

Program Overview:

Host a Local Gathering & Contribute to Sharing Community

Meeting Point 2024

1. What is a Local Gathering?

A Local Gathering can be an activity such as a talk, workshop, seminar or creative action which engages people in connection and exchange in relation to the theme of the 2024 Meeting Point, *Perspectives from the Grassroots*. It can be a short event (e.g. half a day) or happen over 2-3 days. It can be for a big group or a small group, depending on the topics you want to engage on and the format of your gathering.

In general, MCH's attitude is that the format and duration of your gathering is flexible according to your concept and the local context. However, there are few key requirements that we ask you to fulfill:

- Your gathering should relate to the 2024 Meeting Point theme *Perspectives from the Grassroots: Art & Social Action in Asia*
 - You can interpret this in a way that is relevant to your local context and the community you will engage through your gathering
- It should be an in-person event
 - Therefore would expect the event to target community in your local area (or a community with easy access to a common meeting place)
- It must take place between Friday 8th March and Saturday 16th March 2023

Below are three examples of gatherings that have been hosted previously:

Plastic in the Buddhist Rituals	Edge of the Citadel	Myth, Legend and History: Stories from our homes by GOH-Migrant
Phonepath KeoKomsak, Laos	Nguyễn Thị Thanh Mai, Vietnam	Garden of Hope Foundation, Taiwan
<p>This gathering was organized in collaboration with the Master Monk at Vat Pa Fang Temple, Luang Prabang. Local people were invited to prepare a lunch set as an offering for the Monks using natural materials, for example using bamboo basket, creating banana leaf cups for food and making real flower décor offerings. The workshop was documented with photo and video and posted on the Facebook page 'Town of Luang Prabang We Want'. A talk was organized on club house to engage youth in discussion.</p>	<p>The gathering spanned two days. Day 1 included a site-specific art exhibition, a tour of the artworks, a tour of the Citadel's walls visiting relics and vegetable farms cultivated by the community that lived there. Day 2 was reserved for an artist talk and a panel discussion on the residential relocation and site clearance project, with panelists from different sectors, including art and culture, architecture and urban planning, public policy, tourism, and history.</p>	<p>Students from South-East Asian countries in Taiwan were invited to gather with Garden of Hope and National Taiwan Museum and have a light discussion session about culture and history from their home countries. The main purpose was to explore the growing experiences respectively, the differences between culture and tradition, their backgrounds, and how the education system plays a critical role in developing people's way of thinking. Through this gathering the organizers hoped to reveal the context and raise awareness of cultural diversity.</p>

2. What is the 'Meeting Point' that the Local Gatherings are part of?

Meeting Point is a platform where people working with arts and society in Asia can find each other to discover new friends, exchange ideas and experiences and leave with fresh inspiration to take their work forward. MCH organises the Meeting Point every 18 months. The content and format of the sessions is developed by artists and other practitioners, who work together over several months on the journey towards the Meeting Point.

The public program takes place over a two week period, including online sessions and decentralized local gatherings. It culminates with an in-person gathering which lasts 3 days. All the online sessions and the 3-day in-person program are open for public registration.

Each Meeting Point has a central theme. So far these include:

- Revealing Contexts (May and July 2021)
- From Connection to Collaboration (October 2022)
- Perspectives from the Grassroots (March 2024)

Please visit www.mekongculturalhub.org/meeting-points to discover more, including what Local Gatherings were hosted during those programs. There are also stories on MCH's [blog](#).

3. What are the exchange sessions I am expected to take part in as part of this program?

As well as supporting you with a micro-grant to organise your Local Gathering, MCH arranges four online sessions for the gathering Hosts. The purpose of these sessions is to:

- Build networks and connections between the Hosts
- Create connections across the gatherings
- Connect the gatherings to the central Meeting Point program
- Share practices, findings and experiences that will enrich dialogues between cultural practitioners in Asia

These sessions will be facilitated by the MCH team and the Local Gatherings Community Curator, Jeffrey Tan. Through the discussions and activities in these sessions, the Curator will support the Hosts to identify common themes and questions across their gatherings, and find opportunities to connect people or cross-pollinate activities across their gatherings. The Curator and the MCH team will support the Hosts to implement these ideas and opportunities, finding ways to go deeper into the inquiries and exchanges they are inspiring through their gatherings.

The dates for these sessions are:

- Thursday November 9th, 2023
- Thursday December 14th, 2023
- Thursday January 11th, 2024
- Thursday February 22nd, 2024

All sessions will take place from 5pm - 7pm ICT (Bangkok time).

The Hosts* will also be invited for an in-person workshop, which will take place in Hanoi on March 20th. The aims of this workshop, which will be facilitated by Jeffrey Tan, are to:

- Make space for the Hosts to share stories from their Local Gatherings with each other
- Make space for Hosts to reflect together on lessons learnt and potential follow-up actions from their Local Gatherings
- Finalise preparation for the public sharing session at Meeting Point

** in the case of Local Gatherings organised by more than one person, MCH will only be able to support one representative of the group to attend the in-person workshop.*

4. What financial support does MCH contribute towards organising my Local Gathering?

MCH has three options of micro-grant available, which are based on the scale and style of gathering you plan to host. We have called these:

- Coffee Style (\$500 USD budget)
- Workshop Style (\$1,000 USD budget)
- Conference Style (\$1,500 USD budget)

When you apply to host a gathering, you will need to select one of these options. We don't need a precise budget from you and won't make grants based on detailed budgets, but from reading about your plans will get an idea about whether the scope and scale of your gathering is aligned with the requested micro-grant amount.

The table below which elaborates on these titles and the example formats to help give some inspiration as a starting point.

Type	Size	Examples of format
Coffee style - \$500 USD	10-15 people	You might gather in an informal setting like a coffee shop. You might invite participants to share their work and have some internal discussion on a topic of your choice. You might invite a guest speaker, or you might go as a group to visit a project of interest.
Workshop style - \$1,000 USD	15-30 people	You might curate a program that includes structured sessions, for example breakout groups, a training or a talk. You might use the chance to conduct some informal research about concerns related to arts and social action, or to connect with another sector. You might have art work or a performance as part of your program.
Conference style - \$1,500 USD	30+ people	You might decide you want to arrange an event with some talks, panel discussions or screenings that could be presented to an audience.

You don't need to follow these guidelines exactly, they are just a prompt.

5. What do Hosts have to do during the in-person Meeting Point program in Hanoi?

The main expectation of the Host will be to join and enjoy the sessions on offer at the Meeting Point, and use the chance to meet and connect with the other participants :)

However, we will also ask the Local Gathering Hosts to each produce a poster sharing highlights from their gathering. These posters will be displayed throughout the Meeting Point program. Time will be provided during the workshop on March 20th for Hosts to finalise the content of their posters. A template will be provided for this, and MCH will assist e.g. by providing materials and printing photographs in advance of the Hosts arriving in Hanoi.

MCH also plans to reserve one slot in the program schedule that will be allocated for a public session where other Meeting Point participants can come to learn more about the Local Gatherings, and in particular the findings and experiences of the Hosts.

The format for this public sharing will be developed by the Community Curator, in consultation with the Hosts. Possible formats might include:

- Informal show and tell around the poster exhibition
- Small group roundtables, where participants can join thematic conversations with Hosts
- Panel discussion featuring 3-4 Hosts

The format will be decided at the latest by February 22nd 2024 (the final virtual exchange session) in advance of the Local Gathering implementation period (March 8th - March 16th). It will take into account that there is limited time between the Gatherings taking place and the Hosts traveling to join Meeting Point.

7. What are the benefits of this program?

By participating in this program Hosts will benefit from:

- Micro-grant of up to \$1,500 USD to support organising an event
- Growing your networks in Asia by meeting and exchanging with the other Hosts
- Getting new insights into local contexts across Asia through exchanging with the other Hosts
- Personal and professional development through peer exchange at the monthly workshops, as well as implementing your event
- Being supported to attend the in-person Meeting Point program in Hanoi, with all logistics and costs* supported by MCH

** in the case of Local Gatherings organised by more than one person, MCH will only be able to support one representative of the group to attend the in-person workshop. Flight costs will be covered for travel within Asia.*

6. Who are the target participants for this program?

To be eligible for this program you must be:

- A citizen of Asia
- Organizing a gathering that will be in person, in Asia, clearly connected to the theme *Perspectives from the Grassroots: A Meeting Point on Art & Social Action in Asia*
- Willing to organize your gathering between March 8th and March 16th 2024
 - You do not have to give us an exact date of your gathering when you apply but you do have to commit that you will organize it within this date range
- Demonstrate openness to sharing your practice and experience of hosting your gathering, both during the preparation process and after the event, in order to enrich dialogues and connections between cultural practitioners in Asia
- Able to commit to all key program dates, particularly the monthly online exchanges and the travel dates for the workshop and the Meeting Point in Hanoi

We welcome applications both from people who have hosted Local Gatherings previously, as well as first time applicants.

Local Gathering Hosts could be from various professional profiles including but not limited to producers, managers, artists, and community organisers.

7. What are the selection criteria for this program?

The criteria that we will use to select participants for this program include:

- Adherence to the eligibility criteria
- Evidence of interest and enthusiasm to take part, including commitment to sharing and learning with fellow Hosts
- Having a diverse range of experiences and perspectives among the group (considering factors such as countries, artistic disciplines, professional practice, years of experience)
- Potential for connection and collaboration between clusters of hosts, e.g. common interests and concerns, or shared challenges

7. What is the selection process for this program?

- When you send your application we will confirm that we have received it. If you have not heard from us within 3 working days of sending your application, please contact us again
- Shortly after the closing date we will review all applications for eligibility
- All applications meeting the eligibility criteria will then be reviewed according to the selection criteria listed above
 - A scoring system will be used so that applications can be consistently compared
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited for a short online interview on September 27th or 28th
- All candidates will be advised of the selection result by September 30th 2023

9. Who is the Community Curator?

As mentioned above, the exchange between the Local Hosts will be curated and facilitated by Jeffrey Tan, Community Curator. Jeffrey will also guide the Hosts in preparing for the public sharing at Meeting Point.



Jeffrey Tan is a theatre director, drama educator and creative producer. He holds a BA (Drama) from the Queensland University of Technology, QUT (Australia) and MA (Drama and Theatre Education) from the University of Warwick (United Kingdom).

In 2016, Jeffrey started Theatre Today, to bring freelancers together for theatre and arts projects. In 2022, Jeffrey conceptualized and produced ArtsXplore 2.0, a five-month mentorship programme organised by National Arts Council, National Youth Council and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. The youths explored how to make a difference with the arts in 'Environment and Sustainability', 'Inclusivity', 'Support for Vulnerable Groups', 'Mental Well Being' and 'Jobs and the Future

of Work'. Other than the official pitches, ArtsXplore2.0 also culminated in a two-weeks exhibition at Orchard Central, Uniqlo Orchard, and library@Orchard.

Jeffrey is also an Adjunct Senior Lecturer for 'Theatre and Community Engagement' (National University of Singapore), 'Stage Management' (Ngee Ann Polytechnic), 'Community Arts' and Global Arts Perspectives' (Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts) (NAFA).

Jeffrey is supported and the program is coordinated by the MCH Team, including Jennifer Lee, Program Manager and Frances Rudgard, Director. Jeffrey has also been a fellow with MCH for the Curated Conferences in 2021 and presented the Covid Time Capsule Project at Meeting Point 2022.

10. Recap of key dates

Date	Time	Activity
August 17th 2023	5pm ICT (Bangkok time)	Q&A session for interested applicants
September 10th 2023	Midnight your local time	Deadline for applications
September 27th-28th	Various	Interviews with shortlisted candidates
September 30th 2023	n/a	Results communicated to all applicants
November 11th 2023	5pm - 7pm ICT (Bangkok time)	Online exchange session 1

Date	Time	Activity
December 14th 2023	5pm - 7pm ICT (Bangkok time)	Online exchange session 2
January 11th 2024	5pm - 7pm ICT (Bangkok time)	Online exchange session 3
February 22nd 2024	5pm - 7pm ICT (Bangkok time)	Online exchange session 4
March 19th	n/a	Travel day
March 20th	10am - 1pm, 2pm-5pm, ICT (Hanoi time)	Exchange workshop between Hosts (in Hanoi)
March 21st-23rd	All day	Perspectives from the Grassroots: A Meeting Point on Art & Social Action in Asia (in Hanoi)
March 24th	n/a	Travel day