

DEALING WITH THE KHMER ROUGE HISTORY: RESILIENCE, INITIATIVES & MECHANISMS, AND CHALLENGES

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Key Questions

- Why do we need to confront the past?
- Why is it relevant to young people?
- What do we need to deal with the past?
- What did Cambodia do to come to terms with the past?
- What can we learn from a comparison?

KWL Chart Exercise

- What do you know about dealing with the past in Cambodia?

Khmer Rouge Atrocity

- ⦿ Communist Ideology, self-reliance, hatred, intolerance, class struggle
- ⦿ Evacuation, collectivization, separation, indoctrination, forced labor, starvation, purge, and execution
- ⦿ Mass killings and genocide (putting about 2 million to death)
- ⦿ Mental and physical scars, breakdown of social fabric, devastation of infrastructure

Children's Unit



Source: DC-Cam Archives

Why we remember and deal with the past?

- The KR atrocity took place after the Nazi crimes or the Holocaust
- From a failure to prevent to prevention
- For truth, peace and justice
- Healing and reconciliation--moving forward

Adolf Hitler and His Men



https://www.google.com/search?q=The+Nazi+Regime&rlz=1C1CHBF_enKH768KH768&sxsrf=ACYBGNR0HvdJVgepGp4x0-YB6rgRW2cZZO_1578905660449&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUkEwiKkZn4mYDnAhXFm0KHtYqBp4Q_AUoAXoFCBMQAw&biw=1920&bih=969#imgdii=U20_XvHy4FV8hM.&imgcr=8Z0cuTIGUlyHPM

Khmer Rouge Leaders



Source: DC-Cam Archives

Human Resilience

- High resilience, despite devastating loss, suffering, and ongoing civil war
- People were able to stand up to deal with trauma more quickly--restoring life, community and the country
- For women, despite being single mothers and widows, they nurtured their children, made a living, and joined the state to protect their community

Women in the 1980s



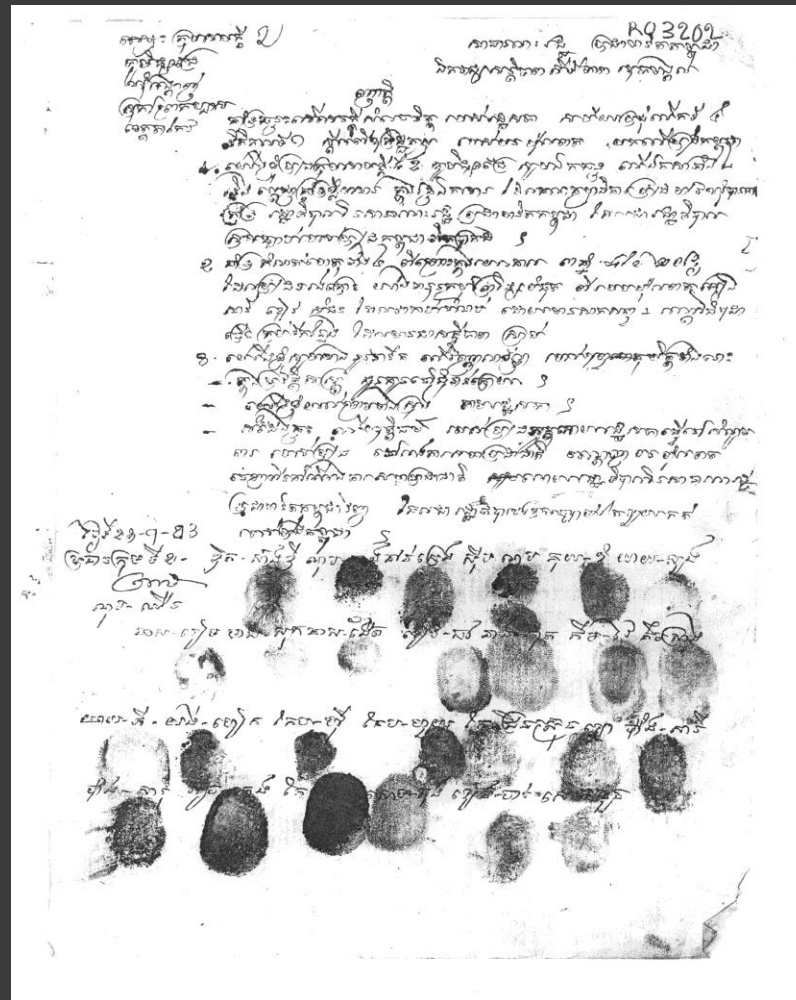
Source: DC-Cam Archives

State and non-state Initiatives/Mechanisms—A multi-dimensional approach

- Justice seeking—People's Revolutionary Tribunal (1979)



Truth seeking—Petitions, truth-telling (1982-1983 till present)



Democratization (election 1993)



Reintegration and giving chances for former KR cadres to speak out and make good living (1996-1998 till present)



Religious-led activities—forgiveness, healing (Buddhism, Islam and Christianity)



Public events and commemoration: mainly 7 January and May 20 (1980, 1984-present)



Source: DC-Cam Archives

Education/Teaching about the Past—Engaging young people (2009-present)



Source: DC-Cam Archives

Criminal Prosecution (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia) (2006-present)



Source: DC-Cam Archives

Acknowledgement of victims (judicial and non-judicial reparation projects), recognition of suffering, victim participation, oral history, public forum (1980s-present)



Source: DC-Cam Archives

Study tours to the killing fields/former Khmer Rouge stronghold areas (2006-present)

Empathy and Humanity



Peace and Human Rights Tour to Anlong Veng, 2018

Source: DC-Cam Archives

Challenges

- The past is just the past
- How to deal with former Khmer Rouge cadre/perpetrators—lower and middle?
- How is dealing with the past shaped by today's situation?
- Need continued effort and other forms of justice

Works consulted

- Reconciliation Process in Cambodia (1979-2007) before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal
- A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)
- The Hijab of Cambodia: Memories of Cham Muslim Women after the Khmer Rouge
- <http://d.dccam.org/Projects/AVPC/avpc.htm><http://d.dccam.org/>
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