Working Paper

‘Duty Not to Forget’ the Past?

Perceptions of Young Cambodians on the Memorialization of the Khmer Rouge Regime

Cambodia Working Paper Series

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Abstract

Memorialization is an often neglected part of the transitional justice process, where there is a missed opportunity to link the violence in the past with prevention and non-recurrence of violence in the present. The inclusion and participation of youth – as a stakeholder and beneficiary – is critical in such efforts. Little however was done and known about how to meaningfully include youth – young people who were born after the Khmer Rouge regime and did not have any personal experience during the regime—in dealing with the past in the post-conflict society of Cambodia. This paper presents the results of a survey conducted in April 2019 with 220 Cambodian students from various universities with variety of majors and of a focus group discussion about their perceptions of the memorialization process and its role in dealing with the past. It highlights the interests of young Cambodian people in learning more about the Khmer Rouge history and in engaging in the dealing with the past process through memorialization process. It also explores the educational effects of memorialization process and initiatives on the building of never again mentality and fostering meaningful dialogue among young people. Such process will then serve as cornerstone to streamline young generation's interest and understanding of history to attain long-term social changes and sustained peace in Cambodia.

Keywords: youth, memorialization, prevention, non-recurrence, transitional justice, Cambodia.

Imprint

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List of Acronyms

CBS	Center for Banking Studies
DC-Cam	Documentation Center of Cambodia
DK	Democratic Kampuchea
ECCC	Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KR	Khmer Rouge
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
RUFA	Royal University of Fine Arts
RUPP	Royal University of Phnom Penh
TJ	Transitional Justice
UN	United Nations

Foreword to the Working Paper Series on Cambodia

Julie Bernath and Ratana Ly, editors of the Cambodia series

The year 2019 was an important milestone for transitional justice in Cambodia. It marks both 40 years after the end of the Khmer Rouge regime in early 1979, and 15 years after the establishment in 2004 of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), also known as the Khmer Rouge tribunal.

On this occasion, this Working Paper series brings together a collection of papers by Cambodian early career researchers to reflect upon the transitional justice process in Cambodia. It is the result of a one-year publication project of the Center for the Study of Humanitarian Law at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and swisspeace, supported by the Embassy of Switzerland in Thailand. This series aims to give more visibility to Cambodian researchers in academic writings on transitional justice. As such, it is an attempt at working against the problematic politics of knowledge production that exist in the field of transitional justice. Although transitional justice scholarship has increasingly questioned the marginalization of local voices and perspectives when it comes to policy-making and practices of transitional justice, researchers from contexts in the Global South in which transitional justice processes take place still have less visibility in, and access to, academic debates on transitional justice in comparison to their peers from the Global North.

This set of papers highlights the important achievements made in pursuing justice, accountability and reconciliation in Cambodia. It also illustrates the vast experiences that Cambodian practitioners and researchers alike have gained in the transitional justice field in the last decade and more. At the same time, the papers reflect the ways in which transitional justice inherently constitutes a long-term process. Fifteen years after the establishment of the Khmer Rouge tribunal, the authors discuss the many challenges that remain in order for the transitional justice process to truly unfold its emancipatory and transformative aspirations.

Taken together, this collection of papers speaks to key issues that, beyond the case study of Cambodia, have become central in transitional justice scholarship ever since it has taken a critical turn. The papers identify the difficulties for transitional justice processes to contribute to long-term socio-political change, at the structural level, in order to guarantee the non-recurrence of human rights violations. They highlight the need to attend to the specific socio-political contexts in which transitional justice processes unfold. The papers also point to the selectivity of formal, state-sanctioned transitional justice processes, which contrast with continuities of violence and discrimination across time that parts of the population may experience, for instance women. They shed light on the diversity of actors involved in transitional justice processes, which cannot neatly be captured by a binary distinction of international versus local, and which include not only state actors or legal professionals, but also civil society actors or donors.

Transitional Justice in Cambodia: Fifteen Years After the Establishment of the ECCC

The Khmer Rouge regime was arguably the most totalitarian of the 20th century (Bruneteau 1999). Between April 17, 1975 and January 6, 1979, the Communist Party of Kampuchea, known as the Khmer Rouge, held power over the national territory. The Khmer Rouge aimed at creating a new people and a communist agrarian utopia within the timeframe of a single generation, in a surpassing of Mao Tse Tung's policies in communist China (Ibid). Under the rule of the Khmer Rouge, an estimated 1.5 to 2.2 million people died from starvation, torture, execution, forced labour and malnutrition — at least one in five of the 1975 population (Kiernan 2003).

Given the geopolitical context of the Cold War, the involvement of foreign countries in the conflicts in Cambodia and the political interests of the regimes succeeding the Khmer Rouge, it was only in 1997 that negotiations started between the United Nations and the Royal Government of Cambodia regarding accountability for crimes committed under the Khmer Rouge regime. After protracted negotiations, the ECCC was established in 2004 with the mandate of trying the senior leaders and those most responsible for crimes committed between April 17, 1975 and January 6, 1979 in Cambodia.

Ever since its establishment, the ECCC has attracted a lot of international attention from researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. It displays unique features as a transitional justice process. First, it is a hybrid tribunal or mixed tribunal, i.e. a court of mixed staff, which applies international and Cambodian law. While several hybrid tribunals were established elsewhere, the ECCC arguably represents the most national of all (Petit 2010, 195). Second, although the scope and form of victim participation has been significantly reshaped over time at the ECCC, it grants victims the right to formally participate as parties –a first in the history of international criminal justice (Ciorciari and Heindel 2014). Victims can indeed participate at the ECCC not only as witnesses or complainants, but also as civil parties. Finally, the ECCC's mandate also includes the provision of moral and collective reparations. While the exclusion of individual and financial reparations led to frustrations from civil parties (see e.g. Williams et al. 2018, 109-120), the ECCC's provisions on reparations significantly expanded over time to include non-judicial measures developed and implemented by the ECCC's Victims Support Section with governmental and non-governmental partners.

At the time of writing, three accused persons have been tried and sentenced in separate legal proceedings at the ECCC. In Case 001, the Supreme Court Chamber sentenced Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch, the former deputy and chairman of the security centre S-21, to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity, grave violations of the Geneva Convention, murder and torture (see Soy 2016). Case 002 consists of charges against former senior Khmer Rouge leaders. In light of its complexity and the advanced age of the accused, the Case was split in two to expedite the trial proceedings. The first portion of the trial, Case 002/01, focused on a set of crimes committed during the early stages of the Khmer Rouge regime: forced transfers of the population and the

execution of soldiers of the regime preceding the Khmer Rouge. This Case was completed in November 2016, however two of the accused died prior to its completion: the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ieng Sary, and the former Minister of Social Affairs, Ieng Thirith. Case 002/02 examines far-ranging charges related to key policies of the Khmer Rouge, including forced labour, security centres, forced marriages and treatment of minorities. The Trial Chamber judgment handed in November 2018 is currently under appeal. One of the two remaining accused, Nuon Chea, died in August 2019 at the age of 93 before the pronouncement of the Supreme Court Chamber judgment (see Kum 2019). The former Head of State of the Khmer Rouge regime Khieu Samphan, born in 1931, is the only accused in Case 002 now still alive.

Four suspects have additionally been indicted in Cases 003 and 004. However, the national and international side of the ECCC mostly disagreed on whether these cases should move to trial, with the national side arguing that the accused do not fall under the category of 'most responsible' of the ECCC's mandate (see e.g. Naidu 2018). Since the Cambodian ruling party has repeatedly voiced their opposition to these cases (Ciorciari & Heindel 2014, 177), they have become the focus of allegations of political interference (see e.g. OSJI 2010).

Besides the ECCC, civil society actors have significantly shaped the transitional justice process in Cambodia. Their work has been complementary to the ECCC, in particular when it came to victim participation, legal services, psychosocial support and outreach, as civil society organisations provided many key services for the ECCC due to the tribunal's limited funding or mandate in this field (Ryan and McGrew 2016; Sperfeldt 2012). Civil society organisations have also been key in designing and implementing reparations and non-judicial measures. Over time, many creative and artistic initiatives have emerged. NGOs were able to make use of the attention of the international donor community on transitional justice in Cambodia that arose with the establishment of the ECCC (Un 2013), although they have now for the past few years faced significant 'donor fatigue' (Sperfeldt 2012).

The establishment of the ECCC thus initiated a diverse process of transitional justice in Cambodia focusing on the Khmer Rouge regime. This process is also characterized by a significant transnational circulation of practices, since the ECCC was established in a time during which transitional justice had become institutionalized and professionalized as a field of policy-making, research and practice (see e.g. Sharp 2013; Rubli 2012). Several cohorts of international practitioners sojourned in Cambodia, including not only international criminal justice professionals – some of whom Kent (2013) described as 'tribunal hoppers', given their high mobility across internationalized tribunals – but also practitioners from the fields of civilian peacebuilding, media, arts and memory work.

Today, a rich and increasingly diverse body of scholarship also exists on transitional justice in Cambodia, with works from various disciplinary perspectives. This includes not only the dominant field of law (e.g. Werner and Rudy 2010; McGonigle 2009) but also socio-legal studies (e.g. Killean 2018; Ly

2017; Manning 2012), political science (e.g. Path 2017; McCargo 2015), anthropology (e.g. Hinton 2014; Kent 2013), geography (Sirik 2016; Hughes 2015), psychiatry (Chhim 2014) or history (Gidley 2019). As elsewhere in the field of transitional justice, this scholarship is also characterized by numerous publications of authors who have themselves been closely involved in the transitional justice process in various functions (e.g. Jarvis 2014, Lemonde 2013, Studzinsky 2011, Mohan 2009).

Ever since the establishment of the ECCC, the literature has discussed its relevance as a transitional justice institution. Some analysts highlighted that the tribunal was important and better than none (see e.g. OSJI 2006). Others argued that given the political context, and most importantly the political control of the national judiciary in Cambodia, a hybrid tribunal would only lead to a flawed accountability process (see e.g. Human Rights Watch 2014). The ECCC's extremely limited temporal scope has also been subject to much discussion. The tribunal's mandate only focuses on the Khmer Rouge regime, although this period is embedded in decades of political violence, war and authoritarian rule. Civil society organisations, while complementing the ECCC's limitations in diverse ways, arguably reproduced to an important extent the focus on the Khmer Rouge period in their transitional justice work.

Today, given current political developments in Cambodia, reflecting upon the transitional justice process and its long-term, transformative potential is of particular relevance. With the dissolution of Cambodia's main political opposition party in 2017 and its exclusion from the 2018 election (see e.g. KOFF 2018), the country has moved further away from its scheduled trajectory towards democracy. In an increasingly authoritarian context, civil society organisations, journalists but also researchers working on human rights advocacy face significant difficulties to conduct their work in an independent manner, free from political pressure. Debates over the impact of international interventions in Cambodia have thus re-emerged, most notably over the UN peacebuilding mission of 1992-93. But the political situation in contemporary Cambodia also raises questions regarding the legacies of the ECCC and the transitional justice process.

Overview on the Collection of Working Papers on Cambodia

This collection of papers contributes to these discussions. It brings together the perspectives of eight authors with various disciplinary backgrounds, including law, social sciences, development studies and international affairs. Many of these authors also draw from their previous experiences and insights as practitioners in Cambodia's transitional justice process.

A first group of authors discusses how far the transitional justice process has gone in Cambodia, and what has been achieved in terms of the goals initially set for this process.

In their paper, Kimsan Soy and Vandanet Hing examine how the ECCC has contributed to improving fair trial rights in the national judiciary. One of the main hopes associated with hybrid tribunals has been that these tribunals would contribute to strengthening the national judiciary, as they are set in the country where the crimes have taken place and employ national staff. This was also one of the strong aspirations shared by actors involved in the establishment of the ECCC. Fifteen years later, Soy and Hing ask how defense counsels and experiences of legal representation at the ECCC have contributed to developments in the national justice system. Drawing from qualitative interviews conducted with Cambodian legal professionals, they argue that although the ECCC clearly demonstrates international fair trial standards, in particular the right to effective legal representation, the greatest challenge standing in the way of positive legacies for the domestic judicial system remains political control of the judiciary.

In her paper, Sotheary You also reflects on the impact of transitional justice on contemporary Cambodia, but with a focus on sexual and gender-based violence against women. In order to do so, she draws from the concept of guarantees of non-recurrence and from feminist scholarship on gender justice. You discusses how the ECCC has addressed sexual and gender-based violence so far, in the legal proceedings and in the reparations projects endorsed by the ECCC. She also examines measures taken by the Cambodian government to address the non-recurrence of sexual and gender-based violence. She argues that in light of the ongoing discrimination against women in Cambodia, the transitional justice process has failed to effectively address the issue. She proposes policy recommendations and the adoption of a comprehensive approach, beyond the remit of the ECCC, to ensure the non-recurrence of sexual and gender-based violence against women.

In his paper, Sovann Mam reflects on to what degree reconciliation has been achieved in Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge regime. Drawing from qualitative interviews conducted in Anlong Veng, the former Khmer Rouge stronghold in the North-West of Cambodia, he argues that reconciliation is still missing at the community level. Mam thereby questions the prevalent political narrative in Cambodia that reconciliation has been fully achieved since the end of the 1990s. He shows that while the policies of the Cambodian government in the 1990s secured stability and negative peace, they also delayed the quest for justice and the establishment of the ECCC. Based on his field research in Anlong Veng and interviews with civil society actors working on reconciliation, Mam suggests that more attention should be paid to facilitating processes of acknowledgment and empathy between victims and perpetrators.

In addition to these three papers reflecting on the achievements and limitations of the transitional justice process in Cambodia, the second group of authors focuses on the roles and views of various actors.

In her paper, Samphoas Huy reflects upon the role of intermediary organisations in facilitating, implementing and shaping victim participation at the ECCC. She conceptualizes the role of Cambodian civil society organisations as 'vernacularizers', or actors intimately involved in the translation of international transitional justice norms into the Cambodian context. She analyses this process of vernacularization in various, rich examples of outreach

and inreach that have taken place around the ECCC over the past years. Huy argues that through this process of translation and appropriation, which similarly to previous human rights work in Cambodia significantly draws upon Buddhist understandings, local actors created a transnational space that allowed for meaningful victim participation. But her paper also shows that this process was not without creating 'frictions': actors involved faced challenges in translation but also difficulties related to questions of representation, agency and voice in victim participation.

In her paper, Somaly Kum focuses on donors – a group of actors that is not researched enough in the field of transitional justice, although being key in shaping transitional justice interventions. She provides an overview of the various types of donors that have been funding transitional justice in Cambodia – state donors; non-state donors; multilateral donors. She asks what their role has been in shaping the transitional justice process, both directly and indirectly, through funding the ECCC and civil society projects. Kum draws from qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with current and former donor representatives, as well as transitional justice practitioners. She discusses how donors reflect upon their roles and societal impact 15 years after the establishment of the ECCC, and shows that one of the main motivations mentioned by her respondents for funding transitional justice, besides contributing to justice and accountability, was to contribute to the rule of law and capacity building.

Finally, Boravin Tann and Khuochsopheaktra Tim discuss the perspectives of an important segment of the Cambodian population: the younger generations born after the Khmer Rouge regime. Although representing the majority of the population today, this group has been rather sidelined in transitional justice discussions in comparison to the elder generations of direct victims. Drawing from rich empirical data, including a recent quantitative survey and focus group discussion, Tann and Tim describe how their respondents, keen to learn more about the Khmer Rouge past, deplored the limitations of information on this matter. They analyse how they view the memorialization processes on the Khmer Rouge regime. They also discuss the existing scope for youth participation in Cambodia's transitional justice process and the intersections between memorialization, the ECCC and the non-recurrence of human rights violations.

Taken together, these papers show avenues for further research and initiatives on transitional justice in Cambodia, from the perspective of Cambodian authors. They also illustrate the relevance of the Cambodian case study for the broader field of transitional justice today. Fifteen years after the establishment of the ECCC, these papers examine from various academic perspectives whether, how and to what extent the transitional justice endeavors in Cambodia have created change. They thereby speak to questions of agency, power and representation that are at the core of critical transitional justice scholarship, and to the long-term emancipatory and transformative aspirations that continue to shape the field.

1 Introduction

Children of survivors and of victims are also victims of the violence committed against their parents or guardians and are therefore key stakeholders in the transitional justice processes (Ramìrez-Barat, 2012: 3). Transitional Justice (TJ) refers to a series of policies and measures implemented in a post-conflict society which include criminal prosecution, truth-telling, memorialization, reparations and institutional reform (ICTJ, 2019). The inclusion of youth in TJ processes and the study thereof is an opportunity to engage younger generations to recognize human needs for justice as a prerequisite for peace and to motivate them to care about human rights in order to prevent future conflict (Scarlett, 2009: 172). More importantly, it serves to try to ensure that conflict or violence does not happen again or to build the 'never again' mentality (Guadelli and Fernekes, 2004; Totten, 2001) as well as to break the cycle of violence and end a culture of impunity, which the youth could have inherited from society (Impunity Watch, 2013: 13).

Remembering the past through memorialization aims not only to address the past but also to foster forward-looking approaches to enable long-term social changes through the guarantee of non-recurrence of violence to ensure a better future for younger generations (Buckley-Zistel and Schäfer, 2014: 5; Impunity Watch, 2013). Memorialization through education of younger generations therefore needs to take place alongside or after the judicial process of TJ. In this paper, we refer to memorialization as a 'deliberate action to preserve the memory of a violent past, rather than ad hoc, spontaneous acts of memorialization that emerge after violence' (Impunity Watch, 2013: 3). It encompasses various official processes and forms of collective remembrance which are fundamental for society to recover from trauma and atrocity (Hamber et al. 2010: 398).

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the collapse of Democratic Kampuchea (DK), in which approximately two million people died of starvation, diseases, malnutrition, and execution between 17 April 1975 and 6 January 1979 (Chandler, 2008: 355). Cambodia is still dealing with its violent past today despite the establishment of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC). The ECCC, a hybrid ad hoc tribunal, was established in 2004 after a lengthy negotiation between the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the United Nations (UN) to bring the top leaders and the ones most responsible for the crimes committed during DK to justice. Numerous memorial initiatives and projects were and are being implemented by various TJ actors in Cambodia to commemorate the Khmer Rouge (KR) regime, ranging from state-sanctioned memorial initiatives, ECCC reparation projects and broader civil societal projects in building a collective and official memory of the KR regime. Most, if not all, of these memory initiatives are designed to include, and are dedicated to, direct conflict actors, such as victims, survivors and perpetrators of the KR regime.

Almost two-thirds of the Cambodian population are under the age of 30 and more than 30 percent are between 15 and 30 years old (UNFPA, 2015). This group did not live through the KR regime and either has not heard about it or has only heard from their older family members and through studying (Impunity Watch 2015: 6). TJ actors, researchers and practitioners alike often

assume that Cambodian youth are not interested in the past or even do not believe that the KR regime happened (McCaffrie et al. 2018: 1). In this paper, 'youth' refers to young people who were born after the DK regime and did not have any personal experience during the regime. After the establishment of the ECCC, young people – agents of change and upstanders for the future of a non-violent society – have been increasingly included in the education and outreach programs of the ECCC and civil societies. However, they have not been an integral actor in the TJ process and their voices are often overlooked (McCaffrie et al. 2018: 1). The lack of integration of youth into TJ so far renders the participation of youth and the effects thereof, in terms of an open discussion on truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence, limited. This further presents a missing linkage in the efforts to link the past with the present in prevention and non-recurrence mechanisms, to building a 'Never Again' mentality and to end a culture of impunity (Miller, Latham and Cahill 2016: 6; Tunamsifu 2018: 42).

This paper is divided into three main parts. The first part presents an overview of memorialization initiatives in Cambodia. The second section discusses our findings on the awareness and perceptions of young Cambodians on the KR past. The third section explores the insights of youth on memorialization processes and effects on non-recurrence followed by the link of memorialization with education effects in Cambodia by examining the roles of relevant stakeholders and how they perceived their roles and engagement in those processes.

2 Methodology

Cambodia is an interesting case study for TJ, not only with regards to the pillar of criminal justice procedures, but also the pillar of reparations in terms of memorial initiatives which aim to address long-term and broader social changes in Cambodia. The purpose of memorialization through education of younger generations is clearly advocated by various TJ actors, but exactly what and how they can contribute is seldomly expressed and explored. So far there have been few studies on broader societal effects of memorialization on the pillar of guarantee of non-recurrence. Notably, most studies were conducted with a focus on the experiences and perceptions of the KR victims on memorial initiatives or specifically highlight certain memorial sites (see e.g. Hughes, 2006; Tyner et al. 2012; Tyner et al. 2014; Brown and Millington, 2015; Henkin, 2018). The academic scholarship on TJ in Cambodia did not give enough attention to the perception of the second and third generations to whom the memorialization was supposed to provide benefits. Existing research on this issue also dates back to the early stages of the ECCC's proceeding and memorial initiatives (see Münyas, 2008; Chandler, 2008; Chhim, 2012).

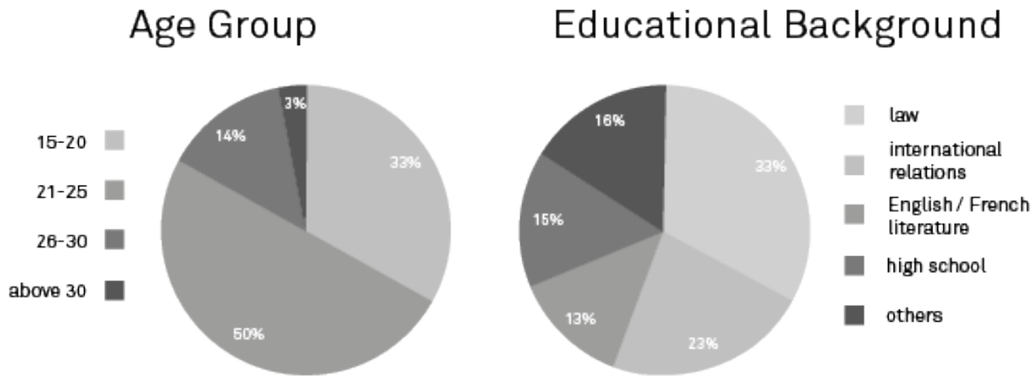
McCaffrie et al. (2018) conducted empirical research with 83 Cambodian young people and 16 professionals and found that their respondents ranked the educational legacy of the ECCC higher than judicial, psychological or capacity-building legacies. However, the study did not address the link between the educational effects of the ECCC and guarantees of non-recurrence of mass violence. It also did not assess the impacts of the work of other relevant actors, i.e. state and civil society, in contributing to education through memorial initiatives for the younger generation of Cambodia. To fill the gaps, our study built on abovementioned studies that have dealt with young Cambodians' perception of memorialization and dealing with the past (see e.g. Münyas, 2008; Chandler, 2008; Chhim 2012; McCaffrie et al. 2018) and studies in other contexts on the inclusion of youth in TJ processes for an insight on lesson-learned and best practices (see e.g. Ramìrez-Barat, 2012; Tunamsifu, 2018).

In order to gain insights into the issues from different angles, our study was conducted using a mixed methods approach. This approach offers a systematic result and produces nuances of the conceptual and empirical understanding of the topic. The target group of this study was Cambodian youth, those who were born after the DK regime. As such, a standardized survey of 220 Cambodian students (120 female and 100 male) in Phnom Penh and Takhmao, Kandal province was conducted in early April 2019. The sample group included high school students (grades 9 to 12), university students (bachelor and master's degree), and recently employed graduates. The survey is based on a random and convenience sampling strategy of those who were born after the DK regime and with access to education or higher education in Phnom Penh, nearby area or abroad. The selection was then drawn randomly from each academic institution in Phnom Penh and Takhmao town. This group was purposely selected based on two rationales. First, the group was selected for their privileged status among the youth population in Phnom Penh and nearby areas which has access to education or higher education and sources of information. As such, their choice of interest in learning about the past and perception of the genocide education may assume a specific meaning in

comparison to those with limited access to education and information. Second, it was based on the geographical accessibility of the target group as most universities are in Phnom Penh.

The demography of the respondents was relatively diverse in terms of their age group, university or school and study majors. The age of the respondents varied from 15 to 38 years old with different educational backgrounds, as categorized in the figure below.

Figure 1: Age and educational background of respondents



Furthermore, a focus group discussion (FGD) with a group of five university students (two males and three females) aged 18 to 21 years old was categorically selected based on their universities and majors. The FGD was conducted in Phnom Penh in late April 2019 in order to gain insights into their perceptions of the issues.[1] On the basis of structural analysis and systematic comparison of the quantitative and qualitative data, this research offers insights into the perception of youth of dealing with the past through memorial projects and initiatives and the perceived scope and nature of Cambodian youth participation in memorialization processes and its effect on TJ processes in Cambodia.

Since this is not a population-based study, this paper does not aim to be representative of the youth population in Cambodia on this matter. Instead it offers a critical perspective via the lens of the youth on dealing with the KR past through various memorialization initiative projects which have been and are being implemented. This research also neither aims to answer the question of how memorialization contributes or advances TJ processes in

1 The FGD was conducted in Khmer and all quotes were translated into English by the authors.

Cambodia nor to discuss the effects of memory politics on memorialization processes. Due to time and logistical constraints, this study is by no means exhaustive; further study is necessary to investigate each respective issue in detail. This research is an entry point for further research on the issue and assistance for decision-making and policy formulation to accommodate the needs of younger generations to foster a meaningful and inclusive participation in memorialization initiatives.

3 Memorialization Initiatives in Cambodia

The initiatives to memorialize the KR regime have gone through several phases. David Chandler (2008) highlighted the dealing with the past effort in Cambodia in terms of two phases: 1980s and 1990s. Right after the overthrow of DK in 1979, the new government took over the capital under the name 'People's Republic of Kampuchea' (PRK) with the support of Vietnamese troops. The PRK took the immediate approach to 'demonize' the atrocities committed by the former regime by commemorating: 'the large, central, national-level memorial, and the smaller, local memorial' (Chandler, 2008: 360; Hughes, 2005: 269). The earliest effort was to convert the infamous Security Center 21 (S-21), one among 196 prisons nationwide, into a Museum of Genocidal Crimes (DC-Cam, 2011; Chandler, 2000). This was followed by the discovery of cooperative branch of S-21, Choeung Ek, which was also turned into a place of memory known as the killing fields, where hundreds of mass graves were located (Fawthrope & Jarvis, 2004). Beside these two prominent historical sites, the PRK also took their outreach approach to the local authorities to preserve mass graves, the skeletons and all other evidence of genocidal crimes across the country (Hughes, 2004).

In addition, symbolic commemorations such as national holidays were also popularly celebrated by the ruling government in order to honor their victory and remind the public of the dark history of the KR regime. The Victory over Genocide Day (7 January), the so-called 'Liberation Day', is celebrated annually since 1980 in the name of a national holiday for the liberation the country from the genocidal regime. In 1993, the government also introduced another ceremony called 'Day of Anger' or tivea chong komhung (literally anniversary for holding on to anger) by marking 20 May to recall their sufferings and the evils of the DK genocidal regime (Chandler, 2008: 362).[2] In 2018, the 'Day of Anger' was changed to 'Day of Remembrance' per request by the ECCC to the RGC as a non-judicial reparation project of case 002/01 (RGC, 2018).

After the transition of power from PRK to the State of Cambodia in 1989, memorialization of the KR regime was compromised by the national reconciliation policy, known as the 'Win-Win Policy', in which 'collective amnesia' was imposed (Chandler, 2008: 356). Amnesties was offered by the Phnom Penh government to their KR counterparts to defect and integrate and the chapters on KR history written by the PRK were all erased from the history textbooks (Impunity Watch, 2015: 7). It was an effort to integrate all factions including the KR forces along the Thai border into forming a new government through free and fair elections supported by the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) after the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991 (Manning, 2017). In response to international pressure to take action against the KR in 1997, the RGC appealed to the UN and international community to provide assistance to set up a tribunal to prosecute the KR leaders for the crimes committed during the regime.

After lengthy negotiations between the RGC and the UN, in 2004 the ECCC was established as a hybrid tribunal to prosecute the crimes committed between 17 April 1975 and 6 January 1979 by bringing to justice the ones most responsible or the senior leaders of the KR regime. This court aims to implement TJ in Cambodian post-conflict society through truth, justice, reconciliation and non-recurrence of such serious crimes. The memorialization has since then been revived in various projects of the ECCC and civil society projects. Victims who are civil parties at the ECCC are entitled to collective and moral reparations (ECCC Internal Rule 23(1), Revision 9). So far, 2 reparation projects have been awarded in Case 001, 11 in Case 002/01, and 13 in Case 002/02. Furthermore, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) at the ECCC oversees outreach programs to bring the public, especially students, to visit the Court and participate in the public hearings. More than 550,000 visitors have visited the court since 2009 (ECCC, 2017).

In addition to this judicial institution, civil society has also played a crucial and active role in this regard. In 2007, the textbook written by Cambodian author Dy Khamboly 'A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)', prepared by the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), received permission from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to be used in local schools (Dosch, 2012). This marked the first effort since the peace negotiation to re-include KR history in the official school curriculum at national level. KR history has since been loosely included in chapters in the official textbook in grade 9 and 12 as part of the Cambodian history narration. The chapters are, however, substantially and systematically limited for students to develop a critical understand of their history. The reintroduction of the KR history in the formal education was also controversial due to its depiction of violence and killing to younger generations. Several local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), e.g. Kdei Karuna, Youth for Peace, Youth Resource Development Program, and Bophana Center, have implemented programs designed specifically to include the younger generation in dealing with the past. Creative, artistic, educational and therapeutic initiatives and programs were developed to complement and supplement the retributive TJ process of the ECCC. For instance, oral history projects through, inter alia, arts and performance, mobile exhibitions, movie screenings, seminars or trainings, a KR History app and intergenerational dialogues with survivors of the regime, were developed to engage youth at both the community and the national level (Impunity Watch, 2015: 9).

Although memorialization initiatives are now robust and vibrant and include both the victims and the younger generation in dealing with the past, the efforts are still limited to the period of 1975 to 1979 as reaffirmed by the limited temporal and personal scope of the ECCC (Tyner et al. 2014: 286). This shows that 'the selectivity and politics of international and TJ interventions' is still in question (Manning, 2017: 41). Indeed, such limitations affect the initiatives to memorialize the KR regime and the quality of the education of younger generations about the past. After lengthy negotiations between the RGC and the UN, in 2004 the ECCC was established as a hybrid tribunal to prosecute the crimes committed between 17 April 1975 and 6 January 1979 by bringing to justice the ones most responsible or the senior leaders of the KR regime. This court aims to implement TJ in Cambodian post-conflict society through truth, justice, reconciliation and non-recurrence of such serious crimes. The

2 The date of 20 May was selected to coincide with the date of the announcement of the KR regime of a total collectivization of the Cambodian population on 20 May 1976.

memorialization has since then been revived in various projects of the ECCC and civil society projects. Victims who are civil parties at the ECCC are entitled to collective and moral reparations (ECCC Internal Rule 23(1), Revision 9). So far, two reparation projects have been awarded in Case 001, 11 in Case 002/01, and 13 in Case 002/02. Furthermore, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) at the ECCC is in charge of outreach programs to bring the public, especially students, to visit the Court and participate in the public hearings. More than 550,000 visitors have visited the court since 2009 (ECCC, 2017).

4 Remembering the Past in the Mind of Cambodian Youth

This section presents findings from the survey with 220 youth respondents (hereinafter, 'the respondents') and qualitative findings from the FGD participants by providing insights into the respondents' perception of remembering the past, knowledge of the KR regime and the ECCC, and their sources of information.

When asked in general whether one should focus on the problems today, from the past or both, more than half of the respondents reiterated the importance of both past and present (54.1%) while two in five people believed we should focus on problems being faced today (44%).[3] A study by Münyas in 2008 found that many younger generations in the houses of survivors 'identify trauma at home, and suffer from distressing parental behavior' (Münyas, 2008: 431). In terms of victimhood, the survey showed a mixed result when asked whether they considered themselves to be victims of the KR regime. A slight majority did not consider themselves to be victims of the KR (51.7%), while almost half did consider themselves to be victims even though they had never experienced the regime (48.3%). Interestingly, our data indicated a link between the respondents' self-identification of victimhood and their answer to which problem should be focused on. The respondents who considered themselves to be a victim of the KR were more likely to choose to focus on the problems from the past and present (65.6%; 31.3% chose problems today) while those who did not consider themselves to be a victim tended to choose to focus on the problems today (52.29%; 44.9% chose problems from the past and present). Further, the respondents' view on collective victimhood was statistically ambivalent. Interestingly, two in five people agreed or partly agreed and partly disagreed with the statement 'Khmer people including former KR cadres were all victims of KR regime' (37.7% and 40.5% respectively), whilst one in ten people disagreed (10.5%) or said they did not know whether they would recognize such victimhood (11.4%).

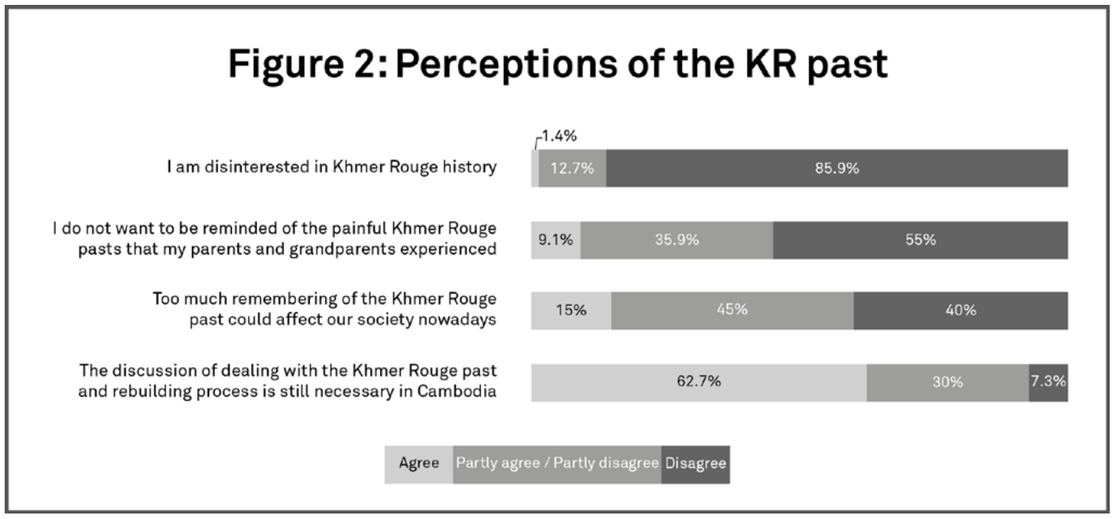
The findings showed the respondents' perception concerning crimes committed during the regime. When asked whether all the crimes committed during the KR regime were genocide against Khmer, more than half of respondents agreed with the statement (53.2%) while only one in ten respondents disagreed (13.6%). The data demonstrated that almost all high school students agreed with the statement while university students dissented. This could be attributed to the access to information and quality of outreach programs which could provide adequate information enabling them to differentiate the types of international crimes such as 'genocide', 'crime against humanity' and 'war crime'. This perception can further be linked to the government's labelling of the KR regime as a 'genocidal regime'. But it may also result from the specific implications of the term 'genocide', as Fawthrop and Jarvis (2004: 5) discuss in their book: 'Many Cambodians have expressed their insistence that the KR be tried for this "crime of crimes", asserting that any other charge would somehow diminish the offence.'

Our findings contested the assumption that Cambodian youth were not interested in learning about KR history (see McCaffrie et al. 2018). They also demonstrated positive perceptions and a strong interest in learning more about the KR past and in engaging in dealing with the past processes (see

3 The number is much higher (83%) in the study by Pham et al. in 2011 with the adult population, aged 18 and above, in Cambodia.

4 A 21-year-old male student (Royal University of Fine Arts, RUFA) from Kandal province, 24 April 2019.

Figure 2 below). This section presents findings from the survey with 220 youth respondents (hereinafter, "the respondents") and qualitative findings from the FGD participants by providing insights into the respondents' perception of remembering the past, knowledge of the KR regime and the ECCC, and their sources of information.



Such affirmation was also reflected in the FGD. Our FGD participants reaffirmed the interest and even necessity to learn about the KR past, 'since history is a part of our body, without it we don't know where we are from'.[4] They nevertheless presented a legitimate concern about their generation's lack of interest in the topic, observing that the interest was decreasing and would possibly 'vanish' completely. Several reasons were cited for this: young people 'never experience it, so they don't know about the pain'; the families do not want to recall it anymore; or it is 'a matter of education nowadays'.

Almost all survey respondents had heard about the KR regime (99.1%), except two. The sources of information they identified were mainly school curriculums (76.1%) and families (75.7%), followed by media (67.4%) and other sources including books, videos and workshops. Further, the respondents had talked about the KR past with their older family members (78.5%), friends (71.7%), teachers at school (64.8%) and others, including colleagues and younger siblings (4.6%). Our participants in the FGD also confirmed that they possessed enough information and had access to 'evidence' which made them actually believe that the KR regime had really happened. One male participant explained,

> I believe because I saw with my own eyes. The first reason is there was no reason that millions of elderly people who survived that regime lied to us for just that one story. Second, at my home there was a documentary talking about that regime. [...] National Geographic channel also showed such a documentary. It's because it was filmed during the regime that's why I believed it; if not, I would not believe.[5]

Despite their interest, the respondents expressed their limited sources of information on KR history. Two in five respondents stated that they did not receive sufficient knowledge and information about the history (42.3%) or partly agreed and partly disagreed with the statement (41.8%). Our FGD participants affirmed such limitations by arguing that it was not enough for them to know in terms of selective collective memory through glancing at textbooks or talking to their senior family members. They wanted to know more beyond 'basic knowledge, but in depth' from both sides of the story, i.e. who was behind the killing, whether they really just followed the orders, why did Khmer kill Khmer, why did the international community not help? This illustrated their sophisticated curiosity about the KR past corresponding to their educational background.

The FGD participants further provided us with their views on learning about the past as a part of prevention and non-recurrence:

> Even though some experiences still haunt us and we are trying to avoid them, if we forget, it might happen again. If we know that way is difficult then we can avoid it and choose another way. So, I think we shouldn't forget it and we need to remember it.[6]

> Memory makes what mankind is, so if humans have no memory then we aren't human but animal. Normally, we need to think about history that's why it's called the wheel of history. It means it's possible that it might come back since we cannot foresee the next 50 or 100 years. So, for those who think it will not happen again then we can only hope that it will not, or it will happen but in a different form.[7]

5 An 18-year-old male student (Royal University of Phnom Penh, RUPP) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.m Kandal province, 24 April 2019.

6 A 19-year-old female student (Center for Banking Studies, CBS) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

7 A 21-year-old male student (RUFA) from Kandal province, 24 April 2019.

5 Perceptions of Memorialization

This section explores further the insights of the respondents into the memorialization process, its impact, the roles of relevant actors and the perceived role of their generation in the process of dealing with the past and guarantee of non-recurrence.

Even though DK collapsed four decades ago, the discussion of dealing with the past in Cambodian society began only recently. It was confirmed both in our survey and FGD that the respondents were interested in discussing and learning more about the KR past. It was, however, unclear what exactly they wanted to focus on and how they wanted to know more or to possibly engage in the process. The question also remained of what and how the dealing with the past process should be and who the agent should be. We discuss two aspects of the perception of the respondents: (1) perceptions of existing memorial initiatives, their perceived impact and relevant actors and (2) perceptions of what could be done for future memorialization and dealing with the past in Cambodia.

When asked about the main actor in the memorialization process of the KR past, the ECCC was associated with a bigger role than the RGC and other stakeholders. Nearly half of the respondents believed the ECCC to be the most suitable actor to record the history of KR and establish memorialization processes (43.8%). This result confirmed previous studies on the educational potential of the ECCC for younger generations (McCaffrie, 2018: 18; Un and Ledgerwood, 2010: 3). This result was not unexpected considering that one of the mandates of the ECCC is truth-seeking and judicial and non-judicial reparation projects. The respondents also mentioned the importance of the RGC (31.3%) and of victims of the KR (24.9%) in recording the KR history, and to a lesser extent also identified the role of local NGOs and the youth themselves (17.1% and 15.2% respectively). It was interesting to note that while this hybrid tribunal assumed a central role in memorialization initiatives, the RGC was perceived to bear the financial responsibility for such initiatives. Most of the respondents highlighted the significant responsibility of the RGC to provide financial support for the memorialization process (79.7%). This could indicate on the one hand the perception that the RGC has the capacity to fund memorial projects and initiatives and the ECCC. On the other hand, it also highlights the appeal for the RGC's ownership of the memorialization process and initiatives albeit without necessarily mobilizing the term 'ownership' as such. The FGD participants further emphasized other kinds of support that the RGC could provide for memorialization processes, e.g. the 'permission' to implement memorial initiatives and other administrative assistance.[8]

Our findings also attended to questions about guarantees of non-recurrence in Cambodia as part of the ongoing TJ process and in particular the ECCC. When asked about the role of the ECCC in providing guarantees of non-recurrence of mass violence in Cambodia, a large majority of the respondents believed that the ECCC contributed to guarantees of non-recurrence (84.4%). The impacts of the ECCC on the guarantees of non-recurrence was not necessarily reflected in the form of memorialization initiatives and projects, but rather in terms of its judicial mandates, i.e. prosecution and truth-seeking. Half of the respondents stated that the ECCC contributed through prosecution of the top leaders and the most responsible ones (49%) as well as seeking the truth and documenting KR history (46%). However, the respondents did not feel the legacy of the ECCC in national judicial reform or broader societal effects. Only one in ten believed the ECCC contributed to the improvement of the national judicial system (9.4%). This finding confirms earlier observations of the limited impact of the ECCC on the rule of law reform (Ryan and McGrew, 2016: 52).

The perspective from our FGD participants was, however, more critical. They indicated the limited impacts of the ECCC in prevention and non-recurrence and viewed the role of the ECCC mainly to be about finding justice for the victims. One participant explained: 'For me, the ECCC's work is on legal aspects of justice. As it has done so far, most of the accused persons are already dead. So, if we talk about preventing those things from happening again, the capacity of ECCC is barely able to do that.'[9] Other participants, however, pointed to the role of other relevant actors, i.e. the RGC and MoEYS, in mainstreaming genocide and peace education through opportunities to visit memorial sites: 'If we don't allow students or people to go there [Tuol Sleng], then they will not know or be reminded of that; then they will not care about that and where it used to be. [...] Therefore, each school should talk to MoEYS to bring students from every grade to go there and they will know such a place really exists.'[10] To emphasize the quality of the outreach program, one FGD participant explained her impression or confusion when visiting the ECCC: 'At that time, they provided us with lunch. When I saw the lunch box, I thought it might be rice with pork, but it turned out to be salted egg with fermented radish. Then I thought that because we were here [the ECCC], that's why they let us taste this kind of food [food during the DK regime].' Another participant indicated the lack of opportunity to visit the ECCC, as she explained: 'the rest of Grade 12 students at my school had chances to go there [the ECCC]. But when it came to my class, they said there is no car available.'[11]

Memorialization is often viewed as a form of symbolic reparation for victims and is a potential tool for inter-generational communication (Tunamsifu, 2018: 42-3). It contributes to the restorative justice aspect of TJ and the educational impact on the younger generation. The findings of our survey and FGD on memorialization as a form of reparation were mixed. In the survey, half of the respondents agreed that collective and symbolic reparations should be provided to the victims of the KR (51.4%). However, when asked further about the importance of memorial sites of the KR regime, a majority of respondents stated memorial sites, including sdop,[12] the Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek museums, were important in remembering the crimes committed during the KR regime (85.9%). This indicates the limited knowledge and awareness of the reparation scheme at the ECCC, i.e. symbolic and collective reparations, and the actual implementation of those projects by various stakeholders such as the RGC and local NGOs. Most of the respondents had visited those memorial sites (80.6%). Among those who visited these sites, three in five were satisfied with their experience (60.8%) while a third expressed a mixed experience (31.3%). Some even mentioned their experience had been terrifying: 'It is still in

8 An 18-year-old male student (RUPP) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

9 A 21-year-old male student (RUFA) from Kandal province, 24 April 2019.

10 A 19-year-old female student (CBS) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

11 A 21-year-old female student (RUPP) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

12 In Buddhism, sdop is a memorial stupa dedicated to the dead.

my brain and I still remember it. Sometimes I feel goosebumps whenever I recall that place. I just felt terrified. I cannot go there alone again. I felt as if it [DK regime] happened recently.'[13] This finding confirmed an earlier study about the insensitivity of the historical museum, demonstrating that visiting the Tuol Sleng museum without age-sensitive interpretation and messages could be a traumatizing experience for young Cambodians (Münyas, 2008: 429).

The findings from the FGD also questioned the level of awareness of the participants with regard to memorial sites and sites that have not been turned into memorials, so-called non-memorialized sites, such as the many mass graves and killing sites that exist across Cambodia besides Tuol Sleng, Choeung Ek and Kraing Ta Chan (see e.g. Tyner et al. 2012; Tyner et al. 2014). Although they generally acknowledged the importance of sdop and memorial sites in remembering the past, the FGD participants were not aware of the existence of other (non-memorialized) sites and even questioned the necessity of extensive memorialization of those sites. One participant was concerned with the economic costs, as he explained: "If we turn every site into memorial sites, it is a waste for the economy. [...] Even though there were many mass graves across the country, we cannot convert them all into memorial sites.'[14] Another participant critically reflected on the potential political reasons behind the selective memorialization in Cambodia: 'Sometimes, our government also doesn't want to remind us much about that. [...] It is a matter of politics. [...] It seems like they don't want the history to recur, so most of the time, they would try to forget it.'[15] This respondent's observation highlights the official narrative on the KR regime, i.e. through policies, public statements, memorial initiatives and education, which demonized the KR regime and labelled it a genocidal regime (Williams 2019: 3). This reflects the notion, which Chandler called 'enforced amnesia', of 'dig[ging] a hole and bury[ing] the past' (Chandler 2008: 356; Impunity Watch 2015: 15). Nonetheless, the FGD participants underlined the need for official documentation and 'recognition'[16] for the purposes of education and preservation for their generation. One FGD participant explained: 'we should document them [memorial sites] in a book, so we can know where all the mass graves are located even when the time goes by.'[17] This resonated with earlier observations that many victims of the KR are still hoping for, and demanding, more stupa or memorials for the purposes of education, prevention and non-recurrence for younger generations (Williams et al. 2018: 118).

The perception of the respondents in the survey and FGD was mixed regarding memorial days. So far, 7 January (Victory over Genocide Day) and 20 May (National Day of Remembrance, previously known as Day of Anger) are official and annual memorial days endorsed by the RGC and the ECCC.[18] Considering its prominent celebration since the 1980s, the majority of the respondents agreed that the Victory over Genocide Day was an important event to commemorate the victims of the KR regime (62.7%). Notably, the perception of the new memorial day, the National Remembrance Day, was more critical both in the survey and FGD. Half of the respondents agreed that 20 May was an appropriate form of symbolic reparation for the KR regime (50.5%). More importantly, one in eight respondents did not know about it (12.7%), or possibly had not heard about it before. One FGD participant expressed his frustration by questioning the meaning of 20 May and the efforts to publicize it, a view shared by his generation:

> Nobody knows what 20 May is for. I asked around [...], but nobody knew. If we check the calendar, it's just a normal day, like Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday; there is nothing special. In order to make it more meaningful, at least you make it more well-known by promoting what 20 May is for. As I know so far, the majority of people don't know [...].[19]

The finding indicated a lack of public information and awareness regarding this new memorial day, which is both a national holiday and a reparation project of the ECCC. This resonates with another study (see Williams et al. 2018: 116) which found that even the core beneficiary of this reparation project, the direct victims of the KR regime participating as civil parties in the ECCC, were unaware of it, not to mention the respondents who are the third-generation victims of the KR regime. Taken together, these findings may reflect a significant decrease in the past few years in (funding for) outreach programs by the ECCC and local NGOs but they may also question the quality of these outreach programs in educating the public about the works of the ECCC.

13 A 19-year-old female student (CBS) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

14 A 21-year-old male student (RUFA) from Kandal province, 24 April 2019.

15 A 19-year-old female student (CBS) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

16 An 18-year-old male student (RUPP) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

17 A 19-year-old female student (CBS) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

18 National Day of Remembrance (20 May) was one among 11 reparation projects of the ECCC in Case 002/01 implemented by the RGC as a non-judicial measure for victims of the KR regime in 2018 (see more in the section on Memorial Initiatives in Cambodia).

19 An 18-year-old male student (RUPP) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

6 Memorialization and its Perceived Educational Effects

20 A 19-year-old female student (CBS) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

21 The survey respondents were able to choose multiple answers for this question (maximum of three)

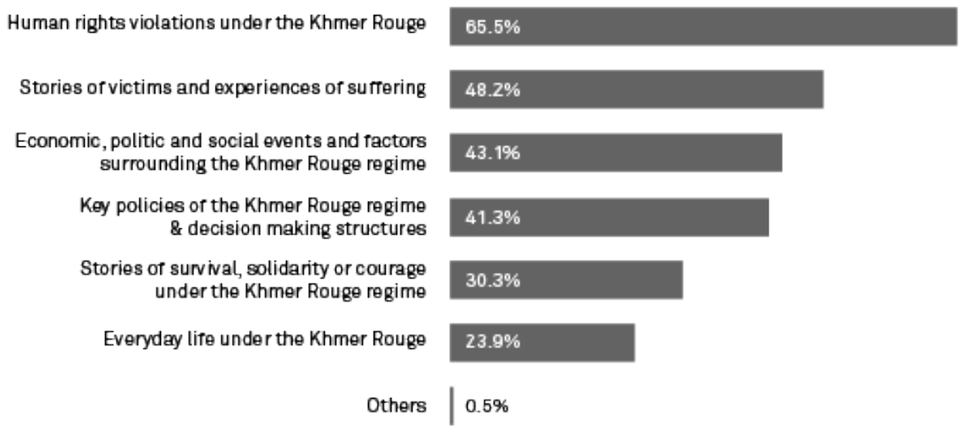
Memorialization through education and intergenerational dialogue projects is useful in raising awareness of the dealing with the past process and in enhancing two-way communication with younger generations who have no direct experience of mass violence (Impunity Watch 2015: 23). The respondents held a strong belief that memorialization had an impact on the education of their generation. Almost all respondents were positive about the contribution of memorialization initiatives and projects to the education of the younger generation about the violent past of Cambodia (95.8%). Surprisingly, the finding indicated the relation or perceived link between memorialization and guarantees of non-recurrence by building a 'never again' mentality among our respondents. The respondents described the apparent educational and preventive effects as the main effects of memorialization in Cambodia. Two fifths of the respondents stated memorialization helped them learn more about KR history (43.2%) and reminded them to avoid conflict and violence (38.5%) and, to a lesser extent, reminded them of the painful past (30.5%). However, the role of memorialization in raising meaningful discussion and dialogue about dealing with the past among themselves was unclear in the survey. Almost one fifth of the respondents believed memorialization allowed them to participate more in public forums dealing with the KR past (17.4%), while only a few confirmed that through discussions of the KR past with their friends and family contributed to education. Such perception indicates the limited educational effects of memorialization when discussions about dealing with the past are confined to the public sphere of discussion and private intimate discussions at home remain in the form of an 'intergenerational transmission of trauma' (Münyas, 2008: 422). One FGD participant explained: 'my parents usually say if you could not finish your rice, do you think you would survive during the KR regime. It seems like they want to remind us during that regime they were suffering.'[20]

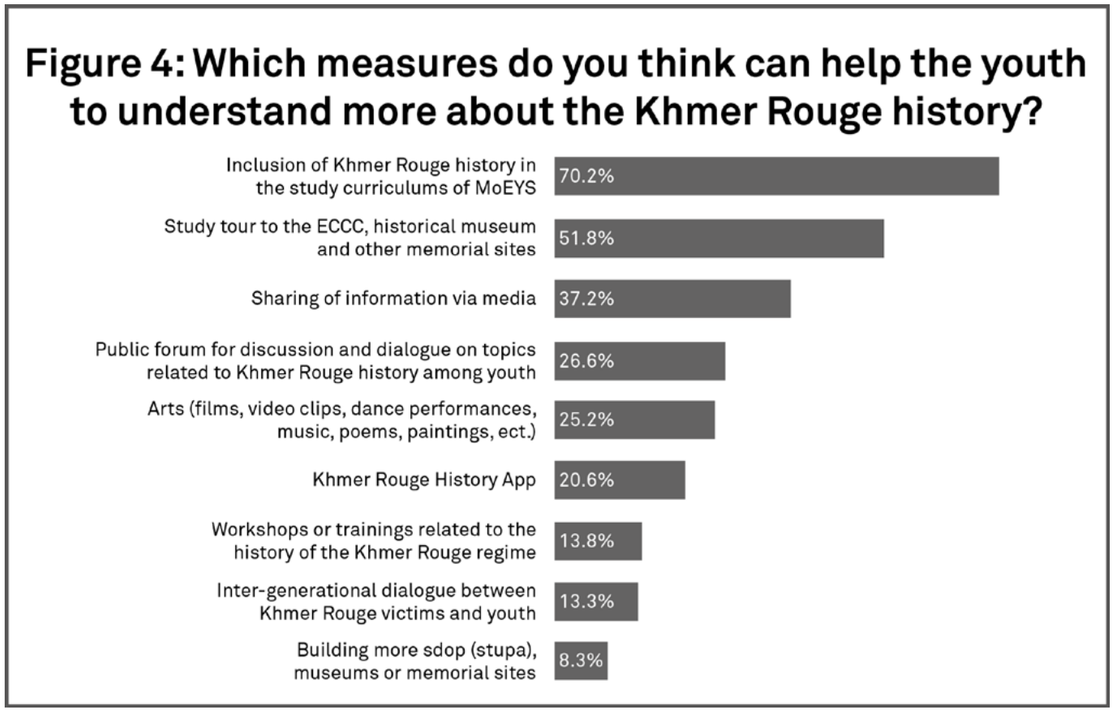
Benchmarking the role of youth in those critical phases can be done by streamlining youth interest to cater to youth aspirations and to devise youth-sensitive and transformative processes for a peaceful and stable society (Kambala, 2017: 18). Memorialization processes should be dynamic and relevant for an open discussion about linking the effort in dealing with the past with the present (Impunity Watch, 2013: 13). In order for an open discussion to link the past with the present, education programs for younger generations should move beyond traditional narratives of the conflict to be about what leads to the conflict, the conflict itself and how society recovers from it (Scarlett, 2009: 172). The respondents confirmed receiving 'only basic, but not in-depth knowledge' of KR history, receiving 'conflicting information' or feeling that some information was 'hidden' from them. As such, they emphasized several topics (see Figure 3) which were not conventionally included in the education and outreach programs on dealing with past, including contentious aspects of the KR regime.

When asked about the content for education and memorialization for their generation,[21] three in five respondents wanted to know more about human rights violations under the KR (65.5%). This tapped into the nuanced understanding of the respondents, which framed the violence and crimes during the DK regime in the context of human rights violations. Such interest in learning more about the human rights violations under the KR reflected the understanding of the connection between the past violence and the current potential inequalities and injustice, which could produce dangerous dynamics in society (Impunity Watch 2013: 13). The education and outreach programs on KR history did not frequently address the discussion of gross human rights violations nor did they mobilize the term as such. The respondents were also interested in learning more about the KR regime, including domestic and international economic, political and social factors, key policies of the KR regime and decision-making structures. These are limited or almost absent in the official study curriculum of the MoEYS and outreach programs of local NGOs with and for their generation (see e.g. Manning, 2017) until they pursue higher education. They wanted to learn 'who was behind Pol Pot', 'whether the upper echelon did not know about the crimes committed by the lower echelon', 'who was behind the mass killings' and 'why they killed only intellectuals.'[22] Interestingly, the respondents also considered stories of victims and experiences of their suffering as an important aspect of education for their generation.

22 FGD participants, 24 April 2019.

Figure 3: What do you think would be most important to focus on in education & memorialization processes about the Khmer Rouge past?





23 FGD participants, 24 April 2019.

24 Respondents were able to choose multiple answers from the pre-defined answer categories.

The interest of the respondents to learn more in depth about the KR past was in the same vein with their appeal for more effort from relevant stakeholders, primarily the state, for memorialization through education of KR history for the younger generation. As shown in Figure 4, when asked about measures which could help their generation to understand more about the KR history, the majority stated the inclusion of KR history in the study curriculums of the MoEYS. Despite the existing chapters in Grade 9 and 12 textbooks on the DK regime, our youth respondents wanted the history to be systematically included in the official textbooks in secondary and high school and university level. Additionally, history should be compulsory in the national exam,[23] followed by other measures of education and outreach programs such as study tours, dissemination of information via media, art projects and intergenerational dialogue.[24] More importantly, the respondents also suggested a more active youth engagement approach to education of younger generations through a public forum for discussion and dialogue among youth (26.6%). It could serve as an opportunity for them to critically reflect on the dealing with the past process, in particular on memorialization and its effects on Cambodian society today, as well as to address contentious narratives of history which concern them.

Confirming the appeal of ownership of the memorialization process in Cambodia, the FGD participants reiterated the role of the RGC, particularly the MoEYS, in developing a more comprehensive study curriculum for younger

students to develop interests and aspirations in learning about history, for example ‘a competition’ about history and ‘incentive’ for learning history. They were vocal in stressing the need for ‘making it [the KR history] heard’ or ‘sharing’ to improve the education of the KR history and memorialization initiatives. As one participant explained: ‘It is about publicizing. Even if we cannot contribute anything much, at least we can share the information about where the stupa is. Secondly, we have to publicize our history; we cannot just forget about it. It's where we are from and it's where we are now.’[25] Another participant added: ‘We can contribute both in a direct and indirect way. We can help in an indirect way since we are from different majors by sharing with our children, while those with a history background can help directly by conducting research and documentation for the next generation.’ [26]

25 An 18-year-old male student (RUPP) from Phnom Penh, 24 April 2019.

26 A 21-year-old male student (RUFA) from Kandal province, 24 April 2019.

7 Conclusion

In a post-conflict society, there is an overlapping area of the TJ paradigm and the memory paradigm that needs be addressed. Memorialization is an often neglected part of the TJ process, where there is a missed opportunity to link the violence in the past with prevention and non-recurrence of violence in the present. The inclusion and participation of youth – as a stakeholder and beneficiary – is critical in such efforts at every stage: conceptualization, design and implementation and follow-up. However, the youth are mostly left at the sidelines or subject to passive consumption in TJ and memorialization initiatives in Cambodia. Fifteen years after the establishment of the ECCC, few studies have been conducted to assess the perceptions of Cambodian youth on dealing with the past and the impact of memorialization projects on their generation and society as a whole. As direct victims – the living evidence – are passing away every day, so are the accused persons, and the question now is what can the ECCC leave behind for Cambodia, particularly for the youth as the agent of change and upstander for the future of a non-violent society.

This study disputed the unproven assumption that the Cambodian youth is not interested in learning about the KR past and did not believe that it happened. The respondents' wishes to learn more about the past confirmed not the duty to remember the KR past, but the 'duty not to forget' what happened during the DK regime for their present and future. Our findings also illustrated a sophisticated and nuanced curiosity of young Cambodians, who were interested to know more beyond the state-sanctioned narratives of the KR history through memorialization, or wanted to dispel 'their ignorance and myth about how and why the genocide took place' (Münyas, 2008). It also explained the lack of interest in learning more in-depth about KR history as well as their perceived passive role in seeking more knowledge since the existing education and outreach programs did not correspond with their level of curiosity or offered 'no benefit.'[27]

Our findings demonstrated that the respondents perceived limited effects by the ECCC on non-recurrence, namely through memorialization initiatives, prosecution and truth-seeking. Due to the lack of in-depth and critical information on KR history, the respondents believed there was a missing link between building the never again mentality with education and outreach programs of various TJ actors. Larger societal effects of the ECCC are not well-established or explicitly seen by the respondents. Their passion in learning about the past is not missing but the engagement opportunity is systemically constrained in several aspects. The quality of the education and outreach programs, not the quantity thereof, raised questions about how young Cambodians view or should view dealing with the past processes through memorialization, education programs and their history. Storytelling of the past by family members often entails an intergenerational transmission of traumatization. Official education at national level is limited in terms of quantity and quality, which restricts the curiosity about the root causes of the violence itself and other surrounding factors which could allow them to critically reflect on the current situation of society. As Youk Chhang, the director of DC-Cam, argued, 'youth needs to be taught that the KR is not just about killing' (as quoted in Münyas, 2008: 432). Memorialization processes, particularly through the education of the younger generation, should move beyond mere narratives of history and be dynamic, relevant and open for discussion to link the effort in dealing with the past with the present. It is essential for younger generations to learn beyond storytelling, to learn instead about critical information necessary for them to make judgments and reflect on their society nowadays in an open and meaningful discussion of truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence. The outreach and education programs, therefore, should not only focus on a description of history; they should also be designed as an age-sensitive and inclusive approach to streamline the younger generation's interest and understanding of history to build a peaceful and stable society.

27 A 21-year-old male student (RUFA) from Kandal province, 24 April 2019.

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