

The Training of Archivists From Developing Countries: A Commonwealth Perspective

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This paper presents the standpoint of one who has worked for a number of years in a national archives in a developing country and has subsequently been involved in the training of archivists from such countries in London, England. This experience has resulted in awareness of both the practical problems of archivists in developing countries and the complexities of designing archival training programmes. The paper examines international developments in archival training and the manner in which a Commonwealth emphasis could contribute to them. Virtually all training of archivists from Commonwealth countries takes place within the Commonwealth on a British model; but the similarities in the structure and content of Commonwealth records, resulting from similar administrative systems, have been little explored as a basis for effective training. The substantial progress, initiated by UNESCO, in establishing the profession internationally over the last two decades, could be greatly enhanced within the Commonwealth if these similarities were exploited to develop common procedures for handling records.

Origins of Archival Training for Developing Countries

Very little archival training had taken place in the developing Commonwealth by the end of the colonial period. The British Colonial Office had begun to issue circulars concerning the preservation of records, but there were little more than embryonic archives in most of the former territories; only in a few places, such as Ghana, Nigeria, Malaysia, and Fiji were there properly designed and well-equipped archival buildings. When national archives were established in the 1960s, British assistance to the development of archival systems took the form of visits by British archivists as consultants to Commonwealth countries and by archivists from Commonwealth countries to Britain; a smaller number of archivists were sent for training to University College London.¹ The real impetus for archival development was to come from UNESCO.

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1 J.R. Ede, "Technical Assistance for Development of Archives: The Viewpoint of Donor Countries," *Archives* 8 (1972), pp. 210-11.

Although UNESCO has been interested in archival development since 1948, it put little emphasis prior to 1966 on archival programmes for developing countries.² In 1948, at the instigation of the Society of American Archivists, UNESCO convened a small international group of experts in Paris to advise it on archival needs and problems. With UNESCO's support, this group proposed the creation of an International Council on Archives, and, two years later, the ICA was formally established in Paris during the first International Congress on Archives. Over the next fifteen years, the ICA and UNESCO undertook various projects, including the compilation of guides to sources for the history of various nations and an international programme to microfilm documents considered of particular significance; but there was no specific major programme to assist the new national archives in the developing areas of the world.³

In 1966, an extraordinary Congress on Archives was convened in Washington; again on the initiative of the Society of American Archivists. For the first time, travel grants from the American Council of Library Resources made possible world-wide representation. At almost every session, the delegates, representing fifty-eight countries, emphasized the urgent need to assist the archives of developing countries. As a result, a resolution was passed approving the establishment of a permanent working group to investigate and coordinate means of assisting them. Two years later at the Madrid Congress, the general assembly endorsed orientation of the ICA's main effort to promotion of archival development in the underdeveloped regions of Africa and Latin America.⁴

The ICA's initial planning for this task was based on an extensive examination of the state of international archival development in 1967 by its Executive Secretary, Charles Kecskemeti, who was under contract to UNESCO.⁵ Significantly, his proposals emphasized training as a key element in archival assistance. Africa was chosen as the first area for development. From the outset, the expense of Western training, the fact that it prepared students for employment in relatively advanced archival environments rather than in small institutions operating on a subsistence level in the tropics, and the impracticality of providing training at the national level were seen as problems. The concept of regional training centres, staffed by foreign experts and used cooperatively by the various countries in a region, was borrowed very early on from the library field.⁶ Two such centres were to be established in Africa, one for francophone countries and one for anglophone. Each was to be attached to a university, associated with an archival establishment, and, if possible, with a school of librarianship. Overseas training was to be reserved primarily for archival leaders requiring to perfect their professional expertise.

Senegal was selected to serve the francophone countries for several reasons. UNESCO had already sponsored a regional training centre there for librarians for several years; it was logical to expand the centre to train professional archivists and documentalists.⁷

2 Frank Evans, "UNESCO and Archives Development," *UNESCO Journal of Information Science, Librarianship and Archives Administration* (hereafter *UJISLAA*) 3 (1982), pp. 159-60.

3 S.N. Prasad, "Technical Assistance for Development of Archives: The Viewpoint of Developing Countries," *Archivum* 24 (1974), p. 191.

4 W.L. Smith, "The ICA and Technical Assistance to Developing Countries," *The American Archivist* 39, no. 3 (1976), pp. 343-44; Ede, "Technical Assistance," p. 205.

5 Smith, "ICA and Technical Assistance," p. 343.

6 Morris Rieger, "Archives in Developing Countries: The Regional Training Centre Movement," *The American Archivist* 35 (1972), pp. 163-71.

7 Rieger, "Archives in Developing Countries," pp. 166-68.

Furthermore, the Archives in Dakar, housing the records of the Haut-Commissariat-Général, was the oldest and one of the best-administered archival establishments in Africa. Founded in 1913, it published the first inventory of its holdings in 1922, and inventories were produced throughout the 1950s based on the French departmental registry system.⁸ The documents were well stored and there was a well-run search room. These factors provided a good basis for the two-year archival training course for school leavers which was established in 1971 with assistance from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It followed French archival traditions and contained a small element of general education.

The second centre was established at the University of Ghana's School of Librarianship, again with UNDP funds.⁹ While of more recent origin than the Senegal Archives, the Ghana Archives were the best developed in English-speaking West Africa. Opened in 1946, the office had the advantage of serving a medium-sized country rather than a large federation such as those of the French African territories or Nigeria. Moreover, having had the continuous services of the same professionally trained archivist since 1949, it housed records from all levels of government; classification was complete for the main bodies of central government correspondence; there were complete accession lists for unclassified material. The Archives had also been active in obtaining originals or photostats of private papers and had, therefore, as complete a range of historical sources as any part of tropical Africa.¹⁰ It had repair and photographic facilities and a pleasant search room. The Ghana School opened in 1974; following the British tradition, it offered a one-year post-graduate course and a nine-month course for school leavers.¹¹

Thus, by the mid-1970s, the regional training movement seemed well launched, and the ICA planned to set up comparable schools in the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean by 1980. However, the movement has failed to progress, and as the only ICA/UNESCO regional archival training programme in the Commonwealth, the Ghana School must be examined to understand why it failed as a regional programme and the possible relevance it may have for future training programmes.

During the period of UNDP sponsorship, the Ghana centre trained archivists from most of the English-speaking African countries. With the withdrawal of UNDP in 1980, it did not prove possible to involve other African governments in its funding. As a result, the regional centre became, in effect, a national school. It still served the countries of the immediate region but drew progressively fewer candidates from East and Central Africa.¹² From its inception, the school was very successful in spreading a sense of professionalism and in developing relevant areas of study along new lines such as African administrative history and the training of archivists as both managers of institutions and practising professionals. However, it never really overcame a stumbling-block which was to have a fundamental effect on its teaching strategies. It proved difficult to provide the

8 Philip Curtain, "The Archives of Tropical Africa: A Reconnaissance," *Journal of African History* 1, 1(1960), pp. 131-32.

9 Rieger, "Archives in Developing Countries," p. 170; UNESCO/UNDP, "Regional Training Centre for Archivists-Accra [RTCA] Project findings and Recommendations," Terminal Report (UNDP/RAF/72/071), (1981).

10 Curtain, "Archives of Tropical Africa," p. 137.

11 Rieger, "Archives in Developing Countries," p. 171.

12 RTCA, "Terminal Report," (1981), p. 35.

practical experience with operative working systems which is so essential to training effective archivists. As the final UNESCO programme report indicated:

The most important teaching aid in the teaching of archival subjects is the possibility of carrying out practical work under skilled supervision in an archive repository. While the arrangement exists in Accra, there is no organised system whereby the students could spend practical periods in the repository. The difficulty involved in arranging practical sessions is compounded by the fact that there is no trained staff at the National Archives who could devote their spare time to the supervision of the practical assignments of the RCTA students.¹³

However, even had there been staff to supervise practical sessions, and had it been possible to overcome transportation difficulties to the Archives, thirteen miles away, the Archives could not provide effective working models for other African countries due to internal difficulties. It is worth quoting at length the experience of a Ghanaian researcher at the Archives at about this time, for it highlights not only the problems of the Ghanaian programme but the plight faced by many African archivists:

At the very top the Senior Archivists are frustrated by lack of government support, by the tardy and meagre response to their requests for equipment and materials. Their own disillusionment is reflected in the failure to exercise control over junior staff. And the Archives suffer. The loose-index cards ... can be found lying on the diminutive desks in the Search Room at Accra weeks after one has finished using them. The same applies to the documents themselves. Re-shelving is intermittent.... It is also important to acknowledge the affectionate help that practically all Archives officers and workers are willing to give the researcher. The expressions of gratitude to them expressed in many theses and publications are richly deserved.

However, this individual willingness cannot really transcend the institutional failings of the Archives. There is nothing that a willing officer can do for example about the decay of documents caused by a broken-down air conditioner. The special low heat light-bulbs that are used in the repositories are all burnt out and have not been replaced, the researcher will be told again and again that the documents he has called for are missing when the real problem is that locating them in the gloom is a near-impossible task even with the torch-lights with which some enterprising officers have armed themselves.¹⁴

Since regional schools have been difficult to finance and manage, UNESCO has moved toward encouraging individual countries to establish archive and records management schools to serve their own needs within the framework of its international standards, and it has devoted increasing attention to the development of these standards.¹⁵ This trend resulted in the establishment within the General Information Programme (PGI) of the Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP)

13 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

14 Kojo Bentsi-Enchill, "Researching in the Gloom of the Archives," *West Africa* (2 March 1981), p. 437.

15 Michael Cook, "An International Standard for the Training of Archivists and Records Managers," *UJISLAA* 4 (1982).

which has been regularly producing studies, guides, and other reports. The study most relevant to this paper, Michael Cook's "Guidelines for Curriculum Development in Records Management and the Administration of Modern Archives," is intended to raise professional standards of training at all levels and systematize them between nations. The report also covers potential for joint training with documentalists and librarians in areas such as reprographics, information retrieval, user services, bibliography, and conservation. This reflects UNESCO's long-standing emphasis on the interrelationship of the information professions. Particularly after the creation of the PGI in 1977, there have been increasing efforts to harmonize curricula for librarians, documentalists, and archivists. The result has been to define archival studies no longer as a history-related discipline but as part of a total approach to handling information.¹⁶

UNESCO and the ICA have, essentially since 1966, addressed successfully many of the critical problems in preserving records in developing countries and established an international network of professional archivists who are very much concerned with the ongoing problem of training. Yet, despite the effort that has been devoted to regional training and to developing international training guidelines, fundamental problems remain; and it is to these problems that a Commonwealth emphasis should be able to make an effective contribution.

Essentially, archival training for developing countries continues to present a circular dilemma: local training cannot yet provide exposure to well-established professional and technical systems within which the archivist may acquire practical experience (as has been the case in Ghana) while training abroad based solely on exposure to such systems is difficult to apply to the practical conditions in the countries concerned (as UNESCO recognized from the beginning of its training efforts). The UNESCO/ICA solution envisages a systematic programme of continuing studies to supplement both approaches and surmount their difficulties; and indeed it is this which the Commonwealth, with its many levels of archival achievement and markedly similar administrative systems, is increasingly able to provide.

Existing Commonwealth Training Programmes

Since 1966, when the lack of appropriate training for archivists from developing countries inspired the regional training movement, important developments have taken place in existing training programmes within the Commonwealth which need re-examination in terms of what they can now offer, particularly in alliance with regional or national training schemes. While the long-planned Southeast Asia regional training centre in Malaysia has not materialized, the school attached to the National Archives of India in New Delhi has developed on a national basis assisted by UNESCO. Run on the British model, although it does not belong to a university, the school contributes regularly to training archivists from developing countries by providing relevant courses at low cost,

16 Edwin Welch, "Archival Education," *Archivaria* 4 (Summer, 1977), pp. 50-51; Bruno Delmas, "The Training of Archivists: Analysis of the Study Programmes of Different Countries and Thoughts on the Possibilities of Harmonisation," UNESCO Report, 1979; Michael Cook, "Professional Training of Archivists: Problems of Modernisation and Harmonisation," *UJISLAA* 2, no. 3 (1980); Jacques Tocatlian, "Information for Development: The Role of UNESCO's General Information Programme," *UJISLAA* 3 (1981); Evans, "UNESCO and Archives Development," pp. 161-66.

including, in addition to standard professional courses, strong emphasis on tropical paper conservation and an option to study the archives of developing countries.¹⁷

Canada and Australia also offer courses which, while not specifically geared to the problems of developing countries, provide exposure to systems which can be implemented elsewhere. The School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales has since 1973 offered a diploma in Archives Administration which, while based on a British model and Australian history and politics, is available to overseas students.¹⁸ Canada has in the past provided places for archivists from developing countries to gain practical experience by spending periods of one to three months in the Public Archives of Canada; others have attended its four-week course for practising archivists.¹⁹ The Canadian concept of "total archives" has a strong appeal for developing countries, and future links with Canada may be especially relevant, particularly with the establishment of the new Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia in 1981. Administered jointly by the School of Librarianship and the Department of History, it offers a two-year M.A. degree which, while making no special provision for overseas students and requiring all students to study Canadian historiography, would admit overseas students.²⁰

The most relevant training programme for developing countries outside the schools supported by the UNDP in Senegal and Ghana and by UNESCO in India is at the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies at University College, London. Established in 1947 to train British archivists, its programme was based on Public Record Office theory and practice and emphasized training for handling medieval and Tudor documents. However, with the enormous increase in the quantity and variety of twentieth-century records, it became imperative to re-examine its syllabus. Since 1970 the school has offered a range of options designed to serve British archivists concerned with post-medieval or mainly modern documents as well as archivists from other countries whose needs are partly the same as those of British archivists but who also need instruction relevant to their own countries.²¹ It thus became possible to qualify for a professional diploma without having to pass examinations in irrelevant auxiliary subjects. Over the last decade, fifty-nine diploma level archivists have been trained from Africa, Asia, and the West Indies and thirteen from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.²² The school has recently introduced an M.A. in Overseas Archives which could enhance the training appropriate to developing countries.

Inadequacy of the Numbers Presently Trained

The range of Commonwealth training programmes thus provides a number of places at the graduate level and offers exposure to a variety of systems, but still fails to meet the

17 UNESCO, *The Education and Training of Archivists: Status Report of the Archival Training Programmes and Assessment of Manpower Needs*, (1979).

18 Peter Orlovich, "Some Basic Assumptions Underlying the Education and Training of Archivists," *Archives and Manuscripts* 6 (1976), pp. 204-26.

19 Ede, "Technical Assistance," p. 211.

20 Terry Eastwood, "The Origins and Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer, 1983), pp. 35-44.

21 Roger Ellis, "The British Archivist and His Training," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1967), pp. 265-71; Ede, "Technical Assistance," p. 210.

22 John MacIlwaine, School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University College, London, personal communication, October 1983.

needs of archive services in developing countries. At the end of the 1970s, a UNESCO report on the education and training of archivists provided the following statistics on training facilities for archivists from developing countries: the regional school at Accra produces a total of about fifteen places a year at graduate and intermediate levels; the Archive School at the National Archives of India provides three to ten places a year for graduate and non-graduate foreign students; the School of Library and Archives at the University of New South Wales offers up to about six places; and the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies in London has been providing between four and six places for graduates only. This amounts to about twenty-five graduate and twenty-eight intermediate level archivists from the whole of the third world outside Latin and South America. We can add to these figures about eight non-graduates trained at the Kenya Polytechnic, on a course initially assisted by UNESCO/NORAD but now funded by the Kenyan government, and about twelve (or twenty-five in two years) from Senegal.²³

The inadequacy of these figures is demonstrated by the findings of a UNESCO survey of training facilities and needs undertaken in 1978-79.²⁴ In the developed world the supply of trained personnel produced by archive schools was found to be broadly adequate, but in the third world the numbers of trained personnel were definitely insufficient. The survey showed for a sample of ten selected Commonwealth national or state archives services that there were 123 professional staff members of whom 61 were trained; the services were proposing to generate 117 new posts, giving a total projected growth of 95 per cent. In four randomly selected services in Africa, not necessarily in the Commonwealth, the professional staff numbered 141, with 73 trained and a projected expansion of 208, giving a total projected growth of 147 per cent. In Asia, the three major archive services employed 441 professional staff, of which 130 were trained, with 385 posts projected, a total projected growth of 81 per cent. Even if they are not taken at face value, these figures suggest a need for far more than twenty-five training places a year. Moreover, this represented only the numbers projected at the graduate level, whereas three intermediate staff to one trained graduate archivist is common. A large developed archive service can provide its own recommended internal training but a new institution attempting to develop efficient standards is unlikely to be able to train at the rate of expansion envisaged.

In the technical fields, the situation is even more serious. Even in the developed countries, there is rarely adequate training for conservationists. The supply of traditional craft workers meets the demand to a reasonable extent, and there are a few organized academic courses such as those in Britain at the Camberwell College of Arts and Crafts in London and the Gateshead Polytechnic in Newcastle and in Australia at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. However, in the developing world, the supply of conservation personnel is so extremely limited that many countries cannot attempt conservation work at all, even though in most cases climatic and storage conditions are worse than in the developed world. There is a conservation unit at the Ghana School, but it is almost non-functional due to lack of materials and failures of equipment; only in Malaysia and India has it been possible to build up conservation units with a high reputation and training facilities available to students from other countries. India offers a formal course and provides a large conservation element in the training of archivists,

23 UNESCO, *Education and Training of Archivists*, pp. 7-11. The National Archives of India has since increased its enrolment of overseas students to about twenty-five.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

while Malaysia can provide attachments. Reprographics is equally underdeveloped. Most countries have some representation from international reprographic firms and copying industries. India includes a course in reprographics in the archives course; Canada offers a six-week training course and various workshops have been organized nationally and regionally, but there is still a general lack of training. Technical training for data processing has for the most part not yet become an issue.²⁵

No more than a tentative quantification of the overall numbers requiring training can be given, but the UNESCO report on the education and training of archivists attempts to extrapolate figures provided by hypothetical statistical models and check them against actual available figures to provide the following estimates:²⁶

Latin America and the Caribbean:

high level 322
intermediate 768
technical 367

Africa:

high level 218
intermediate 768
technical 367

South Asia:

high level 193
intermediate 426
technical 277

Australasia/Oceania:

high level 176
intermediate 731
technical 141

Relevance of the Commonwealth to Future Archival Training

Given these needs, training must continue to be a major concern to UNESCO, the ICA, and in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth's historical continuities in administrative systems and policy, access to developed procedures, and ongoing cultural links contain solutions to two general problems in the development of international standards for the training of archivists and record managers — the cultural/linguistic and the administrative discontinuities between the major regions of the world.²⁷ Yet, not only are the records of the former British territories written in a common language, but they have much in common both in terms of their creation and their subsequent management. Whether training is developed at a national, regional, or international level, and it would seem important to approach it on all three, these similarities can provide the basis for developing effective programmes.

National schools are undoubtedly a trend of major significance for the future; but while there is a widespread desire in developing countries for local archival training and less

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-26.

²⁷ Cook, "International Standard;" UNESCO, *Education and Training of Archivists*, p. 114.

dependence on scholarships to programmes in developed countries, it will be unfeasible for many countries to establish their own schools. In addition to the problem already noted of providing effective working models, the factors which initially motivated the regional approach, notably the relatively small numbers of students to be trained annually in any one country, the expense of running a school which will require a number of experienced and academically trained staff, and the difficulties in recruiting that staff, militate against national schools. Moreover, many national budgets are already strained to provide training in primary development fields.

Nevertheless, where there is a need, national schools will develop (in some cases initially with international assistance) and will become part of the national education programme such as in India and the developed countries. As the schools grow, they are likely to attract students on a regional basis, but, unlike the regional centres, their finances will be secure in the national budget. This is already the case in Ghana where the regional training centre has formally become a national school but continues to serve the surrounding countries. In Kenya, the Polytechnic is beginning to receive requests from neighbouring countries to enroll students in its archives assistants course; and the proposals for the forthcoming second University include provision for a Faculty of Information Science including library, documentation, and archive studies.

Where such schools do develop, the administrative patterns and registry systems in Commonwealth countries provide an excellent and logical basis for developing the specific common procedures for the management, appraisal, arrangement, and description of documents which are so difficult to establish at the general international level. Even the briefest examination of the broadly similar categories of records in the national archives of former colonial territories illustrates the common training potential. At the centre of the former territorial governments, where incoming despatches were filed with minutes and procedural notations of the governor's staff, the governor and his secretariat kept records in the course of decision making at the higher levels, at first in bound volumes and later in case files. These secretariat records also include administrative orders and government correspondence with private citizens, subordinate governing bodies, and other territorial governments. As forms of representative government developed, executive and legislative councils were in due course everywhere set up; the councils generated minute books in a common format which recorded at least the decisions reached, if not the process of reaching them, as well as legislative decrees. The development of specialized executive or legal departments such as the judiciary, finance, lands, railways, and police everywhere followed a pattern, as did the records of the local administration. At each level, these records can be studied with a view to developing common procedures.

Regional training workshops for Commonwealth countries provide a useful means of examining common categories of records and considering appropriate systems for handling them. They can be used to supplement a local training programme, to involve surrounding countries, and, particularly where there is no local training programme, to apply skills learned abroad to practical conditions through supervised work experience and the introduction of technical expertise adapted to local conditions. Training workshops incorporating these themes were organized in Zanzibar in the summer of 1984 for participants from Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. They will continue in 1985 for, it is hoped, a wider geographical region (funded by the Commonwealth Foundation)

as a means of solving some of the major problems facing the Zanzibar Archives and of evolving working systems on a cooperative regional basis.

It is inevitable that for some time to come those who build up the national/regional training schools will have to be trained in programmes abroad. It is critical, therefore, that there be a basis for catering to the training needs of developing countries in the various programmes within the Commonwealth. India already offers an optional course in the archives of developing countries; perhaps the Australian programme, if the number of overseas students grows, may be inclined to do the same. We may also hope both Australia and Canada will increasingly recognize the contribution that practical attachments to their archives can make to archives in developing countries.

In London, the metropolitan centre of the Commonwealth, the availability of records relating to Commonwealth countries provides an important and essentially unexplored teaching resource which should be a logical adjunct to other training programmes within the Commonwealth. The new M.A. course at University College was introduced in the fall of 1984 specifically to serve the requirements of archivists from developing Commonwealth countries. Applications from non-Commonwealth countries are welcome, but the emphasis is on systems based on British practice, which may be quite different from those of countries with a different administrative heritage. Ultimately the programme should train up to twelve archivists a year.

Since training based simply on exposure to the well-established archival and technical systems available in London can be difficult to apply in circumstances prevailing in other countries, the new M.A. programme provides practical experience using relevant records and seeks to interpret theory in light of the kinds of difficulties presented by local conditions. The aim is to prepare overseas archivists to make major professional decisions in the areas of records management and archives administration and to implement them with the available resources and manpower.

British records related to former colonial territories provide the basis for much of the teaching for, however much the present administrations of Commonwealth countries may vary in detail, they all stem from the metropolitan model, and the records available in London, or easily accessible in Oxford, provide the single most extensive source of information about each country apart from its own records. The records of the Colonial Office constitute the major source, while the records of other British government departments involved in colonial affairs illustrate clearly the complex modern governmental structures archivists must understand. Moreover, from the late 1940s, when the Colonial Office began to take an interest in preserving colonial archives, it relied heavily in drafting circulars on the subject on the advice and procedures of the Public Record Office. These procedures, despite subsequent development and differences in scale, remain relevant; the PRO thus provides tremendous scope for supervised investigation, observation of custodial procedures, and acquisition of practical experience.

The course consists of two parts: six core subjects and a thesis. The core subjects, taught over one academic year, are Records Management, Records Office Management (or Archives Administration), Description of Documents, Preparation of Finding Aids, Overseas Historical Sources, and Overseas Administrative History. The Use of Computers in Record Offices is an optional subject. The first two courses are shared with British students, but with additional components relating them to overseas conditions. The second two are taught entirely at the PRO in day-long supervised practical sessions

held once a week. The last two courses provide a unifying framework for work in the other subjects. During the year, there is regular opportunity for discussion of common experiences and problems and their relation to the content of the training. The students also gain experience in local record offices, specialist repositories, or professional institutions. They attend illustrated talks on private, sound, and business archives and on tropical paper conservation by outside specialist lecturers. They make numerous visits to record repositories, and they have full access to the academic seminars and library facilities at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. A thesis on a subject relevant to the country concerned is also required. This might take the form of a catalogue of records relating to that country in Britain or an administrative history of a particular part of its government. The research may also be undertaken outside Britain and should relate directly to the local situation.

While of less interest to Canadians and Australians, in the light of the development of schools specifically suited to their own national needs, the course is relevant to those wanting to gain a metropolitan perspective. The common administrative inheritance and overlapping interests of Commonwealth countries are already apparent at the regular meetings in London of the Commonwealth Archivists Association's Standing Committee on copying, comprised of representatives of the Public Archives of Canada, the Australian Joint Copying Project, and all other Commonwealth archivists in London, including the M.A. students. Canadians and Australians may in due course also contribute to the University College Programme as have guest lecturers from the School of Archives Studies in Ghana and from the Kenya National Archives. Canada's experience with "total archives" is, for instance, of interest to many Commonwealth archivists.

Conclusion

Throughout the world the sheer complexity and volume of archival records makes effective training for a larger number of archivists essential. The exploitation of the similarities of records structures and historical experience within the Commonwealth can contribute significantly to the achievement of this goal. And the establishment of the Commonwealth Archivists Association is, itself, already a major step in this direction.