

Regional Training Emergency Response for Documentary Heritage Course Announcement

WHEN

Opening Conference: 11 November 2024
Course dates: 11 November – 15 November 2024
Arrival: 10 November 2024
Departure: 16 November 2024

WHERE

Pretoria, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Documentary cultural heritage is facing an escalating threat from conflicts and disasters, due to its inherent vulnerability. To address this pressing issue, the [National Library of South Africa](#) as the [IFLA Preservation and Conservation \(PAC\) Centre](#), the [British Library's Endangered Archives Programme \(EAP\)](#) and the National University of Lesotho which acts as the [EAP Hub for Africa](#), in collaboration with [Cultural Emergency Response \(CER\)](#), the [International Council on Archives \(ICA\)](#) and with the generous support of the [Whiting Foundation](#), is organising the regional training program '*Emergency Response for Documentary Heritage*'.

Archives, libraries and museums house valuable primary documentary sources that chronicle the local and national social, political, and cultural history. The South/East African region is home to a rich and diverse documentary heritage, encompassing archives, libraries, manuscripts, and other historical materials that offer insights into the region's diverse heritage, from pre-colonial societies to colonial histories, struggles for independence, and contemporary developments.

These written sources are safeguarded by various institutions. While some materials are housed in national archives, libraries, museums, and academic institutions, others remain in private collections or community archives. Therefore, preservation conditions vary widely. While some institutions are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, others face challenges such as inadequate funding, staffing, and infrastructure, leading to issues of deterioration, loss, and inaccessibility.

Capacity building in disaster preparedness and response is crucial for safeguarding this documentary heritage for future generations. The region is prone to various natural and human-made disasters, including floods, fires, conflicts, and political instability, which pose significant threats to cultural heritage.

This training aims to outline the essential measures to be implemented in order to safeguard these collections prior to, during, and after an emergency. The training will focus mainly on paper collections and aims to equip documentary heritage stewards with a theoretical and practical framework for risk mitigation, stabilisation and recovery planning.

Focussed primarily on documentary heritage professionals from high-risk areas, the training seeks to create spaces for collective reflection, practical exercises and constructive dialogue while equipping participants with practical skills and effective solutions for safeguarding documentary heritage in crisis.

OPENING CONFERENCE

The training course will be preceded by an Opening Conference on the 11th of November, bringing together regional, national and international documentary heritage preservation institutions, experts, funding organizations, to discuss the main challenges and best practices to ensure the preservation of endangered documentary heritage through proactive and comprehensive efforts.

MAIN TRAINING THEMES

In the days that follow, the course will focus on strengthening practical skills and knowledge to preserve documentary heritage collection in crisis. The training will mainly focus on the following themes:

- Documentary heritage risk management, risk analysis and emergency plans.
- Risk mitigation strategies for documentary heritage
- Planning for the prevention, care and rescue of documentary heritage in the event of disasters.
- Emergency actions for the protection of damaged documentary heritage in crisis: evacuation, triage and stabilisation
- Resource mobilisation and project management for documentary heritage preservation projects
- Carrying out digitisation with limited resources.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the training, participants will be able to:

- Explore the diversity, values and risks associated with documentary heritage in the region
- Assess and manage risks to documentary heritage
- Take preventive actions that reduce disaster risks
- Develop an emergency plan for their collections
- Document and inventory collections to prevent loss of documentary heritage crisis situations
- Secure, salvage and stabilise a variety of documentary heritage materials in time of crisis
- Understand the importance and the steps to undertake to strengthen the collaboration between the crisis and heritage sector in their own context
- Engage with the options available for resource mobilisation and different approaches to involving partners and funders
- Understand the main challenges regarding the digital preservation of collection
- Create teams for safeguarding documentary heritage in crisis

WHAT TO EXPECT

- On 11 November the course will be preceded by an Opening Conference, bringing together the main regional and national actors and stakeholders.
- The training will take place from Tuesday to Friday.
- On Friday, a closing ceremony will be held followed by a closing dinner.
- Tours and visits to historical libraries will be included in the training program
- Daily lunches and coffee breaks will be provided for between sessions.

- There is a course orientation on Sunday afternoon before the course begins. You will meet the rest of the participants and the course organisers and learn more about the week to come.

APPLICATION

We are looking for:

- Documentary heritage professionals from South and East (English speaking) Africa with a fluent knowledge of English
- Individuals working as librarians, records managers and archivists in risk-prone areas
- Individuals in charge of protecting valuable local, private, religious or national/international documentary heritage collections under threat.

In order to apply, please fill in the on-line application form: [here](#). The deadline for application is **10 June**. If you are an ICA member, please apply through this [link](#).

WORKING LANGUAGE

English

COURSE FEE

Accommodation, meals, travel and visa expenses will be provided by course organisers. When applying through ICA, airfare expenses will be covered by the ICA.

TRANSPORTATION

Pick up service at the airport by the guide and transfer to the hotel, Transfer from the hotel to the workshop hall where the workshop is held daily in the morning and transfer from the hall to the hotel on the return trip.

Formal communication with the Organizing Committee will be via the email addresses indicated in the communication channels.

ORGANISATIONS

[The National Library of South Africa \(NLSA\)](#)

NLSA is the custodian and provider of South Africa's key knowledge resources. The NLSA is mandated by the National Library of South Africa Act to collect and preserve documentary heritage and to make it accessible, thereby ensuring that knowledge is preserved for posterity and that information is available to all.

[Cultural Emergency Response \(CER\)](#)

CER coordinates and supports locally-led protection of heritage under threat. CER promotes inclusivity and accessibility by developing and strengthening decentralised infrastructures for cultural emergency response. Through its emergency grant mechanism, CER provides fast, flexible support to fit the needs of local actors in crisis situations and invest in the capacities of their partners through dialogue, training, and sharing expertise.

[The Whiting Foundation](#)

The Whiting Foundation provides targeted support for writers, scholars, and the stewards of humanity's shared cultural heritage. The Whiting Foundation supports writing through the Whiting Award for emerging writers, Creative Nonfiction Grant, and Literary Magazine Prizes and offers Public Engagement Fellowship and Seed Grant for scholars. Moreover, Whiting supports the preservation and dissemination of endangered heritage around the world.

This training initiative is part of the ongoing collaboration between CER and the Whiting Foundation, focused on providing first aid to documentary heritage of exceptional value to global, regional, or local communities that is under imminent threat from conflicts or disasters.

[The British Library's Endangered Archives Programme](#)

The Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) facilitates the digitisation of archives around the world that are in danger of destruction, neglect or physical deterioration. Thanks to generous funding from Arcadia, a charitable foundation that works to preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge, EAP has provided grants to almost 500 projects in over ninety countries worldwide, in more than a hundred languages and scripts. Since 2004, the Programme has helped digitise more than thirteen million images and 35,000 soundtracks. Archive types digitised so far include rare printed sources, manuscripts, visual materials, audio recordings. This continually expanding online collection is available freely through local archival partners, and the EAP website (eap.bl.uk).

[The International Council on Archives](#)

The International Council on Archives (ICA) is an international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation that promotes the efficient and effective management and use of records, archives and data in all formats and their preservation as the cultural and evidential heritage of humanity through international cooperation, the exchange of professional experience, research and ideas on the management and organisation of archives and archival institutions.

[The National University of Lesotho](#)

The National University of Lesotho Library plays a central role in ensuring the fulfilment of core academic initiatives of the University. The Library strives to provide a dynamic information service to its clientele to give practical meaning to the university's purpose as a centre of excellence in learning, teaching and research. Since 2023, NUL Library has hosted the Endangered Archives Programme Africa Hub. Throughout the programme, we have hosted joint webinars with the British Library Endangered Archives programme regarding digitisation, conservation and preservation of documentary heritage.