



FINAL REPORT

CollAsia Field Project 2021-2022



Honouring the Silent Heroes – An Online Exhibition



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES CENTER 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| PROJECT SUMMARY | 01 |
| PROJECT ACTIVITIES | 02 |
| PROJECT OUTCOMES | 03 |
| PARTNERSHIPS | 04 |
| CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED | 05 |
| QUOTES ON THE PROJECT | 06 |
| FUTURE PLANS | 07 |
| APPENDICES | 08 |

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project aims to exhibit online the collection of the 72,000 civilian soldiers in order to assist universal access to documentary heritage as well as to engage the public, especially the families of the civilian soldiers and the youth, then successfully reunite families with the materials of their loved ones.

During the struggle for independence in the 1960s and 1970s in Vietnam, many civilian soldiers, including doctors, engineers, writers and other professionals, volunteered and assumed new identities before taking up their assignments in the battlefields. As part of this process, they were required to leave all their documents and personal belongings, such as diaries, letters, photos, rings, and medals. When the war ended, the records of more than 72,000 civilian soldiers moved to the Archives Center for preservation. Work began in the early 1990s to classify the materials and develop an index to allow contact where possible with surviving individuals and families to reunite them both with this archived history and assist them to access social programs.

However, some 30% of individuals could not be reached, as they were either deceased or their last known address is no longer in existence or not known. With the support for COLLASIA program, within 5 months, we managed to organize an online exhibition about the collection of civilian soldiers.

The project is very meaningful from social and individual perspective. The story of a 72,000 civilian volunteers is a compelling one of sacrifice, hardship and determination, at recalls the country's resilience and commitment during the time of COVID-19 and its aftermath. Historically, it shed new light on a hidden chapter of the country's struggle for independence and freedom that makes a compelling subject for the nation's textbooks and heritage education activities for Vietnamese youth as well as national and international researchers.

From the family's perspective, relatives and friends have the opportunity to understand what happened to their relations and find closure. In a few cases, this initiative may even allow individuals to access social benefits to which they may be able. Finally, it is a fitting tribute to the legacy of sacrifice and patriotism.

The official launch of the online exhibition is on 30 April to coincide with the 47th anniversary of the reunification of Viet Nam. Throughout this time, related events, activities and exhibitions organized aimed to inform the public of unknown aspects of the liberation struggle and promote the role and relevance of the National Archives and documentary heritage in Viet Nam.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Organize a team to conduct the exhibition and organise staff meetings to brainstorm and develop a work plan for the exhibition (collection, logistics, communication, design)

ACTIVITY 2

Select, scan and describe the records

ACTIVITY 3

Collect data/oral history of civil soldier survivors and their families

ACTIVITY 4

Organise visits to the archives for students of all levels, general public and journalists with the aim of creating awareness on the value of memory and documentary heritage; at the same time to persuade them to donate valuable history records including print, audio and visual documents, pictures, artifacts and other valuables.

ACTIVITY 5

Prepare the design template

ACTIVITY 6

Make a video for online exhibition and promotional purpose

ACTIVITY 7

Launching of the online exhibition on the website of the State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam at <http://ltqg3.luatru.gov.vn/> and on fan page of the National Archives Center No.3.

Opening time: 30/4/2022 – On the occasion of 47 years of Reunification in Vietnam.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

The access to information, knowledge and documentary heritage is a crucial aspect of learning. It contributes as well to SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and girls and women empowerment. In fact, this project shows how some Vietnamese women gave their lives by fighting for their country.

The project contributes to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels with SDG 16. This project also contributes to SDG 17 recognising that multi-stakeholder partnerships are important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Outcome N°1:

Documents, pictures and valuables of the some civil volunteer soldiers are classified and digitized and made accessible for the exhibition

Outcome N°2:

The online exhibition is launched

Outcome N°3:

Education in documentary heritage, institutional relations and partnerships are built, developed and promoted

Outcome N°4:

Communications, Media and PR Department of National Archives Center III is empowered

Outcome N°5:

The online exhibition connects archives to the family, people to people, generation to generation

Contribution to the SDGs 2030 Agenda



PARTNERSHIPS

A network of archival, cultural and corporate institutions, public or private, is established, nationally and internationally, in order to promote interchange of information. The staffs of the archives work together to prepare the content for the online exhibition and connect to families, reporters, writers, IT company to collect documents.

The support for COLLASIA program played an important role in developing the project.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

I. CHALLENGES

Firstly, we do not have much experience in making online exhibition and media promotion. Secondly, the project was implemented during the Covid time, so it was very difficult to meet or visit the soldiers and their families during the social distancing time. Finally, we do not have much money and time to meet many witnesses in other provinces.

II. LESSONS LEARNED

The significance of the project fosters archival professional development, history and cultural studies, academic research as well as partnerships with the community. There exists the need to carry out more projects to get public awareness about archival work and connect to community. The archives should develop other visible media actions like contests and calls with the following topics: 72,000 civil volunteer soldiers, the value of memory and documentary heritage and the importance of family history and reunification.

QUOTES ON THE PROJECT

1. “History is very important and making people know about the history is more important”
2. “The young should know about what and how the older generation went through to the battle for peace today”
3. “Every record of a civil soldier tells a story about a person”
4. “The life of a civil soldier and of a nation lies in its records”
5. “The exhibition is a journey to come back to the past”
6. “The support of ICCROM for the exhibition is to keep history alive!”

FUTURE PLANS

We continue to promote the collection of civil soldiers and try to return all records and personal belongings such as diaries, letters, photos, rings, and medals for civilian soldiers or their families to help them to access social programs and connect with the archives. Thus, we continue to build and open the heritage network and look for more funding.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Activities during Project Implementation



Team meeting 11/2021



Select and scan the records



Family visits the archives and donates the artifact



The grandchildren of a soldier visit archives and look at records about their grandmother



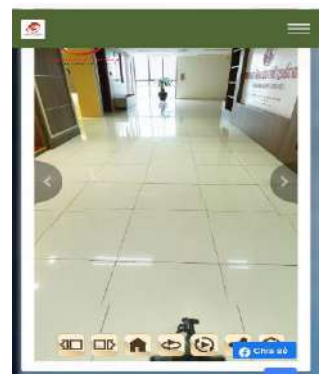
Collecting documents about the war at the family



Meeting with war reporters



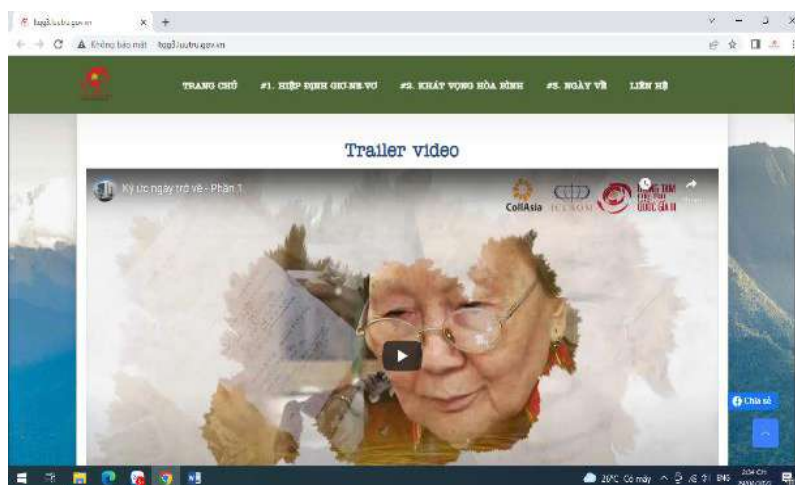
Meeting with writer



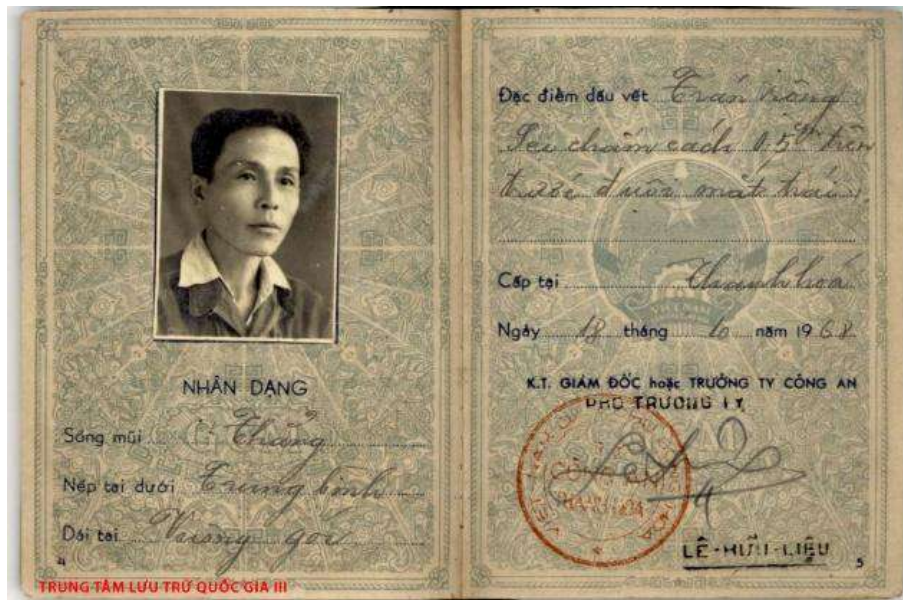
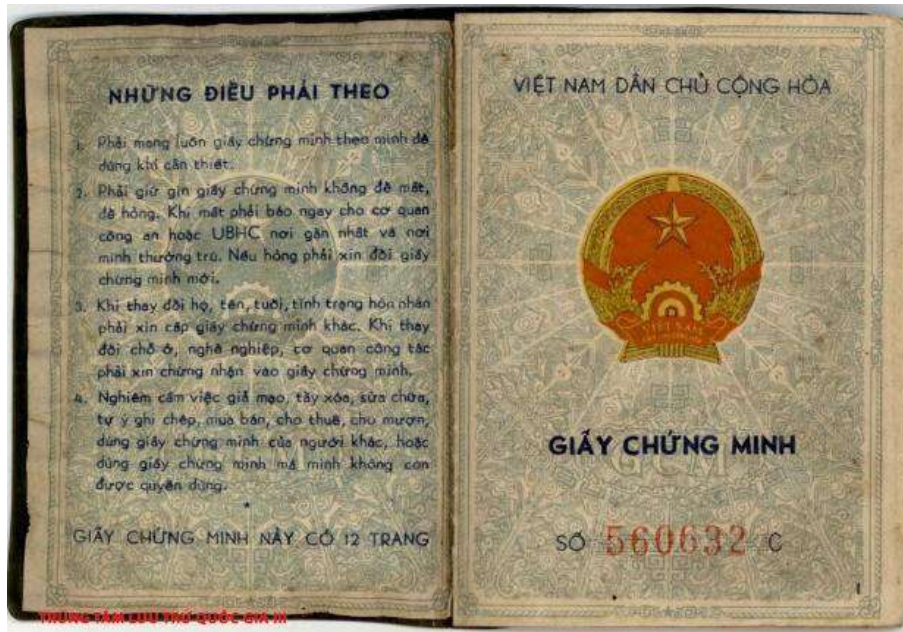
Setting up the exhibition area and Designing online exhibition



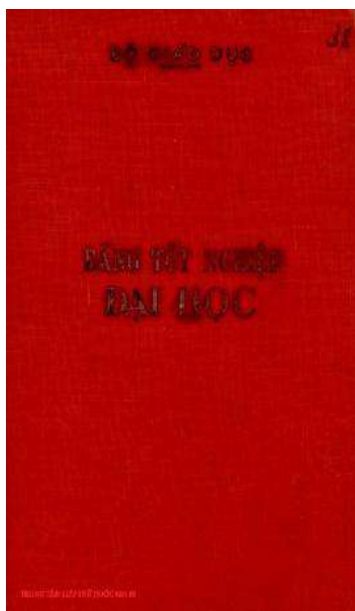
Screenshot of scene from promotional video



Screenshot of online exhibition at the website of the State Records and Archives Department of Vietnam



Scanned identity card in the records



Graduation paper, photos, Medals and Award paper from the records