



International Training Programme 2011

International Training Programme 2011: reflections

The British Museum, in collaboration with six other UK museum organisations, hosted 22 specialists from 11 countries on the sixth International Training Programme (ITP). The participants represent an array of individuals who will help shape the future of museums: from an ethnographer from São Paulo, to a publications officer from the National Museum of China, the Director of Babylon Site Museum, a conservator from the National Museum of Afghanistan, and Museums Experts from Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The six week Programme (June 20-July 29, 2011) exposed participants to the full range of museum functions, from research and exhibitions planning, to public programming, outreach, fundraising and the importance of strategic partnerships. In addition to spending time in relevant collections departments, tailored to the individual, the group sessions, seminars and workshops allow ideas to be shared, friendships developed and opportunities to learn from each other.

A ten day placement outside London gives participants the opportunity to observe a variety of approaches to museums and their operation, particularly those responsible for multiple sites. This year, up to four participants were placed in each of

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales
Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives
Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery
Glasgow Museums
The Manchester Museum and The Whitworth Art Gallery
Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

This report highlights the impressions of the participants, for more details on the genesis of the Programme, and its organisation, see previous reports on the British Museum [website](#).

*“It was an unforgettable, once in a lifetime, experience for me. I met curators from Brazil, Nigeria, India, Egypt, Afghanistan and many other countries. Now I have strong connections all around the world, both personally and professionally”
(Levent Boz, Turkey).*



Dikko Idris and Meltem Yaşdağ checking the condition of an object during the Museum Assistant Training session at the British Museum.

Towards a Global Network: Reflections on the International Training Programme, 2006 – 2010

The summer also saw the publication of a 120-page colour book on the first five years of the Programme. Alongside short essays by British Museum and UK partner staff, the book highlights the achievement of past participants once back at home. The result is an inspiring panorama of the work of museums across the globe, and truly reflects the global network that the Programme is helping to create, with 115 specialists from 18 countries having now taken part. This report echoes the themes of the book – display, education, collections care, research, strategy and partnerships, illustrated by quotes from the participants and images.

Copies of the book have been distributed to past participants, museum and heritage professionals in the UK and abroad, and to key media and government bodies. The book was made possible through the generous support of the Programme's sponsors. If you would like a copy of the book, please contact the ITP team at itp@britishmuseum.org

Participants on the 2011 International Training Programme

Afghanistan

Abdullah Hakimzada, Conservator, National Museum of Afghanistan

Supported by 'Afghanistan, Crossroads of the Ancient World', exhibition

Farhad Sediqy, Curator of Numismatics, National Museum of Afghanistan

Supported by 'Afghanistan, Crossroads of the Ancient World', exhibition

Brazil

Fabiola Andréa Silva, Curator of the Brazilian Ethnographic Collections, Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, São Paulo

Marie-Louise von Motescizky Fellow

Francisco Silva Noelli, Professor, Interdisciplinary Program of Population Studies, State University of Maringá

Supported by the State University of Maringá

China

Chen Chun, Hubei Provincial Museum

Supported by The Lady Juliet Tadgell

Gao Cui, Associate Research Fellow, National Museum of China, Beijing

Marie-Louise von Motescizky Fellow

Xu Yin, Project Assistant, Art Exhibitions China, Beijing

Egypt

Doaa Abd El-Sattar Kamel Osman, Curator, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo

Barakat Trust Fellow

Hager Ahmed Mohamed Hassan, Curator, Luxor Museum

Supported by The John S Cohen Foundation

Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid, Curator, Alexandria National Museum

Marie-Louise von Motescizky Fellow

India

Manisha Abhay Nene, Senior Curator, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu

Sangrahalaya (Formerly Prince of Wales Museum of Western India), Mumbai

The Charles Wallace India Trust Fellow

Joyee Roy, Senior Technical Assistant (Assistant Curator), Documentation Unit

Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata

Iraq

Falah Abdulhadi Abed Al-Jibawi, Director, Babylon Site Museum

Linda Noe Laine Fellow

Kenya

Sahara Dahir Ibrahim, Curator, Nairobi National Museum

Supported by the Folkwang Museum, Essen

Lydia Avikoke Timona, Curator, Meru Museum

Supported by Miles Morland

Nigeria

Dikko Idris, Senior Curator, National Museum, Gidan Makama

Supported by Miles Morland

Victor Michael Obodom, Curator, National Museum Calabar

Palestine

Jana Alaraj, Birzeit University (Architecture & Archaeology)

Supported by The Altajir Trust

Aya Kirresh, Birzeit University (Architectural Engineering & Ethnographic Museum Management)

Supported by The Altajir Trust

Sudan

Abdalmajed Mhmoud Abdalrahman Ebrahim, Curator, Kerma Museum

Supported by Miles Morland

Turkey

Levent Boz, Culture and Tourism Expert – Archaeologist, General Directorate for Cultural Heritage and Museums, Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Supported in the memory of Dr Patricia L Baker

Meltem Yaşdağ, Culture and Tourism Expert – Art Historian, General Directorate for Cultural Heritage and Museums, Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Supported in the memory of Dr Patricia L Baker

“I was amazed by how small ideas can be used to fundraise. For example, the Butterfly Exhibition at the Great North Museum in Newcastle where people will pay donations and have their names on butterfly drawing and put on the walls. I have introduced a similar initiative in Nairobi that I am hoping will be launched in December 2011” (Sahara Dahir Ibrahim, Kenya)

Display

“It made me think of how I can use galleries, museums and exhibition as a relief for these people to reduce their stress and nerves, and make them more happy and relaxed and more positive about their life in Palestine. From this point, I know I want to create fun and curious exhibitions, and learn more about exhibition designs, and their effect on people’s lives” (Jana Alaraj, Palestine)

“It was so beneficial that [with meeting participants from other countries] I could learn the process of museum management and display techniques in different countries at first hand” (Meltem Yaşdağ, Turkey)



Dikko Idris and Farhad Sediqy preparing mounted labels during the Museum Assistant Training session.



The new Hands-on desk in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Formerly Prince of Wales Museum of Western India), Mumbai.

Education

“I think hands-on is very good for the public and should be recommended to our museum for attracting the visitor and transmitting knowledge about objects” (Chen Chun, China)

“Inspired by the Samsung Discovery Centre at the British Museum, I wrote a concept paper for my Director to have our Discovery Room furnished with ICT that can be used for public programmes - we got a response from Canon and are discussing the details” (Sahara Dahir Ibrahim, Kenya)

“Immediately after returning from the ITP, I have started a Hands-on session in our Pre- and Proto- History Gallery where we allow the visitors to touch and handle original prehistoric tools. We are running this desk with the help of our Museology trainees. (Manisha Abhay Nene, India)



ITP Participants with Katy Boaler (Volunteer Advisor) and Joanne Durston (Volunteer) at a Hand-On Desk in the British Museum.

Strategy

“The ITP exposed me to new ideas in the museum profession. In fact, the British Museum International Training Programme is a “Gateway to Museum Profession” because it opened a new chapter in my life as a museum professional” (Dikko Idris, Nigeria)

“Museums are to be established (in Palestine) ... there are different proposed ideas for cultural, scientific, historic, ethnographic, art and other types of museums... I must build a clear perspective of what things will be like and work on my skills, knowledge and image so as to take a leading role within the frame of what is to be” (Aya Kirresh, Palestine)

“I’ve visited nearly 40+ museums and this experience will help me to propose new things about Turkish museology to our ministry. Every museum is a new lesson” (Levent Boz, Turkey)

Collections

“Conservation does not always incur huge expenses. Simple methods of preventive conservation help in a long way. When we went to the archival library of SS Great Britain at Bristol, I saw simple cushions made for manuscripts to be used during handling sessions, we have (now) prepared such cushions for our manuscripts” (Manisha Abhay Nene, India)

“I was mesmerized by the textile collections at the British Museum, I took a personal interest to become involved in that area. [Since returning to National Museums Kenya] I discussed with Head of Ethnography if he can initiate collecting textiles from Kenyan communities” (Sahara Dahir Ibrahim, Kenya)

“It was the first time for me to see the storeroom and to know how to order the objects inside it and to see the different types of storage – each one depends on the material of the objects – and to know the best way for storing each type of object” (Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid, Egypt)



Rasha Ali, Xu Yin, Jana Alaraj, Abdullah Hakimzada and Fabíola Silva in the Hirayama Conservation Studio at the British Museum, with Eoin Kelly (Conservator: Pictorial Art).

Partnerships

“The ITP enriched me by demonstrating the various aspects of the museums both theoretically and practically. This has also created a forum to exchange practices followed in the museums of various countries. The entire training programme... stimulated the participants to broaden their knowledge base, which will surely urge them to provide a sparkling experience in their own museum” (Joyee Roy, India)

“In this age of globalization where every possible information is available on Internet with just one click, it is crucial for the museum professionals to come together, share their knowledge and expertise to sustain the importance of the museums in a society. This will also help the museum professionals to keep pace with the fast changing world.” (Manisha Abhay Nene, India)

“... at the Bristol Museum, I was able to share knowledge from my specialism with the staff. They had a collection from El Fustat in Cairo and the curator didn't have any information about it, so I helped her to organise it and gave them some information” (Doaa Abd El-Sattar Kamel Osman, Egypt)



Doaa Abd El-Sattar Kamel Osman, Xu Yin, Hagar Ahmed Mohamed Hassan, Chen Chun, Aya Kirresh, Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid, Meltem Yaşdağ, Jana Alaraj and Manisha Abhay Nene during a visit to Kew, Royal Botanic Gardens.



Clarissa von Spee, Curator of Chinese Collections at the British Museum, with Chen Chun and Xu Yin, and (far right) visiting JS Lee scholar Leslie Lau (Hong Kong Museum of Art).

Research

“I was able to develop several programmes in my Museum within a month of returning from ITP. For example, the concept of having a departmental reference library. With the help of our Librarian, I have taken up the project of having a separate curators' office library. About 200 books have been registered for this library and I would like to mention that the books which I purchased during ITP are part of this library” (Manisha Abhay Nene, India, Asia)

“The Programme provided me an important opportunity for studying the Chinese jade, porcelain, bronze, print, drawing and lacquer as well as those come from Korean and Japan, and understanding the recent research of curators of the Department and sharing their knowledge” (Chen Chun, China)

UK Partners: *Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales*

“We enjoyed yet another successful ITP at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and had the pleasure of meeting Falah from Iraq, Dikko from Nigeria, Rasha from Egypt and Gao Cui from China. This was the first time we had participants from four countries, instead of from just one or two, and we found this to be hugely beneficial. It meant that we had the chance to learn about several different cultures and about the practices of more than two Museums. The participants were extremely enthusiastic and were keen to ask questions and share ideas. They particularly enjoyed their first day at National Museum Cardiff – where they gave their presentations and met various Directors and Heads of Department – and their visit to Big Pit: National Coal Museum. We created a busy itinerary but, thankfully, they all seemed to appreciate and value the experience“ (Melanie Youngs, Exhibitions Researcher and Administrator, Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales)



Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid and Gao Cui at Big Pit: National Coal Museum.



Meltem Yaşdağ in the folio storage at the Bristol Records Office.

UK Partners: *Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives*

“We thoroughly enjoyed meeting colleagues from Egypt, Turkey, India and Palestine and managed to give them an overall impression of our service and the breadth of collections that we hold and the range of activities that we do. They met a wide representative of our staff and contributed to management team sessions, in which they presented their services. They spent a lot of time looking at our collections and exploring areas of interest to them personally. We tried to be as responsive to them as possible, in order that they got the most from the programme. We wonder about the longer term connections with colleagues internationally, and perhaps there is an opportunity for regional partners to be more strategic about the contacts that we make with the international visitors and the organisations that they represent. I personally benefitted from travelling with them to visit other museums and this informed my own research and practice” (Philip Walker, Public Programme Manager, Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives)

UK Partners: *Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery*

“Birmingham was pleased to host trainees from China and Nigeria. Polite to everyone and studious by nature, they were interested in all aspects of the programme, and engaged with staff by asking copious questions and sharing information about their own museums” (Fiona Slattery, Curator (Applied Art), Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery)

“I found my session with Victor and Chen Chun rewarding. The trainees were both attentive and asked some pertinent and interesting questions about the Portable Antiquities Scheme, metal detecting and of archaeology in Britain generally. It was also very interesting to hear from them about the systems for protecting ancient monuments/artefacts in Nigeria and China respectively” (Tom Brindle, Portable Antiquities Liaison Officer)



Chen Chun in the conservation laboratory with Veronika Vlkova Antoniou (Conservator, Inorganic Materials) at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.



Aya Kirresh at the newly-opened Riverside Museum in Glasgow.

UK Partners: *Glasgow Museums*

“Glasgow Museums has benefitted from participating in the programme in a number of ways. We have had some direct input into the understanding of our collections, and learnt a great deal about how museums operate elsewhere. With so many enquiring minds questioning us about our own practice, we have been able to think again about how our approach could change.” (Martin Bellamy, Major Projects & Research Manager, Glasgow Museums)

“The days had been calm in Glasgow, visiting museums and the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre where we interacted with the collection, conservation workshops and administration staff. They have developed interesting proposals in Glasgow Museums such as the Open Museum for different communities, the New Enlightenment Center for teens and the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre with special programs for children and adults. Tomorrow we will visit the Edinburgh Zoo and the Botanical Garden and the National Museum of Scotland.” (Fabiola Andréa Silva, Curator, Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, São Paulo, Brazil)



Levent Boz, Francisco Silva Noelli and Joyee Roy at the Manchester Museum with Colin McEwan, Curator of the Americas at the British Museum and Andrea Winn, Curator of Community Exhibitions at the Manchester Museum.

UK Partners: *The Manchester Museum and The Whitworth Art Gallery*

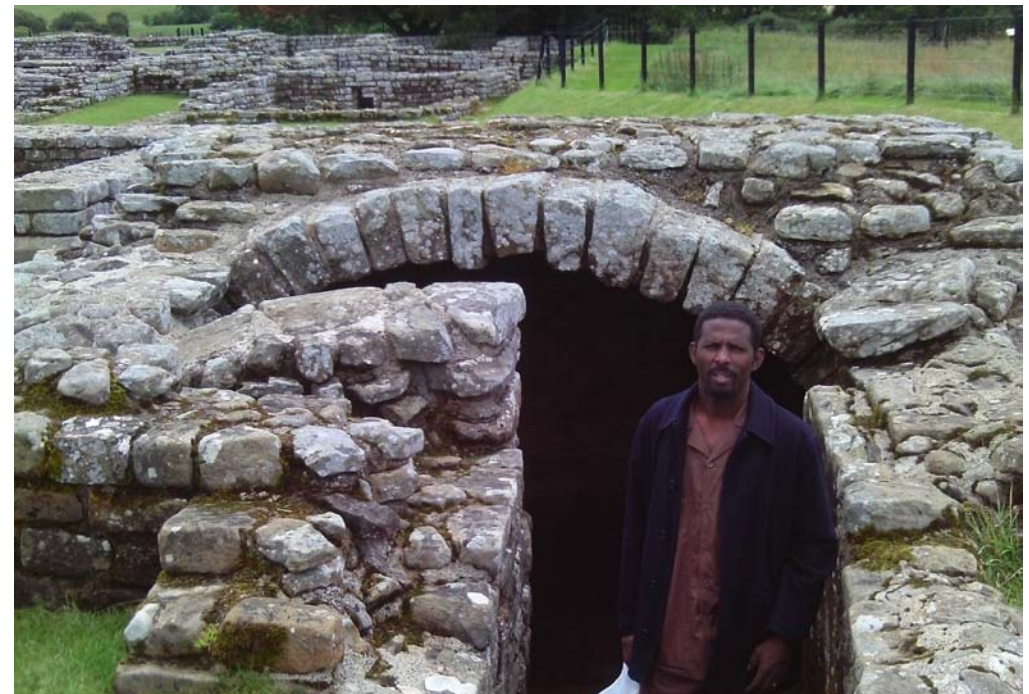
“In 2011 Manchester was host to a trio of participants from three continents, which proved a dynamic and instructive mix for all concerned. Sessions covered aspects of collections and their storage, conservation and display, including layered interpretation for different audiences; community outreach within a university setting; green issues; volunteering; and exploiting new social media. A behind-the-scenes tour of John Rylands Library took place and there was a visit to Leeds. The participants also organised trips on their own initiative to York and Liverpool and to other museums in Manchester in order to learn as much as possible about the heritage of the region” (Frances Pritchard, Curator (Textiles), Whitworth Art Gallery)

“They will take lots of ideas of home with them. Levent wanted to explore volunteering which is not a feature of Turkish museums” (Bryan Sitch, Deputy Head of Collections, The Manchester Museum).

UK Partners: *Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums*

“Lessons learned from last year was not to pack too much into each day and this was appreciated by the group as they had time to reflect and discuss the activities. They really enjoyed the hands on conservation session, gluing together ‘priceless’ china and also the experience of the Northumberland countryside when we went for a full day of walking around the Hadrian’s Wall area.

My lasting impression was how well the participants from four different countries gelled as a group. There could have been problems because of the language barrier but we were fortunate that one member acted as interpreter for another, which helped when going food shopping and on the social side. The camaraderie of the group ensured that the 2011 programme was a success. In addition, the time for reflection created deeper conversations between colleagues at TWAM and the participants about the nature of museums” (Jackie Bland, Training Services Offer, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums)



Abdalmajed Mhmod Abdalrahman Ebrahim on a visit to Hadrian’s Wall during the placement at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

Innovations 2011

Every year, the feedback of ITP participants is incorporated into the planning of the next year's programme, to ensure that future programmes are ever more successful and effective. The 2011 programme included two key innovations.

Mixed flats and partner placements

For the first time, the participants were assigned to mixed-nationality flats and UK Partner placements. This facilitated more cross-cultural communication and saw friendships flourish quicker.

“One of the good points I'd like to say is that each group was mixed of different nationalities so we shared our customs and traditions together” (Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid, Egypt)

“The Programme separated three of us Chinese and ‘forced’ me to go into the big family of the ITP, and make friends with everyone” (Xu Yin, China)



Neil MacGregor and Farhad Sediqy at the Patron's Reception, discussing Kushan coins from the collection of the British Museum.



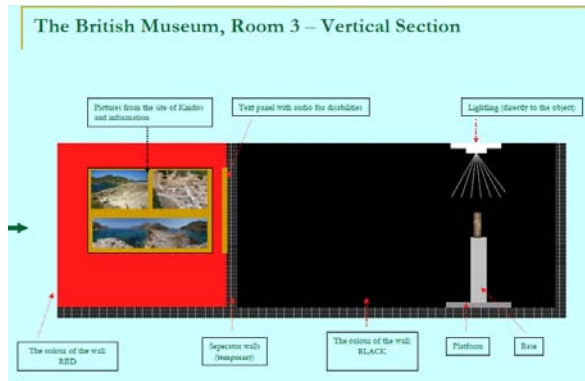
Joyee Roy and Manisha Abhay Nene talking to Richard Muir (The Altajir Trust) at the Patron's Reception.

Reception for patrons

The Patron's Reception acknowledged the generous support of the Trusts and individuals which makes the Programme possible. Objects from the British Museum's collection were chosen by the participants and displayed on tables in the Enlightenment Gallery. This allowed discussion and interaction to take place between ITP participants, the collection, BM staff and guests.

“It was a good chance for us to say thanks to the sponsors. It was a wonderful experience for me to take part in a reception in the great gallery with these precious collections” (Xu Yin, China)

“We were be able to meet the patrons and able to share our own experience. They were also able to see the proficiency of participants” (Joyee Roy, India)



Presentations

As in previous years, the participants were asked to develop a proposal for a small temporary exhibition in a space similar to Room 3 at the British Museum. Using knowledge of their own cultures and experiences from the International Training Programme, the participants proposed an exhibition concept inspired by British Museum objects. The new element added this year was a stipulation that group projects should be composed of multiple nationalities.

“The last day was a special day, because there was a presentation from each one of the participants about making an exhibition, in front of the director and many BM staff...there was cooperation between us and we exchanged ideas and experiences.” (Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid, Egypt)

PROPOSAL FOR AN EXHIBITION AT ROOM 3, THE BRITISH MUSEUM

WEDDING UNLOCKS SOMALI CULTURE: A BRITISH MUSEUM DISPLAY



Presented by:-
Sahara Dahir,
Curator Nairobi
National Museum.

Proud Participant
ITP 2011



Final day presentations. Clockwise from top left: Francisco Silva Noelli and Levent Boz; Farhad Sediqy; a gallery design from *Persephone: The daughter of Knidus*, proposed by Meltem Yaşdağ; posters for *Next Station China: The Trade Express Between Europe and the Orient* and *Zoning Out*; Xu Yin in the lecture theatre; *Wedding unlocks Somali culture*.

Final presentation titles

- Fashion in Nigeria* (Victor Michael Obodom, Nigeria)
- Fish, A Universal icon of World Culture* (Joyee Roy, India)
- A fairy tale* (Hagar Ahmed Mohamed Hassan, Egypt)
- Next Station China: The Trade Express Between Europe and the Orient* (Xu Yin, China)
- Handling archaeological objects – from the field to the museum* (Falah Abdulhadi Abed Al-Jibawi, Iraq)
- Persephone: The daughter of Knidus* (Meltem Yaşdağ, Turkey)
- Zoning Out* (Jana Alaraj and Aya Kirresh, Palestine & Rasha Ali Attia Abd El-Mageid, Egypt)
- The Chinese New Year Envelope* (Gao Cui, China)
- The Golden Age of the Mamluks* (Doaa Abd El-Sattar Kamel Osman, Egypt)
- Chinese Lacquer from the 4th century BC to the 2nd century AD in the British Museum* (Chen Chun, China)
- Crossroads of the ancient world* (Farhad Sediqy, Afghanistan)
- Visions of Ganesha* (Manisha Abhay Nene, India)
- Wedding unlocks Somali culture* (Sahara Dahir Ibrahim, Kenya)
- Same purpose, different approaches - social uses of tea in England, Turkey and Brazil* (Levent Boz, Turkey & Francisco Silva Noelli, Brazil)
- Tracing roots – the cultural relations between Africa and Brazil* (Dikko Idris, Nigeria & Fabiola Andréa Silva, Brazil)

Acknowledgements

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