

National Museum of Ireland

Education and Outreach Policy Document

2007

CONTENTS

Introduction	page 2
Background	page 2
Current Service	page 3
National Museum Of Ireland Mission Statement	page 4
Aims	page 4
Aims and Objectives	
Aim 1 and Objectives	page 5
Aim 2 and Objectives	page 5
Aim 3 and Objectives	page 5
Aim 4 and Objectives	page 6
Action Plans	
Aim 1. Objectives and Action Plans	page 7
Aim 2. Objectives and Action Plans	page 8
Aim 3. Objectives and Action Plans	page 9
Aim 4. Objectives and Action Plans	page 10
Figure 1 - Organisational Charts	page 11

INTRODUCTION

The National Museum of Ireland was established by the Dublin Science and Art Museum Act of 1877¹, which imbued the Museum with a public learning ethos.

With this Education and Outreach Policy, the Director and the Board of the National Museum of Ireland restate the National Museum of Ireland's commitment to public learning and access. An implementation plan, identifying relevant staff and timeframes, will be the first step in fulfilling the actions outlined. The policy will be reviewed after five years.

BACKGROUND

The National Museum of Ireland, (NMI), as established by the 1877 Act, comprised a newly erected building on Kildare Street, which contained exhibitions of archaeology, ethnography, decorative arts and history and the already established Natural History Museum on Merrion Street. No further expansion took place until 1997, when a new Museum was opened at Collins Barracks to display decorative arts and history. This was followed in 2001 by the opening of the NMI - Country Life at Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

The first Education Officer was appointed in the 1970s and since then the role of education and outreach within the NMI has evolved slowly. The Education and Outreach Department expanded in the late 1990s with the appointment of two additional Education Officers and a small staff of Education Assistants.

As the NMI continues to develop it is vital that it evaluates and takes stock of what is being achieved.

The Education Officers embarked on a process of consultation throughout the Museum including the Director and the Board of the Museum with a view to formulating a 'whole museum' policy for the development of education and outreach work within the NMI. This process, together with the publication of this policy document, re-emphasises the central position of life long learning² within the NMI. It also established the Education and Outreach Department as the key audience advocate of the Museum and reaffirms the Department's core role in leading the Museum's public learning remit.

¹ Dublin Science and Art Museum Act 1877 (40 and 41 Vic.Ch. CCXXIV):

"Whereas it is expedient to promote the study of science and art and literature in Ireland, and for such purpose to make provision with respect to the erection of a Science and Art Museum..."

² The concept of 'life- long learning' developed in post war Europe within UNESCO. It was taken up again in the 1990s by the Delors Commission, which viewed learning as a 'passport to life' and identified four pillars of learning: learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together. It sees learning as a process that can happen throughout a lifetime. As such it is not particular to young people and is not confined to the classroom. It acknowledges that learning is something that everyone does as part of their everyday experience and recognises that people have different strategies for learning

CURRENT SERVICE

Organisational Structure

The abbreviated Organisational Chart illustrated in figure 1, (page 11), shows the position of the Education and Outreach Department within the NMI management structure. The Department is part of the larger Museum's Services Department, which encompasses a range of responsibilities. The Education and Outreach Officers report to the Head of Services, a member of the senior management team. Education Assistants report to the Education and Outreach Officer at their respective Museum site.

Physical Resources

Physical Resources available for the delivery of the Education and Outreach programme are summarised in the following table:

Resource	NMI Decorative Arts & History	NMI Archaeology	NMI Natural History	NMI Country Life
Gallery Space	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outside Space	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Lecture / AV Theatre	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Resource Room	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Activity Cart	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Programmes

The following list shows the range of programmes available at some or all of the sites:

On site Programmes

- Guided tours at specific times every day.
- A range of regular, scheduled activities: e.g. Sunday programme, calendar related events.
- Evening lecture series at each museum, subject to the availability of suitable space.
- Classes or seminars on specialised topics related to existing & temporary exhibitions.
- A range of worksheets and guided activities for use on self guided visits.
- A printed version of a general tour of each museum, both in 12 point and a larger point size.
- An education resource room at each site equipped with the above and with a range of objects from the handling collection.
- A range of guided tours for groups by arrangement.
- A range of workshops, demonstrations and special programmes for groups by arrangement.
- Courses in partnership with other organisations.

Off-site Programmes

These programmes allow participants to experience the NMI's exhibitions through encounters with secondary resources, which can be in a physically off site location, e.g. a school, community centre, hospital, etc., or virtually on the web. The delivery of these programmes is described as Outreach.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND MISSION STATEMENT

“The National Museum of Ireland is responsible for the portable heritage of Ireland and makes its collections accessible as a source of learning, inspiration and enjoyment³”

Education and Outreach Policy Statement

“The National Museum of Ireland aims to provide maximum access to a best practice learning experience in all forms of public engagement within the Museum”⁴

AIMS

This policy outlines a strategy for the period 2007 – 2011. Its aims are to:

1. Continue to develop the National Museum of Ireland as a leading centre for life-long learning.
2. Offer quality experiences to new and existing audiences.
3. Ensure that quality education and outreach provision is accessible to all audiences, bearing in mind that barriers to progress can be social, physical, intellectual and geographic.
4. Evaluate education and outreach services and, where appropriate, publish reports.

³ NMI Management Committee 2005

⁴ Anne Gallagher, independent consultant. From a presentation of Evaluation Report, commissioned in 2004 and adopted by the Education and Outreach Department as a policy statement in their Business Plans for 2006. This Report was endorsed by the NMI Management Board on 30th January 2006.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Aim 1

Continue to develop the National Museum of Ireland as a leading centre for life-long learning.

Objectives

1. Develop new ideas for education and outreach services within a creative open environment.
2. Cultivate new audiences.
3. Target key audiences.
4. Develop education and outreach provision consistent with best current practice in the international museum sector, through an ethos of continuing education and research for NMI staff.

Aim 2

Offer quality experiences to existing and new audiences.

Objectives

1. Create a welcome environment for visitors, conducive to learning, through quality customer service standards.
2. Provide audience centred exhibitions and programmes.
3. Implement programming for repeat visits and offer pre- and post- visit services to groups.
4. Develop existing relationships with agencies in both the formal and informal education sectors.
5. Develop in-house contribution to education and outreach provision through collaboration between museum departments.
6. Develop outreach provision⁵

Aim 3

Ensure that quality education and outreach provision is accessible to all audiences, bearing in mind that barriers to access can be social, physical, intellectual and geographic.

Objectives

1. Publish an access policy
2. Develop virtual access to the NMI through the use of information and communications technology, (ICT), and the media
3. Ensure multi-layered access by taking account of barriers to access in planning for exhibitions and programmes.

⁵ Outreach provision can be defined as:

“Learning and ECO, (education, community, outreach), work generally can happen off-site, through direct encounters with primary sources or indirect engagement with secondary recourses, inclusive of the virtual presence of the institution on the internet” A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach (ECO), Council of National Cultural Institutions, Dublin (2004), p.18

Aim 4

Evaluate education and outreach services⁶ and, where appropriate, publish reports⁷

Objectives

1. Establish a system of internal evaluation for selected key programmes.
2. Facilitate a system of annual peer and/or external expert evaluation for a selected number of programmes and exhibitions.
3. Publish selected evaluations of education and outreach provision.

⁶ Including long and short term projects, partnership projects and projects aimed at a range of audiences.

⁷ *“Worthwhile, effective and developmental Educational Community Outreach work is most likely to occur when it is located within a cycle of research-planning-implementation-evaluation-dissemination.”* A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach,(ECO), (op.cit.) p.26

ACTION PLANS

Aim 1

Continue to develop the National Museum of Ireland as a leading centre for life-long learning.

Objective 1

Develop new ideas for education and outreach services within a creative, open environment

Actions

1. Research annually one innovative service available in another comparable institution.
2. Develop pilot programmes, projects and resources at all NMI sites on a regular basis.
3. Compile an audit of key internal and external stakeholders.
4. Meet with both internal and external stakeholders on an annual basis to develop innovative projects.

Objective 2

Cultivate new audiences

Actions

1. Remain open and responsive to requests for services from new audiences, subject to resources.
2. Identify key groups who may have an interest in NMI services.
3. Form partnerships with leaders of key groups to research their expectations and needs.

Objective 3

Target key audiences

Actions

1. Implement a programme of audience research
2. Identify the key target groups for education services on an annual basis
3. Set up regular meetings between Education and Marketing Departments to discuss audience research projects and key target groups.

Objective 4

Develop education and outreach provision consistent with best current practice in the international museum sector, through an ethos of continuing education and research for NMI staff.

Actions

1. Explore new initiatives in museum education through membership of professional bodies, attendance at conferences and visits to centres of excellence in museum education both national and international.
2. Ensure all staff are advised of opportunities for further education as provided through the Performance Management and Development System, (PMDS).
3. Provide training specific to museum education for staff on an ongoing basis.
4. Foster an understanding of 'life-long learning' among NMI staff
5. Ensure Education and Outreach Department representation on internal work teams and committees to provide communication and education advice in relation to exhibitions.
6. Develop a module on the educational aims of the NMI and the role of the Education and Outreach Department, which will be a mandatory part of the NMI staff induction process. This module will be facilitated by a member of the education staff.

Aim 2

Offer quality experiences to new and existing audiences

Objective 1

Create a welcome environment for visitors, conducive to learning, through quality customer service standards.

Actions

1. Establish quality customer service standards and implement training programmes on the standards for all staff.
2. Implement internal procedures for monitoring and maintaining customer service standards
3. Set regular meetings between the Education and Outreach Department and front of house staff to exchange information on NMI audiences and their needs.

Objective 2

Provide audience centred exhibitions and programmes

Actions

1. Identify NMI audiences, both current and potential
2. Ensure that audience needs are taken into account in exhibition planning⁸
3. Undertake an audit of current provision for identified audience categories.
4. Make available a range of appropriate programming⁹ on an ongoing basis.
5. Increase the number of ‘hands on’ and interactive educational activities available throughout the galleries
6. Increase the range of education and outreach services provided through the medium of Irish.

Objective 3

Implement programming for repeat visits and offer pre- and post- visit services to groups

Actions

1. Implement a procedure to monitor patterns of once-off and repeat visits¹⁰
2. Research and identify best practices models for repeat visits and longer term programmes for different audience categories.
3. Engage specialists in a range of audiences, e.g. teachers or youth workers, specialists in working with older age groups, etc., to develop targeted services.

Objective 4

Develop existing relationships with agencies in both the formal and informal education sectors.

Actions

1. Identify and liaise annually with agencies that represent groups in the formal and informal education sectors – including the Department of Education and Science and other Government departments, Education Centres, Schools and Third Level institutions, Teachers’ Unions and Associations, non-governmental agencies,

⁸ “Researching and knowing its publics is a cornerstone of ECO policy... Precise, respectful work must start from a detailed profile of the “target” group and grow, through consultation and shared experience into a detailed understanding of their attributes and needs.” A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach, (ECO) (op.cit.) p.20. See also the same publication pp.19-24 for a further discussion of this topic.

⁹ See service actions listed in A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach,(ECO) (op.cit.) p.22

¹⁰ A visit can be on site off site or virtual through the Museum’s website.

Education and Outreach Policy Document

community groups, active age groups, special interest groups and local history societies.

2. Work through the Education, Community and Outreach, (ECO), group of the Council of National Cultural Institutions, (CNCI), to develop relationships with key agencies, including those listed above.

Objective 5

Develop in-house contribution to education and outreach provision through collaboration between museum departments

Actions

3. Establish a cross-divisional group to facilitate collaboration between the Education and Outreach Department and other Museum Departments.
4. Coordinate discussion between all NMI divisions and departments to consider contributions to education and outreach provision as part of the annual business planning process.

Objective 6

Develop outreach provision

Actions

1. Conduct an audit and evaluation of current outreach programmes.
2. Develop an Outreach Action Strategy
3. Introduce pilot outreach programmes
4. Develop the scope for virtual access through the NMI website.

Aim 3

Ensure that quality education and outreach provision is accessible to all audiences, bearing in mind that barriers to access can be social, physical, intellectual and geographic.

Objective 1

Publish an Access Policy

Actions

1. Agree a timeframe for the development of a NMI Access Policy.
2. Commission an independent access audit of all NMI services and sites in conjunction with key agencies

Objective 2

Develop virtual access to the NMI through the use of information and communications technology, (ICT), and the media.

Actions

1. Review the use of ICT throughout the NMI and website.
2. Establish a working group to explore the potential of ICT.
3. Explore the potential of a range of media to provide virtual access to the NMI

Objective 3

Ensure multi-layered access by taking account of barriers to access in planning for exhibitions and programmes.

Action

1. Ensure all planning of exhibitions and programmes complies with the Access Policy.

Aim 4

Evaluate education and outreach services¹¹ and, where appropriate, publish reports¹²

Objective 1

Establish a system of internal evaluation for selected key programmes.

Actions

1. Build evaluation into the business planning process
2. Set criteria for the evaluation of programmes.
3. Coordinate appropriate training for Education and Outreach staff to undertake internal evaluation.

Objective 2

Facilitate a system of annual peer and/or external expert evaluation for a selected number of programmes and exhibitions.

Actions

1. Identify programmes and exhibitions for external evaluation and recruit appropriately qualified experts
2. Brief selected experts and mentor throughout all stages of the evaluation process to ensure effective measurement.

Objective 3

Publish selected evaluations of education and outreach provision.

Actions

1. Identify programme evaluation reports suitable for publication
2. Disseminate the evaluation of selected programmes through publications, lectures or presentations, as appropriate.

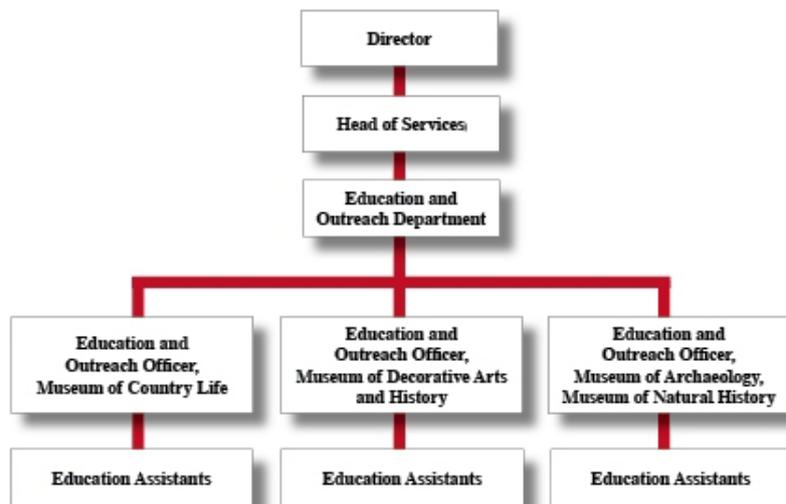
¹¹ Including long and short term projects, partnership projects and projects aimed at a range of audiences.

¹² “Worthwhile, effective and developmental ECO work is most likely to occur when it is located in a cycle of research – planning – implementation – evaluation – dissemination” A Policy Framework for Education, Community, Outreach (ECO), (op.cit.), p.26

FIGURE 1 - ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Organisation Chart: Chart showing the National Museum of Ireland management structure.



Organisation Chart: Chart showing the position of the Education and Outreach Department within the National Museum of Ireland management structure.