

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY

LEARNING POLICY 2013-2018

Chester Beatty Library Mission Statement

To maintain and preserve the collections of the Library and make them available in the most appropriate ways for the use and enjoyment of the public in order to promote a wider appreciation and understanding of the international cultural heritage embodied in the collections and foster relations between Ireland and the peoples whose cultures are represented in the Collections.

Learning Policy Statement

The main purpose of the Learning Policy is to support the Library's key strategic priority **to promote intercultural dialogue and learning** through the cultural, religious, historic and artistic aspects of the Collections (See *Statement of Strategy: 2016-2020*).

Introduction

The Chester Beatty Library at Dublin Castle was formally opened to the public on 7 February 2000, the 125th anniversary of Sir Alfred Chester Beatty's birth. The Library relocated from its original home on Shrewsbury Road where it operated on a smaller site from the 1950s to 1999. Since 2000, the new facilities and redisplay of the treasures of the Collections have attracted widespread interest from local and overseas visitors. The Collections are housed in purpose-built galleries, displaying permanent and temporary exhibitions and complemented with a public programme of events.

Intercultural Learning in the Chester Beatty Library

Since its foundation, the Chester Beatty Library has provided an educative role through research, exhibitions, lectures and a wide range of activities. In January 2000 the Library appointed its first Education Officer (now Head of Education) to undertake the development of a coherent programme complementing the collection and location in Dublin Castle. The role of Head of Education requires an understanding of the Collection as well as the ability to network and develop links with the existing and emerging communities in Ireland and internationally through appropriate programmes. The recruitment and training of volunteers in the Library is crucial to complement this as well as encourage suitable partnerships with relevant organisations.

The Library has an indispensable role to play in developing mutual understanding and respect among all people on our island, as explicitly stated in our Mission. To this end, the Library has carved a unique role among the National Cultural Institutions by reaching out to the existing and emerging communities in Ireland. By drawing upon and interpreting our extraordinary Collections to engage and forge relationships with the newest members of our society, a diverse intercultural programme has emerged and continues to develop. It is a timely programme that acknowledges the changing profile of the Irish population and the need to address issues such as diversity and intercultural dialogue.

This is being achieved through the public programme of exhibitions, lectures, demonstrations, workshops for children and adults, tours, music events as well as collaboration with partners. Other examples of partnerships and initiatives include: *Dublin City Council Chinese New Year Festival, Temple Bar Cultural Trust/Culture Night, The British Council, Educate Together, Forum on Migration and Communications (FOMACS), Asian European Museum Network (ASEMUS) and participation in recent initiatives regarding intercultural and democratic education reform in the Euro-Med region vis-à-vis the aftermath of the Arab Spring organised by the Anna Lindh Foundation and Swedish Institute based in Alexandria, Egypt.*

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY LEARNING POLICY 2013-2018

In the future, the Library envisages developing a broader portfolio of activity including the creation of a centre for intercultural dialogue which will build upon the significant work already achieved in this arena. Internationally, the Library has the potential to develop relationships not only in Europe and the US, but also in the Middle East and East Asia. The Library hosts regular meetings approximately once a month, which bring together key figures from the fields of culture and business in Asia. Through these extensive connections in Asia, the Library plays a significant role in the Culture Programme of the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), a mechanism of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. The Library is also a member of the Asia-Europe Museum Network (ASEMUS), whose aim is to promote a wider mutual understanding between the peoples of Asia and Europe by means of collaborative programmes of museum-based cultural activity.

Current Service

Organisational structure

The Education Department has two permanent members of staff; the Head of Education and the Education Officer. Staff liaise with the Director, Head of Collections, Curatorial staff, Head of Operations and other key members of staff in the development and promotion of the public and learning programme. The programme is delivered by invited freelance facilitators, volunteer guides, guest lecturers, artists, musicians and by working with community groups, embassies and relevant individuals and/or groups.

The Library's Volunteer Programme plays a vital role within the Library. Volunteers are recruited through the Library's website (online application form) and occasionally through Volunteering Ireland. A key number of volunteers are tour guides. Volunteers are also placed in various areas including Education, Conservation, Gift and Book Shop, Membership and Visitor Services. As part of recruitment, volunteers sign an agreement with the Library, based on the Volunteer Policy and the Health and Safety Policy. They also receive induction training which address Library policies, procedures, culture and introduction to co-workers, both paid and voluntary. Training is devised by the Education Officer on a monthly basis including exhibitions, conservation and guiding. These sessions are delivered by in-house Curators, Conservators, Director, Head of Education and other relevant staff. Volunteers are also encouraged to engage in peer learning as well as visit other cultural and heritage institutions. Volunteers are supervised throughout the year, both by the Education Officer and relevant supervisors.

On Site Programmes

The following is a list of events available throughout the year on a regular basis in the Chester Beatty Library:

- Public and booked tours including Community Ambassador Tours in Arabic, Mandarin, Japanese and Irish
- Public demonstrations in techniques found in the collection, e.g. calligraphy, print making, and origami
- Public workshops in techniques
- Music events
- Talks
- Films
- Family days
- Children's workshops
- Intercultural Projects with primary and post-primary schools

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY LEARNING POLICY 2013-2018

- Annual Bealtaine Festival for older people
- Family Activity and Adult & Teen Drawing Packs

Physical Resources

The planned development of a dedicated learning workshop space is on hold due to current financial and space restrictions. To date all workshop events take place in the Lecture Theatre and occasionally on the 3rd floor lobby. Physical resources available for the delivery of the Learning and Public Programme are as follows:

Guided tours – Gallery Spaces

Lectures – Lecture Theatre

Children’s workshops – Lecture Theatre and occasionally 2nd and 3rd floor lobbies

Music Performances – Lecture Theatre, Atrium and Galleries

Adult art workshops – Lecture Theatre and 3rd floor lobby

Creative Corner – 1st and 2nd floor lobbies

Film Screenings – Lecture Theatre

Art Demonstrations – Lecture Theatre, Atrium and 2nd floor lobby

Family Days – Lecture Theatre, Atrium and Galleries

Schools Projects – Lecture Theatre and Galleries

Family Activity and Adult & Teen Drawing Packs – Atrium and Galleries

Activity station for Families – 2nd floor lobby

Off Site Programmes

The Chester Beatty Library engages with a number of organisations, primary and post-primary schools through its outreach programme. The Chester Beatty Library has worked with local primary and post-primary schools exploring how to engage children and teens with the Collections. Workshops based on intercultural dialogue and learning are central to the programme;

- *Stories from the Silk Road* (2004-2005). A project for local Christian, Muslim and multi-denominational schools in Dublin. Primary school students explored how to tell stories through objects in the Collection
- *The Silk Worm Travels* (2006). The Library’s in-house club for children set-up residency in The Ark, Ireland’s Cultural Centre for Children, Dublin. Students from primary and post-primary schools worked with contemporary artists and responded to a number of themes reflected in the Library’s Collection
- *Exploring Different Faiths* (2007). A multi-faith project for post-primary schools using multi-media
- *Tell Your Story* (2008). An intercultural dialogue project to mark the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The Library and Draíocht Arts Centre Dublin 15 teamed-up to work with local schools in the greater Dublin area. Students from primary schools worked with artists and writers to create their own personal stories
- *Shahnama storytelling, music and art* project (2011). As part of the millennium celebrations of the *Shahnama* (Persian Book of Kings) the Library worked with Educate Together (multi-denominational schools). Students worked with a storyteller, musician and artist in response to the Library’s exhibition of the Persian poem
- *Ways of Seeing* (2012-2013) a cross border project for post-primary schools with particular emphasis on students who have recently migrated to Northern and the Republic of Ireland. The teaching of English as a second language is a key theme reflected in the resource

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY LEARNING POLICY 2013-2018

Education and Learning Strategy

This policy outlines a strategy for the timescale of 2013-2018. It aims to:

1. Develop the Library as a centre of intercultural dialogue and learning
2. Continue to develop partnerships with key organisations
3. Recognise multiple learning styles and respond accordingly
4. Maintain access to the Library for visitors through appropriate programmes; physical, intellectual, cultural and virtual access

Objective 1

Develop the Library as a centre of intercultural dialogue and learning

Actions

- Design an Intercultural Learning Zone for the Library website.
- Develop learning resources for students, educators and learners for the Learning Zone.
- Target cross cultural audiences to utilise the Intercultural Learning Zone by means of marketing.
- Maintain contact on an annual basis with existing audiences and cultivate new audiences to maintain and strengthen learning programmes for multi-ethnic communities.

Objective 2

Continue to develop partnerships with key organisations

Actions

- Foster relations with the communities represented in the collection through the public programme.
- Engage intercultural dialogue between communities in order to create a greater awareness of the cultures represented in the Collection.
- Develop a comprehensive adult learning programme (formal and informal) that recognises the different levels of learning.

Objective 3

Recognise multiple learning styles and respond accordingly

Actions

- Respond to multiple learning styles with appropriate programmes.
- Review training programmes for staff, volunteers and freelance facilitators.
- Maintain appropriate training programmes in learning for staff, volunteers and freelance facilitators.
- Respond to the Department of Education and Skills Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015.

Objective 4

Maintain access to the Library for visitors through appropriate programmes; physical, intellectual, cultural and virtual access

Actions

- Develop appropriate programmes in recognition of visitors' multiple learning styles.

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY LEARNING POLICY 2013-2018

- Incorporate access and public engagement through exhibitions, learning and public programmes.
- Work with marketing to disseminate information about the programme on a monthly basis.
- Review and update the Library's Child Protection Policy with reference to the Children First Guidelines 2011 and offer suitable training for staff, volunteers and freelance facilitators.

Approval/Revision History

This Learning Policy is version 1, issued in August 2013 and formally approved by the Trustees on 16 October 2013. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Head of Education and a full revision will take place every five years. Following adoption of the Library's *Statement of Strategy: 2016-2020*, key actions are now annually included in the Library's Strategic Implementation Plan.

**CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY
LEARNING POLICY 2013-2018**