

ITP 2019 Final Report

Written by Abdulrahman Sedeeg Adam Sharaf

Director, Sultan Ali Dinar Palace Museum

National Corporation for Antiquities and

Museums

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the British Museum for creating the International Training Programme, which gathers museum professionals from different countries for training sessions about museums, archaeology, and related studies.

I would like to thank all the staff of the British Museum for all the lectures which have provided us information on different scopes of museum work. Particular thanks go to the Director, Hartwig Fischer; to Claire Messenger, the Manager of the ITP; to Emily Shaw, Coordinator; to George Peckham, Administrator and to Mohamed Mokhtar, the Senior Fellow 2019.

My thanks are also extended to Sarah Gore and all her colleagues at Norfolk Museums.

My special thanks go to all the supporters of this programme who make it possible.

Report:

The International Training Programme is very important for museum professionals because it covers a full range of museum activities including collection management, storage, documentation, exhibitions and galleries, conservation, scientific research, national and international loans, learning, audiences and volunteers, fundraising and income generation, management, communications and photography. It is also important because it creates a global network of colleagues. Meeting together in one place and exchanging information and experiences is a great gain for us.



The British Museum, which is a majestic institution with high capabilities and consists of different galleries with the objects from all over the world, tells us story of humankind through history. We learnt many skills in the British Museum and other museums in and around London. Techniques of display such as writing labels, panels, video displays and other ways of interpretation. It was very interesting visiting the other museums in London, for example the Horniman Museum and Gardens. Really I cannot



forget this mixture of culture and nature in a Museum. It has many galleries but in addition there is a coral reef, aquarium, live animals, a unique house of butterflies and a beautiful garden. It was amazing and we learned many things in this museum.

Additionally, the trip to Stonehenge was very interesting. On our way we saw many farms and villages which were so different to London. Stonehenge Museum was so special - it is small but very interesting. I admired the video display that shows the everyday life of Stone-age man.



In Norwich at my UK partner museum, the first exercise for us was to tour around the city of Norwich and to know more about the significant landmark in the city. Sarah Gore, the coordinator of ITP programme in Norwich, and Jo Warr were so friendly with us through the days we spent there and they invited us for a very delicious dinner in Sarah's house. I cannot forget the hospitality of the English people I met.

Norfolk Museum is a large building that has many galleries and is also a mixture of nature and culture. We took part in lectures in different fields of museum expertise including decolonisation, community engagement and archaeology which were all very interesting. We also visited the museum store where we learned techniques for storing different objects, particularly textiles and papers documents. Also, we visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse's store of big objects; here we took practical cleaning lessons. In the farm we saw huge horses which were amazing. All the trips to different historical sites and gardens were very interesting and impressive and these experiences will help us to improve our museums in our countries.

Definitely the six weeks that we spend in the UK was a very rich and rewarding experience with new information, skills and techniques. The International Training Programme met my expectations and my ambitions too. That is to say that it met what I was expecting and more in the field of museology.

My museum now is closed for conservation and restoration and it will be opening again in another four months. The ITP was therefore a great chance for me to learn new techniques and skills that will help me to improve my museum by sharing the experience with my colleagues. I think that the chance to apply what I learnt on the ITP is possible as we are going to redisplay our museum displays so we will have the opportunity to make great changes in our galleries.

My priorities for change will be on display, documentation, and storage:

Display – this is an essential part of museum work and on the ITP we learnt the techniques of displaying such as writing panel and label text so I will apply this in my museum in the redisplay.

I also liked the classification the objects according to their function. This is a very good idea as it gives the visitors chance to see the same object (function and use) with different forms. I also admired the mixtures of display where museums displayed culture and natural history together – it is very interesting to see both in one museum as in Sudan we have separate museums for human history and natural history.

Digital display - I really admired this kind of display. It is attractive to the audience, particularly children, because it gives pictures and sound to an object. It is very interesting but the challenge that will face us is how to find the devices such as projectors and screens. We will need help in this case.

Documentation – I feel this is like a ‘birth certificate’ for the object so we have to start documenting our objects from excavation to the museum.



Storage – during the ITP we learned different approaches to keeping archaeological objects in the stores according to their material (pottery, metal, wood, textiles, carpets and so on). Each of these objects has a special way of being dealt with in the store. In Norfolk Museums we visited the store house and they have very good ways of keeping their archaeological material. We learnt a lot about how to keep the objects and we also took part in a practical session in the store house about how to clean archaeological objects. It was very interesting and all the things we saw are a good fit for my organisation.

The ITP summer programme means a lot and was a great experience for me. This was the first time for me to visit the UK and there is a proverb that says traveling through countries is knowledge so touring around the museums

in London and Norwich, learning and seeing different ways of collection management, was a great experience.

I now know new friends and colleagues in Britain and other parts of the world and I will be on touch with them through the network.