



**Concept Note Submission of “Their History Our Future” Initiative to  
The “Call for Contribution of Ideas of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia  
(ECCC) Residual Functions Related to Victims”**

**Rational**

The perception of history affects how people at any given time view the world around them. History has the unique power to bring people together in a group that sees “us” as the result of shared background, struggles, national determination, and culture. It also has the potential to divide. When history separates groups, and the conceptualisation of “they” becomes stronger, protracted conflict can manifest itself for generations to come.

This concept note builds upon the important work in [Their History, Our Future: Exploring past conflict while eyeing the future through inter-ethnic creativity](#), carried out in 2020 to bring minority groups together in Cambodia to explore diverse perceptions of common historical narratives both during the dark period of the Khmer Rouge genocide years and beyond. In particular, it looks closer at the connection to the ECCC judgement on the genocide charge in the scope of ethnic Vietnamese and Cham/Khmer Islam victims and the contemporary perceptions that contribute to ongoing discrimination that exists in ethnic relations in Cambodia.

One of the major findings from the past work was the importance in how history is seen differently based on how events impacted certain communities versus others. This was revealed through deep intergenerational dialogue often between children and parents, or grandchildren and grandparents. Facilitative Listening Design (FLD), a Cambodian homegrown action-oriented participatory research approach that uses conflict transformation elements to leverage the process to develop better understand among groups at odds with each other, was used to investigate diverse perceptions. FLD is utilised to structure an inquiry approach that participants employ to explore their own curiosity and questions to better understand historical events while customising the tools and process to enhance dialogue between generations in diverse ethnic minority groups.

In addition, a significant observation in previous work showed that a therapeutic approach among participants throughout the journey was vital in providing the accompaniment needed to emotionally support those engaging on extremely difficult issues and post-generational trauma that persist today, even among those who did not directly experience certain historical events firsthand. Creative art therapy and therapeutic arts approaches have been successfully incorporated to allow participants to explore issues in a safe and non-traditional process. However, participants noted that the therapeutic work must extend to more beneficiaries engaged, not only direct participants. Particularly after engaging those who directly experienced traumatic events in a historical context, deeper accompaniment and clear therapeutic support must reach them after they have opened up and shared about their experiences, struggles, and personal trauma.



In *Their History Our Future* initiative, there are three main goals. Firstly, it aims to foster a more diverse public discourse about memory to ensure that memories and experiences by those from a broader range of ethnic groups are heard and shared through findings and activities among target communities. Secondly, this initiative also works to ensure that Khmer Rouge survivors are acknowledged and provided the space to discuss experience with the younger generation. Particularly, exposure to creative therapies allow younger generation to work through different aspects of trauma, including transgenerational trauma. Last but not least, we believe that the understanding of the past will directly help young leaders of diverse ethnic groups to consider the present, and provide them with the skills and leadership to positively reshape the future of their communities to ensure a “never again” of the violent past of Cambodia.

### Target groups

This initiative will work directly with community members including both Khmer Rouge survivors who experienced the traumatic events of the Khmer Rouge regime years as well as the subsequent generations who were raised in a post-conflict context but continue to experience the impact of historical trauma in multiple ways. It will also incorporate an interethnic lens to acknowledge the diversity of ethnic, religious, and cultural minority groups both in terms of their particular experiences in historical events as well as their current status and place in Cambodian society today.

### Timeline

No	Timeline	Description
1	Jan – Jun 2022	<i>Facilitative Listening Design Process</i> – Exploring the past and the diversity of perceptions of common historical narratives and fostering intergenerational dialogue on the KR history and ECCC process
2	Mar – Sept 2022	<i>Listener creative art therapy</i> – incorporating therapy for Listeners to explore issues directly related to post-generational trauma passed from one generation to the next
3	Jul – Dec 2022	<i>Sharer therapeutic arts accompaniment</i> – Bringing creative approaches to beneficiaries that incorporate arts to work on trauma and healing as a community.
4	Jul 2022 – Jun 2023	Interethnic youth actions – carving out the future through alliance and networking among youth dedicated to learning from the past, but owning the future.

END.