

**MILESTONES IN THE EVOLUTION OF
ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT IN CAMEROON (1884
TO 2015): ADVANCEMENTS, REGRESSIONS AND
RENAISSANCE**

Ngwang, Michael Ngwany Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer, Department of Library, Archives and Information
Studies

Advanced School of Mass Communication (ASMAC)

University of Yaounde II Soa

Email nngwany@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the current unascertained predicament of records and archives management in Cameroon despite the importance of this resource to national development. The researcher sets out to analyze and establish the major changes that occurred in the management of records and archives in Cameroon from 1884 to 2015, in order to identify the major actors, to highlight the principal landmarks, to unearth the major mistakes made and to suggest the way forward. Given the fact that it is a longitudinal study, data was mainly gathered from related primary sources like decrees, orders, reports, laws and other correspondences. The study revealed four main periods of significant advancements and regressions made in various aspects of records and archives management. These include legislation, organization, structure, administration as well as training and staffing. The major periods under study were captioned as follows: the Pre-established Era, the Golden Age, the Dark Age and the renaissance, respectively. Globally, the study revealed that no veritable, comprehensive or consistent progress has been made towards the establishment of a solid base for an effective and efficient record and archives management system in Cameroon till date. The investigator among other things recommends the harmonization of existent structures and the empowerment of the resulting structure that would be charged with the coordination of records and archives management function. It also recommends the complete review of the current legislation in force, in order to make it all encompassing and applicable, as well as the institution of a comprehensive staff recruitment and development policy to effectively man the structures and its various ancillaries.

Key Words: records management, archives management, epochs, developments, analysis, Cameroon.

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent article est motivé par le sort insondable observé de nos jours dans la gestion des archives et des documents administratifs au Cameroun. Il vise à analyser les grandes mutations intervenues dans ce domaine au Cameroun de 1884 à 2015. Ladite recherche prend ancrage dans la situation difficile dans laquelle est plongée de manière prolongée la gestion de ce domaine, étant donné l'importance que revêt

cette compétence informationnelle pour le développement national. Le but ultime de ce travail est orienté vers l'identification des acteurs majeurs, de la mise en lumière des principaux points de repères, du repérage et la mise en exergue des principales erreurs commises, et par voie de conséquence, la proposition des solutions pour sortir de cette situation peu reluisante. Sous ce rapport, la méthodologie retenue est celle d'une étude longitudinale qui prendra en compte les données issues des sources primaires d'information, notamment les textes de loi ; les décrets, les arrêtés, les rapports et correspondances. L'étude met en lumière quatre principales périodes marquée par des avancées et des régressions articulées autour de différents aspects de la gestion des documents administratifs et des archives. Les variables d'analyse portent aussi bien sur les questions législatives, organisationnelles, structurelles, administratives, la formation et les ressources humaines. Les principales périodes étudiées sont en effet (i) la mise en place, (ii) l'âge d'or, (iii) la période léthargique et (iv) la renaissance. De manière générale l'étude révèle que jusqu'à date, le Cameroun n'a connu un véritable progrès significatif en vue de la mise sur pied d'un système national efficace et efficient de gestion des documents administratifs et des archives, encore moins les jalons dudit système. Cette recherche recommande entre autre (i) l'harmonisation des structures de gestion et de coordination des documents administratifs et des archives, leur fusion en une instance unique et le renforcement des pouvoirs de cette dernière ; (ii) la révision générale du cadre législatif actuel et son renforcement en vue de garantir l'opérationnalité et l'applicabilité de ce système ; tout autant que (iii) la mise à disposition d'un profit adapté de ressources humaines et (iv) l'élaboration de politique de recrutement et développement des compétences; ceci dans le but ultime de rendre efficace toutes les structures concernées.

Mots clés : documents des gestions, archives, périodes, développements, analyse, Cameroun.

INTRODUCTION

The global history of archiving dates back to about 5000 BC and does closely correlate with the civilization of writing. Along the line, different techniques like the cuneiform symbols, clay tablets, the codex, the invention of paper through the movable types, to the printing press have been developed by different civilizations to document their activities. Within time, the major purposes for which archives were and are being kept have also evolved significantly. From the "arsenals of law" through the "arsenals of history" to the "arsenal of accountability or justice", archiving has witnessed fundamental paradigm shifts ranging from strict secrecy, through democratization or nationalization to the utmost liberalization of access.

Today the manifestation of archival power no longer needs to be over emphasized. Randall (2010) summarized the uses of archives into three main spheres thus:

- I. Archives hold political and social actors accountable for their actions;
- II. Archives resist political pressures and so supports open governments;
- III. Archives redress social injustice.

All the above functions and more are ensured by archives as they preserve documentation that serves as an authentic record of human activity which could either corroborate or invalidate appeals to precedents and heritage.

Curiously, with the advent of the so called "discovery of Africa", the European explorers nick named Africa the "dark continent". This was because to them, its existence was not documented. The above estimation is very closely related to that of UKWU (1995) who observed that most African countries began the practice of building archives on a wrong footing. This as they unpreparedly got into the establishment of their National archives which he observed, were misconstrued for symbols of sovereignty and independence. This was so because these newly established structures were fashioned after those of the colonial rulers and so could not adequately address the contemporary colonial needs of African countries. ASANTE (1986) observed that the problem of most African countries was not as most people thought, the frequent coup d'états but rather that of poor record keeping, is therefore not surprising.

However, if you do not know where you are coming from, you would hardly know where you are going to. Because the past is prologue for like Mc Cain (1953) stated "The experience of the past provides safe footing, a sure guide, and a beacon light for our faltering footsteps in the future; and those experiences are to be found in our private and public archives." In this vein, a renowned Nigerian archivist Enwere (1989) had declared thus, "A nation without archives, is like a man without a memory" because like Plato contends "man is a microcosm of a state". This is the crux of the problem.

It may be difficult if not impossible to say with certainty what accounts for the current predicament of records and archives management in Cameroon. This is because, how well or not a state would currently manage its archives can hardly be a matter of chance but would rather likely be rooted in its history. Some works including Mohamadou (1974), Mengong (2005), Njoh (2013), and Nzongne (2013) have written on some aspects of archives management in Cameroon, yet none has attempted a complete and comprehensive examination of the development of archives history in Cameroon. It is in this backdrop that this article finds its *raison d'être*. The article which falls within the framework of the basic prerequisites for the establishment of a comprehensive and effective records and archives management system is guided by this question: "Does the historical mutation of archives in Cameroon reveal a comprehensive and logical implantation of a solid base for the establishment of an effective and efficient records and archives management system"? In order to do this, it seeks to :

- Establish a comprehensive history of the various epochs of archives development in Cameroon ;
- Produce a complete balance sheet of the activities and actors up till 2015;
- Present the major land marks, be they on legislation, personnel, structures and otherwise;
- Analyze the mutations in order to unearth the when's, how's, and whys;
- Highlight the advances made and underscore the errors committed and attempt suggestions on the way forward.

I.HISTORYOFARCHIVESDEVELOPMENTINCAMEROON

The development of archives in Cameroon like in many other parts of Africa has followed a tortuous path. The history of archives in the then Cameroons is closely linked to the administrative and political history of the two territories. They mutated as mandated territories under the League of Nations as was administered first by the Germans from 1884 to 1916. The British and the French latter took over its governance first under the League of Nations from 1916 to 1945 and then latter as Trusteeship territories Under the United Nations from 1945 to the independence of "La Republique" on first January 1960. Needless to emphasize here that Cameroon was never ever colonized per say.

After independence, the country became The Federal Republic which later on evolved into The United Republic and finally the Republic of Cameroon as is known today. This brief history is absolutely necessary to be able to grasp the corresponding archival mutations

For the purposes of simplicity and easy understanding, these mutations can be grouped into four main phases thus :

- The pre-Establishment epoch (1884-1951);
- The golden ages (1952-1992);
- The dark ages (1992-2004);
- The renaissance (2005-2015).

I.1 THE PRE-ESTABLISHMENT ERA (PHASE ONE)

I.1.1 THE GERMAN ARCHIVES (1884-1916)

It is certain that the period of the German colonial administration in Cameroon was relatively short. (From 12th July 1884 to 20th march 1916). However within this period, they made significant efforts towards laying a solid base for the management of archives in what came to be known as "large Kamerun". During their rule, they laid emphasis on the conservation aspect of archives administration. In this vein, Mveng, (1985) intimated that such archives were generated by different districts and communities. This was so because the colonial governors, their military authorities and the local authorities jointly administered the territories and by so doing naturally generated archives.

In the course of their administration too, a legal framework was applied to the German archives in Cameroon. It is in this light that Mohamadou (1972) affirms that *"very methodically and carefully arranged, they were centralized at Buea (the headquarters) and was within the competence of government archives except for Douala because, it hardly occurred that other administrative units should conserve archives"*.

These records were later inherited and shared between the English and the French. However, some few administrative units like Mora, Adamawa and Banyo kept archives because of their far distances from the Head quarter.

It goes without saying therefore, that the German administration provided the basis for the formal establishment of archives by the French and the British administration in the Cameroons.

I.1.2. ARCHIVES DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE BRITISH ROLE (THE BUEA ARCHIVES)

This holding witnessed significant mutation both in its appellation as well as in its management. The archives began as Southern Cameroon Archives, then later became the West Cameroon Archives, then, further became part of the Cameroon Federal Archives holding and ended up as the Annex of the National Archives of Cameroon.

Although the British Government had a long established archival tradition, it was not until 1914 that the colonial office showed any concern over public archives in West Africa. In that year, a colonial dispatch requested a briefing as to the custody and preservation of the official records of the Government. It went to express the hope that every care was taken of those records which were more or less recent and therefore required official reference. It further suggested that effective steps be taken to provide for "the safe keeping and preservation of the records in question".

In his reply dated 14th July 1914 therefore, Sir Frederick Lugard, the Governor General gave what appeared to be a rosy picture of the condition of the public archives, concluding that all the departmental official records of Nigeria were "in a very fair state of preservation and that the current arrangements were adequate for their safe – keeping". In view of this impression, no special regulations about records keeping were considered necessary for the next two decades.

I.1.3 ARCHIVES DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION (THE YAOUNDÉ HOLDING)

It was on the 29th of March 1916 that the German administration ended and at the same time gave birth to the French and British condominium in Cameroon. They began by sharing the German holdings that were preserved in the Buea archives. On the 27th January 1913 the French overseas minister enacted a law made up of three main parts thus:

- The interior archives and depots;
- The guide for the classification of archives ; and
- A statement on the conditions for consultation of archives.

However, it is important to underscore the fact that the application of this law only affected the French Cameroon Trusteeship in 1948. Earlier, on 17th July 1946, the French Overseas Minister published a decree aimed at regulating legal deposits in French colonies i.e. decree no 3425. Thus the legal deposit law also regulated archives during this period.

Simultaneously, the French department of administrative and political affairs clearly started the accumulation and collection of significant but varied records between 1946 and 1949. This same report also emphasized the efforts made by the records office towards the putting in place of diverse documentation as well as the establishment of a library, mainly made up of political, administrative, judicial and legal materials.

Parallel to order no. 1489 of 20th April 1949 authorizing the organization of the general administrative service of the high commission of the French republic in Cameroon, it obliged the creation of an Archives Sub-Department in the services of the High Commission.

In fact, in the same report, there were found anonymous manuscripts on the preparation of the setting up of an archives service. These notes contained proposals of attaching the local archives service to the cabinet of the High Commission. The French colonial administration preserved the archives they inherited from the Germans in Caves in the governor's palace in Yaoundé.

I.2 THE GOLDEN AGE (PHASE TWO)

I.2.1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ARCHIVES SERVICE BY THE FRENCH

This period certainly began with the appearance of the first official text on archives in Cameroon that was published by the French administration in 1952. More precisely order No 2924 of 28th May formally created an Archive service in Yaoundé. This was issued M. Jordan the then secretary in charge of current affairs. Its article one stated thus, "*it has been created in the territory a section of archives and documentation attached to the directorate of the Civil Cabinet*"; Article two also stipulated thus "*the control, preservation and management of archives and documentation produced within the territory was assigned to an Archivist Paleographer*". This order also stated the goals and functions of the service. It had as goal "to ensure the national management of archives found within the Cameroon territory". As for its role, it was meant to give technical assistance to all other services.

This marked the beginning of significant strides on archives administration in Cameroon. This service was immediately handed over to Claude Burgaud, an archivist and paleographer of French nationality. He largely brought together the German archives which were dispersed all over Cameroon. He also put in place the first archives classification system. Of all those who headed this institution from 1952 to 1972, only Burgaud was a professional. He was a graduate from the famous *Ecole de Chartes Paris*. He was motivated, dynamic and purpose driven and can rightly be considered as the architect of the Yaoundé National Archives.

In fact, much work was undertaken by the French administration on archives in Cameroon. They did not only reorganize administrative services like the mail service, but further carried out short term training of support staff that were charged with the management of records services all over the territory. Their high commissioner prepared technical instructions which he channeled to the different collaborators like the director of cabinet, director of the political and administrative affairs, finance, economic affairs and regional governors.

Burgaud was replaced in 1957 by Raymond Bonefils, who was in turn succeeded in 1958 by Luis Buttin. From 1960 to 1961, Henri NGUE became the first Cameroonian to head the National Archives. He was succeeded by Alfred Pfouna Majire, who served till the service was attached to the presidency by decree no 65/DF/249 of 12 June 1965.

I.2.2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ARCHIVES SERVICE BY THE BRITISH

The organization and establishment of the Buea Archives can be traced back to the period preceding *independence* and reunification. The first initiative to create the Buea Archives proper was made in 1921 from an order of the High Commissioner in Lagos as found in *File no 453/1921 IF 16 Nov. titled "German Archives in the Cameroons"*. To concretize this initiative, money was voted and sent to the Divisional Officer to create the archives. By the mid-1930s, concern continued to grow about the state of public account records in the territory. This led to the dispatch of two circulars in 1936. In the words of Ukwu (1995) "as a result of the response received from the Colonial administrators, retention periods were alluded to the various classes of account and treasury record, vouchers and counterfoils as they were made to be kept for seven year before being destroyed. This was surely the beginning of the practice of records scheduling. It was in this relation that strict instructions were issued stating that particular attention be paid to records relating to the civil status, registration of companies, maps, land matters, geology and agriculture. The first repository was located in the German Secretariat and its pioneer workers were Whiteman and Wacka.

However, the ordinance to establish the National Archives of Nigeria was issued in 1957. The precise objective of the ordinance was the paramount preservation of important archives in an orderly manner by a National Archives committee. A representative from the Southern Cameroon was nominated by the Commissioner of the Cameroons to this effect. However, given that Southern Cameroon was not committed to remain within the Nigerian Federation after independence, a legal provision was made for a possible surrender of Southern Cameroon archives at that time, should the need arise. It was also decided that the southern Cameroon archives stayed where they would be accessible to southern Cameroonians.

I.2.3. THE ROLE OF CAMEROONIAN AUTHORITIES

Even before the independence of the Cameroons, two outstanding Cameroonians left some indelible marks on the management of archives as inherited from the trusteeship of the French and the British. They were **Andre Marie Mbida** and **Ahmadou Ahidjo** respectively.

Andre Marie Mbida took office on 10th April 1957 and began work immediately. His first initiative was *arête n° 33 CAB/PM of 3rd May*

1957 which specified that the cabinet of the Prime Minister should have an archivist. His duty was to collect, classify and conserve all records emanating from the Prime Ministry and other ministerial departments. So, the PM's service had the duty of managing archives that were collected from the various ministerial departments before forwarding them to the high commission. These records were then directed to the archives service. Agreeably so, this was already current records management function being introduced.

Unfortunately due to some political crisis, Mbida resigned on the 17th February 1958 and was immediately replaced by Ahmadou Ahidjo. After taking over power, Ahidjo continued with most of Mbida's archival reforms. However, within time, he noticed some major dis-functionings which he observed in the following words:

The ongoing reorganization of the national archives lives us with the impression that this service does not have all the documents which were supposed to be forwarded to it, thus, it lack a certain number of documents of capital interest to the history of our country. From all indications, there still exist in a number of prefectures or sub- prefect's offices, precious archives that had been abandoned or were simply left with nobody to care for or are left at the mercy of attenuating temperatures or are being attacked by termites or rodents. So in order to take indispensable measures to ensure its safeguard, I have decided in the first place, to proceed with an enquiry in order to identify all archives that are found in various depots all over the national territory. I would therefore oblige you to subsequently forward them to archives services as fast as it is possible.

As a result of this, Ahidjo modified Mbida's order of 3rd June 1957 with a circular in 1964. He ordered the first ever archives inventory that same year. He also recognized the utmost importance of archives as our collective memory. It is in this backdrop that the department of the National Archives would be created. His circular was accompanied by an inquiry form that was intended to take stock of all archives of the different administrations – German, French and English. This initiative gave rise to the upgrading of the archives service to a department in 1965. President Ahidjo was not only passionate but equally keen and determined about issues relating to archival development. Thus the same year (1964) he personally authorized the opening of a training

program for middle level archivist through reference letter no 2802/CAB/PR of 25/9/64. The following nationals managed the archives after Burgaud, Djengue Ndoumbe 1960 to 61, Mfouma 1961 to 64, and Etende 1964 to 72.

Within this same period, similar efforts were made by southern Cameroon authorities for the Buea archives. In a memorandum dated 1st April 1959 issued by the Social Affairs Committee, A.N JUA suggested that senior Researcher and Anthropologist, E.W Ardener, should represent the Southern Cameroon in the National Archives committee to replace J.O Field, who in a letter dated 31st December 1958, declined his nomination due to administrative work.

E.W. Ardener, then a senior researcher and Anthropologist with the Nigerian Institute of Sociology (Ibadan University), had earlier on repeatedly expressed concern about the closed files and other documents and books upon which future scholarship and research in the territory would depend when he first visited the Buea Region. When a National Archives Committee was created, he was asked to represent the territory and to introduce a system of archival administration for the area, an offer which he readily accepted. A building was accordingly acquired, and J.N Kima a Cameroonian, was recruited to assist him.

It took several months of work in very unpleasant conditions for Mr. and Mrs. Ardener together with Mr. Kima Joseph to sort the books and the papers and then to arrange them in a new accommodation. They also made several tours in order to inspect archives in various other departments and district offices in the territory. Some of these deposits were reorganized and certain material not required was removed from the Buea Archives. Cleaning, repairs, cataloguing commenced.

1.2.4. THE CAMEROON FEDERAL ARCHIVES

1.2.4.1. EAST CAMEROON ARCHIVES

The first major indigenous administrative change occurred in Cameroon east of the Mungo in 1965, with decree no 65/DF/249 of 12 June 1965 reorganizing the presidency of the republic. Thus the archives service, whose status remained ambiguous between 1960 and 1965, was raised to the Department of Archives and Libraries. This new department was directly attached to the general secretariat of the presidency of the republic. This attachment was certainly a symbol of power and authority though it had no specific missions assigned to it.

This move was a veritable landmark in the development of archives administration in Cameroon.

Another major physically perceptible change came barely one year later. Decree no 66/DF/412 of 17 august 1966 created the Department of Federal Archives and Library. The decree clearly stated the status and the functions of Archives in Cameroon. The department was meant to control and administer all archives emanating from councils and all other public establishments of the Federal Republic of Cameroon as well as federated states. This department was made up of both the Yaoundé group (East Cameroon) and that of Buea (West Cameroon) and all other groups that could be subsequently created. This move put Cameroon on record as the first Francophone African country to take such a sound legal disposition MINCULT (2011).

The above regulation was complemented by a very important presidential circular of 29th September 1966. It was directed to all federal administrators, prefects, sub-prefects as well as district officers all over the federation. The circular gave all the necessary instructions on the filling, protection and the preservation of all administrative records. Two master file plans one for prefectural, sub-prefectural and district records and another for the federal inspectorates both accompanied this circular in order to make its implementation very effective.

Legally speaking, this decree did not only state the deadlines for communicating archives that had been transferred to the archive but also went further to outline the conditions for their elimination. This precision was made in its article 18 thus *"no record may be eliminated without the visas of both the service heads of the said archives and that of the director of the Federal Archives"*. Concerning communication, access was to be free for all records above forty years of existence, except for military, diplomatic and personnel files that could only be accessed after seventy years. However these deadlines could exceptionally be reviewed for scientific purposes with the express authorizations of the depositing services. These free access deadlines were however shortened to twenty years and sixty years simultaneously by decree No73 of 3rd January 1973. These access periods were again further reviewed from twenty five to thirty years and one hundred and twenty years for medical records by the 2000 archives law in its article 14. These three texts to a very great extent had significantly dealt with a very important archives management issue that of record schedules and elimination.

The same decree (no. 66/DF/412 of 17th august 1966) created the Superior Commission for Archives and Libraries. The Commission

was made up of nine members. The main objective of the Commission was to advise the head of state on all issue relating to archives and libraries. The commission was also charged with the authorization of the elimination of worthless archives. Unfortunately this commission never effectively functioned as it soon lost its legality. This failure surely accounts for the mountains of useless records that currently occupy important space in almost all administrative units.

1.2.4.2. THE WEST CAMEROON ARCHIVES

There was transition in archives administration following letter no.SS567/106 of 19th May 1962 as confirmed by correspondence number SS567/112 of 12th of August written by the acting permanent secretary to the Yard Superintendent confirming the transfer of archives. It stated that "the large building opposite the post and telegraph garage which used to house the West Cameroon Archives had been taken over by the Federal Inspector of Administration and that as a consequence, it had become necessary for us to move the archive into two small rooms on the ramshackle behind the main building".

The Minister in his instructions of 31st march 1962 refused that the archives would not be moved at all. With this conflict, the federal inspector of administration, J.C Ngoh, who was permanent secretary at the ministry of Education and Social Welfare, D.P Hayden and E.W Ardener, specialist and adviser on archives, concerted and took a number of decisions thus:

The present building was still West Cameroon property and that as far as the long term future of the building was concerned, two solutions were possible: Either they reverted to the West Cameroon Government for the custody of the archives and some antiquities or funds be given by the Federal Government for a new Archives building. This decision led to some provisional arrangements to temporally house the archives. After the reunification of Cameroon in 1961, the Ardener's returned to Nigeria and the service was suspended till 1963. During this time, the archives were transferred to a cabane in Tole where they suffered serious managerial setbacks. In 1963, The Aderners were formally requested by the British administration to offer their services once more to the Buea archives.

However, with the advent of Cameroon's reunification, the research and advice provided by Mr. and Mrs. Ardener could no longer be supported from Nigeria Funds and no provision existed in the West

Cameroon budget at the time. Soon after, pressure for additional office space for federal institutions triggered an emergency situation, and in order to meet these need; the archives office building (The German office of works at the old native authority school) was taken over. The West Cameroon staff of the office was temporary withdrawn. The Archives together with the electrical and other equipment were placed in an unsystematic manner in some iron shelves in the rear of the building.

Fortunately the West Cameroon government latter made arrangements in 1963 with the British ministry of technical co-operation within a technical program for E.W. Ardener, who was then a University lecturer in Social Anthropology at Oxford, to return for a short visit as adviser on archives and antiquities. He was assisted by his wife Mrs. Ardener, a graduate with experience in this field. This program proved useful and was repeated the following years. The relatively short but very intensive visits enabled some projects to be completed and routines and plans were put in place for continuation by the staff throughout the year. In 1967, the aid program was unfortunately curtailed by the British government and the adviser could no longer make the usual visits.

Within time, a site was allocated for the construction of an archive building as indicated in the report of the secretary to the prime minister. The site board proceedings were approved by the honorable prime minister (as stated in letter no. SS.132/181 of 19 February 1965). In the words of E.W. Ardener "...the executive Council recently approved the construction of an archives building in Buea for the sum of ten million France of which two million will be expected this year (1965/1966 as previously arranged and eight million over the next year or so..."

An allocation of 500,000FCFA was immediately made for preliminary work to begin. The building itself was designed by the government architect in consultation with E.W. Ardener as the adviser.

The building was financed from the West Cameroon budget. Due to financial stringency, the work could not be completed in one operation and had to be undertaken in stages. The main construction work was undertaken in 1967. It was not until 1968, however, that the interior work, the fixtures and fittings were completed to the point when the building could be occupied. The Ardener couple returned to West Cameroon the same year (1968) and immediately supervised the transfer to the new building. The building which comprises one reception hall and one reading room for internal use, two offices, one work room, three large repositories and two large deposit libraries and four toilets and given the context in which it was built, is a satisfactory compromise between the budgetary resources and the immediate need of the service.

From 1959 when the department was created, Ardener and his wife Shirley administered the department and was assisted by Joseph Kimawho became the first West Cameroonian British trained archivist to occupy this post. When the Ardener's returned to the UK, Z.M. Njeuma was made archivist and headed the department between 1970 and 1971. He was replaced by Ayuk Bernard, an Anthropologist, from 1971 to 1972. Mark Etende was appointed Director of the National Archives and libraries. From 1972 after the unification, the department was managed as an annex of National Archives in Yaoundé, with Mathias Sack as director.

I.3. THE CAMEROON NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The year 1972 witnessed a major change in Cameroons administrative nomenclature as the country metamorphosed from a Federal to a unitary system of government. From then, the archives also followed suit.

In 1973, another major landmark was recorded in the evolution of archives administration in Cameroon. *Decree no 73-1 of 3rd January 1973* changed the status of the archives from the Department of Federal Archives, to the Department of National Archives and Library following the mutation from the Federal to a unitary state.

Following the above change, most of the German records found in the Buea archives, were transferred to Yaoundé in July 1974 following instruction *no. 151/D of 1st July 1974*. These included maps, plans and books written or published in German. These records were handed to Peter Geisider who then served as technical adviser in the German embassy.

The Department of Archives began the realization of two capital projects by 1975. This included the inventory of all administrative archives (prefectural and governors) as well as the processing of such archives.

Unfortunately, the both archives groups (Yaoundé and Buea) were witnessing serious shortage in staff. This shortage glaringly caught the attention of the International council on Archives expert, V. Schaeffer who within this time was on a UNESCO expertise mission to Cameroon. Schaeffer's (1974) report, painted a very clear picture of the predicament of archives in the Cameroons. He among other thing recommended that absolute priority be given to professional training as it was empirical that "Without a certain minimum number of well trained staff, Cameroun would neither be able to ensure the conservation

of its cultural heritage so as to increase her administrative effectiveness and efficiency". He recommended a minimum number of thirty six staff made up of all categories. Most probably it was Schaefer's recommendation that encouraged the department in 1980, to propose the training of prefectural Archivists while waiting for the creation of Provincial Archives. This was however going to be effective only after the completion of the inventory.

In 1978, decree No 78/496 of 20th November, saw the separation of the archive department from that of the library. From then meanwhile the National Library was attached to the ministry of information and Culture, the National Archives Department, remained attached to the presidency. This was invariably another booster to the National Archives. This however was going to be the last major positive legal move in favor of the blossoming of archives in Cameroon.

The year 1982 witnessed an unprecedented change in the political history of Cameroon. President Amadu Ahidjo resigned his post and handed over the mantle of leadership to Mr. Paul Biya who up till then was prime minister. This change coincidentally had negative impact on the mutation of archives in Cameroon. Thereafter, the first administrative act that greatly affected the archives was *decree no 83-106 of 3rd March 1983* reorganizing the Presidency of the Republic. This was concretized a year later by *decree no 84-30 of 4th February 1984* organizing the Presidency of the Republic. It unfortunately put an end to the attachment of the archives to the Presidency. As a kind of replacement, the organigram of the presidency now made provision for a new archives unit known as "bureau de fishier et des archives", meant to manage the internal archives of the Presidency. Thus, from 1984 to 1988 serious clouds loomed over the plight of the National Archives. This is so because the 1984 decree neither took into consideration the National Archives, nor did it place the Archives under any administrative tutelage. This created the ugliest institutional gap for archives management.

The year 1986 however witnessed yet another land mark in the domain of records and archives development. This development rather concerned the core itself. Thus, *decree no.86/752 of 23 June 1986* provided a special statute for professional including archivist, librarians, documentarists and museographers. However, due to the fact that it was hastily made and also to encompassing, this provision was not only non-feasible but could not also improve on the plight of the practicing archivist.

It therefore took the next four years with *decree no 88-1278 of 21 September 1988* reorganizing the then Ministry of Information and Culture (MINFOC) for archives to be given a statute. The decree made the department of archives one of the directorates of the Ministry of Information and Culture. In its chapter four, the decree devoted four articles (32-35) to the statutory frame of archives. However, its implementation was to be determined by the availability of funds, a dream that was farfetched.

During this outstanding period (1973 to 1989), it was the initiative-driven Mathias Sack who administered the archives. He also went down into record as the longest serving and most successful local director of archives in Cameroon.

Given the prime place that staffing occupy in the practice of records and archives management, it may be worthwhile to highlight the significant evolution in staff strength and quality that was witnessed during this period. The tables bellow illustrates this progress.

Table I: Evolution of Archives Staff Strength 1954-2015

Year	n° of staffs
1952	2
1955	10
1958	6
1960	9
1963	11
1972	13
1980	24
1981	31
1988	60
1992	64
2011	40
2015	20

Source: Researchers compilations from national archives reports.

In 1988, the first provincial staff with post of responsibility was appointed and the first inspection mission was made to the South West and North West provinces the next year. The second inspection mission went to the East and South provinces by 1992. During these visits,

the difficulties facing the sector were identified and the state of the art assessed.

It is also worthwhile noting that during the 1980's; several Cameroonians were offered state scholarships to be trained at the *Ecole de Bibliothecaires, Archivistes et Documentalistes* (EBAD) at the *Universite Chek Antadiop* Dakar Senegal. This explains the significant increase in the number of professionals that manned the archives services between the 1980's and early 2000 as we may observe in the table below.

Table 2: Staff Strength and Quality in the Provincial Services by 1992

Province	Cat. A	B	C	D	10	7-9	Decision	Total
Bafoussam		1			1		4	6
Bamenda ¹	1		1				4	7
Bertoua		1				1	2	4
Buea		1		1	1		5	7
Douala		2		1		1	3	7
Ebolowa		1					1	2
								33

Source: National Archives Annual Report 1992

The various advances made during this period could visibly be noticed through the:

- i. Progressive and regular budget increments (6, 000000 in the 1989/1990 budgetary year);
- ii. Regular missions made to process provincial archives;
- iii. Continued improvements witnessed in working space and comfort;
- iv. Significant acquisition of equipment like reprographic and microfilming machines;
- v. Sensitization of administrative unit heads on the importance of preserving archives and;
- vi. Implementation of extra working hours as well as the payment of mission allowances thus, insurance of staff motivation and productivity.

Furthermore, from a report titled "*The National Archives Today*", The 1980's can undoubtedly be considered as the peak of the golden age of archives in Cameroon. This is substantiated by Sack (1989) who concluded, thus:

The Cameroon National Archives firmly stick to its ideals of not only being an indisputable source of information but also served as a veritable cultural center for human personality and development in all its ramification where all was put in place to inform, teach and distract". This view is also shared by V. Schaefer (1974) who had earlier remarked that by this time major legislative strides had been made for the smooth practice of archives in Cameroon. He however remarked that its application still left much to be desired.

I.3.THE DARK AGES (PHASE THREE)

This period witnessed a general down turn in the development of record and archives management in Cameroon in spite of some rare and isolated progress.

Therefore, however bright the year 1992 May appear to have been, it is also the year that the archives history in Cameroon registered its worst administrative embarrassment. Not only did the National Archives changed hands from the Ministry of Information and Culture to that of the Ministry of Culture, it's status also dropped from a big department to a mere central service.

The following year, the *decree no. 931-138 of 19th may 1993* organizing the Ministry of Culture, gave yet another blow to the archives. The consequence it felt from the Department of National Archives to become a mere service. From then onwards, it was made to be headed by a mere service head.

This negative move also complicated the predicament of the national archives annex Buea whose management by now had also been abandoned in the hands of private philanthropists. Archives management in Cameroon had by that virtue, moved about twenty five years backwards. The former Department of the National Archives was now referred to as the "Archives Central Service" and made service in the Department of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture. In terms of its missions and nomenclature however, the archives preserved its 1983 configuration of three services of the Central Administration and ten external services at the various provincial headquarters.

The management of National Archives Annex Buea equally sunk to its lowest ebb by 1994. By this time, most of its staff had either retired, or had been transferred to the head office in Yaoundé. The Buea

archives were however rescued by a group of concerned persons, who formed an association known as the Association of Cameroon Friends of Archives and the Antiquities (AFAAC). They subsequently took over the basic management of the Buea archives up till 2010 when the Ministry of Culture reassumed full responsibilities of the service and recruited permanent trained staff to work in the structure.

However, *decree n° 98/003 of 8th January 1998* reorganizing the Ministry of Culture in its article 45 paragraph one and two, made the National Archives a specialized organ with some autonomy under the Ministry of Culture. Unfortunately, the modality of the application of this new measure depended on the availability of funds which never saw the light of day.

In order to concretize the 1998 decision and to put Cameroon on the same pedestal with the rest of the world, law n° 2000/010 of 19 December 2000 was promulgated to govern the management of Archives in Cameroon amongst other things. This law was strengthened the next year (2001) by decree no 2001/958/PM of 01 December 2001 which provided the modalities of application for the archives law. This became veritable legal frame that would regulate records and archives management from then hence forth. It actually put some silver lining on the bleak state of archives in Cameroon within this period.

Yet for close to two decades (since 1884) therefore, very insignificant progress was made in the domain of archives development. All the positive activities in this domain were mere vestiges of earlier legal, normative and organizational reforms that were still being implemented. The archives development curve witnessed a continued down turn. This period up to 2004 can rightly be considered as the dark ages in Cameroons archival history. It was a period of significant regression.

Within this difficult period, AYUK took over from Sack and directed the archives from 1989 to 1993, after him, Amadou Pokeko managed the Archives Central Service from 1993 to 1994, Verkijika Fanso from 1994 to 1999, Raymond Assombang from 1999 to 2002 and Mbida from 2002 to 2008. Logically they could not do much given the fact that they were not professionals themselves but more so because they were deprived of any meaningful budgetary provisions. Worst still this period witnessed the retirement of almost all the trained staff that were never replaced.

I.4. THE MIREN RENAISSANCE 2005-2014 (PHASE FOUR)

It was *decree n° 2005/177 of 27th May 2005* organizing the then Ministry of Culture that created the Directorate of Archives. This department was conferred nine major missions all geared towards ensuring the effective management of archives in Cameroon. This included the formulation of government policy in the domain of archives, the development and reinforcement of the archives law and the promotions of international cooperation in the domain to mention just these. This of course was a fundamental legal progress on the existing predicament of archives management in the Cameroon, even if this had to wait for the next three years to be effectively implemented.

Thus *decree n° 2008/2750 of 12th November 2008*, appointing staff to major post of responsibilities in the Ministry of Culture, made the 2005 organigram of the Ministry to go operational.

Amongst those appointed, was the Director of Archives who had to implement the various missions related to records and archives management. However, the real issue was where to begin from?

The years 2009 and 2010 focused on the realization of projects geared towards the general face lift of the almost completely abandoned structure. Apart from the general brainstorming and preliminary paperwork that usually goes with the creation of such structures, the natural point of departure was the recruitment of staff, given the fact that by 2008 this service only had four untrained staff. In this light, a special direct recruitment of professionals of archives, libraries and museographers into the Public Service was made.

In 2009, decision *n° 001674/MINFOPRA/SG/DDRHE/DC of 19th May 2011* effectively posted the recruited staff to various ministerial departments. It transferred twenty seven of the fifty newly recruited Inspectors of Documentation to services in the National Archives system; (the central archives service and the directorate of Archives) see the table below.

Table 3: Distribution of newly recruited staff within National Archives System

Structure	Number of staffs
Department of Archives	10
National Archives Service Yaounde	16
National Archives annex Buea	3
Regional Delegation of culture Extreme North	1
Regional Delegation of culture West Region	1
Regional Delegation of culture Littoral	1
Regional Delegation of culture Adamawa	2
Regional Delegation of culture North West	1
Total	26

Source : Researcher's field work

One year later, following the President of the Republic's special recruitment project, decision n° 001380/CJRS/ST of 02 December 2011, also transferred nine more staff to some public Archives structures. The table below illustrates the distribution.

Table 4: Distribution of staff recruited by the Operation 25000 Youths and Posted to National Archives Structure

Structure	Number of staffs
National Archives service-Yaoundé	2
National Archives annex-Buea	1
Department of Archives	5
Delegation of Culture North West	1
Total	9
Grand Total	35

Source : Ministry of Arts and Culture

A Public contract award of 20th august 2010 for the general refurbishment of the Yaoundé National Archives was realized. Thus, the roof of was repaired, some electricity repairs work done, old windows were replaced, the floor was tiled and external surrounding paved. The fence was also raised and toilets repaired.

In 2011, public contract n° 008/MNCULT/CPM/11 of 24th November 2011 saw the construction of a one story building meant to serve as the new reading room. This same year (2011), the Department of Archives recruited some meaningful number of qualified staff (40) in both its central and decentralized services, even if the recruitment remained problematic in character. This was due to the fact that the recruits were mainly senior staff (inspector of documentation), which was not the appropriate category that was required to clear the huge back log of unprocessed records that had been accumulated for close to thirty years. This remains a major problem till date.

In 2011, government expressed the interest to know the situation of the National Archives and Records Management system. In repose to this request, the Minister of Culture presented an exposé to the Cabinet of Ministers on the 28th July 2011 on the theme "The National Archives Management System". The issues highlighted included; the strategic role that records and archives management plays in administration, the problems pledging the system, and some concrete possible solutions. Given the importance of the subject, government reacted spontaneously through a press release on the same date (Thursday 28 July 2011). The Prime Ministerial Press release contained two major sets of directives, one to the Ministry of Culture and another to the rest of the ministries and other public institutions.

To the Ministry of Culture, it recommended:

- i. The review of the a befitting legal framework governing the management of archives taking into consideration the new technologies currently practice in the domain;
- ii. The elaboration of a National Plan for archives automation and digitization ; and
- iii. The conduct of a study for the construction of a functional building for the National Archives.

To all Ministries' the directive recommended:

- i. The refurbishment of a functional space for archives in each ministry;
- ii. The putting in place of modern records filing system and;
- iii. The digitization of records in conformity with a plan to be developed in this domain.

The above directives served as a catalyst for the already enlisted activities in the 2012 road map of the ministry of culture. To this effect, an inter-ministerial work group was created to carry out the preparatory phase of the work.

Finally, a national workshop titled “Workshop for the Validation of Components of the National Records and Archives Management System” held in Yaoundé, from the 8th to the 10th of October 2012. The principal objectives of this workshop were to, in a consensual manner, review and validate the components for the establishment of an effective and efficient records and archives management system in Cameroon. This workshop that embraced a highly participative approach brought together actors from the various sub- domains of information. The table illustrates the distribution of the participants per sub-sector.

Table 5: National workshop attendance according to field of specialization

Domain	Number in attendance
1. Archives and Librarianship	95
2. Information technology	07
3. Political science and Law	14
4. History	04
5. Communication	12
6. Management and finance	05
7. Architecture	02
8. Sociology and Psychology	04
9. Others	15
Total	158

Source : National Archives Statistics 2012

The participants came from the civil service, the higher institutions of learning, para-statal, professional associations and the private sector. The workshop was organized into three main sub working groups as shown in the table below.

Table 6: Sub- Groups and themes of the National Workshop

Title of workshop	Title of proposal reviews
1) Legislation and regulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft law governing records and archives management. Decree of application. Draft decree on the organization and functioning of the national archives. Draft text on special advantages for professionals practicing in the domains
2) Workshop on policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National procedure manual on records and archives management • National guide on records Schedule • Circular on organization of records and archives management
3) Information technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of the national plan for the dematerialization of archives in Cameroon • Construction standards of archives buildings.

Source: National Archives Records

The workshop came up with four main recommendations as follows:

i. That the Ministry of Arts and Culture should carry out a National Inventory of records and archives management services and units, so as to have a mastery of the practices and operations as well as the types and other specificities of records being managed within the national territory;

ii. The signing of two conventions to ensure collaboration between the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the National Normalization Agency on the one hand, and the National Order of Architects on the other. Both conventions were meant to take care of issues relating to construction and reconstructing of archives services;

iii. That all the drafts submitted for review be validated by the appropriate bodies, taking into considerations all the amendments except those texts that were found necessary to go through major restructuring by new ad hoc committees and;

iv. That training institutions and professional associations be integrated each time work groups are put in place to examine problems on projects related to records and archives management.

The 2012 workshop could be rightly considered as the watershed of the sanitization of the archival system and practices in Cameroon. This is because, thanks to it,

i. The general public and all the major stake holders were sensitized through various mass communication media –radio, televisions, print, internet etc. After that, three televised round table conferences on topical issues were conducted.

ii. A National Dematerialization Plan was drafted and pilot equipment acquired in 2014.

iii. A public contract to carry out a National Audit of archives services and structures was realized in 2013.

iv. A more acceptable archives law and text of application were drafted though yet to be promulgated.

Organization wise, the year 2012 also registered another significant progress. *Decree No 2012/381 of 14th September 2012* that reorganized the Ministry of Arts and Culture, in its chapter IV, modified the former Directorate of Archives as it became the Directorate of Archives and Records Management (DADA). The new element of records management was added to archives in line with the holistic and integrated approach. The new directorate was made up of a sub directorate, a unit and three services. This was a great improvement over the 2005 organigram. More so, article 87 of this same decree made the National Archives an attached service of the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Two years later, decree n° 2014/0882/PM of 30th April 2014 published a text on the organization and functioning of the National Archives as an attached service of the Ministry of Arts and Culture. It was expected that the moment this structure goes operational, over fifty percent of the problems linked to the effective management of records and archives in Cameroon would naturally find their solutions.

Another issue that witnessed significant attention and progress was training. The nine months training program which was ran by the Central Archives Service, was suspended since 2007 because it no longer responded to the needs of the time and also because it lacked legal legitimacy. Its re-launch became one of the major projects of the department since 2010. By 2014, all the paper work relating to curricular development and other related issues were ready. This was to

go operational with the commencement of the National Institute of Arts and Culture (INAC). Within time, other programs to train archivists, record managers and librarians had been opened in the Universities of Maroua (2008) Dschang (2010) Protestant University of Central Africa –UPAAC (2007) and Buea (2008). These programs significantly improved upon the situation of staff shortages in both public and private archives structures.

It is important to underscore the fact that, major strides were also made in the domain of professional solidarity. In this respect, the department recognized and institutionalized the annual celebration of the International Archives Day. Since 2013, every 9th June witnessed remarkable festivities ranging from round table conferences, open door days and varied exhibitions and film projections. Through this forum, the department progressively and systematically imposed itself as the pivot around which archives and records management gravitated nationwide.

In the sphere of International Cooperation, since 2009, the department did not only got enlisted as member of major professional associations like the International Council on Archives (ICA), the Association of Commonwealth Archivist (ACARM), the Association of Francophone Archivist (IAF) but also actively participated in annual meeting in Dakar-Senegal (2009) Malta (2010) Norway-Oslo(2011) Girona-Spain (2014) and Bali-Indonesia (2015) respectively. Bilaterally, it worked with the Bundes Archiv, the French National Archives National Archives of Ghana and Senegal on a number of projects.

II. MAJOR LANDMARKS THAT CONSTITUTE THE MUTATION AND SOME RELATED ANALYSES

Alongitudinal examination of the major mutations of the development of archival practices throughout the four major epochs as outlined above, leaves one with the general impression that all had been set for the sprouting of a viral and vibrant system of records and archives management in Cameroon. However, the current scenario may not really be as feasible and impressive as it may seem. The various developments be them regulatory, administrative organizational, structural, or in terms of training and staffing would have been flawed at one moment or the other, by inconsistencies, illogicalities, incompleteness, or even administrative ambivalence and aberrations. These may be determined by critically reviewing the major determinants of a comprehensive and

effective archives and records management system as they occurred in the mutations.

II.1. NATIONAL ARCHIVES PLACING

The placing of the National Archives as a coordinating organ is primordial to the smooth functioning of the entire archives system. Yet as early as 1978 the Cameroon National Archives had attained its highest statute. At this time, it had not only gained complete autonomy, but had also been given the most prestigious placing ever, as it was directly attached to the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic. The National Archives had thus acquired all it takes to operate optimally-visibility, autonomy, power and certainly financial prowess. Unfortunately, records have it that barely twelve years later, this same structure had lost all the above mentioned qualities. It had been reduced to a mere service in a "third class ministry". Even the so called "period of the Renaissance" would not be able to salvage the lost statute of the mother archive. During this era, the loco- standing of the archives rather witnessed more cacophony. Thus in 2005 the Directorate of archives was created as an integral part of the ministry of Culture, yet this new structure did not come as a replacement of the national archives. The new directorate from 2009 would be made to occupy the structure of the National Archives, run its services and carry out the functions of this moribund structure. Yet Decree no2012/381 of 14th September 2012 that reorganized the new ministry of Arts and Culture simply took this cacophony to another pedestal. It did not only add the Record Management functions to the directorate of archives but went further to confirm the existence of the National Archives as an attached service to the Ministry of Arts and Culture. This move was concretized two years later by Decree no2014/0882 of 30th April 2014 on the organization the functioning of the National Archives. The problems that are likely to emanate from this administrative quack mire are likely to be hydra headed especially within the dispensation of a developing nation like Cameroon. Issues of division of functions, separation of powers, adequate funding, duplication and redundancy are all likely to come to play. Above all, the creation of directorates does not necessarily guarantee their autonomy nor does it automatically provide them the needed powers, funding and personnel.

II.2. LEGISLATION

The domain of Records and Archives management is a highly regulated one. How effective or otherwise such a system would function would significantly depend on the law and other related regulations in force. In the case of Cameroon its history none the less recorded significant strides for like Schaefer had remarked way back in 1974, Cameroon had put in place enough legislative premises for the smooth functioning of its archives services. Though he observed that the application left much to be desired, this view is corroborated by the Minister of culture (2011) who remarked that even though the archives law was promulgated about forty years later, enough regulatory mechanism had been put in place to enable the archives system function smoothly. But all the said arsenal put together would not effectively turn the Cameroon archival turbines at the needed velocity. Apart from the fact that the law alone cannot do the magic, the 2000 law and its 2001 decree of application are in themselves marred with serious irregularities and lacunas. The law to say the least is simply not feasible. This explains why barely eleven years after its promulgation, a Prime ministerial directive was issued requesting the said law to be reviewed. This directive was clear on the fact that this was to enable the law meet up with the legal expectations in the domain. Needless to say that the history of archives in Cameroon does not manifest the existence of most of the complementary elements to this main regulatory framework like directives procedure manuals etc, this is even better understood when one considers either the context under which the 1986 statute was written or that which the 2000 archives law was drafted.

II.3. TRAINING AND STAFFING OF THE STRUCTURES

Record and archives management are labor intensive activities by their very nature. This is more so in the context of Cameroon which is yet to embrace the assistance significant technology in executing most of the tasks. In this light, Ngwang (2006) reported the acute shortage in personnel that Mann the records and archives structures in the Cameroon civil service. Even more serious was the problem of the quality of staff who manage these structures. In this light, Schaefer (1974) did not only propose the minimum number (36) of staff to Mann the national archives system but went to propose a training plan for the

various category of staff needed to carry out minimum service. Forty years later, the staffing situation of the Cameroon National archives System has not witnessed any significant increase. This picture is better painted by the table that shows these figures. This situation sharply contradicts with the relative large number that the six training schools have graduated. The question now is, where do these graduates go to after graduation? What is the government's policy towards recruitment of professionals in this domain?

II.4. FUNDING/POLITICAL WILL

These two elements may even prime over the rest of the factors analyzed above. This is largely true given the fact that most of the advances made in archives management were during the period when the directorate was directly attached to the presidency of the republic. Then, there were regular funding, bursaries were offered for training and extensions were made to the provinces, even extra working hours were paid and so there was enough motivation. The moment this structure was detached from this sovereign structure till today, thing have never been the same again.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From a close analysis of the developments of records and archives management in Cameroon (from inception up till 2015), a number of epochs are discernable. These periods are generally characterized by both positive and negative moves. The mutations do not manifest major consistent nor comprehensive development in record and archives management practices within the period under study. It is certain that significant advances were made in various aspects during "the golden ages", but these were almost completely and systematically eroded during the "dark ages". Worst still, what appeared as a new dawn "the renaissance" was mere symptomatic and sporadic endeavors that lacked symphony, consistency and coherence. This mired efforts obviously left the archival scene in a state of confusion, in which so much seemed to have happened whereas no concrete foundation was laid.

It would be strongly recommended that for such situations to be sanitized, the following steps should be taken:

i. Empower the structure in charge of the record and archives management function. This can be done by granting this structure autonomy and attaching it to a more inter-ministerial structure like the prime ministry or the presidency as was formerly the case. This will provide the structure with most of what it needs to be effective and efficient. These include: visibility, power, autonomy and enough funding.

ii. Enact and implement comprehensive legislation that can appropriately regulate the life-cycle management of records and archives, irrespective of medium and format. A single authority should also be designated to coordinate the function and other associated authorities be assigned clear responsibilities for their respective actions at various stages. This to a significant extent finds its relevance in the prime ministerial directives of 2012.

iii. Put in place competent authorities that should oversee the institutionalization and harmonization of appropriate training programs and an appropriate recruitment policy be formulated to feed the archives structures with trained and enough staff. A comprehensive career profile should also be developed for this profession.

iv. Progressively provide adequate resources including staff, functional buildings, and appropriate equipment and funding this should be accompanied by acceptable policies and procedures which together will ensure the maintenance of an integrated and sustainable records and archives management programs.

RÉFÉRENCES

1) JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Enwere J.C. (1989), Problems of Archives Administration and Records Management in English Speaking West African States, *Journal of the Society of Nigerian Archivists*, 1(1)p.1-13
- Myeng E. (1985), *Histoire du Cameroun*, T2, Yaoundé, CEPER. 150p.
- Mouhamadou E. (1972), *Catalogue des archives coloniales allemandes du Cameroun*, Yaoundé, Institut Goethe.
- Schaefer V. (1973), *Organisation des archives nationales et d'un système de pré-archivage*, Paris UNESCO, 21p.
- Ukwu C.A. (1995), *The Archives in Nigeria: Its mission and vision in The Nigerian Archives*, vol.2 no.1, 10p.
- Ukwu C.A. (1996), *The changing Role of the Archivist in West African States*, *Journal of WARBICA* 1(1), 12p
- Minac (2011), *Les système national de gestion des archives*, conseil de cabinet, 28 Juillet 2011, Services du premier Ministre, 12 p
- Verkijike F.(1998), *A brief history of Archives in Cameroon*, 4p.
- Randall J. (2010), *Archives power and the digital future; supporting Democracy and human rights*, round table of the international council on Archives, CITRA 2010, Oslo Norway, 12p.
- Azangweo C.A. (2000), *Information for accountability workshop, a paper on records Management delivery*, 7p.

2.) REPORTS

- Fogwe A. P. (2013), *A report on the Buea National Archives Annex*, 6p.
- Buttin L. (1958), *Rapport sur les activités du service des archives et du dépôt légal au cours du 2eme semestre 1958*, 7p.
- Mbappe K. B. (1992), *rapport de missions effectuées par le directeur adjoint des archives nationales dans les services provinciaux des archives di littoral, du sud oust, de l'ouest et du nord-ouest du 27-04-1992 au 16-05-1992 et dans ceux de l'est et du sud du 24-05-1992 au 02—6-1992*
- Sack M. (1988), *Les Archives Nationales Aujourd'hui*, 6p.
- Etende M. (1966), *Rapport Annuel des archives au Cameroun*, 11p.
- Sack. M. (1966), *Compte rendu des travaux pratiques réalise aux archives nationales au cours de l'an 1965*, 6p.

3.) THESIS AND DISSERTATION

- Ngwang M.N. (2006), Records management practices in the Cameroonian civil service, A thesis presented for the award of a PhD in library, archival and information studies, University of Ibadan, 157 p.
- Njoh N.J.Y. (2013), Contribution a la connaissance de l'histoire des Archives Nationales de Yaounde de 1952 a 2001, A thesis presented for the award of a master degree in history, University of Yaoundé I, 130 p.
- Mengong M. M.G. (2005), L'Organisation et le fonctionnement des Archives Nationales de Yaoundé, A dissertation presented for the award of a diploma in library and Information sciences, ASMAC, University of Yaoundé II, 82 p.
- Nzogne N.M. (2013), Archivage et bonne gouvernance: Le cas des Archives nationales de Yaoundé-Cameroun, Projet d'interventions présenté en vue de l'obtention du diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées en management public (DESS-MP), 135 p.

LEGISLATION

Laws

Loi N°. 2000/010 du 19 Décembre 2000 régissant les archives au Cameroun.

Decrees

Decree n° 65DF-249 of 12 June 1965 reorganizing the presidency of the republic.

Decrees n° 66-DF-412 of 17 august 1966, organizing the Federal Archives and Library.

Decree n° 73-1 of 3rd January 1973 which changed the status from Department of Federal Archives to the Department of National Archives and Library.

Decree n° 83-106 of 3rd March 1983 reorganizing the Presidency of the Republic.

Decree n° 84-30 of 4th February 1984 organizing the Presidency of the Republic.

Decree n° 84-30 of 1984 transferring the department from the Presidency of the Republic to the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Decree n°. 931-138 of 19th may 1995 organizing the Ministry of Culture

Decree n° 98/003 of 8th January 1998 reorganizing the Ministry of Culture.

Decree n° 2005/177 of 27th May 2005 organizing the then Ministry of Culture that created the Directorate of Archives.
Decree n° 2008/2750 of 12th November 2008, appointing staff to major post of responsibilities in the Ministry of Culture,
Decree n° 2014/0882/PM of 30th April 2014 related to the organization and functioning of the National Archives.

ORDERS

Arête n° 1489 of 20th April 1949 authorizing the organization of the general administrative service of the high commission of the French republic in Cameroon.
Arête N° 2924 of 28 May formally creating an Archive service in Yaoundé.
Arête n° 33 CAB/PM of 3rd May 1957 which specified that the cabinet of the Prime Minister should have an archivist.

DIRECTIVES

Directives N°. A974/SG/PM of 8th of August 2011 on legal framework of collecting conserving and management of archives.