

THE SLEUK RITH INSTITUTE

Building a Permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

WE MUST REMEMBER & HEAL



THE SLEUK RITH INSTITUTE

A Permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia

Helping Cambodians remember, heal, and build a brighter future after the legacy of the Khmer Rouge.



The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) is an independent Cambodian research institute. Since 1997, we have built a reputation as an international leader in the quest for **memory** and **justice**. By documenting and sharing the history of the Khmer Rouge period, we aim to help Cambodians heal the wounds of the past. By aiding accountability efforts and teaching principles of law and justice, we seek to contribute to a stronger rule of law and prevent human rights abuses in the future.

To ensure that we can play a similar role for many years to come, we are preparing to establish the **Sleuk Rith Institute**. The name of our Institute reflects our core objectives, as well as our Cambodian heritage. Sleuk rith are dried leaves that Cambodian religious leaders and scholars have used for centuries to document history, disseminate knowledge, and preserve culture during periods of harsh rule. They represent the beauty of knowledge and the power of human perseverance during times of peril. The Sleuk Rith Institute will represent a permanent stand against genocide, in Cambodia and throughout the world.



OUR WORK TO DATE

Since our inception, DC-Cam has been at the forefront of documenting the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge era and teaching the public about that fateful era. From 1995 to 1997, we were a field office for Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program with U.S. State Department funding. In 1997, we became an independent NGO, securing funds from a range of government sources in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Japan. Highlights of our work include:

DOCUMENTING KHMER ROUGE ABUSES by accumulating nearly one million pages of documents and maintaining the world's most extensive databases on Khmer Rouge history with Yale's Cambodian Genocide Program.

PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY by providing documents and other information to the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, including our interview transcripts from thousands of former Khmer Rouge cadres and their family members.

PROVIDING GENOCIDE EDUCATION by publishing Cambodia's first-ever textbook on Khmer Rouge history, leading the design of a national genocide studies curriculum with the Ministry of Education, and training thousands of teachers throughout the country to educate secondary school pupils about genocide.

TEACHING HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES by hosting legal training courses and seminars and producing educational materials used by Cambodian universities and other NGOs on topics including international criminal law, basic human rights, criminal procedure, and the rights of defendants.



PRODUCING SCHOLARSHIP by publishing scholarly books in Khmer and English on issues related to the Cambodian genocide, ten of which were written by DC-Cam staff members.

KEEPING THE PUBLIC INFORMED by producing various documentaries, a monthly magazine, *Searching for the Truth*, and a popular radio show that educate the public about issues related to the Khmer Rouge tragedy.

GIVING A VOICE TO VICTIMS by collecting oral histories and helping thousands of survivors participate in the Khmer Rouge Tribunal as observers or as formal complainants, witnesses, and civil parties.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF ABUSE by meeting with victims of torture, providing informal counsel, and referring them to qualified health professionals for diagnosis and treatment.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

As Cambodia emerges from its tragic past, the Documentation Center of Cambodia must find new ways to help the nation and its people remember, heal and seek justice.



THE SLEUK RITH INSTITUTE

The Sleuk Rith Institute will be a permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia. The Institute will be built around three key pillars:

A MUSEUM that will cherish the memory of lost loved ones, foster reconciliation, and show the power of Cambodian culture to survive and overcome the dark legacy of Khmer Rouge terror.

A RESEARCH CENTER that will continue our work in compiling, organizing, analyzing, and preserving information about the Pol Pot era and other periods of grave human suffering. Scholarly research at the Institute will promote accountability and encourage a greater understanding of the history of Cambodia and other areas torn by conflict and

tragedy. This research center will be connected to a media center where we will disseminate books, magazines, radio shows, and other sources of knowledge for the public. Our media outputs will seek to contribute to a more robust and democratic dialogue among Cambodians and others about the requirement for a just society.

A SCHOOL that will train Cambodians and international visitors about the lessons of the past and the principles of law and human rights needed to build a more promising future. With a state-of-the-art library, we will create a setting that encourages students and researchers to reflect and learn effectively.

A GENOCIDE MUSEUM

The first pillar of our Institute will be a museum. The museum will provide a tranquil and contemplative environment where survivors and visitors can reflect, learn and heal. Part of the museum will also be housed in the former Beoung Trabek High School, which once served as a prison and interrogation center under the Khmer Rouge regime.

The museum will display a variety of exhibits, including photographs, selected documents, and films. A permanent exhibit, entitled “April 17,” will chronicle the day in 1975 when Khmer Rouge forces took power in Phnom Penh. Space will also be available for traveling exhibitions relating to other cases of mass human suffering. Our exhibits are already renowned and have been shown around the world. In addition to our local partnership with the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, we have shown exhibits in Denmark, The Netherlands, and the United States. We also wish to have an area dedicated to “the Memory of Our Nation,” where visitors can go to honor the victims.

Our staff members—several of whom have trained at leading genocide museums including the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam—will provide tours and periodic lectures to visitors in the exhibit hall and an adjacent conference facility.



A RESEARCH CENTER

Knowledge and education are the key to Cambodia's future. To promote learning about history, human rights, and related issues, the Sleuk Rith Institute will also serve as a research center with a media center, through which we will distribute educational materials to a much wider public audience.

A Hub for Genocide Research - DC-Cam has been a critical resource for much of the leading work on the Khmer Rouge history since our inception, hosting up to 200 research visitors per year. In the future, we intend to develop a more formal program of local and international visiting fellows to complement our existing staff of Cambodian experts. In 2007, the International Association of Genocide Scholars singled us out for excellence, noting that we are the only center of our kind in Asia and encouraging us to expand our research agenda. We aim to be the leading research center on genocide in Asia.

A Media Center - Only by disseminating the truth widely can we help Cambodians heal and move toward a brighter future. We plan for our media center to become the source of a wide range of educational materials for the public. We already have a majority ownership stake in a printing press (the JSRC Press) located beside our new plot of land. We intend to take full ownership of the press and publish our existing monthly magazine and scholarly books, as well as an expanded repertoire of academic monographs and works for the public. We also intend to launch a major new newspaper in English that is geared to Asian audiences and that deals with issues of justice and human rights.

A SCHOOL

The third key component of the Institute will be a school. Cambodian and international high school and university students will be able to take courses on Khmer Rouge history, genocide studies, and human rights. The school will also contain a library and offices for students and scholars.

An Academic Program - We are working with local and international experts in law, anthropology, political science, and other fields to design a new curriculum for genocide studies and human rights in Cambodia. We have strong ties to numerous universities, such as the Royal University of Phnom Penh; the Faculties of Law, History, Anthropology, Archeology, and Foreign Language; and international universities such as Yale, Harvard, Rutgers, Michigan, Hong Kong, Concordia, and Coventry.

A State-of-the-Art Library - A multi-level library will provide students and researchers space for study and research. The library will have desks and computer stations for researchers, audio/visual rooms, and a helpful staff of experts to direct researchers to appropriate materials. We will also have a documentary storage area for our many sensitive and aging documentary materials.





Photo credits: Chy Terith, Eng Kok-Thay (cover), Mam Kalyanee and Phat Piseth.
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A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of several palm-leaf manuscripts. The leaves are arranged vertically, with the central one in sharp focus. The Khmer script is inscribed on the surface of the leaves, appearing as dark, slightly raised lines. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown, suggesting a stack of more manuscripts or a similar textured surface.

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA
INDEPENDENTLY SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH SINCE 1997

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT:

P.O. Box 1110 | 66 Preah Sihanouk Boulevard, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

t: +855 23 211 875 | f: +855 23 210 358

e: dccam@online.com.kh | w: www.dccam.org | www.cambodiatribunal.org