Promotion, Enhancement and Transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage Through Educational Activities
Winnowing trays (กระด้งฝัดข้าว)
- As a handicraft, an artefact displayed in a museum, a winnowing tray can be appreciated by its pleasing shape, intricate weaving patterns, basketry technique. Some call it an example of *folk art*.

- But a winnowing tray comes to life when it is part of everyday life activities when it is being used or made by people who have the knowledge. This type of knowledge is not taught in school, but transmitted in a family, community, and social group. It can be called *practical knowledge* or *embodied knowledge*. 
Mrs. Kum, 70, who lives in Tha Phut community, west of Bangkok, spends most of her life growing rice. Until recently she planted the seedlings, harvested, threshed, husked, winnowed the rice by hand using very simple technology. She is very skilled, and describes several ways of using the winnowing tray, for example:

*fad*: to flip the tray up and let the grains fall to separate the husks from the grains,

*kratai*: to flip in such a way that the grains move from left to right to separate the husked from unhusked grains,

*kratok*: to flip in such a way that the grains move from lower to upper part of the tray to separate small from large grains.

Let's see how she does it.
• The trays are material objects that are part of a set of practical and embodied knowledge. The tangible heritage (object) is **incomplete** without an understanding of the intangible heritage (knowledge, skill, practice, contexts etc.), and vice versa.

• The knowledge is transmitted by practice in the family from childhood. But Tha Phut community has stopped farming in the way Mrs. Kum used to do.

• Museums cannot replace family or community, but it can be a new site of learning and stimulating ideas about the connections between the tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Here are some examples that may give you ideas for your museums or schools.
Tha phut monastery, Nakhon Pathom, west of Bangkok
Training school children to be museum tour guides and museum assistants.
Participation in Cleaning and cataloguing collection
Connecting the older generation to the younger by documenting local history and narratives
Learning local crafts
Banana bark sculpture
basketry
Toymaking, vegetable sculpture
Some reflections

- Not all school children are 'local', a lot of them are children of migrant workers from the northeast who have different cultural background and do not share pride in the local heritage.

- Because of socio-economic constraints, migrant worker parents prefer children to earn income at weekends rather than participating in museum projects.

- School schedule can be demanding, museum educational activities are seen as superfluous.

- Museum operators and school authorities may not cooperate closely.

- There is little continuity once resources from outside agencies stop.

- Religious festivals are important opportunities for transmitting cultural practices. Monastery museums become lively during
Wat Lai Hin, Lampang, northern Thailand
Art can be an effective means to document, observe, and learn about objects in the museum. We are fortunate to have an inspiring teacher.
Training local village children to become young folklore researchers.
SAC supported anthropology undergraduates from Silpakorn university to study the community, and encouraged them to collaborate with museum activities. Seen here is their presentation of the community kinship chart.
Art classes in the monastery
Some reflections:

- Schools and museums only organise activities together when there are extra resources – government special funding, grants from outside agencies. Without funding, or without agencies to facilitate the collaboration, schools and museums tend to work separately.
- Schools have other priorities. High school children are preoccupied with university entrance exams.
- The vitality of local museums depend on the availability, time, and energy of operators. All of them have other jobs, and other priorities.
Ban Don monastery in Rayong, east of Bangkok, has a collection of 200 yrs old puppets, *nang yai.*
Nang yai is a spectacle consisted of shadow images, dance, music, singing, recitation, dialogues and humour. It depicts episodes of the *Ramakien* epic. Puppet performances take place at night using a large screen (6 m. high by 10m. wide) and an open fire (now spotlights) to create light and shadow. Puppeteers hold puppets and dance both behind and in front of the screen. Performances used to take place during royal cremation ceremonies, cremations of high-ranking persons or monks. The tradition began to decline and disappeared in early 20th century. Collections of puppets survive in some monasteries. Three monastery troupes were revived. Now they perform regularly and the collections of puppets are shown in monastery museums.
The puppet troupe of Ban Don was revived some ten years ago by a group of local leaders together with the abbot. Local musicians, singers, dancers helped to train schoolchildren to set up a puppet troupe. A professional dance group from Bangkok helped them to improve theatrical techniques.
School children are trained to dance and manipulate puppets by older boys, with help from professional dancers.
The old puppets are in bad condition, need repair and replacement. But the art of puppet making is lost (or probably not known in this region). Nang yai puppets are made from whole buffalo hide that has to be soaked in water, scraped, stretched, dried. Then an outline is drawn, or copied on the hide, then punched out and cut to create images.
Training in puppet making
Mr. Suchart is a art instructor in a university in southern Thailand who is also a puppet maker and puppetee of *nang talung* tradition. His family runs a puppet museum which is in the network of SAC. We invited his team to do workshops at BanDon monasteries, teaching schoolchildren the techniques of puppet making.
The Ban Don puppet troupe members are now able to make their own *nang yai* puppets. They also make puppet souvenirs and a collapsible model of puppet theatre for exhibition display.
Some reflections:

- Management of monastery troupe creates some conflicts of authority and income sharing between the monastery, the elderly members, the young group leader, the local authorities, but to some extent reconciled.

- Traditional dramatic style is a point of contention between authenticity and innovation. The Ban Don style draws criticism because of its fast pace and use of modern costumes.

- Children have to be trained continually to replace older ones who leave school. Recruiting new dancers can be difficult.

- However the troupe has gained recognition, been commissioned to perform locally and invited abroad.
Some points for you to discuss:

- Local, community, monastery museums have limited resources (limited funds, operators on voluntary and limited-time basis, management embedded in traditional and local practices) which make it difficult to organise children activities on a regular basis.

- Vitality of local museums has to be understood in terms of local religious festivals when museums come to life.

- ICH is a living culture that is constantly changing. It is often hard to draw the line between transmission and re-creation, and often raises issues of authenticity.

- State education policy recognises local knowledge but in practice schools and parents put emphasis on subjects that will get children into university and highly paid jobs.

- Structurally local museums are not an integral part of local schools. Community strength and charismatic leaders are crucial to the collaboration between museums and schools.
Thank you