

**DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA**  
**GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA**

**Quality Control on the Teaching of**  
**“A History of Democratic Kampuchea(1975-1979)”**

**Report from Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap**  
**May 20-27, 2012**

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**1. Introduction**

On May 20, 2012, the quality control team made a trip out to Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces to observe the effectiveness of the integration



*Quality Control team meeting with the Director of Oddar Meanchey's Provincial Education Office*

of DK history in the classroom. Classroom monitoring is part of the team's nation-wide efforts to assess the effectiveness of history, geography, and Khmer literature teachers teach the history of Democratic Kampuchea to their students. In order to get a better understanding of

the educational status of the school system, and the community, the team interviewed school department officials and principals and held a public forum in both the rural and urban areas. During the eight days of quality control administration, Mr. Ly Sok-Kheang and Mr. Dy Khamboly of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) collaborated with Mr. Cheng Hong, a representative from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS).

The table below outlined the evaluation process in Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces.

<b>Quality control project objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching of <i>A History of Democratic Kampuchea</i>.</li><li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials: (1) Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history textbook, (2) Teacher's Guidebook and (3) Student</li></ul>
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	Workbook. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the integration of DK history into daily lessons.</li> </ul>
<b>Data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-hour observation</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Surveys</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom observation checklist</li> <li>• Questionnaire for teacher</li> <li>• Questionnaire for student</li> <li>• Interview questions</li> </ul>
<b>Types of school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban, rural and remote areas</li> </ul>
<b>Number of classes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three high schools and one secondary school</li> </ul>
<b>Average number of students per class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40-50</li> </ul>
<b>Approximate number of students with textbook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA</li> </ul>

## 2. Pre-Evaluation Activities



*A classroom at Samrong Secondary School, Oddar Meanchey*

On the first day of the quality control administration, the team approached Mr. Ing Borath, Director of Oddar Meanchey Provincial Education Office to seek his permission to observe three schools in Oddar Meanchey province. Having prior knowledge of DC-Cam, Mr. Ing readily gave his seal of approval. Afterwards, the team asked for some

general information about the province's education sector from Mr. Ing. Mr. Ing said that the province contains five districts with one high school per district. The number of secondary schools stands at twenty one, which is not for every student in every commune. There are 1,485 teachers in total. There are over 20,000 students in primary schools, 3,908 in secondary school and 4,239 in high schools. On average, each classroom has about 50 to 60 students.

The team also received an approval from the Director of Siem Reap's

Provincial Education Office to observe the schools as planned.

No.	Schools	Teachers	Female Teachers	Students	Classrooms
1.	Samrong Secondary School	42	22	1,038	N/A
2.	Banteay Ampil High School	37	11	945	21
3.	Hun Sen Trapeang Prasat High School	14	4	284	11
4.	Svay Leu High School	9	4	307	7
5.	Kralanh High School	51	14	1,121	22
6.	10 Makara High School	165	52	4,868	84

### 3. Background of the High Schools



*Mr. Cheng Hong instructing students on how to fill in the evaluation form.*

During the eight-day of quality control administration in Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces, the team assessed six randomly selected secondary and high schools. In an effort to gather a comprehensive information, the team observed two schools in urban

areas, and four schools in rural areas. In addition to comparing and contrasting what each school has faced, the team took keen interest in tracing down the history of each school. Two cases were raised at this point. Mr. Phou Uk, Principal of Banteay Ampil High School said that the establishment of the school was made at a time when Cambodia was still at war. However, public demands for education inspired the people in the community to construct a school. Mr. Leng Vy, then Banteay Ampil District Chief, took the initiatives with greater support of the people. During its establishment, this area was surrounded by the Khmer Rouge (KR) forces. The school was built in 1985 with only two classrooms. At that time, it accommodated over 100 students coming from various communes across the district. During the first year, there were only sixth and seventh grades. Teachers were singled out to go to that area. Subsequent trainings were needed for the newcomers. Mr. Phou reiterated that

short courses were organized for the teachers.

During the civil war, Banteay Ampil High School was isolated in time of the KR's attack in 1989. All teachers, students and other government officials fled to Samrong provincial town of Oddar Meanchey. People became homeless, and the students had nowhere to study. Banteay Ampil district was temporarily created inside the provincial area. It was based there between 1989 and 1997. When the war came to an end, some 80 percent of the students came back while others decided not to return to Banteay Ampil district. The non-returned people remained to work and study there.

When the returnees approached their community for the first time in 1989, they found that their school was burnt to the ground by warring faction intended to capture this district in a military strategy. In that same year, a royalist group widely known as FUNCINPEC (National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful,



*Students working in groups.*

and Cooperative Cambodia) movement began their occupation of this area and advanced to Kok Morn commune. In 1991, although the fighting ceased and Paris Peace Agreement was signed, instability and insecurity remained in the area.

In 1997, another round of fighting took place for several months between FUNCINPEC and CPP at a time when the reconstruction of the school started. There were many contributors such as the people, organization and the state helping to build the school. Now the school has been rebuilt using bricks funded by the Ministry and Hong Heut (a native of Banteay Ampil) Association from the US.

During the Thai-Cambodian conflict, the students and the general public were scared. They lost focus on their study. For example, the school was closed in the month of April in 2011. Teachers and students were unable to complete their curriculum because of the disruption. Now the school enjoys the stability of society.

In other words, Mr. Keo So, Principal of 10 Makara High School said that since its existence in 1929, the school was originally part of a primary school of Siem Reap Krong. Between 1970 and 1975, the school was transformed into Siem Reap Krong

School. Many of the teachers during that time volunteered to join the army. In April 1975, the school was turned into the ammunition warehouse. A bombardment in Siem Reap provincial town was dropped on this school on 26 of February 1976.

Shrapnel scattered compound of the school. From 1979 to 1984, the school remained abandoned with UXO everywhere. In October 1984, the provincial office allowed the school to re-open with only three classrooms.

The re-opening of this school was a congratulatory sign for the general public in the town. However, in 1986, the province cooperated with Vietnam to construct five buildings. It was named as "10 Makara" school in which Siem Reap was liberated. It was a historical day for Siem Reap province. The school was built as a remembrance. In 2004, Prime Minister Hun Sen offered to construct one building.

#### **4. General Observation and Challenges for Schools**

During the eight-day administration of the quality control in Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces, the team made a general observation on potentialities and challenges that the six selected schools have faced. Interviews with provincial education officials, school principals, teachers and students brought up six issues.

*The Shortages of Classrooms:* When it comes to the question of number of classrooms, non-respondents reiterated the insufficiency of space regardless of the location of schools- urban or rural.. Mr. Mann Sokha, a geography



*Students reading DK Textbook.*

teacher at Samrong Secondary School, Oddar Meanchey province, said the lack of classrooms remains. Student attendance is divided into morning and afternoon session. The school management team has plans to renovate one old building which was built during the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) to meet the high demands for additional classrooms. Ms. Leng Srei Mom, Deputy Principal of Svay Leu High School, said the most challenging thing is that there is a shortage of classroom. Similarly, Mr. Sean Phalla, Deputy Principal of Kralanh High School said that it is a big problem for his school, too. Students only have 20 rooms to study in, and are in need of at least four more classrooms. Currently, the school is trying to seek support

for funding through NGOs, the Provincial Education Office, and other stakeholders. Other schools anticipated a similar problem in the near future.

*The Inadequate Teachers:* While thousands of teachers are recruited annually, schools everywhere are still experiencing a shortage of teachers. According to the Director of Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sports, Mr. Ing Borath said that there is a shortage of teachers in the field of social sciences. Many teachers would like to transfer from this province. Mr. Borath said smilingly that the province is not attractive enough to keep teachers here. His comment also resonated in the words of Mr. Nung Sambath, Principal of Hun Sen Trapeang Prasat High School. Mr. Nung said the lack of experienced teachers in citizenship and geography is real. Mr. Nung has sent the request to Provincial Education Officials to provide more teachers. Without satisfying the school's demand, Mr. Nung adopted a flexible approach with this issue. For example, he encouraged teachers of geography to teach history or teachers of chemistry to also teach physics. In another instance, 10 Makara High School, which is located in provincial town and contains 165 teachers, also expressed his concern over the lack of expert teachers in social science such as English language, citizen morality, etc. Overall, teachers of each subject only prefer to teaching in towns and cities as they could have the chance to earn extra money to support their family. In many cases, their dispatch to rural areas has faced a lot of challenges for those teachers and the students. According to a deputy principal in Siem Reap province who said that while teachers rarely show up and teach their students, others complained that it's difficult to live far away from their homes or family or to be able to make a living.

*Insufficient Study Materials:* Meeting students' demand for materials continues to be a problem. Mr. Ing Borath said on average, there is only one book for three students. In classrooms, teachers seem to not have enough materials to present to the students. For example, teachers need maps of Cambodia to describe specific locations.

*Drop-out Rate (economic pressure in schools):* Given its close proximity to Cambodia-Thai border, students in Oddar Meanchey have a high drop-out rate. One of the most important factors is the economic pressure brought on students and their families. It's the reason of their drop-out. Mr. Mann Sokha, a geography teacher at Samrong Secondary School of Oddar Meanchey province with five-year teaching experience expressed his serious concern over the drop-out rate at his school. He said approximately a dozen of his 40 students abandoned their schooling. Earning their living represents one of the primary reasons. His students would go to Thailand to perform work on farming, factory, fishing, or help their parents make a living. Similarly, Mr. Phou Uk, Principal of Banteay Ampil High School said that many students abandoned their schooling because of family's economic problems. Students provide a workforce to help earn a living. Each household focuses only on making a living.

On another case, the team found that the fluctuation of student attendance depends on occasional migration. Mr. Nung Sambath, Principal of Hun Sen Trapeang Prasat High School, said the school is very isolated and many people are newcomers. They just attended the class for a short occasion. Students could not attend the school properly. At his school, the drop-out rate accounts for nearly 30 percent. The reasons include marriage, migration, and earning a living. Some died from road accidents, which is relatively high. In order to prevent this, Mr. Nung sent an information letter to the parents to remind their children about coming to school. It is very rare to see their responses. In other cases, Mr. Nung informed the local authority about the high drop-out. Their priority is making business rather than studying. At school, on Monday and Saturday, Mr. Nung frequently raised about discipline, order, environment. Regarding the drop-out, Mr. Nung even warned his students about getting their names deleted if they do not attend school regularly. However, the principal understands how difficult it is to live so far from school at times 30 or 40 kilometers from school.

That's why some even argued that it's the era of materialism that inspires students to think of income. For example, some of his teachers cross the border dangerously to log wood. Some times, Thai soldiers kill them for crossing the border. Mr. Nung mentioned that the death case is frequently taking place in Oddar Meanchey province. Mr. Nung complained that his high school almost became quiet when students leave for work. Now the market of luxurious wood plunged, thus the students stopped crossing the border.

Ms. Leng Srei Mom, a Deputy Principal of Svay Leu High School echoed the same words, "students' drop-out rate is very high as they need to work on their rice fields." At the start, there are many students coming to schools. Approximately 30 percent abandoned their schools after the rice work. If not that, then it is because of age and marriage,. The students' drop-out and absence of teachers could be a closely related issue. Mr. Mann said that he is at a loss when it comes to preventing the dramatic drop-out because the solution to this issue depends on the growth of each household's living standards.

*The Limited Incentives for Students:* While students in rural areas faced economic barriers, more scholarships should be provided as an incentive to complete their high school. Up to now, there are very few scholarships. Mr. In Kin, born in 1967, Deputy Principal of Samrong Secondary School said that scholarships for impoverished students are provided by Mekong Organizations (over ten students), Buddhism for Development Organization, and the MoEYS provided 180,000 Riel per month for one student. Fifty-three students of Samrong Secondary School obtained the scholarship, and six of them still abandoned their schooling.

## **5. Integration of DK History**

Only through the flexibility, knowledge, and skillful arts of integration could the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history be taught and learned, discussed and remembered by students for generations. It's understandable that teachers have to compete with time to wrap up their lesson plan endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). However, the constant mentioning about the history should be a do-able task to keep students communicating with the history. According to the team's observations at six schools in two provinces, the team found out various approaches that each teacher brought this history to students. While some devoted their time to the DK history, others just integrated some in it. Below



*Beng Mealea Temple in ruin in the aftermath of chronic war, May 2012*

are the examples of how each teacher has conducted their class:

Mr. Mann

Sokha, a geography teacher of Samrong Secondary School of Oddar Meanchey province went through the lesson (chapter two: countries in

Asia, lesson 2: India). Mr. Mann guided his students to focus on religious conflict (Hinduism and Islam on the Kashmir territorial dispute between India and Pakistan), ethnic and racial conflict, etc. Mr. Mann seemed to have not tried to link those issues to what happened during the DK. Mr. Mann seemed not to understand how the integration mean. However, in an interview with Mr. Mann after his class, he said he integrated the DK history only when he touched on the issue of economic and political aspects, living condition, and the population. Sometimes, Mr. Mann decided not to integrate the DK history as a specific lesson is extremely long that require him to wrap up in one hour.

Mr. San Chhev, a history teacher at Banteay Ampil High School said **that** he integrates DK history in classrooms when it comes to the migration topic. He began by reminding students of two tourist attractions - natural resort and genocide point. He further explained by showing the students with his own laptop. Students expressed their shock with the mass atrocities and hard labors without meals. Students asked Mr. Chhev about whether it wass true or not. Mr. Chhev pointed out that it was not fabricated in films, but reflected the true nature of Cambodia's civil war and genocide.

Mr. Chhorn Mon, a history and geography teacher at Hun Sen Trapeang Prasat High School said that the integration of DK history was conducted by using methodologies by the MoEYS and DC-Cam. For example, Mr. Chhorn asked students about why the KR regime killed, got people to overwork and starve. According to the observation team, the students expressed their strong desire to learn about the DK. Mr. Chhorn often stressed that the teaching of DK regime was not about revenge and malice. Mr. Chhorn was cautious teaching about this issue as many of students' parents served during the DK period and currently served in the high post in the military command. He feared that his students would get angry at an inappropriate or unreasonable explanation. Students sometimes asked him about why KR regime killed the people? His explanation aimed to provide an answer to fit their contemporary lifestyle in their own communities.

Mr. Saury Oddam, a history teacher at 10 January High School said that he integrated DK history through the Ministry's curriculum and the methods by DC-Cam. Mr. Saury often led discussions with students who took strong interest in those lessons. The DK history led students to draw comparison with the other Cambodian history. They were interested to learn about work, healthcare, brutality and killings of the time. They sometimes have difficulty believing in that history. However, Mr. Saury showed them the pictures and materials of what happened. Students asked Mr. Saury about why the regime came to power and its policy of leaving millions of people dead. Mr. Saury could not answer, especially about the DK regime being led by King Sihanouk at the beginning. One student asked why he was allowed to govern the country. Mr. Saury responded that it was a political issue that everyone wondered about. In reality, other KR leaders such as Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary, etc., were the real leaders who exercised the power.



*Royal Cambodian Armed Forces Guarding Ta Moan Temple in Oddar Meanchey province, May 2012.*

One important notice was that there was no consistent advice from school administrators on whether the DK history should be integrated or not. It's a kind of on-and-off effort. For example, Ms. Leng Srei Mom, Deputy Principal at Svay Leu High School said she has yet to integrate the DK history in classrooms. She complained about the insufficient time to do it as she conducts the class in economics. However, she touched on the issue of food rations. Ms. Leng believed that students believed in it as the students came across the actual armed fighting during the late 1990s. Ms. Leng has no knowledge about whether the integration of DK history was included. It is very rare to come up with the initiatives to get students to learn about the DK. Over the last few years, students have taken strong interest in the history. Most of the people in Svay Leu district are mixed between the KR survivors and former KR cadres. However, Ms. Leng stressed that there has not been a problem

Mr. Sean Phalla, Deputy Principal at Kralanh High School said that the former deputy and Mr. Morn often discussed the DK history. The principal often instructed the teachers to disseminate the history. Mr. Sean even informed them about the books available in the library. Geography, history and citizen morality teachers always integrate this history in their classrooms. Students want to learn about it. In terms of interest, students have the same rate of interest as other subject areas. Students asked new questions that each teacher was flexible to answer. Each teacher could use their own experience to answer.

Mr. Keo So, Principal at 10 Makara High School said previously that the school has not fully integrated the DK history because the Ministry's curriculum does not exist. Teachers could not say anything more than what the Ministry requires. The integration of DK history depends on the flexibility and knowledge of each teacher.

Considering the challenges, the integration of DK history has been taught inconsistently. Mr. Sean Phalla, Deputy Principal at Kralanh High School said that the integration is often included in lessons. But teachers complained that the lesson on DK history could not parallel with other lessons. Mr. Phou Uk found out that it was very difficult to link it. Mr. Uk suggested that the Ministry include the content of the DK history in the school curriculum, rather than just integrating it. Because of time constraint, lessons should be integrated more to allow for teaching of DK history.

In regards to the study materials, Mr. San Chhev, a history teacher of Banteay Ampil High School said that there is a lack of documents and other study materials his students. When asked about whether there are former KR cadres' children in his classroom, Mr. Chhev answered, "NO." In relations to discrimination, respondents made a consistent argument that such a negative feeling has yet to be found within the students' circle. They just stressed that the students were from a younger generation that grew up out of the grudge, malice and vengeance that was left behind by the KR's atrocities.

Mr. Chhorn Mon, a history and geography teacher at Hun Sen Trapeang Prasat High School said that he served in Basre commune child unit, Prey Kabas district, Takeo province during the KR period. Mr. Chhorn was assigned to drive an ox cart to bring fertilizers, build dams, and work in a rice field. In 1979, Mr. Chhorn succeeded in staying in his own village. Mr. Chhorn lost three uncles on his mother's side and one from his father's side. Despite his losses, Mr. Chhorn did not feel any grudge against any individual, but only on the regime. Mr. Chhorn said he really has no problem in teaching this history.

## **6. Commentary of the DK history**

When it comes to the DK history, most respondents in Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces viewed this history as important and it deserves to be learned. When asked to what extent it is important, both teachers and students seemed to repeat a slogan of "preventing the genocide and educating the younger generation." They seemed to get bogged down on how to explain the importance of the subject. For example, Mr. Sean Phalla just said it's good for the students to learn about the DK history, the legacy of the DK regime, and the prevention of genocide. Besides prevention, Mr. Sean answered that every subject (communist and liberal) raised about the weaknesses and strengths of the regime. It's important to collect and compile documents for the younger generation.

Mr. Mann Sokha, a geography teacher of Samrong Secondary School of Oddar Meanchey province, said because he was born after the DK, he is unfamiliar with the history. What he could learn from his parents, consult with documents, and other sources was not enough. He wished to have visual arts to view the true scenarios of the DK. Through his knowledge, students should also be provided with the opportunity to visit crime sites. Mr. Mann said students in Oddar Meanchey province should visit Ta Mok's water reservoir resort. Students could learn by seeing and reflecting the students' spirits to get them absorbed in the troubled past. Without this practice, the history would vanish and become just like a folktale.

It's one of the substantial loopholes that students are not told about the history subjects. So, they should not be blamed on why they took less interest in it. An important hint made by DC-Cam Director Youk Chhang, who joined the team during the class observation at Kralanh High School, said history subjects should equip students with a versatile knowledge and skills that will help their future career. For example, students could become a film maker, author and other professions.

## **7. Conclusion and Recommendations**

One of the key sectors of developing a sustainable human resource automatically points to education. Hundreds of thousands of students are working hard with their schooling. Most succeed in their studies, while others found that economic disparity is a huge challenge. School children could not attend school during an agricultural season. In some cases, they would take one month break or

longer than this to assist their parents at the rice fields. Having observed classrooms and interviewing school management team along the Cambodian-Thai border, many male students chose to log luxurious wood (*Kra-nhuong*) to earn money for their families. For example, Mr. Nung Sambath at Trapeang Prasat school district, Oddar Meanchey province said that his school becomes quiet and would have to be closed for a short period. There is a common complaint among teachers as well in regards to the living condition, some teachers have to cut short their teaching time to work on rice fields or make business to supplement their income.



*A student distributing books, bulletin, and magazines to people.*

Meanwhile, the integration of DK history has been done in all six classrooms the team has observed. While some teachers devoted their one-hour time to teaching students about the history, others conducted their class without mentioning anything about the history. When asked if they integrate the

history, their answers are "yes." Their students confirmed the claims. Time slot for the integration of this history has become a concern as teachers proposed for an increase. Mr. Chhorn Mon, a history and geography teacher at Hun Sen Trapeang Prasat High School, recommended that history teachers be encouraged to integrate the history and be given more time to teach it.

The teachers' inability to convey this history to students is another challenge. It is highly recommended that teachers be encouraged to do more research and conduct an independent study to expand their knowledge. What teachers suggest is that DC-Cam should organize more trainings for geography, history, and Khmer literature teachers. Teaching approach toward how to integrate this history in classrooms should be emphasized and encouraged to implement in their respective schools.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Observation of Students**

1. Ny Vireak (M), 15 years old, is a student of Samroang Lower Secondary School. Vireak said that his knowledge on KR history is very little. He knows that Pol Pot was the KR leader. The people were beaten with hoes, and people ate rice porridge. He has never asked his parents about their experiences during the KR regime. He

received little education on the history at school as well. In spite of his fact, Vireak really wants to know and learn more about what happened at that time. He wants to know why the KR killed their own people and forced people to work on the dam construction project. Vireak wants to know why the KR evacuated people from the cities and forced family members to live separately. He also wants to know why the KR waged war with their own people. Vireak said that no one currently can help him answer his questions on KR history.

2. Mean Sreyneak (F), 15 years old, is a student from Samroang Lower Secondary School. Sreyneak said that she has heard her mother talk about her story during the KR period. Her mother was asked to build dams and canals. However, her mother was allowed to eat only rice porridge. The TV broadcasted about the "Remembering Day", former "Anger Day" on May 20 encouraged her to ask her parents about their experiences during the KR. Her mother cried very often when she recalled her bitter experiences, especially the family separation. Her mother was asked to live far from her parents. Her father discouraged her not to spend too much money because of his hardships during the KR. Her father told her that he did not have anything much to eat at the time. Sreyneak said that using her parents' story as a foundation, she wanted to learn more about the hardship and suffering of the people during the KR regime. However, she dared not ask her mother too often for fear that she may end up crying.

3. Tung Hama, 19 years old, studies at Kralanh High School. She said that she mainly learned about KR history from her relatives. Her grandmother told her that her brother who had light complexion was accused of being Vietnamese and was taken for execution. Her grandmother was a cook at that time. Knowing that her brother was in prison, she secretly sneaked in to see her brother who told her to pretend not to know him. The entire members of her brother's family were killed en mass. One of her uncles escaped to Thailand and lived in Srah Keo camp. He currently lives in Canada. Hama said that her father was just a small child and was asked to find fire wood and to pick up vegetables and shells. Hama believed that the KR regime is a communist regime, killing intellectuals and innocent people. The KR leaders did not need intellectuals. Hama said that she wanted to learn more about the KR history in order to begin moving the country towards a good future. She can't seem to answer why Khmer killed Khmer and how the KR came to power.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Discussion on DK History with Students**

On May 23, 2012, Mr. Cheng Hong, a national teacher led a discussion on KR history with students of Hun Sen Trapeang Prasat High School. Each student received a copy of the textbook "A History of Democratic Kampuchea" after which they scanned through the book before posting questions to Mr. Cheng Hong.

To begin the discussion, Mr. Cheng Hong asked if the students knew the origin of the word “Khmer Rouge.” Without answering this question, Nop Pisey stood up and asked why the KR killed their own people. Mr. Cheng Hong told the students that the KR leaders did not trust the rich and wanted to resolve class struggle. Those who were considered rich and oppressive classes were smashed. KR was slightly different from the Hitler’s regime which promoted only the German race. Likewise, the KR leaders wanted all Cambodian people to be pure Khmers.



*Students at Samrong Secondary school, Oddar Meanchey province.*

You Bros asked who was Angkar during the KR regime. Mr. Cheng Hong asked the students to read the footnote in the textbook which explains the instruction of the use of the word “Angkar.” Angkar referred to the top leaders of the KR.

Khoem Veasna asked who the KR was and how they came to power. Mr. Cheng Hong said that the textbook mentioned that the word “Khmer Rouge” was used in the 1960s by the then Prince Norodom Sihanouk. However, he personally found out that the word was first used in 1967 at which time Prince Sihanouk mentioned the name in the National Assembly. Mr. Cheng Hong told the KR movement emerged from the communist movement that struggled against capitalism. The movement first came out of the Issarak movement, originally aiming at fighting against the French colony. Later, the movement joined the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) under Vietnam. Namely, the KR were forest fighters.

Mr. Cheng Hong asked if the students believed that the killing existed during the KR. Most students said yes as they had read books and documents on KR history. They also saw some photos which showed skulls and bones. The students sometimes asked their parents and grandparents about their experiences during the KR period. These historical facts make them believe that killing existed at that time.

Pa Sreyneang asked why the KR regime existed and the reasons of its demise. Mr. Cheng Hong answered that the KR focused on peasant class and collectivization. That was the reason why the KR established cooperatives nationwide. The demise of the KR regime started with the purge within the party. The KR did not trust their own

people and began killing each other. Moreover, the KR began waging war with Vietnam.

Mao Vann Sivlong asked why the KR needed to fight against the Lon Nol's regime. Which regime brought prosperity for the people? Mr. Cheng Hong said that the Lon Nol's regime was full of corruption. Moreover, the Lon Nol's soldiers helped the KR identify the key battle fields, and this helped the KR to win over the Lon Nol's regime. People strongly disliked the Lon Nol's regime. Mr. Cheng Hong said that both Lon Nol and KR regime did not bring happiness to the people. Wars and violence existed throughout these two regimes. There was no peace from 1970 to 1979. The people worked on the dam constructions and did not have enough to eat. Each person received only 0.5 kilogram of rice per day. This principle only existed on paper, in reality, the people received only enough rice to make porridge. People were executed without any judgment. The two regimes did not bring peace and prosperity to the nation and the people.

Um Marina asked why people did not have enough to eat while rice yield was plenty. Why did KR ruled the country this way? What did they want to achieve? The KR took rice to exchange for weapons from China.

At the end, Mr. Cheng Hong encouraged the students to read the textbook and to ask their parents and teachers about the KR history. Mr. Cheng Hong told them to study hard.

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **Public Education Forum**



*Mr. Ly Sok-Kheang leading a village public forum in Oddar Meanchey Province.*

On May 23, 2012, the team conducted a public education forum in Tuol Prasat village, Tomnup Dach commune, Trapiang Prasat district, Oddor Meanchey province. There were approximately 50 participants in the forum.

To mark the start of the forum, the commune chief

gave an opening remark to the participants. He stated that it is important that education on KR history be integrated in the school curriculum so that the young generation understands the historical events of the time and the hardships and sufferings that the Cambodian people experienced for 3 years, 8 months and 20 days. To encourage talk of peace and reconciliation, DC-Cam distributed documents to the community to promote understanding and peace.

After the remark of the commune chief, Mr. Sok-Kheang Ly thanked the commune leadership for taking the time to gather the villagers and make the forum possible. Mr. Ly then explained the three documents that the villagers received. They are *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*, Trial observation bulletin and booklet on case 002. The textbook has been approved by the government to be used in the classrooms nationwide. Mr. Ly stressed that he had observed three classrooms in Oddor Meanchey province. And he wanted to know how the community members reacted to the teaching of DK history and their understanding of the development of the KR Tribunal. Mr. Ly also gave a brief progress report of the tribunal in which Duch in case 001 has been sentenced to life imprisonment. The other three accused Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Nuon Chea are being tried in case 002.



*Former KR soldier and his daughter in Oddar Meanchey province.*

The village chief said that Tuol Prasat before the 1998 integration was just a forest. After 1998, the people cleared the forest and created the villages by building houses and doing farming. The people commented that their living was mostly mobile. They ran from place to place. Mrs. Khat Soeun, 55 years

old, said that she was in Kandal province during the KR. As her husband was a KR soldier, she moved to live in Ratanak Kiri province. In 1979, she ran to the Thai border and sometimes lived on top of Dangrek Mountain. Some of them reached the border in the early 1980s after spending about one year living in the forest in Ratanak Kiri and Stung Treng province.

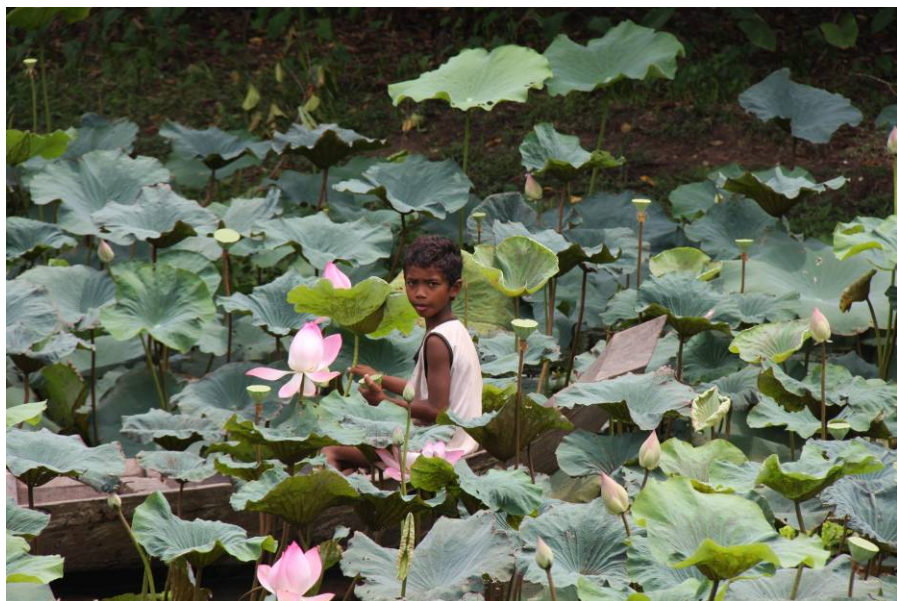
Mr. Nget Ngoeu said that after 1979, the people encountered sporadic wars with Vietnam. As fighting was normal and almost regular, the people built temporary

cottages to live in. Some people killed their own babies because they cried loudly and revealed their secret hideout. The soldiers did not want the women with small kids to stay and follow them. Therefore, some women had to force themselves to kill their own kids. No one cared about the other. As the Vietnamese soldiers shelled their shelters, they would flee immediately. They dared not submit themselves to the inside government for fear that the Vietnamese would cut off their throats.

Mr. Ly asked how the people felt about the past war. The people replied that they were full of wars; they did not want to hear about the war again. When they opened the textbook and saw the pictures, they get chilled. They did not want to hear or discuss about this past traumatic experiences. Mrs. Chan Sieng said that her children did not believe that she as a woman, was a soldier fighting with Vietnam.

Mr. Ly asked how they felt if people said that the former KR cadres and soldiers harmed the people. They responded that they did not harm anyone during the KR regime. They also suffered at that time. They and the victims suffered the same at that time. Chan Sieng said that her husband dared not share his biography for fear of being spied or tortured by the government. He wrote that he joined the KR movement towards the end, though in fact, he participated in the movement since 1969. The government gave only a small amount of money to her husband. They also suffered and feared like the victims.

Mr. Ly asked how they thought about the prosecution of Duch, who received life imprisonment. One of the villagers said that as they live along the border far from the city, they do not know much about the tribunal and have no idea about Duch's sentence. They did not have any idea about the tribunal. They are just small ants, and it is up to the top leaders to keep them informed.



*A boy in a pond in front of Beng Mealea Temple, Siem Reap, May 2012.*

Mr. Ly asked how they felt about the teaching of DK history in the classrooms. The participants said that the history has to be taught in formal classrooms. The children do not believe what their parents tell them. If there is no teaching, the KR history may become like a folktale in the future. One villager said that the people

cannot forget the suffering even though they die and reborn again, they will still remember.

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