

Press Announcement

Celebrating the month of love and dialogue on continuing to support and promote the diversity and equality of love of the LGBT+ community in Cambodia, under the theme "Solidarity for Love"

Phnom Penh, 13 February 2025.

Rainbow Community Kampuchea Organisation (RoCK) together with a network of civil society organizations and youth volunteer groups working on LGBT+ equality, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) rights, sexual reproductive health rights, and gender equality in Cambodia¹ are celebrating the "month of love" by organizing a **dialogue to continue supporting and promoting the diversity and equality of love of the LGBT+ community in Cambodia**, along with uplifting art performances by talented Cambodian artists, which will take place on **Thursday, 13 February 2025** from 2:00pm to 5:30pm at the Cambodiana Hotel. This event aims at:

- Sharing and learning from the beautiful and sincere love stories and experiences of Cambodian lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) couples and families.
- Sharing and learning from the inspiring experiences of supportive parents and family members in recognizing, accepting and supporting their children, relatives and friends who are LGBT+.
- Showcasing the contributions of the Cambodian LGBT+ community and its allies, including artists and media, to continue to raise awareness about the potentials, talents, situations, and priority needs of the LGBT+ community in Cambodian society.
- Providing the opportunity for LGBT+ community members from across Cambodia to continue to meet with and engage in dialogue with supportive stakeholders, including representatives of Cambodian Government institutions, parents, journalists and other stakeholders to demonstrate their shared willingness to continue supporting and promoting the diversity and equality of love for all couples (including same-sex couples and different-sex couples), love for parents, relatives, friends, community and universal love within communities, societies and humanity worldwide with equality, tolerance and harmony, in line with the teachings of the Brahmavihara (loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy and equanimity).
- Highlighting the contributions of all stakeholders to continue promoting further progress on LGBT+ people's equal rights protection, including legal marriage equality for same-sex couples. This is also in line with progressing the commitment of all stakeholders, especially the Royal Government of Cambodia, along with the active role of civil society, LGBT+ community and allies, as well as support from United Nations agencies and several Embassies in Cambodia, to contribute to implementing the recommendations on LGBT+ rights which Cambodia accepted during the fourth cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The dialogue on continuing to support and promote the diversity and equality of love of the LGBT+ community in Cambodia will be presided over by **His Excellency Keo Remy, Senior Minister and President of the Cambodian Human Rights Committee**, who has always shown his commitment to continue to care, support and promote the diverse and equal love of the LGBT+ community.

This event will be attended by Cambodian LGBT+ community members from 20 provinces and city, parents and family members of LGBT+ persons, Cambodian artists, representatives of relevant Ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia, local authorities, representatives of United Nations agencies and Embassies, civil society networks, and journalists and media professionals, totaling approximately 270 participants.

The Cambodian LGBT+ community said: "The meaning and value of love is very deep and profound in Cambodian society, including the love of married life and family, which is a sincere love from the heart, with understanding, caring and forgiving, full of sweetness, warmth and happiness - like a house with a strong foundation. As Cambodians and members of the LGBT+ community, we are committed to preserving this

¹ 1. Rainbow Community Kampuchea Organisation (RoCK), 2. LoveisDiversity LGBT+ youth volunteer group, 3. Beautiful Life Organisation, 4. Micro Rainbow International Foundation, 5. Klahaan Organization, 6. Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC), 7. Cambodian Center for Human Rights, 8. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC), 9. Women Peace Makers, 10. SILAKA Cambodia.

beautiful common value and hope that in the near future, our fingerprints will be stamped on a marriage certificate in accordance with the same law. Recognizing the equality of our marriage and family, under the highest leadership of our Government, will enable us to demonstrate our commitment to each other and protecting essential rights and protections for our families guaranteed by law, in addition to giving our hearts to each other and having a wedding ceremony according to traditional Khmer customs. Marriage certificates are very valuable, showing respect and trust in each other in a partnership where we are committed to holding hands and living together until our old age, with kindness, loving and nurturing, and protecting us forever, while receiving blessings, happiness, and witnessing one of the most meaningful days of our lives."

"We have been in love with each other and living together as a family for over 20 years, and we have two children together. Our family lives together in harmony, working hard to build a better future, sharing joys and sorrows, taking care of each other and our beloved children and providing for their education. Family means a lot to us, and for us as parents we try our best for our children to have a good future. We love our children with all our hearts, they are the precious love of our life. We dream that our family could be fully accepted and recognized, with an equal marriage law and marriage certificate to protect us, especially protecting our children, and most importantly we want to be named as parents on our children's birth certificates and have a family book that recognizes our family as one." - Bun Kim and Sopheak, LGBT+ couple from Kampot Province.

"As their parents, we only raised and nurtured them to grow up, but their minds, what they like and who they love are their lives and their own decisions. We cannot raise them for the rest of their lives. When they are adult who could have a partner, even if their partner are of the same-sex, there is no problem as long as they love each other. If their hearts are in love, it is a sin to separate them. My children are living together as a family, they share role and responsibility, support each other, and they are both happy. Every day, seeing our children happy and content like this makes us feel incomparable joy and excitement as parents. We also wish that our children could sign a marriage certificate together to also bring honor to our family." - San Moeun and Yi Saren, parents of an LGBT+ person from Oddar Meanchey Province.

The Cambodian LGBT+ community together with all stakeholders will also work together to continue making progress, including celebrating two important annual events: Pride Month along with the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia, and Intersex Discrimination (IDAHOBIT) in May and International Human Rights Day (IHRD) in December. These events create opportunities for members of the Cambodian LGBT+ community from across 25 provinces and city to come together, discuss, share important situations and experiences, and engage in dialogue with local authorities, ministries and national institutions of the Royal Government of Cambodia, and other relevant stakeholders about progress, challenges, and ongoing collaboration to address and respond to the priority needs of the LGBT+ community. Meanwhile, public events including concerts and various artistic performances, as well as various sports competitions, will also be organized to celebrate Pride, continue raising awareness and promoting public support for the LGBT+ community in Cambodia more broadly. These events will continue demonstrating that Cambodian society respects human values, compassion, tolerance, solidarity, inclusion, and harmony.

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