



The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)



LICADHO

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Introduction to LICADHO



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About LICADHO

LICADHO is a national NGO committed to the protection and promotion of human rights in Cambodia

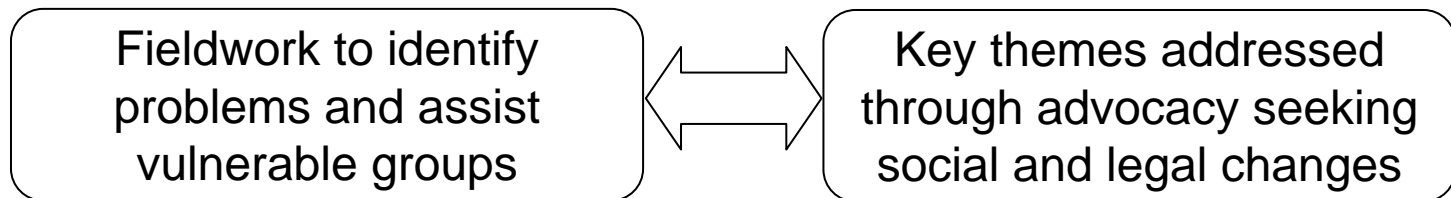
Our vision: *To achieve a democratic society in Cambodia that is peaceful, stable, and whose government and institutions are committed to human rights and social justice*

Established in July 1992 by Dr. Kek Galabru, after the Paris Peace Accords

- Initially involved in conducting voter education for 1993 election
- LICADHO now addresses human rights abuses

LICADHO is one of the largest Cambodian NGOs with over 130 staff and an annual budget of more than \$1,000,000

LICADHO's human rights work is based on two complementary strategies:



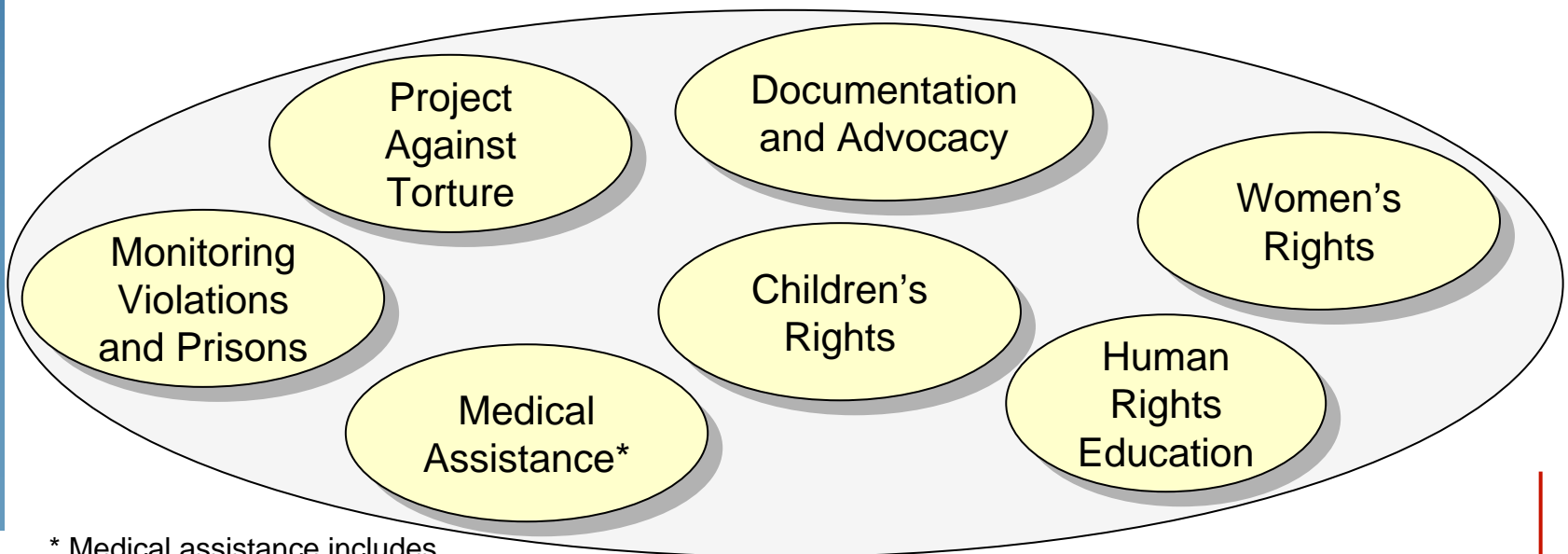


Structure of LICADHO

The head office is located in Phnom Penh with 12 provincial offices:

- The Phnom Penh office coordinates strategic priorities and operations
- The provincial offices provide human rights training and monitor violations
- Each provincial office employs a coordinator, trainer, monitor and prison researcher. Selected provinces employ children's rights specialists

LICADHO's work is organized into six thematic programs:



* Medical assistance includes support to prisons

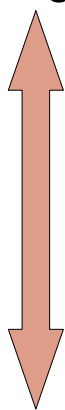


Documentation and Advocacy

Documentation and Advocacy are integrated into all LICADHO programs and involve:

- Collecting, storing and analyzing human rights abuses and prison information in databases
- Publishing and distributing regular reports on human rights issues
- Organizing events and campaigns e.g. for International Children's Day

LICADHO and its partners advocate for human rights at different levels:

- 
- **Local level** – Phnom Penh and provincial offices in close contact with local authorities and NGOs
 - **National level** – active member of the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee, and other coalitions
 - **Regional and International level** – in regular contact and cooperation with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty, Forum Asia and others





Cambodia and Human Rights



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About Cambodia



Cambodia is a small, low-lying country on the Southeast Asian peninsula

Most livelihoods are based on subsistence fishing and rice growing, though rapid urbanization in recent years



'Motor-dops' can be used to carry more than you might think



The stones are so big no one is sure how they were built!

Peace was only fully achieved in the mid-1990s

Cambodia is still struggling to overcome the legacy of violence and turmoil from the Khmer Rouge and civil war

Best known internationally for both:

- The ancient temples of Angkor Wat – the largest religious temples in the world,
- The tragic genocidal Pol Pot-led Khmer Rouge

Population: 13.8m
Religion: 95% Buddhist
Life expectancy: 57 years
Avg. annual income: < US\$300
Population under 15 years: 42%
Population HIV positive: 2.6%

source: UNDP, 2002 figures



Human Rights Context

Halting steps have been taken towards democracy and respect for human rights since end of UN peacekeeping, but:

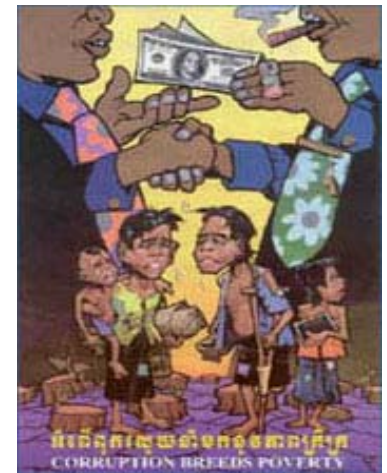
- 2003 general elections still marred by irregularities intimidation and violence
- government support for international human rights obligations rarely extends beyond lip service



Overall, four systemic factors underlie most human rights abuses in Cambodia:



In this context human rights abuses of all kinds flourish. This further burdens the already impoverished Cambodians



source: Center for Social Development



LICADHO Program Offices

- ① Human Rights Education
- ② Children's Rights
- ③ Women's Rights
- ④ Medical Assistance



- ⑤ Monitoring Violations and Prisons
- ⑥ Project Against Torture
- ⑦ Documentation and Advocacy



1

Human Rights Education

Abuse is perpetuated by a culture of violence and impunity and a breakdown of ethical values, stemming from Khmer Rouge and the long civil war

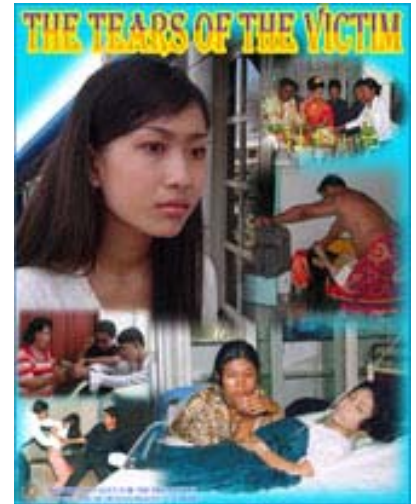
Education and training is key to changing cultural attitudes and behaviors and helping people actively transform their own communities



By December 2004
over 4,000 participants
completed LICADHO's
3-day human rights
training courses

Education Office response:

- Dissemination sessions for the public on issues facing their communities – for example, land grabbing and trafficking
- Human rights training courses on similar topics for specific groups such as students, police, monks and the public
- Participants go on to develop and sustain local networks
- Produces educational booklets, posters etc. e.g. The Tears of the Victim





2

Children's Rights

Over half of Cambodians are under 18 and many face severe hardship:

- Poverty and corruption block children's hopes for education
- Disease and lack of healthcare kill many before their teens.
- Violence and exploitation are big problems - sexual abuse, rape, trafficking, child labor and corporal punishment.



Child sex tourism
Source: World Vision

Children's Rights Office response:

- Monitors violations, and seeks prosecution for serious offences
- Presents 2 or 3-day children's rights workshops for children, parents, NGOs and authorities
- Establishes child protection networks to conduct grassroots action
- Advocates for legal and social change



Children's networks: Monthly meetings of children aged 14-18 to plan activities and spread the word about children's rights



3

Women's Rights

Cambodian women are subject to frequent violence, particularly in the form of domestic violence, rape and trafficking for sexual exploitation

Abuse is often due to cultural beliefs of inferior status of women-for instance:

“Men are like gold - if it becomes dirty, it can be washed and still have value. But women are like white cloth - once soiled it cannot be white again” Old Khmer adage

Women's Rights Office response:

- Monitors, investigates and intervenes in cases of abuse and supports victims to seek redress
- Pilot project to educate and empower women at the community level to combat rape, domestic violence and trafficking in Kandal, Kompot and Battambang
- Advocacy work with CAMBOW and NGO partners to lobby for laws to protect women e.g. for new laws against domestic violence and human trafficking



1 in 4 wives have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse from their husbands

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4a

Medical Assistance

The LICADHO medical team provides medical care to victims of human rights abuses in Phnom Penh and the provinces

In communities, good medical care is often not available to victims, or is costly because the government or private doctors request bribes

Medical Office response:

- Provides free examinations and appropriate treatment and follow-up for victims
- Advocates on behalf of victims for reduced fees or free services from state hospitals
- Assists in obtaining medical certificates from state hospitals for court cases against perpetrators

LICADHO medical workers monitor demonstrations to assist people injured by law enforcement and pro-government groups



During the anti-Thai riots in 2003, the Medical Office provided care for more than 40 people



4b

Medical Assistance – Prisons

Serious health problems exist among prisoners due to inadequate food, poor sanitation, neglect and overcrowding

The Medical Office regularly visits 12 prisons to treat sick or injured prisoners and prison officials

Sanitation programs reduce disease through:

- Treatment of all contagious skin diseases
- Providing cleaning materials to prisoners and organizing cleaning of cells, bedding, clothes
- Education about hygiene, sanitation and prisoner rights

Seeds/tools are annually supplied for 16 prison gardens

LICADHO's presence can also deter serious abuse by prison officials and prisoners

The Medical Office provides care to around 8,000 prisoners and prison officials annually

Only \$0.25 allocated per day to each prisoner for food/utilities and as little as 0.7m² indoor space





5a

Human Rights Monitoring

A weak rule of law allows the rich and powerful to prey upon the poor and weak without repercussions

- Politically-motivated abuses and other crimes - rape, torture, land grabbing – are committed with impunity

Monitoring Office response

LICADHO informed of violation by victims, witnesses, other NGOs or the media

Initial facts gathered and monitors conduct crime-scene investigation and interview those involved

Monitoring Office writes intervention letter to authorities asking them to investigate

If no action, Monitoring Office appeals to other government institutions

Information from monitoring added to electronic database for research and advocacy purposes

Over 464 cases investigated in 2004 and 156 events and demonstrations monitored





5b

Monitoring – Prisons

Prisoners are at the mercy of an inefficient and arbitrary legal system:

- Illegal arrest without court warrant, and torture by state actors
- Pre-trial detainment for >6 months
- Lack of effective legal representation
- Torture in prison, especially after escape attempts

Prison Monitoring response:

Monitoring staff regularly visit 18 prisons to:

- Interview prisoners to assess their legal status and identify any abuses committed against them
- Monitor actions of courts to ensure due process
- Raise problems inside prisons with prison authorities

Monitoring staff work closely with the medical team to monitor and improve living conditions in prisons to meet minimum international standards





5c

Adopt-A-Prison Project

The problem: innocent babies and young children living in prisons with their mothers...

Children lack adequate healthcare, nutrition, education and basic human rights in prison (LICADHO report, 'Innocent Prisoners', June 2002)

"Sometimes Roat Tana cannot produce breast milk because of her poor diet, so her son has to drink sugar water"

LICADHO set up 'Adopt-A-Prison' project to create networks of partner NGOs and individuals to:

- Provide immediate assistance to mother and child, and pregnant women e.g. food, vitamins, clothes
- Facilitate schooling and family visits, and support families after release

Children are now healthier, better clothed, more alert and more lively





6

Project Against Torture

Torture continues in Cambodia... long after the closure of the infamous Khmer Rouge *Tuol Sleng* torture center

Torture is perpetuated by a legacy of violent history and a corrupt, ineffective legal system

Torture is often used by police to punish, extract confessions or extort money and is also used:

- Against opposition politicians and political activists
- To control women in the commercial sex trade

Mob, or vigilante, killing is also common in Cambodia, and 'acid attacks' are used as weapons of revenge

Project Against Torture response

- Rehabilitate torture victims – work on an outpatient basis and provide counseling, economic support etc.
- Investigate and seek redress in serious cases
- Advocate to eradicate torture by legal/social reform



PAT is the only project of its kind in Cambodia



The Role of Donors





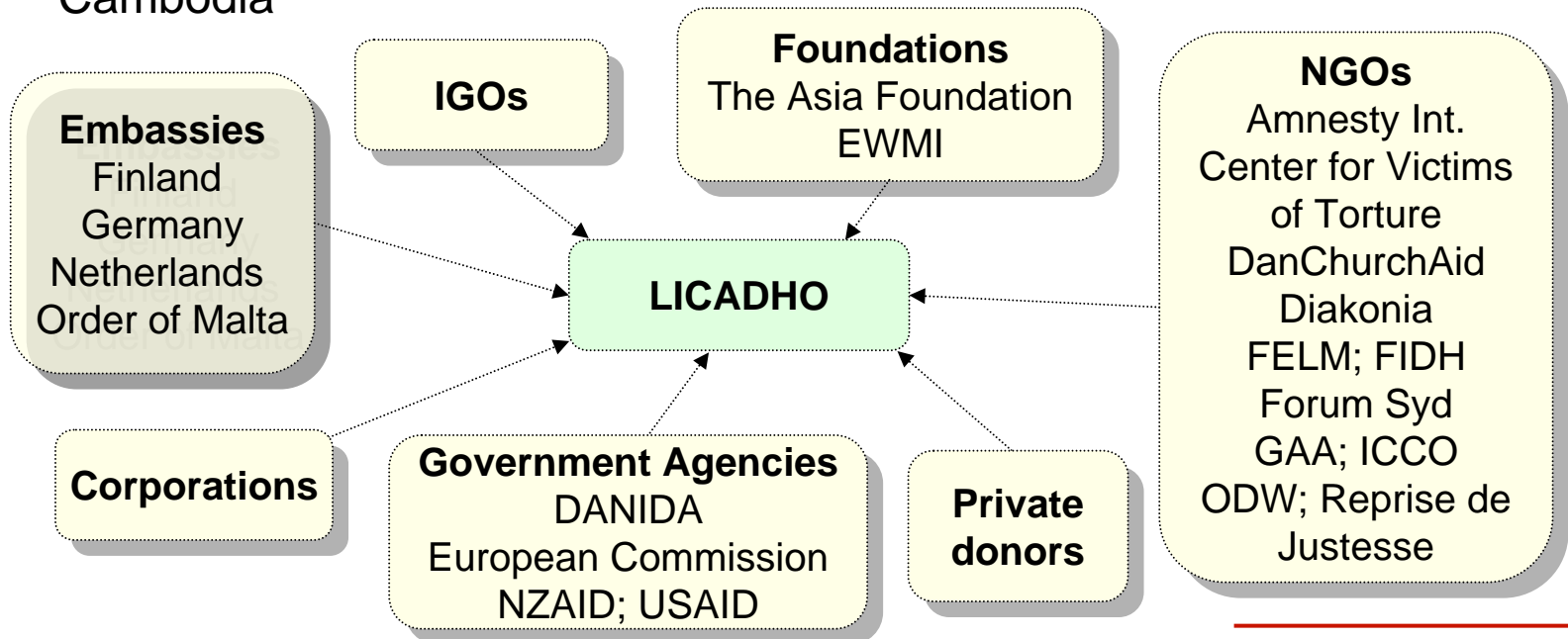
The Role of Donors

Donors are in a unique position to provide powerful and independent support to human rights work:

“Donors are one of the most important sources of pressure we have on Cambodia”
Mike Jendrzeczyk, former Washington Director of Human Rights Watch

Donors are important to LICADHO too!

- Only through donor-NGO partnership can we improve human rights in Cambodia



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The Future





The Future

Since 1999 Cambodia has seen sustained peace, stability, and economic growth.

Recent years have seen improvements in human rights:

- Growing awareness among Cambodians of their rights and availability of services to seek redress
- Grassroots initiatives on legal and social issues
- Strengthening of civil society

Yet major challenges remain before the realization of human rights for all Cambodians, such as:

- Widespread and debilitating poverty
- Endemic institutional corruption, especially of the police and the judiciary
- Restrictions on freedom of speech, association and assembly
- Weak rule of law and inadequate legislation





The End

visit www.licadho.org for up-to-date information on what LICADHO is doing



Appendix



A Brief History of Cambodia

- 1600+ Cambodia maintains its status as an independent nation through concessions to its powerful neighbors Vietnam and Thailand
- 1863 King Norodom I signs a treaty of protectorate with France
- 1953 **Independence** from France
- 1975 “**Year Zero**” - Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, take power. At least 1.7m die under 4 years of brutal KR social restructuring
- 1979-89 Vietnam invades, and occupies Cambodia. Khmer Rouge fights guerrilla resistance war, supported by US and others
- 1990 After Vietnam leaves, United Nations, ‘UNTAC’ force, formed to administer the country until elections
- 1991 **Paris Peace Accords** signed between govt. and Khmer Rouge
- 1992 *Dr. Kek Galabru and overseas Cambodians start LICADHO*



A Brief History (cont.)

- 1993 United Nations mandate ends with first general elections (though KR do not participate). Narrow FUNCINPEC win but CPP contestation leads to two Prime Ministers
- 1994 Khmer Rouge outlawed but continues resistance
- 1997 Hun Sen (CPP) stages violent coup and takes control of country
- 1998 Second general elections are won by CPP but results are contested. CPP-led coalition formed
- Pol Pot dies after being overthrown as head of Khmer Rouge and Khmer Rouge ceases to exist after remainder surrender
- 2002 The first multiparty local (commune) elections are won by CPP
- 2003, Jan Anti-Thai rioting in P. Penh after alleged comments by actress
- 2003, July Third general elections lead to power deadlock
- 2004, July Coalition government between CPP and FUNCINPEC finally formed with Hun Sen as Prime Minister