Transmitting Skills and Strengthening Traditions: Experiences of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

Presenter: Dr. Tran Thi Thu Thuy

Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

- Founding in 1995
- Opening in November 1997

Traditional crafts

- Traditional crafts play an important role
- Traditional techniques and materials of craft have been diminishing
- What can we do and how can we preserve and promote traditional crafts

Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

- Research center for documenting and bringing to life the rich cultural heritage

Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

- Organizing many different activities to preserve and develop ICH
“Crafts in the Classroom” Project

- “Crafts in the classroom” is a project supported by the UNESCO.
- The project aims at making traditional crafts known to and appreciated by young people, especially disadvantaged youth through research and practice.
- The project was implemented at VME in the summer of 2003 then continuing in 2004.

What was taught in this traditional craft class?

A training workshop for research and documentation skills was opened for children.

The first trip to visit the pottery village to give the children an overview of the traditional craft.

Rewrite and redraft the information that children had collected at the craft village.
Workshop classes - basic skills
The first stage

Workshop classes - basic skills
The second stage

Workshop classes - basic skills
The second stage

The second visit to Phu Lang village

The visit to History Museum and Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

Workshop classes - specialized skills
Required results of craft class:

- Children can make products themselves
- Children can make brochures to introduce about craft village or craft class
- VME making a film about the craft class
Development idea for the project

- Guiding children to make panels about craft village, craft people, materials, tool and process of making pottery
- Organizing an exhibition of children's products (panels, pottery products) and what children tell about Phu Lang village, Phu Lang craftspeople and their dream

Purpose

- Make children and craftspeople to be more proud of their work and want to come back to the traditional crafts
- Other children want to join in class
- Encourage craftspeople to have new idea and make changes

Panel about craft village
Panel about craft village
Panel about craft village
Panel about the process of making traditional product
Panel about the process of making new product
New designs and meaning of designs

Mr. Tran Van De
Mr. Pham Van Bay
Phu Lang craftspeople
Phu Lang craftspeople
What benefit children got from the project

In the short term:
- Children can make different products themselves
- Raising awareness of children on traditional crafts
- Creating a close link between children and craft people
- Inspiring the creativeness and initiatives of children in learning

In the long term:
- Occupational orientation for children
- Creating a new generation of artisans or customers in the future

What benefit craftspeople got from the project

- Encouraging the preservation and development of craft villages
- Encouraging the new creation of craftspeople to meet the demand of contemporary life
- Help craftspeople to have more new skills to transmit the craft to the youth
- Understand the important of using and developing natural materials, traditional skills
- Protecting the environment and creating new products but they still depend on tradition
- Gathering more support for traditional crafts
Mr. Nhunh opened the workshop in 2003
Opened the company in 2004

Mr. Nhunh has
3 showrooms in Hanoi,
1 showroom in Hochiminh city
Mr. Nhung started to export his products to South Europe, Japan and America in 2004.

Mrs. Phuong Pottery Workshop (opened in 2005)

Mrs. Phuong's art products

Mrs Phuong started some these products to Korea in 2006, and Australia in 2007
Mrs. Lan’s Pottery workshop
(opened in 2005)

Mr. Bay’s Pottery Workshop
(opened in 2004)

Pham Van Trung - Mr. Bay’s son and his products

Mr. Bay want his son goes to Industrial Fine Art University and continues his trade. He bought a computer for his son and put all photos of pottery products which he and his son created in computer before selling.

Phu Lang pottery village today

- 1 big company, 3 small companies, 7 pottery workshops were established
- Many traders opened Phu Lang pottery shops in Hanoi

Phu Lang pottery shops in Hanoi city
Phu Lang villagers not only using natural materials, develop new products but also protecting environment.

Many Hanoi children want to join in the craft class after seeing the exhibition of craft class.

Other Teaching Intangible Cultural Heritage Programs

Teaching to Make and to Play Traditional toys and Games

- Many toy making villages and toys makers have disappeared because of many plastic toys and computer games.
- These crafts do not have the degree of complexity.

- How to make children to return with traditional toys?
- How to help craftspeople to continue their trade?

Special event for children

- Mid-Autumn Festival
- Started in 2002
- Have continued every Mid-Autumn Festival in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006...

Exhibition and demonstration about traditional toys
Games exhibition

Teaching to making traditional toys

Playing traditional games

Results of the program

- Children return to play traditional toys
- Many schools ask VME organizing similar program for them
- Many other museums, offices...organized similar program
- Craftspeople can sell their toys
- Many traditional toys have come to the market

Asia-Pacific Database on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) by Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)
“I draw the beauty of Hanoi city with many new building, electric and very modern but children still play with traditional toys”
Dinh Quy Duong, Dong Da Secondary School

Textile class
- Have the experience from the pottery class
- No support for craft class any more
- How to continue craft class
- Opened “textile class” in 2005, then continue in 2006
- All expenses of class paid of children

Visiting VME exhibition and documenting

Learning batik of Hmong people
Learning Ikat of Tai people

Drawing motifs and costume of different ethnic groups in Vietnam

Making paper dolls in traditional costume
Making cloth dolls in traditional costume

To create new products

Children's products exhibition

Results

- Children understand some crafts skill to decorate in costume
- Identify motifs and costume of different ethnic groups in Vietnam
- Raising the awareness of children with traditional crafts and culture of different ethnic groups in Vietnam
- Raising children's creation

Pilot project

“Building methods to integrate Hanoi intangible cultural heritage in natural science subjects in secondary school”

A formal education program

Implemented in 2004, and plan to continue in 2007, 2008

Idea and Advisor of project: Dr. Frank Proschan – Smithsonian Institute (now UNESCO Paris)
Researching groups

- VME researchers
- School teachers
- Hanoi Training – Education Service experts

To integrate intangible heritage with subject in school

Using ICH as a tools to teach in formal lesson in class

Result

- Integrating 4 Hanoi ICH into 4 lessons in secondary school
- Indigenous knowledge of making water puppet with lesson “floating”, physics, 8th grade
- Indigenous knowledge of making shadow lantern – Mid Autumn toy with lesson “Radiation”, physics, 8th grade
- Eating betel nut custom with “Canxi Hydroxide (lime)” lesson, chemistry, 9th grade
- Bat Trang pottery with lesson “Silica and Silicate Industry”, chemistry, 9th grade

Thank you very much for your attention