

Archivistes sans frontières, section France

Kuala Lumpur, 21-27 juillet 2008.

Archivists without borders French section was created in February 2005, when the archivists of Catalogne got in touch with French archivists, especially Christine Martinez and Danièle Neirinck. The Spain branch of AsF Was engaged in an important project in the city of Fès (Morocco), to order the old files. And there were in those files some documents in French language, that needed some French experts to be sorted. Then Christine Martinez and Danièle Neirinck decided to create a French section, which had already in the beginning a lot of success among the French archivists. 20 to 30 people, from the national or local archives registered in the French section ; there are now 35 people in Archivists without borders French section. The president of the section is Danièle Neirinck, general curator and former chief of the Service technique in the French Archive Direction.

The main principles of the French section are, in accordance with the principles of AsF international, to act in the archives sector, when necessary and when an institution or organization asks for help regarding their archives and records. Acting, and then support, with material help, with training actions. And then, one of the main goals is to make a link between the archivists, professional or not, to share some experiences.

These principles were the basis for all the interventions and operations we made during those three years. Four projects have to be displayed. One is absolutely over, one may have some other following projects for AsF, and two are in progress.

The operation in Nigeria has been organized when AsF received an enquiry of ECOWAS. The operation dealt with appraisal and disposal of numerous files, conception of classification schemes, appraisal of messy files and settling of a storage area. Some recommendations were also given, so that ECOWAS could continue itself to manage with their own archives (why not with the help of a professional archivist, for example from the EBAD in Senegal).

The operation in Bethlehem University was part of a larger operation, concerning the archives relative to the education in French language. The goal of the operation in March 2007 was to make an audit on the records and archives of the University of Bethlehem and make some recommendations about it. We also began some trainings with a Sister, in charge of managing the archives of the University. We

prepared also an other intervention of professional archivists to sort precisely the old documents. That's why some other interventions may be to forecast. We visited also other religious institutions, where we found archives that need some precisely interventions, especially some old photographs of Palestine.

The intervention in Ethiopia is a long-way experience. At first, the goal was to make an audit on the archives of the railway company Addis-Ababa-Djibouti. Those archives were broken up in several places. The two archivists who made this audit identified all the places and analysed the quantity of documents. Other interventions had and will have for goal to help some people, in coordination with the National archives of Ethiopia, to empty the building, to put the documents in good conditions of conservation.

The last, but not least, operation today deals with the welcome in France of two archivists of the city of Fès. There are four archivists in Fès : 2 are dealing with the appraisal of files, and 2 are dealing with equipment (hardware and software, databases, handling). This is a collaboration with AsF international which is acting on the field, in Fès. The two archivists will have to manage in France during a few weeks (October 2008) with the archival theories and practices. The first one will be welcomed in Marseille, to have trainings about the management of storage areas, and the second one will be welcomed in Digne, South of France, to have trainings about the databases. The two archivists who deal with appraisal will be welcomed, if all is right, next year. This project is for us very important, because it shows the importance and the interest to have links and exchanges between the archivists of other countries, to share experiences and to introduce in our self practices some of the practices of others.