



Multidisciplinary workshops and educational programmes

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Audience and Local Community Engagement

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The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation embraces a multidisciplinary approach to its workshops and educational programmes, aspiring to provide a well-rounded experience to the participants that extends beyond conventional boundaries. Through thoughtfully curated programmes, 'Aisthiseis' (Senses) workshops (a programme which aims to remove some of the barriers faced by vulnerable people for the benefit of us all and with a view to designing a better and fairer society) and collaborations with other institutions, one of the BOCCF's main objectives is to offer a holistic educational journey for people of all ages.

Organisation in charge of best practice

Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation

Location

Nicosia, Cyprus

Dates

Aisthiseis programme: January 2023 - Current date. Educational programmes 2018 - current date.

Description

The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation's multidisciplinary educational programmes and 'Aisthiseis' (Senses) workshops are designed to provide participants (both children and adults) with a holistic experience, drawing from various fields of knowledge, and fostering creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Below, these methods will be analysed in three different sections. The first section will explore the educational programmes provided by the BOCCF. The second section will analyse the implementation of the aforementioned values in BOCCF 'Aisthiseis' ('Senses') workshops (This programme aims to remove some of the barriers faced by vulnerable people for the benefit of us all and with a view to designing a better and fairer society). Finally, the third section will delineate how these values feature in collaborations between BOCCF and other institutions.





Through its educational programmes, the BOCCF has introduced a range of inventive and targeted initiatives with the aim of connecting the young population of Cyprus to the realms of art, literature, and civilization. Over 100,000 students have been able to expand their understanding of Cyprus' history and civilization, as well as that of other nations. These multidisciplinary initiatives not only provide valuable knowledge but also offer students unique and unparalleled aesthetic encounters. Currently there are four educational programmes running at the BOCCF, all approved by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. One example is the educational programme titled "Form and shape in soil" which focuses on the ancient ceramic art of Cyprus. During the session, children explore the world of ancient Cypriot ceramic art, looking into its evolution through the archaeological collection at the BOCCF. Students gain insights into the production process, dyeing techniques, and clay properties, learning about the natural resources used as raw materials. The programme also showcases how natural stones add colour to clay and the subsequent creative processes. To comprehend the historical development of ancient ceramics, children examine figurines and vases from the archaeological collection. Then, they engage in a hands-on activity, crafting their own miniature vases or figurines from clay, adorned with natural colours.

"Form and shape in soil" is multidisciplinary in its approach. Students embark on a journey that integrates archaeology and art history, exploring the historical context and evolution of Cypriot ceramic art. Simultaneously, cultural anthropology is evident in this programme as children connect with the material culture of Cyprus, understanding how ceramics reflect ancient societies' daily lives. The use of natural stones for dyeing clay introduces a natural sciences component, offering insights into chemical processes. This blend of disciplines, including education, results in an enriching and comprehensive educational experience that goes beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries.

In 2023, the BOCCF made significant and lasting changes, prioritising initiatives that increase accessibility to culture for all. The 'Aisthiseis' programme has been integrated into BOCCF's core activities, emphasising a commitment to the value that everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to cultural production. 'Aisthiseis' aims to counter barriers faced by vulnerable groups, supporting a more inclusive and equitable society. Other examples of BOCCF initiatives include the instalment of permanent video-guided tours in the Cypriot sign language via QR codes, ensuring inclusivity for diverse audiences. Additionally, there are currently permanent audio-guided tours, accompanying replicas of artifacts from the BOCCF's collections. The programme aims to reach beyond the architectural confines of the museum, with multisensory tours reaching areas outside the BOCCF and involving extensive training for staff and external individuals. By combining elements from cultural studies, linguistics, accessibility design, and education, the 'Aisthiseis' programme exemplifies a forward-thinking approach to cultural inclusion and education.

One of the 'Aisthiseis' workshops is the "Walking Theatre" (for children and adults) which is an interactive walking tour that invites participants to immerse themselves in an unconventional theatrical experience within the confines of the Archaeological Museum at the BOCCF. The session begins with engaging games designed to foster camaraderie among participants. Then, drawing inspiration from the exhibits, collections, scents, and





sounds within the museum, the participants engage in theatrical improvisations under the expert guidance of an actress-theatrolgist and an archaeologist. This multidisciplinary workshop combines expertise from two distinct fields – theatre and archaeology. The collaboration between an actress-theatrolgist and an archaeologist brings together the creative and performative aspects of theatre with the historical and archaeological insights. Participants not only engage in theatrical activities but also gain a deeper understanding of the historical context and artifacts within the museum.

The BOCCF also actively collaborates with diverse institutions to organise multidisciplinary workshops. These joint efforts involve partnerships with educational institutions, museums, and other cultural organisations. By combining expertise from various fields such as art, history, science, and technology, these workshops provide participants with a comprehensive and innovative learning experience. An example of a collaboration with a multidisciplinary approach is the collaboration between the Cyprus Institute and the BOCCF to offer the workshop titled “Mediterranean Diet: From the Neolithic period to today”. This workshop was held under the European programme “Foodprint: The Mediterranean Diet Revisited” which is a cross-media project explaining why the Mediterranean Diet is relevant to our lives. The workshop was specifically designed for children aged 8-12 and explored the origins and enduring essence of the Mediterranean Diet, spanning from the Neolithic era to the present day. Led by Archaeologists-Researchers from the Cyprus Institute, the workshop comprises three stations where children examine ancient seeds (Archaeobotany), animal bones (Zooarchaeology), and human bones (Bioarchaeology) commonly uncovered in archaeological excavations.

“Mediterranean Diet: From the Neolithic period to today” integrates expertise from various archaeological disciplines and simultaneously allows participants to explore different aspects of the Mediterranean Diet, incorporating botanical, zoological, and human biological perspectives. Encouraging a broader exploration of topics, this workshop is multidisciplinary at its core.

In conclusion, the BOCCF actively tries to incorporate various disciplines in its workshops, educational programmes, and through its collaborations with other organisations. This approach has been proven to be very effective for the participants’ learning experience, creativity, comprehensive understanding in various fields, as well as encouraging innovation and creativity as different disciplines bring unique perspectives and methodologies.







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Links

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Resources needed

The successful implementation of BOCCF's multidisciplinary educational programmes and workshops acquires various resources. These include hiring skilled educators/facilitators who are proficient in diverse fields such as archaeology, art, and theatre. Their expertise is essential for creating well-rounded and inclusive programmes. Furthermore, the BOCCF has invested in technology to facilitate accessibility, such as creating video-guided tours in sign language. This includes acquiring cameras and recording equipment. Financial resources are crucial for program development, outreach, and ensuring accessibility, particularly for initiatives targeting vulnerable populations. Lastly, ongoing support and collaboration from external institutions contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of BOCCF's multifaceted endeavours.

Challenges encountered

BOCCF encounters some challenges in the implementation of its multidisciplinary initiatives. Facing the challenges of attracting new audiences and maintaining relevance, the BOCCF recognises the imperative to continually revitalise its educational programmes and all its workshops in general. This involves a commitment to introducing captivating elements within the monthly schedule, ensuring that each instalment offers stimulating content. A key strategy involves tailoring workshops to appeal to diverse target groups, considering the unique needs and preferences of each audience. This customization is facilitated by a team of professionals, each possessing specialised expertise in specific areas, selected to contribute to the diversity of the cultural experiences offered. The BOCCF aims to create an inclusive environment that resonates with a broad spectrum of participants, addressing the evolving expectations and interests of both existing and potential audiences. Another challenge that the BOCCF faces is maintaining financial sustainability which is crucial, particularly for targeted programmes, and securing funding for initiatives like 'Aisthiseis' workshops is vital for their continuity. Additionally, the BOCCF needs to constantly adapt to the evolving educational landscape and technological advancements which require continuous assessment and integration of innovative methodologies while preserving the core values and aims of each workshop. For example, technology plays a key role in the 'Aisthiseis' workshops as it enables the creation of accessible content. Its integration not only expands the reach of cultural initiatives but also enhances the depth and impact of the educational experiences offered to diverse audiences.

Evidence of success

Evaluating the effectiveness of the BOCCF's multidisciplinary workshops and educational programs involves assessing success through various means: Feedback: Feedback for the BOCCF's educational programmes and workshops consistently reflects participants' positive experiences. The BOCCF receives commendations for its inclusive and accessible approach, with participants expressing satisfaction in the design of workshops that cater to diverse needs. For example, for the BOCCF's educational programmes, after each session, teachers receive an evaluation form. The form includes targeted questions such as ""Would you recommend this educational program to other schools?"" and ""How satisfied are you with the programme?"". The received feedback from these evaluation forms consistently reflects an excellent overall response. This feedback not only affirms





the success of the BOCCF's educational initiatives but also serves as a valuable endorsement from educators, further solidifying the Foundation's reputation for delivering impactful and well-received educational programmes. Participation rates: High participation rates in both 'Aisthiseis' workshops and educational programmes further validate the success of the BOCCF of this multidisciplinary practice. The consistently strong turnout signifies a broad appeal and resonance with the community. BOCCF has executed approximately 54 educational programmes for the year 2023, with each session having an attendance of 25 children. Additionally, in 2023, a total of 65 'Aisthiseis' workshops were held. This robust participation is indicative of the Foundation's ability to attract and cater to new audiences. The widespread engagement underscores the inclusivity embedded in the design of the workshops and educational programmes, demonstrating the BOCCF's commitment to making cultural initiatives accessible to a broad spectrum of individuals. Social Media and Online Presence: Another way of measuring success, is through the BOCCF's social media posts about its workshops and educational programmes. The BOCCF is collaborating with an external marketing agency that aims for high engagement on social media posts. These engagement levels, including likes, shares, and comments on these posts, provide a reflection of the ongoing success and relevance these programmes. Furthermore, press releases are being sent to the media in Cyprus to inform and attract new audiences. Collaboration and Partnerships: The success of the BOCCF's multidisciplinary approach is evident through collaborations and partnerships with external institutions. These partnerships bring diverse expertise, innovative programming formats, and increased outreach to the BOCCF's cultural initiatives. By engaging with professionals from various fields, the foundation ensures a comprehensive approach to its educational programs, enhancing the richness of cultural experiences for a broader audience. Collaborations contribute to community integration, shared resources, and cross-disciplinary learning. By employing a combination of these measurement strategies, the BOCCF gains an insight of the success of its multidisciplinary initiatives. Continuous assessment and a commitment to improvement are essential for ensuring ongoing success of highlighting the synergy of diverse expertise, aiming to transcend the limitations of a single disciplinary perspective.

Potential for transfer

The prospect of transferring BOCCF's diverse educational initiatives embodied in 'Aisthiseis' workshops to another cultural institution presents a valuable opportunity for knowledge exchange, broader societal influence and more accessibility to diverse groups. The transferability stems from the flexible and scalable nature of the programme, allowing for customization to meet the specific needs and cultural context of a different institution. The success of BOCCF's initiatives in engaging youth with various fields demonstrates their universal appeal, making them adaptable to various educational settings. An example is the 'Form and shape in soil' programme which looks into ancient ceramic art and can easily be integrated into another institution's curriculum, providing students with a distinctive and enriching educational experience. Furthermore, the potential transfer of 'Aisthiseis' workshops, aimed at breaking barriers for vulnerable populations, can be replicated in diverse cultural contexts. Such initiatives, when transferred, have the capacity to contribute to the creation of fairer societies globally by addressing the needs of marginalized communities, building informed spaces that are accessible to all. Collaborations with external institutions further underscore the transferability potential.





Successful partnerships between BOCCF and other organisations showcase the feasibility of establishing similar collaborations in new cultural environments. The recently concluded "Summer at the Museum 2023" stands as a testament to the success of such collaborative efforts, particularly evident in the partnership with the Cyprus Institute's STARC. The educational visit to STARC, where children explored Osteoarchaeology, Zoology, and Archaeobotany, exemplifies how fruitful collaborations can transcend traditional museum boundaries and introduce children to scientific disciplines.

Further Information

More about 'Summer at the Museum 2023': In July 2023, the BOCCF decided to organise a two-week special summer learning experience for children aged 8-12 years old, titled 'Summer at the Museum 2023'. This programme incorporated a multidisciplinary approach. Through engaging activities like archaeological digs, art projects, and interactive exercises, children cultivated critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a profound appreciation for cultural heritage. The collaborative nature of the program, involving expert animators and peers, promoted teamwork and effective communication. Educational excursions in Nicosia provided real-world exposure, strengthening the children's connection to the subject matter. An example of an educational programme that the children engaged in, was titled "Invaluable: Currency and Other Treasures." Additionally, they participated in a novel component of the 'Aisthiseis' programme, experiencing the 'Walking Theatre' at the BOCCF's Cyprus Mint History Museum. They looked into myths and fragments of Cypriot history inspired by the ancient coin collection. The expedition persisted as the children, guided by an actress-psychologist and an archaeologist, played games, drew inspiration, and crafted theatrical improvisations, offering them a unique theatrical encounter within the museum's confines. Overall, BOCCF's multidisciplinary endeavors redefine cultural education, offering participants knowledge woven from diverse disciplines. From engaging educational programmes to collaborative workshops and partnerships, BOCCF's commitment to multidisciplinary unfolds as a transformative force in the cultural landscape, enriching understanding and encouraging a dynamic and inclusive approach to learning.

