

Making Space for Collaboration

Abdika Amrullah

As the largest and most intense event I've ever been involved in, ICAS 13 undeniably became the center of my world for months. With over 1500 participants from more than 60 countries, the scale of the event was staggering. It required immense preparation, long hours, and relentless teamwork. At one point, I set aside personal matters, focusing solely on the continuous cycle of work and rest. Yet, every effort was worthwhile, as the event proved to be both professionally and personally rewarding.

One of the most memorable parts of my experience was being the local coordinator for the ICAS 13 book fair. I've always loved books, but this was on a whole new level. I went from being a reader to working with editors and publishers whose work I had long admired. Coordinating the fair wasn't just about logistics; it was about creating a space for the exchange of ideas and knowledge. Facilitating connections between editors,



Fig. 1 (left): Presentation at ICAS 13.

publishers, authors, and readers was an honor and a deeply rewarding opportunity.

Beyond the book fair, ICAS 13 itself was a wellspring of enriched stories and perspectives. I forged meaningful connections with new colleagues, and one of the most treasured aspects of the

experience was the bond I built with my colleagues at IAS. Our shared vision and dedication – and sense of humor, of course – helped us navigate the rough patches, strengthening our teamwork and ultimately forging bonds that not only contributed to the event's success but also deepened our

mutual understanding and solidified our friendships.

ICAS 13 was more than just an event – it was a dynamic convergence of minds, cultures, and stories that reshaped how I view collaboration in academia and beyond.

Making ICAS 13 a Reality

Erik Jansen

Wow! What a wonderful adventure that was! Organizing ICAS 13 has been one of the most exciting rides of my working life. I got to work together with the best team, in Leiden and Surabaya, for which I am really thankful.

While preparing for ICAS 13, I had not met my colleagues in Surabaya in person until mid-July, two weeks before the start of the event. After only seeing them on screen for so many months, and after all

these conversations about Surabaya and the ConFest venues, my anticipation of going to Surabaya had been rising. Finally meeting them in person was fantastic, and experiencing Surabaya in real life suddenly made everything so much more tangible.

In similar fashion, after having had email contact with so many of ICAS 13's participants, meeting everyone in real life and being able to connect names to faces was great. Especially after seeing things run smoothly and seeing so many happy faces, I realized what we managed to put together over the course of the last year, and I felt really grateful and satisfied.

No doubt that Indonesian hospitality contributed immensely to being able to feel the way I felt, being surrounded by the best team, enjoying the most delicious food – it was my first visit to Indonesia, but definitely not my last!

Fig. 2 (right): The Kali Mas ("Golden River") running through the city of Surabaya, 2024.



Fig. 3 (above): Members of the ICAS 13 team, representing both IIAS and AIIOC/UnAir, celebrating at De Soematra, Surabaya, Indonesia.

New Connections and Friendships at ICAS 13

Petrik Mahisa Akhtabi

2024 is definitely a standout for me. I had the amazing chance to be part of the core committee for the 13th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) in Surabaya. Being involved in this event wasn't just about meeting new friends and colleagues – it was also an essential step in building my skills and experience. As a committee member, I worked hands-on with the coordination, from planning and organizing logistics to making sure everything ran smoothly during the sessions involving scholars around the globe (over 60 countries, can you imagine?). This really helped me to improve my communication skills across different cultures, the ability to work with various teams and enhance my management skills.

One particularly unforgettable moment was when I had the chance to meet Nicholas Prévot, a music researcher from France. During our conversation, I learned that he had won the prestigious ICAS Book Prize (IBP)

French Language Edition 2023. We delved into a fascinating discussion about music, particularly traditional Asian music, and he generously shared his broad insights on how music reflects both the social and spiritual character of nations across Asia. This exact moment not only broadened my perspective on the study of music but inspired me to explore cross-cultural music studies further, too. That kind of experience absolutely provided me with invaluable lessons, deepening my understanding of academic dynamics while connecting me with a broader network in the global academic community. ICAS 13 will remain a cornerstone in both my personal and professional journey.

After all, I couldn't be more thankful for my amazing colleagues at IIAS! Their support and teamwork made the whole experience so much more enjoyable. With their dedication, brilliant ideas, and great sense of humor, we didn't just pull off a successful event – we created a tight-knit, fun-loving friendship that I'll always treasure.