



Public-Private Partnership Safeguards Digital History



The DC-CAM archive contains many rare photos including this image of Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot and other senior leaders.

[Photos from DC-CAM digital archives]

Almost one third of Cambodia's population of 7.7 million people died between 1975 and 1979 under the country's rule by the Khmer Rouge, according to the [Documentation Center of Cambodia](#) (known as DC-Cam). In 2006, an [international tribunal](#) was set up to try the most senior responsible members of the Khmer Rouge for alleged violations of international law and crimes perpetrated during the Cambodian genocide. DC-Cam is a leading research and non-governmental organization (NGO) whose mission is to research and record the Khmer Rouge era for the purposes of preserving memory and helping seek justice. DC-Cam houses the world's largest archive on the Khmer Rouge period with about 1 million pages of documents, photographs and video and audio files.

Over the past few years, DC-Cam has converted the documents from hard copy to digital data stored on external hard drives. Videos tell the harrowing story of the first days the Vietnamese came to Phnom Penh and discovered prisoners at notorious prisoner camps such as S-21 in 1979, and photos capture scenes of the Khmer Rouge army taking control of Phnom Penh's streets. DC-Cam is committed to securing the data for future generations, and worked with USAID's [Development Innovations](#) project in 2015 to develop a partnership that provides a long term solution to keep their data secured through the combination of grant funding and technical and financial support from internet service provider EZECOM.

Many NGOs in Cambodia receive their funding from large international donors, but over the years, accessing funding has become more challenging. Private sector partnerships with NGOs are relatively new in Cambodia, but more NGOs are starting to see the promise as more companies launch their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. "Of all of the donors we've had in the past 20 years, this is one of the first collaborations we've had with the private sector," said Dr. Eng Kok-Thay, former Deputy Director for Research at DC-CAM. "We would like to work with the private sector more in the future. We are happy that the private sector in Cambodia wants to contribute to social works and help the country move forward." DC-Cam has defined this priority in its new strategy as it raises funds for the future genocide museum and research center, the [Sleuk Rith Institute](#).

USAID Development Innovations' Chief of Party Kate Heuisler stresses the importance of partnerships like the USAID-DC-Cam-EZECOM activity to make donor funding go further. "Partnerships and co-funding arrangements bringing together private sector, traditional donors and civil society are going to be increasingly vital to the NGO sector in Cambodia," she said. "As donor funding pools constrict or get directed to other crises and regional priorities, many NGOs will have to source alternate funding resources and get creative about the way they look at project planning with new and different partners."

EZECOM, like other private sector companies in Cambodia, is committed to innovative partnerships. "Development Innovations is a strong EZECOM partner that helps identify impactful technology-enabled projects that need outside funding and helps us demonstrate our ongoing commitment to developing Cambodia," said EZECOM CEO Paul Blanche-Horgan. "The Secured Heritage partnership is one of many development projects we plan to support in the future."

Today, the DC-Cam archive is stored securely in multiple locations and is being managed by DC-Cam staff. DC-Cam is developing plans to make the archive available to the public in the longer term and hopes to catalyze the interest of new generations of Cambodians by using digital tools.

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