

Moving Narratives

Cycle 1

Impact Report



C

Fonds

© Prince Claus Fund 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
Goals of this report	3
Impact Report Summary	5
Cohort overview and baseline	7
Outcome areas	9
Connections & Network	9
Translocality	9
Collaboration and looking forward	9
Learning and growth	11
Peer-to-peer learning	11
Support from mentors	12
Spending and growth	14
Impact and Change	16
Practical Feedback	19
Programme structure and content	19
Online sessions	19
Lab Weeks	19
Mentors	22
Administration	22

Introduction

The Moving Narratives programme re-examines legacies of the past, defies euro-centric social and historical discourses, centres the perspectives of marginalised communities, and forges connections between contemporary emancipatory movements and their historical roots. The programme is a collective moment for artists and cultural practitioners to experiment, exchange, and develop artistic strategies that address dominant narratives and the inequalities they perpetuate.

The first cycle of the Moving Narratives programme took place throughout 2024. The twelve fellows who took part are from different countries and work across a kaleidoscope of disciplines. Each fellow received €10,000 to invest in the further growth of their practice, engage their communities and harness the power of culture to challenge and transform. Their work tackles locally rooted issues while speaking to the global challenges humanity is facing, whether through challenging authoritarianism and fascism, articulating issues around the patriarchy and capitalism, or re-examining history and collective memory.

Selected fellows took part in a programme composed of workshops, reading groups, guest talks, review sessions and other encounters developed in response to the needs of the cohort. An interdisciplinary group of

mentors was responsible for developing and facilitating the programme content, with each mentor responsible for a 'chapter' within the programme.

Fellows regularly met online throughout the programme and were brought together in person for two six-day Lab Weeks. During these weeks, fellows participated in intensive programmes of workshops and site visits relating to the themes of the programme within the context of the Lab Week location.

Goals of this report

This impact report was prepared as part of the Prince Claus Fund's monitoring, evaluation and learning efforts. It presents the results and learning of the first cycle of Moving Narratives, to communicate the results of each programme cycle to partners, fellows and other stakeholders, as well as to inform and document any adjustments made to the programming year-to-year.

The report focusses on understanding the impact of the programme through the experiences and understanding of the fellows who participated in it. These experiences have been gathered through group reflection sessions with fellows and mentors at the mid- and end-points of the programme, and reporting submitted by fellows following the end of the programme. This reporting and transcripts of the reflection sessions were qualitatively analysed¹ to provide a broad understanding of the

¹ Consent has been obtained for the use of all direct quotes featured in this report.

following outcomes with relation to each programme cycle:

Short term outcomes

- Potential leaders' creative practice is accelerated/ deepened and their international creative networks are expanded
- Peer groups enabled exchange of ideas, meaningful connections and sparked collaboration (peer-to-peer / mentors)
- Individuals gain (and share) new perspectives, growth and community
- Expanded and strengthened international ecosystems of engaged cultural practitioners

Longer-term outcomes

- Artistic practices brought new perspectives, highlighted hidden stories and challenged dominant narratives
- Raised public awareness of injustice, new insights into the causes of inequality provided or advocated for change

- New perspectives centring marginalised or underrepresented communities are developed on societal challenges and how creative approaches can respond to them
- Potential leaders gain confidence to become positive change makers through their work

Special attention has been given to ensuring a safe space for fellows to share critical feedback during data-gathering, including the option of anonymity.



Above Photo by ElzoBonam

Impact Report Summary

- Building professional and personal connections with peers was one of the most meaningful aspects of the programme for most of the fellows who participated. In particular, fellows valued connecting with artists from different contexts with shared or similar concerns. Some fellows have already initiated possible collaborative projects, while others plan on maintaining close friendships within the cohort.
- The programme was an intense learning environment for fellows, particularly around processes and methodologies. Fellows highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer learning within a diverse group. The content curated by the mentors was also extremely impactful for many fellows, although fellows' experiences of the theoretical material shared by the mentors varied. Feedback given regarding the role of theoretical material informed the second half of the programme.
- The funding received through the programme was a major driver of the deepening of practice during the year. Fellows reported that the financial freedom of the award allowed them to devote time to exploring new ideas, dream bigger and engage more deeply with communities.
- A number of fellows recommended that future cycles of the programme devote more time to the practices of individual fellows, allowing them to get to know each other's work more deeply, and to collaboration within the cohort.
- The two Lab Weeks in the Netherlands and the Philippines were highly valued. In particular fellows appreciated the chance to deepen their connections through collaboration and discussion. However the curatorial logic behind the programme of site visits was not always felt to be entirely clear. During the Lab Week in the Philippines the impact of a typhoon on the programme also created serious challenges.
- The role of the mentors was clarified throughout the programme, and fellows appreciated the in-depth practical support and feedback offered by the mentors.
- The administration of the programme by the programme team was felt to have been sensitive and caring. Feedback concerning the need for a clear decision-making structure in response to emotionally complex challenges has been taken on board.



Left: Digital Scan, Tin-type image, credited to Mr. Edward Wilson in the ART Archives, 1882



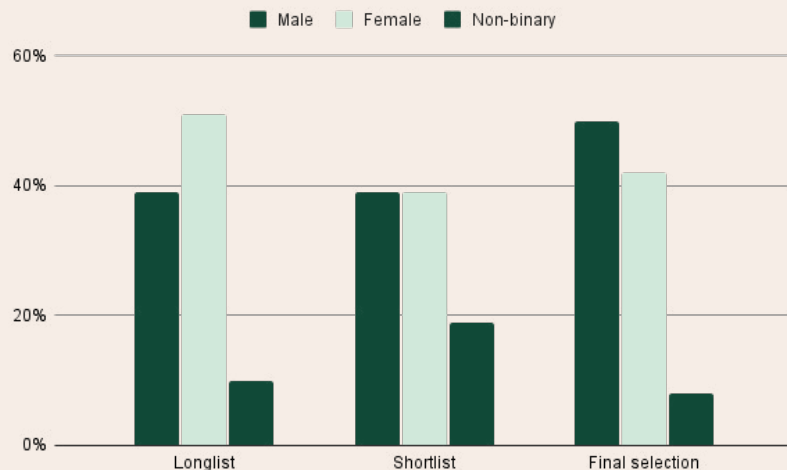
Right - Untitled #1, Digital Collage, AI Generated images using prompts from the letter translations, 2024

Image by Devadeep Gupta

Cohort overview and baseline

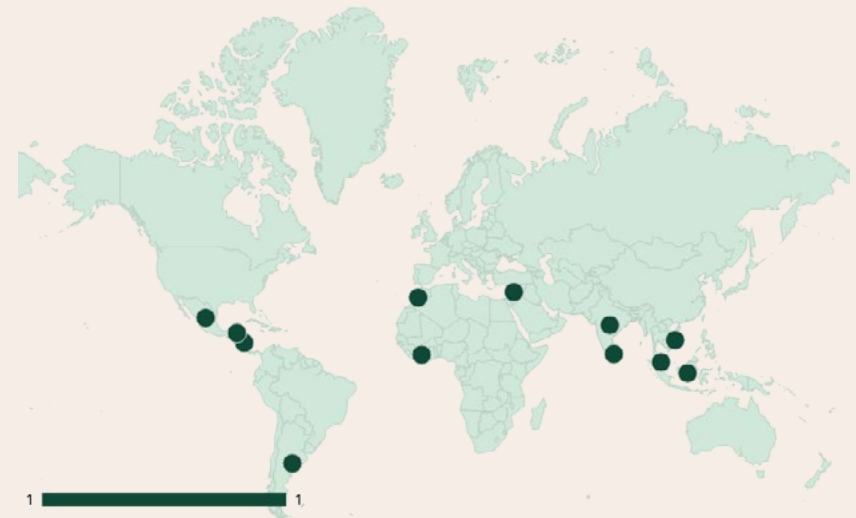
The twelve fellows of the first cycle of Moving Narratives were selected in 2023 from a longlist of 444 eligible applicants, all of whom were scored by panels of staff at both organisations against five key criteria. Based on these criteria, a shortlist of 31 applicants was developed by the programme team. These applicants were invited to answer additional questions based on their application. The programme team also approached the references provided by the shortlisted applicants and conducted additional research. During this research phase, a total of 89 second opinions were gathered from international experts in the relevant subject area.

For more explanation of the process and criteria for selection, see [here](#).



The final cohort selected for the first cycle of Moving Narratives included 5 women, 6 men and 1 nonbinary practitioner.

The fellows who took part in the programme are based in 12 countries across the Americas, Africa and Asia, and their practices span a wide range of artistic disciplines, including (fiction) writing, curatorial practices, performance art, visual arts, film, sound art, and archival research.



In their applications, fellows described their motivations for becoming part of the programme. For most of the twelve fellows, the Moving Narratives programme offered the chance to connect with a community of peers and gain perspectives from diverse geographies. Fellows were interested in finding points of solidarity with other artists with lived understanding of colonial history, and to further develop their practices in conversation. At the

same time, fellows hoped that the programme would offer them concrete, constructive feedback on their work and provide the opportunity to learn new techniques from both mentors and fellows.

Over the course of a year, the cohort worked together as part of a year-long interdisciplinary programme, including online sessions and two in-person lab weeks. The aim was to nurture critical methodologies and artistic strategies focused on re-examining histories and cultivating emancipatory imaginations.

The four mentors responsible for guiding the first cycle of Moving Narratives were: historian, educator and exhibition maker, Samia Henni; artist and writer, Haig Aivazian; journalist and chief editor of Kosovo 2.0, Besa Luci; and philosopher Rohit Goel.

For more information on the individual practices of fellows and mentors, please see the Prince Claus Fund [website](#).



Above Photo by Alfred Tarazi

Outcome areas

Connections & Network

In reporting and reflection sessions, the connections created within the cohort were frequently described as the most meaningful and significant aspect of the programme. Strong relationships were built throughout, as observed by mentor Haig Aivazian, who said

“by the time I saw them in Manila it was kind of lovely to see how close they had gotten throughout the process.”

For fellows, the chance to connect with, as Keren Lasme put it, “all of these wonderful artists and creatives” could be deeply emotional. According to Marianno Pozzi

“getting to know their stories, their fields of work and their projects and visions really widened my horizons and perspectives.”

(for more on co-learning within the programme, see [peer-to-peer learning](#)). Alfred Tarazi described the impact of connecting with the cohort as “extremely beautiful... life changing”, while Devadeep Gupta felt that the community was “necessary, both intellectually as well as emotionally”.

Translocality

A number of fellows shared how meaningful it had been for them to connect with artists working on similar topics across diverse geographies and contexts within the global south. As Alfred Tarazi put it,

“To have the rare opportunity of connecting with other geographies and practices at once was extremely inspirational and insightful.”

Ngoc Nau also pointed out that the contexts where the cohort are based are

“countries where we often share common concerns about colonial trauma, mythology, gradual disappearance of Indigenous cultures under modernization and industrialization”.

Through the creation of these trans-local bonds, the fellows found a solidarity that felt deeply important.

Collaboration and looking forward

Given the significance of these connections, fellows felt that they would continue these connections after the end of the programme through friendships and even potential collaborations. Ngoc Nau described these long-term connections as core to her experience of the programme, writing

“What makes this program unique...is the ongoing connection between fellows even after the program ended.”

While it is difficult to estimate the extent to which these connections will continue, one fellow estimated that “at least half of the team will keep meeting”. Particularly in their reports, fellows described each other as having become “friends” or even “family”. Imagining the future of the group, Elyla wrote that “the connections will stay alive, it’s a web that won’t be broken”, while Devadeep Gupta wrote that “I have made a few good friends, that I am certain I will be on good terms with in the future.”

Alongside ongoing friendships and conversations, some fellows are in the early stages of planning more tangible collaborative projects. Dian Suci Rahmawati shared that “eventually, some of us decided to collaborate on a project together. A collective, surprisingly”. Mark Teh also described a number of different collaborations he has been exploring, including a joint study group between his own collective in Kuala Lumpur and that of Abdeslam Ziou Ziou in Casablanca, and ongoing structured exchanges around “the practice of making lecture performances” with Keren Lasme. There is a high level of interest and enthusiasm around collaboration, with a number of fellows who do not yet have specific projects planned describing themselves as being on the lookout for opportunities to work together.



Above Photo by ElzoBonam

Learning and growth

For fellows, the Moving Narratives programme was a period of intense learning and growth. Fellows described the impact of this growth on their practices, with Dian Suci Rahmawati writing

“I feel that I now have a much richer foundation for approaching my work, allowing me to be more intentional in my creative process.”

Specific areas of growth and development mentioned included the fellows having more rigorous approaches to planning research processes within their work, as well as writing about their own practice.

Peer-to-peer learning

While the structured learning and feedback offered by the mentors was extremely valuable, fellows also described the influence of what they had learned through peer-to-peer conversations within the cohort. Mark Teh summed up this peer learning, writing

“I learned very much about the context, histories, realities, poetics and imagination of these fellows and where they are working, and what they are working with or against.”

Feedback within the group helped certain fellows make concrete steps, such as Devadeep Gupta, who wrote that

“I have a better understanding of my process due to all the feedback that I have received from peers and mentors alike.”

The diverse makeup of the cohort was a key driver of learning, broadening fellows' horizons. Keren Lasme for instance wrote

“I appreciated being introduced to other cultures, art practitioners I didn't know about. This stretched my mind greatly!”

Both Ngoc Nau and Mariano Pozzi picked out the interdisciplinarity of the group as having expanded their sense of their own practice. Ngoc wrote that

“I used to focus primarily on visuals, but I now understand the power of language, especially when working with communities”,

while Mariano described his desire, influenced by the cohort “to work more in the variety of formats and media”. Mariano went on to share how

“the best thing was to broaden my knowledge by getting to know other people's struggles around the world.”



Above Work by Keren Lasme

This appreciation of the trans-localism of the group was echoed by Alfred Tarazi, who wrote

“It was very important for me to make the history I am delving in... understandable and relatable for people coming from other geographies.”

Finally, just as the materials provided by mentors prompted artistic growth, fellows learned from the ideas and works they shared within the group. Alf Bojórquez shared that she

“will keep watching the movies, listening to the music and reading the books and other things they shared with me for years.”

Support from mentors

The experience and expertise of the mentors was felt to be a significant driver of artistic growth by many of the fellows. Through the resources they shared during the chapters and the feedback they provided during one-on-one sessions, mentors stimulated artistic growth on different levels. As Dian Suci Rahmawati wrote,

“Each mentor brought their own expertise, supporting us both theoretically and practically.”

Dian shared how conversations with mentors had particularly helped her to further develop her ethical approach to her work, which she worried ran the risk of becoming unintentionally exploitative. “Through multiple consultation sessions with mentors” she “received valuable insights that helped me refine my sensitivity to these concerns.”

The theoretical content shared by mentors was influential on the fellows’ work. From Samia Henni’s concept of the alibi, to the in-depth consideration of paranoid and reparative reading offered by Haig Aivazian, and the concept of the art of subtraction shared by Rohit Goel, fellows described how the content had

expanded their ways of thinking. For Ngoc Nau, the materials provided by the mentors helped her

“better understand key concepts such as decolonization, total war, politics in everyday life, and social psychology in how we process information.”

During the final reflection sessions, mentors shared examples of how they had seen certain fellows starting to be influenced by the theoretical content covered in the programme, and this influence can be seen in some of the reports from fellows. Keren Lasme wrote that

“the Art of Subtraction taught during Rohit’s chapter created a big shift in my practice especially in the way I used approached the gatherings I curate.”

Another influence described by Mariano Pozzi was how the writing of his new feature film was shaped by

“having the theory sessions throughout the year, [which] helped me to have new concepts in my mind while writing.”

It was noted, however, that fellows were somewhat divided about the role of theoretical texts and concepts throughout the programme. While they could be extremely helpful, some fellows found the level of conceptual reading and thought to be difficult or inaccessible. A recommendation was to offer more support in how to apply these concepts to their own



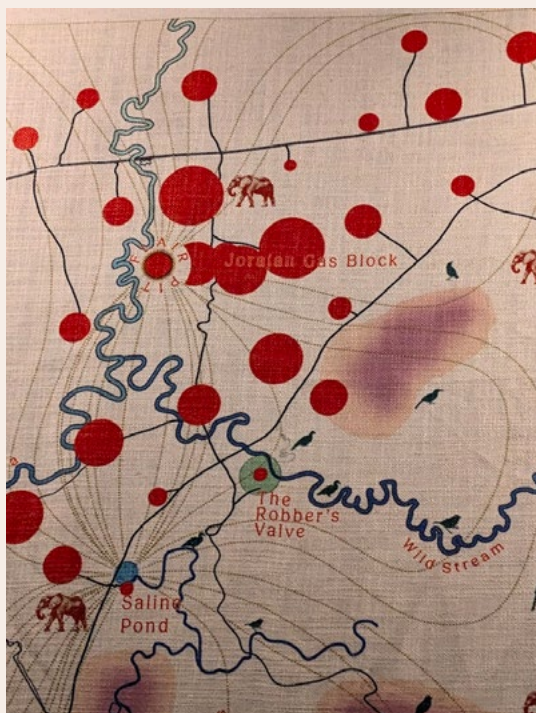
Above Photo by ElzoBona

work. This recommendation informed the chapters which took place following mid-point reflection sessions, and fellows noted that the second half of the programme had enabled more focus on the practical use of theoretical concepts. Concern around the reception of theoretical content has also been taken on board during the selection process for the second cycle, and in planning the induction of new mentors, with increased attention paid to ensuring a more consistent level of engagement with theoretical content within the cohort.

The practical expertise provided by the mentors was described as very useful, and a few fellows shared during the final reflection sessions that they would have

appreciated even more practical advice on surviving as an artist. Besa Luci's guidance was described by Alf Bojórquez and Mark Teh as having been a helpful influence on how they manage publication-based projects. Meanwhile Ngoc Nau shared the influence of mentor Rohit Goel's workshop on the writing of artist statements. She wrote that the session and feedback had helped her create

“a much stronger and more professional artist statement, which will be a great asset when presenting my work in the future.”

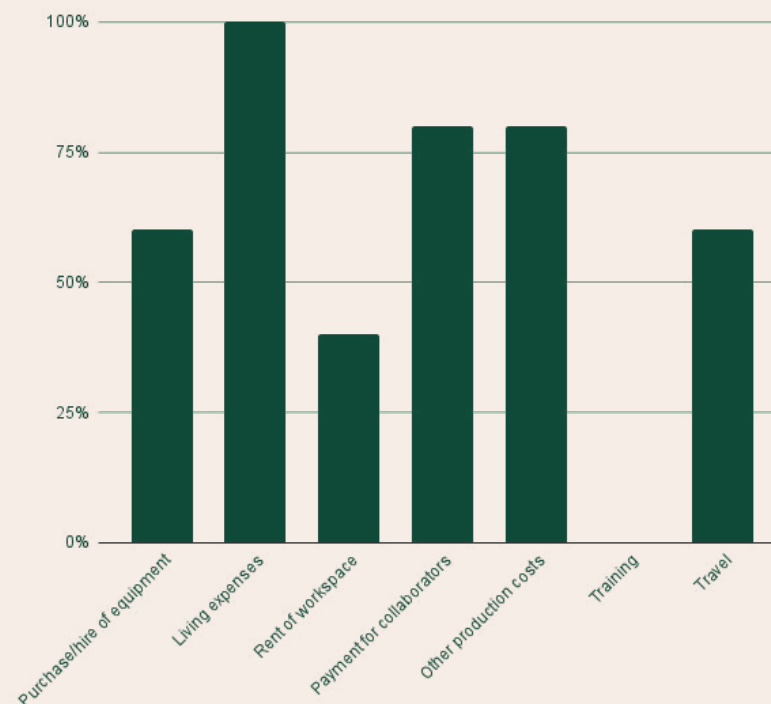


Above Image by Devadeep Gupta

Spending and growth

The funding of €10,000 associated with each fellow's award was also described as a strong driver of growth. As we have observed in the evaluation of other trust-based funding programmes, periods of (relative) financial freedom prompt experimentation, acceleration of practice, and increased confidence. According to Devadeep Gupta

“it meant a year of financial freedom, that resulted in a healthy incubation of my creative process.”



Fellows divided the funding received across multiple categories of spending, with most fellows reporting spending at least some of the grant in four or five categories. All fellows used a portion of the funding for their living expenses during the year, with Dian Suci Rahmawati describing the significance of this support, which

“relieved the stress of having to choose between sustaining my family and continuing my research.”

The investment also enabled fellows to deepen their practice by devoting time and resources to in-depth research. For example, Ngoc Nau shared how

“the financial support from the program was crucial...It enabled me to invest in materials, travel for research, and dedicate more time to developing my work.”

Dian Suci Rahmawati described how the funding has allowed her to make repeated visits to her research site and thereby develop much closer and more collaborative relationships with the community of home-workers whose lives she is documenting. She writes that this capacity “has had a profound impact on the depth of my artistic practice”.

Alfred Tarazi and Keren Lasme also described how the financial support of the programme had prompted them to dream bigger when conceptualising new projects.



Above Image by Alfred Tarazi

Alfred wrote in his report that the funding was

“extremely helpful not only to survive the daily struggle, but to put together more ambitious schemes”,

while Keren described how “the programme inspired me to leave my comfort zone and think about bigger projects”.

Meanwhile, improved financial capacity meant that fellows could work together with others and pay them fairly, with 80% of fellows reporting spending on payment of collaborators.

The trust-based nature of the financial support was also appreciated by fellows for the chance it gave for growth around financial management.

One fellow, Elyla, shared however that more support or guidance around financial planning, possibly in the form of an additional session or presentation, would have helped them to make the most of the support.



Above Work by Mariano Pozzi

Impact and Change

Influenced by their learning through the programme, and with the financial support they had received, Moving Narratives fellows developed work that responds to the urgent needs to their contexts as well as to the goal of the programme.

In their reporting, fellows described completed projects as well as longer-term work still in development, that re-examines historical narratives to create new, emancipatory ways of understanding both the past and the present. Works by fellows during this period presented new ways of seeing historical phenomena, understanding them as highly localised narratives with global resonance. By sharing their perspectives through this work, they highlighted hidden stories and challenged dominant narratives. One example was Ngoc Nau's three-channel video work, which "deconstructs industrialization and technological development in a province of northern Vietnam". Another was the sound-installation developed by Devadeep Gupta presenting his research into the colonial legacy of the industrial-complex in the Dihing-Patkai rainforest in Assam, which sparked what Devadeep described as

"curiosity and inquiries... with many critical questions, about my artistic position, intent and responsibility towards the crisis".

Mariano Pozzi's work during the programme is a powerful example of how revisiting hidden narratives from the past is of vital relevance for the present. During the programme, his series "Missing" was released, telling the stories of children taken from their families during the Argentinian military dictatorship. Mariano describes how the series was received by followers of Argentina's current far-right government, who

"have taken up again the banners of story denialism and hate speech, and have been expressing during the last year hatred and bigotry against not just the series but the whole cause of Human Rights in Argentina."

Fellows advocated for positive change by bringing people together and focussing awareness of injustice. The series of gatherings organised by Elyla throughout the period of the programme illustrates the potential of art to "create community based work that is urgent and necessary in my territory." By bringing together 55 participants in three workshops, Elyla created space for urgent discussions on

"notions of mestizaje and...the existence of queer bodies beyond the right-left schema of the Nicaraguan political context."

Throughout, fellows have centred the perspectives of marginalised and underrepresented communities in their responses to societal challenges, supported by their

learning through the programme. Dian Suci Rahmawati, for example, has been regularly visiting communities of home-based workers, building meaningful relationships and actively involving the community in her research. She is currently exhibiting work on the legacies of influential women from the town of Jepara, exploring how

"their spirit of resilience has been passed down through generations in a spiritual sense, shaping the identity of Jepara's women".

Meanwhile Keren Lasme's work has expanded to include collaborating with marginalised vendors selling second-hand books on the street.

Participation in the Moving Narratives programme has allowed the fellows to refine and amplify their practices. As many of the fellows pointed out, these are still early days for observing the impact of their work. However, there is optimism that the works created through the programme are becoming part of broader currents of change.



Work by Ngoc Nau

Practical Feedback

Programme structure and content

Online sessions

Given the strength of the connections made within the cohort, there was a high level of interest in getting to know each other's work more deeply. Four of the ten fellows recommended future cycles of the programme give fellows more opportunity to engage with their peers' work in progress. For example through detailed presentations, subgroup discussions and moments for feedback. Devadeep Gupta writes

“I felt the need of a dedicated, organised exchange such as a feedback round or focussed group discussion on the project that I developed.”

Similarly, Mariano Pozzi writes

“having the theory chapters was great but I think it would be more impactful and meaningful if that's integrated with reviewing, working and exposing each one's concerns, progresses and struggles.”

A few fellows gave concrete suggestions regarding how this engagement could be integrated into the programme structure, with Alfred Tarazi even suggesting sessions “dedicated for each practitioner to engage the others in his/her work.” Given the number of fellows who made this suggestion, and the importance to the programme of co-learning, this recommendation should be seriously considered.

Also relating to the importance of co-working within the group, Abdeslam Ziou Ziou, Mariano Pozzi, Alf Bojórquez and Dian Suci Rahmawati suggested that collaborative work between the fellows should be woven into the programme from an early stage of the year, pointing out that collaboration had been one of the ways in which they got to know each other's work best. Alf wrote that

“people get to know [each other] better working together than discussing and just talking.”

Lab Weeks

The first of two Lab Weeks took place in Amsterdam in April-May 2024, and featured a curated programme of encounters with relevant local practitioners, moments for the fellows to connect with each other, and a public presentation. During the mid-point reflection following the first Lab Week, fellows were positive about the programme content, particularly the moments in which they were able to encounter each other's practices and work collaboratively.

It was however suggested that the logic behind the selection of Amsterdam-based spaces visited could be more clearly presented, and that time could be allocated to allow for collective discussions following these encounters. The curatorial logic of the week could then be connected to the community building aspect of the programme.

The second Lab Week took place in Manilla in October 2024, and included a range of activities in connection with the cultural landscape of the Philippines. The programme of this week was severely affected by the impact of a typhoon, which made the planned travel to a more rural part of the Philippines for more intensive workshops impossible.

During their stay in Manilla, fellows valued the chance to meet with local artists from the Philippines, which has led to at least one ongoing connection, follow-up visit and planned collaboration. However, some fellows and mentors experienced the city as hectic and overwhelming. This impression was exacerbated by the unfortunate impact of the typhoon on the programming, which disrupted the planned balance of programmed activities in the busy urban environment of Manilla with calmer, more focussed moments of connection and collaboration within the group.

Some fellows also reported that certain moments during the programme in Manilla had felt insufficiently rooted in local knowledge, while the logic behind its connection

to the themes of the programme was again perceived as somewhat unclear. It was suggested that hosting the Lab Week within a city where the organising foundations have a larger network would have allowed the group to connect more deeply with their peers locally.

Both mentors and fellows felt that the rapidly changing weather situation had been handled as well as possible in the moment by programme staff, with the team reacting responsibly and handling the stress well. A few people did point out however, that given the region and the time of year, the possibility of extreme weather conditions could have been foreseen and planned around in advance.

Photo by ElzoBonam

Mentors

During the mid-point reflection sessions fellows shared that they would appreciate more practical support and feedback from the mentors. By the final reflection sessions at the end of the programme, there was a general sense that this feedback had been taken on board by both the programme team and mentors. Since the mid-point reflection, the mentors also felt that a lot of the uncertainty around their role had been resolved, and the relationship had become clearer. The second half of the programme included sessions on practical skills like preparing an artist statement as well as more discussion of the concrete applications to practice of theoretical concepts. During the second half, mentors and fellows also spent more time collectively working through a single text or work, which allowed for collaborative dialogue and deeper understanding. The outcomes of this process are described above in learning from mentors.

Some fellows felt that this could have been taken further – one described during the final reflection that they felt they had had to push mentors to give them concrete feedback on their work – while others were satisfied with the final balance of practical and theoretical support from the mentors.

The mentors were also offered the chance to give feedback on the cohort as a whole and noted that forms of engagement with the programme were not

always consistent among the fellows, and that this had occasionally led to imbalances within the group. The introduction of an interview stage to the selection process for the second cycle of the programme is expected to produce a cohort that is more closely aligned.

Administration

The attention with which the programme was managed was appreciated by the fellows, with Mark Teh writing that

“I appreciate the care, flexibility and programming that was behind my experience in Moving Narratives. I have no concrete feedback except appreciative ones.”

During reflection sessions, fellows discussed how the programme team had responded to emotionally complex situations which emerged during the programme. While it was felt that the team had generally responded well to challenges as they developed, it was recommended that a clearer structure of responsibility and decision-making be established. Such a structure would allow for the team’s responses to emotionally charged issues to be more decisive and transparent.

The mentors were also positive regarding the way the programme had been administered, while recommending that future cycles establish more clarity regarding which aspects of the programme could be flexible and which could not. This recommendation has been taken on board during the planning for the second cycle of the programme, and mentors shared their sense that significant steps had already been taken to address this concern.

Credits

Author: L. Alexander Research & Evaluation

Design: Malaz Usta



Photo by ElzoBonam





F o n d s