WAYS OF WORKING

Last updated: 29/ 10/ 2021

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ABOUT MCH

MCH's mission is to empower diverse cultural practitioners to bring to life their visions for an inclusive, sustainable Mekong Region. We:

CONNECT cultural and social practitioners from the region to grow regional networks at the intersection of arts and society.

EXPAND perspectives by sharing local knowledge and facilitating mutual learning.

BROKER opportunities for co-creation and friendship between artists, curators, cultural practitioners and social innovators.

- Our core values are:
- Learning
- Diversity
- Openness
- Collaborative working
- Social Responsibility

INTRODUCING TO WAYS OF WORKING

MCH's "Ways of Working" refers to the set of policies and procedures that guide MCH staff, collaborators and participants in how they engage with each other and with MCH. These Ways of Working are underpinned by a set of enabling behaviours and attitudes, as follows:

Creating clear expectations — Being empathetic — Embracing diversity — Openness to change — Mutual respect
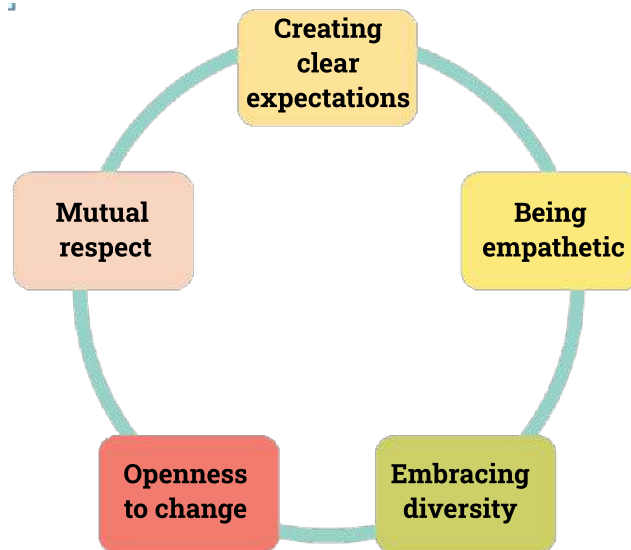
Scope

These Ways of Working apply during activities and exchanges conducted within MCH spaces (physical, virtual or during fieldwork).

The Ways of Working apply to all MCH staff, participants (Fellows) and collaborators (e.g. advisors, mentors, facilitators, speakers etc), whether paid or unpaid.

We recognise that both participants and collaborators of MCH may also hold personal and professional relationships outside of MCH spaces; interactions in these cases are not the responsibility of MCH and therefore are not covered by MCH's Ways of Working. Such relationships should not influence work that is within the scope of an MCH program or project, whether positively or negatively.

If participants and collaborators who become connected through an MCH space, wish to continue a relationship beyond the scope of their MCH program, they are encouraged to uphold the Ways of Working. As above, these ongoing relationships are not the responsibility of MCH.

From time to time, MCH co-creates and co-organises programs with partners. We will make it clear to participants and collaborators who is the responsible organiser.

MCH SPACES

Safe Spaces

MCH is a space for connection, exchange, and collaboration. This requires that everyone, including staff, participants and collaborators, be proactive in creating a welcoming and inclusive space where everyone's safety (physical, mental and emotional) is valued.

Everyone is asked to be aware of their language and behaviour, and to consider whether it might be harmful or offensive to others. Be aware that you can't know what people's boundaries are without asking them. Physical violence or physical contact without consent will not be tolerated. Abuse, harassment and sexual assault, whether verbal or physical, will not be tolerated.

Discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated, this includes but is not limited to discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, sexuality, age, and ability/disability. Preferential treatment of individuals will not be tolerated, e.g. based on pre-existing personal or professional relationships, or for the purpose of seeking or receiving favours.

Attending your program while drunk or under the influence of drugs will not be tolerated.

MCH does not tolerate behaviour that breaches this policy. If you violate this policy, you may be asked to withdraw from the program.

MCH'S LEARNING MODEL

Consistent with MCH's mission, in all our programs and projects, we aim to make connections, broker relationships and facilitate exchanges that will expand perspectives.
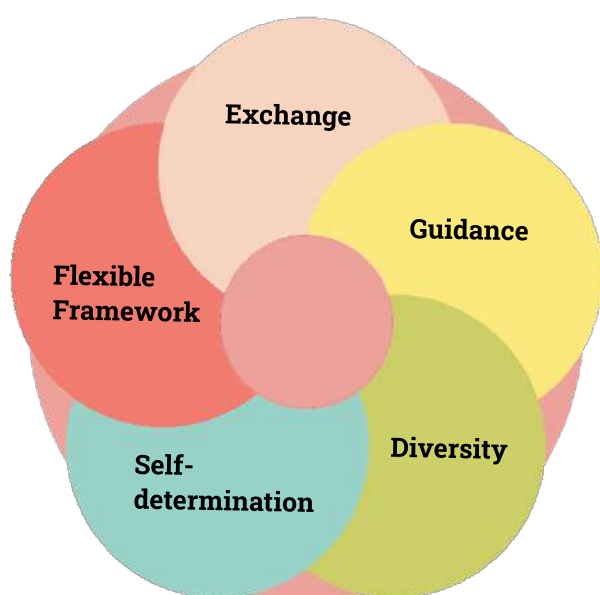
While the activities and goals will vary across different programs and projects, there are some key approaches that form the foundation of MCH's learning model. These apply to all MCH programs.

More detail on these approaches, with supporting guidance for staff, participants and collaborators, is provided below.

Diversity

Every MCH program and project brings together diverse stakeholders. Diversity here refers to multiple dimensions, including but not limited to: multi-nationality, cross-cultural, intergenerational, interdisciplinary, and inter-sectoral. We believe there is enormous value to be gained by getting to know and working with people from different contexts.

We encourage everyone in an MCH space to pay attention to the context(s) that others are operating in and from. Sometimes you may assume shared culture and shared context with others in the room, but there may be differences that you have not considered. Sometimes these can be very subtle.

MCH is aware that every individual's perspective is shaped not only by those attributes listed above (culture, sector, discipline, country etc) but the intersection of many other experiences, including but not limited to the type of education that they had access to, the era when they were growing up, the local politics of where they are based, family values, gender and sexual identity.

Diversity in MCH spaces means that you will encounter a wide range of perspectives. Some of them you may disagree with. Some guidance on how to approach such disagreement is included below.

Diversity in MCH spaces requires all staff, participants and collaborators to adopt an approach of seeking understanding. This may mean understanding another person, understanding a new context, or understanding a different sector. We encourage all participants and collaborators to share responsibility and effort to seek understanding. Both the person speaking and the person listening share responsibility for the success of the communication.

If there is a case where you encounter a perspective or a behaviour that makes you uncomfortable, we encourage you to express that discomfort and raise it for discussion, and also consider in what ways your own context could potentially be shaping your reaction. If someone expresses discomfort in a respectful manner, MCH will ensure that person is supported, and will aim to facilitate a safe environment for discussion, to support further learning and understanding. If something you have said is not understood by your colleagues or makes someone else uncomfortable, we encourage you to accept that feedback and seek an alternative way to express the idea for discussion, and seek to understand the context and perspective of the person who has given you the feedback.

MCH seeks to create safe spaces, where people can speak freely and honestly, without censorship. We aim to invite people into the space who share our core values, however perspectives of individual participants or collaborators in an MCH space, do not represent MCH.

Exchange

MCH's learning model is based on the premise that everyone involved has something to share as well as something to learn. All of our programs include sessions and spaces where Participants will exchange ideas, reflections and experiences - with each other, with the MCH Team and Collaborators and sometimes with an invited group of external guests. These connections and the exchange between you, can not only be useful for short-term learning, but also lead to long-term relationships and the chance for future cooperation.

While there will be opportunities for you to present your work or your projects, what we try to encourage is not only sharing the success of what you did, but some of the 'behind the scenes'. For example, what skills you used - or you had to learn, what kind of practice or methodology you used, opportunities and challenges that you faced, and how you dealt with them.

For many participants it is new to share in this way, and it can be a skill to practice talking about the why of what you did, the how of what you did, the questions you had, and what you learned that you could share to others. However we think this is very worthwhile - as there is a lot of great experience and practice happening in the region - and it is very valuable for people to hear what one another faced and how they handled it, especially when people are working in similar contexts and facing common challenges.

Guidance

MCH believes that learning can be enriched through guidance. For this reason, as part of our learning model we include roles such as Curator, Facilitator, Mentor, Advisor. We invite people to serve in these Collaborator roles who we believe have experience, expertise, skills and experience that can bring value to the program design and structure, and also to the participants. MCH will indicate the role of any Collaborators, and who is serving in that role when they promote the program. When Participants accept a place in a program, they consent to work with the Collaborator and to engage with their guidance.

Flexible framework

MCH's programs always have a framework and structure. Usually the structure will deliberately include space for participants to interpret and develop independent ideas and actions. When Participants accept a place in a program, it means they commit to engage in the process that is offered.

MCH will always explain the framework and structure in documents promoting the program e.g. open call. If there is a change or an addition to the program framework, we will make Participants aware and will be open to discussion and negotiating ways forward if the changed circumstances do not work for a Participant.

Self-determination

Individual performance is not assessed within MCH programs; there will be no pass/fail or grading of achievements in the program. Through the various aspects of our learning model outlined above (diversity, seeking understanding, guidance and the flexible program framework) MCH aims to offer experiences and exchanges that can create learning opportunities. Stakeholders are expected to be reflective, and take responsibility for their own learning.

Once Participants are selected for a program, we ask that they engage fully with the opportunity offered, but acknowledge their right to accept or reject guidance that is offered and recognise that not all elements of the program will benefit all Participants.

We expect Participants to be respectful of one another. If one Participant's behaviour or attitude is compromising the learning opportunity for another Participant, MCH reserves the right to discuss this with the person concerned.

AUDIT

MCH and MCH staff follow the MCH learning model. In keeping with our values, and to ensure we are adhering to the principles outlined in this Ways of Working document, MCH will periodically invite independent Ethics Auditors to review our programs and activities being conducted in MCH spaces. This may involve the Ethics Auditor attending a workshop, seminar or exchange, and assessing what is working well and where MCH could make improvements to make the activities more inclusive, diverse and equitable.

MCH will share the results of Ethics Audits with our stakeholders.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

MCH welcomes feedback and encourages Participants and Collaborators to share feedback and ideas. You can raise ideas with us any time.

Once per year, between January-March, MCH will arrange an Annual General Meeting, which any current or former Participant and / or Collaborator can attend. This will be a virtual meeting, at which MCH will share information and lessons learnt from the prior year, brief stakeholders on upcoming activities for the following year, and make space for Alumni, Participants and Collaborators to share other agenda items, including ideas, feedback and questions.

The date, time and agenda of the AGM will be made available to stakeholders at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

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