



# Museum Management Training at the Fine Arts Zanabazar Museum

UNESCO-Zanabazar Museum National Training Workshop – Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 8- 23 October 2007

## BACKGROUND READING MATERIALS

### **Museum Security and Disaster Preparedness**

#### **Who?**

Security and safety, in all their aspects, must be seen as the responsibility of everyone connected with the museum or related institution. Protecting the often unique collections is a most important professional and ethical responsibility of all, while in most if not all countries all employers and owners or occupiers of buildings and land are legally obliged to ensure so far as practicable the health and safety of everyone entering the museum, whether visitor or employee. Security and safety are not just a matter for security officers or guards and their supervisors. The governing authority (e.g. Ministry, Board) also needs to understand the importance of providing a secure and safe environment, while the Director and other senior staff have a special responsibility to ensure that the management systems, including staff organisation, supervision and training, meet the necessary standards.

Therefore, training and information sessions relating to security and safety need to be provided for all connected in any direct way with the museum. Every new employee or volunteer, regardless of the level of their work or their previous experience, needs a security and safety briefing before they start work, and similar arrangements need to be made for training the employees of contractors working either regularly (e.g. services maintenance contractors) or on special projects (e.g. building alterations, installation of a new exhibition) within the museum. This initial information and training in security and safety procedures needs to be followed by longer-term and more specialised training relevant to the particular job or level within the institution.

Relevant regular training and re-training should also be arranged for all the specialist staff according to their responsibilities: curatorial, conservation, education and communication, administrative etc., while more intensive and specialised training in security and safety matters, including the proper operation and use of electronic and other security and safety systems will be needed for the security staff, including the museum security officers or guards. There can be big benefits in bringing together different types of staff into the same training course group and encouraging an open dialogue among its members. A specialist curator might then be able to discuss with e.g. a security guard or an exhibits designer the significance and importance of an object or collection, while a conservator-restorer could point out why e.g. low lighting levels or “do not touch” rules are needed for particular objects or collections.

#### **What?**

Security must begin with an effective policy and a system for enforcing this, as is stressed in the box: “Who is responsible for security policy and its enforcement?” (page 179 - English edition). This

needs to be developed into a practical policy statement applying to each institution, based on a risk analysis for each building or site. All staff need to have a reasonable understanding of all important security systems and aids that are in use in the museum. In addition, those with policy and management responsibilities need to have a wider understanding of what is currently possible in terms of physical and electronic security systems so that they can keep under regular review the current arrangements, and consider whether these need to be upgraded.

Where emergency and security policies already exist for the museum or museums, provide photocopies of these to participants (or samples from various participating museums if the training programme members are from more than one institution). Where they exist, policies should be reviewed, perhaps using group discussion; where there are no existing policies the trainees' work could contribute towards new policy statements on emergencies and security.

### **How?**

The best source of training expertise is very often within the museum or related body itself, and those organising training programmes should build up a list of local museum and other specialists who can help with the training. Also, the museum staff participating in the training will almost always have their own experiences and views, positive or negative, and they should be strongly encouraged to share and discuss these with the rest of the training group.

Many museums also have developed close links with their national or local security and safety organisations, including the police, fire, civil protection, and public safety authorities or organisations. Such bodies are usually very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in museum training programmes and training exercises, and e.g. to demonstrate the correct operation of security and safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers.

In addition, try to arrange study visits to the premises of cooperating security and safety services and organisations, e.g. fire stations, security or emergency operations control centres, as well as to museums and other cultural premises (e.g. major libraries or archives) with developed security and safety systems.

A risk analysis training could involve the training group in discussion of some possible risks and both inspection of the buildings and research into the frequency and potential force of natural hazards, e.g. flood or earthquake.

In relation to physical and electronic security aids, the technology is constantly being improved: this is especially important in relation to crime prevention, since criminals are constantly seeking to develop methods for overcoming each new security system that is developed. Also, new approaches to fire and safety issues are always being developed. It is therefore very important that those concerned with both security management and with training keep in close touch with sources of specialised information and advice on advances in technology, such as international colleagues, e.g. through the ICOM International Committee for Museum Security (ICMS) <http://icms.icom.museum/> In many countries there will also be national and local security and safety sources, such as a crime prevention service of the national or local police or a fire prevention and safety department of the local fire service, while the manufacturers and suppliers of specialist security equipment can also be valuable partners in training.

(extracted from *Running a Museum: The Trainer's Manual*, p.35-36, UNESCO 2006)