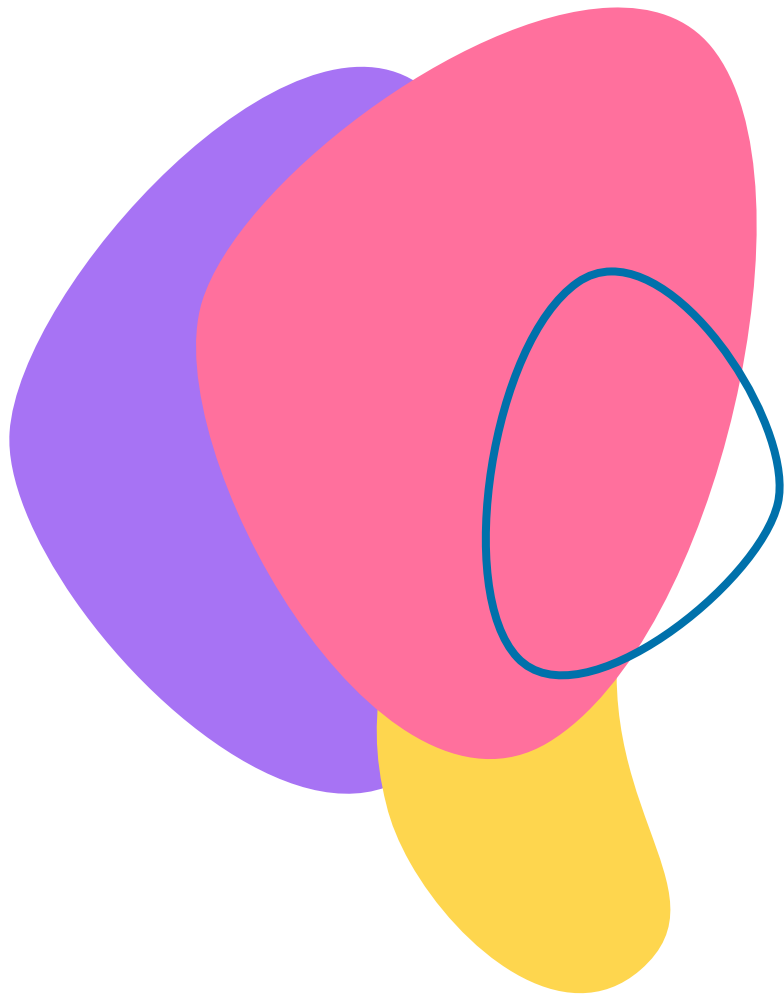


Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social Good

DPC Clinic, October 14, 2025

Clara M. Chu, Juliet Erima, Ruby L. Martinez, Abraham
Mulwo, Florence Plockey, Chris Prom





Project Background

Origins: Project emerged from discussions at iPRES 2023, where delegates from Kenya, Ghana, Tunisia expressed interest in collaboration.

Background: Reciprocal partnership between the University of Illinois, African archivists, Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC), and KM4Dev.

Introduction

- **Funding Source:** The CACASG project was funded by the **University of Illinois** “[Call to Action](#)” program, aimed at addressing systemic bias and structural disparities.
- **Context:** The project focuses on empowering African communities to preserve their histories and Indigenous knowledge through community-driven archives.
- **Collaboration:** Partnership between the University of Illinois, African archivists, Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC), and KM4Dev.

Acknowledgements

- Digital Preservation Coalition: William Kilbride and Karyn Williamson
- KM4Dev: Sarah Cummings
- Moi University: Abraham Mulwo, Daniel Rotich, Duncan Amoth, Joseph Kiplagat, Juliet Erima
- Nairobi City County: Villy Magero
- Smart Tunisian Technopark: Sami Meddeb
- State Department for Ec. Planning: Maureen Kenga
- Technical University of Accra: Florence Plockey
- University of Botswana: Tshepho Mosweu
- University of Illinois: Jessica Ballard-Lawrence, Clara M. Chu, Hannah Conner, Joshua Harris, Gladys Kemboi, Stephanie Luke, Ruby Martinez, Chris Prom, Janis Shearer, Will Schlaack, Anna Smith, Thea Soter, and Angela Waarala

Project Objectives and Goals

- **Main Goal:** Decolonize archiving and preservation resources and empower African communities to preserve their knowledge and cultural heritage.
- **Key Objectives:**
 - Build relationships for curriculum development integrating digital preservation and local knowledge.
 - Document and preserve Indigenous knowledge to support sustainable development.
 - Invest in Indigenous and local knowledge systems to ensure alignment with community needs.

Project Methodology

- **Collaboration:** Built on open knowledge exchange, mutual respect, and equitable participation informed by a *Working Agreement*.
- **Needs Assessment:** Started by identifying community-specific needs for targeted preservation training.
- **Resource Collection:** We gathered and organized existing resources to provide a strong foundation for the module development.
- **Iterative Module Development:** Working in small groups, we developed content for nine training modules.

Module Creation Process

Needs Assessment

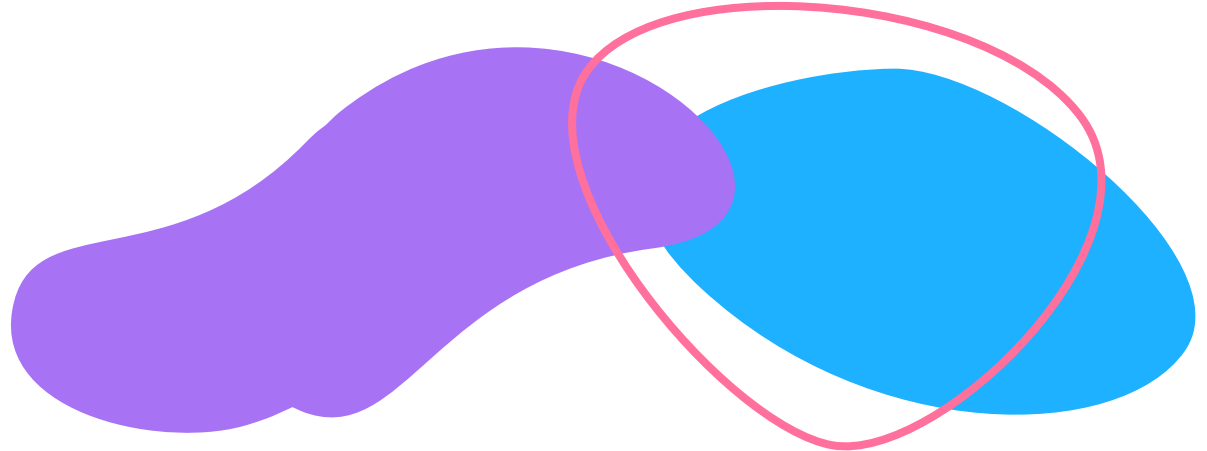
Collaborated with African partners to identify key areas for module development.

Resource Collection

Identified and collected existing resources to avoid redundancy and maximize impact.

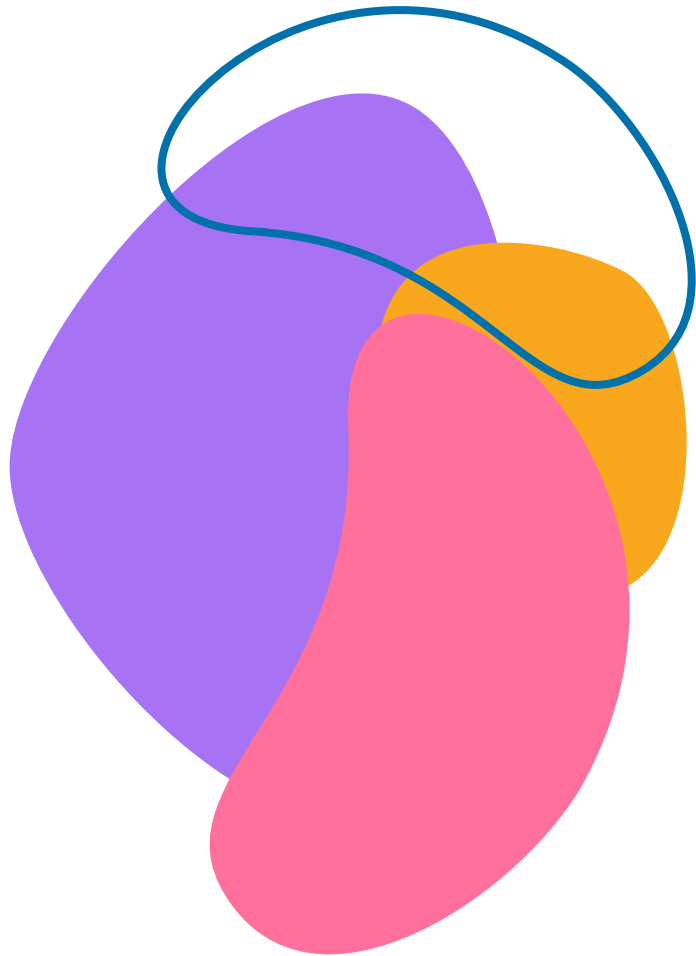
Module Development

Adapted and expanded existing resources based on assessment insights to create targeted, relevant modules.



Training Modules Developed

- Community Engagement
- Decolonial Approaches and Epistemic Justice
- Digitization for Community Archives: From Planning to Preservation
- Introduction to Audiovisual Archives
- Introduction to Digital Archives
- Introduction to Metadata Practices
- Legal and Ethical Considerations
- Planning for Impact: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning
- Oral History in Practice: Interview to Archive



Module Previews

Juliet Erima

Sami Meddeb

Clara M. Chu

Florence Plockey

Abraham Mulwo

Chris Prom

Introduction to Digital Archives

Module Presentation by Juliet Erima

Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social Good



Introduction to Digital Archives

This module provides a foundational understanding of digital archiving, covering its necessity, core concepts, and best practices.

1

Objective

Explore the fundamental differences between traditional and digital archives.

2

Objective

Provide an overview of the key concepts, principles and practices for the creation, preservation and access of digital archives.

3

Objective

Examine how best practices and technologies can be applied to organize, preserve and provide access to digital archives.

Part 1

- The transition from traditional to d-archival formats is discussed - Images of digitized archival materials held in University of Illinois and Moi University repositories are showcased to drive home this trajectory.
- The nexus between d-archiving and d-preservation, within the context of a community archive is explored.
- The d-archiving process is discussed, affirming the adage - Archiving is the action; Preservation is the long-term goal.
- Case studies of community archives are discussed - Tambach Museum, Ogiek Community archive and the Keiyo Community archive, with illustrations of some of the archival artifacts held therein.

Funding For Community Archives

- The module addresses the important component of securing funding for community archives.
- Emphasis: Process of identifying core operations within a community archive; budget preparation for their implementation; how to identify local resources and possible sources for funding.
- Participants are guided on how to develop a strategy for acquiring funds and sensitized on the available funding opportunities, including some of the potential grant sources.

PART 2: Building a Digital Archive

- The process of collection development is highlighted as the starting point, with emphasis being placed on building a collection of trusted resources as defined by the ICA.
- The Community Archive Digital Preservation Toolkit by DPC is used to provide guidance on the overall process of building a d-archive.



Practical Takeaways

- To ensure that the modules are impactful and engaging, exercises and links have been integrated at various points in the module, e.g. participant form on community archive; Discussion points; and participant exercises.
- Templates have additionally been included for important training activities to uniformity of structure and practical application for participants.
- Sources used are clearly acknowledged.
- Reading notes have been appended beneath each slide for enhanced understanding when using this resource for group trainings or as a self-paced resource.

Introduction to Audiovisual Archives

Module Presentation, by Sami Meddeb
Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social Good





Introduction to
Audiovisual Archives
**Catalyzing African
Community Archives for
Social Good**

Why Audiovisual Archiving Matters

Analogue film, magnetic tape and grooved discs across Africa are succumbing to **vinegar syndrome**, **binder hydrolysis** and mechanical wear while playback machines become scarce. Mis-labelled cans and cassettes languish in hot, humid storerooms, erasing languages, rituals, liberation songs and once-only performances that exist nowhere else.



Critical Decay

Chemical and physical deterioration is actively destroying unique cultural content.



Lost Memory

Each lost reel deletes communal memory, weakening cultural continuity and silencing history.



Urgent Action

Simple identification, cooler storage, and digitization can rescue this shared heritage.

Step 1: Prepare Before You Digitize

Effective preservation begins with disciplined, low-cost groundwork.



Identify

Inventory every item, noting format, brand, duration, and visible defects to create an intellectual map.



Store

Relocate to a cool, dry, dark, stable space. Aim for pan> and pan>.



Assess

Inspect for warpage, mould bloom, and vinegar odour to triage the most endangered items.



Prioritize

Focus on unique content, fragile substrates, and high community demand to maximize impact.

Step 2: Strategic Digitization Decisions



In-House Digitization

Evaluate your capacity for a complete workflow:

- Calibrated playback decks and cleaning stations
- High-resolution capture hardware & software
- Technical expertise and dedicated staff time



Outsourcing

Consider external vendors based on:

- Total cost vs. collection size and project scale
- Required turnaround time and technical specs
- Vendor expertise with specific formats

Key Principle: Create uncompressed [] and plan for [].

Step 3: The Digital Afterlife - Post-Digitization Workflow



Quality Control

Playback all files to detect errors.
Redigitize if necessary.



Rich Metadata

Document title, date, format, content, and rights for long-term findability.



Derivative Files

Create MP4 for access, FFV1 for backup, and mezzanines for editing.



Ingest & Access

Store files safely in managed repositories and make them accessible.

Start Today: Your First Step

Momentum matters more than perfection.

1 Create a Simple Inventory

Open a spreadsheet. List each item with columns for title, format, and condition. You now have intellectual control.

Use the PSAP Tool

Run the free online Preservation Self-Assessment Program to evaluate your items and get tailored guidance.

Improve Storage Now

Use ventilated boxes, bag fragile items, and segregate deteriorating formats. Small actions compound into long-term survival.





THANK YOU FOR READING !

Monitoring, Evaluating ,and Learning

Module Presentation, by Clara M. Chu

Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social Good



Planning for Impact: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning

By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand the role of evaluation (formative and summative), monitoring and lessons learned in the implementation of a community archival project;
- Create a community archival project monitoring plan, modeling the template provided;
- Design a process and tool(s) to evaluate a community archival project; and
- Apply a community-engaged process of evaluating a community archival project.



Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the routine monitoring of project resources, activities and results, and analysis of the information to guide project implementation.



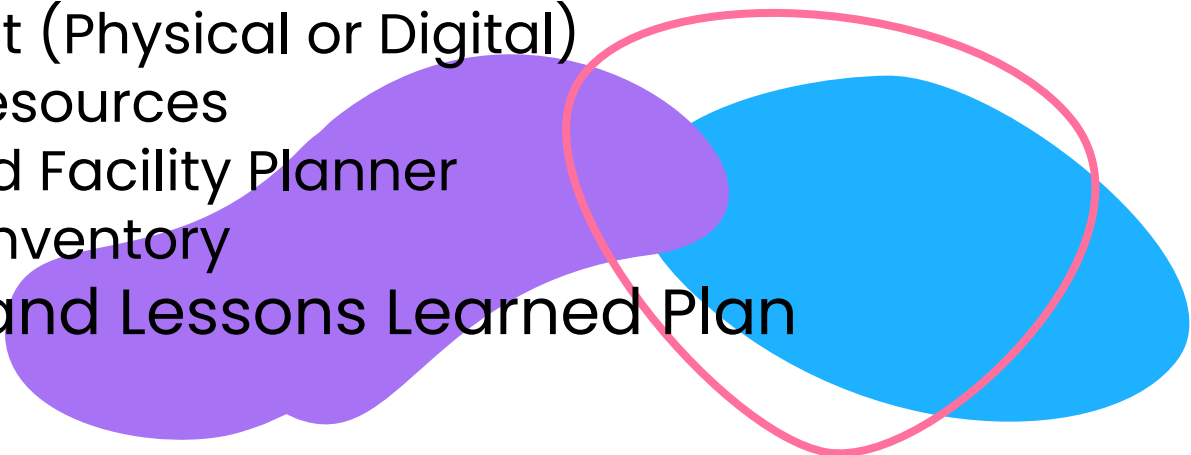
Evaluation

Evaluation refers to the periodic (mid-term, final) assessment and analysis of an on-going or completed project.

Learning

Learning is the process through which information generated from M&E is contemplated and intentionally used to continuously improve a project's ability to achieve results.

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning: Templates

- Project Task and Timeline Tracker (Overall Monitoring)
 - Project Budget Tracker
 - Project Resources Tracker:
 - Equipment (Physical or Digital)
 - Human Resources
 - Space and Facility Planner
 - Supplies Inventory
 - Evaluation and Lessons Learned Plan
- 

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning:

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Effectiveness: Assessing if project goals are achieved
 - Efficiency: Measuring resource use (financial, time, personnel) for output
 - Impact: Identifying long-term changes and unintended effects of the project.
2. Monitoring Process:
 - Develop a monitoring plan early, covering activities, timeline, budget, and resources.
 - Regularly track tasks, budget, and resources (personnel, equipment, and facilities) to ensure the project stays on track.
3. Lessons Learned:
 - Conduct mid-project and post-project reviews to reflect on successes and challenges.
 - Document and share findings to inform future projects and improve team processes.

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning:

KEY TAKEAWAYS (cont'd)

4. KPIs & Performance:

- Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate project goals and outcomes.
- Continuously assess performance against these benchmarks.

5. Practical Tools:

- Use templates for monitoring tasks, budgets, and resources.
- Ensure regular review of community engagement and ethical considerations throughout the project.

Community Engagement

Module Presentation

Abraham K. Mulwo & Florence Plockey

Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social
Good



Introduction to Community Engagement in Archiving

Module Goal

To highlight the importance of involving local communities and stakeholders in digitization and preservation, and to equip participants with skills for effective engagement

1

Objective

To create awareness and knowledge of the importance and principles of community engagement for community archiving

2

Objective

To highlight the importance of building trust and partnership in community engagement for community archiving

3

Objective

To equip participants with skills to undertake effective community engagement during community archiving

What Characterizes An Effective Community Engagement Process?

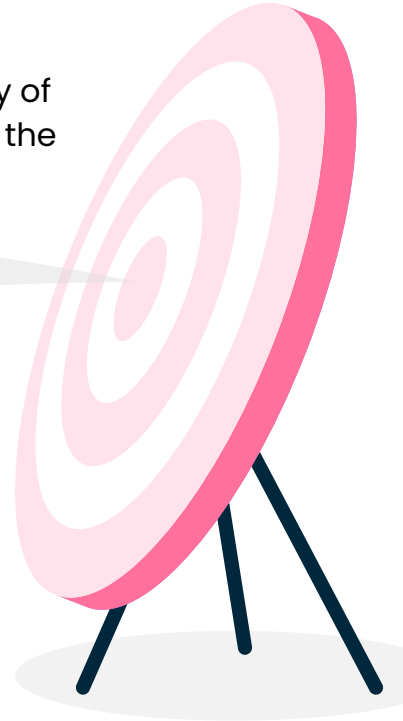
Inclusion of communities at all levels of the project

Access of communities to information

Inclusion of communities in decision-making

Development of local organizational capacity to make demands on institutions and governing structures

Accountability of institutions to the public.



Understanding and Mapping Stakeholders

SHOW CONSIDERATION

- County Governor/Deputy Governor/Speaker of the county assembly
 - Members of county assembly
 - Local media outlets
 - Communities of Practice
- **Key Strategy:** *Engage and Consult on interest areas, try to increase their interest on community archiving issues*

INVOLVE AS KEY PLAYERS

- In charge- Local Museums
 - Area chiefs and traditional leaders
 - County executive office in charge of culture
 - County chief officer in charge of culture
 - Director in charge of cultural activities
 - Scholars/researchers from the community involved in cultural preservation issues
- **Key strategy:** *Engage and consult in all phases of the project. Focus effort on this group, and involve them often in decision-making*

KEEP INFORMED

- Local community members
 - Local women groups
 - Local Farmers associations
 - Local business associations
 - Local university/college students
- **Key Strategy:** *Inform via general communications including public barazas, newsletters, emails, etc*

PAY ATTENTION TO THEIR NEEDS

- Traders dealing with cultural artefacts
 - Organized cultural groups such as traditional dancers/medicine men/women
- **Key strategy:** *Keep informed and consult on low-risk areas. Make use of their interest through low-risk involvement*

LEVEL OF INFLUENCE ON POLICY, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LOW

HIGH

LEVEL OF INTEREST IN COMMUNITY ARCHIVING MATTERS

LOW

HIGH

Co-Designing for Success

What Does Co-designing Mean?

Co-designing community projects refers to a collaborative design process that actively involves community members as equal partners.

Principles of effective co-designing

01

Inclusivity

Involve all community members irrespective of age, gender, tribe, socioeconomic status, etc

Empathy

Recognize, understand and respect the lived experiences of community members as expertise

02

03

Transparency

Build trust through open communication and shared decision-making throughout the co-designing process

Capacity Building

Empower communities with the appropriate tools and knowledge to participate effectively.

04

05

Sustainability

The focus should be on the project long-term benefits and resilience

Introduction to Metadata Practices



**Module Presentation by Chris Prom
(Thanks to Duncan Amoth, Stephanie
Luke, Janis Shearer, and Thea Soter)**

Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social Good



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 Can

Amount Per Serving

Calories 0

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Sodium 40mg 2%

Total Carb. 0g 0%

Protein 0g

Not a significant source of fat cal., sat. fat, trans fat, cholest., fiber, sugars, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron.

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Caffeine Content: 46 mg

PHENYLKETONURICS:

CONTAINS PHENYLALANINE

Ingredients: Carbonated Water, Caramel Color, Aspartame, Phosphoric Acid, Potassium Benzoate (To Protect Taste), Natural Flavors, Citric Acid, Caffeine.

It's the nutrition label that gives us the information we need.

What makes a resource description?

☐ Descriptive Information

Title	Points reached by over-night service : use air mail
Alternative Title	Points reached by overnight service
Creator	United States Postal Service <input type="text"/>
Place of Publication	Washington (D.C.)
Publisher	United States Postal Service <input type="text"/>
Date of Publication	1918-1926 <input type="text"/>
Extent	1 map : color
Dimensions	9 x 22 cm
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shows overnight air mail network connecting Chicago, Toledo, Detroit, Cleveland, Akron, Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Bellefonte, New York, Philadelphia, Hartford, and Boston.• "Don't wire, say more, pay less. Use air mail."• Includes color illustration of the Ryan M-1 airplane.• Likely published in Washington (D.C.).• Likely published by the United States Postal Service.• Likely published between 1918 and 1926.
Coverage-Spatial	Northeastern states <input type="text"/>
Language	English
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air mail service <input type="text"/>

1. Metadata Elements (in a Metadata Profile)

2. Metadata Values

What is a metadata element?

Elements are the basic units of organization within a metadata profile

- Elements contain **values** which provide information on a specific aspect of a resource
- Elements work together to comprehensively describe a resource
- Elements form the foundation of **a metadata profile**

title
creator
publisher
publication
date
description
language
identifier
subject

What is a metadata value?

A metadata value is the information contained within an element's description for a given resource

- Values are where the information that a completed metadata profile contains is stored
- Values provide information that complements the elements they are associated with

Hamlet
Shakespeare,
William
Nicholas Ling
1623
The first folio.
English
PR2751 .A1507
Hamlet (Legendary
character)

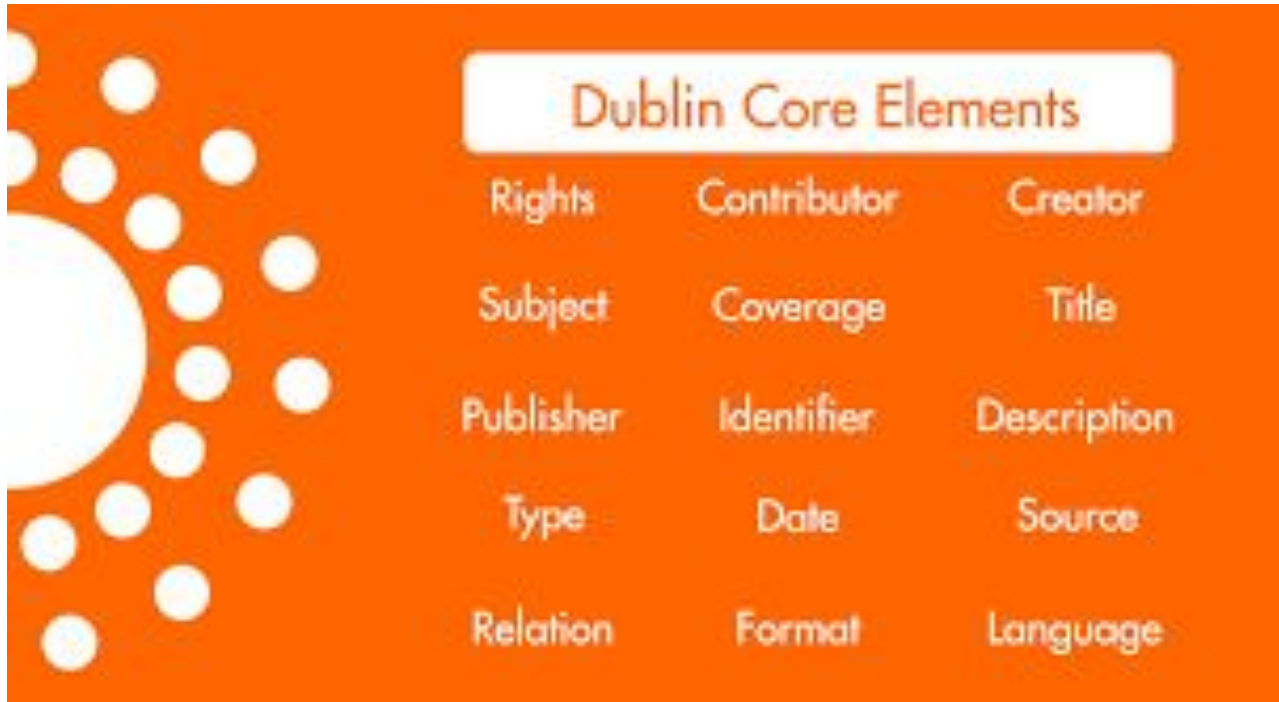
What is a metadata profile?

A metadata profile is a standard that dictates what elements should be used to describe a body of records

- Metadata profiles vary between different collections
- Items from the same collection should adhere to the same metadata profile

A metadata profile is the list of the elements as a whole that make up the description of a collection

Elements



Elements: Creator, Contributor, Publisher

		Examples
Creator	A named entity primarily responsible for the creation of the resource (ex. author, artist, composer, etc.)	Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 [personal name–authorized term from LC Authority file]
Contributor	An entity responsible for making contributions to a resource (ex. editor, printer, illustrator, etc.)	night_fate_stock [a screen name for a creator of an image in a born-digital collection]
Publisher	An entity for making the resource available	Rand McNally and Company [corporate name–authorized term LC Authority file]

Cross-Module Themes

- Partnering Academic and Community Organizations
- Aligning with Community Values
- Building DP Knowledge and Skills
- Fostering Community Champions
- Tuning Programs to Resource Availability
- Mobilizing and Empowering Teams
- Sustaining Communities of Practice
- Practicing Just Relationships

Modules

- **Train the Trainers:** Modules were created with the intent for local partners to use them for community engagement.
- **CACASG Forum** (May 2025): A forum was held to refine the training modules, gather feedback, and plan next steps for sustainability.

Learning Pathways

Community-Oriented Pathway

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This pathway focuses on empowering and engaging the community in the archiving process. It would be beneficial for community leaders, activists, and individuals interested in preserving local knowledge.

Module 1 Community Engagement

Resources

Module_Community Engagement

Community Engagement

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Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social Good



Key Concepts

- Community-driven oral history projects
- Participatory archiving and knowledge sharing
- Empowering communities to preserve their own stories
- Building trust and collaboration between community members and project leaders
- Inclusivity and representation in oral history work

Comprehensive Archiving Pathway

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This pathway provides a holistic understanding of the archiving process, from gathering oral histories to ensuring the long-term preservation of cultural heritage. It's designed for individuals or organizations aiming to create a comprehensive archive while emphasizing community engagement and technical skills. Ideal for archivists, cultural preservationists, community leaders, and educators.

Module 1 Oral History in Practice: Interview to Archive

Resources

Module_Oral History in Practice

Oral History in Practice: Interview to Archive

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Key Concepts

- Oral history methods and ethics
- Interview preparation, techniques, and best practices
- Recording and archiving oral histories (audio/video formats)
- Ensuring cultural sensitivity in oral history practices
- Long-term preservation and access of oral histories

Challenges

- **Funding Limitations:** Restrictions on how grant funds could be used required us to scale back key activities, including in-person piloting.
- **Tight Project Timeline:** With only one year to complete the project, there was limited time for in-depth collaboration, iteration, and testing.
- **Parallel Module Development:** Modules were created simultaneously by different teams, which made it difficult to ensure consistency and integration across topics.
- **Lack of Pilot Testing:** We were unable to test the modules with community partners in Africa as originally planned, limiting feedback and refinement.
- **Cross-Institutional Coordination:** Working across time zones and institutions introduced logistical challenges, particularly in communication and scheduling.

Future Directions

Train the Trainers

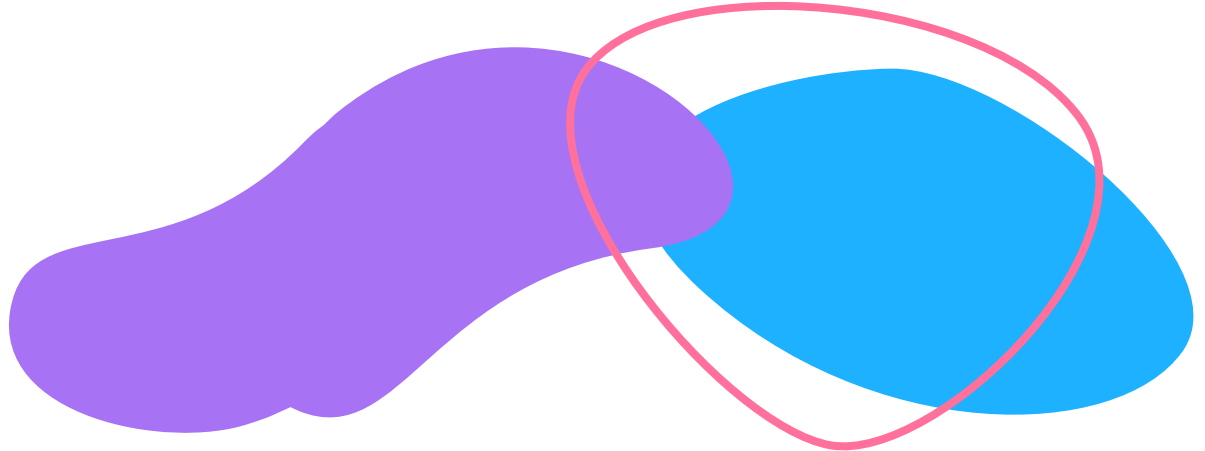
Sessions for community leaders, Indigenous knowledge holders, and elders.

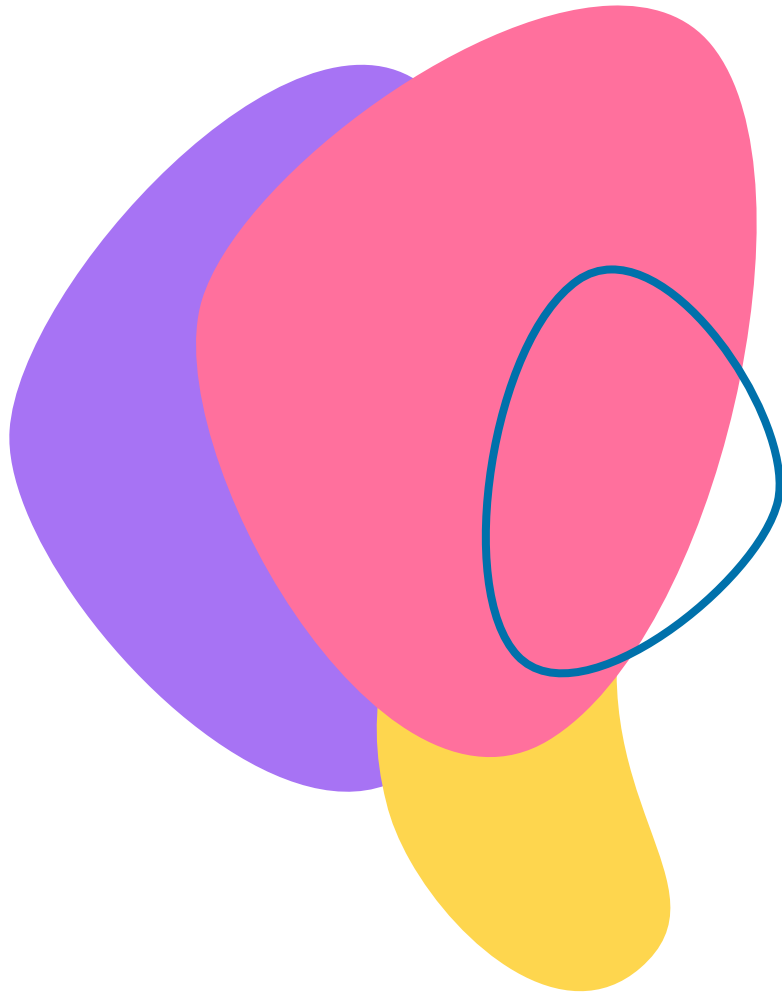
Capacity Building

Support for African partners through knowledge cafés, DPC Clinics.

Community Labs

Collaboration with iSchools to set up labs for community-driven archiving.





Conclusion

- **Empower Communities:** Enable African communities to take control of their own cultural preservation.
- **Decolonize Knowledge:** Ensure that the practices developed reflect local realities and priorities.
- **Ongoing Collaboration:** Continue building partnerships to support community-driven preservation efforts.

Learn More

This information is part of the **Catalyzing African Community Archives for Social Good** (CACASG) module series, created to support community-led preservation and knowledge sharing across Africa.

To explore additional modules or connect with the project team:

Visit: <https://cacasg.library.illinois.edu/>

Contact: CACASGproject@gmail.com

