completely destroyed could have also been saved.

In most instances of water damage, the first decision to be made will be whether to air dry or freeze materials (Illinois State University, n. d.). The use of air drying or freezing water damaged materials has also been recommended and acknowledged by Adcock, Varlamoff and Kremp (1998); Buchanan (2002); Government of South Australia, State Records of South Australia (2007); and ICA, Committee on Disaster Prevention (1997). This goes to show that both methods can be applied depending on the situation. In the case of the National Archives of Namibia, it is the view of the authors that if the

members of staff were aware of the contents of their Plan, they would have considered both options to save those records that ended up being destroyed as a result of being immensely soaked. Freezing the records would have given the National Archives of Namibia time to consult an expert on what to do with soaked materials. Illinois State University (n. d.) advises that wet materials can be stabilised through freezing, as organisations decide on how to deal with them, and refers to materials which have been successfully unfrozen and dried after spending a decade in a freezer.

Conclusion

The study established that some components of the Plan had been based on best practice and other components were lacking. The Plan lacked some of the elements that would make an ideal disaster preparedness plan complete and comprehensive. Members of staff were not aware of the existence of the Plan and its contents; there was no preservation policy, or a list of disaster management team members. Similarly, stakeholders such as the Police, the Fire Brigade, four hospitals and the Electricity company mentioned in the Plan were not aware of the Plan as well as their role. Risk identification would have naturally required that these stakeholders be involved. It was not carried out prior to drafting the Plan, which stakeholders did not contribute to its development. Other shortcomings include the following:

- The disaster management team members list had not been updated and members who had left the institutions had not been replaced, hence contact details were outdated;
- There was no provision for a budget;
- There was no provision for training;
- The Plan had not been tested and implemented;
- No review date and provision for regular reviews; and
- There was no list of vital records.

Recommendations

In view of the shortcomings identified by the study, the authors have come up with some recommendations. The major recommendation of this

study is that the Plan should be reviewed in order to update contact details as well as other omissions. Whilst it is acknowledged that such a major review takes time to achieve, the following are recommendations on what NANLN can do immediately:

- Replace disaster management team members who have left the institutions and update the contact details;
- Raise awareness among staff and stakeholders about the existence of the Plan and its contents;
- Bring other stakeholders on board as recommended by the staff and enter into agreements with all;
- Institute security strategies to protect against theft by staff;
- Come up with emergency supply kits;
- Come up with a budget for disaster management. Bearing in mind that there are budget constraints and rigid budgeting processes in different institutions, this could be an item visible on the current budget format;
- Include a review date on the current Plan and schedule regular reviews;
- Regular maintenance of hand held fire extinguishers.

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