

# *Education Through International Collaboration*

## The Audiovisual Preservation Exchange (APEX) program

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Caring for our audiovisual heritage is a shared endeavor. There's no institution in the world that can preserve content by itself, as preservation methods, tools and solutions originate in the community. Likewise, many of the problems that memory institutions face, derive from factors that escape archivists control, such as advancement and obsolescence of technology, culture of production, changes in copyright laws, and similar factors. Financial opportunities, resources and administrative structures vary from archive to archive, and from country to country, and hierarchical structures—when founded in extreme bureaucratic systems—often inhibit open dialogue and collaboration between memory organizations. With these facts in mind, there are not absolute answers to questions that arise, and many solutions are the result of trial and error in different settings where flexibility of infrastructure and collaboration are key to disseminate knowledge to better care for the world's audiovisual heritage.

The Audiovisual Preservation Exchange Program (APEX henceforth) is based on a vision of sharing information horizontally, by involving students, professionals, artists, communities, archivists, and film enthusiasts in an effort to find answers to problems in a collaborative fashion while net-

working and learning from each other. Founded in 2008 by former Associate Director Mona Jimenez, APEX is a project of the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Master's Degree program (MIAP) at New York University. APEX encourages international dialogue on audiovisual preservation between individuals, professionals and organizations. The uniqueness of this program lays on the way activities take place: work and conversation always occur during hands-on activities with collections, providing the perfect setting to discover new issues and possible solutions in an immersive educational experience. This is also a unique opportunity for participants to engage in transversal knowledge-sharing, since participants operate as students and teachers at the same time. Some of the collaborative activities that APEX encourages relate to collection management assessment, systems of inventorying and cataloguing, workshops on community archiving, video digitization, digital preservation, and discussions on access.

When choosing the locations for the program, APEX considers how the program can counteract asymmetrical archival structures, and the lack of resources in institutions. In its model of exchange of information, APEX participants get to learn how processes are conducted when conditions are

precarious, and gain a lot from archivists who prove to be resourceful and often self-taught. APEX lectures and workshops emphasize areas of knowledge where there is a dire need of training in the countries visited, such as video preservation, digitization, and digital preservation.

Since 2008, APEX has taken place in Ghana (2008 and 2012), Colombia (2013), Uruguay (2014), Argentina (2009 and 2015), Chile (2016) and Spain (2017). It should be noted that there are efforts in some of those countries to increase academic programs in the area of audiovisual preservation, and to tailor related curricula into existing information sciences departments. Recently, a “Diplomatura en Preservación y Restauración Audiovisual” (a Certificate in Audiovisual Preservation and Restoration) has been created in Buenos Aires (Argentina); an MA in Administration of Audiovisual Patrimony is under planning at Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano in Bogotá (Colombia), and similar conversations are taking place at the Elías Querejeta Film School in San Sebastián (Spain). These efforts are non-APEX related, however the program and the networking it generates has been important for consultation on curricular decisions, target audiences, and projection to academic futures.

APEX has been organized by students led by a faculty advisor and professional mentors since 2013, turning it into a rich learning experience as well as an opportunity to develop international leadership. The upcoming tenth anniversary of APEX provides a special opportunity to assess the achievements of the program and to draft prospective new directions, within the same spirit of collaboration. In what follows, we present a series of reflections resulting from that decade of collaborative work, focusing on the challenges of organizing an educational exchange invested in being productive for the whole archival community, while emphasizing a model that may be replicable in other geographies. We also discuss how APEX results and future projects relate to an initiative to concentrate knowledge and resources into a collaborative digital humanities project, tentatively named *Kamani*.

## History and Purposes of APEX

The APEX program (Audiovisual Preservation Exchange) proposes an alternative model for collaboration and a sustainable educational model in subjects related to the safeguarding of the world’s audiovisual memory.<sup>1</sup> The program consists on a visit from a team of US based archivists to archives in other parts of the world. The US team is composed of NYU MIAP students, accompanied by one or two faculty members. Preliminary preparation includes extensive conversation with hosting institutions by elaborating a list of tasks to accomplish and designing workflows. Preparation starts four to six months before the exchange by deciding how the MIAP team will combine with local participants, what specific goals would be achieved, and how the projects are going to be executed. Projects are assigned on the basis of skills and preferences of participants, making sure that learning happens both for visitors and locals, and that competence in areas such as film handling, video digitization, digital preservation, and other audiovisual fields is maximized.

APEX also pursues the strengthening of international networks between audiovisual archives, memory institutions (museums, libraries, and *centros de la memoria* in the case of Latin America), community organizations and individual endeavors in the field. It was initially conceived by Professor Mona Jimenez as a cooperation project between the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Master’s Degree program (MIAP) at New York University (NYU),<sup>2</sup> and the Archive of the Institute for African Studies of the University of Ghana.<sup>3</sup> APEX soon found an echo and grounded its roots in several Latin American countries, although the mission of the program remains open to work in other hosting countries, and at the moment there is interest in countries such as Thailand, Serbia, and Kosovo. The second version of the program was organized in 2009 in cooperation with the Museo del Cine Pablo Ducrós Hicken in Buenos Aires. The 65th Congress of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) took place in the same city just days before APEX, an event that facilitated the presence of archivists from all over the world, and

the presence of the NYU team. Between 2013 and 2017 APEX took place in Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Spain, consolidating as a fruitful model for education and exchange in the field.

The program's original and current mission statement is the creation of productive international networking between audiovisual archivists, administrators, educators and students through shared hands-on work. APEX's main goals are oriented towards conservation and preservation of audiovisual collections through horizontal dialogue and communication, fostering an environment where participants share mutual experiences while searching for innovative, resourceful and creative solutions to both administrative and technical problems, related to areas such as collection management (use and implementation of open source software, for example), and best practices in digitization and digital preservation, among other. APEX's spirit of transversal communication and non-hierarchical exchange has been kept throughout its different versions, welcoming work with diverse collections and teams of varied provenance. This has strengthened the diversity of the program and has expanded its reach beyond solely institutional collections or "major" archives, expanding the definition of what can be considered audiovisual heritage. APEX includes materials from personal and family collections, amateur productions, community archives as well as more traditional organizations and established institutions. We define major archives as those often financed with state funding, and fully ruled by State administrative practices, and more commonly identified as "national archives." In the Latin American context, for example, these archives are highly invested in preserving audiovisual patrimony related to national cinemas, and are associated with cultural production that relates to the construction of national identities: Filmoteca UNAM, Cineteca Nacional (Mexico); Cíntemateca Uruguaya, Fundación Patrimonio Fílmico Colombiano, and Archivo ICAIC in Cuba are some examples of major archives.

For the purpose of our discussion, it is important to note the asymmetrical relations that they establish with minor archives. i.e. those organized and administered by institutions different from the State,

that gather alternative, individual, community, and underground endeavors. Minor archives may be located in official institutions such as universities, memory institutions, or similar. However, they are often attached to specialized collections of paper, books, and documents that arrive to archives whose main mission of statement is not primarily the safeguarding of audiovisual collections. Because of the significance of these collections, and the important segments of information that they contribute to the history of communities, there is the need to rethink their place in the archival infrastructure in various geographical regions. Actual work in these institutions makes it imperative to think of how digital projects can bridge the gap between big and minor archives. In a paradoxical way, it also invites to reconsider how digital environments, social media and technology may play a role so that we become "participatory archives," a term proposed by Anne Gilliland and Sue McKemmish (2014) in their discussion about the role archives play in regard to human rights, and politics of reconciliation. The authors establish a clear opposition between official records, and a counter-archives that, in a way, myriad the opposition we are establishing here between big in minor archives. In their words, "While these [counter-archives] might be regarded by the archival field as "incidental" or "accidental" archives, they serve as important supplements, counters, or corrections to the records held in official archives." (3)

Many of the minor archives that have participated in APEX have been organized in such incidental way. In many cases, their administrative structure ascribes to the memory institution where they are housed, and one of the remaining challenges is establishing specific managing and governing guidelines related to the handling of audiovisual materials. On the other hand, the counter-archival role that many of these collections play is substantial to political discussions of truth and reconciliation in areas of the world plagued by political problems, in this case Africa and Latin America, exactly where APEX has taken place. The Archivo General de la Universidad de la República (Montevideo, Uruguay), for example, and the archive at community TV station Señal 3 (Santiago, Chile) safeguard im-

portant collections related to the violation of human rights during times of political oppression at periods of dictatorial governments.

The APEX model has encouraged not only international but also local dialogue on both praxis and theory: public organizations have the opportunity to take a leading role as guides and mentors, improve interinstitutional communication and sometimes even get to know the *modus operandi* of minor archives, understand the value of this diversity from all angles: administrative structure, archival holdings, and financing models. Moreover, by encouraging exchange between major and minor archives, APEX expects to give visibility to collections of minor archives, with a subsequent impact on scholarship produced on those holdings. Constant assessment and dissemination of the content of minor archives might invite new approaches of research, and additional interest by academic and independent scholars. By expanding the spectrum of the dialogue and generating inclusion, APEX has allowed the diversification of memory representation, and has yielded conversations on sustainability, and resources. It has also provided new opportunities to promote audiovisual heritage. Some of those activities have been the public screening of archival materials, facilitating dialogue among the participating institutions by closing each APEX edition with symposia, and encouraging participants to be active in local and international professional associations.

Self-assessment and surveys have been important components to reshape APEX. In the last years, a project conducted by Suárez has been crucial to think new venues of action for APEX. That project is entitled “Film Archives, Cultural History and the Digital Turn in Latin America”; it discusses the place of audiovisual archives in shaping the cultural history of Latin American countries.<sup>4</sup> For the project, a general in situ collection assessment has been conducted in major and minor Latin American archives in Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. The study compares similarities and differences in policies governing major institutions in order to analyze the administrative forces that currently model archival practices, chief among them the digital turn. This concept is to be

understood here as the increased attention and use of new practices in digital environments across a variety of contexts. The digital turn is a result of globalization and the growing range of technologies of communication that has rapidly changed all aspects of filmmaking, production, distribution, exhibition and, of course, storage. Assimilation and transitions to new technologies are processes framed into hegemonic practices of production and consumption that replicate power and domination patterns of more developed over less developed countries. Traditionally, Latin American countries share a history of consumption of technology and are not leaders in the production of it. Most countries are also importers of technological goods. The access to technology varies from country to country and from region to region in each country. The type of industry also marks a difference, as well as the presence of private or public capital.

Over the years APEX and its allies have had the possibility to work with, and assist in the conservation and preservation of analog materials such as film—nitrate, acetate and polyester, small gauge formats such as 8mm, super 8mm and 9.5 mm as well as large formats, namely 16mm and 35mm—magnetic media in many different formats and digital archives including digitized collections and born digital content. These collections have been a starting point to initiate discussions on preservation of both analog and digital elements. Additionally, the collections APEX has worked with consist of a wide variety of content—newsreels, television programs, artistic creations, feature films, documentaries and other.

In summary, APEX is an opportunity to exchange knowledge, skills and solutions to common problems in the preservation of audiovisual archives through dialogue and hands on work with film, video and digital media collections in areas such as identification and inspection, inventory/cataloging, metadata administration, digitization and digital preservation while also considering creative subjects and the value of archival materials as well as acknowledging the multiple purposes archives have for research, audiovisual production and overall education, yet recognizing the value of diversity in both content and archival practices.

### **APEX: Organization and Structure**

Since 2013, APEX has been held annually, funded mainly by the Tisch School of Arts of NYU, with the support of organizations such as the World Cinema Project of the Film Foundation<sup>5</sup> and donations from supporters of archives. This funding structure and the fact that the program is rooted within an educational organization has allowed to establish a sustainable model from the financial and educational perspective. In addition, APEX counts with the support provided by local organizations participating in the project, often materialized in the form of supplies or in-kind support vital for the execution of the activities. There is the expectation that hosts and local participating archives will contribute in one way or another according to their own possibilities and available resources. Likewise, they will be proactive in negotiating local funding and support. For instance, in previous versions, associate hosts have contributed with working spaces, promotion of special events, and some have accomplished partial coverage of costs such as lodging, meals or snacks, archival supplies and/or local transportation. Generally speaking, MIAP and personal contributions cover costs originated outside the host country. Furthermore, APEX's organizing committee does preliminary work, according to the needs and descriptions of host organizations, to get collaboration from manufacturers and supplies companies to obtain donations such as containers, film leader, perforated tape, specific equipment and the like, which can be difficult to get locally, or too expensive to purchase.

Since 2013, the organization of the activities is led by MIAP students, who are guided by a full time MIAP faculty member. Additionally, the program has developed a mentorship system, with the participation of MIAP graduates who have either engaged in or organized APEX in the past, and are already pursuing a professional career.<sup>6</sup> This constitutes a unique educational model, where the objective not only lies on developing and strengthening technical skills, but also encouraging administrative and organizational abilities as well as developing leadership. Hence,

from the perspective of the MIAP program, giving students the opportunity to organize this type of events constitutes a way of encouraging students' professional development, by helping them to envision and organize team work, plan and fundraise for resources, plan logistics for accommodation and working in a foreign country, and learning how to navigate administrative systems other than those in the United States. Thus, planning with the host institutions is carried out through a small committee led by students with the participation of the professor advisor, mentors and local organizers. As mentioned, the goals and projects to be executed during APEX are determined in collaboration with the host organization (or organizations) and are programmed to meet their interests and needs. From an educational perspective, this also constitutes an opportunity for students to explore their own interests by selecting and organizing projects that are aligned with their research topics, strongest skills, and/or professional goals.

Organization and refinement of each edition of the exchange starts four to six months before the actual dates of exchange and most deadlines and program structures are roughly defined beforehand. This is possible thanks to the experience the program has accumulated over the years, which translates into a fixed administrative framework, yet allowing flexibility and space for testing with new activities and topics. This setting has permitted efficiency and fast responses that reflect in the execution of ambitious projects. In a way, this structure has worked as a syllabus, providing student organizers a framework to work with clear goals. However, it is worth noting that the work performed by students does not correspond to a course in the MA program, and they do not receive grades or curricular credits for their participation.

The flexibility of the program allows the incorporation of additional activities related to the archival field, around specific collections, contents or interdisciplinary work. For instance, in the execution of each edition, APEX has included visits to archives, museums and restoration facilities, workshops, academic conferences, screenings

and artistic performances, just to name a few. APEX is usually carried out in a period between ten to fourteen days during which time the team can work in more than one geographical location in the host country. The work is organized with the participation of two or more local organizations, which is a fundamental requirement for the development of the program since APEX expects to maximize the scope of the exchange as well as to encourage interinstitutional dialogue and collaboration. Groups of visiting participants have been made up between twelve and twenty people, divided into smaller teams once activities actually start in the host country. Each team works with one institution or local organization or in two or more specific projects within one organization. The local participants are generally employees or members of the host institutions, students, filmmakers, artists working with audiovisual materials, local professionals and volunteers. In some occasions APEX has had the participation of professionals from nearby countries. Language has never been a limitation for the project since APEX has always had bilingual participants: students, professors, and mentors from Spanish speaking countries or with bilingual background as well as bilingual hosts who assist in the tasks of interpreting and translating. The fact that they are also professionals in the field facilitate communicating topics and work with specific field vocabularies proper to the activities. Generally, each APEX closes with an event—conversation, meeting or round table—which allows each team to share the results of the collaborative work, to establish dialogues about issues that emerged over the course of the exchange, and discussions on possible future collaborations, whether international or local.<sup>7</sup> In summary, APEX develops four clear target lines: encouragement of open international, inter-regional and local collaboration and dialogue; collaborative problem solving to common issues in the administration of moving image collections; education on the importance of audiovisual heritage, and creation of professional leadership in the field.

### Previous Versions: Lessons Learned in the Educational Arena

After the initial edition in Ghana, APEX has been carried out in four Latin American countries, and its most recent version was held in Cartagena, Spain (2017). As mentioned above, each version has had different specific goals, adjusted to the needs and interests of the hosts. The first APEX edition to adopt this structure was held Bogotá in 2013, organized in collaboration with Fundación Patrimonio Fílmico Colombiano and Proimágenes Colombia, organized by Juana Suárez (MIAP 2013). The work consisted in inspection, repair, documentation and cataloging of heritage film in 35mm, 16mm and magnetic open reels from the *Yuruparí* collection.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the team held a lecture on digital preservation at the Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano and a round table on Colombian amateur films at Cinemateca Distrital de Bogotá. Previous to the exchange, the team organized the repatriation of 16 and 35mm negatives, belonging to the defunct Compañía de Fomento Cinematográfico FOCINE, which were stored in the facilities of Katina Productions in New York since the late 1980s. (Patrimonial rights of those films are currently held by Proimágenes Colombia). Since then, APEX has facilitated networking that has allowed the digitization and restoration of 765 audio tapes and the following adjudication of a grant from the International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT) to Proimágenes—current owner of the collection and rights holder—to preserve six of the documentaries of the *Yuruparí* series. In APEX 2013, work teams were led by recent graduates, making clear that such structure had the potential to strengthen students' skills, providing them with valuable tools to step into the professional world. In that new structure, graduates could serve as guides or mentors. In 2014 APEX traveled to Montevideo, Uruguay, organized by Pamela Vízner with Suárez's mentorship. Main collaborators were Universidad Católica del Uruguay—with Professor Julieta Keldjian as main organizer and coordinator *in situ*—SODRE Archivo de la Imagen y la Palabra, Fundación de Arte Contemporáneo (FAC), Cinemateca Uru-

guaya and Archivo General de la Universidad de la República (AGU, UdelaR). In that edition, the teams worked with film (16mm and small gauges) and for the first time with analog magnetic video (U-matic, VHS and others), focusing primarily in collection assessment and development of proposals to improve storage conditions, handling, cataloging, digitization and digital preservation.

The participation of Fundación de Arte Contemporáneo encouraged activities that used film medium as a creative element. A session of image handling during projection and found footage manipulation was organized as a public performance and exhibition. This new edge brought to the program an interesting interaction between the archive, users and communities, positioning audiovisual heritage as a living element in constant transformation and repurposing. This opportunity reinforced APEX's intentions of creating participative and interdisciplinary communities around media, encouraging dialogue among archives professionals as well as researchers, users and general public.

In 2014, APEX formally introduced professional leadership as a formative goal through the organization of public workshops on film, video and digital preservation, taught by MIAP students. Also new to the program was a closing round table where participants presented the results of the exchange. That meeting was the preamble of what would turn into the *Mesa Interinstitucional de Patrimonio Audiovisual* (the Interinstitutional Group for Film Preservation in Uruguay), a cluster of organizations that currently collaborate to optimize resources for preservation.<sup>9</sup> Since then, every APEX closes with a seminar or roundtable which main goal is to establish future collaboration, paths for exchange, preservation projects, screenings, participation in conferences, formal and informal education, and similar activities.

The following year, Museo del Cine Pablo Ducrós Hicken in Buenos Aires welcomed APEX again, this time with the participation of the public TV Station Canal 7. Four teams worked with nitrate and acetate collections of 35mm film at the Museum. Staff members shared their expertise with other participants in the handling of nitrate films.

Due to its fragility and volatility, and to the fact that it demands specific safety practices, it is uncommon for many archivists to work with nitrate base. This is one of the best examples of horizontal education in APEX, where staff members shared expertise with APEX participants in a horizontal collegial relation, rather than in a hierarchical north-south order. In the same vein, working with Canal 7's 2" Quad tape collection provided a perfect scenario to talk about video restoration and cleaning, thanks to the contribution of their team of engineers and the participation of Jim Lindner, expert in video preservation. Same as the former year, APEX finalized with a symposium organized in collaboration with NYU Global Site in Buenos Aires and partially supported by the US Embassy in Argentina. Colleagues from Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia joined APEX 2015, making evident APEX continuous strive for interaction between former and current participants. The idea of recurrent participation was brought up in Uruguay during the round table.

The Audiovisual Archive of the Chilean National Library<sup>10</sup> and the community TV station Señal 3 from La Victoria<sup>11</sup> hosted the 2016 edition of APEX in Santiago, Chile. Once again, the work centered on film and video, this time with a strong focus on digitization techniques and technologies. In this edition, the teams developed a prototype of telecine for small gauge film and built a video digitization station. These two projects turned the archive into a classroom, where participants were able to observe and participate in the construction of both stations, becoming involved in the planning and execution of the digitizing units. In addition, the organization of a Community Archiving Workshop allowed teams to actively engage people from the community in the preservation of their own heritage.<sup>12</sup> These acquired skills and tools and the democratization of archival knowledge empower communities to undertake self-managed preservation projects that break with the traditional hierarchical and asymmetrical structure that often rule the safeguarding of audiovisual memory. This unequal structure became evident during the closing seminar: Señal 3 director Luis "Polo" Lillo expressed his concern for the

distance that they (as a minor archive) experience between established institutions and community organizations, especially regarding the uneven representation and definition of what constitutes national memory.

In 2017 APEX was held in Cartagena, Spain. Salvi Vivancos from *Memorias Celuloideas*,<sup>13</sup> and Clara Sánchez-Dehesa from *Red de Cine Doméstico* were the main organizers in an edition that extended to work with the *Archivo Municipal de Cartagena*.<sup>14</sup> In this opportunity—although APEX continued working directly with collections—the program had a strong educational component materialized in the form of public workshops. Likewise, the students organizing this APEX proposed and designed an itinerant video digitization kit that was used for open demonstrations, and it is expected to be taken to future APEX editions. Activities were extended to *Archivo de Murcia*, and *Filmoteca de Murcia*. In addition to the now standard closing symposia, the program came to an end with an exchange with the Department of Journalism, Documentation and Audiovisual Communication from *Universidad Carlos III de Madrid*, and a curatorship program of moving images from participant countries, and that have been saved in collaboration with APEX through the last ten years, screened at the emblematic *Filmoteca Española*.

### Mid-term Plans, Impact and Results

One of the mid-term goals of APEX is to establish international collaboration networks to gradually develop after the conclusion of each visit. The creation of a strong professional audiovisual net is of extreme importance not only for the structure of the model, but also to expand the long-term impact of the project so that participants—from both host institutions and visitors—may engage in independent cooperative projects outside the APEX framework. In other words, APEX acts as a catalyst, facilitating the creation of these links, but not always serving as an executor. The idea is to break those traditional dependency ties generated by structured educational programs and traditional hierarchical archival structures between

major and minor archives. Thus, professionals, organizations and communities can be active in the creation of their own definitions of archives, archival holdings, memory and heritage.

So far, these connections between diverse archivist communities have resulted in activities such as collaborative preservation and digitization projects, team presentations in professional conferences, internships, and archival screenings. A public lecture on digital preservation by Howard Besser in APEX Bogotá (2013), attended by staff from different institutions; a closing round table among participant institutions in APEX Montevideo (2014) that provided the seed for the creation of the already described *Mesa Interinstitucional para el Patrimonio Audiovisual*, and a series of workshops organized by the *Red de Cine Doméstico* with the support of *Archivo Municipal de Cartagena* are some examples of activities that have promoted exchange between major and minor archives. Among these collaborations, it is also worth highlighting the recent participation of members of the APEX community in professional events such as the annual conference of the *Association of Moving Images Archivists, AMIA*, having a strong presence in the committees for diversity, education, advocacy and international outreach.<sup>15</sup> In the same vein, APEX has facilitated their participation in events such as the *Orphan Film Symposium*, organized by NYU MIAP, for the presentation and screening of audiovisual archival projects.<sup>16</sup> Based on the collected experience, and taking advantage of the leadership and visibility of the program, some participants have been effective in proposing positive changes in organizations such as the *International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)*,<sup>17</sup> to promote more dynamic and productive conversations, and attention to minor archives. This is a contribution not only to diversity, but also an invitation what is it that those professional spaces consider “diversity.”

The upcoming tenth anniversary of the program in 2018 sets a great opportunity to assess both methodology and results of a decade of work, and to project to the future. The plan is to take APEX to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during the first two weeks



of June, and to work in collaboration with five different archives. To celebrate the anniversary, APEX 2018 is planning to start with a summit that brings together members of the APEX community to present accomplishments of the different editions of the program, assess achievements, and propose mid and long-term actions to secure endurance of the project. At the same time, it will be an opportunity to open the debate in relation to the state of the art of the audiovisual preservation field and its visibility in the Latin American region as well as other subjects such as state of archival facilities and available equipment, conservation of analog materials, digitization efforts and digital preservation.

Considering that most APEX editions have taken place in Latin American countries, there is an awareness that we need to increase work with indigenous and Afro-descendent communities who only in recent years have moved from having their archives showcased in hegemonic curatorial practices, to self-organizing and community archiving.

### **Long-term Goals: Expanding APEX Networks and Educational Outreach**

A long-term purpose for the APEX project is to create a system that allows frequent expansion and updating of content and educational resources while at the same time facilitating a needed dialogue among archives professionals, collaborations north/south, local and global. The materialization of this goal is currently planned through the development of a digital humanities collaborative project, unfolding from Suárez's research on Latin American archives. That project consists of an online platform that will feature panels where people invested in exchange of information on archival practices as a goal will have the opportunity to participate. This includes archivist, activists, filmmakers, researchers, artists, graduate students in information sciences and/or archival programs, people working with orphan films, collections, and similar. Participants will sign up with an email, and commit to a common set of guidelines, and a code of conduct oriented to civilian and productive participation. The pan-

els will include information about participating institutions and archives (if registered as such); a directory of participants; a panel to explore ideas and current discussions in the world of archives; a section on ongoing initiatives that will allow featuring projects at different places; a section on online resources; and a section to centralize funding opportunities. Additional features will be added by periodic assessment, according to needs suggested by users.

This is not the place to discuss to extent a definition of digital humanities. In broad terms, we use it here as the application of computational technologies to facilitate teaching and learning in the field of the humanities, and in this case the arts. In that regards, this project is fueled by the possibilities that the internet offers, yet considering that we do not take for granted access to the internet across the planet. Rather than encapsulating our efforts in every APEX version as a one-time event, this collaborative digital humanities project envisions an environment where APEX is one more piece of a bigger frame, thus facilitating the establishment of more robust and long-lasting professional networks, and subsequent exchange. From an educational perspective, students and emerging archivists are essential to developing digital humanities collaboration. In order to connect and expand not only Latin American archives but archives around the world, there is the need to create a path for students to engage globally with archivists and establish international communication and relationships to diversify experience and strengthen the archival community.

The model of cooperation, mutual exchange and transversal education that APEX proposes - and thus far the project has executed - is invested in another hierarchy of knowledge, and in promoting a symmetrical dialogue. That same structure should reflect in the digital humanities project. For a title, it has tentatively adopted the word *Kamani*, which is Aymara language for "communal obligation/responsibility for the cultivated field." The project is conceived with the understanding that the digital turn is another manifestation that illustrates how cultural institutions are shaped by globalization, and the acceleration of exchange.

*Kamani* is a digital humanities tool that will take advantage of the internet to provide an online platform where members of the community at large can exchange ideas and information without the influence of the power structures that normally inhibit participation. This research is conceived in the spirit of capitalizing community, curricular, and professional endeavors, inviting to rethink our role as educators and archivists in the twenty-first century as well as in the different directions knowledge can flow. It is rooted in our firm belief that diversity is not only about race and ethnicity, but also about gender, social class, education, and age (the generational gap is conspicuous in administrative models in Latin America), among other. It is also based on awareness that privileged mobility entails a sense of responsibility.

The conception of *Kamani* has benefited not only from APEX presence in Latin America, but also from contributions from Latin American colleagues in archival symposia in the last three years, and the current interest of FIAF and Latin American major and minor archives in this project. Hence, the project gathers concerns from colleagues both sides of the border that there is a need for a moderated dialog among Latin American archives, conversations north/south, and the need to centralize a platform of exchange.

Transportability would be one of the most salient characteristic of the project as it can be replicated in other contexts. For example, the model could be adapted in African, and Asian, Eastern European countries, or at least inspire another kind of virtual fluid exchange.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, colleagues and students interested in similar models but at minor scales may be able to address regional or more local initiatives following this path. For example, those wanting to work on the US/Mexico border, interstate collaborations between different communities, collaborations among universities, and so on. The advantage of a digital humanities collaborative project is the Internet, its promise of connectivity and the multiple interlink possibilities it offers. This can help connecting with the many US and European projects that already exist in the field such as the European Film Gateway

Project [21].

Some of the topics in which archivists, scholars and students could get involved are access to materials, comparisons and solutions of intellectual property rights from context to context, tool development, digital libraries, data mining, born-digital preservation, multimedia publication, visualization, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), recording tricks of the trade from senior archivists and making them active knowledge in everyday practices, technology for teaching, and learning, sustainability models, creation of shared-online catalogues, and many other need of humanities scholarship.

Obviously, *Kamani* will need mentorship, coordination, local leadership, consensus, and continuous digital stewardship to prevent it from becoming one of those projects that Aldeheid Heftberger criticizes because they have been reduced to “discussing new ways to of publishing scholarly articles or to demarcation within the field (traditional versus digital humanities) and prolonging the familiar debate of quantitative analysis versus hermeneutical tradition.” (151) Likewise, it is a project that will need teamwork to locate funding, and advocacy to protect its functioning. It will need a moderation system where individuals from different countries take turns at monitoring content, updating information, and encouraging participation. Because of this collaborative structure and the requirement of diverse participation, *Kamani* will not be able to function in isolation. Interaction with other projects in the same vein such as APEX will be fundamental for the success of such initiative as they will continue to feedback from one another.

*Kamani* will be an open process that offers the possibility to join the conversation and APEX will strengthen it and nourish it. Eventually, it will have to promote a strong frame of “train the trainers” in the aim of sustainability, and ultimately students will be those trainers. Exchange is the foundation for change. The interdisciplinary nature, the hands-on approach seeks to expand networks of participation, modes of access, and mechanisms for the dissemination of knowledge and scholarship for the benefit of the world’s audiovisual heritage.

## References

Gilliland, Anne. "The Role of Participatory Archives in Furthering Human Rights, Reconciliation and Recovery." *Atlanti: Review for Modern Archival Theory and Practice* 24 (2014): 78-88.

Heftberger, Adelheid. "Film Archives and Digital Humanities- An Impossible Match?" *MedieKultur. Journal of Media Communication and Research* 57 (2014): 135-153.

## Endnotes

1 For a complete overview of what the scope of the program, goals and history, please visit the APEX Website, <https://tisch.nyu.edu/cinema-studies/miap/research-outreach/apex> (accessed January 9, 2017).

2 Information about the NYU/Cinema Studies' Moving Image Archiving and Preservation program is available at <https://tisch.nyu.edu/cinema-studies/miap> (accessed January 9, 2017).

3 In addition to the NYU site, specific information on this first version is also found at the APEX Ghana Website, [www.apexghana.org](http://www.apexghana.org) (accessed January 9, 2017).

4 This was Juana Suárez's thesis prepared as partial requirement for the degree on Moving Image Archiving and Preservation MA, NYU (2013). At the time, Suárez proposed a toolkit as a possibility of collaboration among archives. That has moved to the collaborative digital humanities project we describe later in this discussion.

5 Information on the World Cinema Project and their commitment to the safeguarding of audiovisual patrimony is available at Film Foundation, World Cinema Project Website, <http://www.film-foundation.org/world-cinema> (accessed January 9, 2017).

6 Priority is given to NYU MIAP students; however, some versions of APEX have included students from UCLA-MIAS, the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation in Rochester NY, and the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In 2015, the program was supported by a team of archivists from different US institutions.

7 A complete overview of the activities that the program has carried out, and the kind of collaborations established in each host country is documented at the website of the program, with videos and a gallery of images: <https://tisch.nyu.edu/cinema-studies/miap/research-outreach/apex>

8 The *Yuruparí* television series consist of ethnographic documentaries made between 1983 and 1986 centered in Afro-descendant and indigenous cultures in Colombia. With further consulting from APEX participants, the project received a Save Your Archive grant from the International Federation of Television Archives (IFTA-FIAT) that yield the beginning of digital restoration of the 64 documentaries.

9 The Interinstitutional Group for Audiovisual Preservation is an initiative of several memory organizations and archives in Uruguay that brings together support and efforts to help preserve the country's heritage. The first film preserved through this initiative is *Eclipse Solar de 1938*, a 35mm nitrate film that documents the study of a solar eclipse in the country. More information in Spanish here: <http://www.universidad.edu.uy/prensa/renderItem/itemId/40416> (accessed January 9, 2017).

10 The Chilean National Library produced a video to document APEX 2016, available at <https://vimeo.com/169909738> (accessed January 9, 2017).

11 La Victoria is an emblematic working-class neighborhood in Santiago, which originated after a land occupation by people who lived in a misery belt. La Victoria has a history of political activity and resistance, especially during the Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1981). Señal 3, the community TV Station, was officially formed after the return to democracy, when neighbors found their voice through independent programming to fight under and misrepresentation by current media.

12 The Community Archiving Workshop (CAW) is an initiative supported by AMIA which intends to help independent or small organizations to jump-start an archiving project with the help of professional archivists and local volunteers. More information on their website: <http://communityarchiving.org/> (accessed January 9, 2017).

13 See information on Memorias Celuloides at <http://memoriasceluloides.medusamediacion.com/> (accessed January 9, 2017).

14 Funded by the city government, the Archivo Municipal de Cartagena is the historical archive of the city, holding impressive documents of one of the oldest Spanish cities. Their work with audiovisual collections is very recent, making APEX a great opportunity to make decisions on planning and projecting. See the archive site at <http://archivo.cartagena.es/> (accessed January 9, 2017).

15 See AMIA website, [www.amianet.org](http://www.amianet.org) (accessed January 9, 2017).

16 See Orphan Film Symposium Website at <http://www.nyu.edu/orphanfilm/> (accessed January 9, 2017).

17 See FIAF Website at [www.fiafnet.org](http://www.fiafnet.org) (accessed January 9, 2017).

18 Although the initial focus of the digital humanities project will be Latin America, this model can be easily expanded and/or replicated in other regions of the world.