

The International Training Programme (ITP) 2022, British Museum

From 19th September to 14th October

ITP report by Dr Alaa Menshawey, Egypt.

I'm Alaa Menshawey the director of Luxor Museum in Luxor, southern Egypt.

Introduction:

The International Training Programme is a unique programme, designed for the participants to cover a variety of aspects of museum work inside the museum sector. The ITP programme aims to deliver working groups, workshops, subject specialist sessions, and one to one meetings which are tailored to best support the professional development of museums, and museum workers.

Learning outcomes:

We have been taught in lectures on the ITP how to use the objects and artefacts inside museums to educate the museum visitors, while providing visitors with interesting new information that will benefit the community. We learned that museums are not limited to artefacts and entertainment and is more likely to be about the history of collections, a contributing factor to educating people and societies, research, and study purposes. Also, museums give the visitors an idea about the daily life of ancient societies. The British Museum has knowledgeable staff who taught us a lot of information regarding the galleries and display of the British Museum.

Confidence and ambition:

The study on the ITP at the British Museum improved my archaeological confidence, due to the experience and new information that added to my archaeological knowledge. Therefore, this new information enhanced my experience and will benefit my career in the future.

ITP benefited us with the following:

Became professional in museum work, educating me about the departments of the British Museum, how those different departments work, how they impact on the British Museum and how they influence the visitors. The best thing about ITP was sharing skills, experiences and ideas of museology, while the fellows of British Museum did the same.

We learned the modern techniques of museums' preventive conservation. Therefore, we will teach the modern techniques to the preventive conservative department at our Museum in Luxor, thus, this will help with better preservation of our collection in Luxor Museum



Rosetta stone on display at the British Museum

New skills:

We studied the creation of a museum trails around the collections inside the museum, thus, this will link a diverse object list inside the museum galleries. Therefore, this will help the museum visitors to spend less time inside the museum and organise their knowledge through their visit. Also, this will help arrange the visitor movement in organised directions inside the museum. We learned the latest worldwide techniques of recording, documenting, marketing, managing museum stores, museum management, museum libraries and display.

We visited many archaeological sites and museums, we found that those sites and even the small museums use the modern techniques, and highlighted a high level of professionalism of methods, approaches, and work ethics.

We studied the modern new methods of display techniques inside museums, and the best lighting system for exhibitions and displays in gallery and museum spaces. The technique of using contemporary work to tell a story about the past inside the museum galleries, is a great way to educate museum visitors and we learned how to use the art, artefacts, and other objects to tell the stories inside the museums. Also, some museums are using sound systems, and some of them use lighting systems to complete this process. We have seen the conservation work for ceramic and glass, this will benefit our staff at Luxor Museum. Therefore, I must teach my colleagues in the conservation department these techniques to use with ceramic, glass and pottery.

Experience from Museums:

We visited Newcastle Museum to learn about the museum management of local museums in the United Kingdom. We found that the museums in Newcastle engaged strongly with the societies of the Newcastle area. Also, it is prepared well for tourists. However, as Newcastle city is not one of the biggest tourist attraction locations, thus, most of the visitors of Newcastle Museum are from Newcastle itself. But we did notice that Newcastle Museum was well prepared for the students who study at University of Newcastle and for every academic researcher. So, this is similar to what we do at Luxor Museum. However, the best thing about Newcastle Museum that the museum dedicated to displaying some stories about the local modern history such as the development of the town and inventions.

We must try and do the same in our Luxor Museum, and it would be better if we could explain about the modern local history of Luxor Governorate.

Development:

The experience I achieved from my visit to the ITP programme at the British Museum and the UK partner will help me to improve the programmes of my museum in Egypt, educate the staff and archaeologists of Luxor Museum, and pass the knowledge I gained to the workers of my museum.



Day of awards on the ITP programme

ITP impacts:

The experience of the British Museum is unique and distinctive and helped me to expand my experience on a practical level and also my knowledge of museum sciences. Also, the ITP will help me to enhance the museology knowledge of my colleagues in my museum in Luxor by passing more knowledge to my colleagues in Luxor Museum. I will prepare a series of lectures on modern museology to train my colleagues about the modern new techniques that I learned on the ITP, therefore, this will educate my colleagues, and will impact on my museum in Luxor, Egypt. Thus, the visitor will enjoy the museum more, and the number of visitors will increase.

The International Training Programme at the British Museum helped me to meet with new professionals from different archaeological departments of museums, with 12 fellows from other countries, we shared our diverse cultural heritage in the ITP - we shared our archaeological knowledge, ideas, and we shared abstract views on our cultures.



Inside the classroom at the ITP

Changes:

Firstly, I am willing to make some changes that I learned during the ITP such as helping my colleagues to be happy, and do their job while they are happy, this will help them to have a smiley face, so the visitors of Luxor Museum see our smile while we are welcoming them. This change I started to do it by explaining to my colleagues the importance of making the visitors of Luxor Museum happy, this will make the visitors pass positive feedback along to others, therefore, more visitors will come to visit our museum.

Secondly, improving the lighting system in the yearly exhibition - these changes need me to write a report to the ministry of Antiquity in Egypt, and explain to them the importance of the new modern techniques I learned from the International Training Programme at the British Museum, the report will include the importance of the modern new museology techniques that I learned on the ITP in the UK.

The barriers while implementing changes in practice:

The funding is the most important barrier, even if we have funds from outside the Ministry of Antiquity, we must do the changes by following a specific process, this process might mean it takes a long time for a decision to apply those changes.

Adapting learning from the ITP:

I will adapt the normal changes that I can do as a director, such as teaching my colleagues what I learned at the International Training Programme, to start with in Luxor Museum. But some changes need time such as changing the display or lighting system to fit your organisation or context.

Personal meaning of ITP:

The Annual Programme means to me, the link between worldwide museology science, improving, developing, and educating the archaeologists who work in museums. Also, making changes in Museums to become better and to benefit academics, students and societies.

ITP global network:

I will follow the news of the ITP in the ministry of Antiquity and I will do my best to attend another project again in the future if this is possible to learn more, especially due to the ITP providing new archaeological knowledge about museology annually.

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