

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

Teacher Workshop-Working Group on Reclaiming Cambodian History
Preah Vihear Temple, December 24/25/26, 2010

PURPOSE

In December 2010, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport will hold its second annual teacher workshop with the aim of establishing a working group on reclaiming Cambodian history through a truth and reconciliation process. Participants in the workshop will include 24 national teachers and 180 provincial teachers who received training on the teaching of A History of Democratic Kampuchea in mid-and late 2009 respectively. The workshop's discussion will focus on four main issues:

The establishment of an official working group on reclaiming Cambodian history: DC-Cam believes that a truth and reconciliation process that fits into the social and cultural context of Cambodia should be established to enhance genocide prevention and national reconciliation and to document the atrocities committed during the period of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) regime. The DC-Cam's Genocide Education Project can be used as a foundation for a more comprehensive and formal truth and reconciliation commission. The Ministry of Education has suggested that national and provincial teachers can play a role in collecting and disseminating historical information about the Khmer Rouge regime. The precise form of this information collection and distribution will be determined according to the expressed preferences of victims, taking into account the Cambodian cultural context. A Cambodian truth and reconciliation process may be primarily educational, in distributing this information in an accessible manner, and may seek to uncover information about the Khmer Rouge regime that is beyond the scope of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. The working group on reclaiming Cambodian history will discuss and formulate the parameters of this process. (Youk Chhang and International Expert)

Professional development: The workshop also aims to enhance the capacity of national and provincial teachers who will be able to act as master trainers in subsequent commune teacher trainings. In 2011 and the subsequent years, DC-Cam and the Ministry of Education will continue to provide trainings to the remaining history teachers and the teachers who teach Khmer studies and citizen morality. The previous two commune teacher trainings revealed that national and provincial

teachers are still limited in their capacity to convey teaching methodologies to the commune-level teachers. In a few cases, national and provincial teachers' ideas about the steps to follow for each method are in conflict. To respond to these issues, the workshop will review the full content of the Teacher's Guidebook with the national and provincial teachers and discuss in detail the concepts for each method. (Chris Dearing and Sirik Savina)

Teaching effectiveness: The workshop will discuss how teachers introduce A History of Democratic Kampuchea into the classroom. Some key questions will be addressed: Are teachers able to apply the knowledge, skills, and methodologies they gained from the teacher training workshops in their classrooms? How much content from the textbook A History of Democratic Kampuchea are teachers able to use in their classroom? Are teachers able to perform effectively in the context of their school environment? What are the challenges teachers face in applying new methodologies and using teaching materials DC-Cam provided during the course of their teaching? National and provincial teachers, though they have completed the training workshops, remain concerned not only about the complex social and ethical issues, nature and political sensitivity of teaching Khmer Rouge history but also about their capacity to teach it in an effective manner. The workshop will offer tools to improve their teaching effectiveness. (Chea Phala and Dy Khamboly)

Documenting survivors' stories: In their roles as commissioners, teachers will have additional responsibilities not just to educate students about Khmer Rouge history but to encourage them to document the stories of their parents, grandparents, relatives and neighbors to preserve the memory of the violent past as part of the truth and reconciliation process. Teachers will play the key role in collecting and writing up stories that will be published annually as monographs. Provincial teachers from all districts of Cambodia will be asked to provide three publishable stories each. Through this strategy, DC-Cam will be able to publish 540 survivors' stories each year. These stories will provide a more robust factual response to the question of why the Khmer Rouge committed such atrocities between 1975 and 1979 and will uncover more thoroughly the factors that led to the perpetration of these atrocities. In the aggregate, these stories will provide a comprehensive narrative description of the entire picture of Khmer Rouge history. (So Farina, Dacil Keo, Peter McGuire)

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