

The role of Rwandan Museums in protecting traditional knowledge.

Chantal Umuhoza, Curator, Institute of National Museums of Rwanda (INMR) (Rwanda, ITP Fellow 2018)

Thursday 22nd October 2020, proposed 1.00 – 2.30pm (BST)

Attendees

Catalina Cavelier Adarve, Cultural Heritage Institute of Bogota (Colombia, ITP Fellow 2019)
Alsu Akhmetzyanova, Arts and Culture Development Foundation (Uzbekistan, ITP Fellow 2019)
Pat Allen, Glasgow Museums (UK Partner)
Ishaq Mohammad Bello, National Museum Kaduna (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2012)
Ketevan Chitashvili, Money Museum of the National Bank of Georgia (Georgia, ITP Fellow 2019)
Beimote Ngozi Etim, Currency Museum, Central Bank of Nigeria (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2017)
Gertrude Aba Eyifa-Dzidzienyo, University of Ghana (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2009)
Amalia Kakissis, British School at Athens (Greece, ITP Fellow 2018)
Rose Lee (Hong Kong, ITP Fellow 2008)
Rana Ramadan Mahmoud, Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria (Egypt, ITP Fellow 2018)
Jacob Nii Marley, Leventis Digital Resource Centre for African Studies, University of Ghana (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019)
Eileen Musundi, National Museum of Kenya (Kenya, ITP Fellow 2008)
Lydia Nafula, National Museums of Kenya (Kenya, ITP Fellow 2008)
Joyee Roy, Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata (India, ITP Fellow 2011)
Aprille Tijam, Ayala Museum (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019)
Vishi Upadhyay, Bihar Museum (India, ITP Fellow 2019)

The session

Rwanda Museums are governed under the Institute of National Museums of Rwanda (INMR) which has the mission of collecting, preserving, researching and presenting Rwandan cultural and natural heritage. The institute was inaugurated in 1989 with one museum, the “Ethnographic Museum” and now has eight museums.

Rwandan Museums, as a public institution and through its center (the Traditional Training Center) is being empowered to preserve and promote national cultural heritage. The center was created in 1996 by the INMR in order to preserve and promote Rwandan traditional skills by teaching young people about the different traditional art and crafts like weaving, beading, pottery and making different decorating materials using banana leaves etc. As a result, it is hoped that the young people gain special knowledge and skills that may help them to improve their income.

This session started with a file introducing Rwanda Museums and a welcome from Chantal Umuhoza. Chantal then took us on a fascinating gallery tour focusing on weaving at the Ethnographic Museum, Huye District, Southern Province.

The session included interviews and demonstrations by museum weavers of how weaving techniques are passed on from generation to generations. Chantal introduced us to the women and children weaving and explained why Rwandan Museums have chosen these people. We were introduced to Chantal’s colleague “ Faustin Nsengiyumva outreach programme officer”; who talked us through the background and programmes of the Traditional Training Centre.

Attendees also had the opportunity to hear more from “ André Ntagwabira , Museum researcher” about the research projects undertaken by Rwandan Museums and see some of the museums publications produced to preserve the traditional knowledge behind the art of basketry.

The session then opened-up to discussion and Q&A.

From the Zoom chat:-

Vishi Upadhyay: Do you have any specific marketing policy?

Ketevan Chitashvili: Do you have online shop, and what difficulties have you faced to sell because of COVID?

Rana Ramadan: Is it allowed for kids to participate in Rwandan traditional weaving as part of educational programs ?

Aba Eyifa: Is it easy to find the raw materials for weaving these baskets?

Matsosane Motbelli: What are the effects of climate change on the raw materials used, how do you make sure that they remain available?

Aprille Tijam: Hi. thank you for your presentation. I am not sure if you mentioned this and I may have missed it, but how long do the young weavers stay and produce these baskets? If there is a fast turnover, there may be gaps in the transfer of knowledge.

Patricia Allan: Thank you Chantal! Really interesting talk and tour - Rwanda is beautiful and the museums look amazing! I would love to see some online basketry workshops from your teachers!

Ishaq Bello: Is there any support from the ITP network re: selling online or through partners.
The ITP team will speak to colleagues at BM Company to see what tips and hints they can share.

Ishaq Bello: Is it possible to have a certificate for these event.
Yes, the ITP will create a certificate for those who want/need one.