First I want to thank National Museums Liverpool to invite me here to talk about Children's right to access information and the role of museums/
Construction

- The situation of Children’s right to access Information In Vietnam
- Our Challenges
- Role of museums – what museum can do
Rapid economic development in big cities, especially in cities of developing countries such as Vietnam, has contributed to growth of the nation. However the speed of change is creating a gap in access to information between children in cities and in rural communities and between the fortunate and less fortunate. Currently urban population represents 34% of the Vietnamese total population, though this is rising.
What can museums do to meet the challenges of "hungry" information in countryside areas. Is this part of their role of social harmony (IMD 2010) This question is relevant not just for Vietnam, but also for many developing countries in Asia and Africa.

First of all, would like to present a number of contemporary issues in Vietnam to illustrate the dangers of a lack of information for children.
The question is:

Museums can they do to meet the challenges of "hungry" information in countryside areas? Is this part of their role of social harmony?
Our Challenges

Without information and self-protection skills, children get themselves in danger zone
Children at risk of abuse

22% of the population earn 10 USD per month in Vietnam:

- Many of them try to escape from the high mountain areas,
- to the big cities to work for more money.
- Without information, These children put themselves into a danger zone.
- Physical and sexual abuse often occurs to children whose position is extremely vulnerable.

*Children always are the first affected before major changes in society*

22% of the population earn 10 USD per month in Vietnam, and levels of poverty mean that children regularly drop out of school even if it is state funded. Many of them try to escape from the high mountain areas to the big cities to work for more money.
Street children believe that earning immediate money is much more useful than reading books, learning math and literature. On the streets there is little or access to government information and their rights to health and education. These children put themselves into a danger zone, especially when they have limited knowledge of self-protection. Physical and sexual abuse often occurs to children whose position is extremely vulnerable. Society subsequently bears heavy socials trying to help these children.

*Children always are the first affected before major changes in society.*
Some children bore into richer families lack a caring parent (divorce, busy in business, indifference, etc.). They often turn to the virtual world on computers, where they can be a hero and save the world, have hundreds of virtual friends and have a powerful virtual voice as a great hero.
Skills in the virtual world seem less useful in the real world, and as children go deeper into the virtual world their ability to socialize is impaired. When these behaviors and thoughts are applied to real life, violence can sometimes result.
Children with HIV and children with sequelae of Agent Orange probably are the most disadvantaged in society. After the war, there are 4 million people sequelae of Agent Orange, 150,000 of them is children. Nearly half (40.8%) of these children can not afford living for themself and more than half (53%) of children infected with Agent Orange live below the poverty line.
It is difficult for those children to integrate with other children in the same class. It is also very difficult to develop an education program in museums for both disabled and non-disabled children as big gaps of knowledge exist between them.
More Challenges

Media information VS traditional culture – too much of information without explanation
Television is very popular now in Vietnam, and can bring all kinds of information for ethnic people who live in the mountainous regions. In particular there are many Korean films on television. With the Bahnar people, Korean films share a symbol of a modern social society.

Consequently, they name their children with names such as ‘Samsung’, ‘Chun Sok’, or ‘Park’.

The practice is threatening the traditional way of naming children, where gender is designated partly by the name given (Y for boy, and H’ for girl. Y Sim is a boy, H’leo is a girl).

I am not sure what happen when British film were show on television, DB could be there some time.??
Many museums are trying to research and develop educational programs about science, art or history to attract children to the museum.
But in fact, we only can attract children from urban areas, other children, poor children who live in rural areas, have difficulty to access that information. Even if they can access it, they don’t have the opportunity to come to museum regularly to experience science or art. On the other hand, those disadvantaged children are most vulnerable victims of violence, abuse or disadvantaged in contemporary society.
I am sure that, museums with a rights-based museological approach can reach disadvantaged children and increase their right to access to useful information - to make them strong enough to protect themselves, to love their culture and also to have a good future.
In June of 2012, the Vietnamese government consulted with children about the draft of a Children’s Law. This really is a positive opportunity for children to participate in the formulation of laws to protect their rights. However, creating opportunities for disadvantaged children is quite difficult. Museums, along with local authorities and public media could act as a bridge between the parliament and disadvantaged groups. If our museum was really deeply involved in those activities, they could also get money from government for their other activities.

People often believe museums rather than public media
“Extending” museum wall “Stories of Mekong – Challenges and Dream” exhibition. This project gathered a number of museums in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Sweden for professional cooperation, shared experiences and work together to develop the travelling exhibition.
We try to create a platform to provide opportunities for the community to share their voice on common challenges of Mekong residents. The exhibition was exhibited in 7 national museums in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Sweden (it is now in Ethnology Museum in Stockholm, Sweden).
Beside the physical exhibition, we also designed an exhibition-poster and sent it to many schools in the Mekong region. This was designed to help students connect and care for local heritage, understand their culture and those of other areas associated connected by the Mekong River.

That is in Ethology Museum now in Stockholm
The exhibition in the museum is about everything after the war, however I want to talk about what they done outside of museum building.

“Extending” museum wall
Case study with War Remnants Museum

- Museum developed many travelling exhibitions to exhibit in far/high mountain area.
- Museum has a lot of activities to support children with disabilities and children legacy of Agent Orange.
- The museum tries to develop activities to bridge the gap between disadvantaged children and better-off children.
- Also, Museum want to be a “connection gate” between disadvantage children with information.
Exhibition "Vietnam Children after the War" in the island of Thanh An commune, Can Gio District, Ho Chi Minh City. HCM (15-16/4/2011)

They developed many travelling exhibitions to far or high mountain areas, also they do a lot of activities to support children with disabilities and children legacy of Agent Orange.
Memories of War Exhibition in Hue, May, 2011
The museum tries to develop activities to bridge the gap between disadvantaged children and better-off children.

Because of these activities, the War Remnants Museum also receives a lot of support from the government to support their work.
Final sample, also as my conclusions, Project: "Strengthening access to reflect the information in order to reserve the cultural heritage value through active project in Daknong and Hanoi".

This is like a pilot project, when we try to training teacher how to work with their student as a partner.
5 days of Training workshop for twenty professional from Daknong and Hanoi, they are all experts on education, law, and cultural studies. They were introduced to a new approaches of teaching and learning (project-based learning) and exposed to the issues of *right to information and the role of right to information in daily life and socio-economic and culturally relevant development*. Participants acquired new teaching skills and learned of ways to access and promote rights to information for students.
Main activities are two camps for students with supervise from twenty-trained professional. The first camp is in Daknong province, the other one is in Hanoi. The purpose of camps is support school student to understand the right to information and the role of right to information in daily life and socio-economic and culturally relevant development thought project-based learning and camping activities. (Topic choice, planning, assigning tasks, team working, collecting data, analysis, report writing, presentation to the community, etc.).
The camps also created conditions to increase friendship and respect to cultural diversity among the members from different locations and different ethnic groups through camp activities. The project aims to maintain the links between members and schools after the camps are over.
Well, I think that’s about it.

I want to thank you once again for allowing me to speak today.
Please email me for any further question or any addition information.

Thank you