Call for Partners

The British Museum is seeking five new partner museums to participate in its annual Knowledge Exchange programme for 2020.

The Knowledge Exchange programme is part of the wide-ranging National Programmes at the British Museum, which partners with c.250 UK organisations a year through single-object Spotlight tours, touring exhibitions, partnership galleries, short- and long-term loans, training and skills development initiatives.

Knowledge Exchange is a programme developed by the British Museum to support professional exchanges between the British Museum and museums, galleries and heritage organisations across the UK, enabling staff to share knowledge, skills and best practice and support their individual professional development.

Generously supported by the Vivmar Foundation, the Knowledge Exchange programme offers the opportunity of a fully funded and co-ordinated five-day professional exchange between paid staff, in any role, at five selected partner museums and the British Museum.

The aims of the Knowledge Exchange placements are:

- To develop individual and organisational knowledge and/or skills
- To help build relationships between organisations
- To provide insight into and gain exposure to specific areas of museum work
- To shape sustainable methods for sharing knowledge and skills across the sector

Participants are selected through an open application process: one person from each of the five partner museums will be selected for a placement at the British Museum, and each partner museum will select one person from the British Museum to host, creating ten exchanges in total. Every exchange is unique and is created based on the selected participants’ application form.

The exchanges are organised by the British Museum’s Knowledge Share Programme Manager in liaison with each participant and their organisation. The British Museum will book and pay for all travel, accommodation and subsistence costs associated with the exchanges, but please note that the British Museum cannot provide funding for backfill or staff cover.
For examples of previous exchanges, please see these blogs and case studies:

https://salisburymuseum.wordpress.com/2017/12/12/an-experience-that-will-stay-with-me/
https://poolemuseumlearningteam.wordpress.com/category/working-in-museums/

If you are confirmed as a partner, the Knowledge Exchange process is as follows:

April-May:
All five partners will work with the British Museum to advertise the opportunity to staff to apply to participate in Knowledge Exchange. The opportunity should be open to all staff in any role or level of seniority. All applications should demonstrate a willingness and ability to share knowledge and skills between our organisations, and in turn gain new ideas and experience.

May-June:
From the staff applications submitted, the British Museum will select one staff-member to host from each partner museum, and each partner museum will select one British Museum staff-member to host. (Please note: the exchanges do not have to be ‘like for like’, each institution makes their selection independently.)

June onwards:
Once successful applicants are informed, the Knowledge Share Programme Manager and the partner museum secure a ‘lead contact’ for hosting the exchanges in their respective organisations and work together to agree dates. Exchanges must take place between June and December 2020.

A five-day timetable is developed for each successful applicant based on the opportunities and requests expressed in their applications. The Knowledge Share Programme Manager will lead on bringing together the five timetables for partner museum staff hosted by the British Museum. Each partner museum will be responsible for creating a unique and varied timetable for the British Museum staff-member they have selected to host.

Participants are expected to document their exchange, with a learning log and photos, plus an evaluation form and a piece of reflective writing after their placement.

Partner museums are required to:
- Work to the agreed programme schedule.
- Advertise the opportunity to apply to the Knowledge Exchange programme to all their staff in a timely and efficient manner.
- Submit their staff applications to the British Museum within the agreed deadline.
- Support one of their staff to participate in the five-day exchange at the British Museum.
- Select a member of staff from the British Museum to host and provide the necessary information for the exchange.
- Create an effective and varied five-day timetable for the British Museum member of staff they will host.
Please send your expressions of interest to Georgia Mallin, Knowledge Share Programme Manager, by Monday 9 March 2020.

In your expression of interest please provide a brief answer to each of the following points:

- Name and job description of nominated lead contact at your organisation
- Does your organisation have an existing relationship with the British Museum? If so, please provide brief details.
- Have you previously submitted a proposal or expression of interest for a British Museum National Partnership programme?
- Why would you like your organisation to be part of the 2020 Knowledge Exchange programme?
- How could staff at your organisation benefit from the exchange?
- How could staff at the British Museum benefit from an exchange with your organisation, and what could they experience?
- Does your organisation receive the British Museum's regular National Programme update e-mail? If not, please provide the details of your nominated contact to include in our mailing list if you would like to.

To discuss the opportunity further and to submit your expression of interest for Knowledge Exchange 2020, please contact:

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