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Genocide Education in Cambodia

The Teaching of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)"

Fourth Commune Teacher Training Report

Kandal Province, April 5-11, 2011

By Sok-Kheang Ly

1. Introduction

A fourth round of the commune teacher training was organized and completed between April 5 and April 11, 2011, at Hun Sen Pedagogical School in Kandal province. As a part of its overall goals to educate commune teachers on Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history, Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has invited seventy two teachers across



Participants in the training

Kandal province to participate in the training. Nearly half of the trainees were female, while there was only one female trainer from Kampong Cham province.

This training involved a five-member team from DC-Cam, three national teachers, nine provincial teachers, and Prof. Sambo Manara, deputy director of History Department, Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). They all played a multi-faceted role in teaching the history textbook, modeling lessons, conducting presentations, and facilitating small groups.



A participant.

2. Pre-Training Activities

In preparation for the seven-day commune training to be held on April 5-11, 2011, DC-Cam's Genocide Education in Cambodia with five team members came to Hun Sen Pedagogical Training school on April 4, 2011. The timely arrival was to wait and welcome provincial trainers from different secondary and high schools. The team needed to make clear which classrooms were assigned for the training. A few minutes later, nine provincial teachers showed up. Also, there were two national teachers from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and Prof. Sambo Manara of Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP).

DC-Cam's Deputy Director Vanthan Peou Dara greeted the trainers and read the Ministry

directive. The directive guaranteed the trainers' understanding of the training and what would occur.

The pre-training meeting stressed the roles, tasks, and responsibilities of each trainer. For example, Mr. Nhik Chhun Chhat, Kampong Cham provincial teacher, would present the methodologies and modeling lessons on four chapters of the *Teacher's Guidebook*. Mr. Khat Thoeun, Kampong Cham provincial teacher, would present four chapters of the DK textbook.

Later, each teacher was provided with a few hand-outs, such as the teaching evaluation forms and directions on how to conduct the teaching practice for trainees. The meeting also ensured that all the trainers got to know the materials and could pose questions and challenges they expected for the coming training.

3. Daily Activities:

To mark the official launching of the fourth commune training, both trainers and trainees gathered at a conference hall of the Hun Sen Pedagogical Training School, Kandal province, on April 5, 2011. A five-member panel presided over the opening ceremony. The consecutive speeches to the participants were made for nearly two hours. Below is the excerpt from the speakers:



The opening ceremony

regretted the fact that no students from the pedagogical school were in attendance.

Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara, DC-Cam Deputy Director

Mr. Vanthan described how the training was organized by DC-Cam and it was being held in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. He stated that the training was designed to provide teachers with new methodologies and this was the fourth time for commune teacher training; moreover, he informed the audience that there would be a university lecturer training in July 2011. In regard to this fourth round, Mr. Vanthan encouraged all trainees to make work towards a smooth implementation of the new curriculum by avoiding any statements or approaches that could encourage revenge and hatred. He also reminded the national, provincial, and commune teachers of four important concepts: Genocide Prevention, Reconciliation, Justice and Democracy. Before thanking the trainees, he expressed his apologies in advance for any issues in organizing the training.

Mr. Sany Saro, Deputy Principal of Hun Sen Pedagogical Training School

He briefed the trainers and trainees about the general structure and number of students at the pedagogical school. He said this school has established a close collaboration with Belgium and Japan. At the end of his speech, he expressed his warm welcome to all teachers and hoped that all would pay an close attention to the coming training. However, he

Prof. Sambo Manara, Royal University of Phnom Penh

He emphasized the importance of studying history. It was his hope that the teachers would convey this knowledge to students. In so doing, the younger generation would do whatever they could to prevent genocide and it would enable them to maintain peace in Cambodia's future. The sustainment of peace is an indispensable mechanism to sustainable development and he encouraged the teachers to keep this peace concept in mind when teaching as a means of encouraging reconciliation.

Mr. Touch Sam-oeun, Head of Kandal Education Office

He gave a warm welcome to national, provincial, and commune teachers, saying that it was a great honor for Hun Sen Pedagogical Training School in Kandal Province to host this fourth commune training. He began by discussing DK history complaining that those who were born after the DK history occasionally regarded the history as a "myth." He worried that the current violence was attributed to the legacy of the deep-rooted and widespread brutality from the DK time period. Mr. Touch singled out two objectives of the training: the first objective is to supplement knowledge about the DK history and the second objective is to provide supplementary methodologies. With respect to the second objective, he discussed how teachers had two roles: teaching (transfer knowledge to others through methodological and psychological channels) and educating (students adopt good behaviors and live a peaceful life.) Teaching DK history is to foster reconciliation, peace, development, and happiness.

Before leaving the conference hall for the training class, Mr. Vanthan read name by name to ensure that each trainee could see which group they were in. Three big groups were divided. As stated in the schedule, the official opening of the ceremony ended at 9 a.m.

On the first day, Ms. Teng Sopheak Leaksmy, a national teacher, presented chapter one of DK textbook. She touched a range of historical events, such as the KR victory on April 17, 1975, forced evacuations, the cooperative system across Cambodia, the leading cycle of the DK government, the collapse on January 7, 1979, and the establishment of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). A subsequent debate focused on the UN seat, in which the KR still occupied. The trainees exchanged their perspectives on this topic.

Mr. Hun Sethann, a provincial teacher, presented chapters one and two from the *Teacher's Guidebook*. He suggested the trainees write down the lesson objectives on a flip chart. It would then make it easy for students to grasp the content of each lesson very well. Then, Mr. Sethan explained the *K-W-L* methodology. Afterward, Mr. Sethan taught lesson one of the *Guidebook's* chapter one as a model.

First, Mr. Sethan wrote down difficult words, and then he asked two students to read out loud to other trainees. To facilitate more trainee practice, Mr. Sethan divided the 24 trainees into three groups. Each group discussed, wrote their answers down on a flip chart, and attached the answers to the black board. A representative from each group came to further explain each point they wrote.

On the morning of the second day, the training proceeded with the screening of a film titled: "Baset and Prey Veng Prison in 1979 and KR Liberated Zone in

Kampong Cham in 1973," and "Tuol Sleng." It depicted the most barbaric killings at a prison in Prey Veng province with human remains scattering in that place. Most trainees expressed their shock when watching these films, supporting the notion that using visual arts is an effective way to let the trainees view the turbulent past of Cambodia. Visual images, moreover, deepen one's memory of certain concepts.

In the afternoon, Mr. Khat Thoeun, provincial teacher, started his presentation on chapters three and four of the DK textbook and *Teacher's Guidebook*. He showed



National teacher presenting methods in the teacher's guidebook

trainees the DK map of evacuation and linked this visual to his personal experiences about the 17 April 1975 evacuation order issued by the victorious DK forces. On the afternoon of April 6, 2011, nine groups consisting of 8 members were divided and assigned 30 minutes to practice teaching chapters three and four of the *Guidebook*.

On the morning of the third day, Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara reminded trainees of all the training materials, restated the objectives of

today's program, and encouraged trainees to be active in class activities and always prepare lesson plans. As stated in the schedule, Mr. Chan Kan, a provincial teacher, began his comprehensive presentation and skillfully connected the lesson to his personal experiences during the regime. His use of personal experiences captivated the attention of the other trainees' and many trainees raised questions. Generally, Mr. Vanthan addressed the trainees' questions.

In the afternoon, four teachers continued to model their teaching. A thirty-minute presentation by Mr. Chreng Chhorn, a guest speaker who is a trainee, covered his personal experience during the evacuation period. He stressed that at that time, he was jubilant when he learned that the war had ended. Hours later, military jeeps declared that the people were to leave Phnom Penh. In the beginning, the people began to wonder about the nature of this evacuation, but they were not afraid. At night-time, he noted that there was a gradual evacuation. He talked emotionally when he addressed the issue of a person being shot to death. During the evacuation, he was separated from his parents. He wished to return to Road no. 6. He began to cry as he explained his situation of no food and the fact that he was utterly alone. He heard that there was screaming of young and old people who suffered from illness. Many died on the road. He always prayed for those who helped him and provided him with food and shelter. Finally, he met his parents. At first glimpse, his parents did not recognize him. He again lost his composure and cried.

In relation to Mr. Chreng's speech, Mr. Ten Kimton, a national teacher, did a model teaching about the daily life under the KR regime and the security system. And a provincial teacher gave a presentation on lesson three of chapter three from the *Teacher's Guidebook*. He pointed out the administrative and methodological

aspects of the lesson, such as the objectives of the lesson, study materials, and the entire teaching process. He spoke at length about interview techniques and questionnaires.

On the sixth day, there was a presentation about on the core concept known as “A Vision: Land of Reconciliation,” brainstormed and designed by DC-Cam Director Youk Chhang in Preah Vihea province on December 25th, 2010. The concept is exclusively dedicated to DC-Cam’s Genocide Education in Cambodia project. Mr. Vanthan explained to the trainees and trainers that the vision was comprised of three angles. The first angle is the writing of “A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979),” and the introducing of the “Teacher’s Guidebook.” Both materials are used as a source to educate students about the DK history. The second angle is the ongoing trainings of 24 national teachers, 180 provincial teachers, and 834 commune teachers throughout Cambodia. Then, DC-Cam is planning to organize a genocide education at higher institutions in July 2011. And, the third angle is to conduct quality control. Asked by a trainee about when the teaching could be commenced, Mr. Vanthan responded that, upon return, all of the trainees could integrate the history into their teaching. Many schools in Cambodia are conducting the teaching of DK history already.

Mr. Vanthan further outlined that in support of the triangular model plan by Youk Chhang, DC-Cam has initiated the placement of memorials and book distribution; the publication of posters and newspaper articles; and the continuation of annual conferences and research/history projects in our villages. Overall, Mr. Vanthan emphasized that these initiatives aim at dealing with the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge regime and thus bringing reconciliation to the Cambodian people.

In addition, Mr. Vanthan also discussed the definition of genocide. A trainee stood up and explained that genocide was the intention to kill, either in whole or in part, ethnic, race, religious and national groups. In this response to this definition, Mr. Vanthan has stated that the genocide charges committed against the Cham people and ethnic Vietnamese including the Khmer Kapuchea Krom or Lower Khmer would fall within this definition. He also called the audience’s attention to the fact that four KR leaders such as Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan and Ieng Thirit were charged at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) for genocide.

At this point, Mr. Ten Kimton, a national teacher from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, took the stage to explain to the trainees about the “Quality Control” portion of the project. He recommended that teachers integrate DK history into their teaching when addressing subjects such as the global atrocities that occurred during the Nazi German regime or other mass killings. A trainee asked about the “different methodologies by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and DC-Cam.” Mr. Kimton responded that it was, in some cases, there were slight differences in the methodologies. In addition to Mr. Kimton, Prof. Sambo Manara took some time to clarify the methodologies to the trainees. As history teachers, we could use whatever methodologies we so choose, which is a convenient way of teaching DK history. Mr. Vanthan returned to the earlier discussion by pointing out that this training has qualified and enabled all the trainees to teach the DK history in their schools.

Over the last several days, most trainees appeared to have been in debate over the term “ideology.” Mr. Ten Kimton explained the term to the trainees by referring to the “Political Lexicon,” a reference published in Phnom Penh in 1983 by Reaksmei Padavoath Publication Institution. The lexicon defined “ideology” as “a set of class ideas on politics, legality, science, philosophy, morality, and arts.” Referring to a specific example, he stated that the most notable ideology is “class ideology,” which turns on economics and politics. The core ideology of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and other socialist countries is “Maxist-Leninist” ideology, which served the life-and-death interest of the worker class and was intended to change the world on the basis of the communist principle. In the capitalist countries, the core ideology could be described as a capitalist and imperialist class. The ideology could protect any regime they had installed.” (pp.115-116).

On the last day of the fourth commune teacher training, DC-Cam team and Prof. Sambo Manara summarized the core concepts of the training and reminded them of the methodologies, the future quality control that would be implemented at their own schools, and other relevant points. The training ended on April 11, 2011, at 12:00pm.

4. General Observations and Comments

The seven-day training of DK history for the fourth time has made good progress since its first iteration. National and provincial teachers were active in conveying their knowledge and experience to 72 trainees from Kandal province. In practice, the model teaching was organized to strengthen and consolidate their ability to teach. As usual, trainees carefully followed each step of the teaching methodologies.

However, it is recommended that they should not be shy or feel nervous. They should point out the objectives clearly, either verbally or in writing. They should be well-prepared for any lessons they were assigned, which means knowing when difficult words from the specific lessons may come up and having a plan to generate discussions and give homework to students. At the break, both trainers and trainees formed different groups to exchange views about the lesson plans, questions, and other topics related to the DK history.

During the seven-day training, trainees showed a remarkable improvement in presenting chapters from both the DK textbook and the *Teacher’s Guidebook*, with most trainees interweaving their personal experiences with the lessons. All trainees were very engaged and participated in the training. Because the trainees were divided up into nine groups of eight members each, all trainees were engaged in the training and learned the participatory model of teaching in a hands-on manner.



A national teacher Mr. Sambo Manara presenting KR history

5. Impacts

Provincial teachers were considered very familiar with the guidebook and textbook. They showed adeptness with all assignments. The pre-training meeting on April 4, 2011, was beneficial for the nine provincial teachers. The national teachers and DC-Cam team members offered insightful guidance to the provincial teachers and responded to all questions they posed.

On the morning of April 5, 2011, taking the experiences of the past three iterations of the commune-level training, DC-Cam made gender equality a primary focus. Female trainees accounted for nearly fifty percent of the trainees. On the first day, a female trainee expressed her own suffering inflicted upon during the KR regime. For example, she talked about her status as a widow, when her husband was killed during the KR regime. A trainee from Sa-ang District, Kandal province, stood up and explained his personal experiences during the KR regime. He explained how he fled to the Site Two camp in Thailand and lived under the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). A trainee suggested that the film screening should be materials should be required supplements to all schools.

On the second day, surprisingly, Ms. Sy Vy, a trainee of Takhmau city, who just gave a birth to a child one month ago, reversed her initial decision to abandon the training during one afternoon in which her baby became suddenly ill. Despite this circumstance, she decided to return to the training as usual. She said that she did not want to miss the training for four reasons: First, she was obligated to attend by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; Second, she wanted to learn about DK history; Third, she wanted the certificate that authorized her to perform future teaching of DK history; and Fourth and finally, she was the only history teacher from her school. With her husband looking after the baby within the training compound, Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara instructed DC-Cam's accountant to provide additional financial support for her husband. This incentive was given to ensure that Ms. Sy Vy could participate for the entire training. DC-Cam wished her every success in her study.

In a different case, although suffering from high-blood pressure, Mr. Khat Thoeun, a provincial teacher, remained committed to coming to the training. He said that it was his privilege to be a trainer of DK history. Considering his health, he was allowed to undergo a medical check-up often to ensure he was healthy during the training.

As a model guest speaker during the training, Mr. Nhik Chhun Chhat, a provincial teacher, was emotional, when it came to the topic of evacuation. He had a vivid memory of his parents' death during the 17 April 1975 evacuation. He narrated his experiences and story for about thirty minutes.

On the fourth day of the commune training, it was noted that there was a significant improvement in trainees' ability. For example, a trainee reiterated that she could not teach DK history before this training. After the one-week training, she could do it with confidence. According to older and more senior trainees, many younger, junior trainees appeared to learn quickly. Following the examples of the more senior trainees, the younger trainees carefully prepared their lesson plans and presentations. Although the senior trainees could draw on their direct experiences

and tremendous suffering in teaching their lessons, junior trainees demonstrated with equal energy an attachment and empathy for the traumatic events and horrors of the history. Both young and old trainees became emotional when they debated KR's ideology. An older trainee witnessed his mother's arrest and ultimate disappearance, which affected his life immensely.

A notable impact for the training day (April 9, 2011) was the affirmation by Mr. Sao Ny, a trainee, who said that as a history teacher, he was committed to finally incorporating DK history into his classes. He said that although he had a textbook in hand, he was still unable to teach. But after this training, he felt confident that he would be able to teach it in the future and looked forward to doing so.

6. Strengths and Weaknesses of National and Provincial Teachers

National teachers have proven capable in delivering their own presentations and providing explanations to most issues. However, there was still room for improvement in their general knowledge, methodology, and art of speaking. Prof. Sambo Manara gave a long, detailed and impressive presentation on two chapters of the DK textbook. This set a good model for each provincial teacher from the first day onward. Similarly, Mr. Ten Kimton, a national teacher, led the class in discussions on the issues surrounding the aspect of the Cold war and the Indochinese war. National trainers' model teaching and presentations further helped provincial trainers in learning the methodologies in the guidebook.

While most provincial trainers were well-prepared for their presentation on methodologies, some remained confused with the *K-W-L* chart. In practice, some trainers gave erroneous instructions to trainees on the need to fill in *K*, *W*, and *L* columns. National teachers helped clarify this confusion by saying that at the start of teaching, *K* and *W* chart would be filled in. At the end of teaching, the *L* column of the chart would be written down to evaluate new knowledge for comparison with the *K* and *W* columns.

Within the seven-day training, both national and provincial teachers were flexible with responding to questions and gave a polished presentation of lessons. They showed remarkable improvement from the first day of training, while a few provincial trainers suggested their need for more research on DK history and the task of expanding their knowledge on global events and history.

7. Challenges and Solutions

The fourth commune training has made good progress with trainees' ability to understand and use the new methodologies as well as deliver the training in a more constructive way. On this regard, careful planning helped ensure that the training remained on the right path. Despite this success, many educational and logistical challenges



Mr. Ten Kimton, a national teacher, presenting the methods in the teacher's guidebook

continue and are described below.

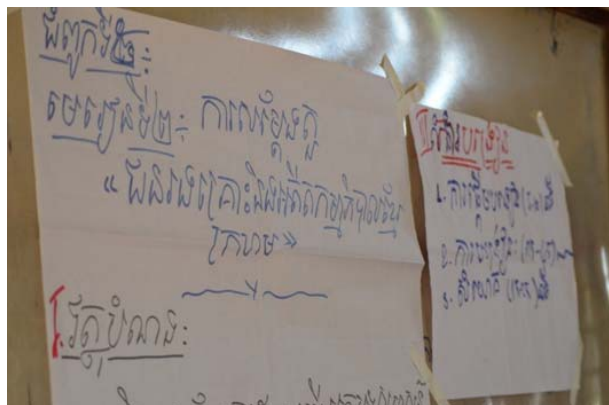
Educational Challenges

Lesson Plans: When asked about whether they prepared lessons, most responded “Not Yet.” The teachers said the previous lesson plans proved different from the “group division, tasks, and responsibilities.”

One trainer was very familiar with the lesson plans he used to practice in accordance with the Ministry of Education’s five steps including greeting, attendance, and classroom environment; revision and connecting to new lesson; actual teaching; summary; and homework; and three columns such as teacher’s activities, content of the lesson and student’s activities. He had yet to understand DC-Cam’s main steps including objectives, materials, launch, explore, and summary. A national teacher from the Ministry of Education helped explain and model how to mould the Ministry’s lesson plan format with the Guidebook format for effective teaching. Mr. Pong-Rasy Pheng explained to all the provincial teachers about his practical experience in teaching. He mentioned the *K-W-L* chart and encouraged teachers to divide their students into group discussions.

Material Familiarity: Some teachers have not read through the materials because of minor changes in teaching assignments, which caused some confusion. All the trainees deserved a clear explanation about the DK textbook and *Teacher’s Guidebook* in addition to clear teaching assignments.

Need Guidance from national teachers: Some provincial teachers have had limited knowledge about how to do the present lessons from the teacher’s guidebook. All of them started teaching DK history for the first time during this training. Thus, they needed considerable help from national teachers. The national teacher, Mr. Ten Kimton, gave a detailed explanation on the methodologies. A day later, all the provincial teachers showed great improvement in implementing the task.



Lesson plan on flip chart

Commune trainees had many questions on the teaching. Without clear guidance from teachers on how the textbook and Guidebook interrelated, most commune teachers found it very complicated in using the two books.

Strengthening team members: Some provincial teachers seemed to worry about the questions posed by trainees. National teachers spent

many time strengthening each teacher’s flexibility to respond to any questions. After the seven-day training, the provincial trainers gradually learned how to deal with challenging issues and questions.

Class control: Although national teachers made every effort to provide detailed explanations to the questions from the trainees, some trainees chose to talk to each other, which posed a distraction to other trainees. To mitigate this issue, both national and provincial trainers have tried to keep all the trainees focused on the task at-hand.

Phone distraction: There were sometimes phones ringing during training. Even if all the trainees were initially instructed to switch off or keep their phone vibrating, many ignored this and kept their phones on. However, after a few days, the issue appeared to resolve itself as most phones became quiet.

Time management: Given the limited time, objectives of each lesson should be written down by trainers and trainees in advance. During the training, it would be quicker to have the objectives prescribed, thus saving time. Also, although there was a set time of actual teaching, some provincial trainers completed their lessons ahead of time. The trainers were not demanding enough in having early finishers to conduct a discussion session, even if generally speaking most lessons were performed very well.

There was a question from trainees about the daily schedule. They complained that they felt uncomfortable with the schedule, which started from 7:30a.m to 12:00p.m. and restarted again from 1:30p.m to 4:30p.m. DC-Cam team members kindly asked them to abide by the schedule as we have already succeeded in implementing it for five days now.

Teaching assignment: Some trainees were assigned to teach four times, while most trainees taught only two times. DC-Cam teams proved to be flexible with the assignment. Teachers with four assigned trainings were reduced to three assigned times. Next time, there should be a standard maximum of three times per trainee. Evidently, a female teacher expressed her disappointment with the three-time assignment. This problem has been solved by appointing a new trainee to replace her at one session. In the future, there should be a clear list of assignments that all the trainees should follow without making any changes.

Health: A provincial teacher, Mr. Khat Thoeun, suffered from high blood pressure. This hampered his ability to sit and follow the training process. At noon, he became dizzy and felt unstable. As a result, a DC-Cam team member allowed him to take a rest to regain energy each day and then drive home to a nearby hospital in the afternoon. However, he kept involving in the training for the entire week.

Caring about assignment: Trainees seemed to care too much about their assignments. They took less interest in the actual model teaching conducted by provincial teachers than they did with the administrative organization of the practice teaching sessions. Every time, Q & A session was allowed. Trainees always posed questions that directly related to their upcoming assignments.

Limited ability: Before their presentations of the DK textbook, provincial teachers informed the trainees about their diminished knowledge and research (in comparison to the national trainers) on the textbook materials. Given this diminished confidence, the provincial trainers did not answer many questions, and national teachers normally entered the stage to come to aid.

Most provincial trainers had prepared their lessons. However, a few provincial trainers had very limited knowledge of the DK history and they provided weak presentations. Thus, many questions were posed to them. In addition, trainees complained that thirty-minutes was too short to practice their teaching.

Electricity: There were frequent power outages during the training. Given prior experience of power outages, the training should, in the future, not rely on the slide presentation. It has an adverse effect on the training process.

Teacher-centered and student-centered approach: Trainees found it difficult to implement the student-centered approach as there was a lack of materials such as the DK textbook. Students have few materials to consult with if they were provided with any assignment. So, there were general complaints about how to teach DK history if there are only five copies of the textbooks at the school's library. Often, and on top of this sparse number, even these books vanished from the library. Thus, trainees pointed out that the teacher-centered approach was the only do-able process for their schools.



Trainee practices teaching

Lesson Practice for Trainees:

Trainees practiced teaching as planned. Most trainees followed each step of the methodologies, such as stating objectives verbally or in writing. The question was that some trainees did not emphasize all the objectives from each lesson and did not give critical questions to students for discussion. Regarding feedback, trainees commented that the model trainee should speak clearly and add any answers that the students failed

to give. Trainees should make every effort to encourage students to engage in class activities. Each trainee should be able to have in hand the evaluation form, while there is only one copy in each group. At the end of the model teaching, each trainee should have an obligation to give constructive feedback.

Loopholes in methodological presentation: Provincial teachers should clearly understand each step of the methodologies in the guidebook before each presentation. Without a thorough reading and a clear organization, it was hard for trainees to listen to the presentation and use it as a model. At most, trainees were

confused with both materials and the model training sessions. During the seven-day training, both trainers and trainees have made a significant progress in conducting presentations and modeling teaching with prepared lesson plans.

Wrong Spellings in Khmer: Both trainers and trainees should be careful with the Khmer spelling written down on the flip charts and black board. Even though the main focus is on DK history and teaching methodologies, efforts should be made to encourage all trainees to address this bad habit.

Material differences over zone number: Provincial trainers debated at length about how many zones should be the most appropriate answer. The question is that the Ministry of Education's number is seven, while the DK textbook is six. However, DC-Cam team members encouraged all the trainers to choose the "six" answer. The issue stems from the fact that the KR's map was published in 1976, and it shows only six zones.

- **Logistical Challenges**

Training site: On the first day of the training, this was a big challenge. The three classrooms were in close proximity to a construction site with distracting sounds of bulldozers and earth-loading trucks. Dust filled the room causing teachers great disappointment with the classroom environment. Plumes of smoke kept circulating in the room, irritating trainees' eyes. In response, DC-Cam's team members decided to move to another building, where the room was a bit humid. There was no fan and very little light. However, it was more convenient in terms of concentration for all trainees.

Technical issue: While all the trainers watched the film with great curiosity, the electricity cut off. It took almost 10 minutes to restart the screening. After that, they needed to replay the film. The trainees spent twice the amount of time in watching the film as a result. Our team should have informed the person who was in charge of the power generator in advance to give us notice if the power would be cut off so power could be continued.

Attendance: Some trainees came late or missed the first session of the training. Attention should be paid to the registration of the trainees before the start of the training. Quick measures were taken to avoid this mistake. Attendance was closely monitored thereafter.

Photos in Textbook: A trainee was curious about the photos of KR leaders in the textbook. He suggested that there



Group discussion in the afternoon teaching practices

should be a clear caption for these photos. In response, national teachers and DC-Cam encouraged the trainee to use it as a foundation to do more research. As a history teacher, it is important for them to recognize the value in conducting personal research, study, and professional development. As a side-note to this issue, the lack of captions has been addressed in the newest version of the DK history textbook.

Class Participation: Each class took part in the training with enthusiasm. National and provincial teachers adopted a flexible approach to deal with any passive trainees. For example, trainers pointed or called on those who sat close to passive trainees, which caused them to awaken without public ridicule. Using this technique transformed passive trainees into active ones.

Class Preparation: The starting time for lesson practice was originally 1:30p.m on April 6, 2011. However, the some of the classrooms needed to be unlocked in preparation for the afternoon session, causing a delay in the lessons by as much as twenty minutes. The groups mitigated this delay by adjusting each individual's assigned time so there was a fair amount of time for each person to present and receive feedback.

Evaluation form: Among the nine groups of eight members, some groups had informed their members about the evaluation form provided to national and provincial teachers on April 4, 2011. Some groups failed to tell trainees about the criteria in the form, which was used to evaluate the trainees practice teaching. Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara and Sok-Kheang Ly followed up with all the groups to ensure this evaluation criteria was made aware to all trainees. Within minutes, all groups effectively followed the guideline in the form. In so doing, other trainees, who acted as students, were able to evaluate the teaching practice. This would also enable others to correct any mistakes they had observed. Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara encouraged all the trainees to follow every point that was listed in the form. However, some trainees refrained from criticizing others for fear that their turn would also be subject to strong criticism. There should be an evaluation form for all trainees. This puts them in a position to evaluate the teaching in an efficient way.

Mr. Pong-Rasy Pheng recommended that:



The afternoon teaching practices

1. Participants should be active in every small group and always provide comments on the teaching.
2. Time of reading and describing pictures should be no longer than five minutes.
3. Model trainees should act as a real teacher.

4. Reading as a group should be created to avoid noise in the classroom.
5. Model trainees should be well dressed.

Model teaching: The teaching practices involving four trainees were implementable. Trainees made their lesson plans and taught in small groups. On numerous occasions, the teaching did not strictly follow the methodologies.

Comment on regulation: Prior to the training, every single point of Regulations for Commune Teachers who participated in the fourth commune training was read to ensure that all were well informed. However, some trainees complained at point 13, which stated that: “Must respect women’s rights; must not speak or behave to show contempt or cause sexual harassment.” Their complaints said that there should be no such regulation. Rather, as teachers, they should merely be informed that they all must conduct themselves in a professional manner. In response, Mr. Pong-Rasy Pheng stated that it was a requirement from donor countries to state this regulation and to enforce these points in practice.

Supplementary materials: Trainees raised questions regarding the need for supplementary materials. Trainers did their utmost to answer these questions. In an attempt to give them concrete materials, trainers and DC-Cam team distributed two sets of documents – “Kampuchea’s UN Seat: Justice Upheld,” and “Royal Letter of Samdech Head of State to Both Parliaments.” Both materials could be a significant reference when they return to their respective secondary and high schools.

Training materials: Trainees were satisfied with the materials such as textbook “A History of Democratic Kampuchea,” Teacher’s Guidebook, Student Workbook, Prison Book, KR Chronology, KR Glossary, DVD “Breaking the Silence,” Magazine “Searching for the truth,” Booklet Case 002, and other necessary materials. However, a trainee suggested that a writing book and a pen should be included in the package.

Unfavorable atmosphere: The month of April represents the hottest month of the year in Cambodia. Trainees found it comfortable with the raining in the morning, while they were exhausted by the afternoon heat.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The fourth commune teacher training succeeded in training seventy two trainees, most of whom were history teachers from different secondary and high schools across Kandal province. According to the national and provincial trainers, the seventy two trainees were a good number for enabling all the trainees to



Participants teaching practices

form small groups. All trainees were assigned to do model teaching and they presented at least three times during the training. All group members participated in giving feedback, and no one was quiet or left out of the feedback session that followed each practice lesson. Without a doubt, the training inspired the trainees to work harder in the future and make a full commitment to the training. Learning and practicing are the strength of the training.

Workshop on DK history textbook: Provincial teachers recommended that DC-Cam organize a workshop designed to study the textbook in greater detail. They would like to learn about the history and have more time to hear explanations from historians and other relevant experts.

Trainers: With trainees practicing lessons, trainers should encourage trainees to follow the methodology in the guidebook. If the trainees failed to address any points, the trainers should comment and correct the trainees. Trainers should give clear instructions to all the trainees and encourage a professional atmosphere by not making jokes during model teaching. Model teaching conducted by the trainees needs a clear lesson plan; otherwise the teaching process would end before the established time.



Guest Speakers: Guest speakers are one of the most effective ways of engaging trainees in the study of DK history. The trainees listened attentively to the guest speaker in Kandal province. It would be great if teachers of DK history are able to invite their own guest speaker, who is living near his/her school. But, as mentioned in the guidebook, guest speakers and their audiences need to be properly prepared. A guest speaker's story can resonate with the audience, causing potential trauma. In addition, a guest speaker's mere telling of his or her story can have a powerful impact on his/her ability to suppress long-forgotten traumatic events. Both speaker and audience must be adequately prepared.

Daily reminder of Training's Objectives: Besides reviewing the objectives of the daily program, both national and provincial teachers should try to remind all the trainees of the core concepts/goals of the commune training, which is designed to “prevent genocide, maintain peace, foster reconciliation through the DK history, and uphold democracy and human rights.”

Visiting Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum: After the training on S-21 or Tuol Sleng Genocide museum, many trainees suggested that it would be great if they could visit the facility at any time during the training. This would enable them to convey a better informed message to their students.



9. Appendix: Questions from trainees

- What is “Angkar”?
- Who is the Khmer Rouge?
- Why Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk did not tell his countrymen about who were the leaders of the KR regime?
- Were there any reasons besides the threat of US bombardment?
- How many points were DK’s policies?
- How many people died during the KR regime?
- Why did King Sihanouk join the revolution?
- Why did China and Soviet, communist states, oppose to each other?
- Why did China decided not to help KR when the VN forces attacked Cambodia?
- Was it correct that Khmer Rouge had two groups—one supporting VN and another China? Who were the members of the respective groups?

- Why did Pol Pot choose to establish an alliance with China?
- What were the common and opposing stances between China and Soviet?
- What was the Issarak movement at night because there was only a day and night Issarak movement?
- Why were Nuon Chea condemned or mentioned during the early 1980s?
- Why did Pol Pot kill technicians?
- Why was an autonomous region established?
- Was Samdech Sihanouk involved in the eight principles of the KR?
- What would be the disadvantage for the KR if Samdech Sihanouk did not return?
- What was the relation between the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK)?

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