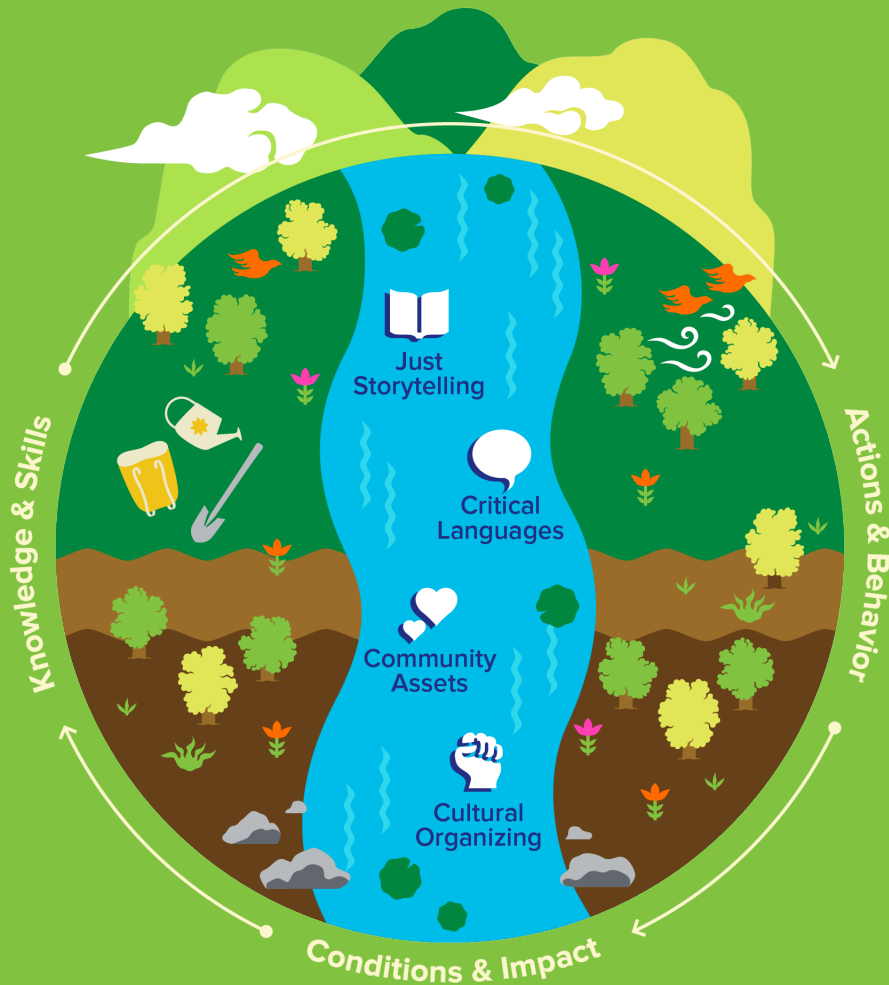




ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



SEAD'S THEORY OF CHANGE



The SEAD Project
@theseadproject

Minneapolis, MN theseadproject.org



Growing social empowerment ecosystems through cultural organizing, critical language, and just storytelling.

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LETTER FROM CO- DIRECTOR

Kaysone Syonesa Schneider



Sa bai dee to our dear community,

The past few years have been an influx of emotions and happenings filled with joy, sadness, celebrations, goodbyes, hellos, challenges, love, and hope. Like the river that carries so much in the depths of its water...we too, find ourselves bending and molding to our surroundings in order to keep flowing, finding a way to navigate through the changes and overcome any obstacles. The circumstances may change, but the water keeps moving. And though we may take a breath to pause, we feel the water flowing past us, and yet it tugs at us to keep moving, inviting us to find ways to flow with its rhythm again.

At SEAD, we are changing, evolving, and transforming too. We are growing and shifting with the ebb and flow of changes to continue to creatively meet the needs of our Southeast Asian communities. The circumstances may change, but the community needs are still there. We are finding our way, as an organization, out of the long days of the pandemic into a time of uncertainty and transition, navigating through our new pages the best way we can. We're still feeling the impact of the community upheaval, the anti-asian hate, the violence, the isolation, the grief. Despite these crises, SEAD continued to respond to community needs through our programs, cultural organizing initiatives, pop-up events, workshops, and partnerships. And amongst all this multitude of critical work, we've said goodbye to long-time staff and board members, including SEAD's founder, Chanida Phaengdara Potter, to whom I want to say thank you for planting the seed, building the foundation, designing the framework, blossoming the possibilities, and passing on this incredible and necessary work to us to carry forward. Thank you to each of you, who gave so much heart and time to the work with your commitment and love.

The couple years of being isolated and withdrawn has taught me that in-person connections are beyond what Zoom or FaceTime can offer, where it's easy to not fully show up, not be fully present for each other. Being in person gives us a deeper way to see and understand each other. Because when I get to be in space with you, I get to see you as you are, and you see me as I am, with honesty, grace, and rawness that you can't get from a video call. I miss and celebrate these sincere moments.

With the pandemic disconnecting and challenging our relationships to one another, this new chapter is for us to remember what this work has meant for the community...that it's bigger than each of us, each of our own circumstances, and that there's significant need and impact this work has on our greater community. As we look on to the next year, we must find ways to flow again, reconnect again, and be in community again, just as our ancestors remained resilient through the generational crises. This is our time to walk forward together, in resilience, in love, in kindness, and see each other as we are, and together, rebuild a vision of hope, and rewrite the pages for each other, and for our community. I envision for the years to come, more opportunities for engagement and creativity so that our work is relevant to what our communities need.

Our doors and hearts are open to listen and connect with community. As the chapter turns over, we invite you to take a breath with us, come have a seat with us, connect with us. We want more intimate and personal conversations to renew our relationships with each other. I hope you accept our invitation. I hope this for us, and many more.

Kaysone Syonesa Schneider
Co-Director, Partnerships & Development

2021 KEY HIGHLIGHTS

10,000+ people reached
with our programs, events, and initiatives this year

 **Storytelling**

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 **SEA Roots
Heritage & Culture**

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 **SEA Change Lab**

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 **Cultural Arts
Events & Pop Ups**

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 **Cultural Organizing
Initiatives**

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Storytelling

1.5: A Southeast Asian Diaspora Remix

SEAD started 2021 on the right foot by taking in some culture and artwork by Southeast Asian artists at our window-facing 1.5: A Southeast Asian Diaspora Remix exhibit at The Minnesota Museum of American Art from Sept 24th, 2020 through January 21st, 2021. This exhibit was an art experience where the community could immerse themselves from the public street and also had components of panel artists of the diaspora to share conversations about reimagining and thriving in a pandemic world. You can still peruse our digital gallery with high-res photos of the art and interviews with the featured artists on our website. We thank The M for your continuous partnership and this exhibit would not have been possible without you.



SEA Roots Heritage & Culture

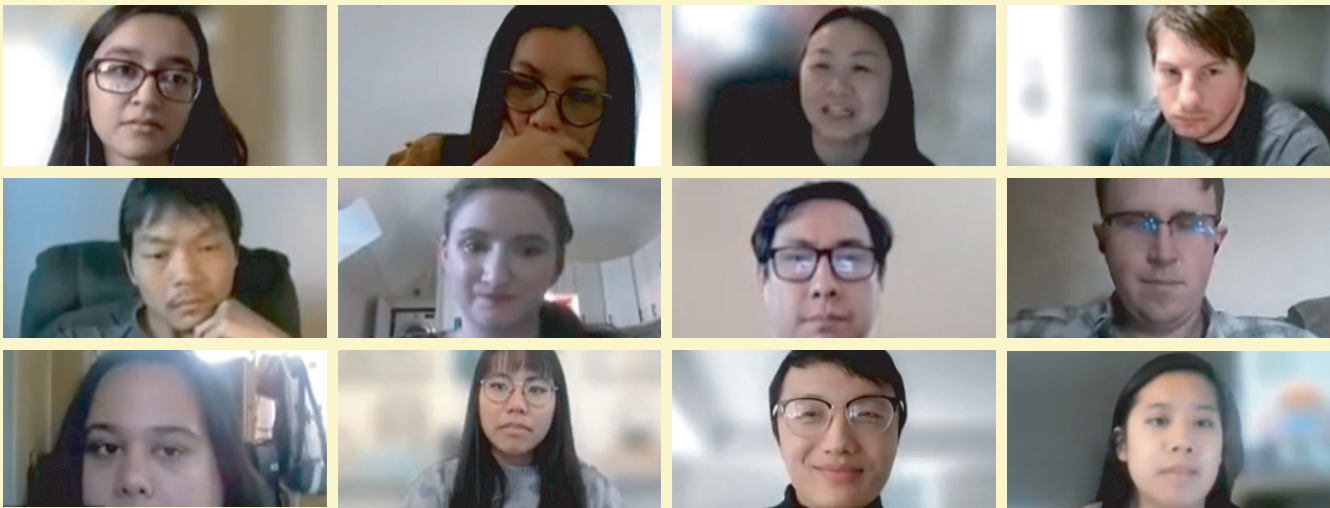
Sharing languages and cultural literacy with community

Language Workshops in Hmong, Khmer, Lao and Vietnamese, which help our community members develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as well as connect with their culture (or learn about another). Our students across the country created final projects that incorporated a cultural story, including song discussions from their Native languages, interviews with elders, and interpretations of traditional folktales.

A huge thank you to all of our teachers that make this program possible during this time of transition and online learning.

Thank you to:

- Hung Nguyen
- Joan Dao
- Bee-Vang Moua
- Sotheary Duong
- Anthony Meng
- Jay Rattanavong
- Anne Souvannasy
- Stacey Phengvath
- Akarath Soukhaphon



SEADS of Love

SEADS of Love card set designed by Kim Dinh to express love, gratitude and a happy Tết. Funds raised spread the love by directly contributing to the SEA Roots Scholarship fund for students with limited incomes. We awarded 21 scholarships. Thank you to all contributors!



STATISTICS

98

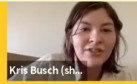
students enrolled

21

SEADS of Love scholarships



Vu Quy



Một người họ hàng của cô dâu tặng cô bằng vàng hoặc đồ trang sức. Trong bức ảnh này, Mai nhận được chiếc nhẫn từ bố. Huế nhận được sợi dây chuyền.



A relative of the bride gifts her with gold or jewelry. Here, Mai receives a ring from her father. Huế received a necklace.

zoom



OLD MACDONALD IN HMONG



zoom



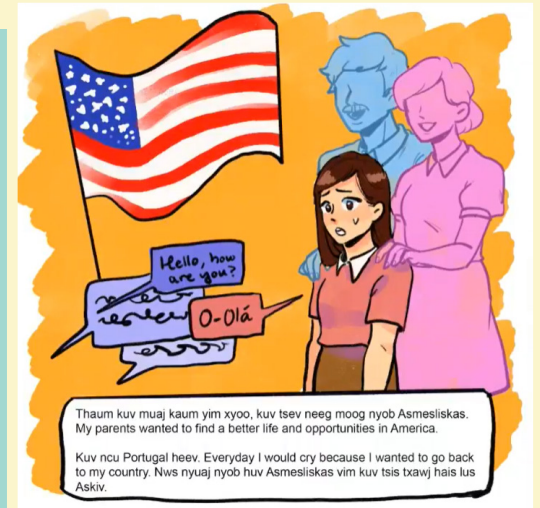
Q: Where did you learn to tailor sinhs?

I learned to sew sinhs in Laos. I was 20 years old.

◆◆◆◆

Her teachers were in Savannakhet. She travelled there to learn for one year. She went to school every day and learned about the fabric, how to use the sewing machine and design patterns for sinhs and tops.

zoom



Thaum kuv muaj kaum yim xyoo, kuv tsev neeg moog nyob Asmesliskas. My parents wanted to find a better life and opportunities in America.

Kuv ncu Portugal heev. Everyday I would cry because I wanted to go back to my country. Nws nyuaj nyob huv Asmesliskas vim kuv tsis txawj hais lus Askiv.

SEA Change Lab

Growing creative leaders at the intersection of arts and advocacy

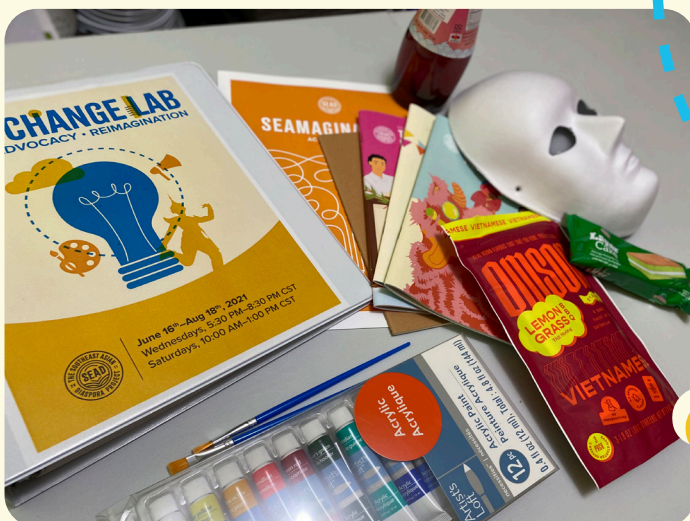
We successfully launched our first hybrid SEA Change Lab program in June in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines. More than fifty new and emerging SEA artists, storytellers, and community organizers ages 18-25 applied for the ten-week program! We were able to offer Changemaker fellowships to 10 young creatives from across the United States. May Lee-Yang, our Summer Program Manager, convened the Changemakers over zoom for twelve sessions and convened for an in-person retreat in the Twin Cities for three days in July. By participating in the SEA Change Lab, cohort members received the opportunity to connect with a network of peers, meet and learn from local and national artists, engage with community leaders, and develop their artistic, professional, and leadership skills.

Some key project highlights include a 5-minute animated film to address how generational trauma gets passed down within the Hmong community, a digital portrait series that explored the intersections of COVID-19, the coup in Burma, Asian American identities, and a composition of two original songs with accompanying videos that explored self-care, healing, and the connections to lineage.

Our SEA Change Lab wouldn't be possible without our teaching artists. These community members share their experiences and expertise with our cohort members.

Thank you to:

- Janit Saechao
- MK Nguyen
- UyenThi Tran-Myhre
- Maw Reh
- Eric Sharp
- Hlee Lee-Kron
- Public Functionary
- Our mentors...and many more!



Here's what some of our Changemakers shared

“

The SEAD Change Lab is an incredible asset to our burgeoning community of young Southeast Asian creatives. It was a powerful experience to be among so many artists that I relate to, some of whom I believe I will cultivate relationships with for a long time to come. I have a newfound sense of possibility with my art making, leadership, and advocacy drawn from my experiences.

“

There are so many things that I enjoyed about the SEA Change Lab program. This summer I got to get back to my artistic/creative side and really capture what that looks like as a Southeast Asian. Being in community with other Southeast Asian creatives taught me so much about what it means to be an artist but also how our identities as Southeast Asians tie into that. I've never claimed any creative spaces because I never felt like what I create was of value but SEA Change Lab showed me that I am needed in certain spaces and that there are still numerous conversations needed to be had about storytelling as a Southeast Asian. The retreat was also a nice part of the program...be in a space where I felt comfortable, affirmed, supported, and understood by those like-minded and with shared identities where it felt very nourishing and inspiring at the same time. Being able to see that there are so many resources and people actively engaged in Southeast Asian arts and activism made me feel hopeful that we continue to build our collective.



About the Summer Program Manager

May Lee-Yang is a writer, performance artist, and teacher who often uses pop culture and humor to interrogate race, gender, and identity. Her theater-based works include *The Korean Drama Addict's Guide to Losing Your Virginity* and *Confessions of a Lazy Hmong Woman*. She has been featured on CNN's *United Shades of America* with W. Kamau Bell and spoken at TEDx Minneapolis. Her work has been supported by grants from the Playwright Center McKnight Fellowship, the Bush Leadership Fellowship, the Jerome Foundation, the National Performance Network, the MN State Arts Board, The Loft Literary Center, and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council. In 2016, she received an Ordway Sally Award for Arts Access. She is a founding member of F.A.W.K. (Funny Asian Women Kollektive), a group that uses comedy to combat the invisibility and dehumanization of Asian women's stories. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Minnesota and worked as the Summer Program Manager at The SEAD Project.

Creative Form(s):

Playwriting, Prose, Poetry, Performing, Comedy

Portfolio/Website:

www.lazyhmongwoman.com
www.fawkollektive.com

Cultural Arts Events & Pop Ups



Reading with Phuoc Tran

Partnered with award-winning children’s book author Phuoc Tran who read an excerpt of her book, Vietnamese Children’s Favorite Stories and shared ways the community can safely celebrate Tết, the Lunar New Year through healing and hope.

Queer Picnic

SEAD hosted its first in-person event of 2021! Our Queer Picnic was held at our temporary community garden on Bush & Johnson Parkway to celebrate the end of Pride Month. We gathered with over two dozen of our community participants in food and celebration.

SEAD Foods 101

Fermented Foods was a collective partnership with Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA) with the intention of growing relationships with our Southeast Asian communities. Thank you so much to our facilitator, Janssen Hang. Our 27 participants nurtured and learned together about fermentation techniques and the cultural uses through the Hmong lens. The workshop highlighted themes of history and cultural importance such as harvesting season, growing methods, and traditional uses in each dish, and herbs used in different regions of Southeast Asia, and how to use these plants and herbs in contemporary dishes. SEAD Foods 101 revitalized traditional knowledge lost to diasporic individuals by educating the public on garden herbs, and plants, and thus creating a paradigm shift on communal knowledge.





Hmong Shamanism 101

This panel featuring Billy Lor, Jousa Lee Grande, and Victor Yang was a huge success with over 150 participants. Our panelists shared their unique approaches to Hmong Shamanism practices. This practice has been handed down for generations, sharing their healing knowledge through oral teaching and apprenticeship. They discussed traditional methods to healing, as well as modern day Shamanistic practices.



Mid-Autumn Film Fest

The program shared stories of diasporic hope from the 70's, and ended in current Asian America. Our first mini film fest screened local works from 7 community filmmakers, curated for the audience to journey through time and explore topics like futurism and happiness. The event garnered 230 attendees of all ages.



Poster Pop Up

In collaboration with Asian Minnesotan Alliance Justice (AMAJ) in an effort to get out the vote, we hosted a pop up to giveaway free posters by local artists such as Christina Vang and Alizarin Menninga Fong.

Cultural Organizing Initiatives

Since 2020, we amped up our cultural organizing work on social justice issues through creative and narrative storytelling via digital campaigns, community conversations, roundtables, and partner coalition work.

Towards Abolition: SEA Histories and Futurities

Led by Ariana Yang, this event encouraged 40 folx to deep dive into SEA/American history and resistance and envisioned new and just futures. We connected our histories and experiences of state violence with the movement for Black lives, and how our communities' histories inform our understanding of abolition. Abolition is a complex concept for people to wrap their minds around, especially our elders who were victims and survivors of state violence. Reflecting on our own histories and lived experiences plus our current political and socioeconomic reality can create a better and deeper understanding of abolition and help us make connections to the past, present, and future. We pieced together a collective timeline mapping activity which incorporates movement histories in Southeast Asian and Black communities as well as our own personal histories as it relates to these major milestones.

Scattered Diasporas and the Critical Renewal

Artists' conversation about what it means to thrive—not just survive—in a pandemic world. This concept is not new to African, Asian, Latinx, Arab and other diasporas, and these practices are often passed down through generations. The 57 participants engaged in conversations that explored how our pasts, futures, and current realities all intertwine, and how we can be unified allies together, especially our role in growing a better and more just and equitable social and cultural ecosystem. Moderated by Amanda Cortes, a Chicago-based cultural worker and artist career consultant. Artists included: Kathy Haddad from New Arab American Theater Works, Ananya Chatterjea from Ananya Dance Theater, Tricia Heurig from Public Functionary, and filmmaker/social practice artist DA Bullock.

Abolition 101

Partnered with UyenThi and Kyle Tran-Myhre from MPD150 to learn some abolition basics and imagine a new world with Southeast Asian community members. This interactive session shared some of the group's research on the 150-year history of the Minneapolis Police Department, answered some frequently-asked-questions about abolition, and 67 participants imagined together what a police-free future might look like and what it will take to get there.



SEA Tea Time

We created the Southeast Asians community learning cohort to allow space and connection to reflect, process, and grow their understanding and practice of abolition, transformative justice, cross cultural work, and other community issues.

Rad Café

The podcast series built political consciousness within Southeast Asian diaspora communities by developing critical dialogue about how both social and economic politics impacts the well-being and decision-making factors at a community, national, and international levels. The intentional dialogue circle space expanded and challenged our political imaginations and practical frameworks that shape the ways that these things impact us in ways both minor and widely-pervading, especially in how they shape the lives, social relations, and intergenerational itineraries of our families and communities.

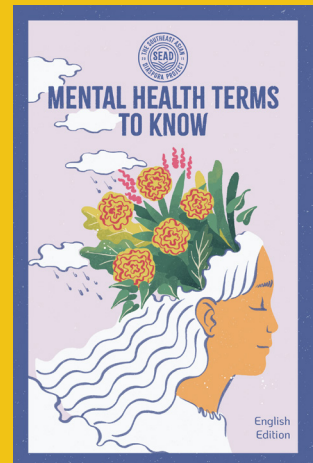


Critical Community Response and Resources

Part of our mission is to amplify SEA voices and make sure urgent information is accessible and shareable to them, especially during all the challenges and crises our communities experienced in the last two years. During the health and racial pandemic, we've ensured our communities are equipped with the right information and resources. From culturally-relevant illustrations about health safety guidelines to teaching about the importance of wearing masks correctly through animated videos, we've partnered with the community and released various multimedia content in Burmese, Hmong, Karen, Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese, and English.

Critical In-Language Response Work:

- *Abolition Set: Social justice decks in Hmong, Lao, Khmer, Viet, and English languages*
- *Mindfulness Decks*



2 Câu hỏi 2 về Thành phố Cục An toàn Công cộng

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1 City Question 1 Government Structure: Executive Mayor-Legislative Council

Shall the Minneapolis City Charter be amended to adopt a change in its form of government to an Executive Mayor-Legislative Council structure to shift certain powers to the Mayor, consolidating administrative authority over all operating departments under the Mayor, and eliminating the Executive Committee?

YES _____ NO _____

Get Out The Vote

Minneapolis voters were faced with important ballot questions this year. Our team worked on translated ballot questions and posters and we partnered with CAAL on doorknocking for the election. We partnered on Yes4Minneapolis initiative and worked alongside People’s Movement Assemblies for the City of Minneapolis ballot and post elections initiatives.

Permaculture and Healing Cohort

We partnered with the Hindolo Pokawa from the Midwest Farmers of Color Coalition and other Southeast Asian healers collective as co-creators and co-facilitators to give space for a healing cohort training and learning exchange for 12 participants comprised of Karen, Karenni, and SEA folks (young and old). During crises and critical times, there’s an increasing need for addressing trauma and integrating more effective modalities of healing that is culturally-competent and community centered. We utilized cross cultural frameworks rooted in permaculture practice, principles of transformative justice, and other SEA-based approaches to equip participants with tools for self and collective sustainability through a learning cohort model.



Community Partnerships and Coalitions

We know community, and we know the importance of working in partnership with others on various initiatives to bring the greatest impact. Our partnerships and contracted projects included:

Education Partnership Coalition

We led parents and organizers through a design-thinking session to co-create tools that answered the questions: How do we get parents more involved in policy decision making? How do parents who don't have degrees, are low income, or immobile find a sense of agency in community organizing? We created "We Got This: Building Power from Our Position + Place", an organizing toolkit for parents to develop capacity to create local and shared policy agendas together for a better education system in Minnesota.

Sign The People's Petition

We joined Black Visions Collective and Reviving Sisterhood for the Sign the People's Petition, a drive-through signature collection campaign for a new Department of Safety.



"In Unity, We Can Make a Change"

We came together with folks from all over the diaspora in support of the Burmese people, who endured the ongoing military coup. We were joined by artists, dancers, speakers, and Karen Culture Organization of Minnesota who came out in solidarity for our friends abroad in Burma.

Asian Pacific Islander Complete Count Committee

We created Census 2020 outreach materials in Burmese, Hmong, Khmer, Lao and Vietnamese to reach our communities who have been historically undercounted. Through visual and literary storytelling with a Southeast Asian lens, we motivated our communities to fill out the census and spoke to what matters to them: family, resources and trust. In the shadow of the racial and health pandemic, 2020 was all the more critical with the presidential election and local elections that would decide the fate of our nation's future — We wanted to ensure Southeast Asian people were seen, heard, and counted.

SEA Women and Nonbinary Healing Retreat

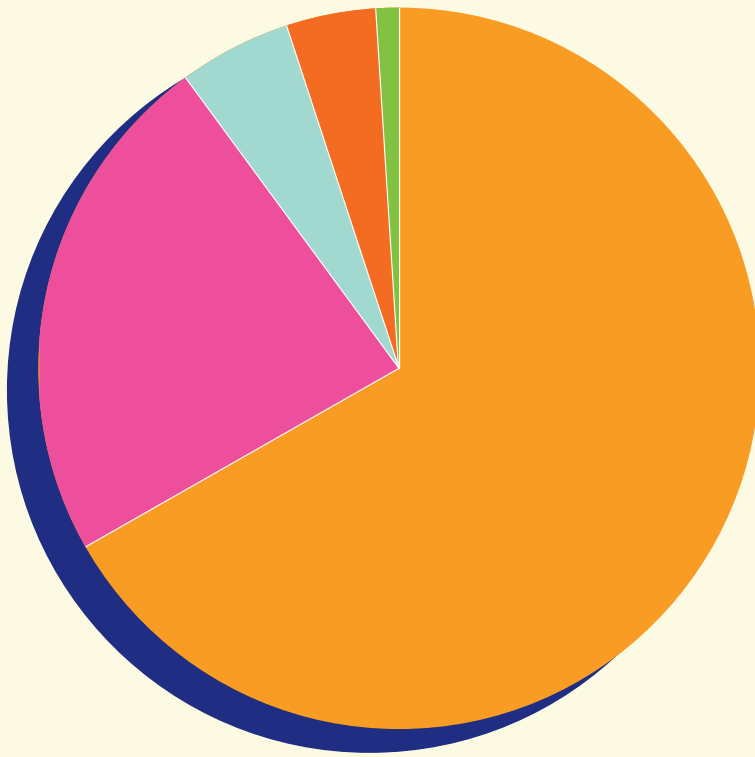
In Portland, Oregon, we hosted and supported a volunteer community group of 12 Southeast Asian women/nonbinary folks co-facilitating healing circles for community building, reflection and connection towards rest and self-care. The group cultivated a safe space to build upon their individual identities and unique experiences to heal and transform our collective SEA community.



FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT¹

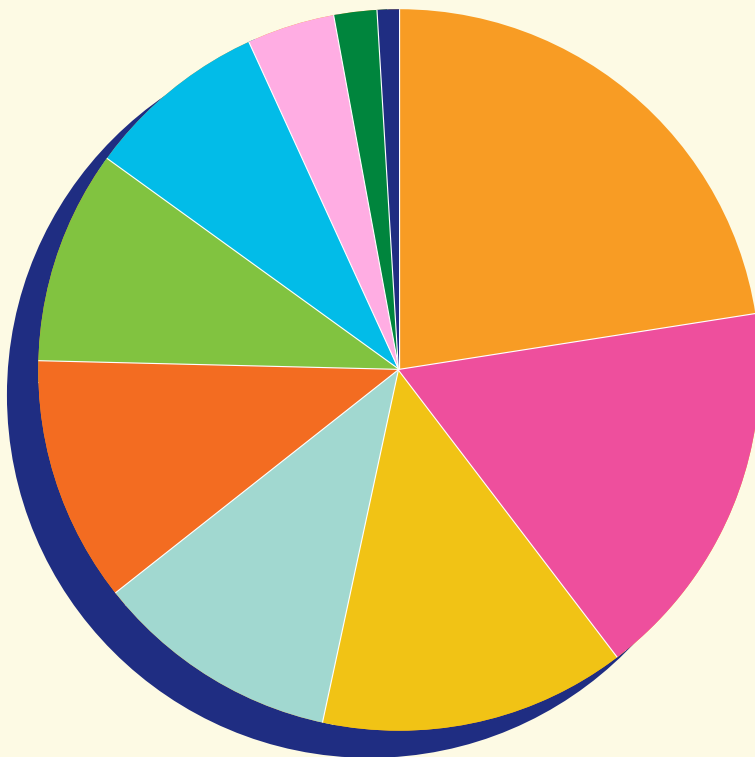
FOR JANUARY 2021
THROUGH DECEMBER 2021

1. See “SEAD FY20-21 Form 990...” Report (www.theseadproject.org/our-impact)



Revenue: \$576,071

- 66% Foundation Grants
- 23% Contract Fees
- 5% Registration Fees
- 4% Individual Contributions
- 1% Other Income



Expenses: \$625,045

- 23% Community Response
- 17% Management & General
- 14% Storytelling
- 11% Fundraising
- 11% SOON Enterprise
- 10% Cultural Heritage
- 9% SEA Youth
- 4% Other Programs
- 2% Policy
- 1% International

OUR GRATITUDE

Thank you to all our staff, board,
community, donors, supporters,
language teachers, contractors,
and volunteers who made our
work possible.



Staff & Board

Kaysone Syonesa Schneider
 Jessica Eckerstorfer
 Charmaine Balialisla
 Chanida Phaengdara Potter
 Tri Vo
 Anthony Meng
 Kia Lee
 Saroeun Earm
 Eric Nguyen
 Soua Christiansen
 Sopheak Neak
 Joy Manichan Nguyen
 Michael Sasorith
 Neeyada Tan
 Mai Hong
 Maishia Yang
 Chann Kong

Key Individual Contributors

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 Souksavat Soukhaseum
 Kathleen Blanchard
 Stacey Phengvath
 Arbeiter Brewing
 Benjamin Ihde
 Diep Phan
 Preston Prince
 Jazzy DiMeglio
 Cullasaja Synergy Consulting
 Community Food Project
 Daniel Hartman
 Lara Bergman
 Nick Ngo
 Isabelle Chan

Funders & Supporters



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WOMEN WOMEN'S
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EMERGENT FUND

F. R. BIGELOW FOUNDATION



MINNEAPOLIS
FOUNDATION



SAINT PAUL
& MINNESOTA
FOUNDATION



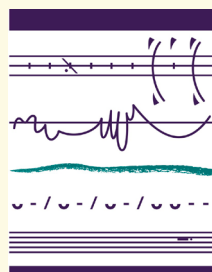
Still Ain't
Satisfied
A FOUNDATION WITH ATTITUDE



Communities
Transforming
Policing
Fund



Minneapolis
City of Lakes



MINNESOTA
STATE ARTS BOARD



CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY
AMENDMENT

OTTO
BREMER
TRUST™

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

LETTER FROM CO- DIRECTOR

Jessica Eckerstorfer



When the Wells Fargo, four blocks from my house, was burnt to the ground, when I was heading into my final semester of graduate school, teaching undergrads three states away via Zoom, when I was resettling into the Twin Cities, but unable to see any friends because of the pandemic—This was the summer of 2020. I felt lost, I felt disconnected and all I could do was stay at home. To get outside, I would drive to different neighborhoods of the cities and take long walks. It allowed me to have new experiences out in the world, while remaining safe. Walking through downtown St. Paul, I saw the M's museum windows displaying The SEAD's Project 1.5 Remix Show. The show combined my love of storytelling with Southeast Asian culture, something I'd seen very little of as a Filipina person studying English literature.

Then, a friend, Cristeta Boarini, reached out to me and introduced me to Chanida Phaengdara Potter, the Executive Director and Founder of The SEAD Project. I thank these two for the moment I currently find myself in, sitting in our one-room office on the second floor of the NEON Building, working on this letter next to my Co-Director, Kaysone Syonesa and listening to her talk to our team members about our upcoming event. I get to work with an entire team of Southeast Asian creatives, not in a vacuum, alone in my house, and not in a nonprofit of well-intentioned, but micro-aggression leaning white folk. I never in my life thought this would be a possibility, and I think this access, this level of representation and inclusion is what SEAD is for our community. The arts are a refuge for our refugee population, a place where we can express our cultural heritage, our stories, our dreams without limits, sharing these thoughts with an audience that recognizes our histories and shares in our personhood.

I have so much gratitude for this last year, for the team that Kay and I have assembled, for the community members I've met, and for the initiatives to come. My first year at SEAD had ups and downs, surprises, and lessons learned. But more than anything, I know the value this organization has within the community. Our ability to see ourselves reflected in story, art, and advocacy issues has an immeasurable value.

Growing up in rural Wisconsin and South Dakota, I had small pockets of Filipina chosen family, friends of my mom that would travel over an hour to larger cities in order to find ingredients to make food from home, dishes they'd bring to house parties and gatherings. I never had a Filipina teacher, a mentor, or a professional in my life I could look up to. To know that SEAD exists to be a place for our people to gather is important.

As our team heads into strategic planning, we seek input from the community. We want to know how we can meet you all where you're at, partner to share resources and grow leadership, never to presuppose what community needs, but to work side-by-side to strengthen our collective power. There is so much potential in our histories and traditions. We cannot let these inherent superpowers fade. To me, SEAD is about preservation with progress. We move forward, healing together, and celebrating the best parts of our personhood.


Thank you to those that came before me at SEAD, to the team and community we currently have, and I have gratitude for all the things to come.


Jessica Eckerstorfer
Co-Director, Programs & Communications




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