

The British Museum

International Training Programme #ITP28 report April 2021



Introduction

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. Working with countries and institutions integral to the Museum's international strategy and those particularly in need of support in building capacity, the summer programme aims to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas through the staff and collections of the Museum and our programme partners.

ITP alumni now total 299 fellows from 48 countries spanning the world. The Museum aims to develop and deliver a wide range of projects and programmes to ensure the ITP thrives in the years ahead. This report provides an overview of a month-long social media campaign called #ITP28, which took place over February 2021.

Background

In March 2020 the Museum, along with all museums across the UK, were temporarily closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many staff at the Museum were subsequently placed on furlough leave as part of the Government's Job Retention Scheme, which led to the postponement of the ITP's annual summer programme and legacy projects for the year.

When ITP staff returned to full-time work in November 2020, they focussed on projects that could be delivered remotely and online. These initiatives aimed to maintain the ITP global network and remain connected to ITP alumni despite physical limitations on travel and programming. Many of the ITP's network colleagues were also experiencing museum closures and national lockdowns caused by the pandemic, which placed an even greater importance on sharing and networking opportunities.

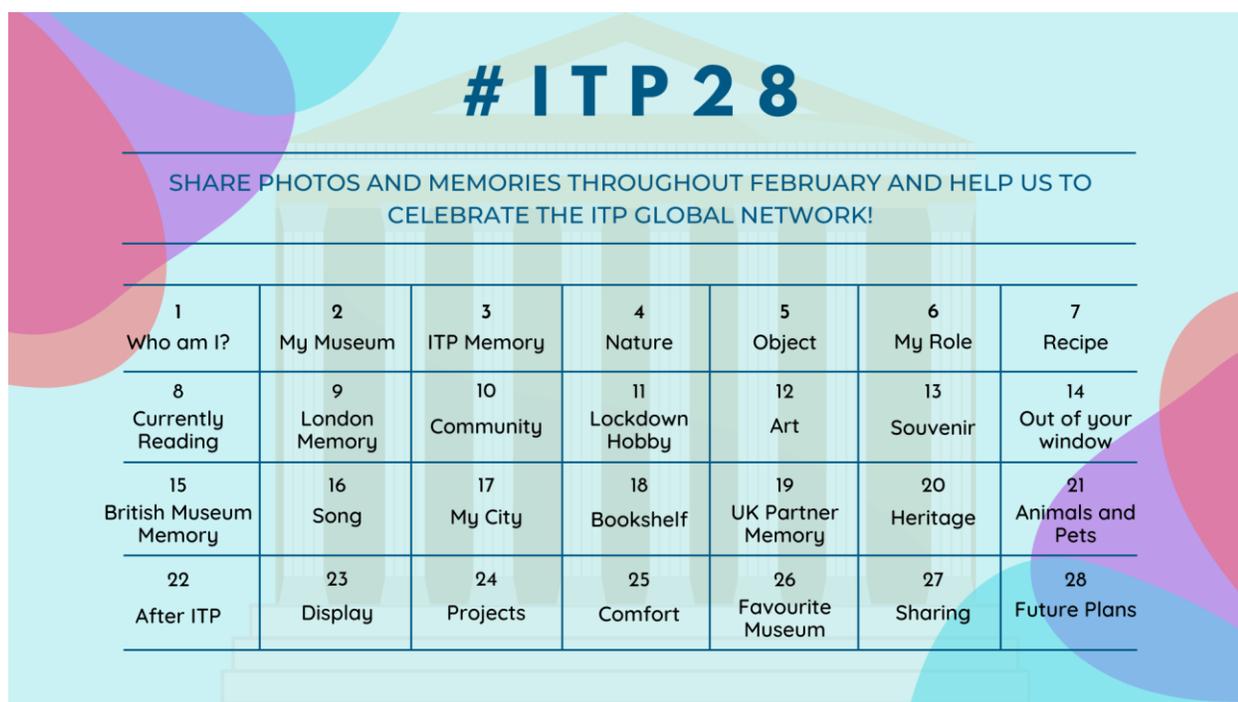
One of the ways the ITP communicates with its global network year-round is through social media. Currently, the ITP has a private Facebook group with over 600 members, a Twitter account with over 1,100 followers, and an Instagram account with over 160 followers. These platforms have become effective ways to share news and updates, blogs published on the ITP blogsite, and daily images and updates from the summer programme and other projects. The social media pages are also used to share sector news, resources, and external events and opportunities.

The focus on engagement and communication online has become more important than ever during the global pandemic, and raised how the ITP can use its social media presence to encourage greater online interaction, networking and engagement amongst its global network.

Project concept

#ITP28 was a 28-day social media campaign which challenged ITP alumni to share updates every day in the month of February. Participants were encouraged to post images and stories about themselves, their work, their experiences of lockdown and working from home, and their experiences of the ITP. Each day had its own prompt or 'theme' which gave the participants a schedule to follow throughout the month.

The aim of #ITP28 was to help the ITP global network feel better connected to their international colleagues, learn more about each other and exchange knowledge and memories. It was also hoped that the campaign would result in increased engagement across ITP years as well as across countries and regions.



Above: the #ITP28 calendar.

The prompts were related to museums and heritage, the ITP and themes which could be completed at home if people were isolating due to the global pandemic. The schedule was shared in the advance and ITP network members were asked to post their submissions on social media with the hashtag #ITP28 so progress could be followed each day.

Outcomes

#ITP28 finished with 630 unique posts from 59 members of the ITP global network. On average, 23 posts were made per day throughout the project. In total, 50 ITP fellows participated in #ITP28 from 25 out of 48 ITP countries. 11 ITP years out of 14 were represented from as early as the 2007 cohort. The nine other participants were ITP staff, British Museum ITP curatorial department representatives and representatives from the ITP’s UK partner museums.

#ITP28 maintained a high retention rate throughout the project. 73% of participants made at least 2 submissions to #ITP28. 39% made more than 10 contributions and 25% posted 15 times or more. There was a slight decrease in the number of contributions by the end of the month. The first five days saw an average daily rate of 30 #ITP28 posts. The final five days saw that average drop to 18.

Themes directly related to the ITP almost consistently performed on or above average for daily social media posts:

ITP related theme	Number of posts
ITP Memory	33
British Museum Memory	22
London Memory	20
UK Partner Memory	23
After ITP	12

The top five most popular themes throughout the month demonstrated that the participants enjoyed the variety of themes and subjects for the different days.

Most Popular #ITP28 Themes	Number of posts
ITP Memory	33
Object	32
Nature	30
Animals & Pets	29
My Museum	29

A selection of highlight posts is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Feedback

“Thanks a lot [ITP Team] for consistently engagements of us in ITP activities. I got introduced to many more people in these days and loved to read their posts...I have participated in many training courses but find only the ITP successfully keeps engaged all fellows, even after the training course...that's awesome”

Vishi Updhyay, Bihar Museum (India, ITP Fellow 2019)

“Thank you so much [ITP] for the opportunity to get to know other ITPers and share stories as well. I learned a lot and I would say a good exercise for my mental well-being this month.”

Aprille Tijam, Ayala Museum (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019)

“Thanks so much, [ITP team]. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about and connect with other ITPers.”

Eileen Musundi, National Museum of Kenya (Kenya, ITP Fellow 2008, Senior Fellow 2013)

“I found the motive for such engagements during ITP, and that is why my connection with this wonderful society is even more important in my professional career. The time of the pandemic seems to have connected us even more tightly, and I would love to continue the exchanges in this wonderful blend of friendship and profession.”

Ana Šverko, University of Split (Croatia, ITP Fellow 2016)

“It was really great to get to know more about us.”

Beimote Ngozi, Currency Museum, Central Bank of Nigeria (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2016)

Future plans

#ITP28 has further supported the ITP's key aim to build and maintain a global network of museum professionals. The ITP's traditional legacy projects allow the Museum to reconnect with a select group of ITP alumni, while social media and online engagement has the potential to connect with any number of the ITP's 299 fellows. ITP fellows were given the opportunity to share information about themselves and learn more about their international colleagues, and the ITP team were able to learn professional news and updates from ITP alumni.

Feedback from #ITP28 was overwhelmingly positive. This will encourage the ITP team to do similar social media campaigns in the future to generate more engagement, conversation and sharing of experiences within the ITP global network online.

The majority of responses to #ITP28 were shared with the ITP Facebook group. The ITP aims to ensure that everything that is shared online is accessible to every member of the global network. A potential obstacle to engagement was that not all ITP fellows have access to Facebook, and so may have felt that they could not participate. Efforts were made to overcome this by encouraging network members to share their submissions by email, which could then be shared on social media on their behalf.

Some of the ITP network have limited access to some internet services and social media. Recently efforts have been made to connect with these groups online by expanding the online services used by the ITP team. Direct messaging platforms such as WeChat and WhatsApp have been useful for communicating with ITP fellows who do not or cannot use social media. It is hoped that this will allow more ITP fellows to connect with other members of the global network online. Future social media projects will be shared across multiple platforms to assure equal access to ITP content and communications around the world.

Appendix 1: Selection of highlight posts from #ITP28

Prompts such as *My Role, After ITP, Projects and Future Plans* helped the ITP team to see professional news and updates from the ITP alumni.

Dikko Idris (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2011) and Namrata Sarmah (India, ITP Fellow 2018) posted about their work after completing the summer programme, and highlighted how they have used their new experiences of the ITP in their work.

 **Dikko Idris**
22 February at 15:58 · 🌐

#itp28, day 22, #After the ITP

When returned to my country after the itp, I organized seminars and workshops for my colleagues base on my ideas and experiences gained from the ITP. I planned and Curated both temporary and permanent exhibitions. I offered consultancy services on Museum and Heritage issues for both private and public organisations including Universities. In photo below I conducted round the Vice president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria during his visit to National Museum Gidan Makama Kano when I was the Curator on 22/02/2020.



  You, Anna Cottle, Claire Messenger and 5 others

 **Namrata Sarmah**
22 February at 14:10 · 🌐

#itp28 After ITP.

As I keep mentioning always ITP is my rock. It has changed my notion about museums and I am confident on many levels which I lacked previously. I have joined as a Project Curator at Assam State museum thinking of contributing something to my home institution. I have curated two galleries- Natural History and Textile Gallery of my museum. Also was involved in curating two district museums. Recently the publication department is going to publish a catalogue written by me on 'Costumes of Ahom Royalty'.



Barbara Vujanović · 22 February at 21:27 · 🌐

#ITP28 #Day22 #AfterITP

After ITP I wrote two books and co-curated and curated several exhibitions in Croatia and abroad, participated at several conferences, gave lectures... And submitted my PhD thesis 😊

33 🍌🍎🍷 9 comments

Aprille Tijam 🌐

Congratulations on the books and PhD! Perhaps there can be a library of books written/published by ITPers at BM ITP office? 😊 Just a thought. Or there is one already? 🍌🍷 5

Like · Reply · 3 w

Barbara Vujanović 🌐 +2

thank you :-))) but I still have to defend the thesis, I will let you know when it happens. this is a great idea 🍷 1

Like · Reply · 3 w

Aprille Tijam 🌐

Barbara Vujanović wish you all the best with your thesis! 🍷 1

Like · Reply · 3 w

Barbara Vujanović 🌐 +2

Aprille Tijam thank you so much!!!! 🍷

Like · Reply · 3 w

Joyee Roy Ghosh

Aprille Tijam It should be. 🍷 1

Like · Reply · 3 w

Write a reply... 🍷📷📺📺

Joyee Roy Ghosh

Keep going Barbara. All the best! 🍷 1

Like · Reply · 3 w

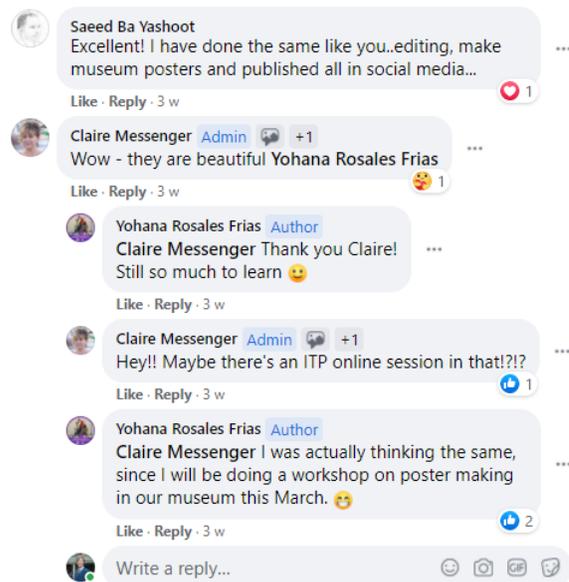
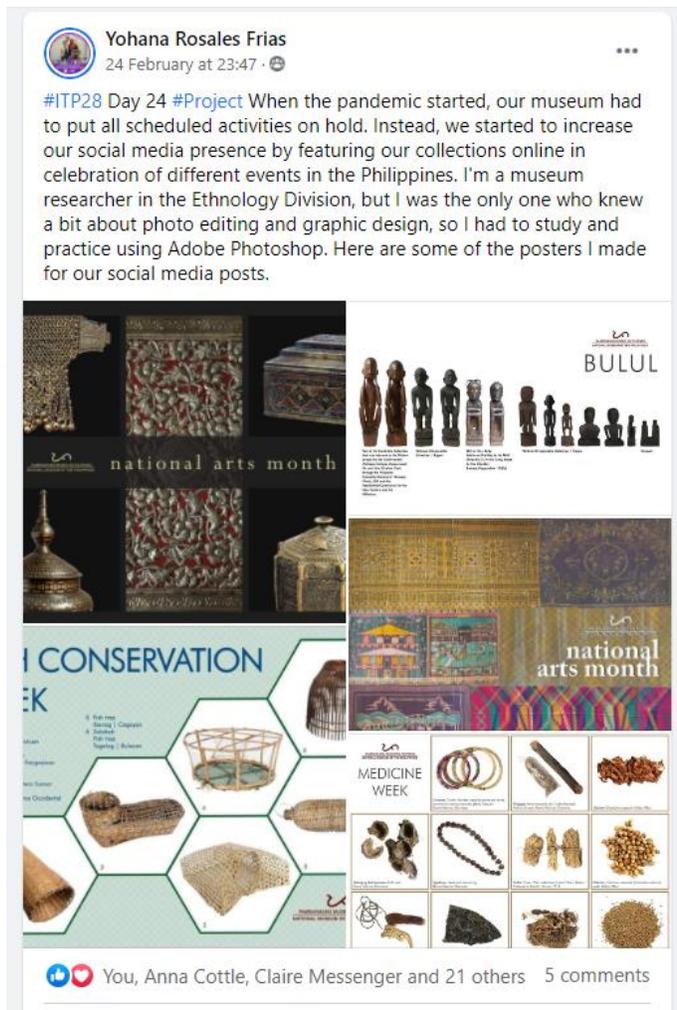
Barbara Vujanović 🌐 +2

thank you so much 🍷 and all the best to you too 🍷 1

Like · Reply · 3 w

Barbara Vujanović (Croatia, ITP Fellow 2016) shared that since completing the summer programme she has submitted her PhD thesis, which prompted suggestions for her PhD to be shared with the wider network through the ITP library.

#ITP28 was also an effective way to see how colleagues in the network have been working throughout the pandemic. On day 24, *Projects*, Yohana Frias (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019) explained how her museum has increased its social media presence during the pandemic. Yohana has developed skills in photo editing and graphic design to create social media posts which feature her museum's collection. In response, Saeed Ba Yashoot (Yemen, ITP Fellow 2016) tells us that he has been working on something similar throughout the pandemic.



Other themes such as *ITP Memory*, *UK Partner Memory* and *British Museum Memory* allowed ITP fellows to share their experience of the ITP with the rest of the network and connect with the colleagues they shared those experiences with. George Peckham (ITP Assistant) shared a memory of a trip to the London Mithraeum for the 2019 summer programme. ITP 2019 fellows Jacob Nii Marley (Ghana), Ciprian Dobra (Romania) and Aprille Tijam (Philippines) all reminisced on the experiences and shared why they thought this was a unique and valuable experience.

The image is a screenshot of a Facebook post and its comments. The post is from George Peckham Itp, an Admin, dated 9 February. The text of the post reads: "#ITP28 Day 9: London Memory I really enjoyed visiting the London Mithraeum with a group of ITP fellows in 2019. Also known as the Temple of Mithras, the Mithraeum was discovered right in the heart of the City of London. Effective use of sound and light make the display very atmospheric." Below the text are two photographs: the top one shows a dark, atmospheric interior of the Mithraeum with a central circular feature and spotlights; the bottom one shows a group of people looking at a wall display of various ancient artifacts, including pottery and tools.

The right side of the screenshot shows three comments from ITP fellows:

- Jake J N Marley:** "It was an exceptional experience for me and I cannot forget it, especially with their peculiar use of lights, sound, and 3D scans and prints in making the experience more immersive. Thank you ITP for the opportunity to experience and learn from this, I am so grateful 😊👍👏 Claire Messenger Anna Cottle George Peckham Itp" (3 likes)
- Ciprian Dobra:** "Tell me about it, Jake! It was such a nice surprise that I could not thank Claire enough for that. The experience was beyond words and totally unexpected. My only regret was that I was not 3 m tall so I can analyze every item in on that wall I am taking pictures at. Loved it! Still do. And I will definitely visit it again when I will have the opportunity to go back to London." (4 likes)
- Aprille Tijam:** "thank you indeed to ITP for that experience! It was an absolute surprise to see an archaeological site underneath modern structures, amazing exhibition design and experience! And my cat was named after the god of this temple. However, my cat is a she (thought she was a "he" when she was a baby 🐱)" (5 likes)

At the bottom of the comment section, there is a text input field that says "Write a comment..." and icons for emojis, photos, GIFs, and stickers.

One of the most popular individual posts throughout #ITP28 came from Claire Messenger (ITP Manager). Claire's post for day 9 of #ITP28, *London Memory*, related to Schafer House, which is where ITP fellows stay during the summer programme. It demonstrated a great example of the shared experience that ITP alumni have of the summer programme across all 14 years it has been running. Fellows from different ITP years connected in the comments section of the post and shared their experiences of Schafer House.

Claire Messenger
Admin · +1 · 9 February · 🌐

#ITP28 Day 9 #Londonmemory

My #Londonmemory has to be ITP related – of course – and has to be Schafer House. Fellows have shared flats there since the very first year of the ITP back in 2006 and it has such happy memories for me. It's where I first meet you all, in person, when you arrive in the UK and sadly say goodbye when you leave 😭. Where we've enjoyed birthday parties, BBQ's and picnic's and I've been lucky enough to enjoy some wonderful 'homecooked' meals. It's where we've had fascinating conversations about your work, your families and your hopes for the future. It's even where I've seen some rather 'interesting' dance moves over the years!!! It's full of smiles – and a few tears – but for me it's the one place in London that embodies all that is so amazing about the ITP.



You, Anna Cottle, Nagwa Bakr and 47 others · 9 comments

Like · Comment

Cynthia Adimabua Iruobe
Awww.....you got the words right out of my mouth. It does have such wonderful memories for me too. 🍷

Aprille Tijam
Schafer House is witness to all the beautiful memories of all ITPers through the years 💜

Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei
These packed suitcases were memories of sad goodbyes. Jake J N, pls come for your travelling bags 😭😭

Jake J N Marley
Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei Our last day at Schafer House, it was so hard to say goodbye, I had to hide my tears 😭
All the same, fun fact, I think our squad had the most luggage thanks to Benedicta and I 😂😂😂
CC: Ciprian Dobra Alsu Akhmetzyanova Balqees Adla

Meltem Ar
I can clearly remember this moment of the photo, even my feelings and hopes about this wonderful experience, thank you Claire Messenger for sharing it 🌸

Mohamed Mokhtar
I spent an amazing time in Schafer House in 2015 and 2019 and I won't forget any of these beautiful memories that I will always remember. Thank you so much all the ITP team. I have a part of my heart still there.

HeBa Khairy
I miss you so much my dear Meltem Ar ❤️❤️

Meltem Ar
HeBa Khairy me too definitely me too 🍷🍷

HeBa Khairy
Meltem Ar May Allah keeps this lovely smile and soul ❤️❤️ keep smiling my dear

Write a reply...

The prompts *Object, My Museum, Community, Art, Heritage* and *Display* allowed participants to exchange knowledge and expertise with the wider network. Jacob Nii Marley (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019) shared his photographs of a fishing community in Ghana for day 10 of #ITP28, *Community*. ITP fellows from Egypt and Philippines replied to discuss similar communities in their respective countries.

Jake J N Marley
10 February · 🌐

#itp28 Day 10

The Elmina fishing #community in Ghana

Fishing is one of the major subsistence activities in settlements along the coasts of Ghana. Some fisher folks spend days, weeks or months fishing in the deep waters close by while others go as far as Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. In Elmina, a coastal settlement in the Central region of Ghana, I once witnessed the return of fisher folks from their voyages. It was an amazing sight. With each canoe coming to dock, crowds of spectators cheered them on with loud rounds of applause depending on how much catch the canoe carried. It was the community's way of saying good job!

Once the canoes came to dock, several people especially women, came around with pans, buckets and baskets. These were then filled with fish and sent off to the various fishmongers who the respective canoes supplied to.

Elmina is one of the busiest places along the Central region coasts, especially on the arrival days of fisher folks. If you ever get to visit the Elmina Castle (a UNESCO world heritage site) in Ghana, you would want to look out for the arrival of the fisher folks. The experience is something you would not want to miss!

Photo credit: Jacob Nii Marley, 2018
(Instagram @jnm_impressions)

#Lifebeforecovid19 #seeghana #subsistence



👍❤️ 28 32 comments

Nagwa Bakr 🗨️
It is really amazing documentation with photos for fishermen community. Did you interview any groups of them and asked them questions about their daily life activities ?
Like · Reply · 4 w 2

Jake J N Marley Author
Thank you Nagwa 😊 Unfortunately I did not have the chance to interact with the fishermen since I was observing and documenting from quite a distance. The photos were taken with a 55-200mm lens.
Like · Reply · 4 w 1

Jake J N Marley Author
Nagwa Bakr When next I get to visit, I am most likely to do a follow up story and share with you all.
Like · Reply · 4 w 1

Write a reply... 🗨️ 📷 📺 🗨️

Aprille Tijam 🗨️
Finally! ❤️ 📷 📺 2
Like · Reply · 4 w
➔ View 3 more replies

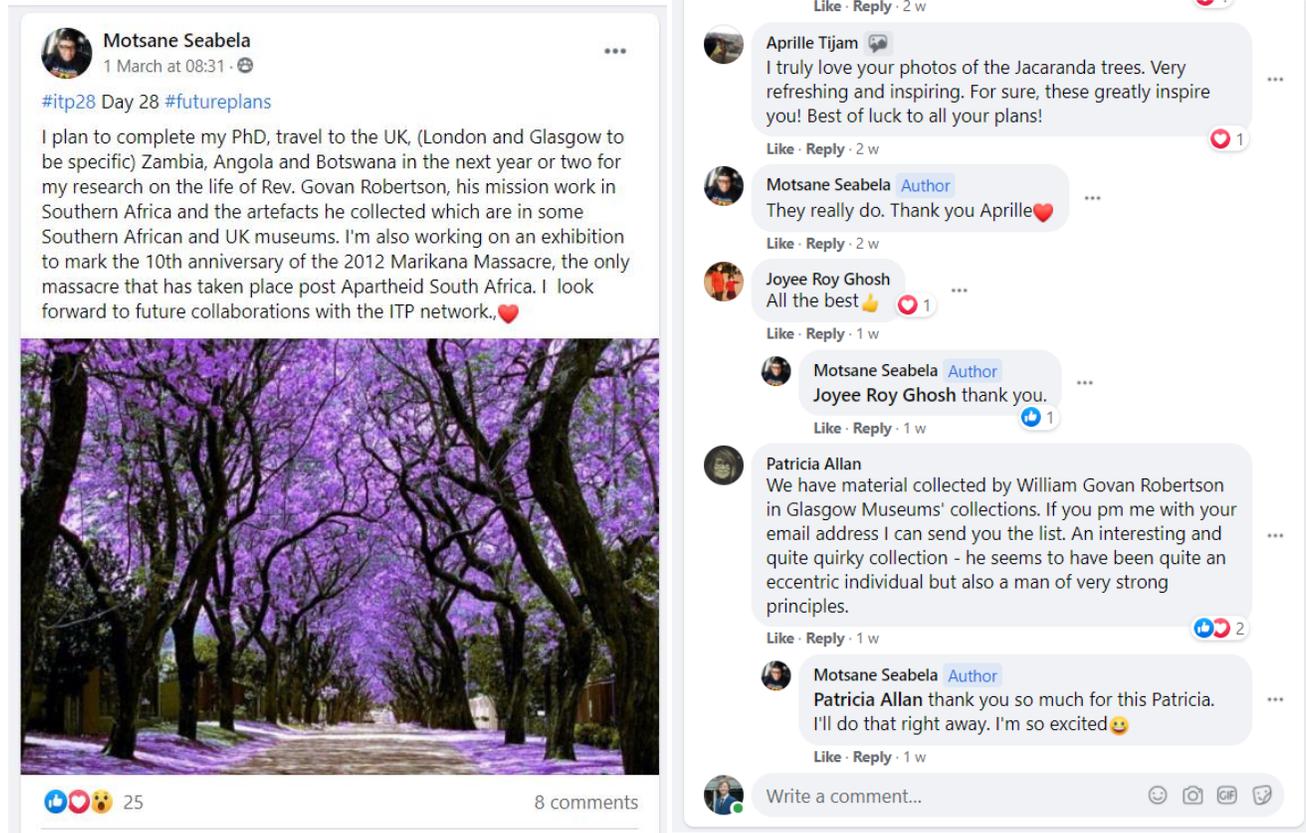
Aprille Tijam 🗨️

Like · Reply · 4 w 1

Aprille Tijam 🗨️
Local fishermen in my province coming back
Like · Reply · 4 w 1

Aprille Tijam 🗨️


Motsane Getrude Seabala's (South Africa, ITP Fellow 2016) contribution for day 28, *Future Plans*, shared details about her upcoming PhD research and connected with Patricia Allan (ITP UK Partner, Glasgow Museums) whose museum has objects in its collection relevant to Motsane's research.



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post and its comment thread. The post is by Motsane Seabala, dated 1 March at 08:31. The text of the post reads: "#itp28 Day 28 #futureplans I plan to complete my PhD, travel to the UK, (London and Glasgow to be specific) Zambia, Angola and Botswana in the next year or two for my research on the life of Rev. Govan Robertson, his mission work in Southern Africa and the artefacts he collected which are in some Southern African and UK museums. I'm also working on an exhibition to mark the 10th anniversary of the 2012 Marikana Massacre, the only massacre that has taken place post Apartheid South Africa. I look forward to future collaborations with the ITP network." Below the text is a photograph of a path lined with large, mature trees with vibrant purple jacaranda blossoms. The post has 25 reactions and 8 comments. The comment thread includes: 1. Aprille Tijam: "I truly love your photos of the Jacaranda trees. Very refreshing and inspiring. For sure, these greatly inspire you! Best of luck to all your plans!" (1 like) 2. Motsane Seabala (Author): "They really do. Thank you Aprille" (1 like) 3. Joyee Roy Ghosh: "All the best" (1 like) 4. Motsane Seabala (Author): "Joyee Roy Ghosh thank you." (1 like) 5. Patricia Allan: "We have material collected by William Govan Robertson in Glasgow Museums' collections. If you pm me with your email address I can send you the list. An interesting and quite quirky collection - he seems to have been quite an eccentric individual but also a man of very strong principles." (2 likes) 6. Motsane Seabala (Author): "Patricia Allan thank you so much for this Patricia. I'll do that right away. I'm so excited" (1 like)

A post from Aprille Tijam (Philippines, ITP Fellow 2019) relating to heritage shared knowledge about the indigenous people of the Philippines and their textile traditions. This drew some comparisons of similar textile traditions in Ghana, shared by Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei (Ghana, ITP Fellow 2019).

Aprille Tijam
· 21 February at 02:57 · 🌐

#itp28. Day 20. Heritage

The Philippines is home to more than 10 million indigenous people (IP) belonging to more than 100 ethnolinguistic groups. Each group maintains clothing and weaving traditions that stood witness to people's lives and Philippine history, and has been passed on from one generation to the next for centuries. These are photos of some of the beautiful handwoven textiles from the different IP groups.



👍❤️ You, Anna Cottle, Claire Messenger and 21 others · 4 comments

Motsane Seabela
These are absolutely gorgeous. ❤️❤️❤️

Like · Reply · 3 w

Aprille Tijam +2
Motsane Seabela thank you!

Like · Reply · 3 w

Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei
We are getting something in common. Ours come in 3 forms. The cloth from the Northern part of the country looks similar to yours and the others full or pattern and images.



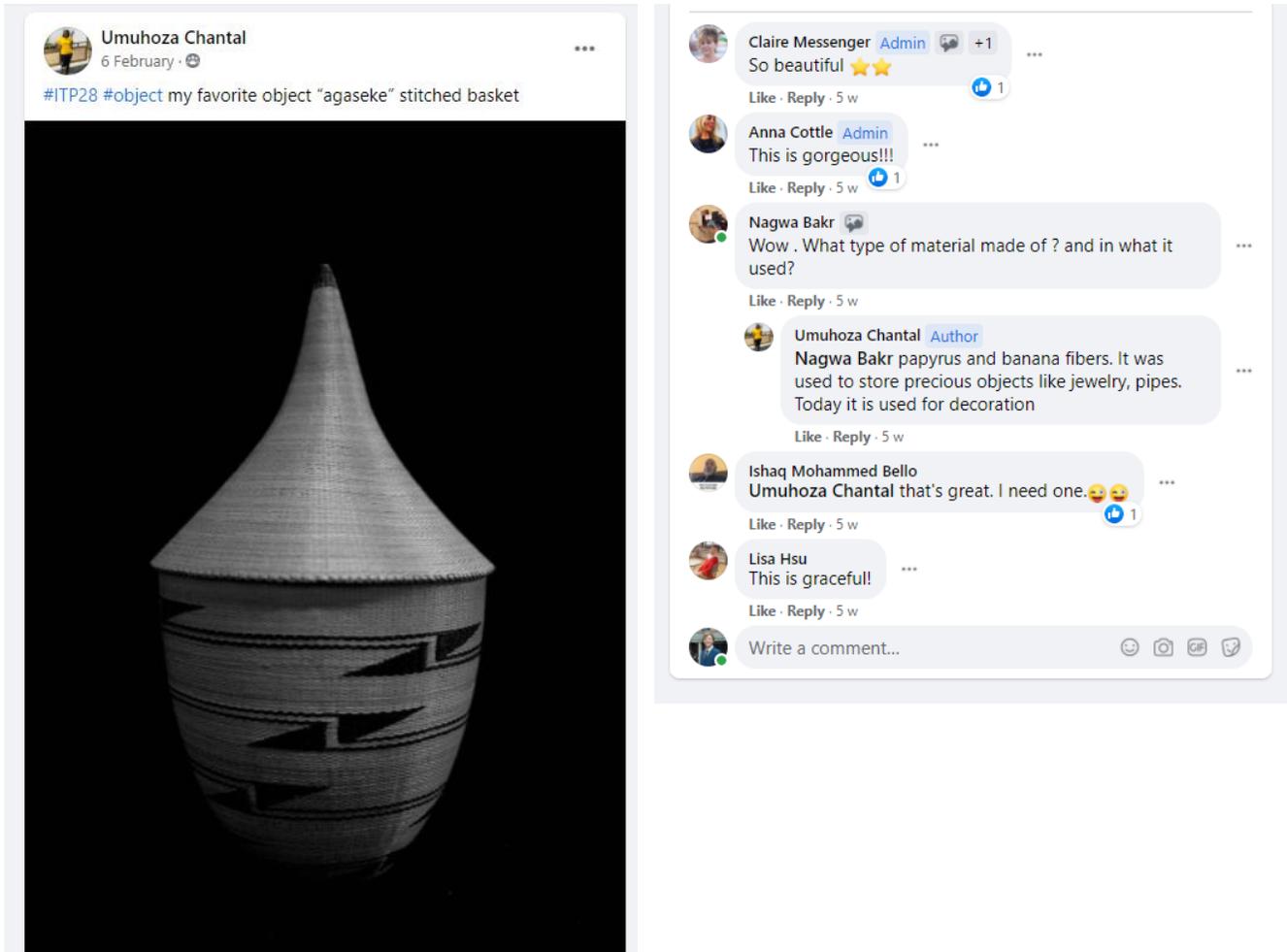
Like · Reply · 3 w

Aprille Tijam +2
Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei ah yes, we have similar linear patterns. Those textiles are beautiful! Some of our textiles, from North to South, have intricate patterns also, usually inspired by surroundings, some geometric patterns.

Like · Reply · 3 w

Write a comment...

Many objects from museum collections around the world were shared for #ITP28 day 9, *Object*. Figure 10 shows just one example, shared by Chantal Umuhoza (Rwanda, ITP Fellow 2018).



A lot of information was shared about the various roles that ITP alumni do at their museums and institutions. For day 6, *My Role*, Cynthia Iruobe (Nigeria, ITP Fellow 2010), shared details of her role as a Curator and Documentation Officer. After mentioning that one of her duties is keeping the collection free of dust, other ITP colleagues shared that they have similar issues with climate control and gave some possible solutions.

Cynthia Adimabua Iruobe
6 February · 🌍

#ITP28# Day 6. My Role.
I am a Curator and a documentation Officer. Basically in a romance with our objects in the stores. It's either am trying to document a new object with the tagging and racking or doing house keeping to keep our objects and surroundings clean and dust free. This is almost impossible with our climate but trying my best. Taking inventory at intervals and assisting with selection, writeups in preparation of our annual courtyard exhibitions. I love my job and always appreciate the BMITP for making me more in love with my job.

Nagwa Bakr 🌍
The common problem for museums in Africa is dusty climate that needs regular cleaning and effort especially for organic materials. ...
Like · Reply · 5 w

Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei
Nagwa, In efforts to reduce the dusty situation and keep the conditions favourable for our objects, my Museum and Julie from BM started something. I dont know how this will help but a project worth trying. ...

Like · Reply · 5 w

Cynthia Adimabua Iruobe **Author**
Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei She did same with us too. God bless her. She's so missed. I wonder how she's doing. Does she still visit Africa? Thanks ...
Like · Reply · 5 w

Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei
Cynthia she is good. I think she was here in November 2019. I believe Corona will slowdown visits for a while. ...
Like · Reply · 5 w

Nagwa Bakr 🌍
Elizabeth Asafo-Adjei great. I think my colleagues who attended ITP and working in storages will like the idea. ...