

SPAFA AFFAIRS



Designing leaflets, one of the main activities of the course.

To strengthen the local cultural programmes and to increase the Asian cultural content of the media, SPAFA has successfully implemented the **Training Course for the Promotion and Dissemination of Information on Southeast Asian Cultural Traditions**.

With the cooperation of the Institute of Development Communication (IDC) of the University of the Philippines at Los Banos (UPLB), Laguna, the course was carried out from November 14 to December 12, 1988 at the IDC Building.

The majority of the trainees were media personnel and information officers of government offices in the SPAFA Member Countries. At the

Training Course on Information Dissemination

commencement of the course, each country delegation was requested to present an assessment of their country's needs and problems in the dissemination of their cultural information. These presentations then became the basis of a proposed regional cultural communication network, later conceptualized by the trainees themselves. During the course, the trainees were also given the opportunity to experience the use of printing and audio-visual equipment.

In addition to the lectures and practicum, the trainees were brought around the campus to familiarize them with the different institutions in UPLB. For a glimpse of the rich Filipino heritage, field trips were arranged outside the campus, to the different towns of Laguna Province.

Experts from the Asian Institute of Journalism in UPLB, the Philippine National Museum and UP Diliman served as resource persons for the training course. They were largely instrumental to the achievement of the course objectives, which were:

- * to arouse interest and awareness in the value of the country's cultural heritage and the necessity of seeking effective ways of

transmitting and disseminating cultural information to the public;

- * to promote intercultural appreciation of Asian cultural traditions;
- * to establish a regular network of information exchange of cultural activities and programmes; and
- * to equip the participants with the principles and techniques of effective utilization of audio-visual equipment and other mass media facilities in the preparation and dissemination of culture and cultural information.

Constant togetherness has reinforced the Southeast Asian group's camaraderie. They were: Mr Soekatno, Ms Siti Dloyana Kusuma and Ms Sri Rahayu Mulati of Indonesia; Mrs Foo Foong Lian, Mrs Norpisah Musa and Mrs Sermani Pien of Malaysia; Mrs Dinah F. Mindo, Mrs Elisa R. Orenca, Mrs Asuncion M. Valdesco and Mrs Filipina T. Villapando of the Philippines; Mrs Sally Ng Ban Kean of Singapore; and Miss Patra Lumjiack, Mrs Vichanee Bunnag and Mrs Wynette Puntuna of Thailand. ■

Frances S. Arespacochaga of the Philippines' Intramuros Administration (IA) and Saengchan Traikasem of the National Museums Division of Thailand travelled to Canada in 1988 and became the second batch of museum experts to undergo training on the various aspects of museum work in Canada.

The two museum experts started their month-long training in Canada on November 7, 1988. Especially designed for museum personnels from the SPAFA member countries, this methodology training aims to strengthen museum expertise of the region and to provide an opportunity for the region's experts to exchange



Museum experts join SEAMEO Institutional Cooperation with Canada

ideas and experiences in museology with their Canadian counterparts. Furthermore, the programme endeavours to create possible connections for mutually beneficial activities in museology, between the participant's country and Canada.

As part of the SEAMEO Pilot Project for Integrated Community-Based Human Resource Development: The Institutional Cooperation Arrangement, this SPAFA training programme is actually funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It is implemented jointly by

the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

Here SPAFA's most recent museology trainees, Frances and Saengchan, talk about their training and experiences in Canada. Frances is the Chief Restoration Officer of IA's Museum Division while Saengchan is Curator 5 of her country's National Museums Division.

Q: What were the objectives of your visit to Canada?

S: First, to develop our professional competence in museum administration, museum exhibition as well as in educational and outreach programmes. Second, to attend the seminar titled "Museum and Art Gallery Management" at the Banff Centre School of Management in Banff, Alberta.

Q: What did you gain from the seminar at the Banff Centre?

F: Information learned from the seminar added to my knowledge in marketing, leadership, financial management, organizational behaviour and planning strategy.

By interacting with our fellow participants in the seminar, we were able to gain insights on museum policies and practices in Canada.

S: This seminar, held on November 13-26, gave me better knowledge in leadership, interpersonal skills, organizational skills, financial management, fund raising and marketing.

Q: Could you relate your experiences and what you have learned during your stint in Canada?

S: The programme is divided into two parts. One is the visits to the various museums in Canada; the other is the internationally recognized seminar on "Museum and Art Gallery Management" held at the Banff Centre.

We visited university museums, provincial museums as well as national museums. This enabled us to observe the administration and management of the various types of outstanding museums. We learned the planning and the concept of museum display, including their exhibition techniques, educational and outreach programme activities in Canada.

F: I arrived in Vancouver only on November 10 but, as arranged by Anne-Marie Fenger, coordinator for our visit, I managed to confer with some officers in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Observation of the museum's exhibition galleries, visible storage, and conservation laboratory capped

by a performance of native dances and songs completed our brief visit to the museum.

On Memorial Day, November 11, Saengchan and I visited the Vancouver Museum, the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the St. Roch National Historical Site. Unfortunately because it was a public holiday, none of the museum officials were available for interview.

Anyhow, I noted down my observations on the various methods of display, lighting, design of exhibit cases, etc. which could be useful for my institution. Particularly interesting were the methods of eliciting the viewers' active participation.

While in Banff, Alberta, we attended the 13-day seminar on Museum and Art Gallery Management at the Banff Centre. This intensive programme is designed to help professionals from museums, artist-run spaces, art galleries and other heritage organizations to develop their marketing and organizational skills.

Four sessions were held daily. And aside from the two to three hour study group meetings in the evenings, there were also the individual study periods. Discussions with faculty and fellow participants in and out of the class sessions enlightened me on the problems and concerns of Canadian museums and their workers. This activity culminated with a group presentation on a major case study.



Museum experts Frances S. Arespachaga (left, second row) and Saengchan Traikasem (fourth from left, first row) pose with fellow participants for a souvenir photo of the seminar "Museum and Art Gallery Management" held at the Banff Centre from November 13 to 26, 1988.

Visits to the Moore and Whyte Heritage Homes, the Luxton Museum and the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, where we attended a book launching, enabled me to witness the impressive active support given by relatively small Canadian communities to cultural activities.

From Banff, Mr Eric Waterton (advisor to the Provincial Museum of Alberta) brought Saengchan and me to Glenbow Museum in Calgary. Discussions with assistant directors were followed by a guided tour of their extensive collections, exhibited on several floors of the building.

In Toronto, Ontario, Robert Kirkman of the Royal Ontario Museum made the arrangements for our two-day visit to one of the largest museums in Canada. Discussions with various officers proved very informative.

I was impressed at how extensive the services offered by the museum are. A quick tour of the ROM galleries revealed the wide range of their collections and their excellent methods of display. I found their "Mankind Discovering" exhibition outstanding.

Our visit to the Royal Ontario Museum ended with a wrap-up session wherein Saengchan and I talked about our respective museums. During this session I met Hugh Spencer of Lord Cultural Resources Planning and Management, Inc. We were able to discuss the possibility of organizing seminars and workshops in the Philippines.

But, just like many other activities in Southeast Asia, funding remains to be the main problem.

In Ottawa Mr Waterton arranged for us to meet the SPAFA/ACCC conference participants: Professor

Their use of high-tech devices was quite impressive.

At the Canadian Conservation Institute, we were given a briefing on the functions and services of the various sections of the Institute. A tour of the laboratories

“A tour of the laboratories showed the tremendous advances made by the Canadians in their conservation and research activities.”

M.C. Subhadradis Diskul, SPAFA Centre Director; Dr Michael Sinclair, Canadian Project Director, SEAMEO/CIDA; Gail MacLennan, Project Officer, ACCC/Asia and Middle East Division; and Liz Chia, also from ACCC. I was glad to be able to personally thank them for the wonderful opportunity extended to the Intramuros Administration and to me.

Mr Waterton also very kindly arranged for our tour of the Canadian Museum of Civilizations. Although still unfinished, it promises to be a major force in the Canadian museum scene.

Visits to the newly-opened National Gallery of Canada, the National Museum of Natural Sciences, the Canadian War Museum, and the Parliament Building provided a lot of information on exhibition methods and guiding procedures.

showed the tremendous advances made by the Canadians in their conservation and research activities.

Q: Did you encounter any difficulties during your visit?

F: I found the 13-day course at the Banff Centre too rigorous. Had the course been stretched to three weeks it would probably have been more beneficial to the participants. The combination of the course and the observation tour of the numerous museums made the pace a bit hectic.

The Canadian weather was especially difficult for me since temperatures went as low as -16 degrees celcius. In Manila it is usually 28-33 degrees celcius.

S: The length of museum visits was too short. In some provinces we had only time to visit one museum. There wasn't enough time to visit other types of museums in the same area.



Top : Enjoying the snow at Lake Louise are Frances S. Arespachaga (right) and friends.



Left : Saengchan Traikasem at the Vancouver Museum.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

F: Perhaps spring or summer would be a better time for Asians to undertake a similar programme. Also, should funds permit, to ensure a more relaxed pace, perhaps a longer period should be allocated to museum visits.

S: More time should be spent in each province to enable a better view of museum works for comparative study.

Q: What do you consider is the highlight of your Canadian trip?

F: Although the seminar on Museum and Art Gallery

Management at the Banff Centre was the major activity of the programme, observations and interviews made at the various museums, particularly the Royal Ontario Museum, proved to be equally informative.

S: We gained different kinds of experiences and knowledge from the activities held at the seminar in Banff Centre and the visits to all the other museums.

Q: Describe what contributions the study tour has given to your institution.

F: IA was quite pleased that its recommendee was chosen by SPAFA. My attendance in the seminar at Banff Centre is a first time for the Philippines. Most of the museum courses taken by Filipinos abroad centre on conservation. The arts management programme was therefore valuable in imparting new knowledge. The readings and hand-out materials I brought home with me, plus catalogues and brochures from fellow participants, are all available for use by IA officers and staff, including any other interested museum worker.

I was fortunate to have had the chance to visit a number of museums, big and small, from West to East Canada. Their structural organizations, storage systems, exhibitions, public programmes and other activities have given me fresh insights and ideas applicable to the IA museum.

In view of our meagre funding,

we could at least adopt some of their techniques and undertake similar projects on a modest scale. For example, our museum will be more active this year in museum education. The kits I have brought home have been very helpful in providing ideas for activity worksheets and other materials for students.

Q: Personally, what did you gain from the trip?

S: This programme gave me the chance to meet with the personnels of various museums, art galleries and other heritage organizations in Canada. Among other things, from our discussions, we learned each other's working experiences, ideas, and culture. I learned the latest developments in museum activities in Canada.

F: I was extremely happy to be able to visit Canadian museums. Prior to this I had never had the chance to visit museums in North America. In fact, my visits to museums in Greece, Egypt, Austria, Italy, Spain, France and China were made years ago. So this trip certainly enabled me to update myself on the current museum scene abroad.

Undoubtedly, my widened network of museum colleagues will prove valuable. Moreover, the museum workers I met in Canada were overwhelmingly hospitable and accommodating.

Q: Would you like to attend a similar programme in Canada again?

F: Yes, I would.

S: Should I be awarded another fellowship, I would choose to go to Canada.

“...this trip certainly enabled me to update myself on the current museums scene abroad.”

Q: Would you recommend this type of programme to others?

F: Yes.

S: Yes, I would.

Q: Would you like to say something more regarding this study tour?

F: Yes. I wish to take this opportunity to thank SEAMEO-SPAFA in Bangkok, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, the Association of Canadian Colleges and Universities, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the SPAFA Coordinating Committee in the Philippines for enabling me to participate in this programme.

S: I feel very lucky I was part of this programme. Hence, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those responsible for enabling us to join this activity. My thanks go to SPAFA, CIDA, ACCC, AUCC and to every individual, at all the places we have visited, for their guidance and help. ☺

- Wynette Puntuna