**Interview with Archivist, March 13, 2025, Abidjan, Cot d’Ivoire**

He is current archivist of national assembly he is in charge of all documentation of national assembly. He is leader in the development of network of archivists of west Africa and documentation of organizations.

He led for 7 years archives of cot d. he is currently in charge of a task force that tries to create network of francophone archives, for francophone countries.

His mission is most of making sure that these documentation and libraries is accessible as source of information for western Africa.

**Lack of protections for archives**

How documentation? His work especially is using archives and documentation to quickly respond to disinformation that is observable in the information env. One of big challenges is that archives access is quite limited, no laws that guarantee the preservation of archives so hard to keep information.

There is no status for an archive. No protections. No protection for archivsts and as a result in other countries they are more protected and have better access where the ones here are struggling more. Another thing the lack of law that protects archives in cot makes it disorganized so not much effective.

Records not accessible online. There is no law or organizism, no one to help manage the website.

The first official journal of Cot is not online.

Many countries also face the same problems but currently trying to numerize their archives. Like Senegal or private companies. Tunisia is one of the best models in Africa on the digital space.

Information monitoring that is much more developed in many countries for archivsts but not much taught between intersection of archivsts and fact checking bc archivists in cot and francophone Africa is still quite limited.

**Archives can counter disinformation**

How archives counter disinformation? Falsification of information… change the dates and signature of the assembly and the archives comes in and say it is not correct. And then the person able to say no I never signed this paper.

On facebook a lot of disputes of ppl owning the same land and you need to be able to weigh into who actually owns the land. And that is on archives.

Very often you can’t tell what is official or not bc it is so well made that if you don’t have a record of the documents you can’t determine.

There is no collaboration between fact checkers and archives. Fact checkers are on the rise while archivists on the down side.

On social media a lot of people tend to fabricate information and nothing is regulated online for social media.

There has been some cases of some of the laws and texts have been fabricated…

More detail? He is going to follow up with an actual article about it.

On a Sunday a world bank representative signed a document and some activists online claimed it was wrong bc it was impossible someone working on a Sunday so ppl started believe them that no such world bank activity. He is going to share more concrete stories

There is a lot of cyber activists who do falsification of documents and they can be influenced by Russian or Chinese objectives. The Chinese more discrete and they don’t like leaving traces behind.

**What kind of collaboration?** Making archivists trained in fact checking and themselves can train fact checkers on how to conserve media and information. Everywhere it is the same thing, not just cot d’voire. Anglophone countries in western Africa it is a bit different.

And Ghana it is more organized, they have a law. Niger as well.

**Current initiatives**

**Needs**

There is a lack of political will. We need training of proper archivist management. We need more diverse profiles of archivists. Fact checking archives. And some specialize in online archives.

What would it take to digitalize? Platforms of online… reasons not: political will, resources, lack of law that manages that.

So there is an informal network created between francophone countries … but lacking a formal status and the president of Senegal gave the greenlight tocreate a formal network of all archives of national assembly so will upgrade their cooperation starting in June of this year. From 12-14 June the first summit.

There needs to be more communication between archives of gov and media, esp when those media more traditional and secluded in rural parts like where don’t have relationship that allows quick debunking of false information.

How are archives do debunking? Yes, very quick. Depends if it is sensitive or classified. But otherwise journalists call. Journalists can just come, it is a quick process. Both, they can call or they can come and look through files. There is an official status if it is them. It is more… more legit if the archivist pulls the information.

Sometimes the journalists will prefer going to the source and ask question to cabinet member like transportation minister to ask if it is true or not.

So a lot of them also work with lawyers, trying to understand legal consideration of their research as well.

He would like to see more cooperation with countries outside of Africa but that takes account of obstacles in cot d’Ivoire

**How can the US help?** It would be nice to have formation of archivists of training made by United States. IVLP, international visitors. It is too complicated in the US, Russia and France propose grants and training for archivists. Especially in France. He has got four grants from France, none from US. Even the print, the big journals and big media they don’t have an archive service bc they can’t keep track of what they publish. It is only limited to journalists they are training from the US.

He is making us a call to flood the waters to make more cooperation for archivists.

Some of the ways this cooperation could take form could be funding for project but also cooperation of archivists between countries. And 2014 when burkina faso coup happened they burned all the archive documents. So the big goal of effort between national assemblies is to digitize so we can save the documents if an event like happened.

Very old archives here, oldest of the region. 1928 documents. South korea is proposing a service that is similar for the national archives. Something about archives collaborazation and digitalization. They have not made a formal proposition but signaled interest in doing so.

Usaid, we don’t want to fund anything anymore. Make America great again.

He thinks the us could play an essential role bc they are seen as credible and making such effort happen too.

France so far the biggest part of archives in the country and the region but seen they are not doing enough. The us and Canada not offering help.

This project could be very interesting to many countries (digitization of archives)

Unregulated ai is a problem for this but also if it could be regulated it could help manage and communicate actual archives if it were regulated and well employed. Everything dependes on use of ai. Could be a blessing or curse.

Contacts:

He will put us in contact with fact checkers. President of Wikimedia is based in ivory coast.