

D U B L I N



2023-2031 CONSERVATION EDUCATION MASTER PLAN

Cultivating the next generation of conservationists





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INTRODUCTION

Education delivery at Dublin Zoo has been an innate objective since the formation of the Zoological Society of Ireland in 1830. The learning that has taken place at Dublin Zoo has been based on knowledge and scientific understanding of animals. This has evolved into understanding the threats species in our care face in the wild. As we embark on the next iteration of science education and conservation learning at Dublin Zoo, we turn our attention further to ourselves, humans, and the social changes we must make to support the conservation of biodiversity. We term this '**Conservation Education.**'

Since the inception of the Education Department at Dublin Zoo in 1986, it has grown in size, skills, capacities and the scope of its learning programmes. Now called the Discovery & Learning Department, the reach of our education activities has grown to over 60,000 learners per year, from pre-school to higher education. In fact, over one million visitors annually engage with our website, social media channels, programmes, on-site interpretation and volunteer engagement activities. Since 2016, the Discovery & Learning team have engaged in bespoke training to build on their existing talents. A reflective practice framework was introduced to ensure the quality of our education output is consistently high. The formal learning programmes undergo regular review to ensure they are meeting the needs of the changing national curricula, our school communities and our conservation education objectives at Dublin Zoo. This commitment to quality conservation education is paramount as we aim to achieve greater conservation impact over the lifespan of this strategy.

Dublin Zoo's Discovery & Learning Department are positioned to be a key player in reaching the vision for the Zoological Society of Ireland to become a zoo-based conservation organisation of national and global impact. We will continue to inspire our audiences to save wildlife, learn how we can help to protect habitats globally and cultivate the next generation of conservationists.

We also set ourselves the ambition to become leaders in science-based conservation education, to ensure we have more scientists and conservation talent in Ireland to support us to save wildlife. The success of this plan relies on a broad range of stakeholders to realise our vision. We hope that you will be one of them and join us on this journey.

Aileen Tennant
Head of Discovery & Learning, Dublin Zoo

CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONISTS

We are Dublin Zoo. Our purpose is to save wildlife and inspire a passion for nature. We have a strong culture of education at Dublin Zoo, offering programming, interpretation and public engagement events to a wide range of learners. To be even more impactful, we want to continue to be innovative in our approach to saving wildlife.

As we live through a period of unprecedented biodiversity loss and accelerated climate change, we at Dublin Zoo must embed the practice of conservation in all that we do. All of us, especially younger generations, are facing a world where the human-driven sixth mass extinction is depriving them of a biodiversity-rich future. Biodiversity richness is the engine room for a healthy global ecosystem that supports life on earth by providing oxygen, reducing carbon dioxide and gifting us green and blue spaces that support our physical, emotional and mental health. By practicing conservation we can all do something to support a healthy global ecosystem.

Our 'Dublin Zoo 200' strategic vision and the launch of our first-ever Conservation Master Plan highlight the need for a paradigm shift to a zoo-based conservation organisation of national and global significance. Dublin Zoo's ambitious conservation work must be amplified across society in order to make a positive change for habitats and wildlife globally. With a visitation of over one million people, and in excess of 60,000 of these arriving in learner groups, we must harness the opportunity

for the public to join us on our conservation journey. It is imperative that we invest our skills in cultivating the next generation of conservationists to help us in our mission to save wildlife. Our visitors and learners must become active conservationists and unite with us to achieve our vision of a world where people live in harmony with nature.

This Conservation Education Master Plan will deliver the strategic objectives of the 'Dublin Zoo 200' strategic vision. It will join forces with the Conservation Master Plan and the Sustainability Master Plan to ensure we are doing all that we can for the conservation of biodiversity.

Conservation Education will primarily be delivered by the Discovery & Learning Team. However, it is the duty of all staff and volunteers to communicate the conservation efforts and sustainable actions that our visitors can take to support wildlife. A clear messaging plan for the site must be developed to support all staff. This document outlines the priorities to be addressed to deliver the highest-quality conservation education and to cultivate the conservationists of the future.

Our long-term ambition is to engage audiences in our species' range countries, working directly with the conservation projects that we support, to ensure that mutual learning and capacity-building takes place. As we are coming up to our bicentennial anniversary in 2031, we want to be able to say that we have increased impact in our actions and grew the numbers of followers to save wildlife.

VALUES



We are optimistic and solution-orientated in our approach to conservation education.



Conservation is about people. Learning will focus on human behaviours and actions, placing people at the centre of change.



We take a scientific approach to conservation teaching and learning.



We love nature and are here to support the conservation of biodiversity.



TERMINOLOGY

Audience – depicts the range and diversity of people that zoo educators and volunteers interact with in-person, online or at public events.

Conservation Education – Dublin Zoo acknowledges that wildlife conservation should be at the heart of all of our education programming. It is a broad term which includes:

- Education for sustainable development and sustainable living
- Biodiversity education
- Environmental education
- STEM education
- Interpretation and public messaging in zoos.

Education – refers to all types of learning that takes place at the Zoo via learning programmes, keeper talks, interpretation signage, volunteer-led tours and public engagement.

Design Thinking – is an approach to learning, collaboration and problem solving. In practice, the design process is a structured framework for identifying challenges, gathering information, generating potential solutions, refining ideas and testing solutions.

Learners – anyone who participates in a zoo visit that interacts with an educator, volunteers on public engagement or attends a keeper talk.

Learning Programme – this includes formal and informal learning programmes delivered by zoo educators and supported by volunteers.

Nature – used in many cases instead of ‘the natural world’ or ‘living things’.

STEM Education – Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Education.

UN Sustainable Development Goals – The United Nations’ commitment to support sustainable development globally. The goals are outlined overleaf.

See: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO POVERTY

2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

13 CLIMATE ACTION

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

15 LIFE ON LAND

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

OUR CONSERVATION EDUCATION IMPACT

NOW

ZOO EDUCATORS REACH

**>25,000
LEARNERS**

60,000+
LEARNERS

VISIT IN **GROUPS**
OR FAMILIES FOR
LEARNING ACTIVITIES

WE DELIVER

25 LEARNING
PROGRAMMES
(FORMAL & INFORMAL)
ACROSS ALL AGE GROUPS

>35 YEARS

DELIVERING LEARNING
PROGRAMMES AT

DUBLIN ZOO

8 DEDICATED
STAFF

65+ ENTHUSIASTIC
VOLUNTEERS

2023-2031

THE CONSERVATION EDUCATION MASTER PLAN

DELIVERS A ROAD MAP

TO CREATING **CONSERVATIONISTS OF THE FUTURE**





CASE STUDY 1 — PROVIDING ACCESS FOR ALL

FAMILIES CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Families Connecting with Nature at the Wild Space was a five-month immersive, themed nature programme designed by our zoo educators in collaboration with local conservation organisations. The aim of the programme was to offer conservation education to families living in urban areas. Its purpose was to build participants' confidence and skills to connect meaningfully with nature at Dublin Zoo's Wild Space and in their local green spaces, thus providing these skillsets for life. In 2018, 13 families participated, and this quadrupled in 2019, with over 60 families taking part. Positive responses noted from participants were biodiversity knowledge gain, increased confidence to explore nature, improved family bonds, and greater empathy towards native wildlife. This programme was made possible through funding from WAZA and the Disney Conservation Fund.

Main image: Families building connections with each other and nature at the Wild Space, Dublin Zoo

Above image: Junior Cycle Teacher STE(A)M workshop hosted at Dublin Zoo in 2019



CASE STUDY 2 — QUALITY STEM AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION

STE(A)M — COLLABORATION BETWEEN BIAZA AND JCT

This award-winning collaboration between British and Irish Association and Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) collections and Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) allowed us to amplify our conservation work and encourage pro-environmental actions amongst teachers across Ireland. The vision of JCT is to provide teachers with rich STE(A)M continuous professional development (CPD) experiences. The STE(A)M Initiative in Junior Cycle (national curriculum for 11-15 year olds) involves collaboration between BIAZA and JCT to advance pro-conservation actions for biodiversity among teachers and their students.

The BIAZA JCT partnership has collaborated since 2017 to deliver CPD workshops throughout Ireland. The original annual in-person STE(A)M workshops hosted at Dublin Zoo and other BIAZA collections changed to virtual delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic, utilising interactive virtual methodologies to great effect.

CASE STUDY 3 — REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

PRIMARY SCHOOL VIRTUAL LEARNING MODULES

With funding from our sustainability partner, SSE Airtricity, the Discovery & Learning team designed two differentiated modules for teachers to deliver in their schools or while remote teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. These curriculum-linked primary school modules, 'Amazing Adaptations' and 'Champions for Conservation', were developed to support teachers to provide rich learning about wildlife and conservation and to motivate learners to carry out pro-conservation behaviours. These innovative modules consist of a teacher pack, interactive PowerPoint lessons, a pre-recorded virtual zoo tour presented by a zoo educator, differentiated worksheets and an extension activities pack. Following completion of the course, a zoo educator delivers a live Zoom call with learners to answer questions. These modules extend our conservation education objectives into classrooms around Ireland. They helped us to stay engaged with schools during the Zoo's closures and have remained popular with schools. To date, over 1,500 learners, often from schools who wouldn't ordinarily be able to attend Dublin Zoo for geographical or financial reasons, have participated.

Main image: Meeting a Macleay's spectre stick insect as part of an after-schools programme

Above image: Zoo Educator, Kelly, delivering a virtual primary school session in 2021



CASE STUDY 4 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AFTER SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

This collaboration between various youth services and the Discovery & Learning department aims to provide small groups of young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds with opportunities to have fun and innovative zoo education experiences. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, this 4-week programme encourages young people to become advocates of nature, influencing members of their community to learn about nature, wildlife and conservation. A vital part of this programme is creating a safe and trusted learning environment between participants and the facilitators involved. The aim is to instil confidence in participants and in their knowledge of the world around them. The programme is also a fantastic way of supporting youth workers in their work with disadvantaged groups. The key focus of the programme is on practical learning and relationship-building, allowing young people to enhance their investigative and reflective skills through 'hands on' thought-provoking tasks and discussions.





CASE STUDY 5 — QUALITY STEM EXPERIENCES

DINOSAUR DISCOVERY

Dinosaur Discovery is a state-of-the-art immersive STEM learning experience designed in 2018 as part of the redevelopment of our reptile house, Zoorassic World. The Dinosaur Discovery zone facilitates hands-on exploratory programmes aimed at bringing out pre-school and primary learners' natural curiosity and developing their scientific skills. Learners are taken on a journey of inquiry to learn more about dinosaurs, their fossils and the evolution of modern-day birds and reptiles. As part of this journey, learners step inside Dinosaur Discovery immersing themselves into the world of a palaeontologist and carrying out their own fossil excavation. Using specialist tools and wearing palaeontologist jackets, they become fully immersed in the life of a scientist. This innovative space is used for formal and informal learning programmes. One of the most popular is 'Dinosaur Families', where family members work together in a scientific approach to experience the uncovering of fossils buried deep in the earth.

Main image: Young learners immersing in life as a palaeontologist at Dinosaur Discovery

Above image: Primary teachers engaging with tree identification at the Wild Space



CASE STUDY 6 — PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PRIMARY TEACHERS SUMMER COURSE

Dublin Zoo has run the Department of Education and Skills (DES) approved primary teachers summer course for over 30 years. Originally run in partnership with the National History Museum, the zoo now hosts a multi-methodology weeklong programme for 75 primary school teachers. The focus of the course is to support teachers to deliver the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) curriculum in their own schools. Zoo educators, animal care specialists and facilitators from partner organisations, such as Bird Watch Ireland, deliver theory-focused sessions followed by active outdoor learning workshops. The programme has evolved to include sustainability education and pro-environmental behaviour activities to align with the conservation education objectives for Dublin Zoo. Demand for this programme and the results of its post-course evaluation are exceptionally high.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION EDUCATION

This Conservation Education Master Plan identifies Dublin Zoo's organisational commitments to best practice in zoo education as outlined by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) and the International Zoo Educators Association (IZE). These commitments, underpinned by our values stated on page 5, also align with best practice in delivering high-quality STEM education

experiences as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills STEM policy. Each of these commitments has a list of key priorities, which will help us embed curiosity and science-based conservation learning into everyday life. This is what is required to achieve our ultimate objective: to cultivate the next generation of conservationists.



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills



COMMITMENTS:

1 BUILDING A CULTURE
OF CONSERVATION AND
STEM EDUCATION

2 EMBEDDING MULTIPLE
PURPOSES OF
CONSERVATION EDUCATION

3 PROMOTING
CONSERVATION
EDUCATION FOR ALL

4 BEING INNOVATIVE AND
TRANSFORMATIONAL
IN CONSERVATION
EDUCATION

5 DEVELOPING CONSERVATION
EDUCATION TECHNIQUES
THAT DEMONSTRATE A
RESPECT FOR ANIMALS
AND OUR HIGH STANDARDS
OF WELFARE

6 PRIORITISING OPTIMISTIC
AND SOLUTION-
BASED CONSERVATION
AND SUSTAINABILITY
EDUCATION

7 SUPPORTING OUR
DISCOVERY & LEARNING
TEAM IN PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
AND TRAINING

8 STRENGTHENING
THE EVIDENCE FOR
THE CONSERVATION
EDUCATION VALUE OF
ZOOS AND AQUARIA

OUR COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION EDUCATION

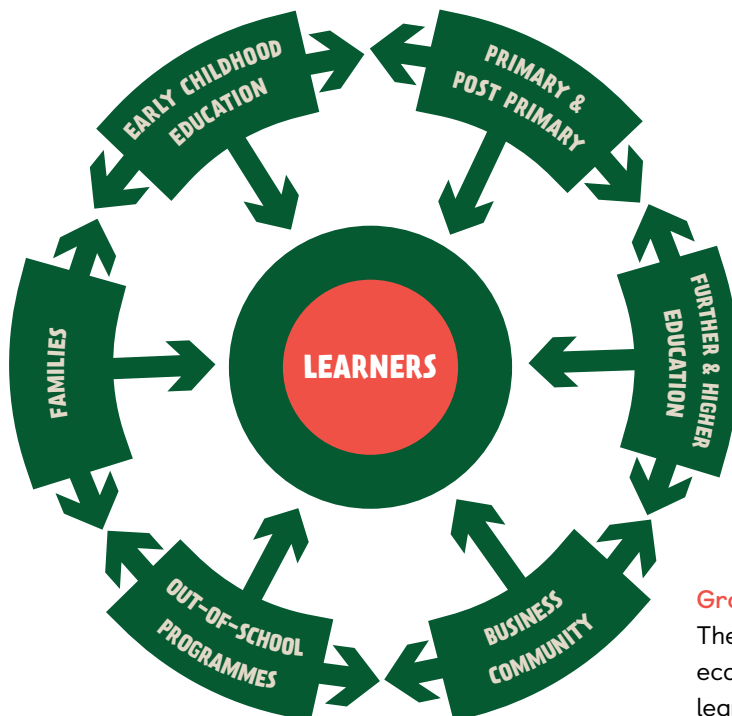
1 BUILDING A CULTURE OF CONSERVATION AND STEM EDUCATION

As we approach a paradigm shift towards a zoo-based conservation organisation of national and global impact, a culture of conservation and STEM education must be embedded in our people and in how the visitor experience is organised. We must deliver consistent conservation messages and maintain a solutions-based approach to supporting wildlife. This starts with a commitment to our purpose and vision: to inspire a passion for nature – one person, one family at a time. At Dublin Zoo, a culture of conservation education

is necessary to promote conservation-friendly actions in society. As we address Dublin Zoo 200's strategic objective 5: operating a sustainable visitor attraction, we must put conservation-based decision-making at the heart of what we do to reflect the sustainable solutions we offer to our audience.

In developing our culture of conservation education, we will work with the aims of other conservation education frameworks to act as a joined-up forum for nature. Among these are the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and WAZA's Conservation Education Strategy, titled 'Social Change for Conservation'. In addition, we will emphasise the relevance of conservation education in the STEM education experience provided by the Department of Education and Skills STEM Education Policy (see graphic below).

STEM EDUCATION EXPERIENCE



Graphic:
The STEM education ecosystem for learners of all ages

PRIORITIES

We will:

1. Ensure conservation education messaging is clear, based on scientific facts, appropriate to the audience and has actionable outcomes.
2. Establish a quality framework for conservation education programme design and delivery.
3. Develop conservation and STEM programming at all levels, from pre-school to higher education. This includes establishing undergraduate and masters programmes in partnership with higher education institutions.
4. Ensure facilities are appropriate to the needs of the audience and support the development of STEM-based play areas.
5. Work with Dublin Zoo's board, staff, volunteers and contractors to harness understanding and support for our conservation education commitments.
6. Promote conservation education in education networks and with trainee and qualified teachers.

ALIGNMENT

By promoting conservation education practices at Dublin Zoo, with learners and in teacher continuous professional development, as well as developing higher education partnerships, we will be contributing to: Quality Education (SDG 4), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Climate Action (SDG 13) and Work in Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17).



OUR COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION EDUCATION

2 EMBEDDING MULTIPLE PURPOSES OF CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Dublin Zoo reaches a broad range of audiences, from pre-school to higher education, through a range of formal and informal programmes that focus on different purposes. As we develop our programming, we will focus on five purposes, which we will refer to as the BASIC Framework.

The BASIC Framework underpins our core purposes for Conservation Education and is designed to motivate and mobilise audiences into active conservation advocacy. A key part of this framework is to identify ways to foster positive connections to wildlife and nature. This will enable outcomes that drive social actions that benefit people and nature.

This framework should also be realised through a public engagement plan that will look to deliver a multi-purpose approach to learning opportunities for visitors. This includes interpretation, keeper talks, volunteer events and public engagement. We need to harness the leisure time spent at Dublin Zoo and aim to foster respect and empathy for animals. In addition, we need to provide opportunities for people to feel intrinsically linked to wildlife.

The Discovery & Learning Team can reach a wider audience with appropriate resources assigned (staff and skills) and in collaboration with the Conservation and Science team. Our ambitions together are to deliver social action campaigns and higher education programming with a focus on conservation science education, in partnership with local Higher Education Institutions.

BASIC FRAMEWORK AT DUBLIN ZOO

BEHAVIOURAL

B

Motivate pro-environmental behaviours, actions and advocacy towards wildlife and nature.

AFFECTIVE

A

Foster positive connections, emotions, attitudes, values and empathy towards nature and zoos.

SKILLS

S

Develop scientific, technical and personal skills connected to conservation.

INSPIRATION

I

Promote awe, wonder, enjoyment, creativity and inspiration about wildlife and nature.

COGNITIVE

C

Build knowledge and understanding about wildlife, nature and our contribution to conservation.

PRIORITIES

We will:

1. Embed the multiple purposes approach, outlined in the 'BASIC framework', into all formal, informal and volunteer-led public engagement programmes.
2. Develop higher education programming with university partners.
3. Run three social action campaigns in the lifetime of the 'Dublin Zoo 200' Strategy.

ALIGNMENT

By embedding the multiple purposes approach, encouraging people to make sustainable lifestyle choices, as well as developing higher education partnerships, we will be contributing to: Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Climate Action (SDG 13) and Work in Partnership for the Goals (SDG17).



OUR COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION EDUCATION

3 PROMOTING CONSERVATION EDUCATION FOR ALL

Dublin Zoo is based in a progressive, diverse and growing capital city. Market research indicates that visitors to Dublin Zoo are predominantly from the ABC1 socioeconomic category. Our education audiences, particularly primary and secondary schools, have a broader range of diversities including gender, culture, race and ethnicity, and neurodiversity. We cater to these audiences well with the resources in the Discovery & Learning Team. However, we want to do more for learners with additional needs and provide increased access to audiences from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. We also want to provide more opportunities for engagement with adolescent and young adult audiences. We will work towards acquiring the expertise and physical resources to support more diverse audiences in our conservation education provision.

Dublin Zoo has developed its skills in on-site, face-to-face delivery including public engagement. In response to the global pandemic in 2020/21, the department acquired virtual engagement skills for online conservation education delivery. We have enhanced our digital content to include a range of online learning resources. These resources will be developed further to provide a range of bilingual (Irish and English) and accessible resources for pre-schools, primary and secondary schools.

PRIORITIES

We will:

1. Actively reach out to our local community to promote access to quality conservation education.
2. Grow the virtual offering and online resources to ensure those who cannot reach Dublin Zoo still have the option to participate in conservation education programming.
3. Ensure the skillset and resources amongst the Discovery & Learning Team support the delivery of, and access to, a broad range of conservation education opportunities.
4. Provide a range of socially inclusive STEM and conservation learning programmes that cater to our learners' and audiences' needs.
5. Develop a range of bilingual (Irish and English) and accessible resources for pre-school, primary and secondary school students.
6. Build a funding model to initiate a bursary scheme for underprivileged schools that have financial barriers to access.
7. Build on our outreach activities delivered to local community partners, which include primary schools, science festivals and conservation organisations.
8. Develop a Youth Board or work placement opportunities that will engage teenagers and young adults in conservation education.

9. Organise a conservation lecture series in conjunction with the Conservation and Science Team.



ALIGNMENT

By educating our visitors, engaging with local communities and under-represented groups, and encouraging people to make sustainable lifestyle choices, we will be contributing to: Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Climate Action (SDG 13), Life Below Water (SDG 14), Life on Land (SDG 15) and Work in Partnership for the Goals (SDG17).



4 BEING INNOVATIVE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL IN CONSERVATION EDUCATION

When programme planning, the Discovery & Learning Team will develop clear learning objectives that engage as many purposes in the BASIC framework as possible. In addition, these learning objectives will meet the needs of the national curriculum. Our pedagogical approach should take into account how learning outcomes can be measured in order to understand and assess the impact of our learning programmes.

Person-to-person interactions are the most powerful way to deliver on our conservation mission. The Animal Care Team currently deliver regular public engagement activities in the form of keeper talks. Volunteers facilitate engagement with wildlife in the Discovery Centre and at the Discovery Carts, as well as at planned engagement hotspots scheduled in the peak season. There is a need for public engagement activities to be supported by trained staff to ensure consistent messaging and delivery in reaching our visitors. Through collaboration between zookeepers, volunteers and public engagement staff, a visit to Dublin Zoo should provide many learning opportunities for visitors.

Innovation requires people and time to be able to solve complex conservation problems creatively. Design thinking in a collaborative setting is a tried and tested approach in our existing partnership networks with JCT and BIAZA. These networks enable us to deliver STE(A)M workshops that have actionable

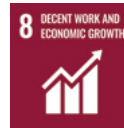
outcomes for conservation. This approach is necessary to bring about transformative outcomes with learning programmes. To be transformative in this space, we also need to increase our collaboration with like-minded peers who want to achieve better outcomes for nature.



PRIORITIES

We will:

1. Ensure all new and existing learning programmes demonstrate innovative and creative approaches to delivering conservation education in order to bring about transformative outcomes for conservation.
2. Design a public engagement framework that reflects our sustainability and conservation objectives and species awareness days.
3. Develop a public engagement team to complement the work of the Conservation and Science Department, Animal Care Team and Volunteers, and to deliver on the public engagement framework on-site and in an outreach capacity.
4. Seek out partnerships with sponsors and other like-minded organisations to deliver transformational programmes to a diverse range of audiences. These should be multi-session modules.
5. Transform existing educational facilities to provide inspiring and immersive learning.
6. Seek out opportunities to communicate conservation and sustainability related issues in innovative ways throughout the site via interpretation.



ALIGNMENT

By transforming existing education spaces to be more relevant to our strategic objectives, and by developing innovative interpretation that communicates key conservation and sustainability messaging, we will be contributing to: Quality Education (SDG 4), Good Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Climate Action (SDG 13) and Work in Partnership for the Goals (SDG17).

OUR COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION EDUCATION

5 DEVELOPING CONSERVATION EDUCATION TECHNIQUES THAT DEMONSTRATE A RESPECT FOR ANIMALS AND OUR HIGH STANDARDS OF WELFARE

At Dublin Zoo, we put the welfare of animals at the heart of what we do. As a zoo with a long history, our relationship with the animals in our care has changed dramatically. We have evolved from a zoo that allowed visitors to freely interact with many species, to a zoo that seeks to maintain the natural behaviour, privacy, and space of the animals in our care.

As we reintroduce animal-learner interactions, we will do this in a way that ensures that all species-specific needs are met, and that does not compromise the welfare or dignity of the animals we introduce to support our conservation messaging. The Discovery & Learning Team will adhere to national policy and best practice guidelines for animal interactions, as well as to the BIAZA, EAZA and WAZA guidelines.

PRIORITIES

We will:

1. Develop an animal handling collection and associated programmes to support the conservation education learning objectives.
2. Demonstrate the prioritisation of the welfare of animals in our collection in all our animal interaction activities.
3. Collaborate with the Marketing and Animal Care departments to develop bespoke animal experiences that prioritise a contemporary outlook and messaging about animal interactions.



ALIGNMENT

By developing an animal handling collection and safe, respectful animal interactions, we will be contributing to: Quality Education (SDG 4) and Life on Land (SDG 15).



**OUR COMMITMENT TO
CONSERVATION EDUCATION**

6 PRIORITISING OPTIMISTIC AND SOLUTION-BASED CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has begun to embed sustainability and climate change education into its primary and post-primary curricula. We must harness the opportunity with these students to raise awareness of the impact that climate change and unsustainable practices are having on biodiversity. We will highlight to the DES and schools that Dublin Zoo (and our BIAZA colleagues) can support these subject areas with our knowledge and effective learning methodologies.

The Discovery & Learning Team is already focused on environmental issues and embed

sustainability and conservation messaging in their programmes. In order to explore these broad-ranging topics in depth, a more focused approach to issues that are relevant to learners' lives is required. Educators will identify the sustainability issues a particular audience is facing, and ensure the learning objectives respond to those. Ultimately, at the programme planning stage, the question to be asked is 'how can we empower an audience to take action in their own lives to live more sustainably and support the protection of species globally?'

To have a broader impact, we need to engage our one million+ visitors with conservation and sustainability messaging and mobilise them to adopt pro-environmental behaviours through social action campaigns. In order to be successful with these campaigns, the Zoo must demonstrate what it is doing, directly and indirectly, to undertake more sustainable operating practices. As an organisation, we must demonstrate our commitment to reducing our own environmental impact, as well as our conservation efforts in Ireland and abroad.



PRIORITIES

We will:

1. Provide an optimistic and solution-based climate change programme to support schools.
2. Embed optimistic and solution-based climate change and sustainability education into our primary and secondary teacher training programmes.
3. Continually review programmes to ensure relevant sustainability and climate change priorities are addressed and solution-based outcomes are included.
4. Support the development of the Sustainability Master Plan for Dublin Zoo.
5. Through social action campaigns, motivate and mobilise audiences to advocate for biodiversity, environmental and conservation issues.



ALIGNMENT

By embedding optimistic and solution-based sustainability messages in our programmes and public engagement, we will be contributing to: Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Climate Action (SDG 13).



OUR COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION EDUCATION

7 SUPPORTING OUR DISCOVERY & LEARNING TEAM IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

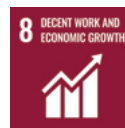
People are both drivers of, and agents for, change. The Discovery & Learning Department at Dublin Zoo has a highly-qualified and diverse team of educators who are also zoologists, biologists and conservationists. This diversity of skills and educational experience extends to the volunteer team. A commitment to building capacity amongst the Discovery & Learning Team is key to ensuring that we can continue to stay relevant with our conservation education methodologies and up-to-date with our conservation messaging.

The team is encouraged to seek out opportunities to build on knowledge and skills that support the objectives of the department and the Zoo. In addition, members of the team are invited to share their learnings and contribute to national educators' networks and international zoo educators' networks on a virtual and in-person basis.

PRIORITIES

We will:

1. Develop the existing professional development and reflective practice frameworks to include reflection on their contribution to the overall Conservation Education Master Plan.
2. Upskill the Discovery & Learning staff and volunteers with annual training based on the needs of the team and current conservation challenges.
3. Contribute to regional and international educator conferences and workshops to share and learn best practices in conservation education.
4. Build on the variety of conservation-supporting activities for volunteers.



ALIGNMENT

By developing our team, we will be contributing to: Quality Education (SDG 4), Good Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16).

OUR COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION EDUCATION

8 STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE FOR THE CONSERVATION EDUCATION VALUE OF ZOOS AND AQUARIA

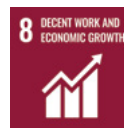
Dublin Zoo's education programmes receive consistent positive feedback from teachers and learners. This verbal and written feedback enables us to ensure that we are meeting the expectations of our audiences. As a leading conservation education department, with award-winning programmes, we also need to provide evidence of the learning taking place. Effective monitoring and evaluation need to be rolled out across all programmes. This is to ensure their efficacy and to demonstrate our impact in leading learners and general visitors to support conservation.

Our large visitation and high volume of bookings through the Discovery & Learning Department provide great scope to bring about social action which supports pro-conservation behaviour. Dublin Zoo will seek out partnerships with academic institutions to embark on social science research to thoroughly measure the impact we are making in conservation education and pro-environmental behaviour change.

PRIORITIES

We will:

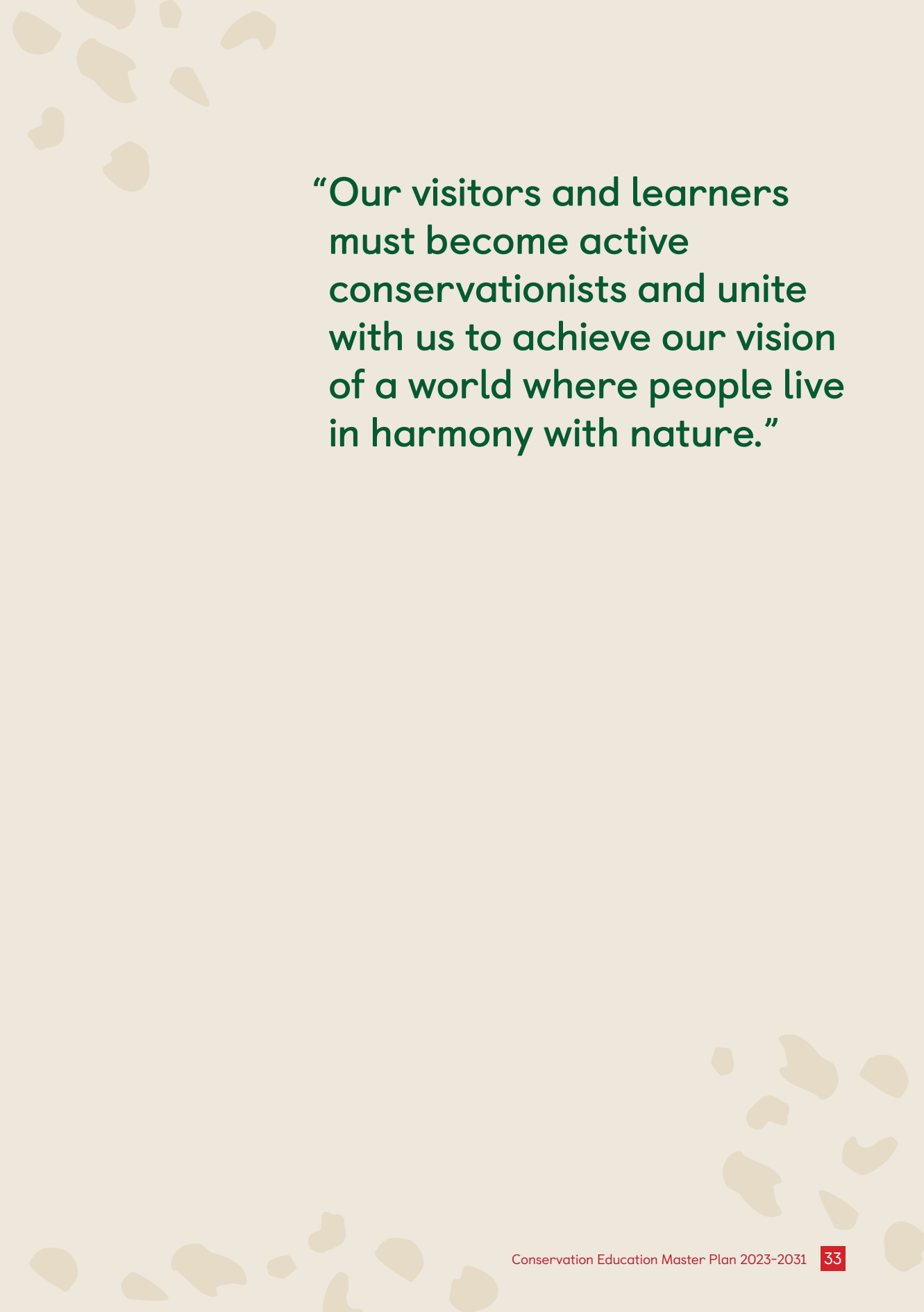
1. Embed monitoring and evaluation of our formal programmes to provide evidence of the effects and impacts of our learning programmes and delivery.
2. Ensure training provided to the Discovery & Learning Team supports the development of programme planning and evaluation skills.
3. Engage with social scientists to support us with the evaluation of conservation learning at Dublin Zoo.
4. Contribute to the body of work that provides evidence of the value of zoos and aquariums in conservation and education.



ALIGNMENT

By evaluating our programmes and ensuring our team are trained well, we will be contributing to: Quality Education (SDG 4), Good Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Work in Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17).



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“Our visitors and learners must become active conservationists and unite with us to achieve our vision of a world where people live in harmony with nature.”

We are Dublin Zoo.
We save wildlife and inspire
a passion for nature – one
person, one family at a time.



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Design by Wilson Creative