

The British Museum

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM (ITP) REPORT

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The British Museum International Training Program was a life changing experience both career wise and on a personal level. My name is Benedicta and I have since birth been exposed to the Art and Museum space but I never really did much apart from visit exhibitions across Ghana. Deciding to work with ANO was a conscious decision to do more within the space than visiting shows and exhibitions but to help drive culture, arts and knowledge in Ghana. This also meant I had a steep learning curve to overcome and ITP did just that and so much more!

I am more confident than ever before about my contribution to ANO and to Ghanaian arts and culture in general than I was before the ITP. The sessions gave me insight like never before into real projects that have had impact similar to ones we are trying to achieve here with ANO and the different departments and considerations it takes to make these exhibitions or shows possible. In actual fact ANO in no way shape or form currently has the man power to execute at the level that the BM does but it surely did give us something to think about in terms of growth, scalability and future prospects.

The partner museum placement at Manchester brought it home a little for me and ANO mostly because the projects were geared towards community engagement which is something the ANO Mobile Museum could benefit a lot more from. The aim of the ANO Mobile Museum is to engage with everyone from the grassroots all the way to people in power and everyone in-between about *What Culture means to them* as a people and *how we can best showcase that to others*. Its about getting people to participate in discussions about who they are as a people and also address issues pertaining to their communities such as

Local Urban Migration(Northern Region), the concept of Power (Western Region), and Nature, Origin, Harmony Spirituality(BrongAhafo Region) just to name a few out of the

lot in terms of issues we hope to address in all the regions. What the placement did was to uncover how other museums worked with their local communities and curated materials around broader themes. My personal favourite was the Manchester Art Museum (**Fig 1**) and how the exhibition was curated in commemoration of the 200yrs since the Peterloo Massacre. The exhibition had traditional forms of art on display but the one that was most fascinating was how the exhibition also invited people to engage in political conversations either through the brightly coloured yellow sheets or by using the space to pursue any activities that contributes to getting the voice of the community heard! (**Fig 2**)

This sort of engagement got me thinking about subtle ways in which we could do more in terms of community engagement with the Osu Castle Project, which requires converting a 400year old castle which was the seat of the president into a museum of international standards (**fig 3**). Unfortunately, in Ghana the “museum culture” is close to non-existent because the majority of the people feel completely detached from such spaces; hence the need for community inclusion that thinks of the people and their needs and using museums as a platform to address those needs in multiple ways.

ANO Gallery & Mobile Museum Tour

Short Term Wins	Medium Term Wins	Long Term Wins
Identified areas we can do better at at ANO such as paying more attention to Social Media as a way of engaging our young audience. Perhaps focus on one object for the week on social media	Go back to developing the Gallery and adding more and exciting things in the space	Develop and Create a database or index of objects we are collecting during the Mobile Museum tour and Recce
Have a Hands-On Desk where people can physically interact with some of the objects in the gallery	Look at tapping into the other senses of audiences in the space other than sight. E,g Include videos from the Tour or instead of writing panels for context, have an audio/visual instead. (barring in mind the low literacy levels as well)	

Osu Castle Museum

Short Term Wins	Medium Term Wins	Long Term Wins
Draft a Proposal Document suggesting ways to build the Museum around Community Engagement	Use the Mobile Museum Tour as a platform to collate some of the needs of people on the ground which the Castle Museum can address during the development phase and even beyond	Work alongside the planning committee which is meeting in a few months to strongly advocate for more inviting spaces to be included in the renovation plan
Identify stakeholders who could be potential sponsors of this project	Design a Format for Sending out Funding Proposals just as was presented during ITP	Work towards establishing trust and stronger relationships with these potential stakeholders

Realistically and given the on-going changes happening at ANO, short term wins could take between one to two months to implement after ITP. Medium Term Wins could stretch between three to five months after ITP and Long Term Wins; six to eight months.

Whiles some of these ideas might be easier to implement than others, there are definitely some barriers to implementing these changes. The most likely one being the bureaucracy and time lags in getting anything done at ANO. Internally things get decided on and changed as often as one can imagine. And for anything to be tabled or given the green light it has to go through the founder. Knowing this, the best approach I have adopted is to share all the learning points during ITP to my work colleagues and the founder and then let them collectively decided when and how to go about these implementable ideas given the projects we currently have and timelines. In that way the ideas that they liked and approve of will always remain fresh on the table regardless of the constant changes that occur at ANO.

Outside of the main ITP schedule it was great learning from other ITPers and how they run things in their respective organisations. I learnt a lot from Catalina Cavelier Adarve and the approach her organisation was taking to preserve intangible heritage in Bogota,

Colombia which was in more ways similar to what ANO is trying to accomplish here in Ghana.

On a personal level, ITP did a lot for me. What more could I ask for! I got twenty two new friends; and even better 22 new friends from 17 countries! The culture and diversity alone gave me something new and exciting to think of each day. Speaking and interacting with each ITPer was a rich learning experience whether it ranged from food to adulting, these are invaluable memories I will forever cherish. Not to mention how ITP catered for my health needs was above and beyond my expectation.

I want to personally thank all those who contributed to make this possible. The Aall Foundation for sponsoring my time at the ITP, The BM for being such wonderful hosts and to Claire Messenger and her team, words are not enough!

I definitely look forward to being a part of the ITP Family indefinitely. Most, if not all, of the ITP Legacy Programs are so exciting and life changing it will be difficult not to take part in any. I am particularly drawn to the idea of working on specific projects with some ITP fellows and I can't wait for that to happen. Maybe in a few years I might also consider returning as an ITP Senior Fellow. However the most important to me is to be a part of the museum's future project . I really believe it will be extremely impactful in how the future of museums are going to be shaped and I have decided to work with the BM focusing on that area for my masters program in New York next year.

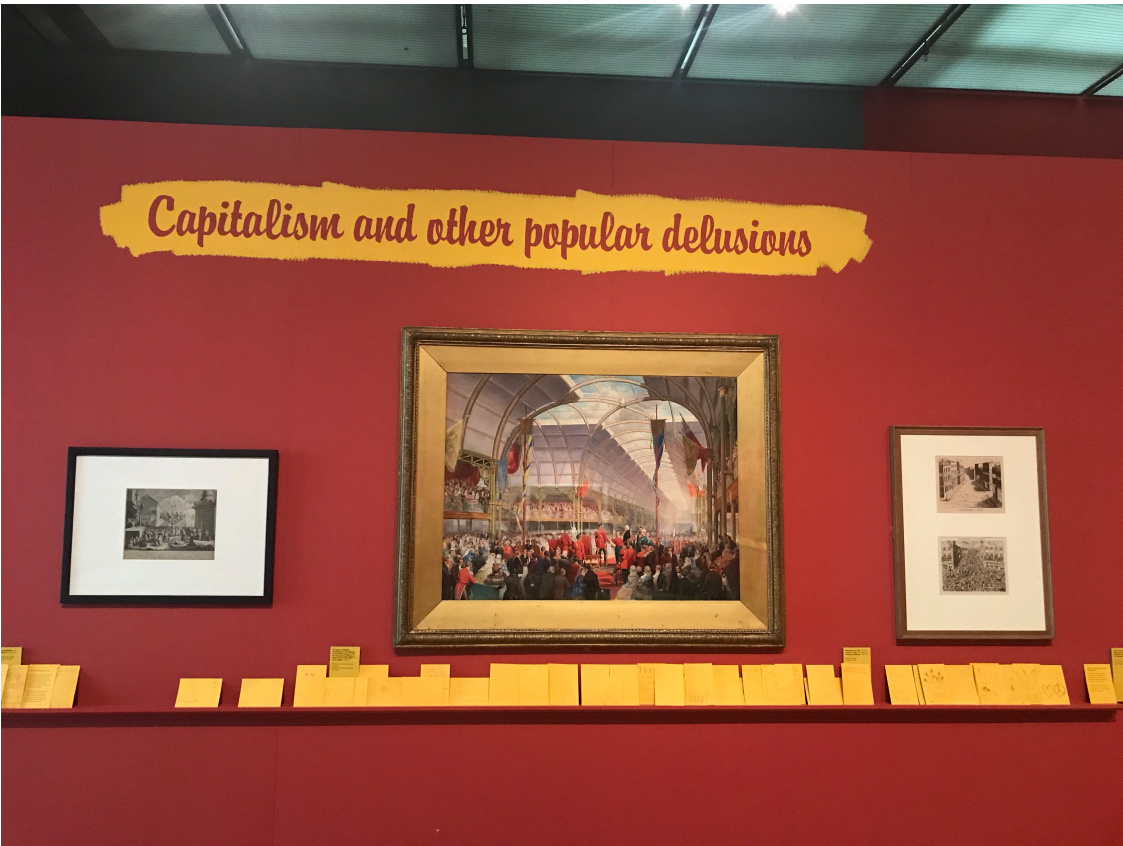


Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3