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**BRINGING THE INSIDE OUT: REACHING NEW AUDIENCES**

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Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles

**Brief description**

The Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles (QSMT) has organized many in-house activities including seminars, informal talks, workshops, and fashion shows. This has brought people into the museum to share their experience and knowledge with the staff and other participants. Last year, the QSMT started a new project to reach out to audiences around Thailand. Besides the mobile exhibition to be launched in 2017, we have already begun our outreach program in 2015 by helping local residents in Baan Nong Khae, Sakon Nakhon province, Northeastern Thailand (*Isaan*) establish a community museum. Its goal is to pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's visits to the village and to preserve and present the textile traditions of this region.

**Target audience**

- Villagers in Nong Khae Village, Kok Sri Suphan, Sakon Nakhon province.
- Students of all levels and young adults.

**Strategies and tools**

**Community Participation:** Making local people stakeholders in creating and running the museum. The QSMT staff and the SUPPORT foundation under the patronage of HM Queen Sirikit worked closely with them. They brainstormed with the QSMT staff and consultants but ultimately made the necessary decisions themselves. The villagers and volunteer students were given training on how to run the museum and interact with visitors.

**Living Museum**

**Mission:** To show the way of life of people in Northeastern Thailand by demonstrating how to make handwoven silk, which includes reeling, bleaching, dyeing the silk threads and preparing the loom. Visitors are encouraged to experience the weaving process themselves. There is also an exhibition telling the story of HM Queen Sirikit, who came to Baan Nong Khae three times in 1978, 1980, and 1982, along with His Majesty the King and HRH Princess Sirindhorn. The museum was formerly the home of Mrs. Toom Phromdi and Mrs. Tai Saengwong, sisters who were master weavers of silk ikat (*mat mii*). In 1978, Her Majesty commissioned Mrs. Tai to copy the silk ikat that had been used to make Her favorite jacket designed by Paris couturier Pierre Balmain. Her Majesty left the jacket with Mrs. Tai to use as a model, and later gave it to her. After Mrs. Tai's death, the SUPPORT Foundation and the villagers preserved the house, as a tribute to Her Majesty's visits and turned it into the Mrs. Toom and Mrs. Tai Museum (*Baan Pa Toom-Pa Tai Museum*).

### **Educational goals**

- Villagers learned how to run the museum: registering and displaying objects, managing the museum and planning tour schedules, for example.
- The young tour guides realize the importance of the art of traditional weaving and are proud of their local heritage. It helps preserve and nurture cultural traditions.

### **Actions**

- The QSMT made work schedules and a museum plan.
- Villagers learn basic collection care and museum management.
- The QSMT cooperates with Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University to create a textile weaving and dyeing program. Students will come to the museum to learn from the skilled weavers there.

- Students who finish the young guide course will be the museum guides and help demonstrate how to weave and dye in the museum workshop.
- The museum shop was created to sell local textiles and handicrafts made by villagers.

## Evaluation

The Mrs. Toom and Mrs. Tai Museum has been open to the public since 24 June 2015. There are 10 committee members selected by the community and 6 young, well-trained tour guides. At least 10,000 baht per month has been donated by visitors to the museum since its opening.

## Outcomes

The Mrs. Toom and Mrs. Tai Museum is a learning center for indigenous textiles. It helps encourage villagers to continue weaving *mat mii* in the traditional way—with natural dyes and in age-old patterns—which provides them with an important source of income.

## Reference

1. The SUPPORT Foundation, Bangkok
2. Office of Her Majesty's Private Secretary, Bangkok
3. The Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles, Bangkok



*Her Majesty giving Her silk ikat jacket to Mrs. Tai during Her visit in 1978.*



*Young tour guides during training.*



*A student telling the story of sericulture to Thanpuying Charungjit Teekara, HM Queen Sirikit's Deputy Private Secretary.*



*The entrance of Baan Pa Toom-Pa Tai Museum*



*The QSMT staff and villagers of Baan Nhong Khae, Sakon Nakhon province.*