

from Connection to Collaboration

2021: A Year in Review



MESSAGE FROM MCH:

from Connection to Collaboration



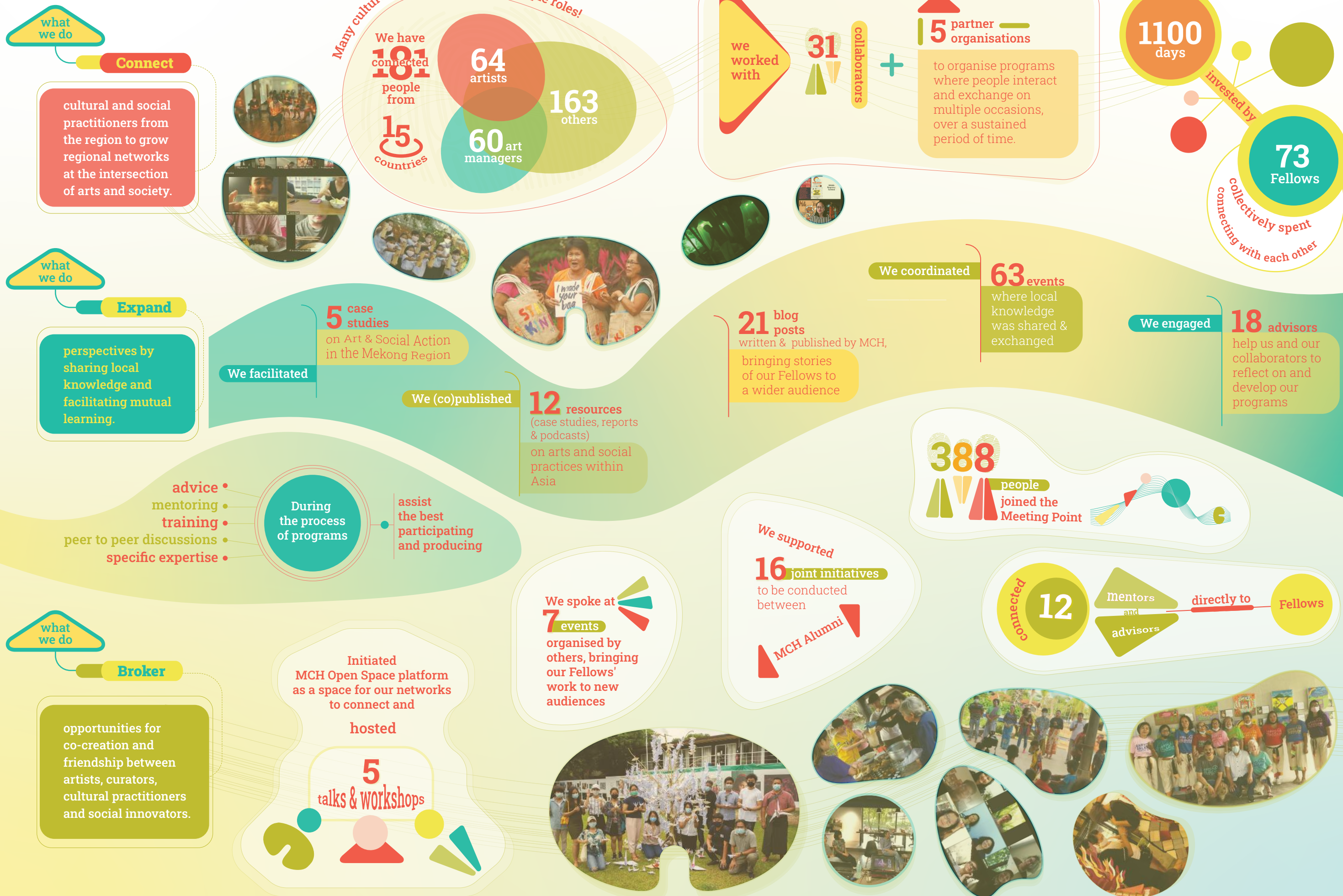
MCH may be a small organisation, but we work with a community that has great potential. The Fellows, collaborators and partners we work with have huge hearts and big ideas for how the arts can play a part in shaping the future of our communities – be that the places where we live, or the cross-border and cross-sector communities we are building together based on shared interests and values.

In May 2021 we held the first part of our inaugural *A Meeting Point on Art and Social Action in Asia* – nearly 300 people joined the online workshops and discussions, with hundreds more attending on-the-ground events organised by Fellows across the region. This is testament to how many of us in the arts are committed to playing a vital role in our societies.

The fact that many of our Fellows in Myanmar have continued to be actively engaged in MCH activities after the coup in February 2021, even while dealing with danger, conflict and in some cases relocation as refugees, speaks to the ongoing relevance of networks in times of crisis, as well as to the creativity and resilience of cultural practitioners in the Mekong region.

While we are optimistic thanks to this engagement – there is still work to be done. We are just scratching the surface of what is possible by transforming connection into collaboration across the diverse network of people that forms MCH. By underpinning the network building, skills-exchange, and collaborative action that we have lined up for 2022, with an ongoing reflexive practice that asks how can we keep learning, how can we do better, how can we adapt to make more room for others, we hope to take another step forward this year. Thank you for being with us!

MCH 2021 ACTIVITIES



BRINGING TO LIFE VISIONS FOR AN INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE MEKONG REGION

MCH Fellows take action

Peer-to-peer networks – testing creative solutions on-land and online

Coming to know each other through the 2nd cohort of SEAA Program, Zun (Myanmar), R'az (Philippines), Joanne (Malaysia), Nadya (Indonesia) and Samnang (Cambodia) co-founded SEA*5 – a project which aims to create a creative society in Southeast Asia supporting each other in finding solutions to problems in their communities, powered by compassion and empathy. In 2021, with a grant from MCH and British Council, each of them conducted on-land and online projects – ranging from art exhibitions and art therapy workshop, film screenings, to online festivals – addressing local community issues and promoting a more sustainable, eco-friendly, healthy and resilient lifestyle. The five came together online weekly to document their experiences and give each other advice and support. Visit their website at projectsea5.org.

Upstream-Downstream – tackling water issues

Sinath (Cambodia) and Golf (Thailand) met in the first cohort of SEAA Program and found a common interest related to water issues as their both countries share the Mekong River. With a grant from MCH, they initiated Rivers Roar – a six-month project which aimed to raise awareness of water issues and encourage behaviour change. The Thai Team brought together environment experts, artists and community members in Chiang Mai to conduct research on the local water resources and sustainable production methods, organise workshops to pass these community wisdoms to the young generation and help them to build leadership skills. The Cambodian Team organised various activities from creative performance, to educational videos and online publications to raise awareness of local communities in Battambang on water hygiene issues.

Solidarity among artists working for their societies

The Curated conference *Artistic Action in Practice in the Mekong Region*, curated by Chung Shefong, brought together 6 art and cultural practitioners and activists from Laos, Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. In nine meetings conducted over six months, they discussed some of the most urgent political and social issues in the region and each participant shared the creative actions and strategies they have been involved in. In two public sessions during the Meeting Point, the participants presented creative projects including a compilation of image poetry, a documentary short film, and a community photo gallery. The group continues carrying out their work, assisting, and collaborating after the program.

Revealing Contexts: A Meeting Point on Art & Social Action in Asia was a collaborative effort of Mekong Cultural Hub, in partnership with Asia Arts Management (AAM). It created a space for people to exchange ideas, experiences and best practices, get new inspiration and connections with potential partners to take their work forward. The program was originally planned to take place both online and onsite in May. However, many events were postponed due to COVID situation which gave us an opportunity to meet each other again in a mini-Meeting Point in July.

The Meeting Point
took place over



in collaboration
with



organisations

and the participation of
98 people as speakers,
facilitators,
curators, artists,
moderators,
organisers.



countries
registered
to join the
online program

South-East Asia's
arts media platform,
Arts Equator,



articles &



about the various
Meeting Point
programs.

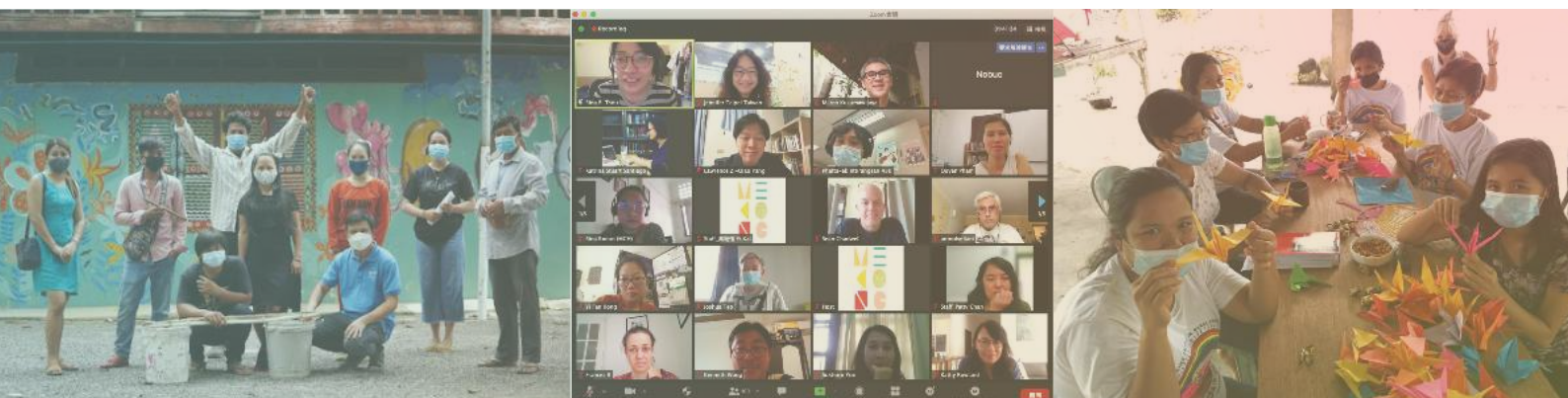


"Meeting Point 2021 brought us to an intersection to understand the state of art and social action in Asia at this current moment, and confronted us with the issues that needed to be resolved and acknowledged before we can take the leap forward into a new future." – Wennie Yang (Arts Equator)

"I am grateful for all the presenters' sharing as creative responses to the pandemic, which lead us to contemplate the various impacts of the crisis on individuals and social groups, ranging from the domains of day-to-life to the public sphere and to the environment and ecology we are situated in." – Curated conference: In the Wake of COVID

This is a fascinating discussion – I feel like it cuts to the question – what makes Southeast Asia, Southeast Asia? What holds us together? It isn't really language as so many have pointed out.. Maybe finding the answer to these questions can help articulate WHY SEA." – Revealing Contexts Roundtable: Future of Art & Social Action in Post-pandemic Asia

I really appreciate your response, to live in harmony without harming or oppressing each other, and embracing each other's differences ." – Case Study Workshop: Peace Poetry, Myanmar



Local Gathering called for interest to our network of Fellows, to seek people who would be willing to host a physical gathering in their local community as an action of solidarity and community on the Meeting Point dates. We asked those interested to design their own event, making the Revealing Contexts theme relevant to their own community, and to commit to integrating some of the virtual Meeting Point program into their agenda. We were delighted with the positive response and the diversity and creativity of the proposals of 21 Local Gatherings from 13 countries.



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING POINT from 20th to 29th October, 2022
with the theme **'from connection to collaboration'**,
where we could continue our conversations on art and social action from last time.



FINANCE HEADLINES

MCH distributed \$63,000 USD directly to Fellows to implement activities, actions and collaborative projects
 MCH paid \$80,000 USD to artists, cultural practitioners and creative enterprises involved in
 designing, organising and producing our projects
 We spent \$6,000 USD on direct expenses of running workshops and trainings
 (much cheaper thanks to zoom!)
 MCH's management and operation costs were \$100,000 USD, including staff, operations,
 marketing, capacity development, and audit

MCH TEAM

Jennifer Lee, Program Manager
 jennifer@mekongculturalhub.org

Rina Roeun, Program Coordinator
 rina@mekongculturalhub.org



Quyen Pham, Communication Officer
 quyen@mekongculturalhub.org

Frances Rudgard, Director
 frances@mekongculturalhub.org

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Supporters & Partners



MCH would like to thank all Fellows and network members
 who have worked together

We would like to pay special thanks to

Amm Siriporn
 Anitha Silvia
 Anmol Vellani
 Bin Kiphavong
 Chu Kim Đức
 Chung Shefong
 Connie Baher
 David Benaim
 Dian Ika Gesuri
 Foo Wei Meng
 Hour Phaktra
 Iwasawa Takako

Janet Pillai
 Jennifer Teo
 Katrina Stuart Santiago
 Kuon Manith
 Lê Thuận Uyên
 Leng Leakhana
 Marco Kusumawijaya
 Minamida Akemi
 Muto Daisuke
 Nagatsu Yuichiro
 Nakagawa Shin

Nguyễn Anh Tuấn
 Nicola Turner
 Regula Gattiker
 Sinath Sous
 Sudebi Thakurata
 Sunitha Janamohanam
 Tawanwiwattanagul Paritta-Anong
 Trần Lương
 Yachita Mio
 Yāengly Chuechonglee
 Zi Var Soe
 Zun Ei Phyu



MEKONG CULTURAL HUB is a regional
 initiative of Living Arts International,
 a non-profit organisation which believes
 the arts are at the heart of every vital society.
 Living Arts International's other initiatives include
 Cambodian Living Arts.



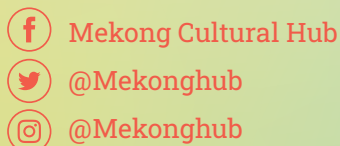
LIVING ARTS
INTERNATIONAL



CAMBODIAN
LIVING ARTS

Email: info@mekongculturalhub.org
 Tel: +886(0)2-2711-9572

Address: Living Arts International (Taiwan Office) No. 177, Section 1,
 Jianguo South Road, Da'an District,
 Taipei City, Taiwan 106



Images Credits: from left to right, top to bottom

Front page: Baryo Balangaw Creative Initiatives (Philippines)

Page 2+3: 1000 cranes praying (Myanmar), EAt/EASt /rEvEAl, Sustainable Travel & Mindful to Nature – Samnang (Cambodia), Creative recovery reflection and community capacity building workshop – Raz (Philippines), Resilience inwards and outwards through film – Nadya (Indonesia), Revealing Contexts Roundtable: "The Future of Art and Social Action in Post-Pandemic Asia"

1000 cranes praying (Myanmar), Rivers Roar Project (Thailand), Rivers Roar Project (Cambodia), Creative recovery reflection and community capacity building workshop – Raz (Philippines), Heritage Space (Vietnam), Online Reflection of the River Roars Project (Thailand & Cambodia), Creative Upcycling and Social Enterprise Towards A Sustainable Planet – Joanne (Malaysia)

Page 5: Project SEA*5 River Roars Project (Thailand), Artistic Action in Practice in the Mekong Region

Page 6: 1000 cranes praying (Myanmar), Rivers Roar Project (Cambodia), Revealing Contexts Roundtable: "The Future of Art and Social Action in Post-Pandemic Asia", Baryo Balangaw Creative Initiatives (Philippines)

Thanks to Local Gathering Hosts

Yeung Chun Wai (Wilson), Liu Ye (Sherry), Sudebi Thakurata, Probal Banerjee from De-epicentre, Rifandi Nugroho Rifandi, Paramytha Gayatri Nadya (Nadya), Dyanitini Adeline – Arie Kartikasari, Rifandi Nugroho Rifandi, Kelompok Kurator Kampung, Muntaha Ismal Muntaha, Kao Chieh, Juny Chiang, Mr. Fly, Aniek Puspawardani, Lravorase Lra-madaralae, Yachita Mio, Hitsujiya Shirotama, AAM Osaka, 1000 cranes praying, The Garden of Hope Foundation, GOH-Migrants, National Taiwan Museum, Research Assistant, Hsuwen (Emily) Yuan, Tsai Ming-Jiun, SEA Junction, Soksopha Monthatip, Seepuan Jump Tassakorn, Hong Grace, Nguyễn Thủy Dương, Lampard Ashley Jonarthan, MƠ ĐÒ, Then Café, Be Café, Vu Thi Thanh Binh (Thanh Binh), Vu Huong Chi (Huong Chi), Heritage Space, Barefoot Ventures