

Biography: Loung Ung



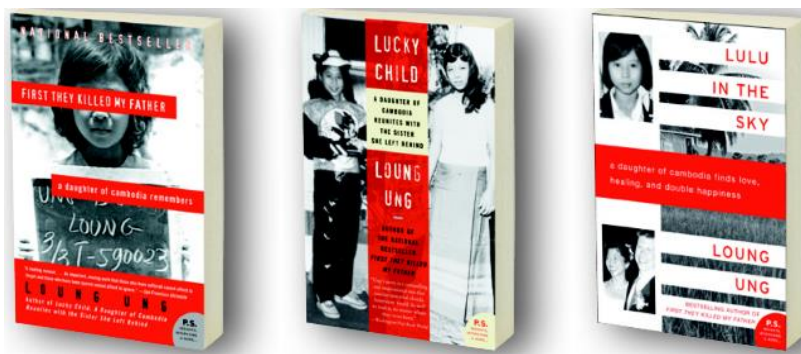
Author Loung Ung was only 5 years old when the Khmer Rouge soldiers stormed into her native city of Phnom Penh. Four years later, in one of the bloodiest genocide of the 20th century, and estimated 1.7 to 2 million Cambodians – out of a population of seven million – died from starvation, hard labor, diseases and executions under the regime. Among the victims were both Loung’s parents, two sisters, and 20 other relatives. In 1980, Loung, her older brother Meng and his wife Eang escaped to the United States as refugees and resettled in Vermont. In 1995, Loung returned to Cambodia for the first time to reunite with the family she left behind. Since then, she has made over thirty trips back to Cambodia and has devoted herself to justice and reconciliation in her homeland as first as the Spokesperson for a Campaign for a Landmine Free World, and now as writer and speaker. When she is not traveling or writing, Loung can be found at Market Garden Brewery, Bar Cento, and Speakeasy Nano in Cleveland, Ohio where she is a partner and food taster.



Author: Loung’s memoir, *First They Killed My Father; A Daughter of Cambodia Remember* is being made into a movie by director Angelina Jolie Pitt to be release in late 2016. Published in 2000 by HarperCollins Publishers, FTKMF is a national bestseller and recipient of the 2001 Asian/Pacific American Librarians’ Association award for “Excellence in Adult Non-fiction Literature”. FTKMF has been published in fourteen countries and translated into Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Khmer and other languages. She is also the author of *Lucky Child*, and *Lulu in the Sky*, and her books have been selected for numerous community and freshmen read programs, and are frequently taught in high schools and universities in the U.S. and overseas.



Activist: Loung began career in 1993 as an advocate at an abused women’s shelter in Maine where she worked to end violence against women both in the U.S. and internationally. In 1995, she moved to Washington DC to serve as the Spokesperson for the Campaign for a Landmine Free World, a position she held until 2005. Loung again expanded her activism reach in 2013, this time as one of the writers of ‘*Girl Rising*’. A groundbreaking film, *Girl Rising*, tells the stories of nine extraordinary girls from nine developing countries who face arranged marriages, domestic slavery, sex trafficking, and other injustices, and through their bravery and courage, fought for their right to be educated. Each girl’s story was written by a writer from her native country, and narrated by celebrated actresses including Cate Blanchett, Priyanka Chopra, Selena Gomez, Anne Hathaway, Salma Hayek, Alicia Keys, Freida Pinto, Meryl Streep, and Kerry Washington.



Speaker: Loung has spoken widely to schools, universities, corporations and conferences in the U.S., and internationally, including Stanford University, Dartmouth College, Georgetown University, Phillips Academy, Hathaway Brown, and Taiwan American School. Additionally, she has also been

a featured speaker at the Mexico 1 Million Youth Summit, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, UN Conference Against Racism and Discriminations in Durban, South Africa, and Child Soldiers Summit in Kathmandu, Nepal. In recognition of her work, The World Economic Forum selected Loung as one of the “100 Global Youth Leaders of Tomorrow.” Loung has been featured in The New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, London Sunday Times, Glamour, and more. Loung has also appeared on numerous televisions and radio shows, including CNN, the Diane Rheme Show, Talk of the Nation, Weekend Edition, Fresh Air with Terry Gross, and The Today Show. In addition, she has been the subject of an hour-long documentary for the German ARTE, Japanese NHK, and NECN. Additionally, Loung is also a founding partner of the Belgian Bier Markt, Bar Cento, and Market Garden Brewery in Cleveland, Ohio.

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“*First They Killed My Father* is a story of triumph of a child’s indomitable spirit over the tyranny of the Khmer Rouge I could not put the book down until I reached the end. Meeting Loung in person merely reaffirmed my admiration for her.” ~ Queen Noor of Jordan, author and humanitarian

“*First They Killed My Father* left me gasping for air. Loung Ung plunges her readers into a Kafkaesque world – her childhood robbed by Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge – and forces them to experience the mass murder, starvation, and disease that claimed half her beloved family. In the end, the horror of the Cambodian genocide is matched only by the author’s unbreakable spirit.” ~ Iris Chang, author of *The Rape of Nanking*

“Loung connected with students, staff and parents. Her sense of social justice and humanity has touched the minds, hearts and souls of our community. Although she is now gone, her influence will continue to resonate for many people.” ~ Mark R. Boyer, Assistant Superintendent Singapore American School

“Loung Ung taught me how to view life in a different way. I realize that I am fortunate to be living the life I live.” ~ Luis Gallegos, student

“Loung has written an eloquent and powerful narrative as a young witness to the Khmer Rouge atrocities.” ~ Dith Pran, whose wartime life was portrayed in the award winning film *The Killing Fields*