



Psychosocial Interventions for Khmer Rouge Survivors in the Context of the ECCC

Lessons Learnt

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Historical Background

- 1975 – 1979 Khmer Rouge genocidal regime
- 1979 – 1998 Continuous civil war
- 1991 – 1993 United Nations mission (UNTAC)
- 1993 General election backed by UN
- 2006 *“Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia” (ECCC)*

ECCC and Victims Participation

ECCC =

- hybrid tribunal
- victims can participate as “Civil Parties” (CPs):
 - Full procedural rights
 - Right to seek collective and moral reparations.
- Case 001:

Against former secretary of the torture center S-21.
66 survivors were accepted as CPs.
- Case 002: Against 3 top leaders
3866 survivors were recognized as CPs.

Transcultural Psychosocial Organization – TPO

- Leading NGO in the field of Mental Health since 1995
- Community based program and outpatient clinic
- Since 2007: MoU with the ECCC providing psychological support to Witnesses and Civil Parties



TPO's Victims Support Scheme

- Preparatory psychological interventions (briefing)
- On-site psychological support during the proceedings
- Follow-up care (hotline, face-to-face)
- Specialized trauma treatment
- Forensic assessments (IRCT)
- Self-help groups
- Outreach interventions
- Information, education and training on trauma to Cambodian public (radio, outreach), staff of the ECCC and civil society.

Victims Experiences and Perceptions

**What are the experiences
of survivors of mass atrocity
in participating
in the ECCC criminal proceedings?**

Victims Experiences and Perceptions

Study by TPO in cooperation with the Berkeley Human Rights Center, University of California, December 2010

Sample: 75 Case 001 Civil Parties

The results are compared with data from a nationwide survey of the general population.

Results: Characteristics of Civil Parties

1. Higher levels of exposure to violence during the Khmer Rouge regime compared to the general population who lived under the Khmer Rouge regime.
2. Higher average scores in Post Traumatic Stress than the rest of the population.

Comparison of Exposure to Violence, Symptoms of PTSD and Symptoms of Depression between Civil Party and Population-based Survey

Symptoms of PTSD sum * Symptoms of depression sum * Total exposure During KR* (number of events) Total exposure after KR (number of events)	Total Civil parties (n=75)		Population survey respondents who lived under Khmer Rouge (KR) regime (n=708)		Population survey (n=1000)	
	Mean	Std. D	Mean	Std. D	Mean	Std. D
	41.1	13.6	30.4	11.4	29.9	11.1
	36.0	11.8	29.4	10.7	28.2	10.2
	8.7	3.7	6.2	3.2	4.4	3.8
	1.8	2.0	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.7

* Significant difference between civil parties and population who lived under the Khmer Rouge regime, Independent T-test p-value <,01.

Reported Motivation to Apply as Civil Party

Motivation to Apply as Civil Party	N	% of cases
To obtain justice for me and my relative who died	51	68
To know the truth	32	43
To honour the memories of my relatives	24	32
To tell my story	20	27
To have my suffering acknowledged	13	17
To confront Duch	11	15
To receive individual reparations	7	9
To put Duch in prison/life sentence	3	4
To prevent future violence	1	1
Don't Know	1	1

Reactions to Rejection

22 survivors, who applied to become Civil Parties, were rejected.

→ Shame

→ Helplessness

→ Anger

“ I feel pain in my head, in my chest...”

“ I feel so much ashamed...”

“ I am here to find justice to my mother who was killed at S21...”

“ If there is one civil party rejected, we all are feeling the pain...”

Experience of Testifying

17 Civil Parties among 75
testified in the Case 001 trial.

Experience of Testifying

Civil Parties' Perception and Attitudes towards Testifying during Hearings at the ECCC

	I'm satisfied with my testimony at the ECCC		I felt respected by my lawyer*		During my testimony, I was treated fairly by the Court		I felt sufficiently prepared for my testimony	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly agree	13	77	12	71	6	35	7	41
Agree	2	12	3	18	7	41	6	35
Neutral	1	6	1	6	2	12	2	12
Disagree	1	6	0	0	1	6	2	12
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0
No opinion	0	0	1	6			0	0

*To avoid the problem of set responses (i.e. responding in a similar way to similarly-phrased questions) and leading questions, statements were stated in negative and positive terms. However, the results were recoded for consistent reporting

Perceptions on Case 001 Trial

Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Duch Trial Proceedings (%)

	The Duch trial was conducted fairly		The court gave too much time to Duch to explain himself		Victims did not have enough time to tell their story	
	Population survey (n= 1000)	Civil Parties (n= 75)	Population survey (n= 1000)	Civil Parties (n= 75)	Population survey (n= 1000)	Civil Parties (n= 75)
Strongly agree	27	23	15	37	19	57
Agree	42	36	35	33	37	23
Neutral	7	11	9	7	8	4
Disagree	4	21	10	12	8	4
Strongly disagree	3	8	2	4	2	5
No opinion	17	1	29	7	26	7

Most Important Moments for Survivors

- When victims are able to tell their story;
- When Duch was found guilty;
- When victims were recognized
as Civil Parties.

Reported Psychosocial Impact of the Trial

Mean score, maximum of 5

	CP	Pop
I personally feel stronger ‘mentally’ after the Duch trial.	4.0	3.55
I have more hope for the future after the Duch trial.	4.03	3.72
The Duch trial helped me in accepting the loss of my loved ones.	2.41	2.93
The Duch trial has helped me in finding closure/ coming to terms with my painful past.	3.35	3.62

Conclusion

- In general Civil Parties perceived their participation positive
- However, no feeling of sustainable psychological relief
- NGOs have an important role in supporting and empowering the victims

Lessons Learnt from Perspectives of Mental Health Professionals

1. Neutral and reliable partnership with victims in a highly complex and dynamic setting
2. Continued support before, during and after the trial phase: Expectation and stress management
3. Complementary elements [trauma treatment, truth telling, memorialization, etc.]
4. Considering social and economic needs of victims
5. Close cooperation between psychological and legal staff.



Thank you