

JANUARY 2024



Connections Through Culture

Evaluation Report
2019 – 2022

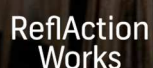


Image: Ralph Labay

Connections Through Culture

The *Connections Through Culture* (CTC) grant programme aims to build long-term relationships and collaborations between artists, cultural professionals, creative practitioners, arts and cultural organisations, hubs, networks and collectives in the UK and countries in Southeast Asia.

6

Participating
nations

580

Applications
received

137

Projects
funded

The six nations participating in the programme alongside the UK are Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Between 2019 and 2022 the programme received 580 applications from which 137 projects were funded.







The evaluation across four years of the programme, including the COVID-19 period, could not be based on comprehensive or consistent data as the programme evolved from one year to the next. However, it is sufficient to provide some important insights and to propose future planning and evaluation recommendations.

The programme ran for a fifth year in 2023 and included Australia, China, Japan and New Zealand. In this round a total of **76** joint projects with the UK were funded across **9** nations of the Asia-Pacific region from **411** eligible applications. The 2023 round is not included in this 2019–2022 Evaluation Report.

Outcomes of the programme are detailed in the body of this report and are measured by the combination of the quantitative and the qualitative responses from grantees. These outcomes are centred on the grantees as participants in the programme.

Outputs from the available programme data (2019-2022)

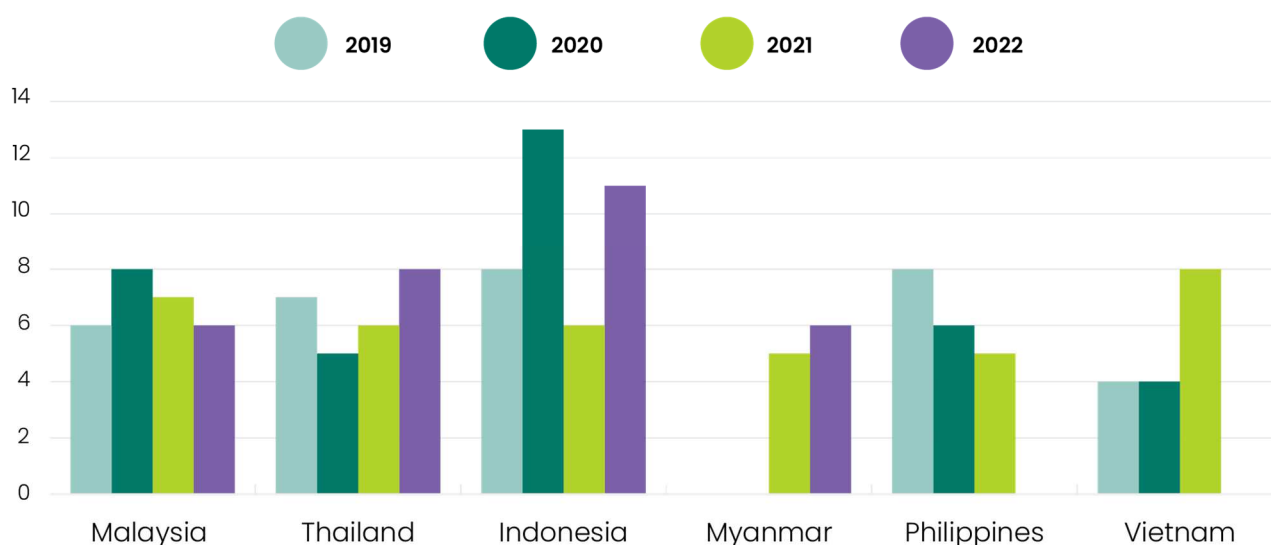
The distribution of grants to collaborations was relatively evenly spread across the six Southeast Asian nations.

2019-2022		Funded	Not funded	Withdrawn	Total	% Accepted
	Malaysia	27	80	-	107	25%
	Thailand	26	61	-	87	30%
	Indonesia	38	129	5	172	22%
	Myanmar	11	27	-	38	29%
	Philippines	19	98	-	117	16%
	Vietnam	16	43	-	59	27%
Totals		137	438	5	580	24

Only Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia had a consistent presence in the grant rounds for each year.

In Myanmar, the programme did not start until 2021. In 2022, the UK-Vietnam Season was prioritised in Vietnam while the programme did not run in The Philippines.

Grants distributed over the four years by Southeast Asian Nation









Projects were funded broadly through either a 'research' or 'professional development' or a 'collaboration' grant with the exception of the 2020 round was not named. All grants sought to foster collaborations whether specifically named 'collaboration' or not.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Collaboration Grant	11	-	31	25	67
Professional Development Grant	22	-	-	-	22
Alumni Grant	-	-	6	-	6
Scoping / Research Grant	-	-	-	6	6
Not named	-	36	-	-	36
Totals	33	36	37	31	137

In the UK, over the combined period the funded applications across the four nations followed the population distribution with a slightly higher rate in Scotland.

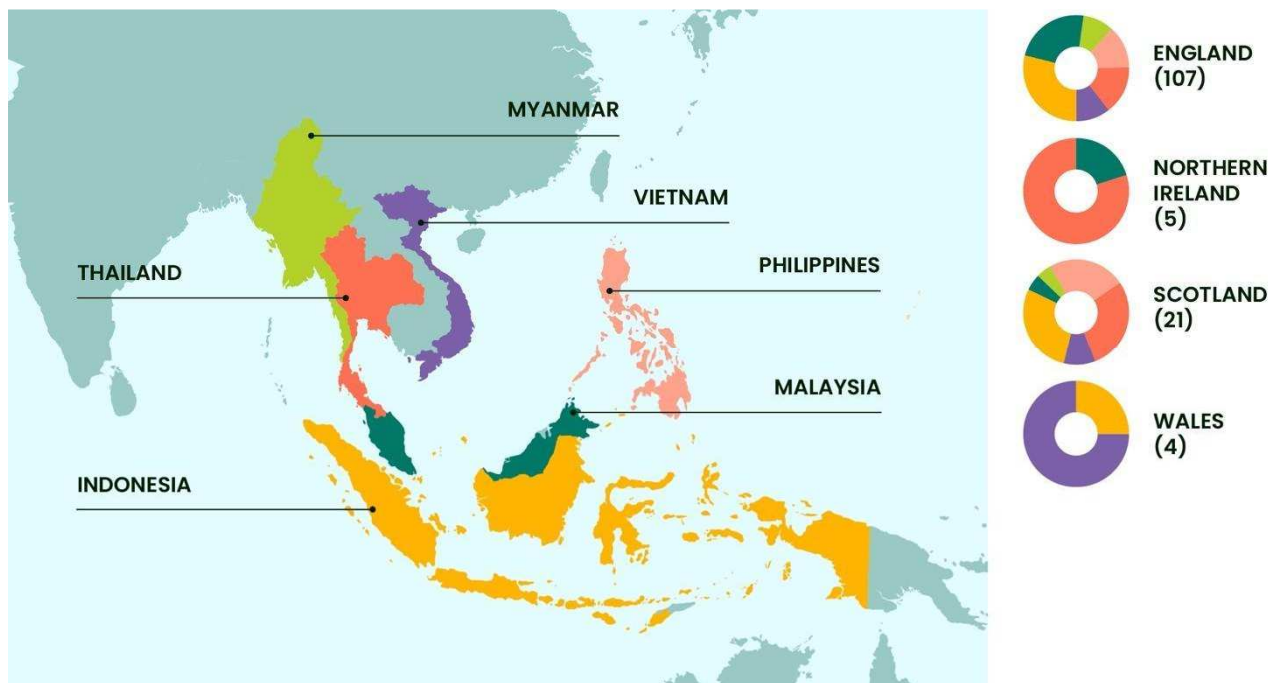
Distribution of Grants	Population	68,138,500	Grantees	137
England	84%	57,440,756	78%	107
Scotland	8%	5,587,357	15%	21
Wales	5%	3,134,371	3%	4
Northern Ireland	3%	1,907,878	4%	5

Across the Southeast Asian nations, distribution of grants was more varied which is influenced by internal priorities.

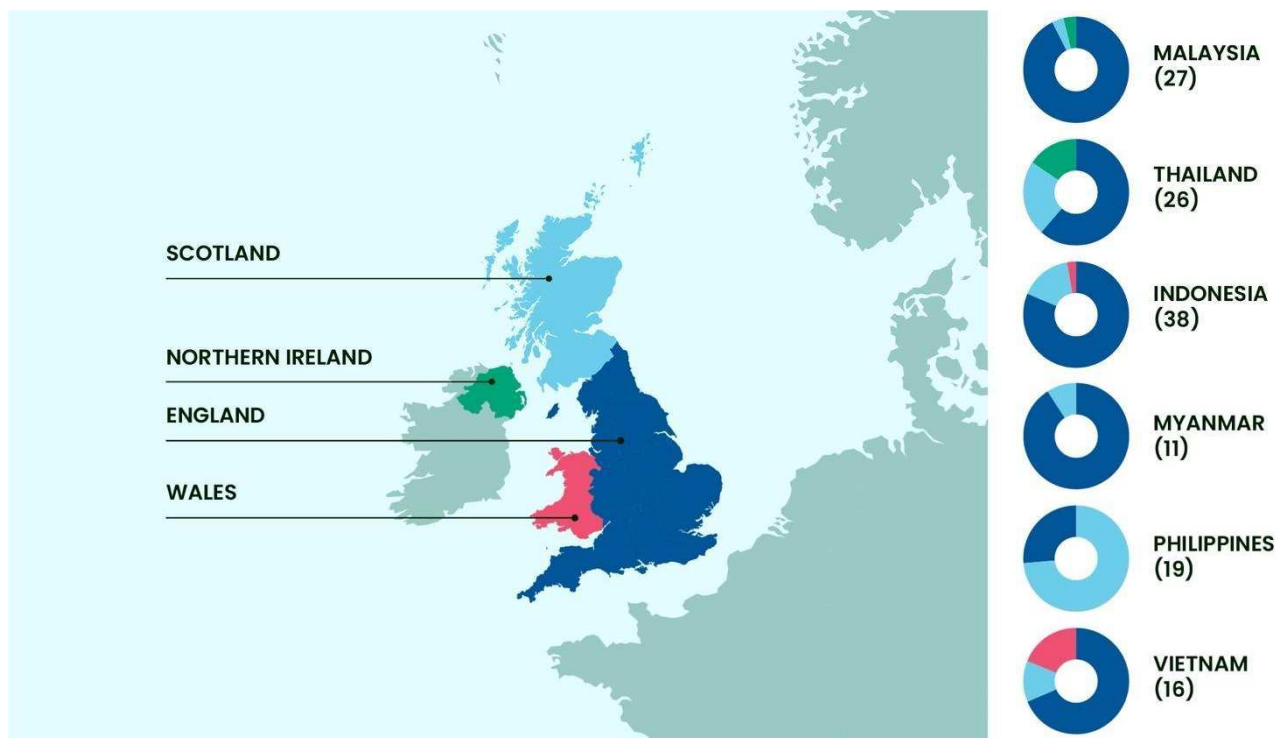
Distribution of Grants	Population	650,000,000	Grantees	137
 Malaysia	5%	34,000,000	20%	27
 Thailand	11%	72,000,000	19%	26
 Indonesia	42%	275,000,000	28%	38
 Myanmar	8%	55,000,000	8%	11
 Philippines	18%	116,000,000	14%	19
 Vietnam	15%	98,000,000	12%	16

Collaboration relationships

There was no consistent pattern to the distribution of collaborative partnerships across Southeast Asian nations over the 4-year period.



Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia participated in all four years of the programme and have the greater number of collaborations with the UK. In the UK, England had the greater number of projects, which is consistent with the larger population base.



Data on the distribution between London and regional England was only collected for 2022 and while it was a small sample it will provide a baseline for future analysis.

Outputs sourced from questionnaire data (2023)

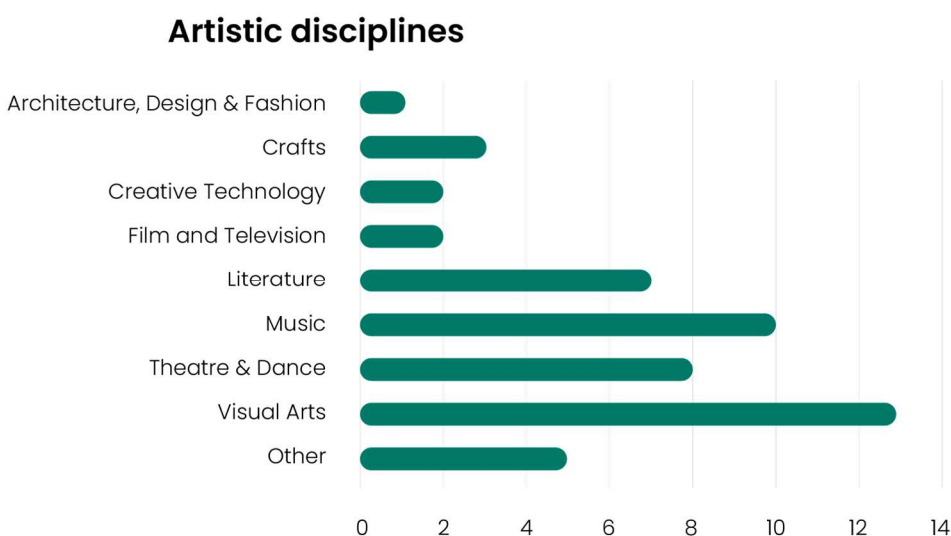
The 2023 evaluation questionnaire provided additional data for **49** of the 137 funded projects.

ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES

Data on artistic disciplines for 2019 and 2020 applications was not available and in 2021 and 2022 applicants were able to select multiple artform disciplines, which does not necessarily reflect the final artistic form of the project.

The **evaluation questionnaire** asked participants to nominate a single artistic discipline. Since it was after the activity, it provides a more accurate representation and due to the small sample size, and the often overlap of discipline definitions, there is no evident trend. This can be addressed in future programmes.

Grants were not limited by artistic discipline and the majority of the work produced by the 51 respondents could be allocated across the four main disciplines of literature, music, performance and visual arts. "Other" activities listed below were for subsets of performance and visual arts, such as puppetry, murals, bio art, art teaching, and social practice art.



ACTIVITY OUTPUTS

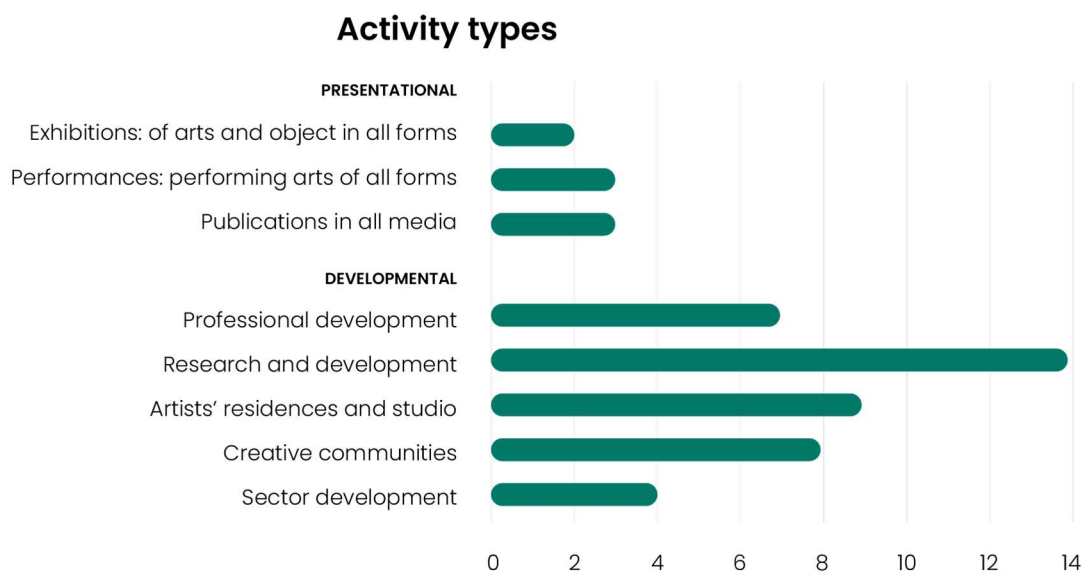
All the funded activities produced can be categorised into two main groups, **developmental** (research, skills development), and **presentational** (performances, exhibitions, events).

Outputs for the majority of funded projects were **developmental** activities, which indicates longer-term planning by respondents thinking of building a practice in collaboration between UK and Southeast Asian producers, compared to **presentational** activities that often focus on the performance or exhibition as the end point.

Of the 49 evaluated projects **81%** were developmental projects.

Presentational activities are those that are most commonly associated with the arts as they are the public side or *product* side of the industry, such as **exhibitions, performances, and publications** (in all media). These are most likely to be the outputs of existing collaborations or as the result of earlier British Council collaboration grants.

Developmental activities are those that build skills and professional capability over time and ultimately lead to an impact on audiences. The measurable outcomes associated with that selection include *knowledge, ideas, and insight gained, professional practice capability increased, and access to beneficial networks and other resources increased*. The ongoing value of these activities and outcomes can impact the artistic careers of both UK and Southeast Asian artists and producers.



Research and development was the largest activity output selected by respondents to the questionnaire. This can be an investigation into past, present or future activities that is documented and communicated in some form and can lead to development of and or presentation of new work, development of new activities or processes. Research and development is an important low-risk first step in successful international collaboration.

The range of **developmental** activities is where many artists, producers and government funding programmes focus, and within international collaboration they can be the catalyst for larger presentational outputs. **Professional development** is a key outcome measure used in this evaluation as it aligns with the programme intentions. The use of **studio exchanges** and access to facilities is also a low cost and early way artists can engage with local communities and cultures.

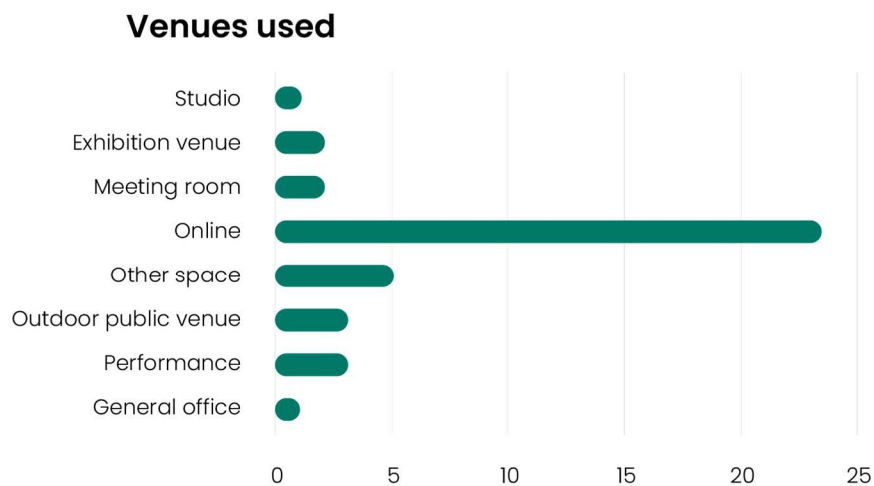
When looking to have a wider impact on communities within nations and regions the **creative community** activities include what is also known as 'socially engaged' arts activities with communities, and often providing access to new creative skills to non-professional artists that can lead to new community-led events.

The smallest selection by respondents is **sector development**, which is a range of activities that aim to strengthen the body of professional and semi-professional artists and producers, through networks, information sharing and collaborations.

The CTC programme is a *sector development activity* as it goes beyond the provision of grants and engages within the sector in each nation to strengthen the networks, support and collaboration of professional and semi-professional producers.

VENUES - LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

Of the 49 surveyed projects **48%** were delivered online. This was evident over 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was not until 2022 and 2023 that “face to face” delivery returned as a delivery mechanism and quickly jumped to 50% of the engagement. The increased use of online tools through the COVID restrictions made online a greater part of collaborations and that has continued as a large proportion (50% in 2022) of the delivery post COVID-19.



Key Findings



Key Findings

Connections Through Culture began in 2019 and continued throughout 2023. It is only after this period that any trends can be confidently identified as the first years of the programme were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sample size, across six Southeast Asian nations and the UK was too small to get any meaningful data from the early years and data collection and recording became more consistent over time as early rounds were completed and indicative results considered when designing future rounds.

The findings have been used to make recommendations on improving monitoring and evaluation so that Heads of Arts and British Council managers can build on what have been considerable achievements in future years.

01

EFFECTIVENESS OF CTC AS A MECHANISM TO DELIVER THE INTENDED IMPACT.

Many industries use funded collaborations as mechanisms for expanding networks, developing new markets and mutual learning. In the context of cultural relations arts collaboration grants often are a catalyst to the start to long-term relations, deeper understanding and trust.

The nature of the CTC programme fits within this practice.

- British Council data indicates that there is a group of producers from the 2021 and 2022 grant rounds that have worked with the British Council before (53%).
- From the questionnaire, 88% of respondents noted a continued relationship with their counterpart after the CTC project ended, and 82% the level of equity in the relationship as high or very high.
- Collaboration online became a significant tool during and post-COVID-19 to engage and enable partnerships to develop within geographic and time zone differences and a hybrid face-to-face and online collaboration has emerged as the primary form.
- The majority of projects (81% of the 49 projects sampled) were developmental activities such as professional development, and research and development, which support a focus on longer-term collaboration and potential for high value collaborations in the future.
- Of the questionnaire respondents (78%) reported that through the project, they had increased their capacity and confidence to address gender, disability or other inequalities as a result of the project. This is a high response when considering it was not the explicit aim of the programme and that comments from the neutral response indicated that there was already this awareness, or the project did not draw on that aspect.

- Both questionnaire respondents and interviewees mentioned challenges that ranged from logistics and management processes to ones related to a small number of the sample where collaborations did not work as well as expected.
- 94% (48 of 51 respondents) rated the CTC programme as having increased their leadership capacity.

02

THE DIRECT BENEFICIAL OUTCOMES OF THE CTC GRANTS FOR THE GRANTEEES

The evaluation addresses specific outcomes of engaging in the programme and the delivery of the project for the producers. The outcomes were tested through the evaluation questionnaire. A single response from 2019 is included in the data and is far outweighed by responses related to the 2020, 2021 and 2022 programmes.

Understanding of the impact through these outcome measures is detailed further below and summarised as key findings here.

- Preliminary findings from the questionnaire indicate there was improvement to professional practice capability with 54% of respondents rating this as a significant outcome.
- The programme is an effective mechanism to increase all participants' access to beneficial networks and resources with survey respondents reporting an average increase of nearly 20%.
- The creative impact of the programme is extremely high with 92% of survey respondents reporting a high degree of creativity inspired through their participation in CTC.
- Participation in the programme led to a high degree of knowledge, ideas and insight with survey respondents reporting an average of 8.9 out of 10.
- While CTC attracts participants from those with a strong appreciation for diversity of cultural expression, this was further increased by participation in the programme.
- The detailed analysis indicates that where change has occurred it was pronounced and observed as very high when compared to other evaluations using the same measures.²

² While not directly correlated, the high ratings in the CTC outcomes responses are at the high end of similar cultural activities in the Takso outcomes planning platform.

03

LONG-TERM IMPACT OF THE CTC COLLABORATION

Four years into the CTC and there are signs that could turn into measurable long-term term impact. It is too soon to quantify that impact and there are potentially refinements to the programme that will enable the measurement over a longer period of time. These are both at the start of the grant round and following the completion of the grant round.

- The application process did not call on applicants to demonstrate or outline the long-term impact of their projects in the application process and was not one of the assessment criteria.
- 88% of respondents to the questionnaire reported that they have maintained a relationship with their collaborators in the other nation.
- There is no significant correlation between existing and new collaborations in predicting continuity of the collaboration. Some factors stated for ongoing collaboration are, starting with a strong intention and a long-term strategy, with a good personal and professional fit, shared goals, and strong commitment.
- British Council staff in the Southeast Asian nations have a rapidly growing knowledge of the issues facing local grantees in the formation of collaborations, applying for the funding, and support during and after projects within their local, national context.
- The evaluation and review after four years provides evidence to enable better planning and stronger outcomes for UK cultural relations in the region and the development of the creative sectors in the UK and Southeast Asia.

The sample size, and relatively short period of the programme did not allow a deeper investigation of what are the key aspects of successful international collaboration, the role of pre-existing and new relationships, and the tracking of post-delivery outputs and outcomes. To address these in the future this report makes recommendations for the design of future CTC programmes to include an evaluation plan for all grantees and their collaborators that addresses the intended outcomes of the programme.

Measuring the impact

The *Connections Through Culture* primary objective: to support new connections, exchanges and collaborations between the UK and Southeast Asia.

Measuring the Impact

The *Connections Through Culture* primary objective:
promote and seed arts and cultural exchanges between the UK and countries in Southeast Asia.

This evaluation assesses measurable *outcomes* (things achieved) centred on the participants and how well these reported outcomes address the key aims of the programme. In the previous section we presented *outputs* (things produced), which are different to outcomes and are the activities that we do to achieve an outcome.

We use the Schema of measurable outcomes published by CDN in 2016, which have been endorsed internationally³ and nationally⁴ to provide a baseline of outcomes over the four years.

Central to the schema are the *five measurable cultural outcomes* of engagement in cultural activities published in the international peer-reviewed journal *Evaluation* in 2020⁵.

In total the Schema consists of 22 outcomes that recognise and measure impact across all domains of public policy that are instrumental in planning.

To assess the impact of *supporting new connections, exchanges and collaborations between the UK and Southeast Asia*, 5 of 22 measurable outcomes were used. 3 from the cultural domain, one from the economic domain and one from the governance domain.

Cultural



Creativity stimulated.

The sparking of imagination, creativity or curiosity that leads to a desire for creative expression.



Knowledge, ideas and insights gained.

Ideas, and insight gained' we mean, intellectual stimulation, critical reflection, creative thinking and deeper understanding.



Diversity of cultural expression appreciated.

Valuing the different ways people express themselves through diverse cultural forms, reflecting their life experience and interests.

³ *United Cities and Local Governments* (UCLG) is the world-wide peak body for cities, local and regional governments. It endorsed CDN's frameworks in 2019 for use across its seven international zones.

⁴ The *National Local Government Cultural Forum* (2013-2018) was a partnership of CDN with Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Commonwealth Government Office for the Arts, and the Australian Local Government Association and its members.

⁵ Dunphy, K., Smithies, J., Uppal, S., Schauble, H., & Stevenson, A. (2020). Positing a schema of measurable outcomes of cultural engagement. *Evaluation*, 26(4), 474–498.

Economic



Professional practice capability enhanced.

An individual's knowledge and experience that informs their practice such as management, creative and production, leading to more efficient use of resources, increased productivity, and practice leadership.

Governance



Access to beneficial networks and other resources increased.

The benefits from linkages between individuals and groups within the local community such as links between community members and council services or artists and the cultural sector.

All respondents were asked to consider their experience of these five outcomes in relation to their activities. The two highest rated outcomes from each respondent are represented in this chart. These indicate where the strongest outcomes were evident across the 49 projects.

Measurable outcomes and the number of instances they were rated as a high result of the project

CULTURAL

Creativity was stimulated



22

Knowledge ideas and insight were gained



21

Diversity of cultural expression was appreciated



8

ECONOMIC

Profession practice capability increased



27

GOVERNANCE

Access to beneficial networks and resources increased



22

0 5 10 15 20 25 30

Across all outcomes the ratings from the 51 respondents were generally high.

The rigor of the application process is likely to favour applicants who are experienced artists and producers and therefore for them to rate the outcomes higher than average is worth exploring further in future rounds. What aspects of CTC were instrumental in these high ratings? What can be strengthened to make those outcomes more consistent to both the UK and Southeast Asian creative cultural sectors?

Current and future rounds of the programme can be designed to dive deeper into the correlations between programme outputs and the outcomes and relationship between the cultural outcomes and the economic outcomes and nation to nation collaboration.

Connection Through Culture Objectives

Increased opportunity for mutually beneficial collaborations between UK and Southeast Asia partners in the arts, creative and cultural industries.

For this objective, the following four measures were surveyed through the 2023 questionnaire



Cultural:

Knowledge, ideas and insight gained



Cultural:

Creativity stimulated.



Governance:

Access to beneficial networks and resources increased



Economic:

Professional capability increased

UK and Southeast Asian artists and producers have beneficial outcomes from the collaborations.

For this objective, an additional outcome was included with the four above.



Cultural:

Diversity of cultural expression appreciated

Each respondent was asked to rate how much these outcomes were achieved for them by providing a **quantitative** score between 1 and 10, where 1 is “Not at all” and 10 is “Most imaginable”.

Following the numeric score, they provided a **qualitative** written response for their rating. The quantitative and qualitative data is compiled and analysed below each outcome, supported by a summary of the results, and direct quotes from some of the respondents’ qualitative answers.

All five outcome measures are summarised below. The graphic represents the number of respondents that provided the same ratings on the scale of 1 to 10. The following descriptions provide context on how to read the graphs and a selection of direct comments directly related to the outcomes are provided.

The outcomes were also the subject of the sample interviews, and a selection of quotes are included to provide examples of how the grantees felt about the outcomes.

CULTURAL

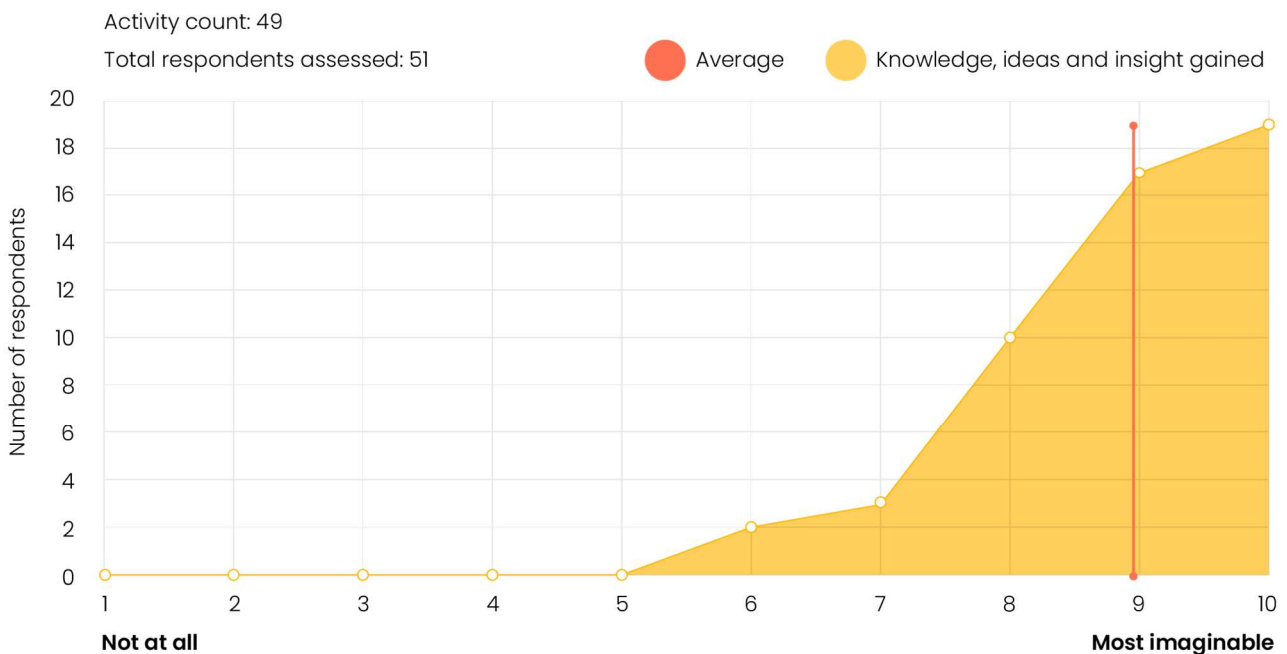
Knowledge, ideas, and insight gained



Grantees assessed the amount of intellectual stimulation, critical reflection, creative thinking, or deeper understanding they experienced.

The 51 respondents evaluated gaining **knowledge, ideas, and insight** on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is “Not at all” to 10 is “Most imaginable” at an average 8.9. This indicated that the level of insight gained by participants was rated **High**.

Graph 1: Knowledge, ideas and insight gained



Graph 1.

The 51 responses across the participating countries rated the outcome of knowledge, ideas and insight gained as high, which taken in a collaboration setting is one indicator of mutually beneficial collaborations.

The solid weighting to the highest score in the graph, with the lowest being a 6 indicates, is a very high amount of knowledge, ideas and insight gained as any rating above 1 is a positive result and a large clustering at the high end is significant.

Of the 51 respondents, 46 rated their gaining of insight in the high (8-10) range with 18 of those rating their experience as 10 or *most imaginable*. Respondents noted that working with their counterparts and learning about ways of working and approaches led to reflection of their own practice. Learning about the culture, histories and issues in their counterpart’s country was also a significant outcome for many respondents.

One interviewee commented on the importance of an embodied experience – face to face meetings – in deepening knowledge. A number of respondents noted that learning about different ways of working and how art can be used to address issues has led them to think about their own practice and creative exploration. One interviewee shares her insight about how dance can be a tool for inclusion and social change. Some respondents shared how the knowledge shared can be applied creating new things through cross pollination.

Comments from questionnaire respondents on their rating of *insight gained*

“I would say the most dominant insight for me was how to effectively manage a collaboration of this nature. I came to realise upon reflection that I have to undertake many roles as a producer, project manager AND public artist and projects of this nature require deeper and more methodical planning to locate each counterparts’ responsibilities in more detail to ensure a smooth delivery. It also taught me that flexibility and adaptability is integral to the enjoyment of a project of this nature as there will be many unexpected happenings along the way and that is part of the process of leadership in this realm. I’ve also deepened my experience in exploring how others can challenge my creative ideals, to add new depths and meaning to the artwork, but also how embedding the people and place and culture within the location can completely transform the original conception of the artwork.”

– **Rachel Taylor, Margate UK. Partner in Bandung, Indonesia.**

Comments from interviewees and their discussion of *insight gained*

“Again, our experience in Malaysia was invaluable in the depth of what was shared with us, in action, in words, in witnessing – this knowledge goes beyond what we have been able to gain from desk research and online conversations, it is embodied.”

– **Emily Gee, St Helens, UK. Partner in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

“Hugely rewarding in terms of the research and sharing we were able to engage in. The objects became the territory across which we could unite the worlds of devised theatre and text-based theatre, creating a rich cross-pollination of theatrical languages. For me, our sessions (which ended sometimes around 9pm Malaysian Time) left me buzzing with ideas and sleep came creeping slow. But I was not upset but stimulated.”

– **Lim Soon Heng, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Partner in Leeds, UK.**

CULTURAL

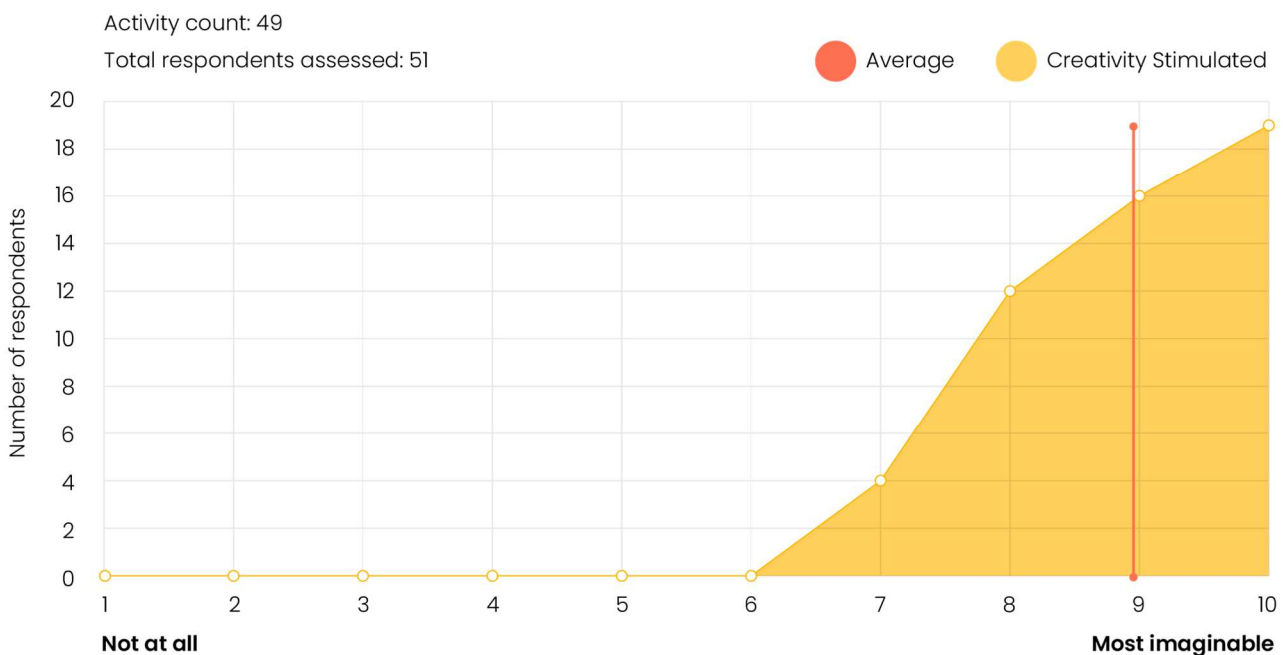
Creativity stimulated



The grantees assessed their experience as a sparking of the imagination, creativity or curiosity that led to a desire for creative expression.

The 51 respondents rated themselves as having a **high** level of **creativity stimulated**. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is “Not at all” to 10 is “Most imaginable” the average was **8.9** which indicates a strong connection between knowledge, ideas and insight and creativity in these projects.

Graph 2: Creativity stimulated



Graph 2.

There were no ratings lower than 7 for this outcome which is notable when compared to aggregated results for the same outcome across different activities in the Takso platform.

Each of the four respondents that rated their creative stimulation at 7, had very positive corresponding comments about how this came about and why they gave that rating.

The questionnaire and interview responses indicate that CTC is an effective mechanism to stimulate creativity with 47 of the 51 respondents saying their creativity was in the high (8-10) range. The aspects of the programme and projects most mentioned by the respondents is how the collaboration with their counterparts and other participants sparked their creativity. The inspiration they get through exchange is most cited in the comments. It could be to learn from a particular inspirational model, different working methods or modes of expression.

Experimenting with new technologies in remote collaboration is cited as opening new angles of looking at things. Taking creative risks by fusing different artistic forms of expression in dance for

example, lead to new possibilities. Being open to serendipity and the unexpected allowed for creative breakthroughs for some. Some interviewees mentioned that having an open attitude or an environment not to be judged helped in fostering creativity. A number of respondents shared that the challenges sparked their creativity and new ways of thinking and solving problems.

The challenges mentioned included having to co-ordinate and balance different elements of projects, language, tight deadlines and problem solving as well as working creatively in different time zones.

Comments from questionnaire respondents on their rating of *creativity stimulated*

“The collaborative aspect of the project further fuelled my creativity. Engaging with a diverse team of artists and sharing perspectives allowed for a rich exchange of ideas, pushing the boundaries of traditional artistic practices. The synergy created within the team inspired me to take risks and explore unconventional avenues in my creative work. In essence, this project has not only provided a platform for creative expression but has actively stimulated my imagination, leaving a lasting impact on my approach to future artistic endeavours.”

– **Piyawat Louilarprasert, Bangkok, Thailand. Partner in Birmingham, UK**

“I’ve learned multiple exciting engagement projects by visiting the archives, museums and libraries throughout the trip (to the UK). I have seen the possibility of an archive being a repository for not only passive holdings, but also as a site of speculating histories, inviting more stories and theories into one’s project.”

– **Nurul Nadia Binti Nasaruddin, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia . Partner in London, UK.**

Comments from interviewees and their discussion of *creativity being stimulated*

“This project has imparted upon me the understanding that creativity and well-designed art have the capacity to evoke abundance, create space, and contribute to a more modern interpretation of the traditionally outdated flower market. The realization that the younger generation can derive enjoyment from a space previously perceived as antiquated is not only personally inspiring but resonates with my team and the visitors alike.”

– **Dr Supitcha Tovivich, Bangkok, Thailand. Partner in London, UK.**

“The event was more about stimulating creativity in others through exposure to the events and activities we created. However, I was very much inspired by the work I saw and heard that came out of this project. The values were that shared, shared passion for creative work, I suppose. I think that’s the biggest value for sharing creativity and being open about accepting any input, any creative input could create something that could be meaningful.”

– **Joel Cahen, Chilham, UK. Partner in Samarinda, Indonesia.**

CULTURAL

Diversity of cultural expression appreciated

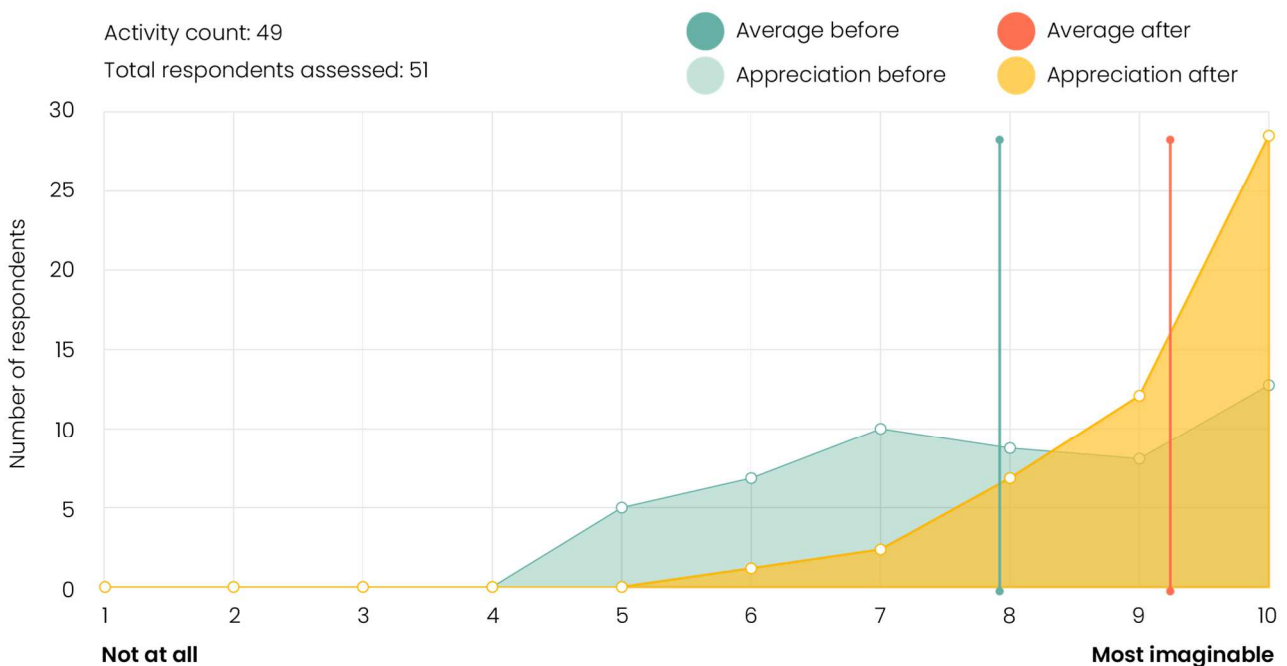


The grantees assessed the cultural outcome of valuing the different ways people express themselves through diverse cultural forms, reflecting their life experience and interests.

The 51 respondents rated **their appreciation of diversity of cultural expression** on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is “Not at all” to 10 is “Most imaginable” at an average amount of change was from **7.9** to **9.3**.

The Trend Chart below (Graph 3.) shows the amount of change in participants as a shift from a pre-participation **appreciation of diversity of cultural expression** (green) to the post-participation sense of shared cultural heritage (yellow). The graph indicates a trend rate of positive change. If the green and orange lines were closer together, they would indicate less change.

Graph 3: Diversity of cultural expression appreciated



Graph 3. The trend shows a clear increase of appreciation. If this is a mutual response between collaborators, then the programme is building potentially strong relationships between participating UK and Southeast Asian producers.

60% of respondents rated their appreciation as already high (8-10) prior to the CTC project. This is perhaps not surprising as such an international grant programme is likely to attract artists who by their existing relationships and appreciation want to engage with different cultural expressions. A number of respondents did mention that their existing appreciation was a motivating factor in

their decision to apply to CTC. Some interviewees mentioned that the fact they are “3rd country kids” with for example as half Thai/English background was an important drive for applying.

By the end of their projects 88% of respondents were rating their appreciation in this high range of 8 or above. While appreciation was high prior to their CTC project, a number of respondents noted that the practical engagement and partnership enabled them to expand and deepen their appreciation further.

10% of respondents noted that the CTC programme enabled an appreciation for the cultural expression of traditionally marginalised communities. Some interviewees mentioned how the project helped them realize the importance of sharing opportunities to a more diverse group of people, linking expression of cultural diversity with inclusivity. Some respondents described a growing appreciation of different techniques and methodologies of practice, how diversity in expressions opens up creativity and opportunities for new markets. One interviewee mentions: *“It highlighted how diverse cultural influences can shape and enrich artistic endeavours, creating a shared language that transcends borders.”*

Comments from questionnaire respondents on their appreciation of diversity of cultural expression

“Before my participation in the Chatri project, my appreciation for it was already high. I held a deep regard for the cultural significance and historical value embedded in Chatri, recognizing it as a cornerstone of our community’s identity. However, through active participation in the project, my appreciation has soared to even greater heights... ”

– **Tharinee Ratanasatien, Bangkok, Thailand. Partner in the UK.**

“Engaging with Tim Casson and his “People Powered Performance” technique, which has been introduced to numerous countries, added a global perspective to our understanding of cultural expression. It highlighted how diverse cultural influences can shape and enrich artistic endeavours, creating a shared language that transcends borders. The project brought together people from different cultural backgrounds and abilities to express themselves through dance. It was inspiring to see how dance could transcend language and cultural barriers, and how it could be used to share stories, emotions, and experiences.”

– **Luyen Thi linh, Hanoi, Vietnam. Partner in London, UK.**

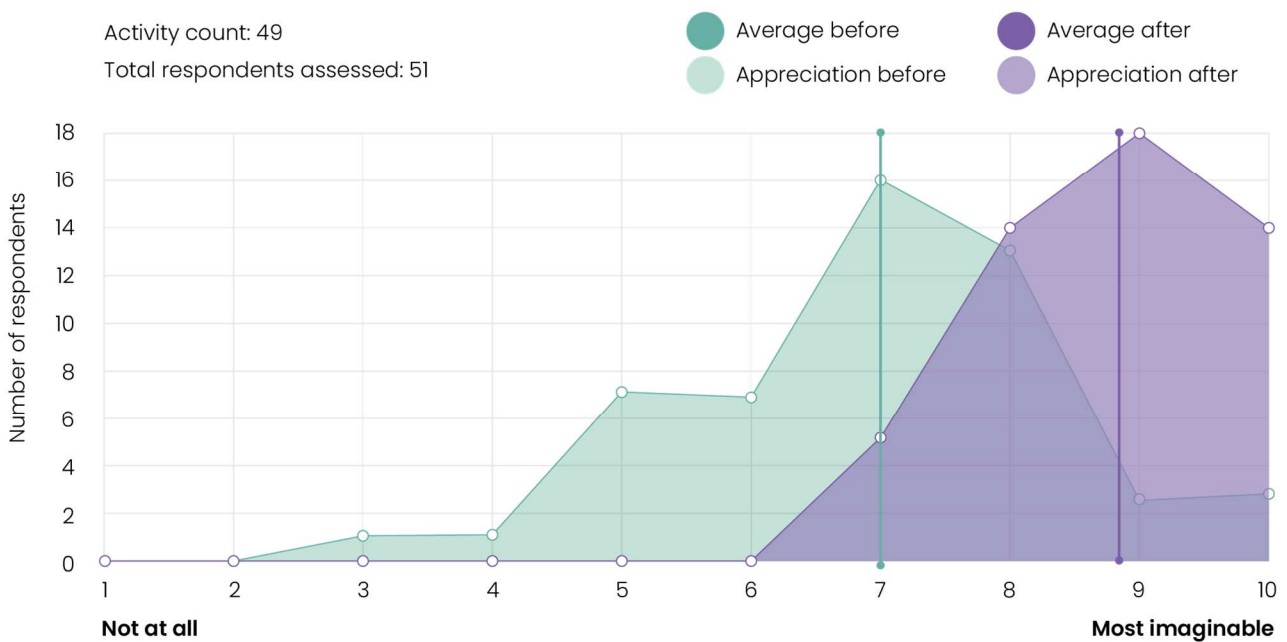
ECONOMIC

Professional practice capability increased



The grantees assessed the economic outcome of strengthening their knowledge and experience that informs their practice such as management, creative development and production, leading to more efficient use of resources, increased productivity, and the potential for individual economic wellbeing.

Graph 4: Professional practice capability increase



Graph 4.

The trend indicates that the grantees are already capable, demonstrated by successful applications, and with that base they still indicated a notable increase in their capability.

The **51** participants assessed the **increase in their professional practice capability**. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is “Not at all” to 10 is “Most imaginable” the average change was from **7.0** to **8.8**.

For respondents who started with low appreciation (3 and 4), each reported a 10 at the conclusion and their comments supported their rating of a profound change. The majority of respondents rated themselves as having a relatively high (7+) experience of this outcome before the project commenced. One respondent mentioned that the focus of their collaboration was capability change for the beneficiaries, but that they primarily found inspiration and new ways of thinking how they approach the project, thus enhancing their experience.

Within the responses in the questionnaire 14 respondents stated their capability had increased by 10%, 15 had an increase of 20% with 8 eight saying that their practice capability has improved between 30% and 70%.

Aspects of capability reported include project and team management skills, growth in artistic and creative skills, communication, and international collaboration skills. A number of respondents noted that engaging with diverse perspectives and cultures had led them not just to push their capability but also their creative boundaries, which demonstrates how the achievement of the cultural outcome is essential to this economic outcome. One interviewee who worked internationally for the first time, noted that they can still grow a lot to become globally competitive, hence being aware of how they have increased their capability and what they still need to learn.

Potential for increased individual economic wellbeing in connection to increased professional capability was not a specific outcome measure. Yet having participated in a CTC grant, some said, it gave them profile and recognition. As a result of the project, one interviewee received a prestigious award gaining international recognition and opening doors to new partnerships.

Comments from questionnaire respondents on their *professional practice capability increasing*

“Participating in this project has significantly enhanced my professional practice capability. Through the experience gained, I have developed new skills and gained confidence in managing both the creative and organizational aspects of my professional practice. The project required a diverse set of competencies, ranging from project management and networking to creative collaboration and cultural exchange. ... Thanks to this project, I have been able to connect with other creative organizations to apply for UK/VN Season 2023 and gain some consultant contracts with some NGOs.”

– **Luyen Thi linh, Hanoi, Vietnam. Partner in London, UK.**

“We haven't realized our full potential until we have done this project. We know we can still grow and acquire more skills to be globally competitive in terms of our work. We have been able to confidently work with other local and international organizations. We have also been able to develop our project portfolio that have helped us raise funds to support our other programmes and activities.”

– **Butong Idar, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Partner in Cardiff, Wales, UK.**

Comment from interviewee and their discussion of *professional practice capability*

“On the subject of professional practice capability, we try to understand this from the different participating stakeholders: local Facilitating Artists, local community participants, and PSBK. The workshop model and active and direct engagement provided the confidence, inspiration, and meaning for artists and participants. Artists gained additional communication skills that enhanced their own professional careers in the arts. For PSBK, the ratings reflect a fairly sound existing capability – but with new found inspiration and change of attitude on the notion of 'investing'. We are keen to expand partnerships and collaborations beyond the 'usual circle' --with socially driven experts, academics, and marginalized communities. We were inspired how The Paper Birds worked with academics as research partners and consulted with Youth led organizations.”

– **Jeannie Park, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Partner in Leeds, UK.**

GOVERNANCE

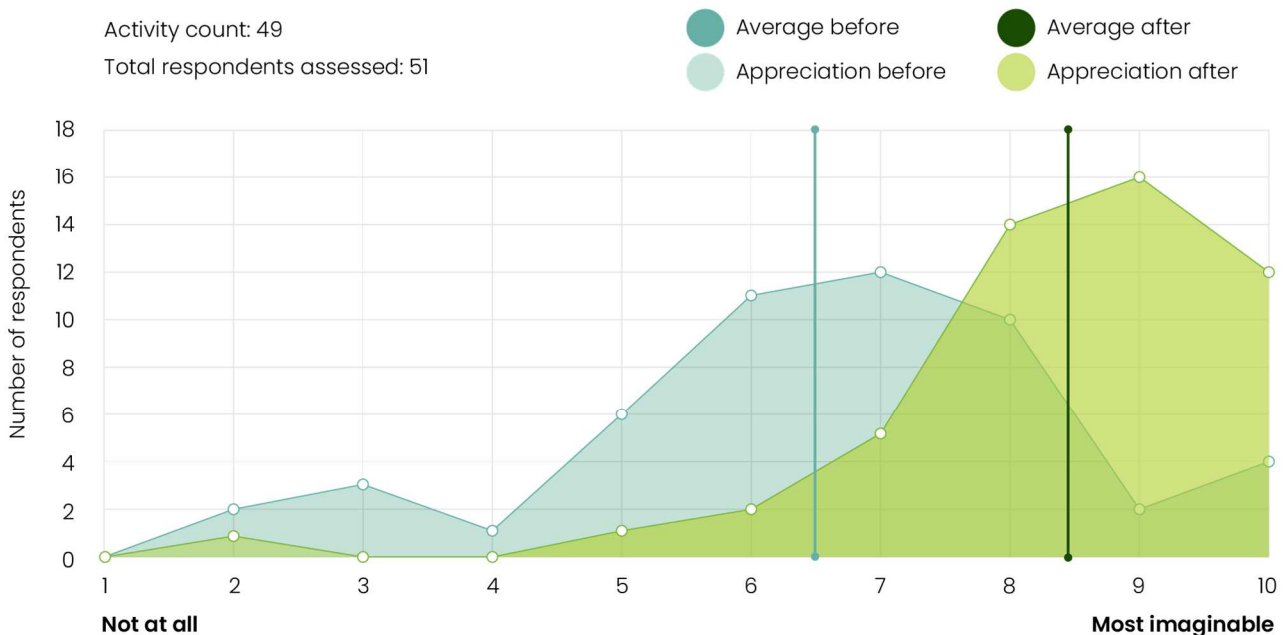
Access to beneficial networks and other resources increased



The grantees assessed the strengthening of linkages between individuals and groups within the local community that have the potential for benefit, such as links between community members and governing body services or artists and the cultural sector.

The 51 respondents assessed the project for how it increased their access to beneficial networks and other resources. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is “Not at all” to 10 is “Most imaginable” the average amount of change was from 6.5 to 8.4.

Graph 5: Access to beneficial networks and other resources increased



Graph 5. The graph shows a strong instance of (positive) change, typical of a grants programme, and indicates that between the before and after, there was a sense of trust in the programme as it provided opportunities to new and emerging producers.

For 15 respondents (29%) reported no change in their access to networks and resources as a result of CTC. Of this group, 10 were in the high range (8-10) both before and after the programme and to further increase access would be difficult to achieve. One respondent who assessed themselves as having the most imaginable level of access to networks, provided a comment suggesting the programme did have a significant impact on them in this regard. For some respondents, accessing new networks was not as such the focus of the project.

17 respondents to the questionnaire reported a significant (30% or more) increase in their networks and resources and a further 19 reported increases of 10% or 20%. Some respondents in this group noted that while they were able to make some connections, there was not sufficient time or

opportunity to cement connections or that they would like to receive more support from the British Council in helping locally with networks. This accords with other questions in the survey where a number of respondents commented that networking opportunities and activities during, and post CTC would improve the programme. Quite a few of the interviewees mentioned that their networks grew well locally as a result of the collaboration. This is not surprising as from the interviews it can be noted that for some UK applicants the intention was to expand their networks in Asia to access new audiences, a new market or enrich their experience through the collaboration, while very few Asian applicants mention they are looking at expanding networks proactively in the UK. This might be related to the size of the grant and the nature of the collaboration, especially during Covid-19. Some interviewees mention that the expansion of their networks is already leading to new opportunities or partnerships.

Comments from questionnaire respondents on access to beneficial networks and resources increasing

"We have got more network, but probably not enough."

- **Narinchai Haphuriwat, Bangkok, Thailand. Partners in Edinburgh, Oxford, Bristol and Cupar, UK.**

"It's one of the things that we feel has grown a lot since we've been doing this project. Our network is more open, we are more confident to build networks not only within the city or within the country but also internationally."

- **Benny Widyo, Tulungagung, Indonesia. Partner in UK.**

"Having lived abroad and not being part of a creative community, and as my day job was not in a creative industry, I had no creative networks. I was also not connected to any queer community. From this project, I have gained new networks in both the creative industry and queer community."

- **Gaia Khairina, Jakarta, Indonesia. Partner in UK and Malaysia.**

Comments from interviewees and their discussion on access to beneficial networks and resources

"We had developed the beginnings of a relationship with Gerimis which has been undoubtedly strengthened by being able to undertake the field residency. The building of trust within this partnership ultimately led to us being hosted by their community network, building links and connections that are very precious to us and we intend to continue to foster."

- **Emily Gee, St Helens, UK. Partner in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

"I would have loved to meet new people in the UK through the project. Many new networks in Thailand though - so networks locally not internationally."

- **Dr Supitcha Tovivich, Bangkok, Thailand. Partner in London, UK.**

"8-8 Contemporary dance is still a growing art form within Thailand. There are areas of political challenges in finding new networks and finding easy access to directors and programmers. We have received wonderful support from the British Council in Thailand, but I would have hoped after our performance in Bangkok there might have been more possibilities for how to develop more work in Bangkok City ballet. Many sponsors attended the event but since then there have not been any movements for possible financial support. In addition, BCB struggled to invite directors to the show. This is something I would like to change and eventually bring more openness to Thai organisations by attracting them through stronger marketing strategies."

– **James Pett, UK. Partners in Bangkok, Thailand.**

What these quantitative and qualitative results tell us

Across the five measurable outcomes grantees reported very high responses and shows that the *support for new connections, exchanges and collaborations between the UK and Southeast Asia* is not only measured by the outputs of activities, but by the quality of the outcomes for the grantees.

The setup of each programme per year has evolved and this report can assist in the planning of the 2024 programme.

Removing inconsistencies in the planning and data tools will enable more detailed understanding of relationships between collaborators, activity types, intended outcomes and what a successful CTC programme looks like in the long-term.

The recommendations in this report describe how to build on this strong indicative result from the first four years.

Long-term impact

In considering this objective of the British Council the findings from the existing data and the evaluation data can inform the mid-term and long-term impact.

Long-term Impact

From interviews with Heads of Arts and other British Council managers in the Southeast Asian nations there is a positive view that CTC demonstrates UK leadership in arts and culture, through the role it plays in the region. This was important for countries that did not have a historical link to the UK such as The Philippines.

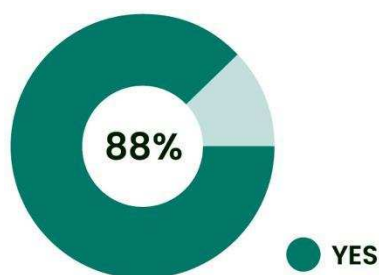
They propose strategies for building on that regional recognition. These include matched funding sources and opportunities for smaller grants that can lead to bigger scale projects i.e., by combining multilateral grants across ASEAN to bring in other SEA partners, bigger projects with bigger impact.

The Heads of Arts in each of the Southeast Asian nations recognise local barriers and pathways and their experience combined with this evaluation report can inform the development of the programme.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO LONG-TERM IMPACT ANSWERED THROUGH THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

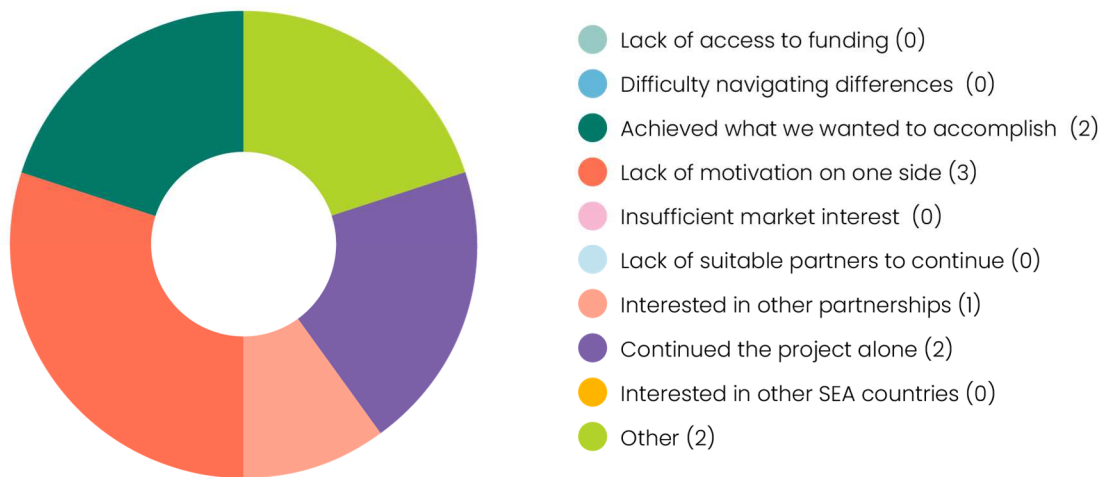
The questionnaire posed several multiple choice and short answer questions to find responses to specific aspects of the outcomes related to the British Council's intended outcomes of positive long-term impact and potential future leadership, ongoing collaborations, and strengthening of equity, diversity, and inclusion through the CTC programme.

Has your relationship with your counterpart(s) continued after the CTC supported project ended?



The six respondents to the questionnaire that did not have a continuing relationship cited lack of motivation on one side of the collaboration and the sense that the project had achieved what it set out to do, and one side or the other was working on other projects.

Since the respondents represent only a sample of the 137 projects, it is likely that amongst those that did not answer the questionnaire, there would be a greater number that did not have ongoing collaborations. Of the six in this sample the reasons cited would be representative of other participants not continuing collaboration.



There are 45 respondents (88%) who are continuing the collaboration in some form. Of these, 22 noted that they were either continuing to work on the project or were starting to work on other activities in other countries. The majority of respondents were still in touch and while they might not have concrete plans most are actively exploring new partnerships and funding opportunities.

From the grant interviewees, there seems to be no difference between old and new connections in terms of guaranteeing a continuity in the collaboration. Those collaborations who started with a strong intention and a long-term strategy, with a good personal and professional fit, shared goals and strong commitment are continuing the collaboration in some form and actively seeking funding.

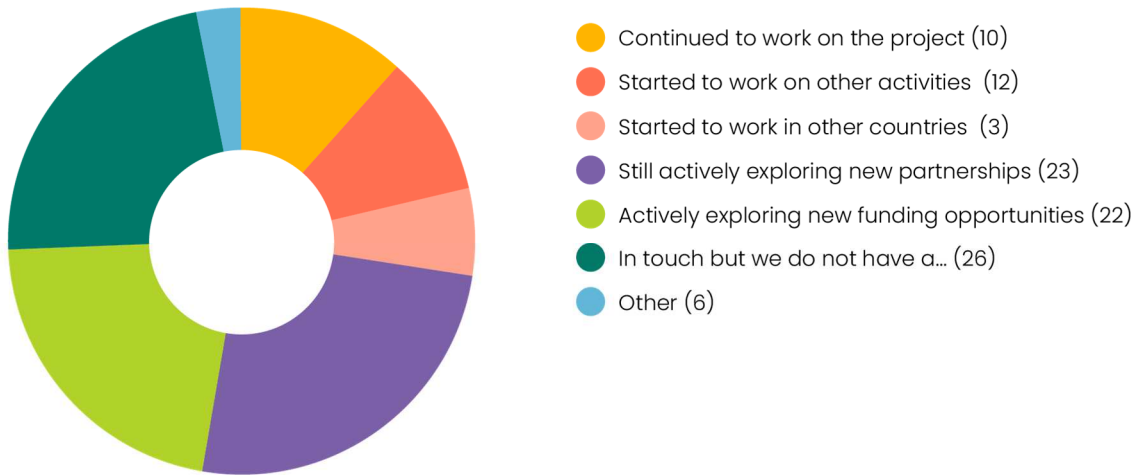
“CTC gave the opportunity for a meaningful and long-term relationship-- CTC helped to kickstart the project.”

– **Emily Gee, St Helens, UK. Partner in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

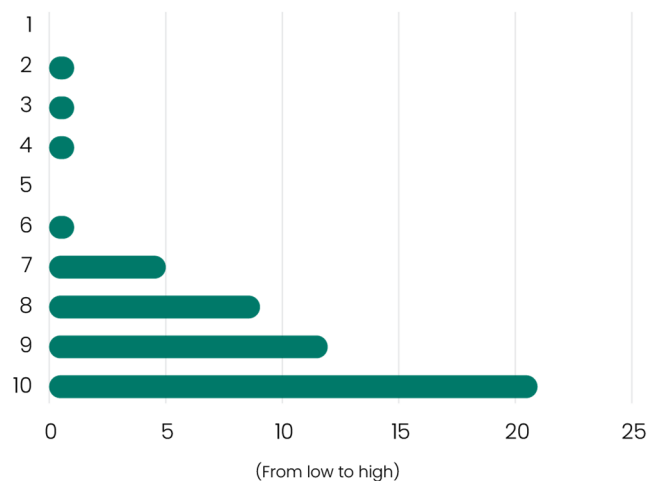
“It’s always about longevity. And it’s always about cultivating and growing this, this network and this, bringing people together. And how we can expand how we can develop and yeah, it’s just a very natural organic path for me.”

– **James Pett, UK. Partners in Bangkok, Thailand.**

This high rate of ongoing collaboration in planning or delivery, evident from the 2020-2022 cohorts indicates a foundation for longer-term impact and an opportunity for the British Council to build on the continuing group.



Using the following scale, rate how equitably the coordination and benefits of this project were shared.



The large majority of responses indicated that overall, there was a high sense of equity in the distribution of benefits and in coordination. Notably, there were three exceptions which related to one side not responding or there being a sense that one party took on more than their expected share of responsibility and risk. In this form of international collaboration equity must be an objective for 100% of the participants. These three failures indicate that there needs to be accessible and timely support to producers caught in an inequitable partnership available over the life of the programme.

Notably, only one respondent to the questionnaire provided a negative response to this question, and it related to the lack of communication and support from the UK partner.

Comment from questionnaire respondents on how equitably the coordination and benefits were shared

"My partner was unavailable during many important calls and was unresponsive when the project was over."

- **Adulaya Hoontrakul, Bangkok, Thailand. Partner in London, UK.**

Comment from interviewees from discussion on equitable coordination and benefits

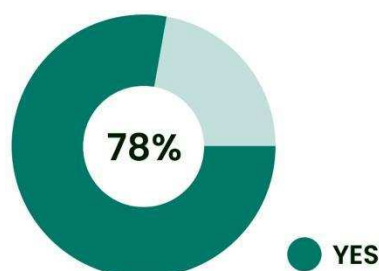
"Previously, we thought that the UK is higher in status than us, but it is a true collaboration, very equal and based on friendship."

- **Aung Myat Htay, Yangon, Myanmar. Partner in London, UK.**

"Because we felt that our UK partners were genuinely open and were mature enough to take praises as well as criticisms, it allowed for an environment for candour. Not to say that we were so brutally honest, unkind, and tactless. We felt heard; we listened. Enabling for a communication that allowed both parties to lead the way without fear that we might be hurting someone's feelings."

- **Lim Soon Heng, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Partner in Leeds, UK.**

Through your project did you gain awareness, capacity and confidence to address gender, disability or other inequalities?



Respondents to the questionnaire (10%) noted that their appreciation of the diversity of cultural expression increased due to working with traditionally marginalised communities such as people with disabilities or diverse gender identities, oppressed cultural minorities, grassroots communities or diversity of people, colour, gender, religious background (in the UK). These respondents often showed the biggest amount of change in their appreciation (see outcomes reporting above).

While responses suggest that CTC is effective in increasing grantee awareness, capacity and confidence to address gender, disability or other inequalities, a significant minority stating that they did not experience an increase. Of the 11 people answering no to this question, 7 left a comment. Three people noted that their project was not designed to address such issues specifically. Notably of these three, one respondent stated that the company and actors they engaged with had a 'very positive and constructive attitude' to the topic and they had gained "awareness and confidence" about the issues while another noted that they were already aware of these issues. A fourth respondent noted that by the end of their CTC funded period, their project was in an early stage and had not yet engaged with many people. Another stated that although

they had not gained any new skills or awareness, projects they developed would assist in tackling these issues in the SEA country they were working with. Two further respondents commented that they had attended the training and implemented the recommendation with one stating that they had “gained awareness, capacity and confidence” on the topic.

Comments from the questionnaire.

“Yes, our recent project has significantly contributed to our awareness, capacity, and confidence in addressing issues related to gender, disability, and other inequalities. By fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment, we were able to explore and incorporate diverse perspectives, ensuring that our project reflected a broad spectrum of experiences.”

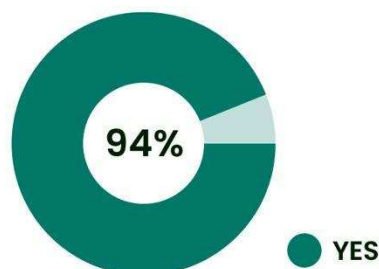
Throughout the process, we actively sought to amplify underrepresented voices, addressing gender imbalances and promoting inclusivity for individuals with disabilities. This commitment was reflected not only in the content of our project but also in our team dynamics and decision-making processes.”

- **Piyawat Louilarpprasert, Bangkok, Thailand. Partner in Birmingham, UK.**

“Gained awareness of specific inequalities and oppressions faced by Orang Asli communities, histories and political contexts around this.”

- **Emily Gee, St Helens, UK. Partner in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

Has your experience of the CTC funded project increased your leadership capacity?



The question had the highest positive response which is understandable for this group of producers, who while already displaying leadership and skills to successfully apply, strengthened their leadership through delivering the project. One of the ‘No’ respondents noted that they approached the project as collaboration and “non-hierarchical” and others did not comment.

“My previous organizational experience was in university. This was the first time I took up organizing in the “real world” which was on a different scale entirely. This experience exposed me not only to trans women but also multiple artists, which pushed me to interact and organize with people of different fields and experiences and necessitated juggling multiple collaborative and coordination work all at once. This experience also helped my confidence and pushed me to believe more in my capacities, even in environments where I might be uncomfortable, and that is a valuable skill as a leader. Lastly, through some uncomfortable experiences, I also learned how to be

responsible and accountable as a leader – accountable to both our collaborators and the sponsor.”

–Gaian Khairina, Jakarta, Indonesia. Partner in London, UK.

Challenges met during and after the project

Over the four programmes, all participants had to navigate common challenges, and this impacted the projects in different ways and often depending on the nature of the collaboration and the activity output they were planning. For some COVID-19 played a significant challenge and where with others it was cultural difference, including language. For 11 of the respondents the financial limits were a challenge for their project. Often this meant the grantee using their fees for production or engaging other artists. Two others mentioned the financial challenge of exchange rates and the broader cost of living issues reducing funding available while increasing need in the community.

Four respondents mentioned ‘legal issues’ as challenges, which included difficulty in securing a visa for their Southeast Asian counterpart resulted in financial loss and for one project not having their counterpart present at the event. Other issues included intellectual property rights and licensing for online content, sending funds abroad and reporting.

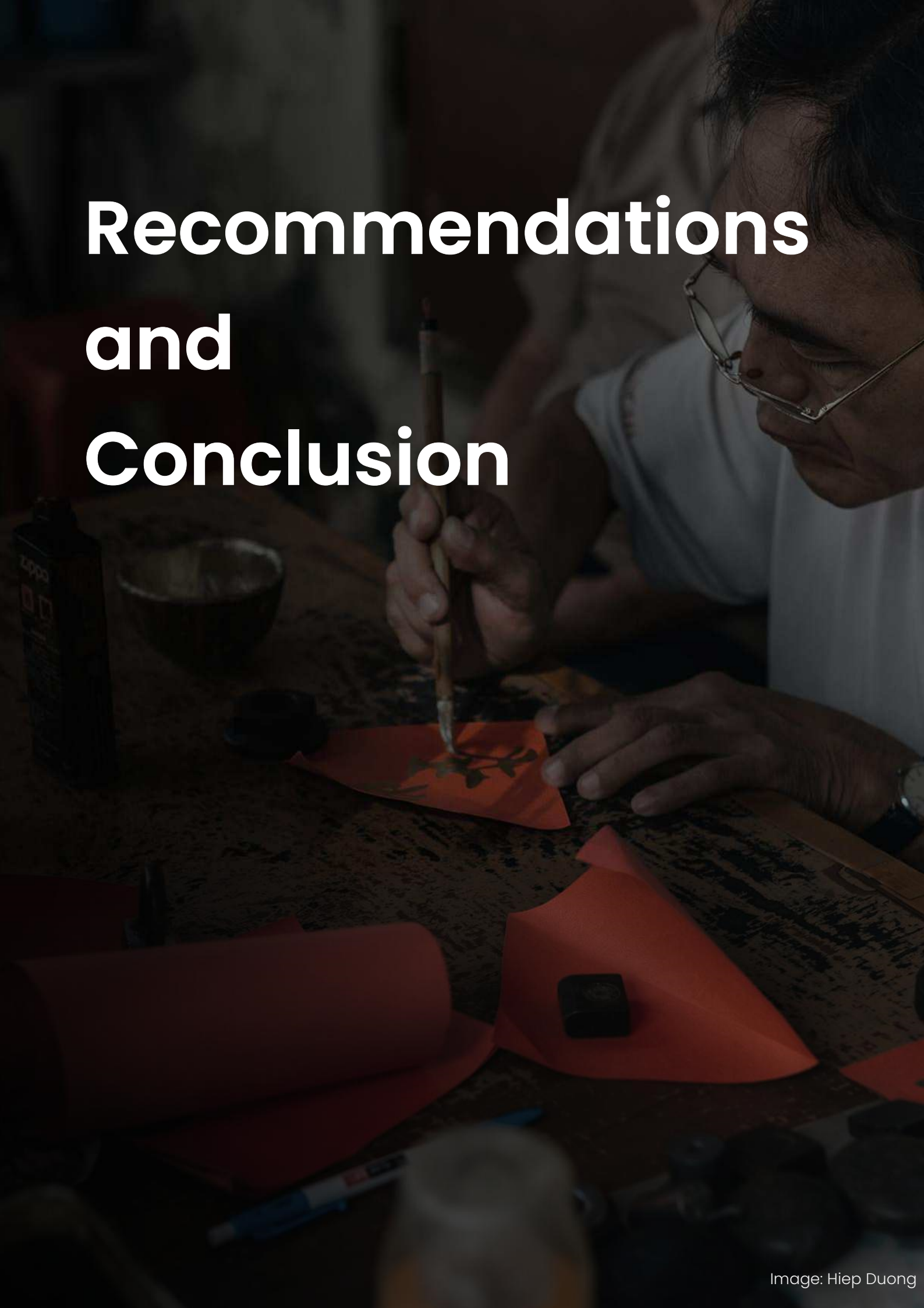
Seven respondents mentioned operational and logistical challenges including managing time zones, delays in shipping or artworks being delayed and damaged in customs. The challenge of the short time scale was also mentioned.

For some the need to collaborate only online during COVID19 was challenged through internet blackouts, zoom fatigue or was not inclusive enough especially for people with disabilities.

Challenges specific to the UK were primarily cultural and understanding the local context for ways of doing businesses. If there is a lack of awareness in the UK sector about difficulties in the region, then it can create tension and imbalance.

Challenges specific to Southeast Asia are similar plus the addition of the time frame for visas to enter the UK, unfamiliarity with UK ways of working.

Recommendations and Conclusion



Recommendations from participants

The 51 respondents to the questionnaire only represent up to 19% of all participants across the 137 funded projects and are only a sample drawn on for indicative recommendations. In general, there is praise for the British Council, the role it plays in the region and the structure of the CTC programme.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND IDEAS

- **Provide access to more online resources** (e.g. curated list of partners, database) before, during and after the projects that can become a network hub for participants to develop new relationships and understanding amongst the growing number of project producers.
- **Develop themed programmes** with specific emphasis, i.e., capacity building, relationships with the UK and addressing issues such as human rights, climate action and diversity/inclusion.
- **Enable more engagement with British Council** before, during and after the projects such as briefings, insight sharing, matchmaking, follow up support on funding that provides training and mentorship for practical skills development. These include planning and development of collaborations, cultural relations, digital literacy, marketing, and financial management. Mentorships connecting experienced cultural leaders with emerging talents.
- **Improve practical issues** related to faster responses for changes in contracts, clarity on tax requirements, and financial reporting that is compatible for different country settings.
- **Revise the application process** a 2-step pathway in applications, that can target calls for early collaborations which are separated from established collaborations. Consider more accessible forms of application, to regular open calls, having an alumni voice to encourage applications.
- **Review selection criteria** to include the encouragement to applicants to think through and produce a long-term strategy to their project proposal.
- **Improve transparency on the aims of the programme** and the priorities related to the goal of the British Council and nominate the intended measurable outcomes and outputs that the programme is setting out to achieve, and why.
- **Develop strategies to include new entrants and sectors** that can increase the diversity of approaches and encourage different people and communities to apply.
- **Develop a CTC network of collaboration partners** for the growing cohort of successful CTC producers. Include cultural training, regular networking and matchmaking sessions across the region and tying into longer lead times on applications to allow for preparation workshops and briefings to new applicants.
- **Accommodate local language as well as English** in applications. The use of contemporary translation tools would encourage more diverse groups of artists and creative approaches into the program.

Comments from participants related to recommendations

"...Looking ahead, I am hopeful that as we transition out of the pandemic, there could be more opportunities for networking events. These events would play a crucial role in fostering connections, sharing experiences, and expanding collaborative possibilities. I believe increased networking opportunities would further enhance the impact of collaborative projects and strengthen the cultural exchange facilitated by the British Council."

- **Luyen Thi linh, Hanoi, Vietnam. Partner in London, UK.**

"...As a suggestion for improvement, I would value even more structured post-project support, perhaps in the form of ongoing networking events or platforms, to ensure that the connections and relationships forged during the project continue to thrive. This could further solidify the long-lasting impact of the initiatives facilitated by the British Council."

- **Piyawat Louilarpprasert, Bangkok, Thailand. Partner in Birmingham, UK.**

Conclusion

The *Connections Through Culture* impact evaluation is an important marker within a programme that has been running since 2019.

Based on a limited sample, the results of the outcome measurements from the questionnaire as well as the interviews with grantees support the objective of the programme to promote and seed new connections, exchanges and collaborations between Southeast Asia and the UK. The majority of the project focused on professional development and R&D which support a focus on longer term collaboration. Overall, the grantees rated very high on increase in their professional practice capability, access to beneficial networks, increase in creativity and increase in knowledge, ideas and insights and on appreciation of diversity of cultural expression. 88% of the respondents continued their relationship after the CTC project ended.

Better planning that includes a consistent evaluation process will build on this evidence and strengthen the programme into the future.

Overall, there is an implicit aim that the programme is a springboard towards building long-term relationships through mutually beneficial collaborations and that these address the goal of the British Council to build trust and understanding.

This could be made an explicit aim of the programme and communicated to applicants that the British Council recognises that

CTC forms an important platform together with other programmes such as the International Collaboration Grants to support the longer-term objectives of the British Council towards stronger cultural relations between the UK and Southeast Asia.

This evaluation concludes with a pathway forward from 2024.

- Communicate the intended outcomes of Connections Through Culture to the applicants, and why it is important that the programme is mutually beneficial through these shared objectives and part of the larger British Council cultural relations framework.
- Reflect on the scope, nature and focus of the programme in relation to a consistently articulated purpose of Connections Through Culture and define clearly what 'new' connections mean for the British Council. Make this clear to the applicants.
- Emphasise the importance of the evaluation as part of the British Council assessment of the programme, and that the grantees' participation in the evaluation and sharing with the British Council is an important input for the improvement of the programme from start to end.
- Draw on the evaluation of outcomes from the preceding round of the programme as evidence and knowledge for strengthening the programme logic of the next round. This provides better data for the British Council and for the evaluation team analysing the impact and achievements.
- Provide a clear structure in the application process that calls on the capability and capacity of applicants to build long-term benefit for themselves and partners. This could be supported by breaking the programme into different stages from early development through to new projects that over time build further international opportunities (e.g. ICG or other programmes).
- Allow the application process (language, timing, technology and communication) to be adapted for local conditions, while the intended outcomes remain consistent.
- Share the evaluation findings with the participants and how it will inform future programme design and decision making in the British Council.

Note for 2024

CDN and Associates are contracted by the British Council in a consortium to review and advise on the development of data tools for the three Global Arts programmes. The project overlaps with this evaluation and includes an examination of tools used in CTC. There is an opportunity for CTC in Southeast Asia 2024 to be a pilot project in that review. This is noted here and can be the subject of the evaluation debrief with British Council management.

Case Studies



These case studies were selected from across the respondents to the questionnaire and highlight the diversity of the projects and provide context to the findings in the report. The aim of the selection was to represent the collaborations across the six Southeast Asian nations and the United Kingdom. No single case study provides all the answers to an evaluation yet collectively they contribute to the learning, the impact of the projects, and the role that the British Council *Connections Through Culture* programme plays in building long-term connections.

Case study

Drifting into I – BCB Dance Gala 2023 and UK collaboration



© James Pett

Time:	January-June 2023
Delivery:	Bangkok, Thailand
Mode:	Face to face in Bangkok, preparatory workshops online
Relationship:	Existing
Activity output:	Presentational: performance (audience 600)
Collaboration:	UK: Individual (James Pett) Thailand: Organisation (Bangkok City Ballet)
Creative Discipline:	Theatre & Dance (new work)

“The project was a crucial moment to present a cultural exchange on a large scale. Many new doors have opened from this performance and new relationships are growing. This is only the beginning of long-standing initiative of mine to grow further into the whole of East Asia”

– James Pett

PROJECT

‘Drifting into I’ was a collaboration of music and contemporary dance exploring the notion of collectivism and individualism fusing western contemporary dance with traditional Thai movements. The collaboration resulted in large-scale performance initiated by James Pett, UK choreographer of UK/Thai descent, together with his brother composer and the Bangkok City Ballet. The collaboration consisted of remote rehearsals and intensive face to face workshops with a cast of twenty-two dancers. Premiered at the Bangkok Cultural Centre as part of the BCB Dance GALA 2023, an audience of over six hundred enthusiastically received ‘Drifting into I’.

IMPACT

Building on previous connections with Bangkok City Ballet, the collaboration deepened the relationship with the partner in a mutually beneficial exchange, cultural learning and resulted in a successful performance. The work has since become a staple of Bangkok City Ballet's repertoire. Viewed as a long-term project, Pett had a clear intention at the start to expand networks in Thailand, develop a base and market in Asia and develop his practice. The collaboration had a profound and direct impact on all partners pushing the boundaries of creativity developing an innovative approach towards highlighting culture and art, leading to new avenues of creative expression. It developed new insight and knowledge about the power of dance in bringing people together. It brought confidence to the dancers and professional and personal growth for James Pett to further develop his work as UK artists and choreographer in the UK and internationally.

LEGACY

The CTC programme and British Council collaboration immediately opened opportunities for James Pett. As a result of seeing the 'Drifting into I' performance the Italian Embassy commissioned him to work on a collaboration with an Italian dancer in a performance presented at the Bangkok Arts and Culture Centre. James continued to work on a new innovative collaboration on the British Council Thailand Creative Ageing programme teaching 60 participants new ways of thinking about movement and expression through dance. He is actively looking for further collaborations and finding new networks and funding for contemporary dance in Thailand remains challenging, given contemporary dance is still a growing art in the region.

LEARNING

International collaboration through a specific and contemporary artform is a challenge and this is one of the few presentational projects that appeared to break through barriers through the association and support of the British Council and this programme.

"CTC is important for creating new sources of inspiration, learning between the two countries and finding interesting ways to collaborate. It is really important to have influence from both places, and how we can learn together and create something new."

'Reflecting upon this project, I understood how we need to find ways to continue to develop this project further. Going deeper and longevity are always crucial aspects of my reflection process.'

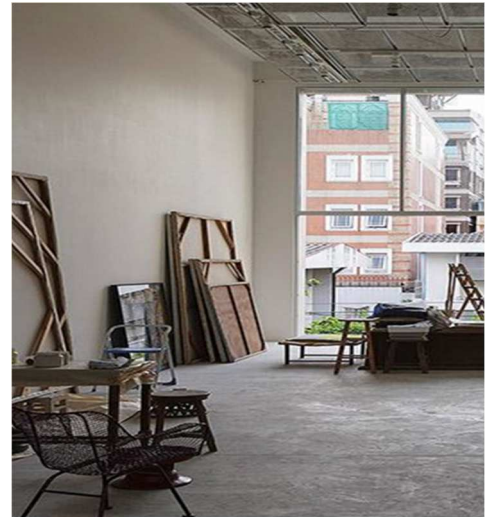
'To get a recommendation from the well-established and respected network of the British Council really helped, as it is very hard to access new networks if you're not from the country and unknown in the country.'

— James Pett

Case study

The Studios Project, Asia – An online platform of artists' studio

Time:	January – March 2021
Delivery:	Online. UK & Vietnam
Mode:	Online and face to face visits in Vietnam
Relationship:	Existing
Activity Output:	Developmental: research and development of web platform (25 active participants)
Collaboration:	UK: Individual (Sally Lai) Vietnam: Individual (Richard Streitmatter-Tran)
Creative Discipline:	Visual Arts



© Studio Project 2022

“CTC provided a brilliant opportunity for us to develop an exciting exchange particularly during a time of COVID-19 where collaborations and international engagement was restricted. Rich and I developed a great deal of mutual respect, and the foundations are there for future collaboration.”

– Sally Lai

PROJECT

This project was a collaboration between curator/facilitator Sally Lai (UK) and artist Richard Streitmatter-Tran (Vietnam) to explore the role of artist studios in Asia and how an online platform might enable studios to be ‘visited’ & experienced and made more widely accessible. They had known each other for over 20 years and did not have any language or cultural barriers. Due to COVID-19 the project was largely done by connecting with artists online with some studio visits in Vietnam. Two workshops attended by 25 people were conducted involving other SEA speakers. The project resulted in a web platform with studio introductions from across Asia made publicly accessible and shared with contacts in UK and Vietnam in accordance with the partners involved.

IMPACT

A motivation for creating the project was to change the opportunity to visit studios (usually only for arts professionals, particularly curators) from a generally 'exclusive' experience to a more widely accessible one. This raised awareness of inequity of opportunities for people with fewer financial resources to travel. The CTC grant gave the collaborators the time and resources to connect, exchange dialogue and deepen their connection but did not have a long-term goal. Given their experience in international collaborations, the project's main impact for Sally was in her creativity, ideas and insight which deepened her knowledge of the artists and artistic practices in Asia. With her existing relationships and with ongoing post-activity support from the British Council they are looking to the expansion of networks in Asia.

LEGACY

After the project, Richard was invited to give a talk about the research at the MA Programme at the University of Lincoln (USA) on the role of studios in Vietnam and Asia. No new work was created but the collaborators stayed connected and wanted to continue to explore new partnerships and funding to develop the project and create an artist studios book, yet no concrete actions were taken. The challenge for the two individuals is the availability of additional funding opportunities to build on what was achieved in this project.

LEARNING

Access to studios and support for studio practice are valuable ingredients to visual arts careers and this first project did provide some insights into the studios in Asia, particularly Vietnam. Providing access via an online platform is innovative and this small project points to a larger project that could be conceived around the access to studios across the region.

"What I don't know is whether or not we have taken enough advantage of the opportunity, to sort of take it as a springboard to do more with it.

I feel like, in some respects, my knowledge has increased, but probably the impact on my professional practice isn't as big. I think it's also to do with where people are in their careers

Having that kind of knowledge of or working with Asia before, and the fact the relationship was already there were elements that made it quite possible quite quickly get the application in in time for the deadline, which people who don't know each other might not have.

What I don't know is whether or not we have taken enough advantage of the opportunity, to sort of take it as a springboard to do more with it."

– Sally Lai

Case study

A Tale of Two Flower Markets: Bangkok – London

Time:	January- March 2022
Delivery:	Bangkok, Thailand
Mode:	Online with UK partner and face to face in Bangkok
Relationship:	Existing
Activity output:	Presentational: Exhibitions: of arts and objects in all forms (31,000 visitors)
Collaboration:	Thailand: Individual (Dr Supitcha Tovivich) UK: Individual (Dr Catalina Ortiz)
Creative Discipline:	Photography



© A Tale of Two Markets

“CTC project has helped to transform the Bangkok flower market in a positive way, leading to new business opportunities for local artists and a new level of creativity with the community.”

– Dr Supitcha Tovivich

PROJECT

Initiated by Dr Supitcha Tovivich, UK UCL alumnus and assistant professor from the Faculty of Architecture Silpakorn University, this collaboration was to develop a photo exhibition from two flower markets: Pak Khlong Talat in Bangkok and Columbia Road Sunday Flower Market in London. Dr Tovivich had been working since 2016 on urban development in the framework of the Thai government's city beautification programme on reviving the struggling Pak Khlong Talat flower market. She was inspired by the innovative approach of Columbia Road Market in London in creating new life in a neighbourhood, catalysing business opportunities and enabling a transformation of a social space. Dr Tovivich connected with a former colleague who is a photographer and UCL lecturer, and with her ex-student at University College London. Together, they conceptualised the project online and implemented it with other partners in Bangkok. The exchange resulted in two photo exhibitions over nine days from the two flower markets, telling stories of the daily lives of people, traders and revealing the innovative ways of using the space, creating thus a virtual dialogue between the two markets. The exhibition was part of a larger festival set up by Dr Tovivich.

IMPACT

As a receiver of a UK alumni award in 2019 with a deep affinity for UK arts and Culture and an existing collaborator in the UK, Dr Tovivich was able to develop the collaboration in a short time frame when the CTC grant opportunity opened because of her past connection in the UK. The collaboration not only stimulated her creativity but also expanded her awareness of her organisational skills. She gained deep insight in how a well-designed art initiative can have the capacity to create change from a traditional outdated flower market to a modern interpretation. Of the 31,000 people visiting the events 82% were young people and 18.7% first time visitors. It generated an estimated revenue of approx. 4.87 million THB for local vendors, a sixfold increase. The project gained international recognition and received a prestigious Gold Winner acknowledgment at the Pak Khlong Pop-Up Bangkok Flower Market Festival. The project increased Dr Tovivich's network in Thailand, but not in the UK. The collaboration was asymmetrical as all the activities took place in Thailand.

LEGACY

Dr Tovivich expressed interest in continuing the project by having the opportunity to showcase the results of the project in a gallery in the UK. There were no further discussions with her UK partner on future programme collaboration due to lack of time from her collaborator's side and there was not a sufficient network to get to know other partners in the UK during the CTC collaboration, which she regarded as a missed opportunity. She is actively exploring new partnerships and funding with many local partners such as the Creative Economy Agency of Thailand, and the organisers of the Bangkok design week to serve as hosts for the market next year. Through this project opportunities for further urban renewal will arise. The CTC grant helped leverage more funding from other sources, and the British Council's reputation in Thailand was beneficial for the project.

LEARNING

This project is a case study on a project that reached very high recognition and success in one side of the collaboration, through the CTC programme. The recommendation for post-project support from the British Council and alumni network, could have provided an opportunity to expand the project into a larger exchange between the two flower markets and the cities.

"The fund was crucial for the project. Without it, the project would not be possible. The very good thing about the fund is its flexibility. It is perfect for creative activities. It makes me feel confident to be creative and to know that the creativity could be accomplished in practice."

"The collaboration was a bit limited in time for me to find new networks outside like existing connections."

— Dr Supitcha Tovivich

Case study

The Safe Space

Time: November 21 – April 2022

Delivery: Myanmar

Mode: Online

Relationship: New

Activity output: Presentational: Exhibitions: artwork (200 visitors)

Collaboration: UK: Individual (Tony Gammidge)
Myanmar: Individual (Dr Aung Min)

Creative discipline: Visual Arts



© Nyarna Linn and Than Lwin Oor

“CTC opened up opportunities for networking and learning between Safe Room artists and youths, the artists and the international community.”

—Dr Aung Min

PROJECT

The collaboration, between Dr Aung Min, his art therapy organisation and members and Tony Gammidge, focused on mentorship, training and conversations once a week about using art with people who have suffered from trauma and mental health problems. They exchanged working practices in animation, drawing and photography and made new work about food. This resulted in an exhibition in Yangon attended by 200 people, networking between Safe Room artists, youth in Myanmar and the international community. A collaborative virtual ‘Community Table’ was set up with Art Refuge, a UK based charity working with refugees, which included drawing exercises and a unique approach to working with trauma using art and community.

IMPACT

The collaborators were introduced by Alice Fox, a British Council Myanmar consultant on inclusive arts. Tony Gammidge and Dr Aung Min were invited by British Council Myanmar to apply for CTC. The intention of the project was simply to explore different practices and experiences in art therapy in the UK and Myanmar. They creatively worked together despite the language, technology, and internet challenges. Tony was interested in how Dr Aung’s uses art as a starting point in therapy, not often the case in the UK. Dr Aung’s organisation and his members expanded

the use of materials and art making techniques and ways to make his work more inclusive. Dr Aung Min got new perspectives from Tony on the issues and dynamics within his art therapy practice through mentorship and training. The participants expressed noticeable benefits from the online sessions and were more confident and expressive through the experience.

LEGACY

The partners were invited by the British Council to apply for a follow-up CTC grant to help fund 2 workshops with clients of Dr Aung Min putting the learnings directly into practice. Dr Aung continues to apply the exercises he learned in the collaboration in his practice with new clients. He has since worked with the French Institute on a programme with children, with the Goethe Institut on Arts and Healing programmes and other art and mental health training institutes. He continues to work with people in need in the light, easy and happy way he learned through this collaboration and has diversified his client base. Tony has used the creative ways of using zoom in this collaboration in other projects he does internationally. Both partners felt they could continue to work together, particularly on making collaborative art/film/animation works. Yet when there is no money or funding, it gets pushed aside.

LEARNING

This project shows the facilitating power of the British Council staff to encourage collaboration based on previous work done and to support the collaboration when it was happening. The project explored not only the power for online collaboration in challenging contexts like Myanmar, but the deep learning that can come from mutually beneficial collaborations where at the first they might not seem to be perceived like that by the partners.

“Previously, we thought that the UK is higher in status than us, but it is a true collaboration, very equal and based on friendship.”

– Dr Aung Min

“We thought more long term, as things unfolded. I work a lot with time limited projects. That’s what I do. But with this, it felt much more important to be ongoing.”

... I think the West can learn a lot from safe spaces, experiences and knowledge and expertise.

You know, once you find someone you want to keep going with. I think it makes sense to keep going because I think the money goes further.”

– Tony Gammidge

Case study

In Every Bite of the Emperor



© In Every Bite of the Emperor

Time:	January - June 2023
Delivery:	Malaysia
Mode:	Face to Face and online preparation
Relationship:	New
Activity output	Developmental: Artists' residencies and studio programmes (45 active participants)
Collaboration:	UK: Organisation (Heart of Glass) Malaysia: Organisation (Gerimis)
Creative discipline:	Social practice art

“The project provided a step-change in practice in terms of international collaboration, beyond organisational partnership and the confidence that in-depth international community working which maintains the qualities of attention in my UK-based practice is possible.”

— Emily Gee

PROJECT

This project, Initiated by Heart of Glass (UK) and its associate artist Youngsook Choi and in collaboration with Wendi Sia from Gerimis, took the form of an expanded field residency in Malaysia and the UK as the 1st phase of a 3 year long international collaborative artistic research project. *In Every Bite of the Emperor* explores the climate crisis through the experience of grief, harnessing this shared emotion as a process for gathering, witnessing, and speculating different futures. Work created through the supported field residency resulted in a series of outputs - a publication, a performative lecture, a podcast episode and a long-read blog post. Performative lectures have been delivered to a wide range of audiences in the UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Germany as well as online audiences.

IMPACT

Heart of Glass had worked with the British Council before. The organisation had developed the beginnings of a relationship with Wendi Sia from Gerimis prior to the CTC application through online research. From the beginning, the two organisations had a shared intention of forming strong common ground for collaboration, aware of challenges around cultural differences, language and climate. The field residency provided a long-lasting source of creative points of response for Heart of Glass, and specific knowledge that went beyond desk research or online conversations, allowing a full appreciation of the cultural expression of the hosting communities. Their international network increased through a combination of individual meetings and interactions and the connections that were made through the wider sharing of the project on and offline.

LEGACY

The collaborative relationship has been critical to the opening of the project and has inspired new lines of enquiry within the artistic research of the work. Beyond the direct outputs, the partners began the first weaving of a wider project, with a women's organisation in St Helens. They have also further developed the long-term plan of *In Every Bite of the Emperor*, fleshing out how further Asian collaborations in Korea and Vietnam might work within this. Heart of Glass are actively seeking financial support to continue the project, to deepen the relationship and build new partnerships.

LEARNINGS

Organisational collaborations have additional obligations due to their governance responsibilities, and therefore the potential for long-lasting relationships is higher when the goals of both organisations align. There is also a likelihood that both organisations have underpinning resources that enable them to collaborate at a lower level for longer in between funded projects. Further investigation could see a different strand of grant funding for organisations taking account of longer-decision making processes.

“An ongoing challenge is how to share ‘a process in progress’ and to articulate a moment in impact that will continue to unfold throughout and beyond the wider project.

We had developed the beginnings of a relationship with Gerimis which has been undoubtedly strengthened by being able to undertake the field residency. The building of trust within this partnership ultimately led to us being hosted by their community network, building links and connections that are very precious to us and we intend to continue to foster.

CTC helped us with kickstarting the project, and that's amazing. What is always a tricky thing with funding projects in this way, is the desire of many funders to see news things and that makes it quite hard.”

— Emily Gee

Case study

Lenses Cross Cultures (LensesXCultures): A Creative Documentary Film Lab



© Lenses Cross Cultures

Time:	November – February 2021
Delivery:	The Philippines
Mode:	Online
Relationship:	New
Activity output:	Developmental: creative community
Collaboration:	Philippines: Organisation (North Luzon Cinema Guild) UK: Organisation (Noe Medelle, Scottish Documentary Institute)
Creative discipline:	Film and television

“Through the CTC experience we have been able to confidently work with other local and international organizations. We have also been able to develop our project portfolio that have helped us raise funds to support our other programmes and activities.”

— Jerome Dulin

PROJECT

Lenses Cross Cultures: A creative Documentary Film Lab is a collaboration between North Luzon Cinema Guild, Inc. and the Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI) with the aim to increase accessibility to film education in The Philippines for emerging filmmakers from the region (outside Metro Manila). The partners jointly developed online learning modules, did an open call for fellows, organised private mentorship sessions and public sessions to share experiences of mentors to the fellows and audiences on challenges in executing documentary film projects around social issues. Through the fellow's mentorship sessions 10 filmmakers enhanced their skills in creative documentary and learnt to produce competitive documentary projects showcasing unique narratives by developing their film dossiers, pitch trailers and pitching their projects to a panel of producers from the UK and PH.

IMPACT

Following the involvement with the British Council Philippines *Creative Communities* project, Jerome Dulin felt confident enough to apply with his organisation for CTC. Through an online search he found in the Scottish Documentary Institute, he found a partner with similar values and vision. His intention was to access international expertise to help develop documentary filmmakers in The Philippines. The partnership grew from just sharing tasks to deeper mutual sharing and learning about each other's culture, the film market and ways of working, keeping an open and flexible mind. The project brought inspiration, expanded their horizons and built confidence. It pushed their creativity in problem solving and developed their collaboration skills. They gained new knowledge and technical skills in creative documentary making and made them realise the power of socially engaged documentaries. The project has been a way to diversify their activities and made them understand how to develop activities with grassroots communities to reclaim identity and stories through filmmaking.

LEGACY

As a result of the collaboration, North Luzon Cinema Guild was able to scale-up their network with other funders, develop new partnerships and leverage funding to sustain their own activities. They received grants from the Netherlands and Italy to develop new activities and developed partnerships in Southeast Asia to present Philippine documentary movies from their network in festivals in Singapore and Malaysia. While not collaborating with SDI anymore, they do keep sharing opportunities and information. They are actively exploring new partnerships with platforms that work on movies for social change. Not only have they benefited as an organisation, but they have been able to give their network of filmmakers the confidence by helping to present their work locally and internationally. This collaboration set the standard of how to work internationally.

LEARNINGS

The notion of 'intention' articulated by James in this project is a reminder that the focus on 'outcomes', or 'intended outcomes' are a critical driver for successful projects. The insights shared by James in his project demonstrate that within successful grantees there is an alumnus of skilled and experienced professionals emerging from CTC that can strengthen the experience of others.

"Intentions make or break the longevity of a programme. The intention grew along the way while actively sharing with SDI. Intention is really an important thing.

We haven't realized our full potential until we have done this project. We know we can still grow and acquire more skills to be globally competitive in terms of our work .

This collaboration set the standard of how to work internationally."

-James Dulin

Case study

Restaurateur of Leeds



Image source: courtesy of British Council

Time:	January – March 2023
Delivery:	Malaysia
Mode:	Online, face-to-face and performance
Relationship:	Existing
Activity output:	Developmental: Artists' residencies and studio programs
Collaboration:	UK: Organisation (Knaïve Theatre, Leeds) Malaysia: Organisation (KL Shakespeare players, Kuala Lumpur)
Creative discipline:	Theatre

“CTC allowed for time and money to help actively explore opportunities for a deeper collaboration and executing a live project.”

—Soon Heng Lim

PROJECT

This project is a collaboration between Knaïve Theatre and KL Shakespeare Players taking the form of an online artistic residency to deepen their exchange following a previous artistic exchange as R&D for Leeds23. The project focused on fully outlining a highly visual production with strong socio-political content and able to leverage the necessary funds for international collaboration and touring in a difficult economic climate, especially in poorly resourced emerging economies. The residency was documented in blogs and culminated in an online sharing/discussion around today's climate for international collaboration. The process was shared through a podcast which was hosted on a couple of platforms. This scoping grant was a motivation for applying to secure an additional week for all four collaborators to share a digital space. This would ensure true exploration of their initial proposal and how it could develop into a project that can further develop their artistic practice, be innovative and can lead to a real joint production.

IMPACT

The intention of the partners in applying for the CTC scoping grant was to explore the potential for deeper collaboration in their mutual areas of formal expertise and complementary differences. At

the start of the project, they created a manifesto of collaboration to ensure fair decision making and fair leadership. The project allowed for stimulation, ideas to be shared and refined often in unexpected ways. The project created a deeper understanding of shared challenges in different contexts and the importance of mutual encouragement and learning. The project did not generate the opportunity for new networks and connections as that was not the primary aim.

LEGACY

The partners remain connected and are meeting to create a script. They aim to collaborate on a live project and are actively exploring funding opportunities. The successful completion of the British Council supported collaboration provides an important credential for future partners and funders. As a result, KL Shakespeare Players developed a project with the Japanese director Hiroshi Koike. KL Shakespeare Players want to explore online performance too, but that is less appealing to the UK partner who prefers in person performances.

LEARNING

Similar to other organisation-to-organisation collaborations the values and purpose of both organisations need to align for there to be the best chance of successful collaboration. In this case the alignment had already been established through earlier collaboration and reinforced by their own initiative to agree to a 'manifesto'. Strategies for ensuring the best fit for new organisations and examples of fair ways of collaborating are worth building into future CTC funding rounds.

"We started the collaboration with a Manifesto that captured our values, and detailed how differences were to be handled, including the permission to disagree and to apologize.

And if one adopts some good practices from the other, there is growth. If the differences engender a shared product--oh what joy!

By merely having this collaboration, allows for some name-dropping which raises KL Shakespeare Players' profile. That has translated into engagements from important organizations and people."

—Soon Heng Lim

Case study

The Dance WE Made



Image source: The Dance WE made

Time:	November 2021 – January 2022
Delivery:	Vietnam
Mode:	Online between UK & Vietnam and performance
Relationship:	New
Activity Output:	Developmental: creative community
Collaboration:	Vietnam: Individual (Luyen Linh Thi) UK: Individual (Tim Casson)
Creative discipline:	Dance

“The project played a pivotal role in establishing an inclusive dance community in Vietnam, with participation not only from professional dancers but also from dance teachers. These individuals acquired innovative techniques that they could then impart to their students.”

—Luyen Linh Thi

PROJECT

The Dance WE Made (TDWM) included an online training programme and a live performance in a public space in Hanoi, Vietnam. Four Vietnamese professional dancers were directly trained by Tim Casson, founder of Casson & Friends, through multiple online sessions. There was a live interactive performance with around eighteen participants, who were selected at random from Yen So Park, Hanoi. The newly trained TDWM Hanoi team then used their skills to facilitate an online TDWM community project (The Dance WE Made at home) with Vietnamese residents to create the online version of TDWM. Eight participants between the ages sixteen and fifty-nine were selected, including three people with disabilities.

IMPACT

The project has facilitated a number of cultural exchanges and creative collaborations between the UK and Vietnam. It helped introduce new ideas and approaches to dance in Vietnam, and also gave the four Vietnamese dancers the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with world-renowned artists, adding a global perspective to their understanding of cultural expression. They became dancers of the People Power Performance network created by Casson and Friends and were equipped with skills that benefit their future careers. This highlighted how diverse cultural influences can shape and enrich artistic endeavours, creating a shared language that transcends borders. Tim Casson also developed close relationships with several Vietnamese dancers and arts professionals.

The CTC project has had a significant impact on Luyen's development as a culture practitioner. Luyen's confidence particularly to manage both the creative and organisational aspects of professional practice was enhanced. Luyen was able to acquire new skills in areas such as project management, networking, and fundraising as well. The project strengthened her network with people with disabilities in Vietnam, especially through Vun Art, her partner organisation in Vietnam. The impact of the project was challenged by COVID-19 as events were disrupted and networking opportunities were diminished.

LEGACY

Engaging in the project significantly increased Luyen's profile and positioning for future opportunities. The project video, once aired, caught the interest of fellow dance professionals in Vietnam and Luyen connected them with Tim Casson. Together they pursued additional funding such as applying for the UK/Vietnam Season 2023. Although they weren't successful applicants, they continued exploring other opportunities.

LEARNING

For the collaborating producer in Vietnam CTC had a significant impact on their development as a culture practitioner and learning from working with Tim Casson and the Vietnamese dancers. This case-study is underpinned by the interview that indicated the development of new skills and knowledge in areas such as project management, networking, and fundraising. It also shows how despite COVID-19 artists continued to deliver great collaborations.

"I gained valuable insights from Tim Casson on effectively managing creative projects, particularly in terms of creating an international impact.

I learned that dance is not just about movement and technique. It is also about self-expression, storytelling, and community building. I learned that it is important to create inclusive dance communities where dancers of all genders, abilities, and I learned that it is important to create inclusive dance communities where dancers of all genders, abilities, and backgrounds feel welcome and respected. I learned that dance can be a powerful tool for social change. It can be used to raise awareness of important issues, to challenge stereotypes, and to promote understanding and empathy between different groups of people.

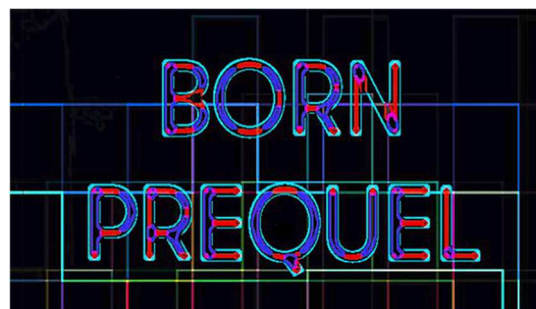
One noteworthy outcome was the expansion of my professional network within the dance community. Tim Casson, in turn, deepened his understanding of Vietnamese culture, and there are plans for him to visit Vietnam in the future. I facilitated his introduction to the local dance community, and he expressed the view that Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, holds significant potential.

After the series of workshops, we received much positive feedback. We now strongly believe that it is possible to create a safe space where people can unleash their creativity without judgement. We need to provide more support and opportunities for people with disabilities to access arts and cultural events.”

—Luyen Linh Thi

Case study

Resonansi



© Doc by Newtoy and Muarasuara

Time:	November 2021 – May 2023
Delivery:	Indonesia, UK
Mode:	Online
Relationship:	New
Activity Output:	Developmental: professional development
Collaboration:	Indonesia: Individual (Joel Cahen, Muarasuara) UK: Organisation (Newtoy Limited)
Creative discipline:	Music

“The ability to collaborate creatively and even online among people makes it immensely important for the British Council to continue these initiatives.

“Doesn't feel like cultural colonialism.”

—Joel Cahen

PROJECT

Resonansi consisted of both online sound workshops by UK and Indonesia based artists/producers and the release of a cassette showcasing the creative collaboration which was sold on Bandcamp. There were six workshops in total, three of them facilitated by Indonesian artists while the other three were led by UK-based artists. They developed "Born Prequel" which is a compilation where each track extends from its predecessor telescopically. Each musician listened to the previous track and used its ending as a beginning for their piece. This resulted in a sonic journey that unfurled organically, seamlessly connecting musicians who have never met. Weaving vocal techniques with electronics, traditional instruments with intricate sonic textures, this compilation of previously unreleased music gave a glimpse of contemporary music from Indonesia and the UK.

IMPACT

Joel Cahen's curiosity to discover new cultures stimulated him to apply for CTC. He worked together with Indonesian musicians he found through social media and personal networks. Joel felt that the cross-cultural pollination of the work, the workshops, art, and music led to a diverse output. It challenged the artistic practices of all the collaborators.

CTC gave Joel a framework to develop cross-cultural creative exchanges. He saw it as a really good way to successfully share creativity and knowledge between groups. Joel also felt that it brought different and unusual perspectives on creative practice. For example, the workshops helped explore a particular way of singing, traditional to an Indonesian culture from where the workshop leader came. Whereas, for an artist from the UK, working with NFTs, enabled them to understand how to use the crypto environment to create or present artwork.

The project was conducted entirely online. The experience might have been more interesting if they were able to meet at the end of the process.

Joel gained insight about working with a sound art organisation in a small Indonesian city and being inspired by their work. He expressed being more confident in developing on this model of interaction with the public and collaboration with other organisations worldwide.

LEGACY

After CTC ended, the collaborators felt that was the natural end to their project. They did not continue collaborating since there was no format for it, and with no financial benefit, people being busy with their own practice and having to take care of expenses of daily life, they had to prioritise other work. Yet they would collaborate again if there were opportunities in future, which would be paid for.

Joel has a few projects that he has been touring with abroad and felt confident that if he managed to get funding, he would be welcome to organise a tour in that area of the world. Joel felt that this project was great to profile on his CV. It is also a model of work which he could use to work with other organisations. It was the first time that Joel really did something like this online, which made him feel confident that it could work with other organisations as well. Joel has done on-site workshops in Dover on an Arts Council project using a similar model.

LEARNING

The CTC collaboration is a testing bed for new ways of working. In the case of this collaboration, it opened an opportunity to test a new model of working together across cultures pushing creative boundaries through music, an artform that can lend itself to experiment relatively easily online. Nevertheless, face to face connections keep being mentioned as a means of connection at another level.

"It's something I've already learned from other projects, making sure that everyone is on the same page while setting milestones. That was something that I learned from the way they worked. We'd meet around this time, this date, and by that time, we'd achieve this milestone, then the next milestone.

Found marketing to be challenging and hoped for more participants for our workshops. By end 2021- early 2022, people were a bit tired of Zoom workshops and so the uptake was disappointing. It was a challenge to know exactly what the Indonesian partners were doing in terms of promotion. There was also a printing error on the cassette we released which was printed in Indonesia and there is no recourse to changing that.

Maybe what I would do, if I had been given another chance of having more of an open discussion between creatives from two different cultures, you know, sharing some sort of feel, like a conference where the artists can speak, and there's more sharing of practices."

-Joel Cahen

Case study

The School of Hope

Time:	March – June 2021
Delivery:	Indonesia and UK
Mode:	Online and face-to-face
Relationship:	New
Activity Output:	Developmental: Artists' residencies and studio programmes (21 active participants)
Collaboration:	Indonesia: Organisation (Padepokan Seni Bagong Kussudiardja PSBK) UK: Organisation (The Paper Birds)
Creative discipline:	Theatre and Dance (38 new works)



© Doc by Media PSBK, Sito Adhi Anom

“I think the impact for sure was incredible for everybody. I think the most significant impact is to have these diverse communities in one room and collaborating.”

—Jeannie Park

PROJECT

PSBK collaborated with The Paper Birds in hosting the global citizen project *The School of Hope* (TSoH) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The unique engaging creative model, created by The Paper Birds, enabled youth to explore the theme of empathy both from emotive and academic perspectives, offering ways to interrogate what makes people care about other people, especially people who may be different. PSBK has been active in shaping arts practice in Indonesia as an important learning resource for both artists and communities since 2008. PSBK have explored artistic and creative learning strands through workshops and other engaging formats to collaborate with diverse communities. The CTC collaboration was an exploration of new strategies to engage with young people from marginalised communities such as the hearing impaired, LGBTQI, and Islamic 'santri' members - all in one space and one activity.

IMPACT

PSBK and Paper Birds met each other when PSBK attended the Caravan Assembly in 2020 as an online delegate during COVID-19. The Paper Birds reached out and shared their new initiative. When the CTC grant programme was made available, they applied with the intention to further explore strategies to engage with young people from marginalised communities.

The collaborators from Indonesia were very happy to be able to connect, genuinely collaborate in a trustful and equal way, and continue to have a lasting relationship with a UK partner. Jeannie from PSBK was appreciative of The Paper Birds for their ability to take creative investigation to new ground-breaking levels – that is sensitive and authentic. She highly respected the artistic and creative drive and intended to connect that kind of energy to the Indonesian cultural communities and planned to continue to devise platforms that cultivate quality exchange.

The most significant impact of the project was having diverse communities in one room and collaborating with each other. For example, for the deaf community, not only were deaf people invited to participate, their sign-language interpreters were also invited to be participants. When they realised that they were invited as participants, it really changed their attitude and the way they were engaged in the project. And it provided a whole new level of meaning for their role where they began doing something very creative as well, while also exploring their own personal journey about empathy.

The participants from marginalised communities acknowledged that they finally developed what empathy means to each of them. They learnt that it's possible to accept differences and at the same time work together towards a goal just by being in the same space.

The project reaffirmed the belief that the arts is not just about the final creative output, but how the arts can become a very powerful neutral space, not just for dialogue and for better understanding, but at the same time, be able to stimulate creativity and offer a safe space when practitioners feel vulnerable.

LEGACY

The collaborators mentioned that 'great projects with great outcomes generally follow with credibility' and that 'they are extremely pleased that their invested integrity has managed to enrich their existing beneficial networks with new opportunities that came about the year after this collaboration'.

PSBK continued to collaborate with The Paper Birds in the second phase (creative development) through a project called Empathy Spaces in 2022, conducted in the UK and Yogyakarta, which included a side programme called Young Creative Council –engaging young Indonesians in 2022 and in 2023. The final cycle of the project called 'Feel Me', will enable The Paper Birds to come to Indonesia and finally engage with Indonesian artists and youth directly (onsite) in 2024.

LEARNING

This collaboration is a great example of how CTC can provide opportunities for creating a safe space for exploring equality, diversity, and inclusion. The project created not just a better

understanding of how EDI is put in practice through genuinely creative endeavours but also that the process in international creative exchange is as important as the practice, which demonstrated strong cultural relations values.

“Genuine appreciation as well as facilitating appreciation has always been at the core for PSBK, as we strive to offer and sustain quality human-to-human exchange with the arts. What I personally appreciated was the level of representation of diverse art forms and UK citizens/artists (of colour, gender, religious background) that The Paper Birds included in TSoH workshop model. It was wonderful that our Indonesian participants were able to sense the current 'who' of UK society.

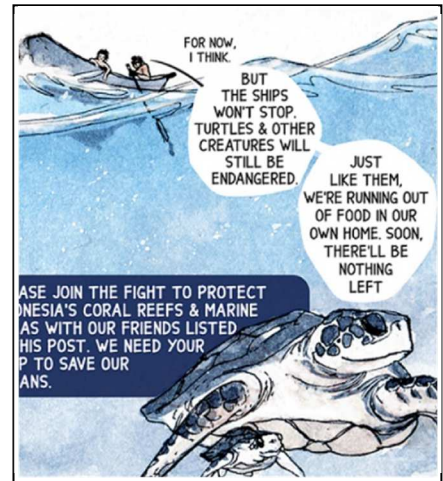
And about somebody from the LGBTQ, he was saying he's never been in an environment where he truly felt safe to be who he is. Speaking to somebody who has a very strong religious background he was just really touched by how it is possible to be in one room. It is possible to kind of accept these kinds of differences, but at the same time, they can work together towards a goal and learn from each other. Is there a way to stop making assumptions? They felt that it's possible just by being in the same space together.”

—Jeannie Park

Case study

Rewriting Extinction in SE Asia

Time:	December 2022 – May 2023
Delivery:	Indonesia and UK
Mode:	Online
Relationship:	Existing
Activity Output:	Presentational: Publications in all media
Collaboration:	Indonesia: Individuals (Sheila Putri, Ariela Kristantina, Pungky Nanda Pratama) UK: Organisation (Paul Goodenough and Will Scantlebury Rewriting Extinction)
Creative discipline:	Comic arts



© Rewriting Extinction

“CTC was fantastic, because it was absolutely aligned to what we’re trying to do, which is make truly collaborative stories within countries, understand the issue and then use those stories to inform the public. It’s exactly what we’ve always wanted to do. And we’re getting funding meant we’re actually able to pay these creators, what they’re worth, and actually kind of stimulate the Commonwealth economy over there as well, which was great.”

– Paul Goodenough

PROJECT

The project was a collaboration between UK- based Rewriting Extinction, represented by Paul Goodenough and William Scantlebury, and Indonesian environmental experts and comic creators Sheila Putri, Ariela Kristantina, Pungky Nanda Pratama. Rewriting Extinction turns important environmental issues into fictional stories as a way of engaging people. The Indonesian partners identified environmental issues in Indonesia faced by the public. Those issues were translated into comic stories in the form of two 10-panel comics. They were stories about litter making it to the oceans and contributing to the great garbage patch, and on trawling by-catch, focusing on a turtle and its mother who got caught in a net. The team at Rewriting Extinction helped to come up with ideas for the stories as well as write these comics. The comics were further released on social

media for both educating people in Indonesia and an international audience about the issues and their potential solutions.

IMPACT

This collaboration was built upon an existing relationship from 2021 where the collaborators were using the mechanism of climate storytelling. Through CTC they were able to expand the collaboration into social media to reach audiences who don't buy or read comic books.

The funding enabled Rewriting Extinction to pay the creators properly which shifted the type of work that could be done. It deepened the creativity of the creators and gave some breathing space. It also enabled them to produce a professional piece of work that touched people by giving the time and attention it deserved for the creators to truly tell their story and not someone else's story, guided by someone else's agenda.

The collaborative environment they created allowed for open-minded brainstorming among the collaborators, which resulted in stories which were a true mix of two cultures. The collaboration stemmed from a conscious process of mutuality, of understanding each other's interest areas and mapping those to plan the process out, which was conversational and complementary to each other's expertise and experiences.

LEGACY

They gained specific knowledge on the environmental issues in Indonesia, on the public and how they interpret stories as well as how to collaborate better. The work they started in Indonesia is continuing and forging new relationships and working together again.

CTC enabled them to upskill, hire more people and grow as an organisation.

LEARNING

This collaboration was one of several that addressed an underlying issue on the ability to pay artists fairly so they can concentrate on their creation, explore true collaboration without pressure and expand their professional practice capability. The economic wellbeing of the participating artists is an aspect that future evaluations can focus on providing the grant round is set up to examine that detail

"I think about collaboration like a meal. And what happens often, with relationships is that one person's cooking the food and one's eating it, where it's a meal or good collaboration, is when you've got the idea of a meal that you both enjoy, but the ingredients each of you put in blows your mind. And you get this incredible fusion at the end of it that's bigger and better than either of you ever could have done on your own. So for me, I personally think a collaboration is when two people can want the same goal but astound each other by the ways in which they get there."

– Paul Goodenough