International Council of Archives
Section on Professional Associations
Archival Solidarity Project

Activity Report
September 3, 2003
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Archival Solidarity is a project of the International Council on Archives (ICA), which aims to co-ordinate efforts in the international archives community to carry out foreign assistance projects to develop tools and expertise for developing communities and communities in transition.

Its objectives are to:
1. Share information about international projects for development and cooperation.
2. Facilitate international projects for development and cooperation that are responsive, practical, and well targeted.
3. Initiate international projects for development and cooperation that will:
   • Work with partners to share professional information
   • Send experts to provide training and education
   • Provide expertise and/or materials to carry out archival projects

The Archival Solidarity Project was born in 2000 within the International Council on Archives (ICA) to try to establish a program for foreign assistance projects. A small task force was formed in the Section on Professional Associations (SPA) to research the subject and propose a program to the ICA.

Information was gathered on current activities through a questionnaire distributed widely in 2002 and 2003 using listserves, personal letters, follow-up correspondence and personal communication.

At September 1, 2003 we received 78 replies and information about 102 projects.
   • The projects reported provide assistance to 21 countries and eight international groups, from partners in 64 countries and six international groups.
   • Project organizers include NGOs, national or other government archives, archival associations, and other groups and individuals.
   • Many of the reported projects deal with government record keeping and accountability, and professional training; others deal with description and access, preservation management, computer applications/digitization, and other archival subjects.
   • Funding sources are most frequently NGOs, governments, and archival associations, but foundations and other associations were also reported.

The task force is presently preparing a proposal for the organization and structure of the Archival Solidarity project. This will be discussed within SPA and then submitted to the ICA for discussion and action. The task force is also preparing a session for the 2004 Vienna Congress at which its findings will also be presented.

The proposal will be based on the following underlying principles:

- Funding will not be from ICA itself but from many diverse sources.
- The core activities will be promoting international exchange activities for archives and archivists, acting as an information clearinghouse, and finding/matching partners and funding.

BACKGROUND

The Archival Solidarity Project was born in 2000 out of an initiative within the International Council on Archives (ICA) to try to establish a program for foreign assistance projects.

The Section on Professional Associations undertook to research the subject and propose a program to the ICA. A small task force was formed and discussions were held in person and by e-mail. An initial meeting was held in Barcelona in November 2001 where the mandate/mission statement was prepared. After further discussion and consultation the following mandate/mission statement was finalized in June 2002:

Archival Solidarity is a project of the International Council on Archives (ICA), which aims to co-ordinate efforts in the international archives community to carry out foreign assistance projects to develop tools and expertise for developing communities and communities in transition.

Its objectives are to:

1. Share information about international projects for development and cooperation.
2. Facilitate international projects for development and cooperation that are responsive, practical, and well-targeted.
3. Initiate international projects for development and cooperation that will:
- *Work with partners to share professional information*
- *Send experts to provide training and education*
- *Provide expertise and/or materials to carry out archival projects*

INFORMATION GATHERING

The working group decided that we needed to gather as much information as possible about current and recent outreach projects. Nancy Marrelli took responsibility for information gathering and creation of a database.

Mailing of July 2002

1. A letter of request for information was prepared in English, French, and Spanish. A Russian copy was prepared for circulation to Eastern Europe.

2. On July 7, 2002 postings were made to all known archival listserves with a request to circulate as appropriate. The postings were in English, French, and Spanish.

3. Hard copy letters (66) were mailed in July 2002 to all SPA members and to all ICA Regional directors using mailing labels supplied by the ICA office. The letters were sent in the appropriate language(s).

By October 31, 2002, only a limited response had been received, and SPA agreed that the posting should be re-sent as the response rate was too low.

Mailing of March 2003

An additional mailing was done in March 2003. The original letter of request for information was used again in this mailing, with an additional paragraph explaining that this was a second mailing and thanking those who had already responded. As with the first mailing the letters were in English, French, Spanish, and Russian.

Postings were re-done to all known archival listserves with a request to circulate as appropriate. The postings were in English, French, and Spanish.

As with the first mailing hard copy letters were mailed to all SPA members, all ICA Regional Directors, but we also sent hard copy letters to all Heads of Institution members of ICA.

Response was greatly improved. We have also done extensive follow-up and collected supplemental information where required.

We have developed and refined a database and entered all information received. We can now add information easily as it arrives and we can generate any kind of information we may need to help us advance the project.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION COMPILED FROM REPLIES

Summary Information

As of September 1, 2003 we have received a total of 78 replies.

Of these, 36 replies document appropriate projects. Other replies report projects outside our area of interest, express support or interest in Archival Solidarity, or ask about funding possibilities. All responses have been acknowledged, and in most cases we have asked for further information regarding projects that fall within the parameters of the mission of Archival Solidarity.

We have opened a file for and collected information on 102 projects. As new information or clarifications are received we will add the information to the database.

Date range

1982 is the earliest project reported. Many of the projects are currently underway. Most of the activity has occurred within the last three years.

Partner Countries and International Groups Offering Assistance

Countries
Our respondents report a total of 21 countries that offer assistance:
Australia
Belgium
Canada
Croatia
France
Germany
Hungary (Open Society Project / Society for Open Archives)
Israel
Italy
Japan
Liechtenstein
Norway
Russia
Scotland
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
The Netherlands
United Kingdom
United States

International Groups
Our respondents report a total of 8 international groups that offer assistance:
Archivists without Boundaries/Archivistes sans frontières
Association internationale des archives francophones
Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM)
European Community / Council of Europe
International Council on Archives (ICA), ICA Secretariat, EURBICA and PARBICA
International Records Management Trust (IRMT)
UNESCO
UNESCO Memory of the World programme

Partner Countries or International Groups Receiving Assistance

Countries
Our respondents report a total of 64 countries that receive assistance:

Albania	Korea
Bangladesh	Latvia
Barbados	Lithuania
Belize	Macedonia
Bermuda	Malawi
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Malta
Botswana	Morocco
Brazil	Mozambique
British Virgin Islands	Netherlands Antilles
Bulgaria	Nicaragua
Burkina-Faso	Pakistan
Cambodia	Poland
Cameroon	Romania
China	Russia
Cuba	St. Kitts and Nevis
Czech Republic	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Denmark	Senegal
East Timor	Serbia and Montenegro
Egypt	Sierra Leone
El Salvador	South Africa
Eritrea	Sri Lanka
Estonia	Surinam
Ethiopia	Tanzania
Fiji	The Gambia
France	Trinidad and Tobago
Ghana	Turkey
Grenada	Uganda
Guyana	Ukraine
India	United Kingdom
Indonesia	Vietnam
Jamaica	Zambia
Kenya	Zimbabwe

International Groups
Our respondents report a total of 6 international groups that receive assistance:
Commonwealth African countries
Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute
Francophonie (French-speaking countries)
Organization of East Caribbean States
Secretariat for the Commission of East African Co-operation
Southeast Asia region

Summary of Project Organizers

Projects were organized by the following types of bodies:
N.B. Some projects fall into more than one category

Archival associations	20
Individuals	2
International organizations	9
National or other government archives	33
NGOs, universities, etc.	39
Non-archival associations	11

Types of Projects

The projects fall into the following categories:
N.B. Some projects fall into more than one category

Acquisition:	3
Archival facilities:	2
Archival policy and law:	2
Computer applications/digitization:	9
Description and access:	11
Education, training, professional development (including donations of professional literature):	21
Government record keeping and accountability:	58
Preservation management:	9
Research:	2

<u>Funding Sources</u>

It is not always possible to ascertain funding sources from the information supplied by respondents. Follow-ups have been made in an attempt to get this information. Some projects received funding from more than one source.

Reported projects were funded as follows:
N.B. Some projects fall into more than one category

Archival associations:	17
European Community:	3
Foundations:	5
Government of partner country or region offering assistance	35
NGOs:	47
Non-archival associations:	5
Partial funding by government of recipient partner:	3

WHAT COMES NEXT?

The Working Group must now take the information gathered and proceed with the project, moving towards implementation of a concrete functioning program:

- We must develop a draft proposal for the organization and structure of Archival Solidarity within ICA. The draft proposal will be presented to SPA where it will be discussed and then submitted to the ICA for discussion and action. Our work plan calls for this to be done in time for the Vienna Congress in 2004.
- We are also preparing a session for the Vienna Congress in 2004 to explain and discuss our findings and proposals.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

The proposal will be based on the following underlying principles:

- Funding will not be from ICA itself but from many diverse sources.
- The core activities of the Archival Solidarity project will be to:
  - promote international exchange activities for archives and archivists
  - act as an information clearinghouse
- find/match partners and funding.

We have learned from the responses and from discussion with those involved in a variety of projects that the following issues are of great importance and these must play an important part of our proposal:

- Funding programs exist into which archival development projects would fit but archives and archival associations often do not know they are available. It is essential to research, compile, and make available accurate and current information about funding sources.
- The three parties to international development projects are:
  - The partner providing assistance
  - The partner seeking assistance
  - The partner funding the project
  The partners can perform more than one of these functions and each major function can be carried out by more than one body or organization.
- A committed individual or group of individuals on one or more sides is frequently the prime mover in successful projects. These individuals or groups keep the idea going until something happens.
- It is extremely important to ascertain the needs and goals of the project clearly and coherently.
- When setting the project goals remember that sometimes what people ask for is not necessarily what they need or even think they need. They may be asking for what they think they can get.

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- Matching the request to the body/group that can best fill the request is extremely important to the ultimate success of the project and it can be a challenge.
- We must look for funding from both obvious and unexpected sources.
- Government funding is often available for a portion of the project but partial funding can be found from private sources if you are resourceful.
- Follow-up and ongoing mentoring and availability of expertise are often even more important than the initial on-site project initiative. All the initial work can be completely lost without follow-up. The partners must understand this and make a commitment to appropriate follow-up before a project begins.
- Evaluation of the project is a challenge but is very important for ongoing planning and ensuring the best possible use of limited resources.
- National Archives are major players in providing international assistance and they can be important partners.

We must now move forward working towards an effective working program for Archival Solidarity.