

LERC Attends the “*Formation Archivistique*” at the CPEL in USEK

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Reported by Liliane Haddad

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) was represented by Ms. Liliane Haddad, Archivist and Chief Indexer at the Lebanese Emigration Archives and Database, the electronic archiving wing of LERC, at a training seminar titled, “*Formation Archivistique.*”

The six-day training seminar was held at the **Centre Phoenix pour les Études Libanaises (CPEL)**, in the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) in collaboration with The National Archives of France, represented by Ms. Magali Lagousses, and the Curator at the National Archives Mr. Danis Habib.

For the duration of the seminar, Ms. Lagousses and Mr. Habib shared their expertise in collecting, archiving, encoding, and saving public and private archives, according to international standard norms.



The first two days were devoted to defining 'Archives,' and responding to three questions: Why archives? From whom? And to whom?

During the next two days, speakers developed, the following terminologies: Research instrument, steps of collecting, sorting, selecting encoding, conditions of accesses, rules, role of the Archivist and International Standard norms ISAD(G), and EAD with application in exercises and examples.

Encoded Archival Description (EAD) is a data structure standard for preserving the hierarchy and designating the content of descriptive guides to archival holdings worldwide. It enables Internet delivery of these guides and also ensures their permanence by providing a stable, non-proprietary data storage environment from which data can be transferred to other software environments as necessary. In technical terms, EAD comprises a Document Type Definition (DTD) for encoding archival finding aids that is written following the syntactic rules of Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) and Extensible Markup Language (XML).

EAD is a more specific structural standard than ISAD(G) *General International Standard Archival Description, adopted by the Ad Hoc Commission on Descriptive Standards, Stockholm, Sweden, 21-23 January 1993* in that EAD is focused on the particular type of archival finding aid typically called an inventory or register. As mentioned earlier, however, the developers of EAD looked closely at ISAD(G) and made certain that its elements were accommodated within the

EAD data structure. Moreover, EAD is completely compatible with ISAD(G)'s principles of multilevel description. This comfortable fit between the ISAD(G) and EAD data structures is a primary reason why interest in EAD has been strongly international in scope.

Archivists who lack experience thinking explicitly about multilevel description when implementing a hierarchical data structure such as EAD will find that ISAD(G) provides a vital framework within which to situate EAD-related decision making.

The Evolution of Archival Descriptive Standards:

Archives, libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions exist to preserve and protect the documentary record of human activity and to make it available for research, study, and evidentiary purposes. To carry out this mission, archival repositories have long devoted significant effort to arrangement and description of their holdings, routinely preparing detailed guides to collections so that users can locate materials relevant to their interests. Until recently, however, many of these finding aids were unpublished and therefore available only within a single repository. Archivists have long sought affordable and effective means of making their resources more widely known.

Representatives from several research centers and documentation archives attended the seminar, including the Center of the National Archives, the Faculty of Information and Documentation, Lebanese University (LU), The National Library, Banque du Liban (BDL), Saint Louis Hospital, the PCLS at USEK, and the LERC at NDU.



During the closing session, attendees assessed the seminar as a whole. An exhibition organized by the students of the Centre Phoenix Archives Maurice Gemayel Collection and titled, “*Maurice Gemayel (1910-1970) Le visage du Liban faconne par l’ histoire,*” took place on the premises later on that day.

