

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

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

Report from Kampong Thom, March 7-12, 2011

By Khamboly Dy

1. INTRODUCTION



1 January Dam, Kampong Thmar District, Kampong Thom

On March 7-12, 2011, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) and the Ministry of Education conducted a quality control evaluation in Kampong Thom province, the home town of the Khmer Rouge (KR) top leader Pol Pot. Kampong Thom is also the birthplace of Duch, head of the KR central security center S-21 (or Tuol Sleng prison). The evaluation

team consisted of two DC-Cam staff members, Mr. Khamboly Dy and Mr. Sovann Morm, and two officials from the Ministry of Education, Mr. Ten Kimton and Mr. Mouny Sophat. The team observed five actual classroom teachings and conducted seventeen interviews with teachers, students, School Directors, officials of the Provincial Offices of Education, and former Khmer Rouge (KR) cadres. The interviews also included second and third generations of Pol Pot who are currently working in various offices and studying in some high schools in the province. The team also wanted to see the perspectives of Pol Pot's family members toward the teaching and learning of KR history in the classroom. Their interests and attitudes will be highlighted in point 7 below. At the end of each classroom observation and evaluation, the team provided feedback and recommendations for improvement to the observed teachers and School Directors to ensure the teaching of “A History of Democratic Kampuchea” reaches its goal in a broader term.

In general, teachers, students, education officials, and residents in the provinces whom we met and/or interviewed agreed that teaching and studying about KR history in a formal classroom setting is important to prevent the reoccurrence of such atrocities in the future. However, the team found that Pol Pot's second generations were not enthusiastic toward introducing KR history into the classroom. They did not want to recall and talk about the past; rather, they wanted to have a clear distinction between Pol Pot as the Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and the family members. Samrith Ros (a son of Saloth Roeung, Pol Pot's older sister) said that, “I don't have any comment on the teaching and the textbook. As it is already integrated into the official teaching in the classroom, it must be good. But history has to

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

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express the fact. If there is no fact, it is not history, and you betray your consciousness.” In spite of this observation, the third generation who were studying in high school expressed their positive interests and attitude toward learning KR history. Tin Thavry (a grandson of Saloth Nhip, Pol Pot’s younger brother) said he received a copy of the textbook about two years ago when DC-Cam held a textbook distribution ceremony in Hun Sen Balaing High School. At that time, Thavry was in grade 10 and attended the ceremony. Thavry said he has read the textbook twice and wanted to know more about what happened at that time. He often asks his mother or listens to his older relatives, especially his mother, Mrs. Nhib Thol (Pol Pot’s niece), talking about life during DK.



Water Gate of 7 January Dam, Kampong Thmar District, Kampong Thom



Water Gate of 6 January Dam, Kampong Thmar District, Kampong Thom

The table below is a brief summary of our evaluation in Kampong Thom provinces.

Quality control project objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching of <i>A History of Democratic Kampuchea</i>. • Evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials: (1) DK history textbook, (2) Teacher’s Guidebook and (3) Student Workbook. • Evaluate the integration of DK history into the daily regular teaching in schools.
Means of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-hour observation • Interviews • Surveys with students and teachers
Tools for evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom observation checklist • Questionnaire for teacher • Questionnaire for student • Interview questions
Types of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban: Hun Sen Balaing and Kampong Thom High Schools • Rural: Chea Sim Kampong Thmar and Hun Sen Taingkok High Schools • Most remote areas: Sandan High School
Number of classes observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five
Average number of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 45 and 50

per class	
Approximate number of students with textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 17 percent
Approximate number of teachers with Teacher's Guidebook and student workbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only teachers who participated in the training have guidebook and student workbook on hand.
Approximate number of students with student workbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No single student has ever received student workbook.

2. PRE-EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



Meeting with Leaderships of Kampong Thom High School

A. Meeting with officials of the Provincial Office of Education

Arriving in Kampong Thom town, the team met with officials of Kampong Thom Office of Education. The team presented a letter from the Ministry of Education authorizing them to conduct the observations of the schools. In addition, the team provided the evaluation tools as well as two copies of the DK history

textbook and the magazine *Searching for the Truth* to Mr. Sam Vong Vaddey, Head of Administrative Office of Kampong Thom Office of Education. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce DC-Cam's work, the collaboration between DC-Cam and the Ministry of Education, and particularly the objectives of the quality control work. The meeting was also conducted for the purpose of obtaining the permission from Kampong Thom Office of Education to observe various high schools in the province and encourage future collaboration.

In addition, the meeting with the officials of Kampong Thom Office of Education allowed the team to obtain basic information related to each school and the people who they were going to observe. For instance, Mr. Sam Vong Vaddey informed the team that, in the past few years, there were a number of Pol Pot family members working in the provincial education sector and a number of Pol Pot's grandchildren studying in Kampong Thom and Balaing High Schools. In the present day, only a few of them are in the province as many third generations continue to advanced degree in Phnom Penh. For example, all Samrith Ros's children are now studying at various universities in Phnom Penh. Family members still living in Kampong Thom include: Mr. Seng Sarak (Head of Balaing District Office of Education), Samrith Ros (former Deputy Head of Kampong Thom Office of Education), and Chea Sipa (Deputy Head of Steung Sen Municipal Office of Education). The team was able to locate many of them for interviews.

B. Meeting with the School Directors

Before each classroom observation, the team spent about an hour meeting and discussing with the School Directors of each school we observed. The purpose of this meeting was the same as the meeting with the officials of the Provincial Office of Education. The team submitted a letter from the Ministry of Education with a note from the Provincial Office of Education to the School Directors authorizing the evaluation team's visit. The team also submitted the evaluation tools, copies of the DK history textbook, and magazine to the School Directors.



Meeting with Director of Hun Sen Balaing High School, Kampong Thom Province

After introducing members of the evaluation team and the purposes of the quality control work, the team asked the School Director about the general conditions of the schools as well as the situation of teaching KR history in each school. For instance, Kampong Thom High School was one of the first schools established in Kampong Thom province in the middle to late 1950s. The construction of Kampong Thom High School started in 1959, and it was put up for public use two years later. In 1979, after the collapse of the KR, the school was reopened. Students from Preah Vihear province also attended this school.

In the early 1980s, when the KR guerrilla forces were fighting with government forces of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) regime, the school was used as a garrison of the PRK forces. The roof of a two-story building was used to put artillery ammunition, which destroyed the foundation of the building. Currently, the building is very aging and decayed. However, due to the lack of classrooms, the school leadership decided to continue using the building. Most often, students have

to run out of the building when the rain comes.



The First Building Built in Late 1950, Kampong Thom High School

Sandan High School was used as a security center during the KR period. Prisoners were arrested and detained in the school buildings. They were taken for execution to the Prey Kanleng killing field, which was a bigger security center in Sandan district. Not much different Sandan, Hun Sen

Taingkok High School was a hot battle field between Lon Nol and KR forces during the war between 1970 and 1975. It was also the place where operations Chenla I and II took place. One school building was totally destroyed by bombing, and other buildings were also strongly affected.

In addition, we learned that almost all of Pol Pot's younger generations used to work and study in Kampong Thom High School. Deputy Director of Kampong Thom High School Mr. Loy Lot said that all of Pol Pot's younger generations have left the school. Mr. Samrith Ros was also a former Deputy Director of the School. At that time, Mr. Loy Lot rarely talked about Pol Pot and the KR period to Mr. Ros. He just learned that Mr. Ros had never met Pol Pot during the KR regime even though he was Pol Pot's nephew.

The table below shows the number of teachers, students, and classrooms of each school.

No.	High School	Teachers	Female	Students	Classroom
1	Kampong Thom	118	53	2,915	53
2	Hun Sen Balaing	89	30	1,651	33
3	Hun Sen Sandan	35	5	1,005	23
4	Chea Sim Kampong Thmar	79	28	1,590	45
5	Hun Sen Taingkok	63	22	1,409	37

3. CLASSROOM AND GENERAL OBSERVATION

A. General comments

Some teachers the team observed used traditional teaching methods, which do not allow much opportunity for students to practice critical thinking and self-learning. For most of the time, teachers started the lesson by asking students to take turns reading sections in the social studies textbook. After that, teachers asked students



Students in Sandan High School Writing the Answers on the Board, Sandan District, Kampong Thom Province

some comprehensive questions to assess students' understanding. The question we asked in this regard was: What factors prevent teachers from using methods that generate classroom discussions and group work? According to the teachers and School Directors, there were several reasons for their failure to use more interactive lessons. (1) Classroom structure does not allow students to move in the classroom easily. Teachers are discouraged to practice group work. (2) The large number of students in the class were another obstacle. Usually, there were between

40 and 50 students in each class. Some classes contained more than 60 students; this made the classrooms too congested to facilitate group work. (3) Both teachers and students were not familiar with the new methods, which further discouraged them from testing the new methods in the classroom. For example, teachers stated the Jigsaw method needs a lot of time, so they rarely used this method. Usually, teachers are valued through their ability to speak a lot in the class. Teachers who are not able to talk much are considered weak. Therefore, some teachers kept using the traditional method.

In spite of this fact, teachers admitted that using the new methods generated a lot of student interest. In their experience, the most interesting methods included the K-W-L chart, Jigsaw, group discussions, and role play. Students were very interested in history class when these methods were employed. It was said that students liked to play different roles in groups the most. For example, one student would be a time keeper, another worked as a motivator, another note taker, or a presenter. In this format, each had their own responsibility.

In those classes with about 35 students, teachers could introduce methods that facilitated group discussions more effectively. With this set number, students can move and form groups easily. Small classes are more likely to have group discussion than bigger classes. Teachers are able to engage all students to participate in classroom activities that generate critical thinking skills and student-led activities.



Ms. Ly Buntha Is Teaching Her Class, Kampong Thom High School



Ten Kimton, an Evaluator, Is Leading Survey with Student, Kampong Thom High School

According to the teachers, the quality of education is lower than previous regimes, except that of the KR. Teachers commented that students are now strongly influenced by modern influences that were previously unavailable. According to Ms. Ly Buntha of Kampong Thom High School, almost half of her students engaged in social entertainment, such as games, karaoke, or other leisure activities. They pay little attention to their studies. In spite of this fact, more than eighty percent of the students pass the exam. Khim Sothea of Baliang High School added that the challenge of improving the quality of education can be tied to the circumstances of teachers. Some teachers do not pay enough attention to their career. Teachers have to engage in private business to secure their living. With a low salary and not enough documents, teachers are unlikely to produce quality students.

Although the amount of integration of KR history in the classroom teaching is relatively small, talking about this history generates a lot of discussion and questions from students. In other words, students are quite eager to learn about what happened to their parents and grandparents at that time. Ms. Ly Buntha from Kampong Thom High School said that she did not want to integrate KR history too often because her students asked a lot of questions each time she taught, and that



Library in Sandan High School, Sandan District

affected the program assigned by the Ministry of Education.

Students appear to grow more and more curious on topics such as mass weddings, starvation, forced labor, and the abolition of school, religion, and the market economy. For example, one of her students said, *"How come a pretty girl got married to a disabled man. If I were in that situation, I would not have gotten married."* In some cases,

teachers asked students to clarify their questions with survivors in

order to save time to finish the lessons in the Ministry's social studies textbook.

Teachers who were survivors and had their family members killed during the KR commented that the content of the textbook was a bit light and did not adequately reflect the scope of horror during this time period. Director of Hun Sen Balaing High School Mr. Norng Chanyara told his students that the actual crimes are much more than the ones described in the textbook. However, he advised his students that they grasp as much knowledge as possible from the textbook. Ms. Pom Sokunthy of Kampong Chheu Teal High School said that she wanted to have more sections on KR executions in the textbook. Her father was taken for education during the KR period, and she has never seen him since.

Almost all teachers we observed failed to use the textbook during the teaching. Even Khim Sothea, a teacher whom we considered the most effective teacher, did not make use of the DK history textbook when she asked students to compare between Pol Pot and Hitler and Mussolini.

Though the students were active in the discussion and they worked hard to find the answers to the assigned questions, they would have produced better answers if the teachers allowed them to use the DK history textbook. If there are not enough copies, teachers could copy the related section of the textbook for students.



The Compound of Hun Sen Balaing High School

B. Excerpts from classroom teaching

Most teachers in Kampong Thom effectively integrated KR history into their teaching. Among the five observed teachers, the evaluators give high evaluations to almost all of them. One teacher, Ms. Khim Sothea from Hun Sen Balaing High School, was given high marks by the team. Her teaching stood out among the six provinces the team observed. Mr. Sothea accomplished one objective of the three devoted to KR history (as noted in the DK history textbook). He asked students to compare the leadership of Mussolini with that of Hitler during World War II and Pol Pot of the DK regime.

The evaluation team suggested that she be used as a model for all teachers nationwide. Below is the lesson plan and excerpt from the teaching activities of Ms. Khim Sothea.

Ms. Khim Sothea, Hun Sen Balaing High School, Kampong Thom Province
Grade 12, duration: 1 hour

Chapter I: World History
Lesson 13: Italy and Germany (1919-1939)

Objectives:

1. Students explain the impacts from the totalitarian ideology of Fascism.
2. Students describe important social and political events in Italy and Germany and compare them to the dictatorial regime in Cambodia.
3. Students define important words and learn to appreciate democracy.

Materials: History core course book of the Ministry of Education and lesson plan.

Process and procedure

Step 1: Teacher checks class attendance, asks students about their health, and prepares materials for teaching. Students also prepare their materials for the day's learning.

Step 2: Teacher reviews prior lesson by asking students questions related to the material. Teacher uses K-W-L chart for the purpose of assessing students' prior knowledge on Italy and Germany.



Ms. Khim Sothea Is Teaching Her Students in Hun Sen Balaing High School, Steung Sen District, Kampong Thom

K	W	L

- Who created Fascism? **Mussolini was the person who created Fascism.**
- What are the important characteristics of Fascism? **The important characteristics of Fascism are narrow-minded policies, racism, and opposition to freedom and democracy.**
- Why did the millionaires and big businessmen support the Fascism of Mussolini? For what purposes? **They feared the loss of their own interests.**

In addition, the teacher asked students to examine the picture on page 90 of the Ministry's social studies textbook. Students identified the name and the position of the people in the picture. (They were Mussolini and Hitler.)

Step 3: The teacher showed the objectives of the day. Students listened and understood the meaning of each objective.

Step 4: Before dividing students into groups, the teacher explained some of the difficult terms in the textbook.

- Demagoguery: Making people believe a leader with political trickery.
- Nazism: A name of a totalitarian regime created by Hitler.
- Inflation: The money loses its value.
- Credit: The money owed with interest.
- Famine: No food to eat.
- Imperialism: The exploitation of people's economy.



Students Discussed in Groups and Wrote Answers on the Flip Chart.

Step 5: The teacher divided the students into five groups. Each group read pages 88-91 and took notes on important events in order to answer the teacher's questions. After that, students wrote answers on the flip chart and a representative from each group presented the answers to the class.

Question for group 1: How did the

great economic crisis of 1929 affect Germany? In order to solve this

problem, what did Germany do?

Question for group 2: What were the reasons for Mussolini and Hitler's dictatorship?

Question for group 3: Compare the dictatorships of Mussolini, Hitler, and Pol Pot.

Question for group 4: According to your understanding of the lesson, do you want a regime like Italy, Germany, or Cambodia under Pol Pot? Why?

Question for group 5: Who are perpetrators? Who are victims? What difficulties afflict countries that experience genocide?

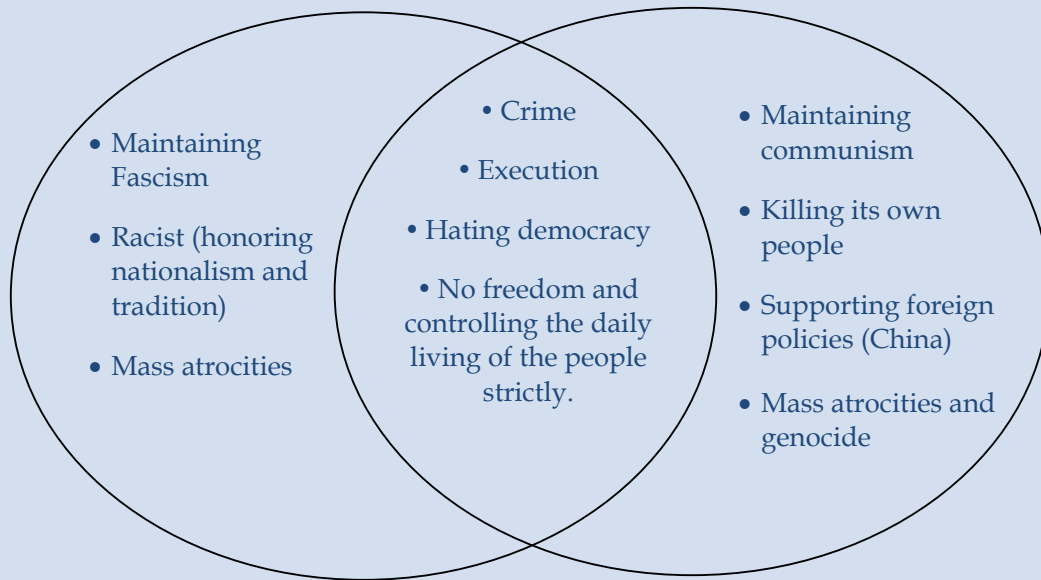
After working in groups to find the answers to their respective questions, each group chose one representative to present their answers to the class. The following were answers from the groups.

Group 1	The great economic crisis of 1929 strongly affected Germany because the US and the UK stopped lending money to Germany and forced Germany to pay back its debt early. Germany could not export and the lack of money to buy the raw materials necessary for its industry led to an economic crisis. To solve this problem, the government issued more money which caused a loss in value.
Group 2	<p>The reasons that led Mussolini and Hitler to practice dictatorship were:</p> <p>For Italy: Economic crisis. Mussolini loved himself and was arrogant. He assumed a policy of invading other countries. War was spreading throughout Italy. He loved power and held power totally. He wanted to enforce his power on the world.</p> <p>For Germany: Economic, social, and political crisis. The Warsaw Pact was a political pressure for Hitler, who hated democracy and socialism. He was too proud and held all power in his hand. He wanted to expand his power throughout the world.</p>
Group 3	<p>Mussolini and Hitler: Glorify their own race and kill other races. They wanted to control the whole world.</p> <p>Pol Pot: Kill his own race and destroy the social system. Support foreign policies (China). Want to control the whole country.</p>
Group 4	According to our understanding of the lesson, we do not want regimes like the ones in Italy, Germany, and Democratic Kampuchea because these leaders did not practice multi-party policy. Moreover, they worked against democracy and socialism. In addition, these regimes prohibited all kinds of rights in their countries.
Group 5	<p>Perpetrators are Hitler of Germany, Mussolini of Italy, and Pol Pot of Cambodia.</p> <p>Victims are: People.</p> <p>Countries that experienced genocide have the following problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social crisis ▪ Political crisis ▪ Economic crisis

Step 6: The teacher strengthened students' knowledge by asking students to

compare the similarities and differences between Germany, Italy, and Democratic Kampuchea of Pol Pot. The teacher used a Venn diagram to facilitate the students' comparison work.

Venn Diagram



Step 7: The teacher provided homework for students. What were the important meanings of the political program of the Nazi party that affected global peace?

4. OBSERVATIONS OF STUDENTS



Students Work in Groups to Find Answers, Chea Sim Kampong Thmar High School, Kampong Thmar District.

Students from grades 7 up to grade 12 believe the history and the atrocities that happened during the KR period. Through our observations, the team observed that over 90 percent of the students expressed belief in the history. The other 10 percent were less committed and did not say whether they believed because they were still

According to our observation in Kampong Thom and after comparing to other provinces, students' interest in and attitude toward studying KR history is becoming stronger over time. Moreover, their belief in the history is increasing as well. Students' belief varies according to their age. Students in primary school (from grades 1 to 6) are not familiar with the KR history. However, most

skeptical of the unimaginable events during the KR. One example of this skepticism was illustrated in the common question that was posed to teachers regarding how old people could allow a few young guards to arrest and kill them.

What factors make students believe the atrocities and stories told to them? Most students that the team interviewed said the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT) is the main driving force behind students' belief. The establishment of the KRT generated a lot of dialogue within each family. Most parents described their experiences during the KR regime to their children at dinner time, which was another factor in changing students' attitudes toward the existence of KR atrocities. The publication and massive distribution of the DK history textbooks as well as the formal integration of DK history into the classroom teaching enforced students' understanding and their beliefs. For instance, Director of Hun Sen Balaing High School said students began to develop special interest in and beliefs in the history ever since the distribution of the textbook in October 2009.

5. INTEGRATION OF DK HISTORY COMMENTARY

The integration of KR history into classroom teaching in Kampong Thom made little difference from those of the previous provinces the team observed. Most teachers complained that the program from the Ministry of Education is long and hardly finished within an academic year. With this large amount of work, teachers, in some cases, were discouraged from integrating new lessons into their teaching. Moreover, most students stop coming to school after the semester exam. Students take leave to help their parents in farming. Therefore, teachers have to delay some lessons in order to



wait for the absent students, and this makes the program late. As a result, teachers are not able to integrate much of the outside content into their teaching. In light of this fact, teachers who have received training managed to integrate some content in the DK history textbook into their daily teaching. They said that integrating KR history into the history subject is easier than geography or other subjects.

Students Discuss a Question on KR History, Kampong Thmar High School, Kampong Thmar District.

Within the history subject, teachers are able to integrate only some relevant lessons such as World War I or World War II, in which teachers can ask students to compare the atrocities in these World Wars to the events that occurred in Cambodia during the KR regime. Lessons on the history of Germany and Italy are also good points that teachers can integrate KR history. Teachers can assign students to do comparative studies between Germany and Democratic Kampuchea or between

Hitler and Pol Pot.

The effective integration of KR history into the classroom teaching depends strongly on the teachers' will and desire to teach KR history. Permission from the Ministry of Education to allow teachers to officially integrate KR history into their classroom teaching opens the opportunity for teachers to teach KR history, but it is not compulsory for teachers. Teacher suggested that in order to have a wider teaching and learning of KR history in Cambodian classrooms, DC-Cam should recommend the following ideas to the Ministry of Education.

1. The Ministry of Education issues a formal directive telling teachers to teach or integrate KR history into their teaching. The instruction should clearly specify the number of lessons, when, and where to teach/integrate KR history. How to integrate is the teachers' choice. Some teachers may use a descriptive method (i.e., by describing a particular point in KR history for students). Other teachers may give students several questions and ask students to work in groups to find the answers by library research or interviewing their parents or older relatives. Teachers can discuss this assignment/homework at the beginning of the next session. Alternatively, teachers can integrate by making one objective of the three devoted to KR history. Then teachers can use a comparative method to achieve the objectives.
2. Within the history subject, the Ministry of Education may prepare the program in which two months are devoted to KR history within the academic year. For this approach, KR history can be placed at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the academic year. This approach makes KR history stand out from other Cambodian modern histories. However, some teachers are not sympathetic to this approach. They want to see KR history framed within other Cambodian modern histories so it is taught sequentially from one period to another in the proper order.
3. In addition, some teachers suggested the Ministry of Education establish KR history as an independent course. The DK history textbook would become the core course book for the subject. To accomplish this, more teaching hours will be needed, and more teachers would have to be recruited, which would result in more spending to the Ministry's budget. Though this approach is highly unlikely, it is worth considering due to the fact that mass atrocities still exist in the world today.
4. Some teachers suggested the Program Development Department of the Ministry of Education include more texts from the DK history textbook into the social studies textbooks for grades 7 to 12. The Ministry of Education should insert the texts on KR history into all relevant subjects such as History, Geography, Khmer Studies, and Citizen Morality. In order to balance the number of lessons in the social studies textbooks, the Ministry of Education should reduce the number of pages devoted to foreign histories, which may not be as important as KR history in the contemporary day. By devoting more time and materials to KR history the teachers would have enough time to finish the entire social studies textbook within the academic year. Students

from grades 7 to 12 would then be able to grasp the whole picture of the KR history. This approach is most likely to be accepted.

6. TEXTBOOK, GUIDEBOOK, AND WORKBOOK AVAILABILITY AND USE

Like previous provinces the team observed, only teachers who received training from DC-Cam obtained copies of the guidebook, student workbook, and KR history textbook. These teachers have used these teaching materials to teach or integrate KR history into their daily teaching. In contrast, teachers who have not been trained do not possess these teaching materials and very occasionally integrate KR history in their classes. Among the untrained teachers, only senior teachers who came through the KR period talk about their life during DK to their students. The young untrained teachers totally ignore the KR subject.

In order to encourage all history teachers and teachers in other related subjects to teach/integrate KR history into their daily teaching, the team brought with them some copies of the guidebook and student workbook. The team deposited these guidebooks and workbooks in the school library so the untrained teachers could take advantages of these materials if they need assistance in teaching KR history in their classes.

All schools observed by the team have received at least one hundred copies of the KR history textbook. Hun Sen Baliang High School received up to over 2,000 copies because the school was the location for the book distribution ceremony in October 2009. However, the number of students receiving copies of the textbook is still small. Among 182 students we surveyed only 32 students have the textbook on hand. Some school libraries do not function well. For instance, over a hundred copies of the DK history textbook are left gathering dust in the Sandan High School's library.

Most teachers and School Directors suggested the copies of the DK history textbook should be deposited in the library for longer use, the same way with the core course books. If the copies are given directly to students, they will take them with them when they finish their study. The coming students will have no textbook to study.

7. COMMUNITY OBSERVATIONS/INTERVIEW

Perspectives from Pol Pot's second and third generations on teaching KR history:

The team met and interviewed one niece, Ms. Chea Sipha, and one nephew, Mr. Samrith Ros, of Pol Pot, and one grandson, Mr. Tin Thavry, and one granddaughter, Ms. Moun Nameas. The team wanted to know the attitude of Pol Pot's second and third generations toward the formal teaching and learning of KR history in the classroom.

Tin Thavry: a great grandson of Pol Pot

Tin Thavry is a grade 12 student studying in Hun Sen Balaing High School. He is 18 years old and is a son of Ms. Nhib Thol, daughter of Saloth Nhib, Pol Pot's younger brother. He lives in Prek Sbov village, O Kunthor commune, Steung Sen district, Kampong Thom province.

He said that his parents often talk about their life during the KR period. He did not ask a lot of questions, but he did listen to their discussions and he learned a lot about what happened during the KR regime. He claimed that his parents also suffered during the KR period, even though they were close relatives of Pol Pot. His parents never saw Pol Pot during the KR regime between 1975 and 1979, nor did his grandfather Saloth Nhib. He learned from his mother that one reason that the family members never saw Pol Pot is that Pol Pot left home from the day he was six; he never returned back to the home village ever since.



Being asked how the villagers treat his family, Thavry said the villagers treat his family like they normally treat anyone else. The villagers even admire his grandfather Saloth Nhib; they said that his grandfather is a very gentle man, unlike Pol Pot – who killed a lot of people. In school, not many teachers and students are aware that Thavry has a blood

Tin Thavry, Saloth Nhib's Grandson

relation with Pol Pot. He said that his friends who know his background also treat him fairly. They never discriminate or show any hatred toward him.

Mr. Khamboly Dy asked if he admires Pol Pot and is proud to have a relation with Pol Pot, who was the Prime Minister of Cambodia during the DK regime. Thavry said that he did not have any pride in this relationship to Pol Pot. Mr. Dy asked, "What were the reasons that Pol Pot led the country to the killing of millions of people?" Thavry hesitantly answered the question. He heard his old relatives say that Pol Pot wanted to show cruelty by creating cruel soldiers who could persecute certain parts of the population. The main purpose of doing so was to use this cruelty to threaten neighboring countries who wanted to invade Cambodia. He said, "This is a form of politics," which suggested that the questions were requiring



Moun Nameas, Granddaughter of the Sister of Saloth Nhib's Wife.

answers that were beyond his understanding.

Mr. Khamboly Dy asked if he wanted to be a Prime Minister like his great grandfather and lead Cambodia to a prosperous country, different from Pol Pot. Thavry said he did not have that ambition. He wanted to finish higher education and be able to work with a non-governmental organization that provides social assistance to the people. Mr. Dy asked if he liked Pol Pot. Thavry said he loved Pol Pot as a relative. The family members still perform a ceremony in dedication to Pol Pot and other deceased family members every year.

When Mr. Dy asked if he wanted to study KR history, he said, *"I want to study more about this history in order to find out whether it [what happened during the KR] is the politics of the government."*

Mr. Samrith Ros and Ms. Chea Sipha, Pol Pot's nephew and niece



Mr. Dy Interviewing Chea Sipha, Pol Pot's Niece

Mr. Samrith Ros is the son of Saloth Roeung, Pol Pot's older sister. He is the former Deputy Director of Kampong Thom High School and also former Deputy Director of Kampong Thom Office of Education. He is currently retired and working with a private university in Kampong Thom. Ms. Chea Sipha refused to give the details of her biography. She is currently the Deputy Director of Steung Sen

Municipal Office of Education. They both live in Kampong Thom town. Their living conditions are relatively well-off. Samrith Ros is able to send all his children to continue their university study in Phnom Penh. Both Samrith Ros and Chea Sipha refused to talk about the past and their personal relations with Pol Pot though they agreed to conduct an interview with Mr. Khamboly Dy.

Mr. Dy asked about their perceptions of teaching KR history in the classroom nationwide. They reluctantly supported the teaching of KR history. Chea Sipha said, "Since the book is already published and put into the official curriculum, it must be good." However, both Samrith Ros and Chea Sipha provided some comments on the importance of studying KR history. They said, *"It is to teach young children not to practice the crimes again."* However, Samrith Ros warned, *"History has to be about facts. If there is no fact, history will have no more value."* In the last minutes when Mr. Dy said goodbye to them, Samrith Ros said, *"The writer of History has to give facts, please remember. Otherwise, you betray your consciousness."*

Perspectives of former KR cadre toward teaching DK history in the classroom:

So Try, a former prison guard of Prey Kanleng security center: The team met with



Vann Seng, Student in Sandan High School, Sandan High School, Sandan District

So Try, Vann Seng's Father and KR Former Prison Guard, Sandan District

Mr. So Try, who is currently the Director of Taing Krasoa Primary School. His son Vann Seng is studying in grade 9 of Sandan High School. Mr. Dy interviewed Vann Seng to learn his knowledge and his interest and attitude toward studying KR history. Seng said that he has heard a lot of about the KR period from his parents who usually describe their experiences during dinner time. His father never tells him about his work as the prison guard, but he learned his father's story from the nearby villagers. Seng said that although he is the son of a former prison guard, the villagers and friends at school treat him normal. He does not receive any discrimination. He is interested to learn more about KR history in order to find out what life was like during that period.

Learning from the Deputy Director of Sandan High School that Vann Seng's father So Try is a former KR prison guard, the team made a phone call to So Try to ask for an interview in which he agreed. Being asked if he ever described his work in Prey Kanleng security center during the KR regime, So Try said that he told his children about his hard life during that period, but he never told them about his work as a prison guard. Mr. Dy asked if he could share with his son Vann Seng about Prey Kanleng security center if Vann Seng accidentally got an assignment from his teacher to write a short story about Prey Kanleng. So Try said that he could discuss the general life during the KR regime but not his work in Prey Kanleng. He does not want to recall his story at Prey Kanleng. He is not ready to share this story. Mr. Dy

asked about his perception toward teaching and learning KR history in school. So Try commented that KR history should be taught within the framework of *A History of Democratic Kampuchea* textbook. The teaching should be enlarged to include individual stories but not to impact on personal safety.



Memorial in Baray Chan Dek Pagoda, Kampong Thom

8. IMPACTS, CHALLENGES, AND LESSON LEARNED

We should have tested the evaluation tools before using them for quality control work. The teaching observation checklist that the team uses to observe the classroom teaching should contain three columns: “yes,” “no” and “little.” Some teachers allow time for students to ask questions, but the time is not enough. So the evaluators can tick on the ‘little’ column.

Evaluators may not conduct other activities such as taking photographs during the classroom observation. Evaluators need to pay serious attention to the activities of teachers and students in order to be able to provide necessary feedbacks to improve teachers’ performance in the classrooms. Moreover, evaluators walking in the classroom during the studying hour may distract the classroom’s activities.

Two evaluators from the Ministry of Education, Mr. Ten Kinton and Mr. Moun Sophat, who went with the team to observe schools in Kampong Thom, commented that the implementation of the Genocide Education Project is very successful. The two evaluators have worked for the Ministry of Education for more than ten years. According to their experiences and comparing to the previous teaching



Human Remains Preserved in a Memorial in Baray Chan Dek Pagoda

performance of the teachers, the teaching has improved greatly. Evaluators from the Ministry of Education were excited on how well the teachers in Kampong Thom used the knowledge, methods, and materials they gained from the training to apply in their classroom. The most important observation to come from the evaluation was the lessons performed by the teacher cited in this report, who used the new methodology with skill and was able to engage all the students in a way that they could find answers on their own. Moreover, students understood the lesson remarkably.

Khim Sothea of Balaing High School has finished teaching six chapters from the DK history textbook up to early March. She not only integrated DK history into other lessons, but she also taught whole chapters from the DK textbook. Students asked her to teach more KR history, but she has to commit to finish the Ministry’s social studies textbook. She believes that by the end of the academic year, she will be able to finish the entire DK history textbook.

Moreover, she asked her students to produce anti-genocide slogans for the poster that was distributed to her during the annual meeting in Preah Vihear. She used the poster as a model for students to produce the slogans on their own. Students will put

the slogans they produce in their classrooms.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The observation and evaluation in Kampong Thom shows that the Genocide Education Project has achieved its goals to a satisfactory degree. Though not every student has a copy of the textbook on hand, their level of understanding on DK history increases considerably, and their interest and attitude toward learning DK history is high. Teachers' desire to teach DK history in their classes is strong, though



A School Building in Sandan High School, Turned into Prison during the KR, Sandan District

the desire is sometimes distracted by some challenges ranging from teachers' well-being to lack of incentives, and not enough time to finish the program of the Ministry's social studies textbook.

Most teachers in Kampong Thom teach/integrate KR history into their regular teaching effectively, compared to the previous five provinces the team observed and

evaluated. The teachers employed the methods in the guidebook and allowed a chance for all students to engage in all classroom activities, though they failed to use the DK history textbook and faced some educational and personal challenges to integrate DK history in a broader and more satisfactory manner. In spite of this fact, the amount of integration of KR history is still limited. For many teachers, integration means describing the story by mouth for a few minutes within the core lesson. To have a wider teaching of KR history in Cambodian classrooms, more texts on KR history should be included in the Ministry's social studies textbook and an integration instruction from the Ministry of Education should be issued to all secondary schools so that teachers have a formal obligation to integrate KR history on a regular basis.

Like the previous five provinces, students in Kampong Thom have a strong interest in studying KR history. Some students reported they have finished reading the KR history textbook two times already. The level of understanding and belief in what happened during the KR varies according to age. Students in lower secondary school (grades 7-9) have a lower understanding and interest toward learning KR history, compared to students in upper secondary school (grades 10-12). Very few students show reluctance when they are asked if they want to study KR history and if they believe what their parents and older relatives and villagers told them. The majority shows a strong interest and totally believes their parents' stories. However, some still possess a lot of doubt. There needs to be more efforts in genocide education to solve many of the questions in students' minds.

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