

Crafting out of poverty



JOINT PROGRAMME ON GREEN PRODUCTION AND TRADE
TO INCREASE INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RURAL POOR

CRAFT & DESIGN IN VIETNAM

2011



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PREFACE

This publication is made possible by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) within the context of the joint programme entitled 'Green Production and Trade to Increase Income and Employment Opportunities for the Rural Poor'.

Vietnam has a long and rich tradition of handmade crafts, but the rural families that produce them are among the country's poorest. Against this background, the joint programme works to increase income and employment opportunities for raw craft material growers/collectors and grassroots handicrafts and furniture producers. The cultivation and processing of natural raw materials and handicraft production constitute the most important sources of additional income for rural households.

This *Craft and Design in Vietnam* publication presents the results of a team of foreign designers who have been engaged under the programme by ITC and UNIDO to assist companies develop new and more sustainable product collections. The product collections will be first introduced to international buyers at LifeStyle Vietnam 2011, the international home décor and gift fair organized by VIETCRAFT in Hochiminh City in April 2011.

There is greater long-term export potential for mid-sized companies that source responsibly from skilled rural producers and produce higher-end products with an attractive sustainable design, produced through a Cleaner Production approach. The philosophy behind it is simple: increased sales by companies will increase the demand for handicraft

production at household level, and, as a consequence, their income derived from it.

The joint programme is funded under the Thematic Window 'Development and the Private Sector' of the MDG Achievement Fund, which seeks "to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs through interventions that promote the development of private sector, through enabling policy frameworks, the growth of inclusive markets and the establishment of pro-poor public-private partnerships that create and sustain decent and productive employment."

For further details on the present publication, or the programme, please contact the Programme Management Unit, at: pmu@greentrade.org.vn or visit us on the web at www.greentrade.org.vn.

Mr. Le Ba Ngoc
Secretary-General AND
Vice-Chairman
Vietnam Handicraft Exporters
Association (Vietcraft)

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Viet Nam has always produced substantial handmade products, which is deeply rooted in the culture and traditions of its people. Promoting a rapidly growing handicraft industry in Viet Nam is part of the Vietnamese government's plan to foster economic development across all regions of the country, reducing unemployment, especially in the rural areas, and raising exports. Viet Nam is gradually revealing both its potential and the wide range of its products to the international handicraft markets. The sector has created millions of jobs for local workers, elevating their living standards while helping to preserve ancient traditions. In general, handicrafts are produced at household level, whereas product finishing, packaging and trading are mostly undertaken by SMEs. Several hundred crafts exporters with large producer networks throughout the country are providing employment for 1.35

million people in some 2,000 crafts villages.

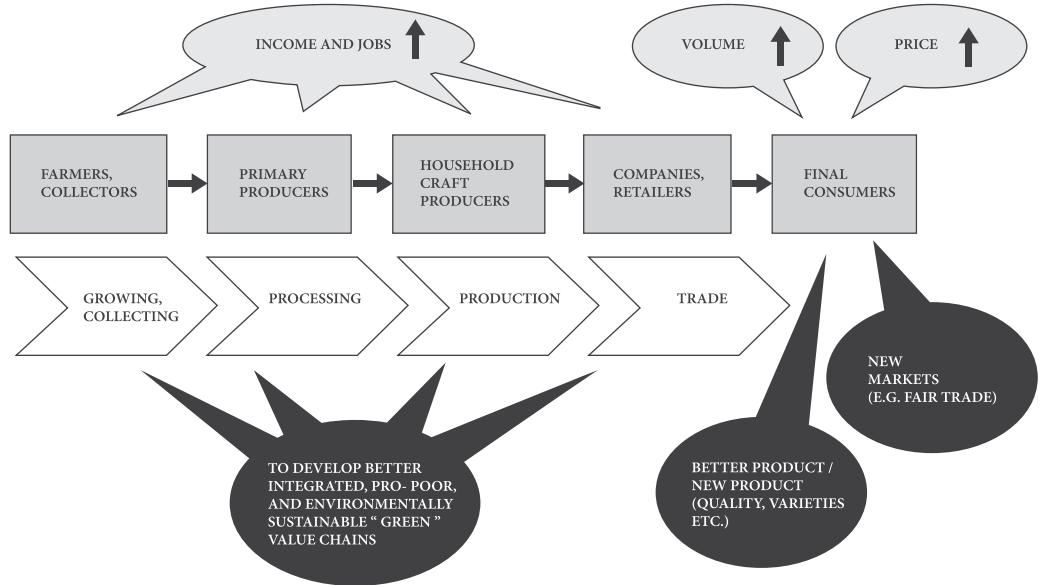
Despite the favorable conditions, the handicraft industry in Viet Nam faces fierce competition from other countries, including China, India and Thailand. To supply a higher end market, producers will need to upgrade their designs, quality and finishing techniques, and constantly stay on top of current design and consumer trends.

Other significant challenges face the sector. While Viet Nam has a good natural base of cheap and varied raw materials, particularly bamboo and rattan, the previously abundant natural resources are getting increasingly scarce due to overexploitation of tropical forests. Severe shortages of raw material are expected within 3-5 years if no appropriate action is taken.

Against this background, the programme aims to increase income and employment opportunities for raw material growers/collectors and grassroots producers of handicrafts and small furniture, targeting 4,800 poor households in four northern provinces of Viet Nam, namely Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Hoa Binh and Phu Tho. Within the four targeted provinces, the programme will focus on the five following value chains: (i) bamboo/rattan; (ii) sericulture and weaving; (iii) sea grass; (iv) lacquerware; and (v) handmade paper.

The programme's approach is to develop better integrated, pro-poor, and environmentally sustainable "green" value chains, enabling poor growers, collectors and producers to improve their products and link them to more profitable markets.

All project outputs are directed towards changing the systemic competitiveness of the value chain and shall together lead to higher income of beneficiaries. Improved productivity in raw material collection, processing, production, environmental sustainability, compliance with market requirements, trade promotion will lead to increased sales volume and/or higher prices and thus higher income for stakeholders along the value chain.



Farming households will receive support to increase their yield from the (re)planting, cultivation and harvesting of raw materials, whilst craft producing families will receive support to enhance productivity by improving working conditions and provision of technical skills training. Due attention will be given to creating safer and more comfortable working conditions, basic business skills, and making more efficient use of raw materials.

The programme will also create linkages with some 50 companies in the provinces and Hanoi, and assist these to clean up production, strengthen their entrepreneurial behaviour, find new buyers, improve working conditions and compliance with labour and trade standards, introduce improved technologies and sustainable designs.

The complex challenges faced by the five value chains, ranging from sustainable raw material production, entrepreneurial skills development and cleaner production to market linkages and trade information deficits, can best be addressed by a joint programme which combines the core competencies of the relevant UN agencies; the International Trade Centre, the U.N. Industrial Development Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization and the U.N. Conference on Trade and development.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Sustainable Design is just as much a philosophy as it is a practice. It is based on economic, ecological, and social principles regarding the importance of sustainability.

It is about having a holistic view on the complete life-cycle of a product, including everything from designing for energy efficient production and transport to creating recyclable quality products with long durability.

Products made through sustainable design are intended not to seriously impact the environment either when they are being created or when they are being used. These products are also often designed to allow the users to feel more connected or to relate more closely to the natural environment. Ideally, they are not only sustainable in themselves, but they also raise awareness and inspire to environmentally friendly behaviors.

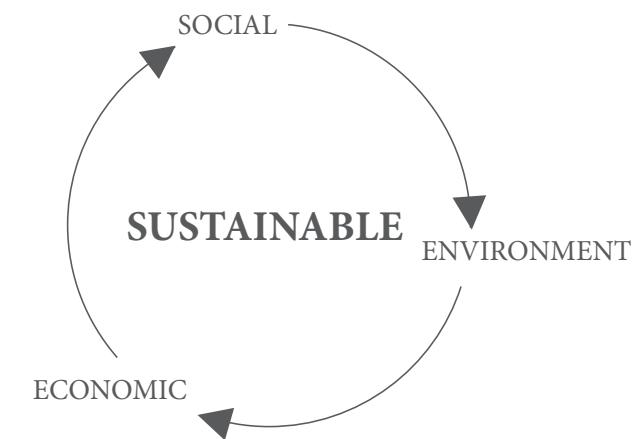
Sustainable design means making products that last longer, to counteract the “wear and tear” culture through timeless design with increased aesthetical, functional and emotional values.

It also means paying careful attention to (re)plantation of raw material such as bamboo, rattan, seagrass and improving the productivity and yield through variety selection, high quality seedlings, and Good Agricultural Practice.

From a social angle, sustainable design implies creating stable, comfortable and safe working conditions, which reduce the risk of injuries, discomfort and improve productivity.

Finally, pro-poor considerations are taken into account to ensure that higher sales volumes will indeed translate to income and employment generation for household handicraft

producers and raw material farmers in rural areas. This focus on social, environmental and economic consideration is also referred to as the triple bottom line.









CLARA LINDSTEN

Clara Lindsten is a Swedish designer. She has spent one year in Vietnam working closely with skilled craftsmen, experimenting with traditional methods and natural materials, all based on the concept of increasing value by reducing material. Before the design project for UN / Vietcraft, she worked for WWF with the objective to strengthen the design capacity of the rattan sector in Vietnam by designing sustainable products for European market as well as providing training for local companies.

In Sweden, she was art director for events and websites. In Paris, she was part of the avant-garde art and fashion collective Andrea Crews and worked with styling, product design and interior design for clients such as Colette, Smart Car and the worlds biggest fashion fair; Prêt à Porter Paris.

During her MA education at the Industrial design department at Lund University, Clara benefitted from one year of exchange at the design academy Eindhoven and an internship at conceptual 5.5 Designers in Paris.



PATRIK NILSSON

Patrik Nilsson is born in Stockholm, Sweden. After his MA studies in Industrial design at Lund University, he and his colleague Matilda started the design studio Argue, their ambition is to work with a spectrum that reaches outside the traditional borders of industrial design. This has led him to work with projects such as art film installations, packaging design for an Italian high-end fashion brand and industrial moulded

felt furniture for children. Alongside his MA education, Patrik has done guest studies at Carl Malmsten School of Woodcraft and Furniture design at Linköpings University and an internship at Tom Dixon Studio in London. For the past six months he has been working closely with local handicraft villages around Hanoi to increase the value of design and sustainable thinking.



REBECCA REUBENS

Rebecca Reubens has been working with bamboo and rattan for over a decade now. She began her journey with these materials as a student, and stayed with the subject for the seven years following this while coordinating the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR)'s Global Marketing Initiative in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Rebecca is currently pursuing her PhD at the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands, on the linkages between sustainability, design, and development through the medium of bamboo.

Rebecca stayed in Vietnam for a month; working hands-on with three SME's, and the SPIN project, to collaboratively design products that would take into consideration, the social and cultural tenets of sustainability alongside the ecological and economical tenets. She believes that design can make sustainability

desirable, fashionable and economically viable, and that renewable materials processed by small craft-based producers, are the route to holistically sustainable products.



INGRID BRANDTH

Ingrid Brandth grew up in a creative family environment in the small Norwegian town of Mosjøen.

In the beginning of 2009 she graduated from the Leisure department at the Design Academy Eindhoven in the Netherlands. She extended her studies by a year for additional studies in Canada at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design and for a design collaboration in Hong

Kong at the Polytechnic University.

The last couple of years Ingrid has been working with footwear and fashion design in the US and New Zealand. She also works closely with her brother in her family's design and production firm in Norway. Ingrid is currently living in Vietnam where she works as a designer for ITC and Vietcraft.



MR. VASE

BAT TRANG, HANOI
www.mrvase.com

Mr. Vase is specializes in lacquered wood and ceramic vases.

DESIGNS

Trophy Vase
Lacquer on wood

A collection of vases which is created as a tribute to Vietnamese natural lacquer. Drawn from traditional shapes that re-occur in several cultures, in particular the Vietnamese, it is aimed to be a time-less, long-lasting and inspirational piece of handicraft.

Egg Crush Bowls
Eggshell and lacquer on wood

The wood has been carved into shapes which resemble the mortar

used for grinding. By rolling the shapes in crushed egg shells, the surface becomes generously covered with a tactile and natural colored layer. This innovative and time-saving production method offers the possibility to build several collections using various materials found in Vietnamese forests, households and factory floors.

Wood Crush Bowls
Lacquer and wood chips on wood

Wood crush is built on the same concept as the egg crush collection. By covering the surface with the wood chips carved off while making the bowl, this collection generate minimal amount of waste material.

This type of surface is also much more environmentally friendly as compared to the traditional lacquer ware which requires the repeated polishing of multiple layers.







LACQUER WORLD

CHUYEN MY, HANOI

www.lacquerworld-fact.com

Lacquerworld is applying lacquer to both ceramics and wood. They focus on decorational objects with various pattern designs.

DESIGNS

Rice Bowls

Lacquer on wood

By playing with the proportions of traditional Vietnamese rice bowls, this collection aims for a new yet timeless expression, differentiated from other lacquerware through its subtle and natural color scale.

Dot pattern

Lacquer on rolled bamboo

Creating the perception of the time consuming work of an artisan mak-

ing a high-end painting, this concept is aiming to raise value of ordinary objects through the application of a vibrant dot pattern design.

Candle holders

Lacquer on wood

A collection of candle holders with symbolic ethnic patterns, which have been borrowed from traditional Vietnamese weaving craft. The pieces are small and odd, but they carry the potential to bring emotional product value and make people keep them for a long time.

Lotus pots

Lacquer on rolled bamboo

A collection of flower pots with a new approach on lacquer patterns. The motive consists of a naivistic illustration of the Lotus flower, which is the national flower of Vietnam.





THAI LINH

DUYEN THAI, HANOI
www.thailinhhandicraft.com

Thai Linh is a lacquerware company with a wide selection of decorative and functional products in their range.

DESIGNS

Kitchen
Lacquer on turned wood

To differentiate from the purely decorative, which is most common on the Vietnamese lacquerware scene, this collection extends the beauty of colorful lacquer with functional values. The bowls and vases are ideal to use in the kitchen for storage and serving purposes. The lids are made in raw wood and can be utilized as cutting boards.

Angle Shelves
Pressed bamboo board

A modular set of geometrical frames, which enables the user to alter between various arrangements when interiors changes over time. The shelves function separately or joined together, hung on the wall or free standing on tables and floors. The different parts fit into each other for space efficient transportation. Each set is available in natural bamboo or lacquered in soft colors





NGOC SON

PHU NGHIA, HANOI
www.ngocson.com.vn

Specializes in natural fibre furniture and lightening.

DESIGNS

Step Bowls

Rolled bamboo

By keeping the beautiful shapes of un-polished rolled bamboo, these bowls and vases get their rough and characteristic look while reducing both production time and the amount of waste material.

Stack Lamp

Rolled bamboo

Skewed bamboo rims stacked randomly on top of each other create these pendants resembling a stack of rice bowls. Each layer carefully

hiding the lamp bulb while spreading the light evenly. The diffuser is made of handmade paper combined with a graphical bamboo mesh. The shade is made out of natural materials and the surface is kept unpainted to show the natural beauty of bamboo.

Hanging Wardrobe

Woven bamboo mat

Several sheets of bamboo mat are stitched together to create this hanging wardrobe that is both lightweight and collapsible for flat packing in transport. Each shelf plane is made strong by using bamboo mat in layers of different directions. No other structural material are needed. The wardrobe can be made in various different colors and in different lengths and sizes.





Twist Lamp

Woven bamboo mat

A simple lamp that is made from a single sheet of bamboo mat, twisted into itself to create a thin yet strong lamp shade. A lamp holder is then fitted through the hole at the top.



The production is fast and the product can be flat packed or stacked in transportation.

The material use is minimal and various colors or decorative stitching patterns can be applied.



HA LINH

PHU NGHIA, HANOI
www.rattanvina.com.vn

Specializes in Rattan and Bamboo.

DESIGNS

Tray Table
Bamboo and lacquerware

By utilizing the extreme lightness of bamboo in a design where no nails are needed, these collapsible tray tables are highly energy-efficient in both production and transport. The simplicity of the construction, which refers to the aesthetics of classical Asian tray tables, makes it fast to produce. Each stand can be adjusted to fit two different sizes of trays and the trays can be taken off to be used separately.

Basket Table

Rattan cane and woven rattan

A collection built on the same principles as the Tray tables but with rattan instead of bamboo.

This merge between basket and table serves as a modern yet classical piece of furniture which offers various usages in the home environment.



HOA TIEN TEXTILE

QUY CHAU, NGHE AN
www.vietcraft.org.vn

Textile (Brocade) is a product of the ethnic minorities in the Northwest of Vietnam. There are many minorities in the region, each of them having their own products and identity.

DESIGNS

Created exclusively from natural local materials and colors from natural pigments, these designs are based on traditional craft from the Thai people in the Quy Chau district of Nghe An. The goal has been to make small changes that give a strong impression and create design that reflect the genuine and skillful craftsmanship of this ethnic minority in the Northwest of Vietnam.

Split Scarf
Silk and cotton

By adjusting the weaving process, creating linear patterns these split scarves get a new texture of fragility and lightness - an example of how to add value by reducing material.



Fringe Scarves

Silk and cotton

A collection of scarves with an unusual ending which bring an eye-catching feature to this minimalistic product. The brilliant colors come from the palette of nature, traditionally used by the people of Quy Chau.

Animal Cushions

Silk and cotton

A collection which highlight the beautiful ethnical patterns of the Thai people. By enlarging and selecting singular animals, they are given full exposure. The cushions carry their own stories of ancient Vietnamese forest life and fortune-bringing rituals.





DUC PHONG

VINH CITY, NGHE AN
www.ducphong.com.vn

Duc Phong specializes in bamboo skin weaving.

DESIGNS

Fish Rod Lamp

Inner bamboo skin and rattan

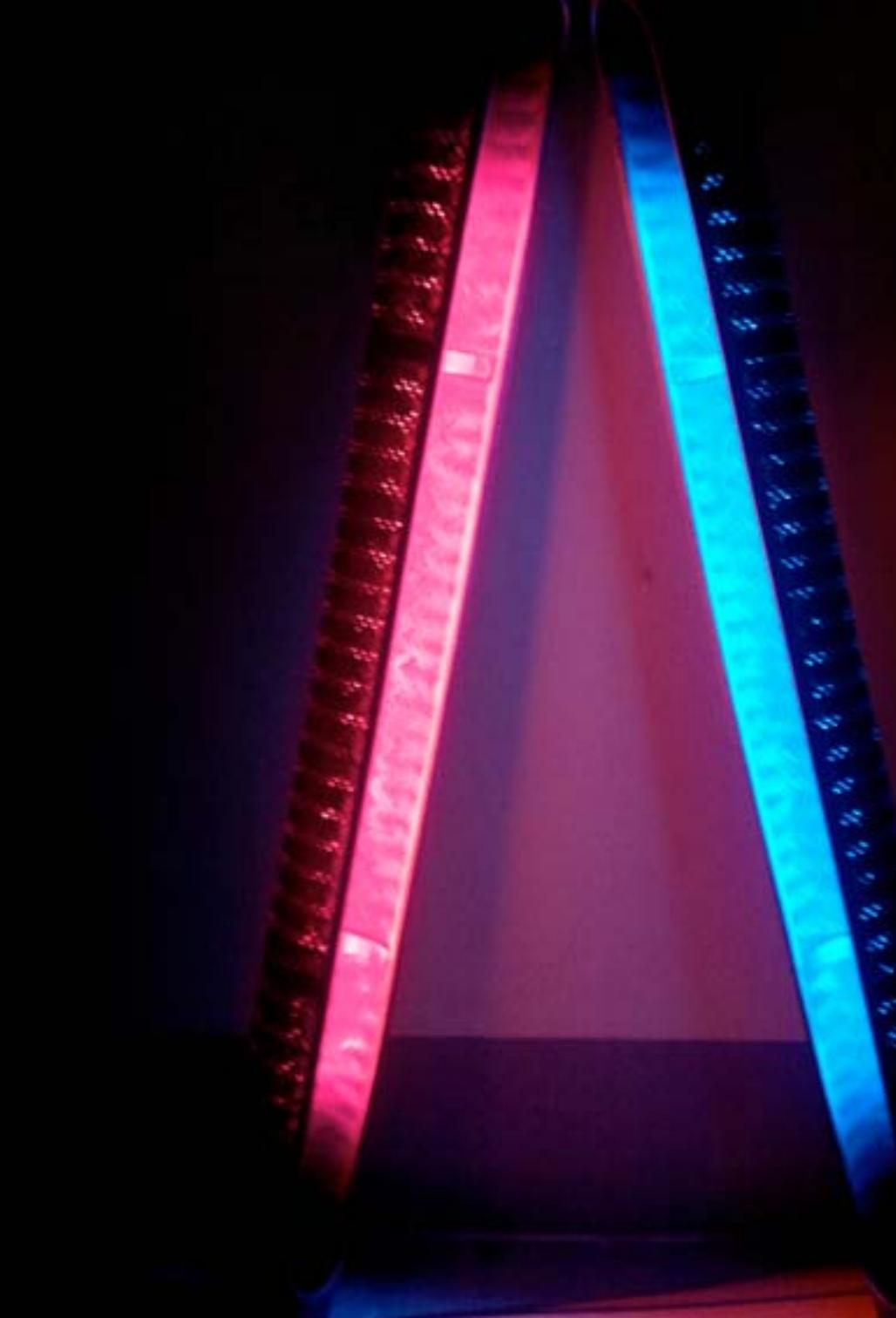
Inspired by old Vietnamese fish rods these lamps use a simple method of weaving bamboo sticks. The lamps are made in three different layers to visually hide the bulb but still give a good ambient light diffusion. It is constructed out of the rougher inner skin of the bamboo stem, a material that is usually considered a lower quality and not used for lamps. The three layers also provide a structural fitting for the lamp holder with no additional materials being needed.

Tube Lamp

Woven bamboo skin

A modern and natural take on a classic office lamp. The weaving method commonly applied in basket production, is given a completely new application by this long tube design that encases a standard low energy fluorescent lamp.

They can be serial-connected into longer formations or made to fit different lamp sizes. Its minimalistic design makes for a long product life and the simple construction makes it easy to recycle.





KANA

HANOI

www.kana.com.vn

Kana is a retailer of clothes and accessories. They are located in the center of Hanoi.

DESIGNS

Animal Scarves

Silk

A collection of oversized ethnical animal motives, produced by the Thai group in Quy Chau. The material is local silk, dyed by natural pigments.

Kimono

Silk

A traditional garment made out of Vietnamese silk, with ribbons produced by Mhong people displaying their traditional patterns. By sim-

plifying the pattern and by adding a hood, the kimono becomes modern.

Purses

Hemp, cotton and stone

The material of the white collection is Vietnamese hemp. By merging the hemp with another raw and beautiful vietnamese material (carved stone) it increases the authenticity and thereby its value. The stone Jewellery can also be used seperately as key rings.

The textile for the black purses is made by the Thai people in Quy Chau and display traditional patterns in a subtle way.







DOI MOI

KIM SON, NINH BINH
www.doimoi.com.vn

Doi Moi is specializing in seagrass.

DESIGNS

Beach bags
Seagrass

Inspired by classical beach bags and created with traditional seagrass weaving, this is a design where the innovation lies within the small details. By removing 3 vertical straws of seagrass, the hollow space can



contain the straps. By simple means, it is an efficient way of turning a low-value product into something unique. The material is natural and locally harvested.

Braid collection
Seagrass

A collection of baskets and mirrors that exposes the seagrass material as more exclusive. It is lightweight, natural and is inspired by a shape that everybody can relate to - the ordinary braid of hair.







HAN HANH

PHU VINH, CHUONG MY, HA NOI
maytredanhhoanghanh@gmail.com

Han Hanh is working with Rattan and Bamboo.

DESIGNS

This collection consists of lighting pieces constructed from a small diameter rattan species which is indigenous to Vietnam. This species is called 'garden' rattan because unlike most rattan species which grow in the forests, this species is cultivated in homestead gardens, and so harvesting this rattan does not endanger the forests, and it can be sustainably grown, managed and harvested. Since garden rattan grows in North Vietnam, it is physically closer to the SME, thus making transport cost effective and ecological as well.

The rattan has been used in the products in the most natural manner possible i.e. without bleaching or treatment by diesel. Additionally, rattan cut-offs which are waste bits of rattan have been used in the design to add texture and a design element. Rattan waste, which is around 28% of the weight of the whole cane, has also been used to make tiny spheres to form 'berries' on garden rattan 'vines'.

The products have been designed to facilitate outsourcing production of the components to nearby homes, where women can be engaged in producing the 'vines' which can then be assembled at a central location.







VIET QUANG

PHU VINH, CHUONG MY, HA NOI
maytrevietquang.phuvinh@gmail.com

Viet Quang is working with Rattan and Bamboo

DESIGNS

This collection is comprised of 'lace doilies' made from an indigenous Vietnamese rattan species called 'garden rattan'. The rattan gets its name from the fact that it is cultivated in homestead gardens: harvesting this rattan does not endanger the forests, and it can be sustainably grown, managed and harvested. Since garden rattan grows in North Vietnam, it is physically closer to the SME, thus making transport cost effective and ecological as well. The rattan has been used in the products in the most natural manner possible i.e. without bleaching or treatment by diesel.

Garden rattan is naturally very flexible. The collection taps into this natural property and also the skill of the SME in making exquisite, intricate knotted forms to create a range of 'lace doily' based lighting units, that fuse Eastern and Western cultural capital. The design is constructed from different elements, and does not require exactly standardized components, thus catering to the limitations of handcrafted production.

The products have been designed to facilitate outsourcing production of the components to nearby homes, where women can be engaged in producing the 'doilies' which can then be assembled at a central location.





VIET LINH

TIEU SON, THANH HOA
bambooth@vnn.vn

Viet Linh is working with Bamboo board, manufacturing bamboo flooring.

DESIGNS

This collection consists of furniture pieces made from laminated bamboo board. The bamboo used in making the board is locally available and sustainably cultivated and harvested. Each of the production processes of making the board were streamlined, so as to make it as ecologically and economically sustainable as possible.

The products designed from the board are designed to use zero glue in assembly. Flat pieces of board are assembled using notches and bam-

boo board pins. The pins also serve as a design element for these products. Absolutely no hardware other than the bamboo pins has been used in the products. Since the product is therefore comprised of a single material, its end of life disposal is simpler, and disassembly is not required.

Due to the notch locking system, each product packs completely flat for transportation, and can be simply assembled by the user. This saves on space, and energy for transportation making for an ecologically and economically sustainable product as well.







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