

# African Humanities Research and Development Conference (AHRDC), 2023



## Call for Papers

### Navigating Nigerian Archives: Experiences, Opportunities, and Advancements

Proposal Deadline: August 31, 2022

Conference: February 20-22, 2023

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

#### CONVENED BY

EGODI UCHENDU, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

OGECHUKWU WILLIAMS, CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY, OMAHA

CHUKWUEMEKA AGBO, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

#### SUBMISSIONS

Email to

[navigatingarchives.ahrdc@gmail.com](mailto:navigatingarchives.ahrdc@gmail.com)

Abstracts of no more than 250 words for individual papers

Panel proposals of 3-5 panelists with a title & brief description of the panel, and abstracts of all proposed papers.

Roundtables should assume the same format as panel proposals

Roundtable abstracts to have a title/brief description of participants' contributions

Acceptance Notification  
October 15, 2022

#### Conference Registration

10,000 NGN for participants in Nigeria and \$50 for non-Nigerian participants.

AHRDC Annual Membership Fee: \$30

#### ACCOUNT INFORMATION

NAME: AFRICAN HUMANITIES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

BANK: FIDELITY BANK  
NUMBER: 6060137833

Paypal available for international payment

#### Contact Us

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## DESCRIPTION

Many post-colonial archives in African nations are fraught with issues of inaccessibility to researchers, erasures (deliberate and non-deliberate), and problems of funding. These problems are more intractable in some countries than in others. In Nigeria during the colonial era, the colonial government documented and preserved its footprint in the country in archives located in Nigeria and the UK. Although these records were not all accessible to the public, as current research on the British government's deliberate concealing or destruction of documents pertaining to various colonies has proven, they have undoubtedly shaped the nature of historical scholarship on Nigeria's colonial era.

In the post-colonial period since the 1960s, Nigeria's national archives have not systematically collated records from Nigeria's various ministries, public and civil services, and other government parastatals. This development has adversely affected scholarship on post-independence Nigeria and exacerbated the problem of access and erasures. It has created an atmosphere in which the Nigerian government, for reasons of funds, self-interest, or self-preservation, fails to see the need for the centralized maintenance of records and its impact on nation building.

Over the decades since independence, this deprioritization of archives and record-keeping has created a cascading effect on the efficiency of Nigerian archives and their colonial-era collections. Government funding for this sector, its staff, and the proper preservation of files remains insufficient, which further culminates into uneven, unequal, unreliable, and inconsistent experiences by researchers who seek to use the archives' collections.

#### The Goal

This conference seeks to bring together various stakeholders from the academia, educational institutions, Nigerian archives, government ministries, and the public to discuss conditions in the archives, how these conditions shape research experience and outcome, and ways that the archives can be built into a vibrant arm of scholarship and nation building.

#### The Questions

We reflect on multiple questions: How do scholars navigate the problems of researching Nigeria's history in Nigeria? In cases where records of government parastatals are not centrally located, how do researchers proceed? How do the archives influence research experiences and outcomes? Since identity politics (religious, economic, national, international, etc) play a crucial role in navigating Nigeria and its archives, how do the experiences of students and researchers in Nigeria and that of their Nigerian counterparts from the diaspora (or other international visitors) differ? How can scholars who study Nigeria proactively forge partnerships with archives, archive staff, and other supportive organizations to promote sustainability in Nigerian archives? Are there successful case studies that can be drawn from? How do the experiences of visitors in Nigerian archives compare to their experiences in archives elsewhere in the world? How can the academic unit create awareness at the government level about the need for systematic accessioning of records? How can we preserve other sources of African history that emanate from oral histories and personal records? What lessons can be learned? What action plans can be taken?

## THEMES

- History of Nigerian archives
- Comparative experiences of archives in Africa
- Colonial archives and records
- Archival collections since independence
- Historical methodology
- Comparative experiences of Western and Nigerian archives
- Cost of research
- Government (dis)incentive for document preservation
- Nigerian archives and data availability
- Archivists, expertise, and research in Nigeria
- Data preservation and obstruction of research
- Politics and data preservation
- The archives and corruption
- Archives and identity politics
- Nigerian archives in a digital age
- The archives, funding, and research in Nigeria
- Access and erasure
- Private-public partnerships
- Alternative funding
- Informal archives
- Archives on sensitive subjects
- Nation-building and data preservation
- Medical Records and healthcare challenges
- National accountability
- Ethnography and written records
- The past and the present in Nigerian governance
- Oral histories and records preservation
- Funding for higher ed research
- Challenges of Nigerian archives
- Nigerian archives and building partnerships
- Archival administration and efficiency
- Nigeria and recordkeeping
- The future of Nigerian Archives in a continuously evolving world