



Healthy Campus Case Study



HEA

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas
The Higher Education Authority

DCU Human Library

Institution/ Organisation	Dublin City University
Who leads/ led the project?	DCU Healthy
Date and timeframe	5th March 2026 and 20th March 2024
Project Rationale	Implement the Human Library as a learning platform in the University Community to raise cultural awareness and diversity. It's a "library" where people, instead of books, are on loan to readers. Its purpose is to challenge stereotypes and prejudices through open, honest conversation in a safe environment.

HUMAN LIBRARY

DCU Human Library

Unjudge someone.

Borrow a "Human Book" for a 20-minute conversation. Challenge stereotypes and explore diverse life stories through open, honest dialogue.

Browse: Pick a "title" from our catalog. Borrow: "Check out" a volunteer. Discuss: Ask questions, share stories, and return.

Thursday 5 March 2026
2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Cregan Library
St. Patrick's Campus

To learn more about the event or register to attend, please scan the QR code or visit dcu.ie/library/human-library-dcu

Project Overview/ Summary	
<p>Planning</p> <p>The organising committee comprised staff from Student Support and Development, DCU Library, and the Students' Union. Planning commenced six months in advance and followed the Human Library Organisation Guidelines.</p> <p>Recruitment of Books</p> <p>To participate, a Book must have lived experience of stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice, or stigmatisation. The committee contacted individuals within their own networks and previous participants from another Dublin-based Human Library event to gauge interest.</p> <p>Training</p> <p>All Books and Librarians completed mandatory Human Library Organisation training, which can take up to four hours. Librarians were also encouraged to attend online Human Library events to gain experience.</p> <p>Communication and Marketing</p> <p>Posters were displayed across the main campuses, and the event was promoted via all-staff and all-student emails, as well as weekly newsletters.</p>	<p>Social media posts explained the concept of the Human Library, supported by short promotional videos shared before and during the event.</p> <p>Implementation</p> <p>The event was held in the library's exhibition and group work area, divided into three zones. One zone was wheelchair accessible, while another provided a quiet space for Books who were hard of hearing. A separate quiet area was available for breaks, with a counsellor and security on call.</p> <p>Books wore blue T-shirts and Librarians yellow. Information stands promoted DCU Healthy, Speak Out, Safe Zone, the Library, and the Students' Union. Sample Books covered topics such as homelessness, autism, mental health recovery, previous drug misuse, and being gay in the 1980s.</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with high levels of satisfaction reported by both Books and Readers, who highlighted the impact, learning, and emotional engagement of the experience.</p>

Key Learning Points
<p>Give a safe space to humans and they will connect: When you try to explain to another person what a Human Library is, they are always confused. Furthermore, they can feel intimidated by the topics or fear they will say the wrong thing. However, once a reader sits down and connects with the human book, magic happens. The engagement, connection and sense of belonging is so strong and positive. The book feels seen and heard and the reader gets to understand an important story and has a safe place to ask questions they would not normally do.</p> <p>Key Advice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give the committee at least 6 months to organise the Human Library for the first time. It takes time to understand the concept, apply for the license and recruit books. 2. Encourage all committee members to be readers in online Human Libraries to understand the concept, the positive change that happens after you read a human book and the benefits of the concept. It will make it easier to promote it to others. 3. Encourage students, staff and the local community to take part.



Limerick Framework for Action			Whole Campus Approach	Type of Evaluation
Culture	Partnership	Students	Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) (Pillar 2)	Process Evaluation
			Campus Culture & Communications (Pillar 3)	Outcome Evaluation
			Health Focused Area (Pillar 5)	Summative Evaluation

