

INNOVATION AND SUSTANABILITY OF SMALL MUSEUMS



Prem Singh Basnyat, PhD

MUSEUM IN GENERAL

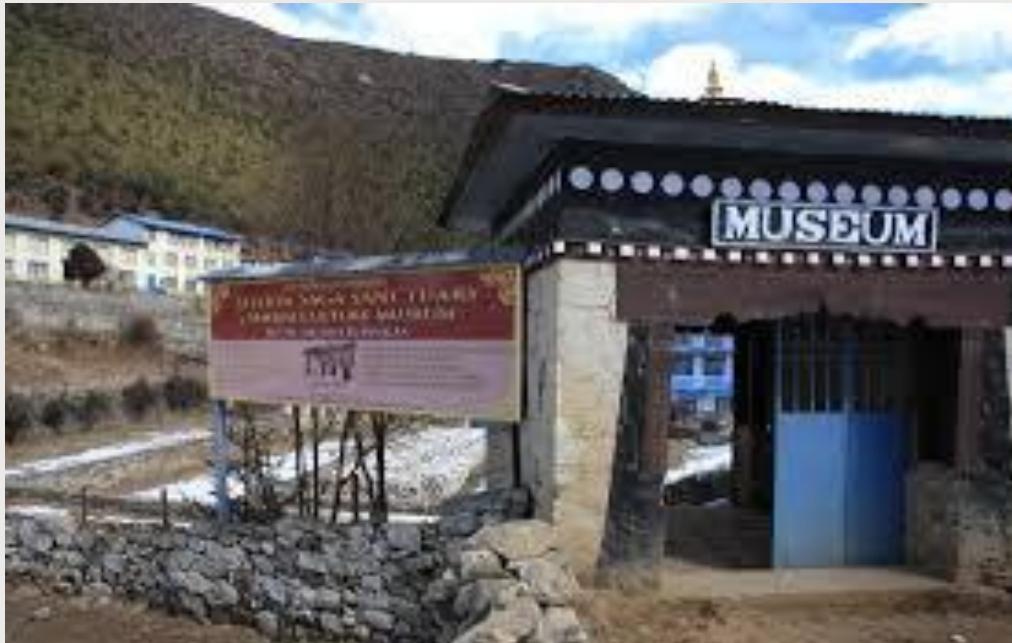
Museum as such serves as a mirror for a country because it reflects the national scenario of political, economic, cultural and historical past.

It is not to be viewed as a book loaded with highly jargonized language by an author. It is in true sense of the term a comprehensible book written down to commoners' digestion, like laborers, peasants, children and foreigners.

The significance of museum is all the more being realized in the present context after the World War II when the countries broken free from colonial noose are turning to retrieve their culture and practices.

In the scary context of one country split into many by conflict, war and colony, and embittered by feud and contempt now see the possibility of rebuilding/rejoining with a glue of identical culture and civilization.

IMPORTANCES OF SMALL MUSEUMS





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Hundreds of languages, castes and cultures stay set in harmony within a country, for instance; Nepal is house for over 120 languages and more than 100 species of caste. All of them are eager to learn about the origin and present status of their language and culture.

The commoners do not sound happy with the history written about the high class ruling elites who for a long time enjoyed high echelons of power, the history, culture, practice and museum singing sweet of them. It seems that they are demanding the foundation of more inclusive history, culture and museums.

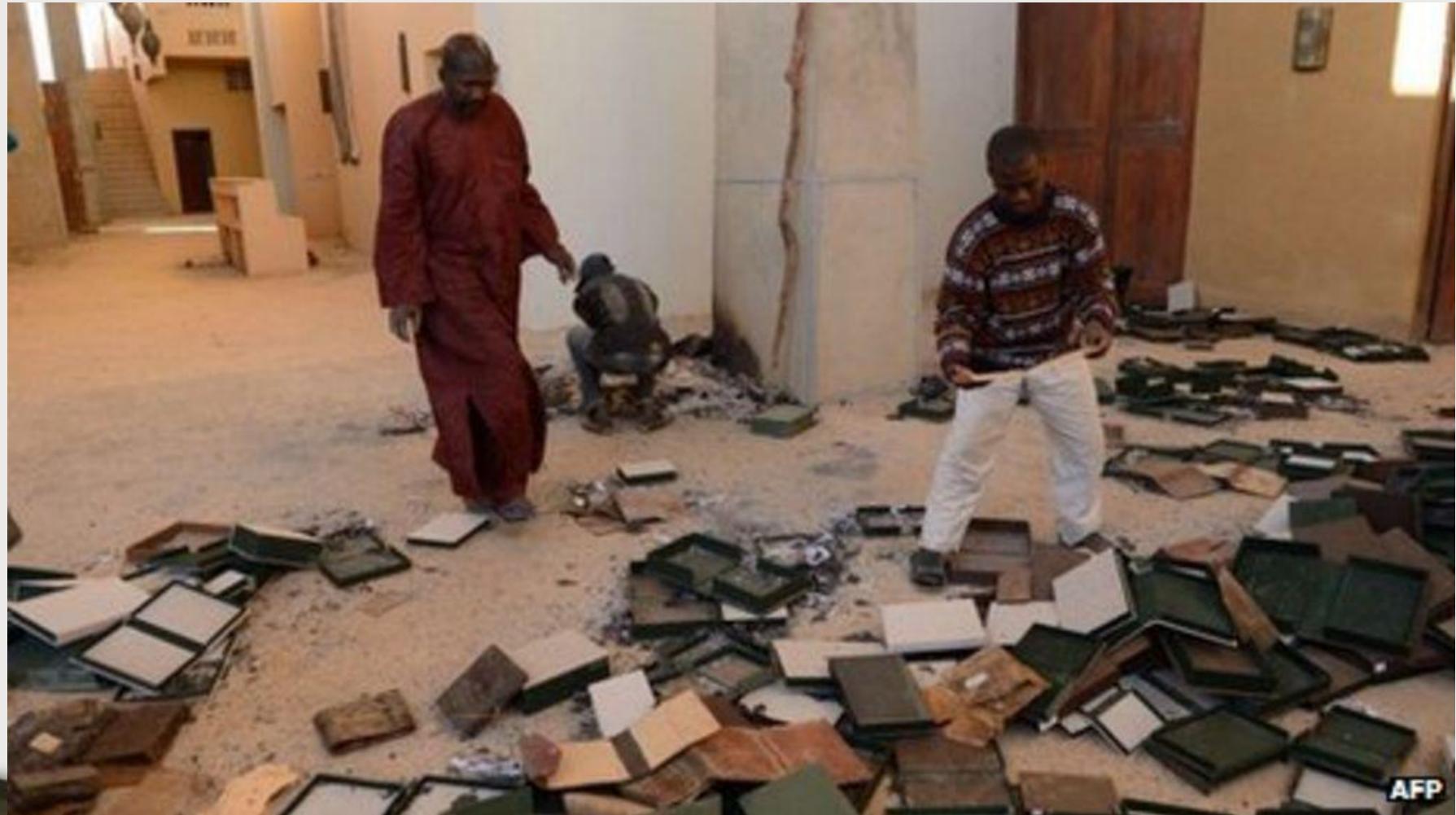
And obviously, a state is obliged to have the people of the specific locale realize the glory of their caste, language and culture. The need of doing this is all the more pressing in the poor and conflict ravaged countries.

IMPORTANCES OF SMALL MUSEUMS

The best way to do so is to found museums of low cost with high public participation. Likewise, museums in advanced and developed countries are likely to strengthen unity, identity and National security, finally.

Therefore, the present write up underscores the foundation of small museums with lasting sustainability. The scribe also forwarded examples and grounds to justify the need of such museums for scribe's country Nepal.

CONFLICTS TARGETING HERITAGES

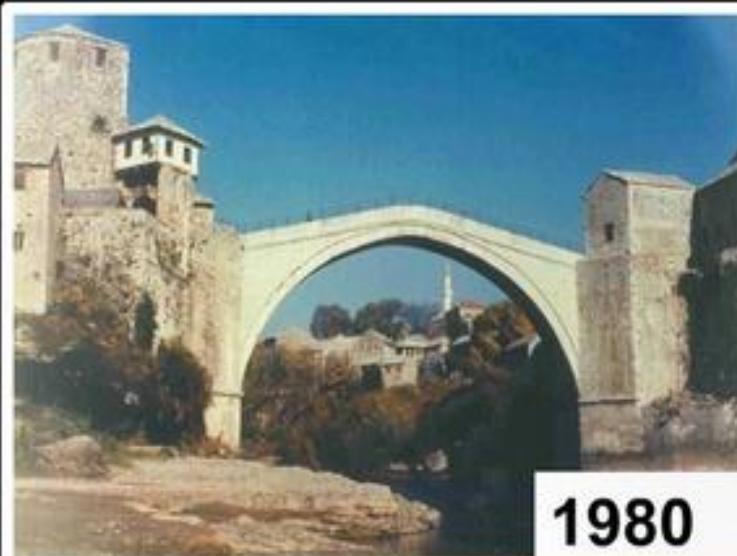


AFP



Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar

Bosnia and Herzegovina



1980



1993



1998



2009



Illicit antiquities trade threatening cultural heritage

Stephen Quillen

Tunis

Esides the illicit trade of weapons and drugs, smugglers in the Middle East and North Africa have found a lucrative business in trafficking antiquities.

The smuggling of ancient artifacts to wealthy clients around the world has tripled in the last decade, with experts warning that the region's archaeological heritage is in peril.

"The problem has dramatically increased since the outbreak of conflict," said Michael Danti, principal investigator and academic director at the American Schools of Oriental Research's Cultural Heritage Initiative, which is seeing the full range of antiquities."

Danti noted that "looting is worst in Syria," where the Islamic State (IS) has systematically plundered some 40 percent of the 4,500 archaeological sites that contain historical treasures.

While such looting long preceded the civil war, the conflict has opened up opportunities for wide-spread, systematic exploitation of artifacts," wrote Moran Kersel and Fiona Rose-Greenland for the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. "The general availability of artifacts, a general breakdown in border controls and competition among insurgent groups for revenue streams all played their part."

Despite dire conditions, Syrian archaeologists have gone to great lengths to preserve the country's artifacts, in some cases evading or hiding them.

On March 16, 2015, Khalid al-Asad, an 81-year-old Syrian archaeologist and head of antiquities for the city of Palmyra, was publicly beheaded by IS after he refused to turn over the keys to the city's hidden artifacts. UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova called his death "a deplorable act, made all the more senseless that it was the result of an attack on the museum and ancient citadel."

"They killed him because he would not betray his deep commit-



Lost treasures. A fragment of an Assyrian-era relief is seen at the ancient site of Nimrud that was destroyed by the Islamic State fighters near Mosul.

ment to Palmyra," Bokova said.

By 2016, all six of Syria's UNESCO World Heritage sites were either under IS control or severely damaged. Up to 100,000 Syrian cultural artefacts were reportedly under IS control.

There have been similar reports

■ The amount of money ISIS is taking in is estimated at \$150 million-\$200 million per year.

Italians newspaper La Stampa reported in 2015 that Italian migrants cross borders every day selling weapons to IS in exchange for stolen antiquities, which were then sold in Russia and Asia.

An Interpol database that tracks stolen cultural artifacts lists dozens of missing antiquities from museums and sites in the region. "A total of 94 items of invaluable cultural her-

itage were stolen from the Mosul Museum in Iraq" in 2014-15, the database reads. "Many other objects were destroyed."

While it is impossible to gauge how devastating IS's campaign of destruction has been on the region's cultural heritage – particularly in Iraq and Libya – the amount of money the extremist group is taking in is estimated at \$150 million-\$200 million per year.

IS is not the only culprit. Rival militant factions, displaced Iraqis and ordinary citizens seeking a big payout have tapped into the market. This is particularly true in Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories, where the sale of replicas of historical artefacts and religious relics fuels demand among collectors and traders, but the practice extends to the Gulf and North Africa.

In March 2016, Tunisian authorities stopped a trafficking network from smuggling a rare, 15th-century Torah out of the country. The scroll, which authorities described as "a one-of-a-kind" historic artifact, was destroyed.

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smuggling and dealing networks handle such material. They make use of private sales and the seaport system to move artifacts.

Much has been done to crack down on the illicit trade of antiquities. In December 2015, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) established an international list of cultural objects at risk of being stolen from Libya. The ICOM maintains similar lists for Syria and Iraq.

To more effectively deal with the problem, ICOM has urged a number of government measures:

"Better monitoring of the seaport system. Stiffer penalties for dealers and purchasers of antiquities. More enforcement of laws. Bilateral agreements between countries to develop and enforce cultural property laws and more law enforcement dedicated to cultural property crimes."

"In the end, we need peace in the Middle East. The criminals are exploiting instability and poverty."

Syrian conflict in spotlight at London's Imperial War Museum

Karen Dabrowska

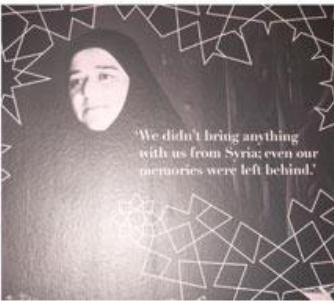
London

The Syria: A Conflict Explored exhibition is rightly an "exploration" by London's Imperial War Museum (IWM) into the intricacies of the sides coming together to tell their stories about the Syrian conflict, which has developed into an international proxy war.

Divided into three parts, the exhibition's first section features a museum-like display of objects that tell the story of the tragic events in Syria. A child's abandoned orange life jacket found on the Greek island of Chios refers to the more than 4 million Syrians who have fled the fighting and are living as refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Europe.

Also on display are souvenir mugs and plates with photos of Syrian President Bashar Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which are on sale in the port of Al-Rusafa, Ramadi. Muslim and naval base cartoons from Syria's most famous political cartoonist Ali Ferzat; a helmet worn by the White Helmets, a humanitarian organization for those in civilian areas in opposition-held areas; and a replica of a barrel bomb used by both sides in the conflict are among the offerings.

The second section consists of an installation film on two framed



Rare insight. Syrian refugees tell their story.

screens giving the visual effect of shattered glass. Produced by Liminal Films in collaboration with the IWM, the film tells the story of the conflict. It begins with a historical background to Syria and its conflicts, including the Baathist regime. The film ends with a poignant quote from Lakhdar Brahimi, the veteran Algerian diplomat who was the UN and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria from 2012-14: "Everybody had their agenda and the interests

of the Syrian people came second, third or not at all."

The final section of the exhibition gives a voice to Syrians – the refugees, the civilians who stayed as well as the internally displaced. Captured in black-and-white photos they tell their story.

"The situation in Syria is complex, live and evolving and we know that viewpoints may change in two years, two months, two days or two hours," said Gill Web-

ber, executive director of Content and Programmes at the IWM. "We want to help our visitors cut through the complexity and enable a deeper understanding of the causes, context and consequences of what is happening in Syria."

"Conflict Explored reflects a multitude of perspectives and posi-

tions that the internet we have available to us has made available to us."

A Lens on Syria, another retrospective about the Syrian conflict, is displayed on the same floor of the IWM. It is the first British exhibition of photographs of acclaimed Russian documentary photographer Sergey Ponomarev. The Assad's Syria series offers a rare insight into what life was like for Syrians in an opposition-controlled area in 2013-14.

Ponomarev was one of the few photographers allowed access to Syria. In a statement accompanying his work, he said: "For Assad's Syria I was trying to document life inside one of the most tightly controlled states in the world. In this environment photographs were caught between what we saw and what the government wanted to show us. How do you distinguish between reality and propaganda?"

"It is very difficult to say if people are in government-controlled areas just because people are in government-controlled areas does not mean they are living well or safely or that they necessarily support the government."

The Exodus series of photo-

graphs, which ends the exhibition, is a collection of images taken at the height of the European refugee and migrant crisis from June 2015-March 2016. The images capture the disillusionment and despair of people caught in the background of changing seasons, harsh weather, deprivation, violence and border closure.

■ **Syria: A Conflict Explored** reflects a multitude of perspectives and positions about the Syrian civil war.

The exhibition features many contrasting photographs: war shippers at the Sitt Zeinab and Christians attending mass at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross. A photo of Homs in Syria in 2012 shows a family relaxing over drinks at a cafe in the government-controlled Gouta district, where living conditions form a stark contrast with those in the rebel-held sector of the city that under siege 3km away. In another photograph, children play in the ruins of Homs after opposition forces have left.

Syria: A Conflict Explored and A Exodus series of photo-

Karen Dabrowska is an Arabic Weekly contributor in London.







In scribe's presentations in international forums, the scribe has been claimed that museums can be set to act as a peace center to build peace in the conflict ridden countries. And this is possible too.

Unfortunate we must call it that in most International conflicts / wars, it is the religious, cultural, historical centers and museums to be targeted first.

The museums flatten to rubbles and the antiques get plundered.

Present day Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya offer glaring examples of such devastation. The museums devastated during the World War I and II number beyond count.

The United Nation's failure to protect such cultural heritage from the feud and fight is no less. Any failure of the present generation to protect the museums, temples, churches and public places built strenuously by the past generation is sure to cause loss of our art and cultural identity. That is sure to terminate the momentum of development of our civilization.

**WAR POWERS LOOTING
HERITAGES**



After Second Word War in Germany



Looting of the Iraq National Museum and
Mesopotamian Archaeological Sites



Looting of the National Museum of Iraq

If the 21st century military warfare doesn't spare to plunder and rub the epitome of age old cultural heritage, how else is to describe them? They are not any less than the gang of robbers of the Stone Age! This is a really a sensitive issue.

It is therefore a matter of grave concern of all the connoisseurs of art, culture and history. If we still fear to raise the voices against the super powers' guns, bombs and missiles and resort to keep mum even as they destroy the embodiment of our ancient art and culture, there is none but ourselves to be dead alive.

From now on, let us speak loud and clear to the world "**No plundering others**" culture in the guise of war'. It is high time we preserved the existing museums and found more museums to preserve the art, culture and history.

It is advisable that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the power centers take a policy to found and provide assistance to small scale museums in the developing countries.

SMALL MUSEUM/MUSEUM AWARES CONFLICT PREVENTION

It is very obvious to mention is that another aspect not much attended to is that almost 80 percent of the conflicts happen in the poor countries. Search of race, region, religion and language related identity and poverty coupled with lack of access to resources fan the fire to conflict. Identity based conflict outnumber the conflict due to lack of basic needs.

As referred to above, what one finds is people seek representational access to resources from their respective castes, religion, lineage, culture and civilization. Such conflicts tend to be detrimental challenging to massive ethnic cleansing.

SMALL MUSEUM/MUSEUM AWARES CONFLICT PREVENTION

There are abundant examples of such conflicts in the world. Clear enough, all revolt and conflict have their roots to search of identity, and foundation of museums and rewriting of history to some extent calms the fire of fury. Because the museums keep things to represent the ethnic groups, they own up a sense of “**we-feeling**” to generate a sentiment of collective love and ownership.

If government offers a little assistance to set up and operation of museums, they will sustain and grow up.

ICOM NEEDS TO FOCUS ON SMALL MUSEUMS



It also would be fair to highlight is that the International Committee of Museums (ICOM) Paris's turn/move to concentrate its conferences, researches and case studies for development more to developing countries than developed ones would be fruitful.

May be the rich and the power centers don't need small scale museums so much. They need large and advanced museums suitable to their operation viability/capability.

To put it in brief, the ICOM, Paris would do well to put foundation of small scale museums for another two decades in its priority. That would be the call of the hour.

SMALL MUSEUMS ARE BENEFICIAL IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

Another equally important aspect that we cannot afford to overlook is that the poor countries with difficult geographical terrains, sparsely populated areas, winding up and down roads, tall mountains and snow capped Himalayas, flood prone plains and inclement climatic zones.

For instance Nepal have their own assets endowed by nature.





Village Tourism





But we see underdevelopment turns the blissful nature to limitation. This scribe is proud of his country where visitors from far and near come and return with experience of a world of fun and joy.

Fortunately, the incumbent Right Honorable President of Republic Korea Mr. Moon-Jea-In and teams of museum experts and other personalities came to Nepal and returned happy with the beauty hereof.



President of Republic Korea Mr. Moon-Jea-In



President of Republic Korea Mr. Moon-Jea-In



museumassociation.org.np

Professor Bae Kidong, PhD and his team



museumassociation.org.np

Professor Bae Kidong, PhD

President Moon has once already visited Nepal prior to his assumption of the presidential responsibility to help the earthquake victims in 2015.

Museum export Professor Bae Kidong, PhD and his team visited Nepal for archeological research in several parts of Nepal.

Given many places without access to road transport, inaccessible due to no bridge over the big rivers, sparsely populated areas with people ground under poverty, foundation of museums in those places to represent and conserve their languages, cultures, costumes and practices would prove like a godsend gift there.

The communities there would surely join hands to found such museums and upkeep them with a sense of pride. The museums in those places would certainly contribute to enhance local economy from tourists and pacify the flaring fire of identity conflict to a great extent.

They would also serve as open school and peace center. In retrospect, the 1995-2005 ten year Maoist war within/ insurgency weakened Nepal when as many as more than 17,000 people lost their lives. Many people in the rebellion period demanded racial and religious identity.

Now 20 years down the line since the end of insurgency and arrival of the Maoists in peace process, as many as 120 castes of people are still raising their voice.

Small scale museums in the far off places without access to modern facilities would surely address the expectation of the people to some extent.

The same is true to the African countries, Balkan region, and underdeveloped countries of the Middle East where foundation of small museums are long felt.

SOME SMALL MUSEUMS IN NEPAL



WELCOME TO 1870-1980
OLD GURUNG MUSEUM
& TRADITIONAL RESTAURANT
GHANDRUK 5 Pro & Prag Gurung

ENTRANCE

ENTRY FEE: Rs 30
FOR ONE PERSON

MAIL
BOX

CHICKEN COOP

ANNA PURNA
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
P.N.CAMPUS POKHARA







It also would be very important to note that yet another aspect that needs attention is that museums are the entities of pride and glory of any country.

Advanced countries have founded museums to represent their progress and achievement. It has found way to the national policy there. But in the poor countries where food, shelter and clothing is the immediate need cannot find museums of advanced quality and are concentrated to the cities only.

Mass of the population cannot avail of the museums in the cities. It is better for the poor countries to found small scale museums to represent their art, culture and history.

As a start up, they can initiate to found small museums and to grow and conserve them.

ONE FOR ALL & ALL FOR ONE



To sum up, knowledge, experience and skill grows and expands by sharing. Just as a lit candle can make aflame thousands of unlit candle, so it can spread light too at the same time. For the development of **sustainable small museums**, why not the developed countries initiate to expand the branches of their museums in other parts of the world as help and assistance?

Things such as how operate the museums and what to keep there could be sorted out from bilateral agreement. Why delay to start a campaign of “**Museum for Museum**” with International Move?

Just as a bank/ industry/ INGO of one country expands/opens its branches across the world, if the same could be done to expand museums in the countries rich and poor, it would greatly contribute to the growth and development of the museums rapidly.

For this dream to take shape, “**one for all and all for one**” spirit of benevolence is a must.

Any queries?

Thank You