

Kdei Karuna submission to the Call for Contribution of Ideas of ECCC Residual Functions related to Victims

Since over a decade, Kdei Karuna (KdK) has been implementing reparation projects and other activities to support memorialisation and healing and mutual understanding between survivors of the KR regime and the next generations. Over the years, KdK has worked intensively with Khmer Rouge survivors, former Khmer Rouge cadres, high school and university students and high school teachers. Special attention was given to the perspectives of survivors of SGBV and survivors with a Muslim or Vietnamese background.

Alongside the legal procedures of the ECCC, space was created for non-judicial initiatives to support memorialisation, healing and reparation to the Cambodian people. KdK believes that there is a strong need in Cambodian society to continue these processes. Based on the information and insights collected through numerous oral history collections, family and community dialogues, KdK identifies the following needs in Cambodian communities.

- **Survivors’ needs to share their experiences.** As one dialogue participant formulated it: “*the more I talk, the more I feel relieved*”. Being able to tell their stories and being heard with compassion has a healing effect, but survivors state that they lack the opportunity or the space to do so.
- Many survivors suffer from their experiences in silence and the behaviour that results from this is not understood by the younger generations. There is a **need to close the gap of knowledge and mutual understanding** between survivors and 2nd and 3rd generations.
- There is a **need for youth to build their capacities to start and conduct conversations** about the KR past with survivors in their family or community. Youth are interested in learning about the past but are reluctant to ask their older relatives about it for different reasons, such as the cultural inappropriateness to ask questions or fear of inducing strong emotions.
- Survivors expressed the **need for places for remembrance in their province**, such as stupas and the engagement of youth to care for these sites and keep the memories alive.
- There is a **need for direct reparation at the individual level**. Besides improvement of living conditions, medical and psycho-social care, survivors also express a need to repair the negative impact on the 2nd and 3rd generations, for instance by supporting good education and job security.
- The **need to focus on non-recurrence from a local perspective**. Focus on education in history and training in soft skills to ensure that skills in conflict analysis, resolution and prevention are embedded in Cambodian society may contribute to prevent history repeating itself.
- Although many (oral) histories have been collected, there is a **need to document the more ‘hidden’ experiences**, such as experiences from marginalised groups (religion, ethnicity, sexual identity) and the experiences from former KR cadres, as well as the effects/impact on their children and grandchildren in the present time.
- Many survivors also raised **roles and responsibilities of state actors** to involve in the reparations, for instance through ID poor card, pension, other public services for them.

Suggestions for interventions/activities/undertakings

1 – Inter-generational dialogue	
<i>rationale</i>	Focus on dialogue and oral history skills within families and communities. Creating space for sharing, especially SGBV, ethnic discrimination and building deep listening skills (non-violent communication) will ensure continued healing processes at the individual level and also build community resilience (non-recurrence) skills
<i>target group</i>	Survivors of SGBV, ethnic minorities, students
<i>timeline</i>	At least three years (2022-2024)

2 – Create Centre for Dialogue Facilitation	
<i>rationale</i>	Building dialogue facilitation skills of key people in Cambodian society, will create a ripple-effect and ensure sustainability of memorialisation and healing processes as well as work towards non-recurrence.

<i>target group</i>	Community-based dialogue facilitators – high school teachers – local authorities
<i>timeline</i>	At least three years (2022-2024)

3 – Continued oral history collection and conservation

<i>rationale</i>	Collect stories of experiences (SGBV, ethnic minorities, former Khmer Rouge cadres) that have not been uncovered yet. This is important for truth telling from all different perspectives (paint the full picture), which will be an important resource for future research and learning about the KR past. Something like build/collect the primary sources for the research of future historians (and sociologists etc).
<i>target group</i>	Under-represented groups of survivors – former Khmer Rouge cadres
<i>timeline</i>	At least three years (2022-2024)

4 – Vocational skills training

<i>rationale</i>	During the Khmer Rouge regime, family life was uprooted and practices like forced marriage resulted in protracted situations of domestic violence, including sexual violence. Large families, facing tensions and violence are living under the poverty line and children cannot get adequate education. Many survivors raised the need for skills training in mechanics, agriculture, etc. so that young generations can earn an income.
<i>target group</i>	Children and grand-children of survivors
<i>timeline</i>	At least three years (2022-2024)

5 – Community Self-Care for SGBV survivors

<i>rationale</i>	Trauma and mental health support are still much needed among SGBV survivors and children, but especially for poor families and/or survivors in rural areas availability of adequate mental health care is very limited. By training local facilitators in mental health support these much needed services can be provided to survivors, while at the same time building community resilience.
<i>target group</i>	SGBV survivors and family members – local facilitators
<i>timeline</i>	At least three years (2022-2024)

6 – Research on the impact of SGBV trauma on children and grand-children

<i>rationale</i>	In a previous project of story collection of both survivors and their children, KdK observed the interesting finding of how the experience of the parents shaped their children's mindset. This initial finding of transferred trauma or second generational impact asks for further study. How does the CRSV experience of the parents affect their children's lives?
<i>target group</i>	Survivors and their children/family members
<i>timeline</i>	12 months (2022-2023)

7 – Dialogue between survivors and state actors

<i>rationale</i>	KdK and UN Women raised some concerns from SGBV survivors to line ministries and had a dialogue between survivors and ministries in 2015. Continuing this process will be important for survivors: having state actors listen to their real needs as well as showing roles and responsibilities to address the needs of their own people.
<i>target group</i>	Survivors and line ministries
<i>timeline</i>	At least three years (2022-2024)