

## Report from Kampong Speu and Preah Sihanouk

March 1-8, 2012

By Kamboly Dy and Sok-Kheang Ly

### 1. INTRODUCTION

On March 1-8, 2012, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (the Ministry of Education) conducted a quality control including classroom observations and evaluations in Kampong Speu and Preah Sihanouk Provinces. The team



A Single Building of Chambak Lower Secondary School

consisted of two DC-Cam's staff members, Mr. Kamboly Dy and Mr. Sok-Kheang Ly, and one official from the Ministry of Education, Mr. Siv Thoun from the Education Quality Accreditation Department. The team observed six actual classroom teaching sessions and conducted eighteen interviews with education officials, teachers, students, school directors and villagers. On March 4, the team conducted a public education forum in O Chrov commune, Preah Sihanouk province, with about one hundred villagers. Mr. Sok-Kheang Ly led the discussions on the Khmer Rouge (KR) history and current development of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT) in order to learn the villagers' attitude toward teaching KR history in formal classrooms.

The table below summarizes the evaluation work in Kampong Speu and Preah Sihanouk.

<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></ul>
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Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials: (1) Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history textbook, (2) Teacher's Guidebook, and (3) Student Workbook.</li> <li>• Evaluate the integration of DK history into the daily regular teaching in schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Means of Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-hour observation</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Surveys</li> </ul>
<b>Tools for Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom observation checklist</li> <li>• Questionnaire for teachers</li> <li>• Questionnaire for students</li> <li>• Interview questions</li> </ul>
<b>Types of Schools</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>• Six schools: (1) Kampong Speu High School, (2) Torp Meanchey High School, (3) Treng Troyoeng High School, (4) Preah Sihanouk City High School, (5) Stung Hav High School, (6) Hun Sen Prey Nup High School</li> </ul>
<b>Average Number of Students per Class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 45 and over 100 students per class</li> </ul>

## 2. PRE-OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



**Mr. Ney Vanhorn, Deputy Director of Kampong Speu Provincial Office of Education**

Vanhorn, deputy director of Kampong Speu provincial office of education. Mr. Vanhorn said that Kampong Speu consisted of twenty-one high schools and sixty-seven lower secondary schools. Vanhorn totally supported the teaching of KR history

Prior to the classroom observations and evaluation, the team met with education officials of the provincial offices of education in order to learn the general education situation and get approval to work with selected high schools in the provinces. In Kampong Speu province, the team met Mr. Ney

in the classroom as he himself came through a bitter experience during that period. Vanhorn said he suffered enough. At that time, he was put in the regional mobile unit, his wife was in the commune mobile unit, and his children were put in the child unit. They lived separately. At one point, Vanhorn attended the meeting chaired by Ta Mok, Secretary of the Southwest zone. Vanhorn was forced to do labor work such as building dams and planting rice. He used to tell his story to young children who would typically respond with great interest and probing questions as to his life back then. Some children told him that “the old people are crazy.” They could not understand the reality of living during the DK period, and would typically ask questions such as, “Why did you allow the young KR cadres to kill you?” “Why didn’t you resist the killing and fight back?”; and “Why didn’t you run away?” Vanhorn said it is important to educate young generations about the root causes of the tragedy that happened in Cambodia during the KR regime. “If we don’t teach the youth, they will not know the suffering that their country endured, and most importantly they will miss out on a significant period in their nation’s history. Knowing the history of the Khmer Rouge helps the children of today work to prevent the conditions that defined the regime so they will not happen again,” said Vanhorn.

In Preah Sihanouk province, the team met with Mr. Oeng Nibona, deputy director of Preah Sihanouk Provincial Office of Education. Nibona has followed the KR history and the KRT hearings regularly. He said that his office has received copies of the DK history textbook and has distributed these texts to all secondary schools in the province. His painful experience motivates him to teach KR history in the formal classroom setting. During the KR period, Nibona worked in the KR mobile unit. In late 1978, as many KR soldiers were killed in the war with Vietnam, he was recruited to be a soldier to fight the Vietnamese troops in Prek Kdam, Kampong Cham province. His parents, one sister and one brother died at that time. Nibona said that he has to tell his children about this history. He totally supports the teaching of KR history in the classrooms. Nibona endorsed our work to observe three classroom teachings in Preah Sihanouk province.

The table below summarizes the schools the team observed and evaluated.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Female Teachers</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Female Students</b>	<b>Number of Classrooms</b>
1	Kampong Speu high school	56	10	2,117	907	17
2	Torp Meanchey high school	29	4	767	355	15
3	Treng Troyoeng high school	28	10	771	326	8
4	Krong Preah Sihanouk high school	87	24	1,959	880	36
5	Steung Hav high	38	11	605	297	27

	school					
6	Hun Sen Prey Nop high school	54	18	1,149	476	19

### 3. CLASSROOM AND GENERAL OBSERVATION

Some schools in Kampong Speu and Preah Sihanouk face severe shortages of classrooms. For instance, Kampong Speu high school, the first and biggest high school in Kampong Speu province, has only seventeen classrooms to accommodate



2,117 students. Each classroom consists of 65 to over 100 students. The observed classroom taught by San Ly consists of 71 students. Two to three students share one-meter long table. The students could hardly move and take notes. Eng Thavut, the school deputy director, agreed that the

#### **A Class of 74 Students Filling in the Questionnaires**

school has suffered from an increase in the number of students who have been coming from different districts of the province. The influx of students is partially a result of students from neighboring villages who rent out nearby houses for accommodations, in the hope of attending, what they perceive to be a high quality school. The over-crowded classrooms have had a significant impact on the quality of education. In addition, the poor conditions have caused teachers to abandon student-center approaches such as group discussions and presentations for more lecture-based activities. Thavut said the school needs at least an additional fifty classrooms in order to reduce the number of students to around forty per class. For the past five years, the school leadership has sent repeated requests to the Ministry of Education and private organizations and individuals, but they have failed to obtain any positive response. Eventually, some students who cannot afford the rent and living expenses in the city drop out and return to their villages. Others become garment workers in the city, especially female students.

According to classroom observations, the observed teachers, though not generally applied to all, have several weaknesses in their teaching performance. The teachers believe that the Cambodian educational context does not allow them to apply the student-center approach and modern teaching methods such as group discussions, debates or presentations. One of the main reasons is that the student-centered approach does not enable them to finish the lessons on time within an academic



year. More often than not, teachers seem to prioritize the completion of textbook lessons over the quality of education. When asked if they are satisfied with the knowledge their students currently have, all teachers said “no.” In some cases, students cannot read the texts at their assigned level..

The following anecdotes will provide additional context and corroborate the points above. San Ly from Kampong Speu high school taught about the history of Khmer Chenla Empire. Before starting the lesson, Ly asked several pre-lesson questions in order to recall the old lesson. After that, he asked several students to take turns reading sections of the lesson from the textbook. Finishing the series of reading, Ly asked students to define some difficult terms. Then he wrote down one question on



**A Student Presenting Her Group Finding to the Class**

the board and asked students to discuss. Interestingly, the students stayed still at their respective tables and worked among their friends who sat on the same tables. After discussion, only one student came to the board and wrote down the answer which Ly used as the conclusion of the entire lesson. The same

issue applies to Sim Chanthach’s teaching in Stung Hav high school, Preah Sihanouk province. Like all other observed teachers, Chanthach began the lesson with the same process. She did ask students to work in groups of two, but students did not form the groups, and the teacher did not facilitate group organization and discussion. At the end, two students, one representative from each group, reported their answers on the board.

At the end of the observation, national teacher Siv Thoun, who is one of the observers, provided feedback to San Ly and Sim Chanthach and the school directors. Siv Thoun said that some students behaved inattentively in the classes. They did not take notes as several of them did not bring their history notebooks to the class. Instead they brought chemistry notebooks or notebooks for other subjects. He encouraged teachers and the school directors to take more responsibility in checking the students’ notebooks to ensure a better quality of the students. Siv Thoun observed that the students learned very little from the one-hour session. With regards to the teaching performance, teachers did not create an environment for students to ask questions. This condition makes students become passive, which has long implications on the students’ future work performance. Moreover, Ly did not check students’ homework, and this act discourages students from working hard on

the assignments. Ly agreed with Siv Thoun and confessed that students are disciplined only during the presence of the observers. Some of them did not listen to teachers and chat in the classroom.

In addition to the shortage of classrooms, the schools in the two provinces also face a shortage of specialized, competent teachers as well as teaching materials at all grade levels. It is not surprising to find that some teachers quit the teaching profession for better-paying work. Others stay in the remote schools for two years before requesting a transfer to the urban and more economically-advantaged areas. Men Sothat, director of Torp Meanchey high school in Kampong Speu, said that his school has only twenty-nine teachers for 767 students for grades seven to eleven. As the school does not have enough specialized teachers, Sothat has to ask Chemistry teacher to teach Mathematics. Khem Ron, director of Stung Hav high school informed us of the same problem. He employed lower secondary school to teach high school students as he could not obtain enough qualified teachers with bachelor degree.

With regards to the teaching materials, three to five students in Torp Meanchey high school and Kampong Speu high schools share one copy of the history textbook. According to the director of Torp Meanchey high school, the school can only allocate seventeen copies of the textbook to fifty-two students



**Students Working in Groups**

for each classroom. Other teaching visual aids do not exist. On many occasions, Top Sophea taught the students with no materials at all. Stung Hav high school shares the same issues. In Sim Chanthach's class, four to five students share one copy of the textbook. As students do not want to squeeze into a tightly-packed reading group to discern the words on each page of singly-shared book, some of them just simply sit and listen without caring whether they understand the lesson or not.

The teachers' performance is strongly link to their personal well-being. San Ly from Kampong Speu high school has to drive a motor taxi in order to earn extra income to support his family. Top Sophea from Torp Meanchey high school lives in the classroom. He comes from Samraong Torng district, so he does not have a house to stay in. In order that Sophea could stay and teach in the school, the director decided

to share one classroom for Sophea's accommodation. As a newly employed teacher, Sophea earns a smaller amount of salary than most teachers, which is about 80 USD per month. Therefore, Sophea sought an extra job as an English teacher. Sok Lim from Treng Troyoeng high school comes to the school only two days per week. She spends the rest of the week on her home business as a tailor. She can earn adequate living from the second job. Sok Lim said if she depends on the teaching job alone, she would not be able to survive the current living condition in which the expenses are much higher than her income. These secondary income-generating jobs make teachers lose time, energy, and commitment in the profession. Moreover, it saps their ability to focus on the improvement of their profession. Consequently, teachers conduct very little research as part of their professional development.

Student competency is a real concern for all. Student knowledge is strictly confined to the content of their textbooks. Our classroom observations show that teachers narrowly tailor their questions to answers that are immediately recalled from the book and which require very little critical thinking or reflection. There are no critical thinking questions, group discussions, or questions from students. Upon receiving the questions, students open the textbook and simply read out the answers.

#### **4. OBSERVATIONS OF STUDENTS**

Student interest in learning is very dependent on age and grade level. High school teachers attempt to generate student interest in KR history by telling their own stories, and teacher accounts suggest this has been effective. Srey Kimsin from Preah Sihanouk City high school said that if she begins the lesson by talking about her story during the KR period, she would not be able to finish the lesson. She has to talk about it for an hour. The students keep asking her questions and she is often unable her to begin the regular lesson for the day. She comments that students are more interested in one's life story than stories related to politics or senior leaders of the regime. Sok Lim from Treng Troyoeng high school, on the other hand, said that her students seem to be not particularly interested in KR history at all. Lim teaches grade eight students whom she said are too young to understand this complicated history. She suggests that the younger the students, the less focus they have as they are not familiar with the KR history. She said high school students express more interest than lower secondary school ones. *(For more observations on students, please see appendix two and three.)*

#### **5. INTEGRATION OF DK HISTORY COMMENTARY**

The integration of KR history into the regular teaching program in schools is conducted occasionally. Most of the time, teachers integrate KR history through oral narratives that come to mind at various points in a curriculum. For instance, Sim Chanthach from Stung Hav high school taught about the Sangkum Reasrt Niyum regime (1955-1970). Before starting the lesson, Chanthach asked students several

questions to recall the old lesson on the French colonial period and to link it to the new lesson. She asked students to take turns reading the lesson aloud in the class. After the reading, Chanthach explained some of the historical events related to the Sangkum Reasrt Niyum regime and the French colonial period. She asked several comprehension questions to learn students' understanding on the lesson. She said Prince Sihanouk abdicated the throne in favor of his father in order to take a more political role in building up the country. She then asked what the students knew about the KR regime. Students said people were living in the prison without walls. People suffered tremendously from torture, overwork and lack of food. The KR torture methods included pulling out of finger nails and the tying up of legs with the head down. Another student said women were raped. This answer aroused students to laugh as the case is probably unfamiliar for the students. Chanthach then turned back to the Sangkum Reasrt Niyum regime which was prosperous and contrary to the KR regime. Next, she asked students to take their notebooks out to record two discussion questions. She divided students into two big groups and gave each group five minutes to discuss and provide the answers. After group discussions, two representatives wrote down the answers on the board. Chanthach spent the rest of the time explaining the answers and adding missing parts.



**Meeting with School Leaderships and Teachers for Feedbacks after Classroom Observation**

Srey Kimsin from Preah Sihanouk City high school started the teaching with the same process as mentioned above. The observed teacher started the lesson by asking two students to take turns reading the text loudly in the class. Some students sat listen lazily as they did not

have textbooks on hand. After the reading, Kimsin asked several comprehension questions to learn how much students understood the lesson. She then jumped quickly to KR history. She compared the living conditions of the people in the French colonial period and that of those living during the KR. Kimsin asked students if they knew the daily life of those who lived during the KR. One student stood up and said there was no education, religion or money. Kimsin then told students about her own experiences. She said she was separated from her mother and lived in the child unit. She was asked to cut grass and collect cow dung to make fertilizer. She was sometimes beaten when she did not finish the last grain of rice from the plate. Hearing this, the students laughed.



Without explaining further about her account during the KR, she continued her lesson about the French colonial period by asking more questions.

Stung Hav high school takes the teaching of KR history more seriously. Khem Ron, director of Stung Hav high school, asked his two teachers who attended DC-Cam's training to teach and integrate KR history regularly. In the teaching schedule, Ron has determined the date and time in which the two teachers have to conduct KR history teaching. Ron convened a meeting with all school leadership and related teachers to determine the appropriate chapters for teaching/integration. Ron said he does not want his teachers to teach the chapters related to politics and other sensitive issues that are far from students' understanding in the current social context. The meeting decided that the two teachers can teach four chapters from the DK history textbook. These included: Chapter Three: The Khmer Rouge Coming to Power; Chapter Seven: Daily Life during Democratic Kampuchea; Chapter Nine: Office S-21 (Tuol Sleng Prison); and Chapter Eleven: The Fall of the Khmer Rouge. Ron explained that Chapter Two, which is about the history of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, is too complicated for students at the high school level. Moreover, teachers may have limited capacity to go deeper into the discussion on the party's history. In contrast, Chapter Seven fits with the students' level of understanding as the chapter is about daily life in which students can seek more information from their parents and old relatives.

Young teachers who are born after the KR regime face difficulty in explaining students about life at that time. Chanthach from Stung Hav high school said that when she taught the KR history, her students asked her if she was born before the regime. With no personal experience, Chanthach used survivor stories in the book. She said that students are interested in these stories. However, some students asked why the book does not contain cruel photos such as killing and torture-like descriptions. She explained that the teaching does not aim to traumatize the students. However, they can find such photos in other publications such as the magazine *Searching for the Truth*.

## 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Except one, all observed schools do not have adequate classrooms to accommodate effective teaching. One classroom had between 45 to over 100 students. The over-crowded classrooms do not allow



**Torp Meanchey High School**

teachers to apply student-center approaches such as group discussions, debates, and presentation. Students who sit in the back of the classrooms receive less attention from teachers and are more likely to draw, talk, or do anything besides study during class hours. In addition, all schools lack necessary teaching materials and or teachers who are trained in their subject area. In most cases, three to four students share one copy of the history textbook. For instance in one classroom consisting of fifty students there were only seventeen copies of the textbook.

Moreover, all schools do not have an adequate number of teachers trained in their subject area. In some cases, one teacher teaches two to three subjects. In most cases, teachers with lower secondary school level are asked to teach at the high school level as the schools do not have enough teachers with university degrees. Hun Sen Prey Nup high school has only six teachers while the school needs at least thirty teachers with university degrees. This lack of materials and lack of qualified teachers has serious implications for the quality of the students and the nation's education-at-large.

When asked if the teachers are satisfied with student knowledge, all teachers replied in the negative. Many students are not qualified to be in their grade levels. Our observations of grades seven and nine confirmed that students are still struggling with basic literacy. Chanthach from Stung Hav high school commented that most students study only in the classroom but not much at home. They are influenced by modern technology and materials such as phones and computer games.

The integration of KR history is conducted occasionally through oral narratives that are interspersed throughout the lesson, as determined by the context of the lesson and the particular teacher's background. Most teachers have difficulty with finding the appropriate context for integrating KR history into their history lessons. Usually, the integration is accomplished when the lessons contain information related to war, violent conflict or the Cambodian political regime. Among the observed schools, only one school demonstrated a significant effort toward conducting the teaching of KR history regularly. In this instance, KR history was taught about two times per month. Most teachers blamed the limited time and lack of incentives for the poor integration of KR history. This stands in contrast to the fact that KR history has been inserted into the official curriculum for grades nine and twelve. Not surprisingly, this mandate has caused many history teachers to teach the entire history of the KR period at the end of the academic year.

#### **Appendix One: Public Education Forum with Cham Muslim in O**



### **Chrov Commune, Prey Nup District, Preah Sihanouk Province**

The forum was conducted on Sunday, March 4 in O Chrov commune, Prey Nup district, Preah Sihanouk province. There are about 100 participants in the forum. The forum discussed the villagers' life during the KR regime and their reaction and/or attitude toward teaching KR history in the classroom. The forum also discussed the current development of the KRT. At the forum, the team distributed copies of the DK history textbook, magazine *Searching for the Truth* and booklet on case 002 to the participants.

#### **The Public Education Forum in O Chrov Commune**

The commune chief opened the forum by thanking DC-Cam's team for conducting the forum in his commune. He said it was a good opportunity to discuss and disseminate the history of the KR to the people in the commune. O Chrov was the most remote commune of Prey Nup district—as most communes are located along the national road. Not surprisingly, access to written information on KR history is very rare. He encouraged the villagers to read the magazine *Searching for the Truth* to search for their disappeared relatives. The commune chief emphasized that the forum is about the facts of what happened during the KR regime. Though not all villagers attended the forum, it is anticipated that the forum will have second-order effects by way of the participants. It is anticipated that the villagers who attended the forum will discuss and further disseminate the materials and information they received from the forum to their families and youth. The commune chief said the forum contributes to the prevention of genocide and the prevention of those conditions that defined the KR regime. He encouraged the participants to share the information they receive to other villagers who did not have a chance to participate. Finally, he thanked the team and wished the success of the work.



**Cham Muslim Participants in the Public Education Forum**

After the short remarks by the commune chief, Mr. Sok-Kheang Ly took the floor. Mr. Ly introduced DC-Cam to the villagers. He said that DC-Cam has published the DK history textbook to train teachers and to teach students about the KR history nationwide. He asked the villagers to give some comments on whether they had

told their children about their experiences during the KR. Mrs. Sa-Em said that some of her children did not come to know the regime, but they did ask her about KR history. Sa-Em told children that she walked her seven children and mother to an

unknown destination when the KR came to power. The KR asked her to go to Sre Cham commune (now O Chrov commune) with about 20,000 other villagers. One week later, she was moved to live in another village. Sa-Em had to pack her luggage in preparation for another journey. Her belongings were almost confiscated. Arriving at the newly assigned village, she was asked to still go to another village. Sa-Em cried in the audience when she came to the point in her story when her son disappeared. She said that she has never seen him since. She told the audience that she could not finish her story.

Another villager Pann Noeun took the floor to tell his story. He lived in Sre Khnong village where he saw a number of cruel treatments by the KR cadres. He said women were asked to work in the rice fields. As they could not perform the job properly, they were beaten badly. The people were not allowed to eat enough. Noeun said the KR were so cruel. The KR harmed him and his villagers. Noeun developed an infection on his buttocks. The KR cadres did not believe him and asked him to take his trousers off to prove the disease. One KR cadre asked Noeun's wife to find a new husband because Noeun might not live longer. Noeun said that this cadre loved his wife, and the cadre falsely gave recommendations to his wife to get married to a new husband. However, Noeun tried to find traditional medicine to cure himself, which he eventually did.

Mr. Ly took the floor back from Noeun and began to discuss the violent acts on the people. As half of the participants are Muslim, Mr. Ly asked if the KR harmed Cham more than Khmer. The villagers said all people were cruelly treated similarly. The Cham people were not allowed to pray and conduct other religious practices. No one could help anyone. People could not even eat the potatoes planted around their houses. Asked if they had lost family members, all participants shouted that they all lost family members at that time. One Cham woman said that one of her daughters had her entire family killed during the KR. Being asked how to deal with the suffering, participants had mixed ideas. One man angrily stood up and said that he wished the court would prosecute the leaders and kill them instantly. However, most participants did not agree with this opinion. Several participants said that one had to take religion and forgiveness into consideration. If one takes revenges against another, the cycle of vengeance would be endless. The deputy commune chief stood up and clarified his stand. He said O Chrov was in Region 37 and people suffered tremendously. The KR gathered a big number of people to build canals in Prey Nup, which is about ten kilometers long. Looking through the canal, one could see a crowd of people like ants. All the people were asked to live and eat collectively in the communal hall. The KR destroyed the mosque. He believed that the young would not believe the story because they did not experience it themselves. He said religious rites may help heal this wound.

After that Mr. Ly asked the participants if they knew Koh Kchang prison. One Cham woman Isas said that she was put in Koh Kchang prison. She was first tied up and was

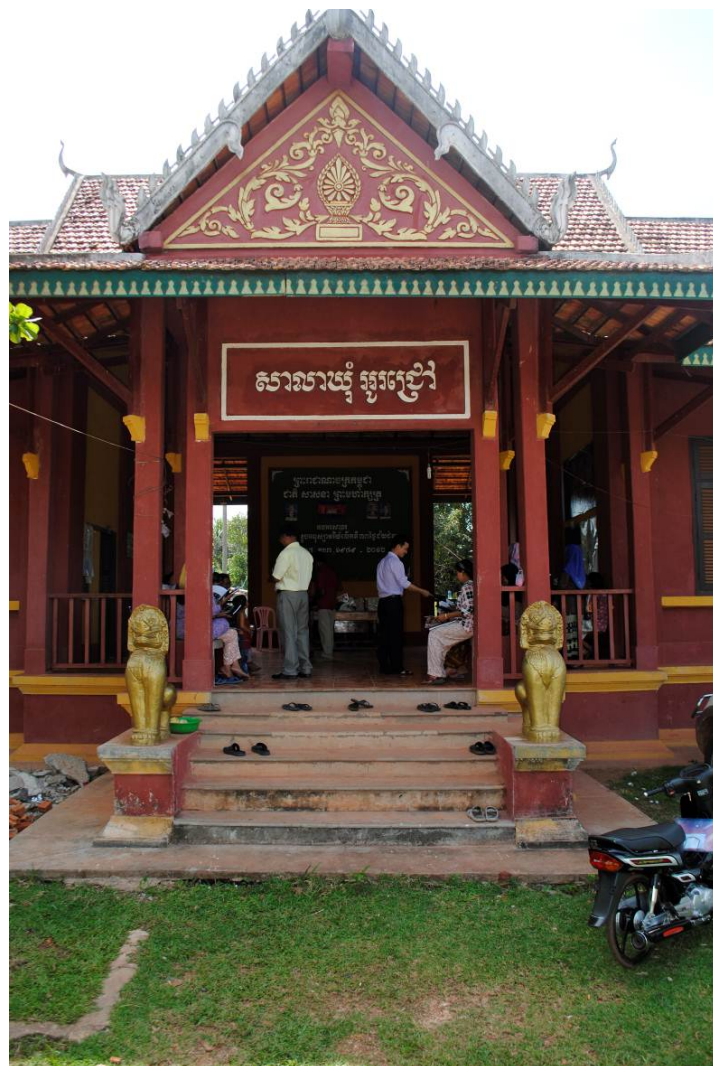


walked to the prison. Arriving at Koh Kchang, she saw a variety of people including small children. One day, the prison guards asked if anyone volunteered to plant potatoes. All prisoners told her not to go because this was a trick to be killed. However, Isas agreed to go because many of her family members had died, and she would not be afraid to lose his life. However, Isas survived the prison detention.

Mr. Ly understood the suffering that Isas narrated. Mr. Ly said that DC-Cam used the teaching of KR history to bring about national reconciliation and unity. He said that the young children would not believe if they only receive education from the schools. The most important part that contributes to students' knowledge is the personal stories from parents. Mr. Ly encouraged the villagers to tell their stories to the children and answer questions from their children as best they can. Mr. Ly told the villagers to read the DK history book and other books including the book by Farina So, "The Hijab of Cambodia: Memories of Cham Muslim Women after the Khmer Rouge" to improve their knowledge on the history. Then Mr. Ly opened for questions from the villagers.

San Kong asked DC-Cam where were the United Nations (UN) when the KR harmed their people. Mr. Ly answered that the UN did not receive enough information on the atrocities happening inside Cambodia. The KR closed the country from the world. Very little information was leaked to the outside world through refugees in Thailand. There was not enough ground for the UN to take action to prevent the killing. Moreover, the UN was very weak at that time to take military action against the KR atrocities.

The O Chrov village chief Vong Chhen said that without Vietnamese forces fighting into Cambodia to liberate the Cambodian people, the KR may have annihilated the entire Khmer race. Mr. Ly said



**O Chrov Commune Office**

that the KR did not yet totally collapse in 1979. The KR continued to exist along the Cambodian-Thai border and they continued to struggle against the government until 1998 when Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan defected to the government. Ieng Sary's defection in 1996 was the main contributing factor to the total collapse of the KR movement.

The villagers asked and discussed the KRT. Mr. Ly briefly informed them about the KRT hearings. He said that Duch, the Chief of the Tuol Sleng prison, had been prosecuted in case 001 and sentenced to life imprisonment. In case 002, there are four accused. Ieng Thirith, on the other hand, has suffered from mental problems, so she is temporarily on the sideline for further consideration. The villagers were a bit angry when Mr. Ly said Ieng Thirith's name using a polite title in Khmer "Lok Srey" (in English Mrs. Ieng Thirith). They said Mr. Ly should not be too polite to the KR leaders because they killed a lot of people. To ease their anger, Mr. Ly agreed to call the KR leaders by just their names without antecedents "Mr." or "Mrs."



**A Slogan on the Tree in the School Compound, Saying "Knowledge Is Food; Intelligence Is a Weapon."**

San Kong asked how many KR leaders would be taken for prosecution. He stated that he knew of only a small number for prosecution. Mr. Ly asked how many prosecutions are considered justice. Mr. Ly stressed that it is difficult to define justice and to determine the number of prosecutions. For him, justice is a fair

process which is accepted internationally. If the prosecution is done on the low-ranking cadres, it would affect national stability. Moreover, the UN may have no money to support the KRT to conduct further prosecution. Mr. Ly raised an example of Phan, who was former Preah Netr Preah commune chief during the KR. He was responsible for killing a couple who were accused of committing moral mistake. Phan killed the couple in front of many villagers. However, Phan is not taken for prosecution. Mr. Ly stressed that the society needs unity and forgiveness, not revenge.

Finally, Mr. Ly encouraged the villagers to tell their children about their experiences. He said the purpose of the forum is to introduce tolerance and reconciliation as well as forgiveness, not hatred, revenge and a sense of anger. He thanked the villagers for

their participation and discussions in the forum. He encouraged the villagers to read the distributed materials.

The commune chief gave the final remarks to close the forum. He again thanked the team for coming to discuss and disseminate the information on KR history and KRT to his villagers. The chief said that there is a lot of evidence such as bones and skulls which also exist in his commune. He stressed the forum's aim is to prevent the reoccurrence of the KR regime. He emphasized that preventing the regime involves asking questions and learning, from books and television. Moreover, with narrations from their parents, the young children must believe the atrocities during the KR. He is proud to have the team coming to discuss the history and he expressed his thanks to the Ministry of Education for integrating KR history into the school curriculum. "If we don't study the history, some people may forget and the atrocities may return," said the commune chief. He agreed with the explanation from the team. He has nine siblings, three of which were killed during the KR. At the end, on behalf of the local authority, he wished the team success in their work and a safe return home. He wished peace for all the villagers, both Khmer and Cham.

### **Appendix Two: Discussions on KR History with Students**

On the morning of March 3, 2012, Mr. Siv Thuon, an official from the Ministry of Education, gave a lecture and opened a discussion with thirty students of the eleventh grade. The discussion was designed to evaluate the level of students' understanding about the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history.



**National Teacher Siv Thoun Leading Discussions on KR History with Students**

To begin with, Mr. Thuon asked if the students have known or heard about DK history. All spontaneously responded "Yes." They stressed that they had seen and read some parts of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" textbook.

Ou Heng Long, eleventh grade, said he heard about the KR regime through his grandmother. She said the regime made the people starve and people suffered tremendous hardship. He remembered that the regime's cruelty was to evacuate, separate, and torture the people.



Kim Malen, eleventh grade, said, through documents and study, parents and neighbors, she knew that on April 17, 1975, the people were evacuated from towns to rural areas. During the regime, religion was prohibited. For example, monks were disrobed and killed. Intellectuals were arrested, imprisoned and executed.

Phin Chheav Phing, eleventh grade, heard that the regime was the cruelest regime. It starved people. Any sort of stealing, particularly food, would result in prompt execution. During the regime, anyone with an education was targeted to be killed by the regime. The regime killed the educated people because they were perceived to be a threat to the regime.

Soeun Ra-Ul, eleventh grade, said that, "I heard stories from my parents. My home province is in Banteay Meanchey province. There is a pit at Phnom Tauch-Phnom Thom where people were rounded up and killed. I knew this about the crime site."

Sok Lihour, eleventh grade, only knew that the regime forced people to suffer unbearable forced labor.

Touch Dalin volunteered to describe the KR regime. "My grandfather was forced to do hard labor. The base and new people were forced to live together." She also learned about forced marriage. Anyone who refused to get married would face death.

Heng Guek Hoan volunteered to speak about the worst conditions at the prison facility. Prisoners were not allowed to speak to each other. Even the sound of chains would cause much trouble.

Cheav Chhor-Yi volunteered to add more information. She said that the regime intended to kill people gradually. Their throats were cut before being pushed into the pits. Illiterate people were assigned to lead the units.

According to two interviews with two outstanding students, they stressed that they had yet to learn the history from their teachers. The information they obtained was through the limited media broadcasting they received, such as radio and television. Faced with such a challenging education, the two students suggested that teachers incorporate some portions of the KR history in their curriculum. Kimuoy, 18 years old, believed that, as a student, she considered "education" to be an effective prevention measure against the reoccurrence of genocide. However, her classmate Sean Limsrou, also 18 years old, clarified that genocide prevention requires active, collective participation.

### **Appendix Three: Reactions from Students**

Ms. Heng Chhor Poan Raingsy, tenth grade, of Kampong Speu High School, learned about the KR history from her parents and teacher of Khmer literature. She heard



about the worst living condition of people and mass executions. She would like to explore the exact scenarios in which the KR harmed the people and the reasons why the KR leaders led the country to genocide. In this regard, she wanted her teachers to teach about the entire period of the DK regime. "DK history should be included into every classroom or there should be extra time to teach it," she added. Her parents often draw comparisons between their lives and those of the younger generation. The later generation was lucky to live a good life with basic needs and freedoms, so, they should focus on education.

Ms. Seng Kenedy, tenth grade, of Kampong Speu High School, had little knowledge about the DK history, even though her parents and teachers often told her stories about DK history. Her parents told her that the DK regime was the most brutal,



**Students Reading the Questionnaires**

killing millions of people. Children were put to work under difficult circumstances. Each family faced separations. She said after hearing this history, she almost came to tears. She always wondered why the regime brought so much suffering to its people. Her teachers

occasionally incorporate KR history in the classroom. However, she found the previous teaching of this history to be limited. Her suggestion was that teachers should go into greater detail. In her opinion, it is wrong that Cambodians do not know their own history clearly. "We need to convey our history, culture and civilization to the outside world," said Kenedy.

Ms. Tim Muoy Kea, eighth grade, of Treng Troyoeng High School, learned about the KR history through her parents and teachers. She had no doubt about what the KR did to the Cambodian people. "I really wonder why Cambodians kill their own people." She stressed, "If our country did not experience the genocide and civil war, it would be a country of great development and prosperity. Future efforts are to prevent genocide. As for students, they should study hard." In the meantime, she said "Our society needs to tolerate each other. There should be no discrimination of children of former KR cadres."

Ms. Tuon Sokunthea, twelfth grade, of Stung Hav High School, has read the Democratic Kampuchea textbook. Her reading inspired her to learn more about DK's governing structure and leadership. "I remembered the Cambodian people faced

overwork, starvation, torture, and killing." Her parents often narrated the history in conjunction with the teaching in class. Her beliefs became stronger as she has conducted more research on these issues. She frequently engaged her relatives and neighbors in the discussion about KR history and the comparison of the KR period to the prosperity of the current government. Despite grave concerns over the fact that the next generation might not believe in the existence of the KR regime, Kunthea pointed out that the DK textbook could be a helpful resource for general understanding and learning.

**END.**

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