'Funding the Archives Sector' Research Report September 2012
The National Archives and the International Centre for Archives and Records Management
Research and User Studies (ICARUS), University College London

1 Executive Summary

The 'Funding the Archives Sector' research project was a collaboration between The National
Archives and the International Centre for Archives and Records Management Research and User
Studies (ICARUS) of University College London. The project advisory board also included
representatives from the Welsh Government Division, CyMAL: Museums Archives and
Libraries Wales and the Archives & Records Association. The project took place over the period
September 2011 to September 2012 and this report outlines the results of that project in
answering three key research questions:
  • How are archives in the UK funded?
  • What funding resources are under developed within the sector?
  • What appropriate advice and training support can be delivered by The National
    Archives to improve access to additional funding resources?
The critical drivers for this report were the financial pressures on archive services foregrounded
by the impact of the recession; the UK government's 'Big Society' agenda and related initiatives,
and the general awareness of the need for further development in this area within the archives
sector and how this might be achieved within The National Archives' strengthened leadership
role.

1.1 How are archives in the UK funded?

Following discussion with the project advisory board and the Scottish Council on Archives, it
was agreed to undertake a survey of collecting repositories in England and Wales only. The
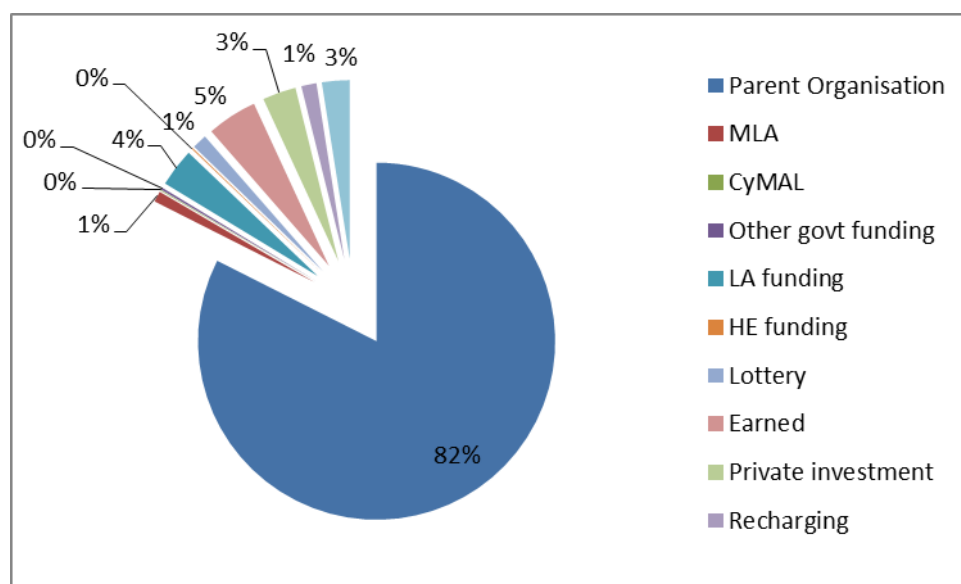survey asked a number of detailed questions relating the archive services income.

Fig A: Archives in England and Wales: How much income did your archive service receive from
each of the following sources in the last financial year?

Fig A represents these survey findings and further analysis is provided in Section 4 of the report.
Whilst recognising that these figures represent a snapshot of a single accounting year, the survey
findings back up the assertion that archive services are reliant on parent organisations for either
the whole or the majority of their funding. There were some variations between the funding
sources accessed by different types of services and the scale of external funding. For example
university archives received 31% of funding from external sources, compared to 17% in local
authorities. Organisations with charitable status attracted 23% of their funding from external

sources. In contrast to the wider cultural sector, there did not appear to be greater success for archives services based in London when attracting external funding.

1.2   What funding resources are under developed within the sector?

Based on a literature review, the survey findings and a focus group, the research project sought to analyse the funding landscape in which archive services operate, what funding sources they use and how they access these sources. The report evidences that little investment is made at a service level to diversifying funding sources. Barely a third of archive services stated that their organisation had a fundraising strategy and only 3.2% of staff time is allocated to fundraising activity, demonstrating that a cultural shift is required to recognise this as a core management activity. Only 17% of respondents have a budget allocation towards fundraising activities, resources and training, although 56% reported that they could access some fundraising expertise and resource from their parent organisation. There is clear evidence that archivists are lacking in confidence and experience in a range of fundraising techniques and that this is hampering the sector as a whole in accessing additional external funding. Fig B below illustrates responses to survey questions asking to rate confidence and experience levels for a range of fundraising tactics.
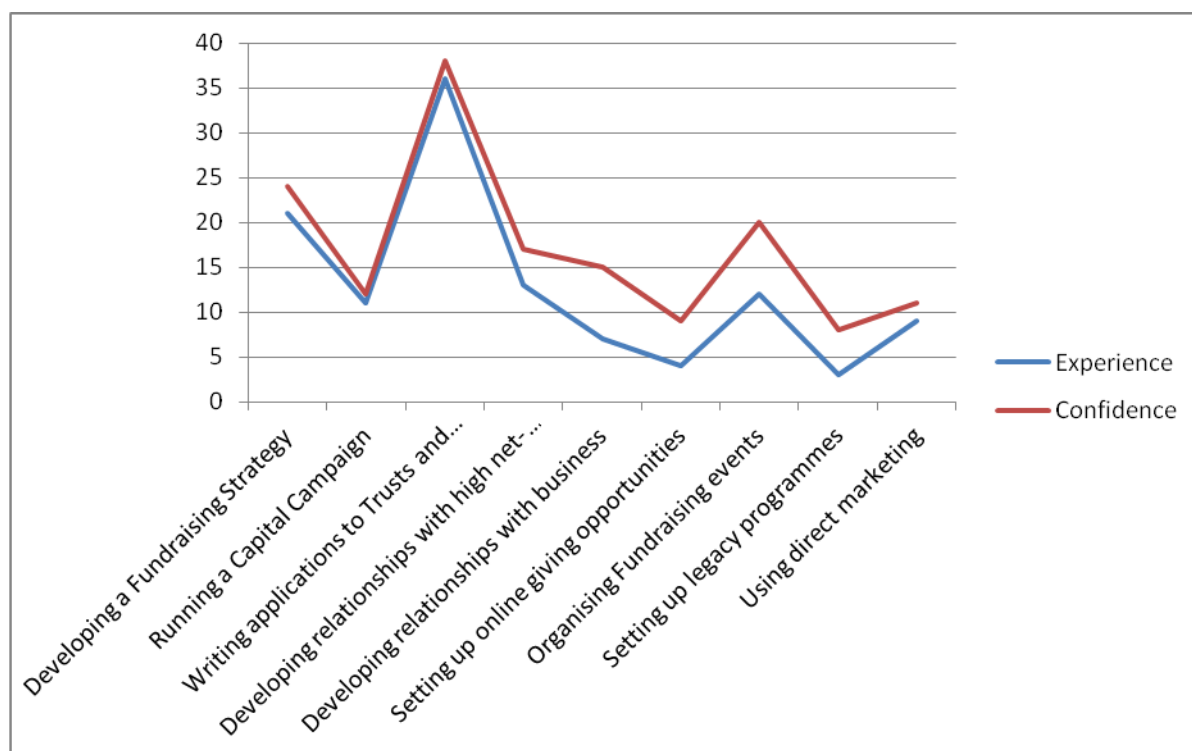

Fig B: Comparison of confidence and experience levels

The research identified a range of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to archive services seeking to fundraise or generate additional income. The areas covered in more detail in Section 5 of the report are listed below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Parent organisation support	Governance models
Tradition of sharing knowledge and collaboration	Financial planning
	Incentives and disincentives
Accessing the Heritage Lottery Fund	Resource allocation
Writing bids to trusts and foundations	Risk taking and innovation

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	Advocates and relationship management
Opportunities National levers - Archives for 21st Century and Accreditation Developing an evidence base The National Archives as information conduit Higher education sector Capitalising on engaged user base and volunteers Crowdfunding opportunities	*Threats* Lack of engagement with issues around fundraising for archives Lack of monetary value placed on service Lack of major donors Lack of business relationships

Having considered both the challenges and barriers facing archive services, and the potential and possibilities for the sector, Section 6 of the report presents a future-focused approach.

In addressing these issues at organisational level, the report sets out seven success indicators for archive services and for Heads of Archive Services (HoAS) to consider:

1. Parent organisations understand the need to continue to invest in their archive service and external funding is not used to withdraw or reduce core funding but rather to grow capacity
2. HoAS and other budget holders are confident in financial planning and have a clear understanding of the cost of all aspects of delivering their service
3. HoAS are looking at all times to embed financial efficiency into service delivery, maximising the benefit of both core and external funding
4. HoAS have sufficient resources to develop a strategic approach to fundraising and income generation and work with their parent organisation on approved approaches that enable the archive service to harness the full benefit of successful fundraising and income generation
5. HoAS are able to work successfully with their parent organisation's development teams or draw on other internally available expertise, where applicable
6. Services are able to access a range of funding sources but are doing so through a clear-sighted analysis of strategic fit and return on investment, rather than simply chasing a funding pot.
7. Income generating activities are pursued with an understanding of value with regards to both profit generation and other purposes

Fig C overleaf revisits the national funding picture and puts down a marker as to what this should look like for the archives sector, five years on from the original survey. This is a challenging aspiration, predicated on future development support.

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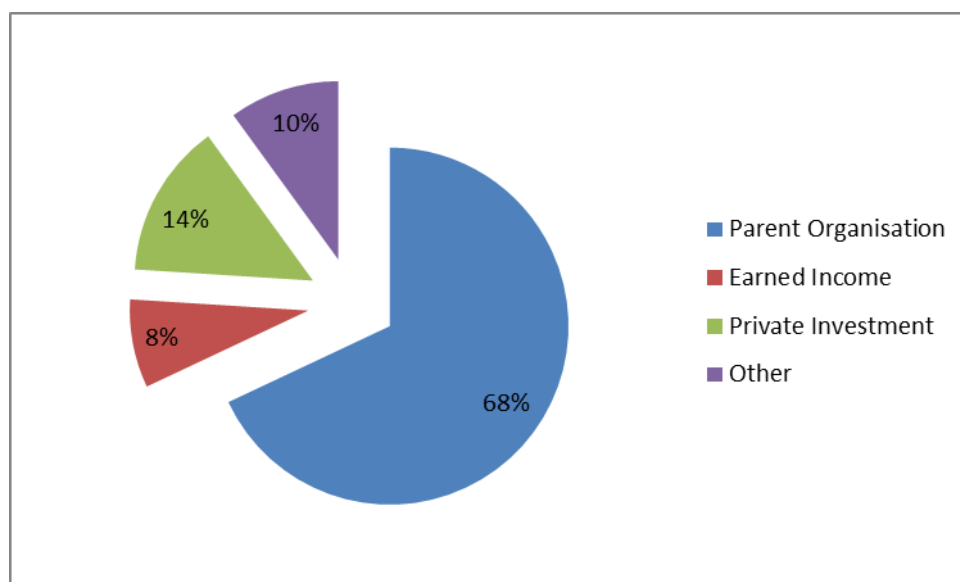Research and User Studies (ICARUS), University College London

Fig.C: Aspirational national income breakdown for the archive sector 2015/16

1.3   What appropriate advice and training support can be delivered by The National Archives to improve access to additional funding resources?
Having set out for the first time an analysis of the current funding picture for archive services and presented a proposed future model to work towards at both national and organisation level, the following recommended approach is provided for The National Archives.

1	**Leadership**
1.1	Develop stronger relationships at national and regional level with funders and stakeholders
1.2	Influence policy at national and local level to ensure sustainable funding for services
1.3	Support piloting of new approaches to funding and fundraising
2	**Collaboration**
2.1	Identify opportunities to bring together funders to enable greater strategic impact
2.2	Identify opportunities to bring together archive services to capitalise on funding initiatives
3	**Good Practice**
3.1	Provide mechanisms and opportunities for archive services to learn from each other
3.2	Ensure archive services have access to up-to-date and appropriate information on funding and fundraising
4	**Advice**
4.1	Ensure archive services have access to individual support where needed
4.2	Ensure funding support is part of all strategic discussions with archive services
4.3	Ensure archive services have access to appropriate training

It is the hope of the research team that these ten high-level objectives will be accepted and become the basis of a more detailed action plan for The National Archives and its strategic partners in providing developmental support up to 2015 and beyond.