

ITP 2022

Final report



Mohammad Alqaisi
Jordan



Introduction:-

I was fortunate enough to be one of the 2022 ITP Programme participants at the British Museum. During the 4 weeks of my stay there, I worked together with other Fellows from around the world.

Experience obtained from the ITP 2022 includes discussions on the Museum's management, temporary exhibitions, learning, education, and collections. Also, UK cultural heritage and diversity, how to attract different audiences, and educational outreach to schools. I learnt about museum's resistance to change, technology, and external communication and this was an opportunity to ascertain the potential for expansion in technological updates and public programming at my museum.

My gratitude to the ITP team Claire, Anna, George and Senior Fellow Roshan Mishra, my ITP colleagues and the Altajir Trust.

Confidence and ambition for my organization

The ITP gave me the capabilities to engage in fruitful discussions, to know how to help others, and share knowledge of understanding with each other.

The British Museum and the partner museum offered a wide dialogue environment to discuss the challenges of museum management, exhibition artifacts, operations and visitor care.

My ambitions have become stronger with the ability to operate with confidence in relation to opportunities in my daily work and for future planning with more ideas for my organization.

The storage and archives centres of UK museums are not only places to store objects and documents but also places for researching objects, which can be handled for study or further academic study. I found this idea appealing and I could implement at my museum for a different level of study.



Museum educational programmes offered children's guided tours behind the scenes, handling objects for special topics targeted at specific groups.

I saw object-handling activities that were conducted by education teams or volunteers where the public can discover the history of objects by touching them. This experience is widely used in different museums for children in the UK. The Jordan museum has an educational center where we have started to use this technique for an educational programme.

I experienced objects displays suitable for all ages and disabilities - museum access for people with disabilities who can touch objects, audio guides and braille, and large format text for visually impaired people. Architectural solutions such as these ideas could be used as guidelines for the new project we are running now to be the first accessible museum in the Jordan.



Skills

Various skills learned on the ITP:

Using research skills consistently when planning upcoming exhibitions – I clearly noticed that most curators are experts in a particular type of art, history, or other subjects, which involves being able to read and analyze extensive amounts of information on that topic.

Use research skills to verify the information you include in exhibit catalogs and artwork labels – this is one of the important skills I learned on the ITP and I have started to apply this at home and also use management skills by establishing guidelines, rules, and procedures for interacting with artworks and completing key tasks for projects.



Working with professionals in the development department to determine the budget for a project and develop fundraising initiatives for each exhibit.

Working with educators who may want to use museum content to teach students about history, culture, religion, and other concepts.

Good practice in museum education, undertaken for the social and cultural benefit of young people.

Changes that have happened

Using skills that I learned implement change:

Review past exhibits: It is useful to study the types of exhibits a museum displayed in the past to learn about popular themes and determine what kinds of artworks and artifacts are most engaging to the museum's visitors.

Study the museum's collection: Learning about the museum's permanent collection can help quickly generate ideas for exhibits without having to arrange complex art purchases or loans.

Interact with other departments: communicating with museum professionals in the conservation, development, and marketing departments to create the most impactful and relevant exhibits for the community.

Plan ahead: it is a good idea to start brainstorming future exhibits in advance.

Developing an educational collection of objects, either by making replicas (e.g. through 3D printing) or by using duplicate, damaged, and decontextualized objects of limited research value, such as fragments of surplus pottery.



Gradually re-working texts, object arrangements and images in permanent museum displays to make them more accessible to diverse visitors, including learners of different ages.

Building up online learning resources, including films focused on selected museum objects, which museum staff can actively share with schools but also make available to the wider public.

Communicating with the public to tell them about the museum's collections and activities, especially to encourage visiting and engagement by members of local communities. Museum marketing through social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) is increasingly effective here.

Continuity

Using collections to create thematic temporary displays and activities that focus, for example, on just one object, story, and learning outcome, in contrast to more generic and comprehensive guided tours of museums.

Reaching out directly to teachers to explain how museum collections and displays can be used to support their teaching, to provide them with educational materials for their visits, and to arrange to follow-up and post-visit outreach work.

Establishing a structured school education programme, including a booking form, a museum staff contact list, programme descriptions, lesson plans with links to the National Curriculum, learning resources, and collections-related craftwork activities in the museum resulting in souvenirs that the children can take home, and feedback forms. Documentation is important here so that other museum staff can deliver and develop this work in the future. It is also worth noting that it is possible to undertake effective activities on a low budget.

Teaching lessons in museums that are different from those taught at school. Museum objects are key to this. Show-and-tell activities in particular are effective in provoking curiosity, questions, and deep learning.

Thank you to all, the ITP team and the British Museum for your help during the 4 weeks. Your valuable insight helped me understand the criteria better, allowing me to become a lot more efficient.

Mohammad Alqaisi