

International Training Programme Museums Association Conference Report 4 – 12 November 2023



Summary

The British Museum's International Training Programme (ITP) seeks to develop a sustainable global network of inspired museum and heritage professionals, through sharing knowledge, skills and experiences. The ITP alumni now totals 353 fellows from 60 countries spanning the world and the Museum aims to develop and deliver a wide range of projects and programmes to ensure the Programme thrives in the years ahead.

Philanthropic support for the ITP has enabled the British Museum (BM) to plan with added confidence and provide for the programme's growing network of culture and heritage professionals. In November 2023, with the generous support of the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, the Museum was able to support five ITP fellows to attend the Museums Association Annual Conference and Exhibition in Newcastle.

This report provides an overview of the scope and delivery of a week-long programme, held in Newcastle between 5 – 11 November 2023. The programme was attended by:

- Aprille Tijam (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019), Senior Manager, Exhibitions and Collections, Ayala Museum
- Beatrice Adeola Bamigbade (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2022), Assistant Chief Conservator, Unity Museum, National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM)
- Fatma Sezin Dogruer (Turkey, ITP Fellow 2009), Culture and Tourism Expert (Architect), Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Sanjeewani Widyaratne (Sri Lanka, ITP Fellow 2019), Education Promoting Officer, Colombo National Museum
- Yanoa Pomalima Carrasco (Peru, ITP Fellow 2022), Museum and Heritage Consultant, Ministry of Culture

These five fellows were selected from 18 of the ITP alumni through an open application process. For the fellows' full biographies, see Appendix 1.

Additional programming

In addition to attending the MA Conference and Exhibition, a key aim for the week was to offer further opportunities for fellows and their institutions to develop skills and experiences and to create new networking opportunities. With that in mind, we put together an additional programme of visits and sessions over two days in Newcastle and County Durham.

Learning and outreach at Discovery Museum

For the morning of the first day of the programme was spent with Clare Smith, Learning & Engagement Manager for Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM). We met Clare at Discovery Museum, which offers visitors an immersive history of Newcastle, focusing on the area's maritime, scientific, and technological importance to Britain and the rest of the world. We sat with Clare and learnt about the different learning and outreach programmes offered by Discovery Museum and TWAM.

As a group we discussed TWAM's Recovery Programme, which aims to develop projects and programmes to support local people in addiction recovery, homelessness, and justice recovery. TWAM works with local organisations to design programmes to support recovery journeys, increase confidence and promote wellbeing. Discovery Museum have created co-curated community exhibitions, volunteering opportunities and object handling workshops through the Recovery

Programme. Similarly, TWAM's Wellbeing Programme supporting local people with mental health problems through bespoke programmes and creative sessions.

Before arriving in Newcastle most of the fellows expressed interest in learning more about museums working with local communities and creating programmes which promote wellbeing. Our morning at Discovery Museum allowed the group to ask questions about TWAM's approach to learning and outreach, discuss challenges and the objectives of creating such programmes.



'Clare Smith spoke about the health and wellness projects around communities in Newcastle. She emphasised working with specialists in the field of mental health and wellbeing makes the job easier. I learnt it's good to be ambitious while dealing with people with special needs but it's paramount to be gradual with the milestones and work within the pace of the target audience.'

Beatrice Adeola Bamigbade (Nigeria, ITP 2019)

An overview of the collection and display strategy at Great North Museum: Hancock

The afternoon focused on Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle's museum of natural history, archaeology, geology and world cultures. There we met with Andrew Parkin, Keeper of Archaeology, who gave the group a tour of the museum's galleries, focusing particularly on the Hadrian's Wall gallery, World Cultures gallery, and archaeology. Andrew was able to explain to the group the museum's display strategy and highlighted key important objects in the museum's collection and some of the stories they are trying to tell.

The group were able to see some of the more unique aspects of Great North Museum's galleries, including the very large projection in the Hadrian's Wall gallery which shows areas of the wall in Newcastle and the surrounding area which are still visible today. This was an effective way of showing the objects in the gallery in context and connects the history to the region. Andrew explained how the film was created and the thinking behind displaying it so large within the space. The group could ask questions about the display and some of the technology used in the galleries, such as projection mapping which brought stone objects to life with animation and colour.



'The extensive tour given by Andrew Parkin a refreshing way to recall what I had learned about Hadrian Wall's five years ago. Interestingly, Andrew highlighted new additions to the exhibition components which made the visit more experiential and comprehensive.'

Aprille Tijam (Philippines, ITP 2019)

Community engagement and open-air museums at Beamish: The Living Museum of the North

The second programme day was spent at Beamish: The Living Museum of the North, with the aim of looking at how open-air museums engage with their local communities. Beamish is a living, working museum, set in 300-acres of County Durham countryside which brings the history of North East England to life. Here visitors can discover what life was like in North East England during different time periods over the last 200-years and meet the museums 'engagers' who are dressed in historical costume and shine a light on the stories, facts and the goings on of everyday life.

Arriving at Beamish we were met by Geraldine Straker who is Remaking Beamish Community Participation Officer at the museum. Geraldine welcomed us to the museum and gave us a history of Beamish and explained their mission and their collecting strategy. She also explained the ongoing Remaking Beamish project, a major redevelopment project of the site and its attractions. Community participation is at the core of Remaking Beamish and the group had the chance to discuss how local voices can be incorporated into museum programmes and displays.

After the introduction with Geraldine, the group spent the rest of the day exploring Beamish and interacting with the museum's 'engagers'. Having time to look around the different areas of Beamish allowed the fellows to experience first hand how an open-air museum works to successfully immerse visitors in different moments in time.



'While at Beamish, we learned about their outreach and community engagement programmes. From the conversation, I emphasised their project with older adults and their consulting narrative phase for recreating past local environments and spaces while expanding their exhibitions in the museum.'
 Yanoa Pomalima Carrasco (Peru, ITP 2022)

Museums Association Conference

The Museums Association (MA) is a professional membership organisation for museum, gallery and heritage professionals, organisations, and companies that work in the sector. The MA aims to share knowledge, develop skills, inspire innovation and provide leadership while advocating for museums, setting ethical standards and running training and professional development programmes.

In 2023 speakers from the UK and around the world came together to discuss the latest thinking about museums, galleries and heritage sites. The theme, *The Power of Museums*, aimed to tackle current social and political issues and covered topics such as economic regeneration and the cost of the living crisis, museums' role in health and wellbeing, the impact of discrimination, and engaging with communities with contested histories and marginalized groups. A large focus of many of the conference sessions this year was tackling anti-ableism and how museums can become more inclusive and accessible places. Other than looking at social issues, the conference also addressed



the climate crisis and considered how museums can use their power to encourage and facilitate debate about environmental sustainability.

Through attendance at the MA Conference and Exhibition we were able to offer our ITP fellows further platforms to network and gain knowledge beyond what is traditionally offered through the summer programme. Our aim was for fellows to attend a new range of skills building sessions, to hear from colleagues globally about current practices and projects, to engage in debates around the future of museums and their audiences, and to create networks that may be outside our usual remit.

'The 'anti-ableism' campaign of the Museums Association resonated well with me. And this campaign is significantly aligned with the programmes for the disabled that my museum has recently launched.'
Aprille Tijam (Philippines, ITP 2019)

'From the conference, I realised museums around the world have ignored people with disabilities over time, forgetting they are a part of our societies and need to be considered when planning exhibitions and building structures in our respective museums. I hope to bring this to the knowledge of my top managements to always make provisions for people with special needs.'
Beatice Adeola Bamigbade (Nigeria, ITP 2022)

'As the first day of the Museums Association Conference came to a close, it left me with a profound sense of inspiration. The discussions and presentations have laid the groundwork for a more inclusive future for museums, one where every individual, regardless of their abilities, can fully engage in the beauty and knowledge that these cultural institutions offer.'
Fatma Sezin Dogruer (Turkey, ITP 2019)

Networking

Networking was also high on the agenda, and the programme included evening and weekend events, providing an informal and relaxed setting for fellows, the ITP team and conference participants to engage. We were pleased to be able to invite a further three more ITP fellows to attend the MA Conference who are all currently based in the UK to study. For the conference we were joined by:

- Beimote Ngozi Etim (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2017), Principal Policy Officer, Currency Museum, Central Bank of Nigeria
- Cynthia Iroube (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2010), Chief Curator, National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM)
- Ma. Yohana Frias (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2018), Exhibition Designer, National Museum of the Philippines

As a group of eight, the fellows arranged a trip to see part of Hadrian's Wall at Housesteads Roman Fort; the most complete Roman fort in Britain. The fellows were excited to see a world-famous historic landmark in Hadrian's Wall and enjoyed making the trip together as a group. Small trips such as this helped the group bond and strengthen their connections within the ITP network. We are glad we took the chance to invite more fellows to the MA Conference as it meant that fellows had the opportunity to meet more members of the ITP global network, share ideas and discuss possible collaborations.



Social Media

ITP social media channels are vital for keeping in touch with the global network. Since the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen our platforms increase in popularity both abroad and in the UK. Through surveys and data analysis we know that the ITP fellows, programme partners and colleagues across the museum sector use our social media accounts to keep up to date with ITP. During their week in Newcastle, we asked the fellows to share their thoughts and experiences of the programme with the ITP global network through social media. Each day, the fellows created a social media post to be shared on the ITP social accounts. Fellows reflected on sessions they attended at the conference, museums they visited during the week, favourite objects they saw on display, and more.

See appendix 2 for examples of the fellows' social media posts.

Outcomes

Clear and immediate results are demonstrated in the fellows' reports, which they each wrote on their time spent on their legacy projects:

- Enhanced relationships across ITP year cohorts and between curators from different countries.
- A clear desire from the group to share and disseminate their learning with colleagues back in their home institutions.
- The legacy programmes gave a level of support to the fellows which enabled them to think about and reevaluate their personal career progression.
- Enhanced relationships between the BM, our programme partner museums, the Museums Association and the global ITP network.
- Confirmation of the ITP's strategic aims up to 2025, particularly the potential impact of enabling our fellows to have access to international events that cost and logistics would otherwise bar.
- Interest in other legacy projects (the Annual Programme's Senior fellow role, for example) due to the two legacy projects crossing over and creating a wider ranging group of fellows.
- The fellows reports stated that these projects have given them new ideas that they wanted to put into practice back home.
- The size of the group meant that fellows could discuss issues and possible collaborations directly with our BM and UK partner museum colleagues and colleagues at the MA and, perhaps most importantly, with each other.

'The areas which I have focused during the MA conference are more or less similar to the areas which I'm involving in now in my museum. I believe the international exposure and the sharing related things with international professionals would be beneficial. This event creates a big opportunity to

share knowledge and gain knowledge. I already connected with the ITP network, but few of them I met in person. I'm very much privileged to join this event and it would do effective changes in my museum activities.'

Sanjeewani Widyaratne (Sri Lanka, ITP 2019)

'Overall, the entire week surpassed my initial expectations. It nourished me with essential values: inspiration and encouragement to create collaborative experiences in Peru, building platforms to promote, explore and work for our different communities' beliefs, traditions, and local necessities, and developing programmes for the health and mental care of our communities and their local empowerment.'

Yanoa Pomalima Carrasco (Peru, ITP 2022)

Conclusion

The seventh MA Conference attended by the International Training Programme provided fellows with a platform for discussion and sharing knowledge, which again proved to be inspirational and motivating. The conference provides a change in dynamic to the Annual Programme and our other legacy projects and allows fellows to explore the cultural sector in the UK more freely, with more choice to choose particular areas of interest to focus on over the week.

The programme's key aim is to build a global network of museum professionals and the MA legacy project builds additional links between colleagues and strengthens the global community of museums.

The British Museum is very grateful to the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust for its involvement and encouragement of the project, and for providing support to enable fellows to attend.

Acknowledgements

Supported by

The Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust

And the British Museum remains grateful to the range of trusts, foundations and individuals who support the annual International Training Programme each year.

Special thanks to the following institutions and individuals for their invaluable contributions to the MA Conference programme:

Bill Griffiths, Head of Programmes and Collections, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Clare Smith, Learning and Engagement Manager, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, Discovery Museum

Andrew Parkin, Keeper of Archaeology, Great North Museum: Hancock

Geraldine Straker, Remaking Beamish Community Participation Officer, Beamish: The Living Museum of the North

Museums Association

Appendix 1

Fellows' biographies



Aprille Tijam

Senior Manager, Exhibitions and Collections

Ayala Museum

Philippines

ITP 2019

Aprille obtained a BA degree in Philippine Arts at the University of the Philippines-Manila and has worked with both private and government museums in the Philippines since 1994. Her extensive experience in the museum industry has allowed her to engage in education, PR, exhibitions and collections, providing her with a holistic understanding of the many facets of museum work.

At present, Aprille is Senior Manager for Exhibitions and Collections at Ayala Museum, where she has been working since 2004. As Collections Manager, she has developed collections-based education programmes and has organised the 5-year collections management rehabilitation programme from 2008 to 2013. Since 2008, she has project-managed the museum's Traveling Exhibition Program, bringing this to more than 70 destinations nationwide. In addition, she has also organised training programmes on Basic Museum Training, Collections Management, and Conservation. She has extensive experience as well in overseas exhibition shipment management and acted as courier for overseas loans. She was the Exhibitions Manager of Fernando Zobel. Contrapuntos, Ayala Museum's participation as an official Collateral Event in the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017, and in 2022, managed loans from the Philippines for the Zobel. The Future of the Past exhibition at the Museo Nacional del Prado. In recent years, she has been engaged in museum development projects in the Philippines. Her Research on Fernando Zobel Collection and Donation to the British Museum was supported by a full grant from the British Council-Connections Through Culture Programme in 2020.

Aprille is a voting member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) since 2008 and was a member of the Board of ICOM Philippines from 2019-2021. She has received training grants from ICCROM, ICOM, the Getty Foundation, and SEAMEO SPAFA.

At the British Museum

During her time on the International Training Programme Aprille was based in the Department of Asia and her partner placement was spent at Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums in Newcastle.

Aprille worked with Diana Mohamed Ahmed Digna (Sudan) on her Object in focus project. Their exhibition proposal was titled Life After Death: treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur.

Aprille's place on the International Training Programme was generously supported by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust.



Fatma Sezin Doğruer

Culture and Tourism Expert
General Directorate for Cultural Heritage and Museums
Turkey
ITP 2009

Fatma currently works as a Culture and Tourism Expert in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey with the responsibilities of managing restoration projects of registered buildings and counselling museum projects. Her major research interests include preventive conservation, museum design and civil architecture.

Fatma received her BArch (1999-2003) and MA in History of Architecture (2003-2006) from Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Türkiye); PhD (2014-2019) in Conservation of Cultural Properties from Gazi University (Ankara, Türkiye). From 2015 – 2016 Fatma was a visiting scholar in the Museum Science Graduate Program at Texas Tech University, USA. She earned the title of Associate Professor in 2023. She currently gives lectures in the university as a guest instructor and works on the editorial board of the Turkish Journal of Archaeology and Ethnography.

At the British Museum Fatma particularly enjoyed visiting the Departments of Conservation and Scientific Research and the Department of Exhibition. The Portable Antiquities Scheme and Treasure was also interesting for her for sharing with her institution.

At the British Museum

During her time on the International Training Programme in 2009, Fatma was based in the Department of Greece and Rome. Fatma's exhibition proposal was entitled The Nereid Monument – A New Display.



Beatrice Adeola Bamigbade

Assistant Chief Conservator

Unity Museum

National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM)

Nigeria

ITP 2022

As Assistant Chief Conservator, Beatrice is responsible for the preservation of objects in the museum's collection, including preventative conservation which is a great interest. Bronze is a large part of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments collections and Beatrice focuses on both textile and bronze conservation, helping to preserve antiquities for posterity.

I also focus on using museum objects to pass across information and solve societal problems within our communities. In collaboration with her colleagues she plans educative programmes for people living with disabilities (PWD), she introduced the "touch and feel" session to the PWD programmes.

At the British Museum

During Beatrice's time on the International Training Programme she spent time in whole group sessions for a detailed overview of all aspects of the Museum's work, both front of house and behind the scenes. Beatrice attended a range of subject specialist sessions, tailored sessions, chosen to reflect her professional interests, role profile and current projects and programmes. She spent her partner placement at Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums in Newcastle.

Beatrice worked with the ITP 2022 participants to develop a 15-object trail based on a story they wanted to share based around the British Museum collection. The theme of the trail was Food and drink and Beatrice's chosen object was a cooking bowl from Africa.

Beatrice's place on the International Training Programme was generously supported by the Edith Murphy Foundation.



Sanjeewani Upaka Widyarathne

Education Promoting Officer
Colombo National Museum
Sri Lanka
ITP 2019

Having achieved a BA degree in History from the University of Kelaniya; a post-graduate diploma in Archaeology; a post-graduate diploma in museology and an MA in Archaeology, Sanjeewani joined as the National Museum, Colombo as an Education Promoting Officer in September 2005. In this role it is Sanjeewani's responsibility to organise educational programmes and guided tours to provide knowledge on the history, heritage and museological methods of the Colombo National Museum to both local and foreign visitors. Sanjeewani plays an active role in the arrangement of exhibits and dealing with the requirements of objects in the permanent exhibition galleries. She also gets involved in temporary and mobile exhibitions and takes care of 16 gallery registers and databases of historical exhibits in the museum.

Sanjeewani is always partaking in various workshops, courses and conferences. She has written multiple research papers on a wide range of topics and participated in the 21st General conference and 22nd General Assembly of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Vienna, Austria in 2007. At present Sanjeewani is doing research to introduce a system of accessibility and usability of museums in Sri Lanka for differently-abled people.

At the British Museum

During her time on the International Training Programme Sanjeewani was based in the Department of Asia and she spent her partner placement at National Museums Northern Ireland.

Sanjeewani worked with Nagwa Bakr (Egypt) on her Object in focus project. Their exhibition proposal was titled Spiritual Journey.

Sanjeewani's place on the International Training Programme was generously supported by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust.



Yanoa Pomalima Carrasco

Museum and heritage consultant
Museologist
Ministry of Culture
Peru
ITP 2022

Yanoa has worked for the Ministry of Culture since 2012. As a museologist, her responsibilities included curatorial work for temporary and permanent exhibitions, designing educational activities, developing interpretation content, and guiding professionals from museums' education and curatorial departments to address their needs. Due to her experience in participatory curatorial projects with native communities, Yanoa encourages colleagues to include local voices and their ideas to create meaningful narratives highlighting stories behind collections.

When Yanoa came on the ITP, she was developing curatorial work on temporary exhibitions, virtual tours of public museums in Peru, and tools for museum educators.

Since this year, she has taken on new challenges by creating a museum consulting firm, providing expertise and support to museum projects, with a line of work aimed at accessibility and inclusion within archaeological sites and museums.

Currently, she is in the communication and interpretation department of the Museo de América (Spain) where she creates interpretation and educational material and organises workshops that seek youth engagement in the museum and its collection.

At the British Museum

During Yanoa's time on the International Training Programme, she spent time in whole group sessions for a detailed overview of all aspects of the Museum's work, both front of house and behind the scenes. Yanoa spent her partner placement at Glasgow Museums, where she and her colleagues developed a travelling exhibition with pieces from Africa, Asia, and The Americas.

The Aall Foundation generously supported Yanoa's place on the International Training Programme.

Appendix 2

