

Museums and Community Development



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community museums to present
on-site culture of the
community. While globalisation

The organizing committee of the ICOM Kyoto session
“Museums and Community Development”
National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka
2020

This publication is written versions of the addresses delivered at the session “Museums and Community Development” co-organized by the ICOM-Japan and the National Museum of Ethnology on September 3, 2019 within the ICOM Kyoto General Conference.

Organizing committee of the ICOM Kyoto session “Museums and Community Development,” National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka (Japan)

Head: Naoko Sonoda

Members: Isao Hayashi, Mitsuhiro Shimmen, Akiko Sugase, Motoi Suzuki

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Museums and Community Development

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About the publication of *Museums and Community Development*

Naoko SONODA¹

Head
Organizing committee of the ICOM Kyoto session
“Museums and Community Development”
National Museum of Ethnology
Japan

This publication is written versions of the addresses delivered at the session “Museums and Community Development,” co-organized by the ICOM-Japan and the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka (hereinafter “Minpaku”), within the ICOM Kyoto General Conference from September 1 to 7, 2019². The session was held on September 3 at the Kyoto International Conference Center. Its title was conceived in a way to meet the main theme of the General Conference “Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition.”

The publication compiles up-to-date information on community-based museum activities for regional revitalization, especially in

¹ Naoko Sonoda is professor at the National Museum of Ethnology. She has been carrying out research in conservation science and especially in preventive conservation of museum collection. She has also been actively involved in the international museology course conducted by the National Museum of Ethnology and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), since its implementation in 1994.

² The language of presentations at the session was English, and interpretation was provided for Japanese, Japanese Sign Language, and American Sign Language. English captioning was provided as well.

developing countries, focusing on the experiences of Armenia, Ecuador, Myanmar, and Zambia. All speakers are connected to the international museology course that Minpaku has been conducting for more than 25 years.

The course's history and outline are briefly summarized below for help in understanding the background of the publication³.

In the early 1990s, Minpaku was receiving many requests from Asian countries to conduct museum-related training. In 1993, taking advantage of the concurrent visits of researchers of museology from Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand to Minpaku, it held a short international cooperation seminar on museology. That year became "year zero" for international training in museology at Minpaku.

Since 1994, Minpaku has been organizing an international museology course with financial support from JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). The name of the course and its format have evolved since, but the goal remains unchanged, which is to promote international interaction and exchange with museums worldwide. One of the main features of the museology courses has always been a comprehensive approach to cover diverse subjects related to museums rather than focusing on a single topic.

When our international museology course commenced in 1994, an advantage of getting trained in Japan was the involvement of

³ Sonoda, N., "Introduction: Twenty-Year of International Cooperation for Museums and Museology," In Sonoda, N. (ed.) *New Horizons for Asian Museums and Museology*, pp.1–15, Springer Singapore, Open Access <http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-10-0886-3>, ISBN: 978-981-10-0885-6 (Print) 978-981-10-0886-3 (Online), 2016.

Japanese experts with first-hand experience of the post-war “dawning” of Japanese museums, which was what the participants were experiencing in their home countries. Those people in Japan retired, and the relationship between course participants and Japan changed. The result is a shift from a unilateral teaching of experiences to a bilateral sharing of knowledge and experience, in which each party influences the other.

Indeed, at the beginning, there was a strong request to learn basic techniques of museums, such as conservation, documentation, and exhibitions; however, after 10 years, the number of people specializing or interested in museum education notably increased. Also, in recent years, there is a high awareness of deepening relations and strengthening cooperation with local communities. We thus started, in 2015, the new program “Museums and Community Development,” reflecting the present global trend calling for museums to shift their role toward achieving closer relationships with society and users, and promoting collaboration with local communities.

The number of participants and observers of the international museology course totals 269 so far from 61 countries and regions. If there is a connection on the time axis within the same country or region, each year’s participants have a strong one covering different countries, thus creating multi-layered networks originated in Japan and spreading all over the world.

Many of these former participants came to play a central role in the operation of museums and human resource development in their respective countries and regions.

Among them, three former participants and one researcher were invited to make a presentation in the session “Museums and Community Development,” after thorough consideration of

participation year and geographic distribution.

In fact, the speaker from Myanmar, Nu Mra Zan was the first year's observer in 1994, while Carolina Navas Guzmán from Ecuador was 2018's participant, and Ani Avagyan from Armenia, placed right in the middle of this history, was 2009's. Victoria Phiri from Zambia was a key person in organizing a workshop in Zambia in 2019, which can be considered as a follow-up of Minpaku's international museology course. Their presentations clearly demonstrated that there were, at present, very active and unique museum activities based on their respective historical, cultural, and social backgrounds.

It is our great pleasure to publish here the outcome of the session "Museums and Community Development," the same name as the current international museology course. We hope that this publication helps encourage interaction with readers from around the world, to disseminate the results of the international museology course conducted in Japan to stakeholders worldwide and to clarify the role of museums toward revitalizing local communities.

Participants of the museology courses (1994 to 2019) including observers

	Number of participants and observers	Countries and regions
Africa	64	18 (Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, the Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zambia)
Asia	88	16 (Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam)
Europe	13	4 (Armenia, Bulgaria, Finland, and Macedonia)
Latin America	47	11 (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Peru, and Mexico)
The Middle East	37	6 (Iran, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey)
Oceania	20	6 (Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu)
Total	269	61 countries and regions

Museums as a Basis of Community Development

Kenji YOSHIDA¹

Director-General
National Museum of Ethnology
Japan

On behalf of the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku), I am very pleased and honored to jointly host with ICOM Japan this session as a part of ICOM Kyoto 2019.

Minpaku was established in 1974, and opened to the public in 1977. Although it is called a “Museum”, the National Museum of Ethnology is basically a research institute, founded as a Inter- University Research Institute in the field of cultural anthropology and ethnology. It is equipped with museum facilities as well as post-graduate educational facilities. Around 60 members of the academic staff carry out field work in various parts of the world. Minpaku currently holds 345,000 artifacts in its collection, which makes it one of the largest collection of ethnographic materials that has been built since the late 20th century. As for the scale of the facilities, Minpaku is now the largest ethnographic museum in the world (Photo 1).

¹ Kenji Yoshida is Director-General at the National Museum of Ethnology. He has been carrying out fieldwork on the expressive culture and cultural heritage of Africa. He has also been organizing various exhibitions on art and culture by networking art museums and cultural museums. His major publications include *Images of Other Cultures* (1997) and *Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Africa* (2008).



Photo 1 National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku), Osaka, Japan.

When we look back, controversy had been growing over ethnographic exhibitions in museums in the 1980s and 90s. Ethnographic museums throughout the world had long been focusing on cultures extraneous to the country in which the museum is located. Museums had likely to approach to this task from their vantage point of their own cultures. However, in the 1980s and 90s people of the world who had long been the subjects of ethnographic exhibitions in the large-scale museums became more aware of their own cultures and histories, and thus begun to protest against this prevalent one-sided approaches to exhibitions of ethnic cultures. Under the circumstances, it became common for large-scale museums to have collaborative relationships with the people who are represented in exhibitions, in organizing exhibitions or constructing data-base of their collection. Involvement of people in the activities of those large-scale museums promoted people's awareness of their own culture and history, and now there is a vigorous movement in every corner of the globe to build local or community museums to present on-site culture of the community. While globalization has been prevailing in every aspect of human life, the significance of the museum as a device

which is rooted in each local community, inherits its culture, and furthermore, newly constructs it, has been recognized more widely.

Along with an increase of the number of museums in the world, the demands for the opportunity to acquire knowledge or technique required for managing museums have become more vociferous year by year. However, there are only limited occasions for acquiring substantial knowledge and technique related to museums in an integrated manner. Under such circumstances, a series of museum training courses which has been carried out by Minpaku as a project sponsored by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) is a very unique attempt in the world.

As a total of ten trainees participate in the course every year from all over the world. As for this year's course which started on the 30th of August, and will last up to 21st of November 2019, there are ten trainee participants from eight countries and regions; Armenia, Bhutan, Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, Palestine, Sudan and three participants from Zambia. The subject of this four months course ranges from history of the museum, its latest trends, methods of collection management, conservation science, exhibition design, database construction, museum education, development of museum goods to risk management. Any of those is mainly undertaken in workshop style focusing on discussion or practice rather than giving unilateral lectures (Photo 2). Lecturers of this course are researchers and curators of museums in Japan such as Minpaku, and other expertise are also invited according to each specialized field. We would ask the professional of arts transporting company to lecture on a workshop for packing art objects, and the expert individual who is in charge of marketing for business practices. After the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, training of risk management and disaster



Photo 2 Conservation workshop, "Museums and Community Development" course at the National Museum of Ethnology, 2018.

prevention has been intensified. Training trips are also programmed during the course term to visit not only museums in Kansai area but also the museums in Niigata, Tokyo and Hiroshima areas.

There is no model which can be applicable to anywhere for museum management. It is our plan scheme that the participants could search for something which is applicable to the museum activity of each participant's country through directly experiencing varied activities that Japanese museums provide. As far as I know, there is no such a kind of occasion in a worldwide level as this course which comprehensively serves to train for a wide variety of museum activities.

While the course provides them with an opportunity for training, the "trainees" are actually curators who are well experienced and have been active in the front lines of their country's museums. Thus, in reality, this training opportunity becomes like a forum where our



Photo 3 Participants to the "Museums and Community Development" course at the National Museum of Ethnology, 2018.

experiences in Japan confront with their experiences so that we are able to learn each other and share new knowledge and recognition.

We have accepted 269 trainees from 61 countries and regions in the last 26 years so far, as the outcome of the current "Museums and Community Development" course and its predecessors, which originally started in 1994. The global networks connecting the museums that have been constructed through those courses are vast fortune for all of the people and organizations which have been involved in the course (Photo 3).

To today's session, we invited four curators who completed this course or its follow up programmes in the participant's own countries to share their activities promoting community development through their museums. I understand, and I do hope that this session will be a unique opportunity to scrutinize and clarify potentials and challenges of the museum as a base of community development.

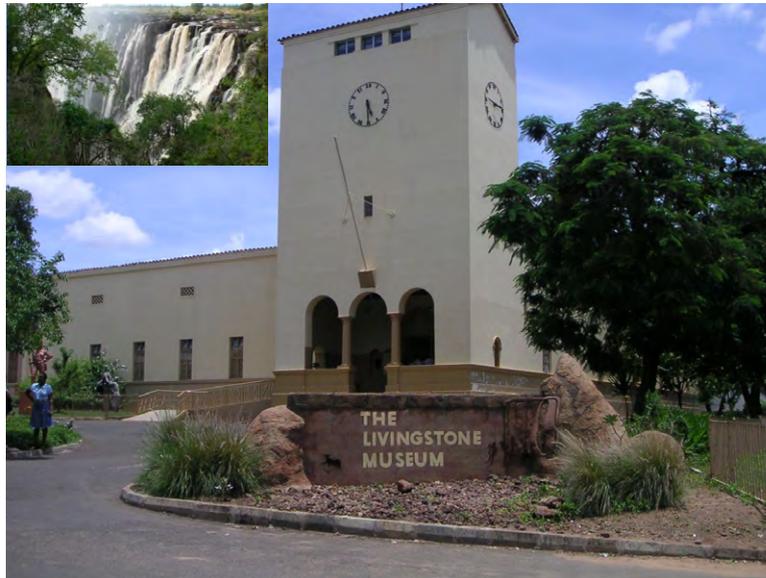


Photo 4 The Livingstone Museum, Livingstone, Zambia.

I have introduced our “Museums and Community Development” in Japan. But there is more than that. As for Zambia, by 2004 we had received six trainee participants in the courses. In Zambia, a workshop entitled “Museology Workshop in Livingstone 2005” was organized by the six former participants targeting museum curators of the country who did not have chances to come to Japan for the period 4 – 9 December 2005 (Photos 4 and 5). It delighted us in that in this way the achievement of the training acquired in Japan can be further developed in each country and lead to unique activities of the locals. The initiative taken by the former participants in the training courses was highly appreciated by JICA Regional Office, and from 2006 to 2008 more intensive workshop on museum activities, focusing on a particular subject each year, that is the exhibition design in 2006 (Photo 6), the conservation of collection 2007, and the documentation including the construction of data base and the film making, were organized as a follow up programme of the training course. In each year, former participants to the course played a role



Photo 5 Museology Workshop in Livingstone, 2005.



Photo 6 Exhibition Design Workshop at Lusaka National Museum, Lusaka, Zambia, 2006.

of instructor, and we, Japanese museum specialists also joined the workshop as facilitators. And the follow-up workshop really functions as an opportunity where a unique museology which is based on the local specifics is jointly created by all participants. The form of development that we have aimed at from the very beginning of the project of the training course was finally attained. And JICA Regional



Photo 7 Installation of an exhibition by using the “Carton-Box Technique.”

Office in Zambia is now planning to start another project which is to support community development through national and community museums in the country.

Visible results of the training course are now appearing in Zambia. Some temporary exhibitions about local communities at the Lusaka National Museum were installed by using the so-called “Carton- Box Technique,” which was introduced during the training course in Japan. It is a form of technology that makes use of simple material like carton boxes to make partitions and display walls for exhibitions (Photo 7). Achieving maximum efficiency by using minimum equipment is always a basic item on the training’s agenda.

An ethnographic exhibition realized at the Livingstone Museum is a unique reflexive exhibition (Photo 8). In refurbishing ethnographic gallery, the museum divided the gallery into three parts, Village Life, Urban Life and a corner called “Museum.” Visitors are invited to enter into the reconstruction of a village setting first, where

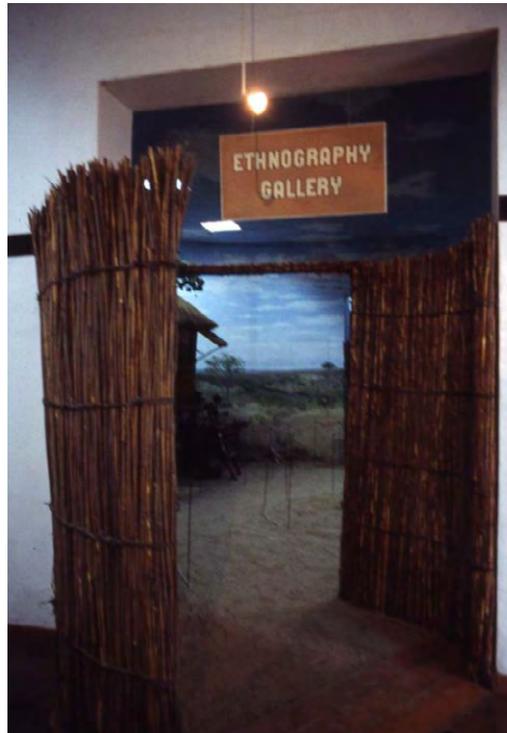


Photo 8 New Ethnography Gallery at the Livingstone Museum, 2006.

a bicycle and plastic water tanks are placed in front of thatched huts (Photo 9), then to another reconstruction of urban life settings where familiar scenes in a town for visitors are reconstructed by combining paintings, photographs and real objects (Photo 10), and finally to a corner called 'MUSEUM' where typical ethnographic exhibition is developed by displaying objects visitors are actually using in their daily life (Photo 11). Through this exhibition, visitors are unconsciously led to review their own choice of where to live either in a village or in a town, which is a crucial question all people in Zambia are now facing, and are also invited to rethink what is a museum which shows their daily utensils. In this exhibition, visitors are not only visitors per se, but become an active players in the exhibition. By being juxtaposed with reconstruction of village and urban settings,

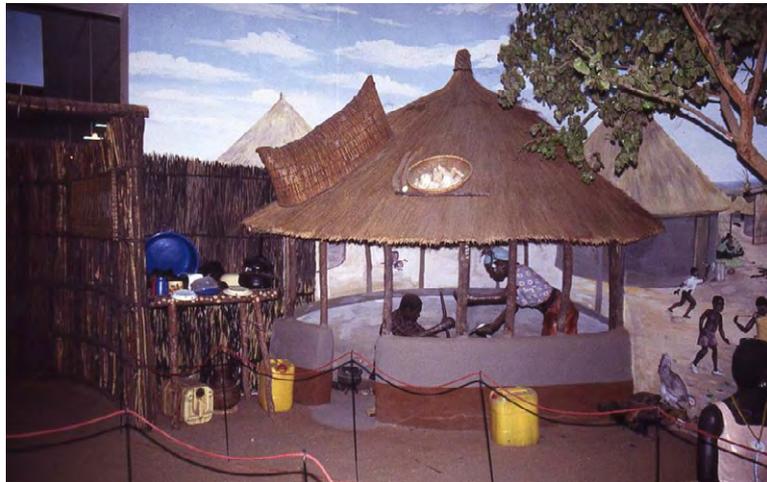


Photo 9 The reconstruction of a village setting, Ethnography Gallery, the Livingstone Museum, 2006.



Photo 10 The reconstruction of urban life settings, Ethnography Gallery, the Livingstone Museum, 2006.

typical ethnographic exhibition in the museum became another reconstruction of a museum setting, all of which shed new light on visitors' experience either in a village, in a town, or in a museum.



Photo 11 "Museum" section, Ethnography Gallery, the Livingstone Museum, 2006.

The curators who were engaged in realizing this exhibition said to me that they were inspired by the exhibition to which they were introduced during the course in Japan, that is "Images of other Cultures" held at Minpaku in 1997, where the British Museum's old galleries (Photo 12) and kiosks (roadside shops) in Africa (Photo 13), Papua New Guinea, Europe and Japan were reconstructed. Actually, I am the one who curated the exhibition. They say they digested some concepts of the "Images of other Cultures" exhibition and created their new ethnographic gallery. Seems to me, this exhibition at the Livingstone Museum can be considered as a new type of reflexive exhibition which has been developed uniquely in Zambia by digesting Japanese experience.

Perhaps there is a particular reason why Zambian museums, or more precisely Zambian museum professionals, are now so acquisitive of knowledge and techniques in museology. It is not because of my involvement.



Photo 12 Reconstruction of the Ethnographical Gallery at the British Museum around 1920. *Images of Other Cultures* exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnology, 1997.



Photo 13 A Kiosk installation from Ghana, Africa. *Images of Other Cultures* exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnology, 1997.

In Zambia, there had been few festivals which are organized being based on the whole ethnic group. One of the few examples of



Photo 14 *Kuomboka* ceremony, Lodzi people, Zambia, 1984.



Photo 15 *N'chwala* ceremony, Ngoni people, Zambia, 1999.

this sort is *kuomboka*, a royal barge festival of Lodzi people (Photo 14). Having been inspired by such a big-scale festival, in 1980, a ceremony called *n'chwala* where the first harvest of the year is



Photo 16 *Kulamba* ceremony, Chewa people, Zambia, 1984.



Photo 17 *Twimba* ceremony, Nsenga people, Zambia, 1993.

brought to the King was revived among the people called Ngoni (Photo 15). Following the Ngoni, a neighboring ethnic group named Chewa created a harvest festival called *kulamba* in 1984, being



Photo 18 Nayuma Museum, Lodzi people, Mongu.

based on an old custom of annual tribute to their King (Photo 16). Being stimulated by these movements, yet another ethnic group in the region, the Nsenga, invented a rain calling ceremony called *twimba* in 1988, by combining various old customs (Photo 17). The central government also supported these movements by providing transport for audience, and by sending representatives like ministers and in some cases the president himself to each festival. And now almost all ethnic groups whose number is said to be 72 have got their own annual festivals.

In the 1990s, having created festivals, each group started planning to build its own museum to show its cultural heritage. Some have already been established, most of which are located at the very sites of annual festivals. Nayuma Museum built by the Lodzi people in 1986 is the pioneering museum in the trend (Photo 18). The Choma Museum in Choma in the Southern Province which is dedicated to Tonga community can also be mentioned in this context (Photo 19).



Photo 19 Choma Museum dedicated to Tonga culture, Choma, Zambia, 2007.



Photo 20 Reconstructed *chisungu* girls' initiation hut in the Motomoto Museum, Mbala, Zambia, 2007.

Another example is the Motomoto Museum which was originally established by a Catholic Father, Jean Jacques Corbeil. He built an ethnographic collection which includes objects used in girls' initiation ceremony called *chisungu* while he was working in Bemba land (Photo



Photo 21 Nsingo Community Museum, Ngoni people, Feni, Zambia, 2018.

20). The collection was donated to the national government and the museum became one of the national museums in 1974. Because of the character of its collection, however, the museum is nowadays playing a role of a community museum of Bemba people.

The most recent achievement is the Nsingo Community Museum which opened last year 2018 in Ngoni land (Photo 21). Ngoni people have converted the former municipal hall into their own community museum. I understand the process through which the museum was constructed will be introduced by Ms. Victoria Phiri here in her presentation.

It is noteworthy that the target visitors of these museums are people of the local communities rather than tourists, and that the museums seek to strengthen people's pride in their culture and to transmit their traditional culture to a younger generation. The notion of the museum is, however, quite new to the most of the local people. People are groping their own way of creating their museums.

Just three weeks ago, in August 2019, we held an on-site workshop on the Community Museum at Nsingo Community Museum

in Zambia by inviting villagers who are engaged in creation of the museum. As I said, the notion of the museum is quite new to the most of the local people. My question was why people became interested in the museum which they have never seen. I was touched by answers given by two old men. One old man said, "When I die, my knowledge and technique also die. But if I bring the tools I have been using to this museum, and the ways of making and using these tools are recorded, the knowledge and technique of mine may be handed down to my descendants. That is the reason I brought these utensils here." Another old man answered to my question, "Did'nt you feel antipathy to bringing the tools which you are actually using every day?" by saying "Even though I bring my tools to the museum, those tools still belong to me". I was very much impressed by the fact that villagers understand the significance and the potential of the museum so correctly. It was a valuable opportunity for me to realize the importance of the museum as a basis of existence of the community.

Out of the various endeavors, some notable activities are also emerging. Motomoto Museum, which I have introduced above as a community museum for Bemba people, launched an outreach project of prevention of HIV infection in their surrounding areas. Some pieces in their collection, which used to be used for traditional education during girls' initiation ceremony called *chisungu*, were displayed and used for providing villagers, especially women, with information about prevention of HIV infection.

Another museum, Livingstone Museum, which I referred to above, installed an exhibition entitled "What we have been told about Independence", which was realized by collecting reports written by school children of what they had been told by their parents and grandparents about the Independence of Zambia in 1964 (Photo 22). This exhibition gave people of the local community an opportunity of



Photo 22 *What We Have Been Told About Independence* exhibition, the Livingstone Museum, Livingstone, Zambia, 2005.

re-discovering their historical heritage, and led to develop some touristic spots. Ms. Victoria Phiri, who is here as one of the presenters today, is the one who curated this exhibition.

In these ways, the museum is now playing a role of instruments of development of community. The museum, an institute of constructing cultures, can also be appreciated from the viewpoint of community development.

Before concluding, it should be noted here that, if the identity created or strengthened by these movement is narrow-minded, it would result only in creating nationalistic ideology. The identity museums are to create should be open-minded and the one which admits cultural diversity. For that purpose, networking museums, both nationally and internationally, is indispensable.

The museum has long been considered as a place of representation, preservation and conservation of the tangible cultural property of the past. From this viewpoint, there seems little room for

museums to contribute to community development. However, the museum is not only a storage of tangible objects of the past, nor just a tourist spot, but a base of accumulation and dissemination of local culture, including knowledge, technology, and memory which have been transmitted from one generation to another in the community, and thus, a base of creating people's pride in, or identity to, the community. Only when people have pride in themselves and their own culture, people can challenge and overcome various difficulties. In that sense, museums may well be considered to be the fundamental of community development.

Active Community Participation in Museum Collection and Exhibition in Myanmar

Nu Mra Zan¹

Museum Consultant
Department of Archaeology and National Museum
Myanmar

An Introduction to the Connection between Myanmar Museums and the Local Community

Myanmar public museums made a gradual appearance after her independence in 1948 with the support of the central government as well as regional authorities (Photo 1). The Ministry of Culture established ethnological museums, i.e. state/regional cultural museums, in the states (Photo 2) where the majority of ethnic groups live, because the cultures of Myanmar's indigenous groups are relatively little known internationally. At first, most public museums could be inaugurated during the usual functions of museum professionals, while only some by the community, in rare cases, and those major stakeholders remained disconnected from each other.

¹ Nu Mra Zan is a Bachelor of Education, Master of Development Studies, and Ph.D. (Honoris Causa) (Honorable Doctor of Museology). She was a curator for over 37 years and an overseas visiting fellow (visiting professor) at the National Museum of Ethnology (Japan) in 2011 for three months. She is now working as a museum consultant and has a rich experience with respect to museum exhibitions.



Photo 1 National Museum (Yangon) established in 1952 and National Museum (Naypyitaw) established in 2011.

However, the first connection between museum professionals and the community was observed during Lashio Cultural Museum's collection and exhibition in 2003–04. With respect to religious museums in Myanmar, it is the trustee board of each pagoda that decides to establish the museum after receiving artifacts from the community only for the purpose of preserving those precious collections and providing satisfaction to the donors.

A Case Study of Active Community Participation in Collection and Exhibition at Lashio Cultural Museum

Museum display work is a mix of art and science, and it involves new displays for newly built museums and renewal works or upgrading the existing displays. As a museum consultant with the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, I have often been assigned to do not only renewal works or upgrades of the existing displays at departmental museums but also new displays in newly built public or private museums or existing buildings.

Lashio Cultural Museum is in the list of existing buildings that will be turned into ethnic museums. The structure was owned by a rich local man who had abandoned it many years ago, and later, when



Myitkyina



Loikaw



Hpa-an



Hakha



Mawlamyaing



Sittwe



Taunggyi



Kyaington

Photo 2 Some examples of state/regional cultural museums.



Photo 3 The building that became Lashio Cultural Museum.

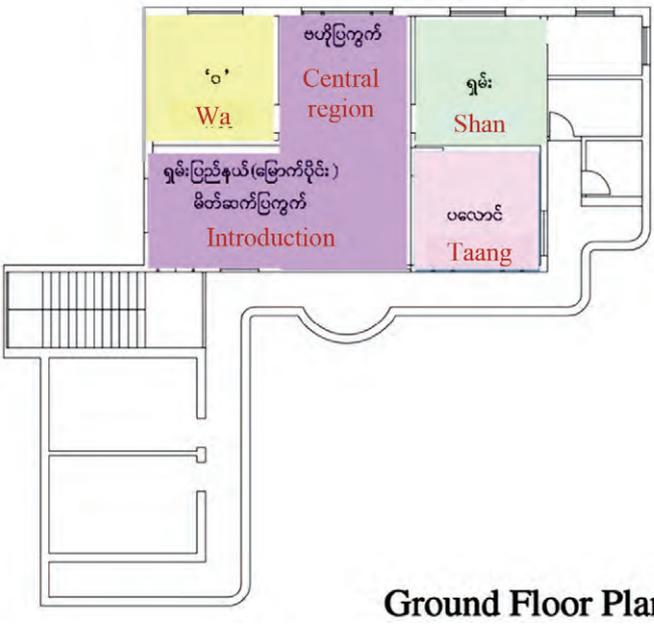
our department was searching for a suitable place for a regional level cultural museum, the local administrative authorities handed over that building to us (Photo 3). Its renovation took a year.

At the beginning, the museum only had a few collections, and the curators' floor plan was copied from the National Museum (Yangon), thus not matching Lashio's situation. Therefore, I decided to change the floor plan to reflect an ethnic museum based on the eight major minority ethnic groups' culture in Lashio (Fig. 1). After organizing discussions with each group's literature and culture associations, all eight—Shan, Wa, Taang (Plaung), Lisu, Lahu, Kachin, Koekant, and Myaungzi—participated actively in collecting ethnic cultural objects (Photo 4). The collection consisted of miniature traditional houses, one pair of couple costumes for mannequins, daily household utensils and others including weapons, traditional musical instruments, select literature of some ethnic groups, and video documentation of their festivals or livelihood.

I led my exhibition team from the department, and we attended their traditional festivals, like the Taang (Plaung)'s Buddhist



First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

Fig. 1 Floor plan for the major eight minority ethnic groups in Lashio.



Photo 4 Discussions with ethnic group's literature and culture association (left) and collecting donations from an ethnic group (right).

Novitiation Ceremony and the Kachin's Manaw Dance Ceremony; sometimes, we visited the homes of the Shan, who made traditional handicraft of *Toe* and *Kinnari-kinara* which are mythical creatures. From those visits, we could collect unexpected ethnic items. With respect to the traditional costumes, a representative from each of the eight groups helped to put them on the mannequins, and some checked the correct process of wearing the costumes. Finally, on the opening day, they cooked and brought their traditional food items to serve to the invited guests; the opening ceremony was a success with a variety of active dances by the eight groups' youths wearing colorful dresses.

A Case Study of Active Community Participation in Collection as a Religious Belief at the Museums of Three Famous Pagodas

As Myanmar is a Theravada Buddhist country, it has many stupas, temples, and monasteries. Among them, famous ones like the Shwedagon Pagoda and the Botahtaung Pagoda in Yangon, and the Mahamuni Pagoda in Mandalay have their own Buddha museums.

The Shwedagon Pagoda (Photo 5) has three types of religious



Photo 5 The Shwedagon Pagoda Buddha Museum and its collection.

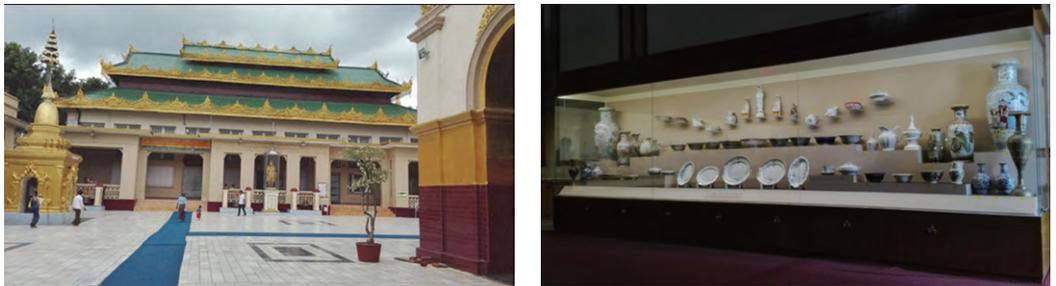


Photo 6 The Mandalay Mahamuni Pagoda Museum and its collection.

museums—Buddha Museum, Historic Photo Gallery, and Museum for Buddha’s life stories called *Buddhavamsa (Buddhawin Pyadike)*—while the Mahamuni Pagoda (Photo 6) has the Bronze Statues Museum, Historic Paintings Museum, Foreign Contribution Gallery, and Gallery of Buddha delivering the First Sermon to five monks and other donated items.

The Botahtaung Pagoda Museum (Photo 7) is different from the others because of the pagoda’s unique architecture. It houses Buddha’s sacred hair relic, kept in the pagoda’s central room (*Gandakuhti taik*) instead of Buddha’s image. The entrance to the relic leads to a narrow path, but devotees can turn left to find 14 exhibition booths. All of their collections come from public donors. Most Myanmar people are Buddhists, and according to their religious beliefs, they donate not only Buddha statues and miniature models of

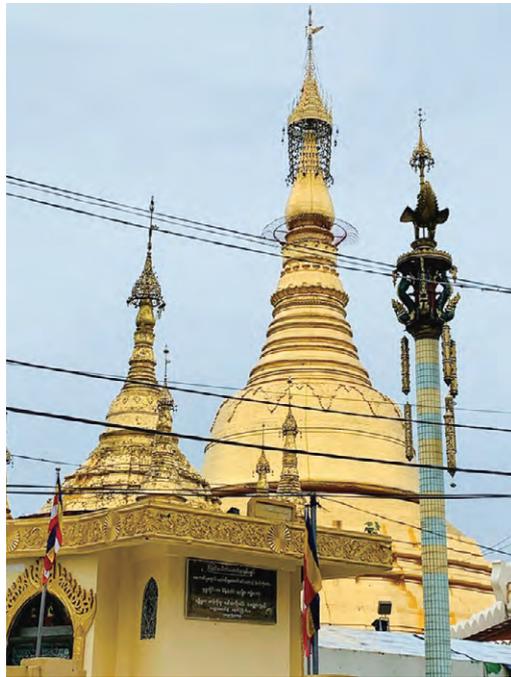


Photo 7 The Botahtaung Pagoda and donated items to its museum.

pagodas but also precious items like their own jewelry, awards or medals, and heirlooms handed down from generations. They donate these to the pagodas they regard most highly, to be used in any way deemed best by its trustees. Their donations also include gold leaf to gild the pagoda, or valuable objects that are installed in a sacred place, like the diamond bud and vane on the umbrella spire at the pagoda's highest point. It makes the donors happy to see their donated items on display at the religious museums.

Hope for Greater Community Participation in the Future at Myanmar's Museums

The world of museums has been continuously evolving. First, in the Greek and Roman empires before Christ, museums appeared as "collection-centered" places, and these can be categorized as "The First Generation of Museums." Then, between the 18th and 19th centuries came "The Second Generation of Museums," which started holding functions, including museum education; while this was the start of a relationship between museums and the community, museum professionals communicated with members of the public like teachers and students, and always thought they knew more than the locals. However, at the end of the 20th century, some museums in Europe started to change the concept, seeking greater community involvement in most museum matters, including acquisition, documentation, research, conservation, museum exhibition and interpretation, and museum marketing and education, together with the staff. These museums can be categorized as "The Third Generation of Museums."

In Myanmar, museums are looking forward to involving the community more than it is presently. Most museums' physical development in new buildings and renewal exhibitions can be viewed

easily, but this is still far from public participation programs or deep community involvement, as seen in developed countries, except the donation of artifacts to museums and some of the limited exhibitions.

Museum Activities for Local Community Development: Revitalization, Integration, and Professional Networking at the National Gallery of Armenia

Ani Avagyan¹

Former Head of Education Department
National Gallery of Armenia
Armenia

The National Gallery as an Anchor: Catalysts for Community Development

Revitalization

The National Gallery of Armenia (NGA) (Photo 1) is the largest Art museum in Armenia, and hosts collections of fine arts (oil painting,

¹ Ani Avagyan has been working at the NGA since 2005. In 2010, she was appointed as the head of the PR Department, and from 2016 till 2019, she was the Head of the newly established Education Department. She has been the Executive Director of ICOM Armenia since 2011. In 2016, she was elected as the ICOM/CECA Secretary. In 2017, she was elected as the Chairman of ICOM Armenia. Her participation in the Intensive Course of Museology at the National Museum of Ethnology (Japan) in 2009 was essential to her professional growth. She is an author and co-author of a number of articles and books. In 2019 Ani was appointed as the director of ROCHEMP Regional Office for Cultural Heritage Enhancement, Management and Protection.



Photo 1 The National Gallery of Armenia.

sculpture, graphics, and decorative fine arts) coming from European and Asian countries as well as Russia and Armenia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the museum, as well as many other institutions and the society itself, fell into the post-Soviet crisis. At the beginning of the museum's journey of community development, we faced a number of challenges in administrative, financial, moral, and other sectors.

The 2000s were a period that witnessed a considerable lack of visitors and interest in the museums and their collections. This was the time when the "new" professional skills started to be demanded in the process of forming the development strategies of the museums and overcoming the post-soviet crises. The "new" professions include marketing specialists, fundraisers, educators, psychologists, PR specialists, product developers, graphic designers, IT developers, and social media developers.

In the backdrop of the situation described above, several

museums took their first steps in order to understand their potential visitors and their needs, interests, and psychology. The National Gallery of Armenia was one of the few museums in the country that started the process in the first decade of the second millennium.

In 2008 informally, I was assigned to start a pilot for experimental activities of development for museum education activities. Parallel to the process of raising a staff (mainly volunteers), we developed a strategy of investigation of the needs and expectations of our potential audiences (three kinds of questionnaires during 2010-2013).

The team included volunteers from the staff of the NGA and non-staff members: an art historian, a psychologist/pedagogue, and a museum educator.

About 2000 people were interviewed in and outside the museum, the strategy of community development was followed later.

Three kinds of questionnaires were developed for the visitors of the exhibitions inside the museum building, the groups of visitors, passersby, and the general public in the Armenian cities of Gyumri and Vanadzor. The main aim of the investigation was to find out whether they knew or not about the museum, by what means they learned about the museum's events, how they would like to receive the information, and what kind of services they would like to get at the museum, etc. The survey helped us learn that the communities, in general, were not aware of the educational role of the museum. Moreover, they found the museum mundane with an unfriendly and inhospitable environment. The collections were inaccessible to some groups of society, like elementary and middle school students, people with disabilities, families, etc.

Integration and Professional Networking

Another big challenge on the way included the lack of understanding

and support from the administration and the services provided by the staff members at the museum.

Therefore, our goals involved changing the attitude of the museum staff members, changing the approach of the community toward the museum and its collections, and developing a community around the museum that would adapt to museum visiting culture and would go to the museum with a great pleasure for learning, rehabilitation, enjoyment, and fun.

When I once asked a colleague to provide me with a carpet for the kids to sit down during educational activities, he pointed to the monitor that illustrated the museum entry camera recording and said, "Look at this screen, there are only a few visitors entering the museum every day. What are you talking about?" The answer followed, "This is the result of the work with/for the society performed during the last decades. Now, we are working to have visitors in at least ten years." So, ten years have passed.

Community Development Strategies at the NGA from 2008 to 2016

In the first year with no financial resources and one staff member in the Department of Public Relations, we started the journey of developing educational activities that would attract new audiences.

Community Development Strategies (CDS)

Community Development Strategies in the NGA involve:

- Redefining the target groups
- Redefining the ways of communication
- Research on the needs and interests of the local community members
- Creating relevant product(s)
- Ensuring sustainability of community engagement activities

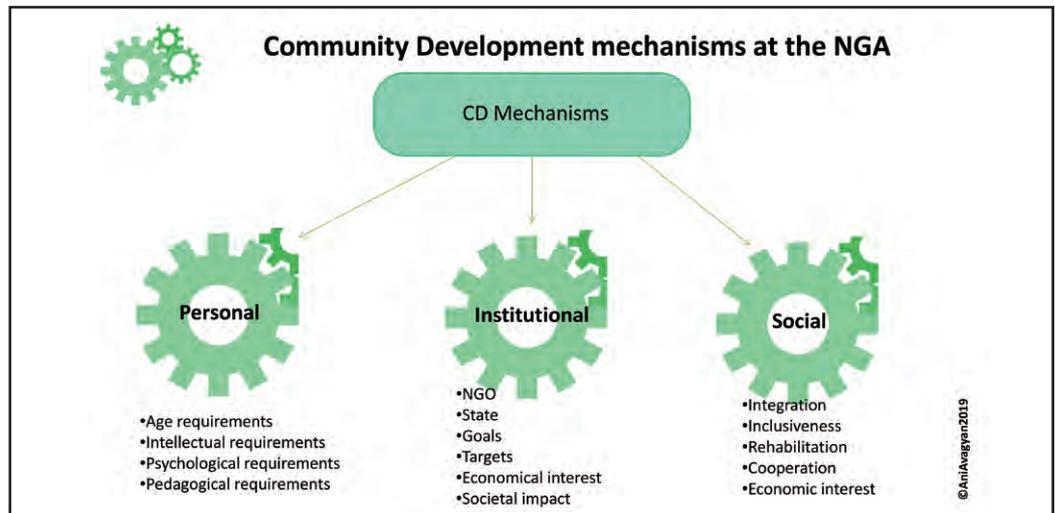


Fig. 1 Community development mechanisms at the NGA.

After the approval of the CDS, the Community Development mechanisms at the NGA were defined (Fig. 1), included their personal, institutional, and social aspects.

1. The personal mechanism was based on the age, intellectual, psychological, and pedagogical approach.
2. The institutional mechanism was based on the importance to encourage different institutions owing to their statutes (NGO or state organization); to match their goals, helping them implement their role toward their target groups; to move forward to their economic interest, offering them reasonable and prioritized admission fees; and to facilitate them in the process of impacting the society. This mechanism was implemented mainly for kindergartens, schools, creative hubs, universities, governmental bodies, etc.
3. The social mechanism implementation intended to support the NGOs works for different “unprivileged”² groups of the society in the process of integration through providing inclusive, creative, and educative services, intended rehabilitation of those groups via art therapy. The NGOs were provided with mutually beneficial conditions

for cooperation to be economically reasonable for such organizations. Owing to the internal strategic decision, we received them and provided educational services free of charge, bringing our impact into the social benefit of the socially impaired groups of our society.

Community Development Steps

In the process of implementing the strategies, the NGA started with a motivated and enthusiastic worker with a relevant educational background. The process of elevating the importance and image of the educational role of the museums within ICOM Armenia and ICOM CECA (Committee for Education and Cultural Action) was a parallel process. In particular, our team initiated and organized two national and international events, which had a huge impact on changing the scene in the country. In 2010, ICOM/CECA Regional Training on Hands-on Education³; and in 2012, ICOM/CECA Annual Conference were organized in Yerevan⁴.

Searching different ways of changing the approach from the professional role of the museum toward the educational role of museums, I once asked a senior colleague to suggest a way to attract

² All those members of the society who do not have a certain intellectual level or relevant knowledge to understand the so called "high level art."

³ ICOM Armenia, with the support of the ICOM, organized the first workshop on museum interactive programs. International Experts Prof. Emma Nardi (Roma Tre University) and Marie-Clarté O'Neill (L'Ecole du Louvre) were invited to conduct the workshop for 15 participants from different museums in Armenia at the National Gallery of Armenia.

⁴ ICOM/CECA organized its Annual International Conference in Yerevan in the October of 2012. Around 150 museum educational professionals joined the meeting from 47 countries in the world. This was a big event in terms of promotion of the educational role of the museums within the local museums.

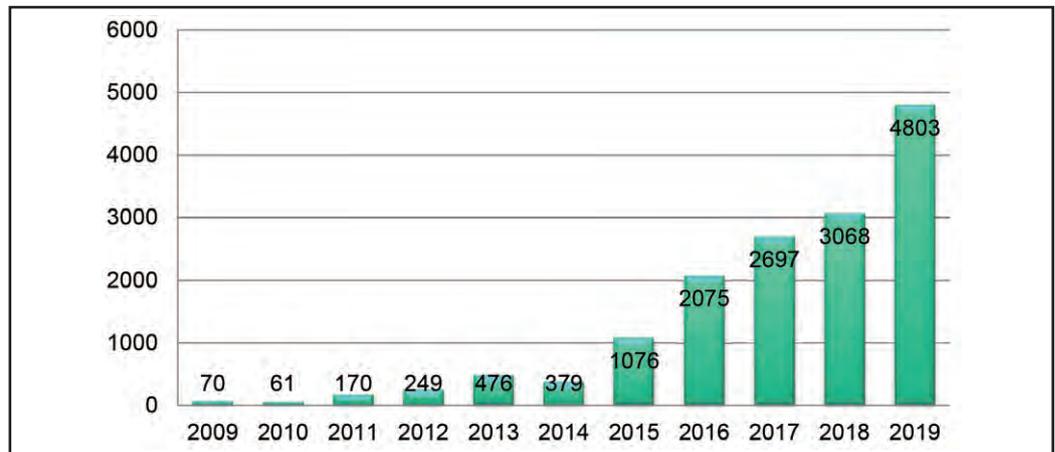


Fig. 2 The Number of education activity participants at the NGA from 2009 to 2019.

the museum workers in the learning process. She answered, “Convert your staff!⁵” Changing the mentality of those who could potentially be involved in the process of implementing the educational role of museums was essential. Nowadays, the increase of the figures in the work of the education department is totally based on the quality of the support from the museum staff members (particularly the keepers), researchers, as well as from the volunteers. The permanent staff is constantly of the same number; however, for each year, on average, we observe 50-100% increase in the number of participants of different activities (Fig 2).

A person of the 21st century has a huge impact on the technological environment; accordingly, his/her needs are different from those of people from, for example, a decade ago. Therefore, in this process, a multidisciplinary approach to create programs based on personal needs and possibilities of an individual is essential.

⁵ Marie-Clarté O’Neill



Fig. 3 Community development steps.

At the NGA, we emphasize on the importance of assessment for each initiative. It helps to find out the gaps and to develop the program and services with each step. The assessment models used by us are different, which is another topic of presentation. We often perform very efficient, inspiring, unique, and attractive projects that many people look for. However, they do not find any information owing to the lack of communication. One of the reasons is promotional costs.

During the last 11 years, 4/5 educators have worked efficiently for the education of the museum and stepped forward in their professional careers. In order to ensure sustainability, it is important to motivate and train new professionals. It is hard work that is everlasting and ongoing, and requires investment every day from people with big hearts! (Fig. 3)

The first three years of community development activities also served as a pilot owing to the lack of resources. In 2012, a staff member was recruited to work for educational activities. The activities toward the community development were viewed on a

broader scale after the Scientific Education Department was established officially in 2016 and the second staff member was recruited. Presently, the growth of the community engagement is around 50%. It also involves an economic impact on the museum.

We researched the needs of different members of our society to learn their expectations about the museum, the things they would like to consume in a museum, and the easiest way to reach out to them. One of the main results of the monitoring was the definition of the target groups (Photo 2).

Systematic Work toward Local Community Development

Systematic work toward local community development was undertaken on the basis of the PR department established at the NGA in 2004. The integration of the local community members and, particularly, unprivileged groups is one of the goals of the museum. Hence, we launched an action plan for integration and implemented it step by step.

- Individual approach to each potential target group is the cornerstone of the community development activities.
- Professional networking provides possibilities to extend the scope of activities. Experience exchange is considered essential for the self-development of professionals.

At the National Gallery, we have a dual approach to this aspect:

- Internal: We work closely with the staff of our museum, explaining to them the importance of the educational role of the museum as well as the importance of education for the museum.
- External: We work closely with the staff members of other museums and schools to enable experience exchange, ensure the spread of information about their work, and identify advantages and disadvantages (Photo 3).



Photo 2 Examples of museum activities at the NGA between 2009 and 2019.



Photo 3 External professional network: Briefing of educational activities at the NGA for the teachers of different schools.

Museum Education Activities became a tool to attract and provide inclusiveness to each member of the society.

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Museological Project to Preserve the Memory of a City: Former Hospital San Juan de Dios

Carolina Navas Guzmán¹

Chief of Museology and Education
Museum of the City of Quito
Ecuador

Museo de la Ciudad (the City Museum) operates in one of the oldest civil buildings in Quito – Ecuador, in the former San Juan de Dios hospital (Photo 1), which served as shelter and healthcare facility from 1565 to 1974 (Photo 2). In its 409 years of history, it has been witness to social, cultural, political, and economical processes that the city has experienced. Throughout its multiple administrations and different service models for its patients and those in need, the hospital became a focal point for the collective memory and history of Quito and its inhabitants. After closing its doors in 1974, the hospital remained shut down for approximately 20 years. In the 1980s, Ecuador's Central Bank restored certain areas in the building. In

¹ Carolina Navas Guzmán studied Social Communication, Museology, Curatorship and Education. She has fourteen years of experience in the field. She started her professional activities as a museum guide and educator. Currently she is in charge of the Museology and Education area of the Museum of the City. Her professional interests point to the transformation of museums as forum spaces where projects are generated from collaborative work with communities. She participated in the JICA museology course in 2018.



Photo 1 The former San Juan de Dios Hospital /Museo de la Ciudad. Colonial courtyard. 2018. Museo de la Ciudad Collection.

1994, the Town Council began a definitive restoration process which lasted four years.

“The history of San Juan de Dios Hospital is important in several ways for the city. For example, I cannot recall another institution in the country which shows with such pride a 400-year service record. Since the 9th of March of the year 1565, the hospital has added up 409 years, five months and 19 days of service without pause: the shelter and healthcare facility adapted itself to times of scarcity and prosperity, faced wars and revolts, tended to the wounded of all flags, multiplied itself in the times of typhoid or earthquakes to shelter those in need.”²

² Book presentation. Historia del Antiguo Hospital San Juan de Dios, Tomo I y II. Quito. Instituto Metropolitano de Patrimonio. Museo de la Ciudad. 2012.



Photo 2 North cloister. Gottfried Hirtz. Circa 1960.
Museo de la Ciudad Collection.

At the same time the architectural intervention was taking place, a project for a museum that would house the city's history was conceived. Designed to reflect Quito's socio-cultural processes from a historical daily life perspective in its permanent exhibition, Museo de la Ciudad was born on July 23rd, 1998. In its temporary projects, the Museum displays the city's historical, anthropological, and artistic

aspects, and has also developed itinerant projects in some of Quito's neighborhoods and in other Ecuadorian cities.

Historical Research and Documentary Center

At that time, the museological perspective centered on restoring the hospital's official memory, rather than creating a space for alternative perspectives, such as oral memory. So it made sense that in the Museum's first years, a focal point for those in charge was to collect and document the history of the institution. It was decided then that a historical research with editorial purposes was the best option to preserve the memory of the institution.

For more than five years, a group of four historians worked in local and national archives. Their work finally resulted in two volumes of the hospital's history, which were published in 2012. The first comprises the foundation and the colonial period, the second the Independence and Republican period until its last days in 1974. The historical approach to the research was a new interpretation of the changes, continuities, ruptures, and innovations that the institution underwent.

The historical research in archives and other primary and secondary sources gave way to a documentary center, turned library in 2019, which collects documents related to the history of the institution. The Documentary Center began the creation of a specialized documentary collection in Quito, centered on museological and literary subjects, among others. Also, in 2015 the Center received the donation of a bibliographic collection dedicated to the city's urban and historical themes which belonged to Instituto Ciudad. The current library also collects the Museum's publications about the temporary exhibitions and the institutional memory of several museological projects.

Official and Non-Official Memory: “Building Together the Memory and History of the Former San Juan de Dios Hospital” Exhibition Project

Among the beneficiaries the Museum receives every year, it is common to find senior citizens whose main interest is to talk about the hospital, whether it is because they were patients, ex-workers, neighbors, or they had come to visit a patient. For example, many describe the wing where the infirmary used to be located, or the x-ray room, or other locations. Several people talk about their memories with yearning, joy, and others with sadness. Thus, the Museum undertook a project seeking to link the hospital’s history and “official” memory with the individual experiences and memories of those who frequent the Museum (Photo 3).

In 2010 the museological project began. Its main objective was to create a space so that the public could share their memories and anecdotes regarding the hospital. For the first time in a museological



Photo 3 Photography donated by Mrs. Delia María Gordillo, who worked in the Hospital since 1948 as a telephonist. Circa 1950. Private Collection.

project in the Museum, senior citizens were the target audience. Museographic resources were placed in several locations throughout the museum which invited the public to tell stories, myths, and legends about the edification. In a special route developed for the project, historical information was distributed throughout the building, and visitors were asked to explain what used to exist in that place.

Likewise, a communication campaign was carried out using written media and radio inviting the public to come to the Museum and give their testimony --in audio or written form-- about the hospital or to donate personal objects such as photographs (Photo 4). Part of the exhibition showcased said donated objects; and a cabin with a video camera was set up so that people could record their memories and stories. More than 70 people participated.

The project generated debates regarding official history, the historical method, and oral memory, since the veracity of the recorded stories was questioned in several situations. The decision to include myths and legends was also discussed, since the "official"



Photo 4 Educational workshop. "Building together the Memory and History of the Former San Juan de Dios Hospital." 2010. Museo de la Ciudad Collection.

concept could also be distorted. However, for the first time the Museum aimed to expand their horizons and present a project which linked heritage with emotions and memories --accurate or not about the hospital, and especially give value to the word of those who had known it. In this way, the living memory was prized in spite of the controversy surrounding the narratives.

Aside from conceptual challenges, collecting and systematizing the testimonies was also a difficult task, since many people were intimidated by the camera. This situation was overcome by improvising with other resources such as tape recorders or cell phones from the Museum's staff to record the information. From this, it was necessary to consider the relationship between senior citizens and the use of technological devices when working with evocative stories that provoked different emotions.

Life and Death in the Former Hospital

Following the museological project "Building Together the Memory and the History of the Former San Juan de Dios Hospital," the Museum considered important to continue the previous process and presented the result of the collection of objects and testimonies of all the participants who came to the Museum in 2010.

With this decision, the project to recover the memory of the former hospital turned into a program that included semi-temporary exhibitions about different subjects requested by the public, for example, healing and treatment of illnesses in specific time frames or life experiences of those who lived in the hospital, or based in the objects and pictures donated.

In 2012, the "Life and Death in the Former Hospital" exhibition was created. This exhibition—which presented written and recorded testimonies and donated photographs—had a particular approach: the



Photo 5 Photography donated by María Hermelinda Toapanta. Hospital's Kindergarden. Circa 1960. Private Collection.

hospital wasn't only a place for exercising medical science, it also presented a place for deep social relationships, a territory of life which incorporated understandings and practices about birth, childcare, crafts and trades, and work, within a religious-spiritual dimension of everyday life. The different aspects of the exhibition centered in this cultural life cycle of the hospital (Photos 5-8).



Photo 6 Photography donated by Luis Pacheco. Laboratories. 1958. Museo de la Ciudad Collection.



Photo 7 Interior view of the women's nursing room "Sala de la Virgen". Circa 1950. Dr. Alfonso's Castro Collection.

"Cure the Body, Heal the Soul: A Brief Look at Treating Disease during the Colony in the Royal Audience of Quito, 16c – 18c"

As a request from the public and people participating in previous projects, in July 2015 an exhibition centering on the methods, uses,



Photo 8 Hospital's main façade view. Circa 1950. Dr. Alfonso's Castro Collection.

beliefs and vision surrounding the treatment of disease in the hospital from the arrival of the Spanish conquest to the 18th century was created (Photo 9). This approach was made from religious perspectives as well as physical aspects. Subjects such as endemic plant use, medical knowledge, medical trades, chronology of illnesses were included, this in the context contemporary everyday knowledge about disease and its treatment.

For a good part of the hospital's trajectory, illness was understood as a divine test, "an opportunity for the sick to bear it with resignation and patience... and the occasion for the community to fulfill its obligation to aid the ailing patients by caring for their body and soul..."³ In order for the disease to be healed, faith was a vital

³Museological script "Cure the Body, Heal the Soul: A Brief Look at Treating Disease during the Colony in the Royal Audience of Quito, 16c – 18c." Museo de la Ciudad. Unpublished document. 2015.



Photo 9 Guided tours. Exhibit "Cure the Body, Heal the Soul: A Brief Look at Treating Disease during the Colony in the Royal Audience of Quito, 16c – 18c.". 2012. Museo de la Ciudad Collection.

component. God was the only true and real physician who acted through doctors and priests, Prayer, sacraments, preaching, peregrinations, and relics had a pharmacological effect. Medicine contributed to the healing process, which came from divine forces.

The exhibition had different aspects: an approach to healthcare in America and the Royal Audience of Quito in the 16th century, hospitals in America, the foundation of the Former San Juan de Dios Hospital, treatment of disease in the hospital, and medical practices.

Connecting with Senior Volunteers

With the purpose of connecting the community to the educational and exhibition areas that the Museum offers, the Education Team began in 2012 a pilot project to learn about the Educational Mediation tool and about the contents of the exhibition "Life and Death in the Former San Juan de Dios Hospital," targeted to senior citizens.



Photo 10 Senior volunteers. 2014. Museo de la Ciudad Collection.

This pilot project's objective was to offer senior citizens who had known the Hospital in its working days a meeting place in which to share their experiences about the hospital. In this way, the Museum took into consideration both the official version of the hospital's history, as well as the anecdotes and experiences of former users of the healthcare facility.

Beginning in 2012, the Museum worked with a group of eight senior citizens, all users of the Senior Experience Center (*Centro de Experiencia del Adulto Mayor, CEAM 24 de Mayo*), who received the necessary preparation to guide tours of the aforementioned temporary exhibition. The execution of this phase of the project took place until the first quarter of 2014 (photo 10).

In May 2014, due to group interest and taking into account the inauguration of the temporary exhibition "Cure the Body, Heal the Soul," a content training was began regarding the crafts and trades which occupied the different areas in the *Real de la Misericordia de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo* Hospital, under the Brotherhood which bears the same name (1565-1705).

In 2016 the contents of the "Carmelite Sisters: Historic Origins and Daily Life" exhibition from the Museo del Carmen Alto (MCA) were also integrated. The purpose of this joint project was to complement the historical axis of Quito's daily life in different socio-cultural



Photo 11 Play "Clownicas". 2018. Museo de la Ciudad Collection.

contexts. This collaboration lasted until 2017, when MCA decided to not continue with the project.

In 2018, the volunteering project centered on developing the artistic skills of the participants. The theater group Sabueso Azul gave the group training in theater techniques and dramaturgical creation. Thus, the play "Clownicas" was born, written and acted by the voluntary group (Photo 11). The play uses elements from the clown theater genre to narrate memories and stories from Quito through the experiences of the voluntaries.

2019 began with the project "Inhabiting the Museum - Inhabiting the City: Curatorial Project with Senior Citizens" (Photo 12) which establishes a dialogue between several concepts like patrimony, museology, the city, memory; it takes into account tangible needs such as the role of senior citizens in contemporary society, and their most direct needs when inhabiting and moving around the city. The project's objective is to build a virtual exhibition, curated and conceptualized by the voluntaries, which will be available in a web platform by the end of the year.



Photo 12 Participants of the project “Inhabiting the Museum - Inhabiting the City”. 2019. Museo de la Ciudad and Metropolitan University of Ecuador UMET Collection.

So far, the voluntaries have participated in workshops centered on the museological conceptualization and preservation of cultural and heritage assets. They are currently documenting different places in Quito (traditional squares and neighborhoods) to conduct a photographic record, which will be part of the exhibition. In these visits, the participants recall their relationship with the place in their childhood or adolescence, and analyze how they have changed, starting with their old age conditions and the current existence of architectural and cultural facilities to access these spaces.

Remembering the Hospital from the Recollection of Former Workers

As part of the celebration for the 450 years of the hospital's



Photo 13 Guided tour with retired physicians of the San Juan de Dios Hospital. 2019. Museo de la Ciudad Collection.

foundation (2015), the museum established a close relationship with the nuns and retired physicians who ran the hospital back in the day. They recounted their experiences in different events such as roundtables, talks, and guided tours (Photo 13). The retired doctors shared their experiences and medicinal practices in the hospital's last years (1960 – 1974) with museum staff and the public. Our work with this community is of great importance, not only because the physicians understood the inner workings of the hospital, but also because their anecdotes, experiences and memories contribute to the recovery of the memory of the place. The retired doctors miss their time in the hospital, and at times, they have expressed their discontent with having a city museum and its history occupying its place. However, they have always been willing to participate in the activities.

Final Notes

With the passing of time, the project to recover the hospital's

memory has become a permanent program, which has opened up a space of dialogue between personal stories and official history, and an exercise between individual and collective memory. The museum understands memory as a building tool for the collective which feeds from official sources, as well as from the memories, affections, and anecdotes from those who experienced a living hospital, or from those who use the framework of the institution's history to reflect on Quito's historical processes and their relation to the past – present.

These stories, whose source is the institution, have brought forth in its true dimension the hospital's importance in the life of the city. At the same time, the museum today is a meeting place and an engine to revitalize these memories. Through these experiences, we have shared the oral memory, individual recollections and emotions, affections, and also recorded historical information and facts. The factual and official have melded together with memories, remembrances and affections to give way to an inclusive, polyphonic, and flexible memory, which is in continuous transformation.

The heritage value that the building has lies not only in its age or state of preservation –since the building now a museum is in its essence a dynamic memory device –, but also as a container and facilitator of dialogue and valuation of memories and perspectives about Quito. As a result, these processes broaden the meaning of material and immaterial heritage.

From this perspective, the program to recover the former hospital's memory will continue to grow and transform, through processes that make room for reflection about the institution, the life of a city, and to question the relation between past and present, and a roadmap for building memory nowadays.

(Translated by Ma. Belén Sáenz)

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The Challenges and Experience of Setting Up a Community Museum: The Case of Nsingo Museum in Zambia

Victoria Phiri¹

Director, Lusaka National Museum
National Museums Board
Zambia

Introduction

The National Museums Board (NMB) of Zambia entrusted Lusaka National Museum with the responsibility of helping establish a Ngoni museum in Chipata in honor of Nsingo, who was one of the group's most outstanding princes and heir to the throne. Nsingo was known for his bravery and love for his country that helped his people fight a war of resistance against British colonialism in the 1890s. He was later executed for his role by the British.

¹ Victoria Phiri is an ethnographer and has worked for the national museums of Zambia for more than 20 years, as a researcher and also as a Director. She has specialized in Zambian cultures and done extensive field research work across the country, the findings of which have contributed to permanent exhibitions of the national museums of Zambia, and been published in international publications. She has also been instrumental in bridging the gap between museums and the community by working on ethno-tourism projects and community museums in rural Zambia.

The Nsingo Community Museum project was initiated in 2004 under the leadership of Dr. Josiah Ngondo. The idea of establishing a community museum was aimed at showcasing the history of the Ngoni people. That year, Dr. Ngondo made a request to the Chipata Municipal Council for turning the unoccupied and dilapidated Chipata Nsingo Council Hall into a community museum. As an institution responsible for the preservation of Zambia's natural, cultural, and historical movable heritage as well as the control, management, and development of museums in the country, the NMB was consulted to provide professional advice and assistance on how to go about with the establishment of the new museum. The NMB started with the renovation of the dilapidated building before putting up an exhibition. By 2015, the project was fully under the NMB community museums development project, and Lusaka National Museum was tasked with ensuring that the museum was established.

The purpose of establishing this museum was to document and showcase the Ngoni history and culture, to encourage the local community to appreciate their history and identity, and to encourage the retention of the local indigenous knowledge systems for the enjoyment and education of the present and future generations. The NMB also envisaged spin-off benefits, such as the empowerment of the local community through job creation and income generation through the provision of a number of services that go with the presence of a museum in the area like tour guiding, crafts market, accommodation, transport, and food.

Outline of the Exhibition

The project's research and exhibition team comprised a historian, an ethnographer, an education officer, a conservation officer, and an accounts officer. After writing the outline, the team embarked on a

research and collection exercise that took one year to complete. The Nsingo Community Museum storyline was generated from two perspective themes, namely the historical and the ethnographic and art aspects of the Ngoni people. However, this task was challenging because Ngoni history in Zambia was based on stories that had primarily been passed down orally with very limited documentation. Besides, the research team was not sure if there were enough ethnographic materials within the present Ngoni villages that could help explain the Ngoni culture.

The Historical Aspect

The history part of the outline was generated using the following themes: the 18th century Ngoni land of South Africa; the Mfecane; the Rise of Shaka Zulu; Zwangendaba's migration; Mpezeni's Ngoni; the Ngoni under Nsingo and their resistance to colonialism (the warfare); the Anglo-Ngoni war; death of Nsingo and the subsequent emergence of colonial rule in Eastern Zambia; the formation of Fort Jameson; the end of Ngoni Regiments; and the post-war Ngoni society.

Available written documents were examined. In addition, the research team visited old people in five villages, where they were surprised to find that the oral history was still very rich among the people. Most of the history was recorded in the form of songs and dances of the people, which the research team used to create the storyline for the exhibition.

The Cultural Aspect

The cultural aspect of the outline was generated using Ngoni cultural attributes that the people had acquired over time and space, from the time of their migration from South Africa, through different territories and interactions with different peoples, up to the time of their settlement in Eastern Zambia. The outline focused on different

cultural landmarks in a Ngoni person's way of life from birth, puberty, and marriage to leisure, recreation, economic activities, spirituality, and death.

These were obtained from some written literature, from the Ngoni oral tradition, and also by observing the Ngoni people's way of life. The team faced challenges in documentation because they lacked equipment such as cameras, tape recorders, and video cameras.

Acquisition of Objects

At first the researchers went to Livingstone Museum to collect Ngoni artifacts that the museum had acquired in the 1930s. After that, the team travelled to Ngoni villages to research and collect objects (Photo 1). The heads of villages and families organized meetings, and there the purpose of the team as well as the importance of having a community museum were explained (Photo 2). A Member of Parliament (MP), Mr. Charles Zulu also took it upon himself to organize



Photo 1 Meeting with local people.



Photo 2 Meeting of heads of villages and families.

meetings in his constituency, and encouraged people to donate objects to and share information with the team.

The team received a positive response and cooperation from the local community, with about 20 families and an additional 30 individuals in nine villages donating some of their objects. Some villagers from far away villages covered great distances to bring objects and also visit the proposed museum. Others did not bring objects, but shared information, stories, songs, and dances that they had heard in their families for generations. The objects and information obtained from the people were supplemented with literature on the Ngoni people to create and design the exhibition (Photos 3, 4, 5, and 6).

The team was surprised to see the amount of ethnographic materials that were preserved by families and individuals. Over 400 objects were collected.



Photo 3 Villagers making donations.



Photo 4 Documenting a day's work of the village porter.



Photo 5 Documenting the making process of the Ngoni beer, *masika*.



Photo 6 The kitchen utensils were recorded in the village.

Designing of the Exhibition

After collecting the objects, the team designed the exhibition based on the stories and the objects collected. The designing was done at Lusaka National Museum before the team traveled back to Chipata with all the logistics needed for setting up the exhibition. The

assistant conservator made a model of the exhibition using cardboard paper before it was transported to the exhibition hall.

This arrangement posed many challenges to the team. First, it was difficult to design the exhibition in a place away from the space in which it was to be set up. Second, the exhibition had to fit into the exhibition hall which was originally designed as a community hall. Third, the space was limited.

Mounting of the Exhibition

The research team undertook the task of setting up the exhibition because of shortage of manpower. The team sourced help from the local villagers who thankfully were willing to help. They came forward and offered their skill and expertise in plastering and thatching the village model, and placing captions, while also helping in lifting heavy things (Photo 7).

Another challenge was the lack of time, which forced the team to work long hours to meet the deadline. The normal schedule of the mounting process started at 5:30 in the morning and ended at 22:00 in the evening. The team engaged local artists who camped at the museum hall and worked long after the team left at 22:00. What was interesting during the mounting process was that more information started coming in from the local people because they now had a better understanding of what was needed, and it was during that time that the exhibition team started making adjustments and adding more information and more objects to the exhibition. The mounting took five days to complete.

The Exhibition: What to Look for in the History Section

The most interesting thing to look for in the history section is



Photo 7 Local women helping to plaster the village set-up (up) and local men helping to construct the village house models.

Mpezeni's lineage that links him to Zulu land in South Africa. The genealogy of Mpezeni, which traces his ancestry to the Great General Zwangendaba in the army of Zwide, who migrated from the Nguni land to avoid Shaka's war, is an outstanding feature in the section.

The other outstanding feature in this section is the replica of the cave where Nsingo hid from the British when they were looking for him after the Anglo-Ngoni war. Nsingo was seen as a major stumbling block to the British interests in expanding their colonial territory from Malawi. What is particularly prominent in this part of the section is the Ngoni regiment organization and how they stood up against the British. The section gives details of how the regiments were organized as well as details of the routes and major battle fields of the Anglo-Ngoni war of 1891–92.

The Exhibition: What to Look for in the Ethnographic and Art Section

The exhibition depicts the historical perspectives of the Ngoni people's way of life, emphasizing the links that the present day Ngoni still have with their distinctive historical traditions and customs.

Ngoni Architect and Art

Center stage in this section is the traditional Ngoni village, set up to depict the traditional Ngoni architecture. The houses in the village are complete with traditional decoration known as *chibeta* that uses natural colors from clay. What is interesting is the unique skill which the villagers possess in producing this art form, and our desire as a museum is ensuring that these skills are passed on to the next generation.

The Kraal

The other interesting feature in the village model is the *kraal*, which is commonly known as *chibaya* in Ngoni. This is an important structure in the Ngoni culture for it is not only an economic feature, but also serves as a platform where major rituals are performed. Therefore

all the Ngoni chiefs command *kraals*, and each and every person identifies himself/herself with a *chibaya*. Some of the ceremonies that take place in the *kraal* include *kuzoza* (rituals pertaining to the installation of Ngoni chiefs); *mgeniso* (a marriage rite that is performed for a married man by his in-laws where they formally allow him to enter their *kraal* as a symbol of accepting him into the family of his wife); and *mgubo* (the death ceremony is not complete without the cow for the funereal feast and the cowhide for burial).

Laweni and Nthanganeni

The *laweni* and the *nthanganeni* are also outstanding features in this section. Without their mention, the Ngoni culture is incomplete. *Nthanganeni* is the sleeping quarters for single girls and *laweni* for single boys. These were the basis upon which regiments were created. The *n'cwala* ceremony, a major ceremony for the Ngoni, is centered on the *laweni* for Paramount Chief Mpezeni.

The Ngoni Marriage

The section also highlights aspects of the Ngoni marriage ceremony and the complexity of the process as it involves a series of different ceremonies that are performed before the actual wedding ceremony takes place. The exhibition therefore shows the different stages of the marriage such as the *chivula mulomo* (two white plates tied in a white cloth to start the process of the marriage negotiations); the *chikole* (a gift given to the bride by the groom after the marriage proposal is accepted); the *muthoso* (the groom's gift to his future mother in-law); *viphoko* (the assortment of food stuffs and beer that the bride's family takes to the groom's family); and *lobola*, which is paid just before the wedding to give the groom the rights over children from the marriage.



Photo 8 Ngoni beer making process.

Masika: The Ngoni and Beer

Beer is very central to the Ngoni culture and serves different purposes. It is a part of marriage and death rituals, and is also used to relax, pay homage, or show love to one's husband. Therefore the exhibition highlights the process of making the beer, some of the ingredients and utensils used in brewing it, and the custom of drinking the beer, which is normally consumed when it is warm (Photo 8).

The Ngoni and the Bicycle

The exhibition also depicts certain aspects of the modern-day Ngoni cultural traits. The bicycle stands out as one item that a modern Ngoni cherishes and values. The bicycle first appeared in the Ngoni society after the Ngoni started participating in migrant labor in South Africa and Rhodesia after their colonization. Those returning back to home came back with bicycles. Today the bicycle still plays a key role in Ngoni society and is the most common mode of transport around



Photo 9 The Ngoni bicycle.

the Chipata area. A bicycle is displayed at the exhibition to show how it is used to transport literally anything in the area (Photo 9).

Official Opening

The official opening (Photo 10) of the Nsingo Community Museum was graced by the Minister of Tourism and Arts, Hon. Charles Banda. Among the notable people that attended the official opening were the Paramount Chief of the Ngoni, Mpezeni IV; Chief Chikanta of the Tonga people of Choma district; all the ten chiefs across Ngoni land; Luangeni MP Hon. Charles Zulu; and National Museums Board officials, including Chairperson Prof. Francis Musonda, Director General Mr. Flexon Mizinga, other NMB directors, and one of the NMB members, Dr. Bizeck Phiri.

There was jubilation from the local people during the event, and Chief Mpezeni thanked Minister of Tourism and Arts Hon. Charles Banda for the completion of the project and encouraged the local people to take care of the museum, urging them to guard it zealously



Photo 10 Official opening of the museum.

for the future generations.

When the museum was officially opened, the Research and Exhibitions team could not handle the large crowd that wanted to have a glimpse of the exhibition.

The First Visitors after the Official Opening

Local Visitors

The first local tourists that visited the museum after the official opening were teachers from Chipikulu primary school. It was interesting to note that the teachers had been in the Ngoni area for the past 10 years, yet they did not know the significance and role of the *laweni* in Ngoni culture. They were very excited about the new Nsingo Community Museum as they recognized it as a source of in-depth information on Ngoni culture and practices.

First International Visitors

The first foreign people that visited the Nsingo Community Museum after the official opening were from Japan. The visitors were happy to have been the first international visitors and to find a new museum in Chipata. They enjoyed the exhibition and appreciated its educative value. They liked the simplicity of the display and the text in that it was easy to follow and very informative. By the time they finished touring the museum, they fell so much in love with the Ngoni cultural ceremony that they rescheduled their visit so that they could attend the *nc'wala* ceremony, which was to take place shortly.

State of the Museum

After the official opening, the team cleaned up the other museum rooms and packed the objects that were not exhibited in a safe place. The venue as well as the objects were fumigated to protect against possible insect attacks. On February 17, 2018, the Lusaka National Museum handed over the established Nsingo Community Museum to the National Museums Board and the local community.

Experiences

From this exercise, the research team learnt the following:

- Even though the Ngoni history had been transmitted orally, it has been preserved within families
- The people have a rich ethnographic collection
- By helping put up the exhibition, local people felt ownership of the museum
- Community museums in Zambia are helping maintain the political stability of the country that has 73 ethnic groups

- The Government of Zambia is encouraging all ethnic groups to own a community museum
- As a land-locked country, Zambia provides a forum for ethnic groups of different countries to unite through community museums

Postscript

Akiko Sugase¹

Chair
Steering committee of the international museology course
“Museums and Community Development” 2019
National Museum of Ethnology
Japan

The National Museum of Ethnology is the only research institute in the world specializing in cultural anthropology and ethnology. As part of our academic activity, we have been offering the museology course for 25 years with the cooperation of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In recent years, we have focused on the relationship between the museums and local communities' development, and revised the course year after year. The 2019 course, conducted from August 30 to November 22, had curators and museum professionals from Armenia, Bhutan, Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, Palestine, Sudan, and Zambia. So far, we have welcomed 269 participants and observers from 61 countries and regions.

The mission of this course is three-fold. Its primary objective is to provide participants with the general and fundamental knowledge

¹ Akiko Sugase is associate professor at the National Museum of Ethnology. She is specialized in religious practices of Arab Christians in Palestine/Israel and Lebanon and their coexistence with non-Christian neighbours such as Muslims and Jews. She has been working as a member of JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program “Museums and Community Development” for seven years, and now a Chair of this program since 2018.

and skills required as museum professionals. The second is to share the experience and knowledge stemming from the history of museum activities in Japan. Third, this course aims to serve as a platform for participants, a space where they are free to talk about their own experiences and the knowledge they have acquired in the course of their career as museum professionals in their home countries. It goes without saying that we, the Japanese staff, join them on this platform, participating in the discussion and learning from them.

Since 2015, the course has been run as a three-year plan and we've completed the second term's second year. The second term's final year has already been scheduled for Fall 2020. We will continue the course into the third term, building an expansive forum where museum specialists can exchange experience and knowledge openly, working together to solve issues regardless of nationality.

Cover photograph: Isao Hayashi



Keynote Speech
Museums as a Basis of Community Development