



# Repositioning Music Archives as Pedagogical Partners: Lecturer-Informed Strategies for University–Music Archive Collaboration in Kenya

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## Abstract

The integration of music archives into university teaching in Kenya remains limited despite the cultural and pedagogical value of archival resources. Existing engagements between universities and music archives are often informal and dependent on individual lecturer initiative rather than structured institutional collaboration. Guided by Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, this paper examines lecturer-informed strategies for strengthening university–music archive collaboration in support of culturally responsive music teaching within selected Kenyan public universities. Drawing on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, the study used lecturers' perspectives to explore how interactions between universities and music archives are mediated by policies, institutional arrangements, and pedagogical practices. Qualitative data were generated through semi-structured interviews with music lecturers and analysed thematically. The findings reveal that effective collaboration requires a multi-level institutional approach beyond the mere availability of archival materials. Lecturers identified key strategies including formalised partnerships between universities and music archives, joint research and training initiatives, digitisation of archival collections, increased institutional funding, lecturer professional development, and community-engaged archival programmes. Although focused on selected Kenyan public universities, the study contributes to broader discussions on archives, institutional collaboration, and culturally responsive music pedagogy within African higher education. The study further highlights the need for structured institutional frameworks and policy alignment to strengthen the integration of African musical knowledge within higher education curricula.

## Introduction

Music education in Kenyan public universities faces the challenge of aligning pedagogical practice with the cultural contexts from which musical knowledge emerges. While curricula aim to build technical and theoretical competencies, the integration of culturally grounded resources remains uneven, often failing to reflect the diversity and lived realities of musical practice. This has intensified



interest in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, which emphasises connecting teaching to learners' cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and community knowledge systems (Gay, 2018).

Music archives are a significant yet underutilised pedagogical resource. Across Kenya, institutional and independent archives hold extensive recordings that capture the richness of musical expression across communities, offering important possibilities for connecting teaching with cultural memory and performance practice. However, their integration into university music teaching remains inconsistent.

Scholarship has highlighted archives' potential as pedagogical partners in cultural knowledge transmission (Watkins et al., 2021), while studies across African contexts point to persistent challenges of access, awareness, limited digitisation, and weak collaboration between educational institutions and archival repositories (Saurombe, 2018). The question, then, is not whether archives can support music teaching, but how university–archive collaboration can be institutionally strengthened to support culturally responsive pedagogy.

This paper draws on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, which conceptualises learning and institutional practice as emerging through interactions among actors, tools, rules, communities, and organisational structures. Universities and music archives are understood here as interconnected activity systems whose collaboration is mediated by archival resources, institutional policies, pedagogical practices, and professional relationships. From this view, the uneven integration of archival materials reflects institutional and pedagogical contradictions rather than a lack of resources, making CHAT a useful lens for examining how collaboration can be strengthened.

Accordingly, the study examines the strategies music lecturers identify for strengthening university–music archive collaboration, and how they perceive these strategies as supporting culturally responsive music teaching. It is guided by two questions: Firstly, What strategies do music lecturers identify for strengthening this collaboration? Second, How do lecturers perceive these strategies as enhancing culturally responsive music teaching? Drawing on qualitative insights from lecturers in selected Kenyan public universities, this paper examines their perspectives on strengthening university–archive collaboration in support of culturally responsive music teaching.

### **Literature Review**

Scholarship on archives and education increasingly suggests that the challenge facing universities is no longer preservation alone, but transforming archives into active partners in teaching, research, and community engagement. In music education, this shift matters because archival resources can connect pedagogy with cultural memory and lived musical practice.

A major concern is the absence of clear institutional and policy frameworks for sustained collaboration. Many archival initiatives remain fragmented because university–archive relationships are informal and poorly coordinated. Saurombe and Ngulube (2018) emphasise formal agreements such as memoranda of understanding to clarify roles and access rights, shifting collaboration from ad hoc engagement toward structured partnerships. Saurombe (2018) similarly advocates integrating archives within higher education and research policy agendas to strengthen institutional recognition and funding. Chisita and Tsabedze (2020) argue that advocacy toward policymakers is essential for demonstrating archives' pedagogical and cultural significance where their value remains under-recognised.

Scholars also emphasise professional capacity as essential to sustaining archival engagement, given persistent shortages of skilled personnel and training opportunities. Harper and Opoku-Boateng (2019), studying the J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archives in Ghana, show how long-term partnerships



support mentorship and technical assistance, strengthening both preservation and pedagogical integration by building mutual literacy between lecturers and archivists.

Closely related is the growing role of technology in expanding access. Dobreski et al. (2019) and Hawkins (2022) argue that interoperable metadata systems and digital infrastructures connect diverse collections and broaden educational access, as seen in projects like Linked Archives and the Smithsonian Global Sound Project. In African contexts, digitisation by the International Library of African Music (ILAM) similarly facilitates circulation and repatriation of recordings. Crawford (2017) argues the digital turn requires universities to treat archives as pedagogical infrastructure central to culturally responsive teaching, though scholars caution that digitisation alone is insufficient without digital literacy, infrastructure, and sustainable funding.

Access alone, however, does not guarantee meaningful engagement. Participatory archival practices enable communities to contribute to interpretation and circulation of knowledge. Caswell and Mallick (2014), through the First Days Project, show how digital storytelling lets communities document experiences and address historical silences. Huvila (2008) explains that digital environments decentralise archival authority, producing participatory archives where users help create and interpret records. These post-custodial approaches, in the context of this study, support integrating diverse cultural perspectives into music teaching. Relatedly, Ngulube et al. (2017) propose public programming to strengthen community engagement and awareness – a practical extension of this participatory logic. For university–music archive collaboration, this enables students and lecturers to engage music as living cultural practice rather than preserved content. This participatory shift extends into pedagogical and community-centred practice. Chaudhuri (2021), studying the Archives and Research Centre for Ethnomusicology (ARCE), shows archives functioning as collaborative spaces where performers, communities, and scholars co-create knowledge. Lewy and Brabec (2023) emphasise "resocialisation" of recordings through ethical co-curation.

Such collaboration cannot be sustained without broader institutional transformation. Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) argue sustainable archival systems require policy development and institutional commitment beyond technology adoption. Lambrechts (2020) emphasises community integration through engaging elders, tradition bearers, and local musicians as collaborators, conceptualising this as "epistemic delinking", archives shifting from colonial instruments of control toward decolonial knowledge exchange, with potential in Kenya to revitalise indigenous repertoires.

Finally, collaborative engagement must remain ethically and legally accountable. Seeger (2023) and Nannyonga-Tamusuza and Weintraub (2012) emphasise policies governing consent, royalties, and benefit-sharing to fairly recognise performers. Harper and Opoku-Boateng (2019) show transparent copyright agreements strengthen institutional trust. Anderson and Christen (2019) advocate Indigenous data sovereignty through Traditional Knowledge and Biocultural Labels, while De Beer et al. (2013) and Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) critique Western intellectual property frameworks where cultural knowledge is collectively owned.

Although prior studies identify strategies including digitisation, partnerships, capacity building, and community engagement, less attention has been given to how music lecturers themselves understand and prioritise these strategies. This paper examines lecturers' perspectives on strengthening university–music archive collaboration in Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which conceptualises learning and institutional practice as socially and historically situated processes mediated through cultural



tools, social interactions, and collective activity (Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, 1987, 2001). CHAT emphasises that human activity is shaped by relationships among individuals, mediating artefacts, institutional structures, and communities working towards shared objectives. The framework is particularly useful for examining how knowledge, practices, and resources are produced, negotiated, and transformed within and across institutional settings.

The study draws on Engeström's (2001) expansion of CHAT, which conceptualises activity systems as existing in dynamic relation to one another and interacting around shared objects of activity. This perspective enables examination of collaboration across institutional boundaries and the tensions, contradictions, and opportunities for learning that emerge through such interactions. In this study, universities and music archives are conceptualised as interconnected activity systems linked through the shared objective of supporting culturally responsive music teaching. Within these systems, archival-based music resources function as mediating tools through which lecturers engage culturally grounded musical knowledge in teaching and learning.

In this study, culturally responsive music teaching refers to pedagogical practices that draw upon learners' cultural experiences, local musical traditions, indigenous knowledge systems, and culturally relevant musical resources to support meaningful and contextually grounded learning. In practice, this includes the integration of archival recordings, culturally relevant musical repertoires, and reflective learning activities that support students' engagement with Kenya's musical heritage. Music archives therefore provide access to recordings, oral histories, performance practices, and other forms of cultural knowledge that can support culturally responsive approaches to music education.

The study further conceptualises music archives as pedagogical partners rather than passive repositories. As pedagogical partners, archives contribute to teaching by providing learning resources, support for research and fieldwork, opportunities for student engagement, and collaboration in knowledge production. From this perspective, the uneven integration of archival resources reflects broader tensions and contradictions within and between university and archive activity systems rather than simply the absence of materials.

CHAT provides a useful framework for examining lecturers' perspectives on strategies for strengthening university–music archive collaboration and for understanding the institutional, pedagogical, and organisational conditions that shape the integration of archival resources within culturally responsive music teaching.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative exploratory design to examine lecturer-informed strategies for strengthening university–music archive collaboration in support of culturally responsive music teaching. A qualitative approach was appropriate for exploring lecturers' perceptions of archival integration within university music education.

The study was informed by Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which provided a lens for understanding how interactions among lecturers, archival resources, institutional structures, and pedagogical practices shape collaborative engagement and educational outcomes. As the study focused exclusively on lecturers, the analysis reflects their perspectives on university–music archive collaboration.

The study population comprised music lecturers teaching in Kenyan public universities offering music programmes. Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in music teaching and experience with archival resources and university–archive collaboration. Seven lecturers participated. Consistent with Malterud et al. (2016), sample adequacy was determined by



information power rather than numerical size, with participants selected for their capacity to provide rich, relevant accounts of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed flexibility for participants to reflect on their experiences while ensuring systematic coverage of archival integration, collaboration, and culturally responsive teaching. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis: familiarisation with transcripts, generation of initial codes, identification of recurring patterns, development and refinement of themes, and interpretation in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework. Themes were continually reviewed against the data for coherence and consistency.

Ethical considerations included informed consent, and confidentiality and anonymity in reporting. As music educators within the Kenyan higher education context, the authors held professional knowledge of the field; while this facilitated informed understanding of participants' experiences, reflexivity was maintained through coding notes documenting interpretive decisions and regular peer debriefing between the authors to critically examine emerging themes and minimise individual bias.

### **Findings**

The findings address the study's research questions by identifying lecturer-informed strategies for strengthening university–music archive collaboration and examining how these strategies support culturally responsive music pedagogy within Kenyan public universities. The analysis reveals that these strategies operate across interconnected pedagogical, institutional, technological, and policy domains. The sections that follow present the key strategies identified by participants and discuss their implications for music pedagogy and archival collaboration.

### **Strengthening Institutional Collaboration Frameworks**

Lecturers consistently emphasised the need for stronger institutional collaboration between universities and music archives as a foundational strategy for supporting the integration of archival resources into music teaching. Existing forms of engagement were largely described as informal, inconsistent, and dependent on individual initiative rather than formal institutional structures. One lecturer acknowledged limited engagement with archival institutions, noting that "I don't think I've collaborated with any archivists. I have been a consumer mostly, not necessarily a participant in the archiving process" (Participant 1). Similarly, another participant observed that "I'm not aware of any formal interactions..., only got to know about PPMC because I was a student at KU" (Participant 3). These responses suggest that collaboration between universities and music archives remains weakly institutionalised and often relies on personal awareness and initiative rather than coordinated institutional frameworks.

Participants further indicated that the absence of structured partnerships limited opportunities for regular access to archival resources, collaborative planning, and sustained pedagogical engagement. In some instances, lecturers explained that engagement with archival institutions depended largely on individual effort. As one participant stated, "It was always an initiative on my part to inquire whether there was any new material at KICD" (Participant 1). Such accounts suggest that archival engagement often occurs through personal networks and informal arrangements, making collaboration vulnerable to staff transitions, shifting institutional priorities, and changing administrative contexts.

To address these challenges, participants proposed the establishment of formal collaboration structures such as memoranda of understanding (MoUs), joint institutional programmes, and



coordinated partnership frameworks between universities and music archives. One participant argued that “The University should be serious and establish an official relationship with Music Archives” (Participant 7), highlighting the perceived need for formal and sustained institutional engagement. Similarly, lecturers suggested creating more regular opportunities for interaction between archivists and university communities. As one participant explained, “Archivists should go out into the universities and create rapport” (Participant 1), while another argued that “Universities should invite people from the archives to come and talk to students and faculty” (Participant 5). Participants viewed such initiatives as important mechanisms for facilitating communication, resource-sharing, and sustained engagement between universities and archival institutions.

Participants further highlighted student placements, internships, and field-based learning opportunities as practical avenues for strengthening collaboration between universities and music archives. One lecturer observed that “Sometimes we only talk about collaboration in theory, but if students were actually placed in music archives, it would make a difference in how they value these materials” (Participant 4). Similarly, another participant noted that “Internships in archives would really open students’ eyes to what goes into preserving and documenting our musical heritage” (Participant 5). These suggestions position collaboration not only as an institutional arrangement but also as an experiential process through which students engage directly with archival practice and cultural preservation.

Beyond formal agreements, lecturers highlighted collaborative research, fieldwork and documentation projects as important avenues for strengthening university–music archive relationships. One participant emphasised that collaboration should extend beyond institutions to include the communities from which musical knowledge originates, explaining that “Collaboration should start with communities... universities should collaborate with them because they are the custodians of the music. Then, institutions come in as researchers and support systems” (Participant 4). This perspective positions collaboration not merely as a mechanism for accessing archival resources, but as a broader process of knowledge sharing, preservation, and cultural engagement, and demonstrates that effective university–music archive collaboration extends beyond resource access and involves the coordination of institutional practices, professional relationships, and shared pedagogical goals. Formal partnerships, collaborative initiatives, and community engagement emerged as important strategies for creating sustainable pathways through which archival resources can support culturally responsive music teaching within Kenyan higher education.

### **Building Capacity for Archive-Based Teaching**

Lecturers emphasised that meaningful integration of archival resources into music teaching depends not only on the availability of materials, but also on the capacity of educators and students to engage with such resources effectively. Capacity building therefore emerged as an important strategy for strengthening university–music archive collaboration and enhancing the pedagogical use of archival materials. Participants identified significant gaps in archival literacy, particularly in relation to accessing, locating, maintaining, interpreting, and integrating archived musical materials into teaching. As one lecturer explained, “Many of us need some training, ..... we lack training in proper use and maintenance of music archives and how to find the recordings” (Participant 3).

Participants further identified workshops, seminars, and collaborative training initiatives as important mechanisms for strengthening interaction between lecturers, archivists, and students. Such initiatives were viewed as important not only for improving technical skills related to archival access and interpretation, but also for supporting the pedagogical integration of archival resources within music teaching. In addition, participants highlighted experiential learning opportunities as important



for developing students' understanding of archival practice. One lecturer noted that "Internships in archives would really open students' eyes to what goes into preserving and documenting our musical heritage" (Participant 5). This suggests that capacity building encompasses both professional development for educators and practical learning opportunities that enable students to engage more meaningfully with archival resources.

### **Enhancing Access and Visibility of Archival Music Resources**

Participants identified access to archival materials as a major factor shaping their pedagogical use within music teaching. Digitisation and the development of online repositories were consistently emphasised as important strategies for improving the accessibility, visibility, and integration of archival-based music resources within university contexts. Lecturers stressed the importance of searchable digital collections that enable educators and students to retrieve, organise, and engage with archival materials more effectively. As one participant explained, "They should digitise everything. Upload it. Make it searchable" (Participant 3), highlighting the importance of organisation, metadata, and discoverability in supporting teaching and learning. Similarly, another lecturer observed that "With digitised versions, it's easier to play on a laptop....and mobile devices" (Participant 2), suggesting that digital access can reduce practical barriers to classroom use.

Participants further noted that digitised archival materials create opportunities for more interactive and experiential forms of learning. Digital access enables recordings to be replayed, analysed, compared, and contextualised across different musical and cultural settings, thereby supporting deeper engagement with musical practices and histories. Lecturers associated such accessibility with increased opportunities for exposing students to diverse musical traditions that might otherwise remain inaccessible within conventional classroom environments. At the same time, participants' recommendations reflected awareness of existing barriers to access. One lecturer recalled that "You had to go there physically and actually request particular material" (Participant 1), while another noted that "Accessing KICD recordings requires a letter, sometimes a fee" (Participant 3). These experiences show that physical, bureaucratic, and institutional barriers continue to limit the educational use of archival resources.

However, participants also cautioned that digitisation alone does not automatically translate into pedagogical use. Although increased accessibility was viewed positively, lecturers emphasised that digital collections must be organised, contextualised, and integrated into teaching practice if they are to support meaningful learning. In the absence of pedagogical frameworks guiding interpretation and classroom application, digitised collections risk remaining underutilised despite improved technological access. This suggests that meaningful engagement with archival resources requires alignment between technological infrastructure, pedagogical practices, and institutional support systems.

Participants also raised concerns regarding uneven representation within archival collections. While lecturers generally viewed archives as important repositories of musical heritage, some observed that certain musical traditions appeared to be more visible than others. As one participant noted, "there are some cultures that are more represented than others" (Participant 7). Such observations suggest that the accessibility of archival materials is shaped not only by technological infrastructure and institutional access mechanisms, but also by patterns of documentation and preservation that influence which musical traditions become visible within archival collections. Participants therefore highlighted the importance of ensuring that archival initiatives support the documentation and preservation of diverse musical traditions in ways that promote broader cultural representation and visibility within music education. This aligns with Lambrechts's notion of epistemic delinking by



emphasising the need for archival practices that move beyond historically dominant systems of knowledge production and create space for a broader range of musical traditions to inform university–music education.

Beyond digital access, participants highlighted outreach activities as important strategies for increasing the visibility and relevance of archival resources within music education. One lecturer suggested that “Short clips showing what archives have would help. They could present during cultural festivals” (Participant 5), while another proposed seminars, online resource-sharing platforms, and organised digital repositories as ways of improving awareness and engagement (Participant 6). Participants also viewed festivals, workshops, collaborative performances, and community engagements as important opportunities for reconnecting archival materials with contemporary cultural practice.

This demonstrates that access to archival knowledge is mediated not only by technological infrastructure but also by the social, pedagogical, and institutional processes that shape how archival materials are discovered, interpreted, and utilised in music education. Enhancing access and visibility consequently requires more than digitisation alone; it also involves creating pathways through which archival resources can become meaningful components of teaching, learning, and cultural engagement.

### **Supporting Sustainable Collaboration Through Resourcing Strategies**

Lecturers identified funding and resource allocation as critical factors shaping the sustainability of collaboration between universities and music archives. Participants observed that limited financial support constrains key activities such as digitisation, preservation, archival access, collaborative research, and the pedagogical integration of archival materials within music teaching. In many instances, participants explained that archival initiatives depended heavily on externally funded projects, making long-term collaboration difficult to sustain beyond specific funding cycles. As one participant noted, “Most archives lack the funds to digitise materials, but with university researchers as partners, we can develop proposals that attract cultural preservation funding” (Participant 6).

To address these challenges, participants identified collaborative grant initiatives as important strategies for strengthening institutional partnerships and supporting shared activities between universities and music archives. Lecturers noted that funding proposals combining university research expertise with archival collections, community knowledge, and preservation objectives were often more competitive and capable of generating broader educational and cultural impact. One participant explained that “if universities and archives could jointly apply for grants, it would strengthen our chances, because of the aspect of collaboration and impact” (Participant 7). Collaborative funding was therefore viewed not only as a financial mechanism but also as a means of strengthening institutional relationships and expanding opportunities for research, documentation, and pedagogical innovation.

At the same time, participants expressed concern regarding overreliance on short-term donor funding. As one lecturer cautioned, “Donor funding can help, but it should be guided by our own needs, not just external agendas” (Participant 5). Several lecturers observed that externally driven projects frequently decline once financial support ends, resulting in interrupted programmes, reduced archival engagement, and limited continuity in collaborative activities. Participants therefore emphasised the need for stronger government support and policy-backed funding structures that recognise music archives as important educational and cultural infrastructures rather than peripheral heritage



institutions. As Participant 6 remarked, “Without government backing, most of the time, good collaborations can fade away once project funds are exhausted.”

In addition to institutional and government support, participants proposed locally driven income-generating initiatives such as workshops, performances, and digital content production as supplementary strategies for sustaining collaboration. These approaches were perceived as important for reducing dependency on external funding while simultaneously increasing the public visibility and educational relevance of archival institutions.

Therefore, sustainable university–music archive collaboration depends on coordinated and long-term resource support structures capable of sustaining institutional relationships, pedagogical activities, and archival engagement over time. In this regard, funding functions not merely as financial support, but as an enabling condition shaping the continuity, stability, and expansion of collaborative music education practices

### **Strengthening Policy and Governance Frameworks**

Lecturers emphasised that sustainable collaboration between universities and music archives requires coherent policy and governance frameworks operating at both institutional and national levels. Participants observed that although policies supporting African music, cultural heritage, and indigenous knowledge exist, their implementation within music education remains inconsistent. As one lecturer noted, “The curriculum supports African music. The policy is there. But it’s the teacher who makes or breaks it” (Participant 5). This observation suggests a disconnect between policy intentions and the practical realities of integrating archival resources within music teaching.

Participants also highlighted the need for stronger coordination between educational and cultural institutions in order to support more structured collaboration between universities and music archives. Such coordination was viewed as important for positioning music archives as integral components of educational infrastructure rather than peripheral heritage institutions operating outside formal pedagogical systems. Lecturers also suggested that stronger institutional alignment could enhance curriculum integration, resource allocation, and long-term commitment to the use of archival resources within culturally responsive music teaching.

Ethical concerns surrounding intellectual property, consent, representation, and benefit-sharing emerged strongly within participants’ discussions. Lecturers emphasised that archival collaboration should not involve the extraction and preservation of musical materials without consideration of the rights and interests of the communities from which such knowledge originates. One participant argued that “We need policies that protect the community’s rights... if royalties come from the community’s music, some of it should go back to them” (Participant 4). Similarly, the same lecturer stressed that “We must have mutual respect... scholars should not just take and go. We should explain the goal of collaboration clearly and ensure it benefits the community too” (Participant 4). These perspectives highlight the importance of ethical and reciprocal engagement practices that recognise communities as active contributors to musical knowledge rather than passive sources of archival content.

Participants further advocated for governance approaches that foreground community inclusion and shared ownership of cultural heritage. One lecturer suggested that “PPMC should return music to the people” (Participant 4), while another observed that “Play recordings from the ‘80s in the community...as it would revive the music” (Participant 5). Such views position archives not only as sites of preservation but also as mechanisms for reconnecting communities with their cultural histories and musical traditions. Participants therefore envisioned governance frameworks that promote



accountability, participation, and benefit-sharing among universities, archives, communities, and policymakers.

This vision was most clearly articulated by one participant who proposed “a post-colonial archive, one that addresses preservation of music in contemporary Kenya, includes communities, cultural leaders, institutions, and musicians” (Participant 4). This perspective reflects a broader call for governance structures that move beyond custodial approaches to archiving and instead support collaborative, community-centred, and culturally responsive forms of knowledge stewardship. The participant's vision of a post-colonial archive also resonates with Lambrechts's concept of epistemic delinking, which advocates moving beyond inherited colonial knowledge structures by recognising communities and cultural practitioners as legitimate contributors to knowledge production. Rather than positioning archives solely as institutional repositories, this perspective reimagines them as collaborative spaces in which diverse musical knowledges are documented, interpreted, and sustained through partnerships between universities, archives, and communities.

## **Discussion**

### **Collaboration as a Response to Institutional Fragmentation**

A central insight emerging from the findings is that lecturers' proposed strategies are fundamentally responses to institutional fragmentation rather than the absence of archival resources. While participants consistently recognised the pedagogical value of archival materials for culturally responsive music teaching, they described existing forms of collaboration between universities and music archives as largely informal, inconsistent, and dependent on personal relationships. The frequent emphasis on memoranda of understanding, collaborative research initiatives, internship programmes, and institutional partnerships therefore suggests that lecturers perceive the primary challenge as the absence of stable institutional structures capable of supporting sustained engagement.

This finding extends previous scholarship that advocates for formal collaboration frameworks between archives and educational institutions (Saurombe & Ngulube, 2018). Rather than viewing collaboration simply as a mechanism for improving access to resources, participants framed institutional partnerships as necessary conditions for integrating archival materials into teaching, research, and professional practice. The findings therefore suggest that meaningful archival engagement depends not only on the availability of collections, but also on the institutional arrangements through which those collections are mobilised within educational contexts.

From a CHAT perspective, this tension reflects a secondary contradiction between the object of culturally responsive music teaching and the institutional rules, community relationships, and division of labour that shape university–music archive collaboration. While lecturers expressed a desire to incorporate archival resources into their teaching, the absence of formalised relationships between universities and archives limits opportunities for sustained interaction, knowledge exchange, and resource sharing. Consequently, collaboration often remains vulnerable to staff turnover, changing institutional priorities, and the discontinuity associated with informal networks. Addressing this contradiction requires processes of expansive learning, through which universities and music archives collectively reconceptualise their roles and develop more sustainable and institutionally embedded forms of collaboration.

### **Beyond Access: Repositioning Music Archives as Pedagogical Partners**

The findings further challenge the assumption that increasing access to archival resources will automatically lead to their integration into university music teaching. While participants consistently identified digitisation, online repositories, and improved visibility as important strategies, they



simultaneously emphasised the need for professional development, archival literacy, and curriculum integration. This suggests that access alone is insufficient for meaningful pedagogical engagement. Rather, archival resources become educationally valuable through processes of interpretation, contextualisation, and pedagogical mediation. This finding is significant because it shifts attention from archives as repositories of information to archives as active participants in teaching and learning. Participants' emphasis on training, collaborative learning opportunities, and engagement with traditional knowledge holders indicates that archival materials do not possess inherent pedagogical value. Instead, their educational significance emerges through the ways lecturers and students interact with, interpret, and apply them within specific learning contexts. In this sense, the challenge is not simply making archival materials available but enabling their pedagogical translation into meaningful learning experiences.

The findings therefore support Crawford's (2017) argument that archives should be understood as pedagogical infrastructures rather than supplementary educational resources. Within music education, archival recordings and other cultural resources provide opportunities for students to engage with music as historically situated and culturally embedded practice. However, participants' emphasis on capacity building suggests that such opportunities can only be realised when lecturers possess the knowledge and skills necessary to connect archival materials to curriculum objectives, classroom activities, and culturally responsive teaching practices.

The findings also suggest that access to archival resources is shaped not only by technological and institutional factors but also by questions of representation and cultural visibility. Participants' observations regarding uneven representation within archival collections indicate that archival access is not simply a matter of availability, but is also influenced by prior processes of selection, documentation, and preservation. From this perspective, digitisation may improve access to archival materials, but it does not necessarily address existing imbalances in whose musical knowledge becomes visible within archival collections. This therefore points to the need for collaborative archival practices that attend not only to access but also to questions of representation, inclusion, and cultural visibility.

From a CHAT perspective, archival resources function as mediating tools through which cultural knowledge is introduced into educational activity. Yet the effectiveness of these tools depends on the capacities and practices of those who use them. The lecturers' emphasis on professional development therefore reflects a recognition that the pedagogical value of archives is not located solely within collections themselves, but within the relationships, practices, and learning processes through which archival materials are transformed into educational resources.

The findings consequently indicate that repositioning music archives as pedagogical partners requires moving beyond access-centred approaches toward models that foreground participation, and pedagogical engagement. In this regard, archives contribute to culturally responsive music teaching not merely by preserving cultural materials, but by creating opportunities for students and lecturers to engage critically with musical heritage, cultural memory, and locally grounded forms of knowledge.

### **Sustaining Collaboration Through Governance, Community Engagement, and Institutional Support**

The findings further indicate that the sustainability of university–music archive collaboration depends on governance structures capable of coordinating the diverse actors involved in the production, preservation, and use of musical knowledge. Participants repeatedly highlighted the need for policy



support, funding mechanisms, ethical frameworks, and stronger relationships between universities, archives, policymakers, and communities. These concerns are a clear indicator that collaboration is not simply a pedagogical matter, but also an institutional and governance challenge.

Participants' emphasis on policy alignment reflects recognition that archives occupy a position between educational and cultural sectors. While universities seek to utilise archival resources for teaching and research, archives operate within broader heritage, preservation, and cultural mandates. The absence of coordinated frameworks connecting these domains can therefore limit opportunities for sustained collaboration. Therefore, stronger alignment between educational and cultural institutions is necessary if archives are to become integrated components of music teaching rather than peripheral resources accessed on an ad hoc basis.

Equally important was participants' emphasis on community engagement and the inclusion of traditional knowledge holders within archival and educational activities. This finding reinforces arguments within participatory archival scholarship that archives become more meaningful when communities actively contribute to the interpretation, circulation, and preservation of knowledge (Huvila, 2008; Caswell & Mallick, 2014). Within music education, such engagement enables students to encounter musical knowledge as a living cultural practice shaped by performers, communities, and social contexts rather than as static historical content. This demonstrates that sustainable collaboration requires relationships that extend beyond universities and archives to include the communities from which much of the archived knowledge originates.

The emphasis on ethical concerns, including consent, intellectual property, and benefit-sharing, further highlights the importance of governance in shaping archival practice. Participants recognised that collaboration involves responsibilities toward communities and cultural practitioners whose knowledge is represented within archival collections. Consequently, the sustainability of university–music archive collaboration depends not only on institutional agreements and technological infrastructure, but also on governance arrangements that promote accountability, reciprocity, and ethical stewardship of cultural resources.

From a CHAT perspective, these findings illustrate the importance of rules, community, and division of labour in shaping collaborative activity. While archives, universities, and communities may share an interest in preserving and transmitting musical knowledge, their participation is mediated by institutional policies, professional responsibilities, and cultural expectations. Therefore, it is clear that sustainable collaboration emerges when these elements are aligned around shared educational and cultural objectives. In this regard, governance, funding, and community engagement are not peripheral concerns but central conditions that enable archives to function as enduring pedagogical partners within higher education.

Therefore, strengthening university–music archive collaboration requires more than improving access to archival resources. It involves building institutional relationships, supporting pedagogical mediation, and establishing governance structures that connect universities, archives, and communities in mutually beneficial ways. Such collaboration creates conditions under which archival resources can contribute meaningfully to culturally responsive music teaching within Kenyan higher education.

## **Conclusion**

This study has shown that the limited integration of archival-based music resources within Kenyan university–music education is less a problem of resource availability than one of institutional coordination and sustained collaboration. While music archives hold significant potential for



supporting culturally responsive pedagogy, their educational value depends on how relationships among lecturers, archives, universities, and communities are structured and maintained.

The findings demonstrate that meaningful archival engagement requires more than access to preserved materials. It depends on collaborative institutional frameworks, pedagogical capacity, and governance structures that enable archival resources to be integrated into teaching and learning. In this sense, archives emerge not simply as repositories of cultural memory, but as active pedagogical partners that support culturally responsive music teaching within Kenyan higher education.

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