



**PRESS RELEASE
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Effects of Culture and Art in Dealing with Khmer Rouge Trauma

Phnom Penh – Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO Cambodia) in partnerships with Khmer Art Academy, Kdei Karuna and Bophana Center supported by the ECCC and funded by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Civil Peace Service of German International Cooperation (GIZ), today announces the launching of “**Effects of Culture and Art in Dealing with Khmer Rouge Trauma**”.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) are adjudicating crimes against humanity alleged towards two senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime. The current Case 002/02 includes the crime of forced marriage and crimes committed to Muslim Cham.

For the past 10 years TPO Cambodia followed its commitment towards Civil Parties and Khmer Rouge survivors by supporting their process of dealing with the past and healing the long-term effects of severe trauma from structural violence with different types of psychosocial interventions. Two of the interventions – Testimonial Therapy and Self-help Groups - have been accepted as reparative transitional justice measures and were included in the verdict of case 02/02.

With Cambodian Cham Muslims as clients, issues of culture became a concerning factor for TPO to deal with. As all TPO counselors are Khmer Buddhist, their own concepts of suffering and healing are influenced by Khmer Buddhist culture. With Cham clients as beneficiaries, questions of cultural differences arose and had to be explored before psychosocial interventions were trustworthy and acceptable enough to be effective. The project ‘Justice and Relief for Khmer Rouge Survivors’ has been working with Cambodian Muslim survivors since 2016 and will present its latest **video documentation about Testimonial Therapy with Cham**.

Utilizing Art and Culture as catalysts for social and individual transformation has been at the core of another proposed judicial reparation project, to which TPO contributed its transcultural psychosocial expertise. The ‘**Pka Sla Krom Angkar**’ project was developed and implemented by a consortium of Cambodian and International NGOs and addresses the harm suffered by Civil Parties as a result of forced marriage

Part of this project was a TPO research study about the effect of art performance on survivors of forced marriage and sexual violence. The main findings will be presented during the conference.

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