

Report from Kratie and Mondul Kiri

June 6-13, 2012

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1. Introduction

The quality control team went to Kratie and Mondul Kiri provinces on June 6, 2012 to conduct an assessment of the implementation of the history of Democratic Kampuchea in schools. For one week, the team observed six classrooms, organized a forum with 40 villagers in attendance in Sambo district, Kratie province, led a focus group discussion with approximately 50 students at Koh Nhek secondary school, and interviewed provincial education officials, students, teachers, school principals, and



Quality Control Team Meeting with Preah Moha Khsatrei Kosomak High School Director.

the members of the community. The team evaluated the students' understanding of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history through the evaluation form.

The quality control team consisted of Mr. Ly Sok-Kheang and Mr. Dy Khamboly of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) and Mr. Kung Hak, an official from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). The table below summarizes the evaluation process in Kratie and Mondul Kiri 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) Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history textbook, (2) Teacher's Guidebook and (3) Student Workbook. • Evaluate the integration of DK history in daily instruction.
Means of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-hour observation • Interviews • Surveys
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, rural and remote areas
Number of classes observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three schools in Kratie province and three schools in Mondul Kiri province
Average number of students per class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40-50
Approximate number of students with textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

2. Pre-Evaluation Activities

Prior to observing the six classrooms in the two provinces, the team contacted the directors of Provincial Education Office to inform and seek their official permission. In Kratie province, provincial education officials gave a written approval to the team. They were very friendly and cooperative. In Mondul Kiri province, the team met with Mr. Tim Sangvat, Provincial Education Office Director. He gave his oral permission and informed the school principals about the team's observation plan. Based on interviews with school directors, the team noted the following information about each school.

No.	Schools	Teachers	Female Teachers	Students	Classrooms
1.	Preah Moha Khsat Trei Yani Kosamak High School	73	38	1,270	38
2.	Koh Khnhe Secondary School	7	2	133	4
3.	Hun Sen Snuol High School	35	9	605	17
4.	Hun Sen Koh Nhek High School	28 (8 BA)	4	593	11

5.	Chroh	Bou	Sra	10	1	86	3
	Secondary School						
6.	Keo	Seima	Secondary	17	1	221	6
	School						

3. Background of Schools

During the eight-day visitation, the team met with many new rising school principals with great talents and leadership skills in leading their respective schools. However, the team found that some of the new school principals were unable to provide them with the history of their schools.

4. General Challenges for Schools



Class Observation in Kratie Province, June 2012

The quality control team observed schools in provincial towns and in rural areas. The team focused on the school's curriculum and the teachers' capacity to instruct their students. The team learned that the poor attendance of students is a challenge for teachers. Teachers oftentimes find themselves unable to

finish their lessons that are required by the MoEYS. The list below shows the challenges faced by schools in rural and urban areas face..

THE INCREASE IN TEACHER'S CAPACITY: As a newly appointed school principal of Preah Kosamak High School, Mr. He Bun Chhy pointed out some outstanding challenges for his school. Mr. He complained that teachers' capacity is very limited given the new upgrade of school's curriculum. He said that some of his secondary school teachers are teaching with their secondary school education. Mr. He said that the content of the curriculum is too high, well above the skills and knowledge of the teachers. Only teachers with at least a BA degree in the field may have the knowledge base to teach effectively. However, Mr. He said that it is very difficult to get teachers with a college degree given the shortage of perspective teachers. Mr. He complained that teachers often transfer to private institutions soon after their appointed. Mr. He said his teachers need a lot of support and intensive training during the three-month vacation each year to expand their content knowledge and increase their teaching skills

THE FULFILLMENT OF CURRICULUM: Mr. He of Preah Kosamak High School



Students working in groups.

did not have an exact answer regarding to completing curriculum units as required by the Ministry of Education. Mr. He stressed that grade 12 teachers spent most of their time preparing students for examination. Mr. He also pointed out that there are so many holidays in Cambodia.

Some of the teachers ended up take athletic time in the rainy season to catch up with instructional programs. Mr. Seng Tong Hong, a history teacher at Preah Kosamak High School, also has a difficult time teaching the required curriculum because of the lack of time. Mr. Seng said that the community should work together to provide more knowledge to students. For example, parents and the media (TV) should play a constructive role in getting students to learn about history.

STUDENTS TAKING TWO MONTHS OFF PRIOR TO VACATION:

Due to excessive absences of students, some teachers are unable to complete their required tasks. . However, Mr. Saut Kolida, Principal of Koh Khnhe Secondary School, claimed that 85-90%t of his teachers are unable to finish teaching their curriculum.

THE SCHOOL'S INFRASTRUCTURE:

The fence is not fully built at Preah Kosamak High School. Student discipline is an issue.. Fights occur at least once or twice a year. Mr. He often seek help from the police department.

THE SCHOOL'S STRENGTH:

Mr. Saut, Principal of Preah Kosamak Secondary School , encouraged his students to go to



Mr. Saut Kolida, Koh Khnhe Secondary School Principal.

the library, create artistic work and music, and set up sports teams. These are types of motivators to keep students in school.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SECTOR at KOH KHNHE SECONDARY SCHOOL:

Mr. Saut Kolida, Principal of Koh Khnhe Secondary School said that the quality of public education is a big problem. Mr. Saut wrote down his recommendations and challenges to stress the need for high quality education. In regards to students' accommodation, Mr. Saut has put in a lot of effort to build a house for students from who live far from the school. Mr. Saut even hosted religious ceremonies to collect donations for improving his school's infrastructure.

5. Integration of DK History

Based on the information provided by principals and members of the faculty, it is an on-and-off effort to integrate the DK history into classrooms based on the lack of time. When informed of the classroom observations, teachers did their best to integrate the DK history into their lessons. .

Mr. Chan Sret of Koh Khnhe Secondary School commenced his teaching on Lesson Two "AIDs." He divided students into four groups to discuss the topic. After each representative wrote down their answers on the white board, another four representatives began their presentation of the answer. Mr. Chan Sret, who taught a

biology class on Aids tried to use his expertise on history by linking the lesson on Aids to the numerous deaths occurred during DK history. He also generated students' thinking of the death at Koh Pich that involved over three hundreds lives. The



Students Working in Groups.

death was caused by a horrible

stampede. Students remembered that. Then Mr. Chan tried to propose a new question of what happened to the Cambodian people over the last few decades. One female student stood up and answered that the KR regime took the lives of millions of people.. After getting this exact answer, Mr. Chan proceeded to draw a K-W-L chart to evaluate students' prior knowledge of the regime. In an attempt to engage more students, Mr. Chan asked his students about the regime to complete the "K" column, s The students' shared what they know about the prohibition of religion, the lack of food and family separation.. In the "W" column, Mr. Chan has a very clear

knowledge on this by explaining that the column is for the question that students want to learn about. Four of his students raised four questions such as who was the KR? How KR came to power? Why the KR could rule the country? When the KR regime collapsed? In regards to the "L" column, Mr. Chan suggested that students can complete that after his KR instruction. **Mr. Lean Man, a history and geography teacher at Hun Sen Snuol High School**, started his lesson on "India." Mr. Lean picked two of his students to read loud. Then Mr. Lean provided further explanation on the lesson by simplifying the terms and by connecting the lesson to the contemporary issue. Taking several minutes at the beginning of the lesson, Mr. Lean gave a lecture on DK history. The observation team noticed that the students were surprised when their teacher introduced DK history when teaching about India. Despite the awkwardness of his introduction of DK history, his students seemed interested in this history. After class, Mr. Lean said that the narrative of parents are just one piece of history sharing, thus school should provide supplemental instruction



Mr. Saut, Principal Preah Kosamak Secondary School

Mr. Saut, Principal Preah Kosamak Secondary School, reiterated that last year, the integration of DK history was done, but was unsure of its effectiveness. Mr. Saut is aware that DK history is included in the national examination. Mr. Saut is not aware of his students' interest in learning about DK history. Based on observations, most students seemed to be attracted to the history with pictures. They want to know what

and why the regime ruled the country. To capture students' attention, Mr. Saut said that teachers' need to stress the importance of DK history set up a library of resources for students to learn about the history. Furthermore, teachers need to compare life under DK regime with the present life.

Mr. Chea Sith, a geography and history teacher at Hun Sen Koh Nhek High School said that the integration of DK history has been done from grade nine to twelve. Mr. Chea said that he explained to the students about the root cause of the DK regime. Mr. Chea briefed the students about the subsequent regimes that shaped the Cambodian politics today. In some cases, students wished to explore more by reading books in the library. Mr. Chea observed that during his teaching, students began to pay very close attention to the KR regime. They even wondered why the regime starved and killed the people. Mr. Chea heard a hard-to-answer question from students about why the KR killed people. Mr. Chea answered the question only after he consulted with the study materials. Mr. Chea said he only integrated DK history into his lessons when he found it relevant. Mr. Chea admitted that he has a difficult time learning the terms in the DK textbook. He put a lot of effort to consult others and, including DC-Cam.

Ms. Khiek Chanthy, a geography and history teacher at Chruoh Bousra secondary school said that the integration of DK history has been implemented based on her knowledge obtained from DC-Cam-organized training. Ms. Khiek said she encouraged her students to focus on the DK history that she would touch on this issue throughout the year. Ms. Khiek said the students seemed disinterested because they found that history to be unimportant. Mr. Khiek responded that it's difficult to re-capture students' attention as they have to earn the money. Their parents have no influence on their education. Students were recruited to clear land for agricultural sectors. The number of absence is very high.

Ms. Khiek even asked her students about their parents' background. Students have no idea about the regime. Ms. Khiek encouraged them to talk to their parents and neighbors about the regime. Ms. Khiek said she integrating the history into her lessons. Ms. Khiek tried to show students pictures of the KR regime. Students expressed their strong interest in it as the number of students reading



Student Engaging in DK debate in classroom.

the DK textbook increased. The other points that ethnic Phnong experienced are that the relations between parents and children are extremely distant. It's hard to commence any debate about the DK history. They have no idea about the DK history. Only through their schooling could they learn about it. It would be very helpful if students could visit actual crime sites to believe history. **Mr. Saing Sina, a geography and history teacher at Keo Seima Secondary School** said that the integration has been done through group discussions, research in library and debates with their parents and neighbors. Mr. Saing asked students to read aloud the lessons. Any lessons about war made it possible for Mr. Saing to generate debate about when Cambodia plunged into war. Students sometimes asked about the timeframe of the war period and Tuol Sleng prison. Mr. Saing often discussed with his school director, Mr. Orn El to find the exact answers. Sometimes students raised doubt over why the KR killed their own people, and why the people did not rise up against their rule. Sometimes, students asked Mr. Saing about whether it's true that the KR regime killed ugly people. Mr. Saing said that having sufficient materials for teaching is not a problem. The problem is a lack of sufficient time to teach the history of DK history. However, Mr. Saing often tried his best to integrate. For example, after a 40-minute examination, Mr. Saing spent several minutes to teach about the DK history.

Based on the lesson plans reviewed by the observation team, there was very little evidence that teachers integrate the history in their daily lessons. .

Mr. Seng said that his integration is included in his lesson plan. For example, Mr. Seng wrote down two questions: What was the condition of Khmer literature between 1975 and 1979? When the KR regime started? He kept proposing or asking students about the history related to the DK. For example, Mr. Seng asked the students about the mindset of the KR regime and the truth of the DK regime and why people had to evacuate and why the KR leaders are being tried? These questions generated



Mr. Chan Sret of Koh Khnhe Secondary School

debates among his students. Mr. Seng observed that when it comes to the history, students express their strong interest. Students want to learn about the DK regime. Some students even talked frankly about their relatives serving the regime.

Mr. Seng advised his students to do independent research to find more information. He suggested that students access the archives stored at DC-Cam for additional resources. Mr. Seng said that student asked about whether there is any consulting document. Mr. Seng just say “Yes” and he does not know whether their intention was to expand their knowledge. It is believed that their interest could be the result of the ongoing trial. The students wished to hear whether the trial of KR leaders could provide justice to the survivors. Many students were requested by ECCC to visit ECCC.

6. Commentary of DK History

One notable concern that the team has found during the eight-day assessment in both provinces was that some teachers are afraid to integrate or mention about the DK history for fear of political persecution.

Up to now, Mr. He Bun Chhy, Principal of Preah Kosamak High School said that he has no idea of why teachers failed to teach, but refer to other teachers such as Mr. Im Mang, a history teacher and also a provincial teacher of DC-Cam. Mr. He at the starting of the school year said he instructed teachers to integrate the history, but did not do a follow-up. Mr. He commented that students seemed to be more interested in reading novels than in reading about the history of DK history. Mr. He also said that parents do not support the importance of learning about social science such as history. It is very difficult to convince them that it is important background knowledge to have in college and in society. To endorse full integration of DK history, Mr. Touch said that the Ministry and DC-Cam should inspire teachers to do more research. Mr. Touch said that the Ministry should take the lead in making DK history important to teach and study. Students should also be encouraged to

become historians – be the keepers of Cambodian history. Most importantly, Mr. Saut further outlined that students should realize the value of learning about DK regime to help prevent this history from reoccurring in the future.



Bou Sra Waterfall, the most attractive point of interest in Mondul Kiri province, June 2012.

Mr. Huoy Chan Dany, Principal of Hun Sen Snuol High School has no idea about the level of students' interest. Students show their interest in activities such as the December 2 ceremony (the starting day of liberation of Cambodia from Pol Pot regime)

Mr. Chan Sret of Koh Khnhe Secondary School said he does not integrate the DK history in the lesson. Mr. Chan said previously took a really strong interest in teaching his students all the lessons in the DK textbook when he was newly trained, but now with the pressure of preparing his students for the national examination, he has no time to devote to DK history. Asked why he stopped his good practice, Mr. Chan provided the following reasons:

1. He has been busy with his general teaching.
2. He is required to complete his curriculum.
3. He needs to take care of home as his wife just delivered a new baby.
4. His interest in teaching the DK history decreases from year to year because he has no time to devote to this and no financial incentive to put in extra effort.
5. He needs to find additional ways to support his family financially.

Mr. Chan hopes that next year he will be able to commit more time to equipping his students with a comprehensive knowledge of this history.

Mr. Lean Man, a history and geography teacher at Hun Sen Snuol High School said frankly that he occasionally integrates DK history. His failure to integrate regularly stems largely from fear of political persecution. Mr. Lean said that it is very difficult to respond to students' questions involving politics. Furthermore, some of his colleagues even warned him not to implicate himself in political history.

Mr. Touch Sokun, Principal of Hun Sen Koh Nhek High School said that



Mr. Touch Sokun (left) and Mr. Chea Sith (right)

the DK history is Cambodia's history that each student should learn. Students also need to take it seriously because it is being asked in the national examination. Some of the students are also children or grandchildren of former KR cadres. . The school is hoping that some of these students will become future teachers so that they may teach about the

history of DK without any problems.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The integration of DK history is sporadic, thus cutting short students' knowledge of the history. Based on interviews with teachers, school principals and students, time constraint is a major issue in the effectiveness of implementation. That's why Mr. Chan Sret of Koh Khnhe Secondary School recommended that the integration of the DK history in the school curriculum be fully incorporated into the secondary and high school levels, as MoEYS has already included. Only through placing it in the official curriculum could the students be drawn in the history. Mr. Chan said in order to attract the students' attention, it is important for him to point out that as evident in history, a leader has the power to make or break a country. Mr. Chan further explained that with a clear knowledge of history, a new leader would be able to lead with understanding and with examples. . In addition, Mr. Chan truly believes that students can pursue a career in the field of history as a researcher, as an educator, as a guide and as a leader.

In regards to teachers' capacity, Mr. Lean Man, a history and geography teacher at Hun Sen Snuol High School recommended that each teacher should receive more training on the DK history to make them fully understood and confident in teaching students. Furthermore, Mr. Lean proposed that the period between 1979 and 1993 should be included as it represents a substantial political history that each student should realize. However, some teachers feel worried about the political sensitivity of the DK history. Mr. Touch Rathany, a math teacher of Preah Kosamak High School said teachers have a hard time separating history from politics. Thus they are afraid of mentioning the history. Mr. Touch reiterated that it could stem largely from the lack of clarity and assurance and the visible support from the government. According to Mr. He, the school should have a big meeting to guide them. For example, Mr. He said the DK textbook should be made a required text. In

an attempt to expand students' knowledge, Mr. Saing Sina, a geography and history teacher at Keo Seima Secondary School raised the importance of teaching about the history. Students need to understand that understanding history can inform and change the way leaders lead the country.

APPENDIX I

STUDENTS' OBSERVATION

Most students know only the basic information about the KR history. Such information includes killing, forced labor, family separation, and lack of food. Going into details and the reasons behind those events, the students have difficulty in responding to the questions from teachers. For example, the students know that during the KR period, family members were separated, but they cannot comprehend why the families were asked to live separately. For instance, one student in Koh Kha-nhe secondary school said that he knew about the shortage of food, the evacuation of the people from the cities to the countryside but did not know the reason why. He learned from his grandparents that the KR asked people to go for a study session and they disappeared forever. The student knows some KR leaders such as Pol Pot, Duch, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Therith. He wanted to know more about who the KR were and the other top leaders of the regime. He believed that the KR history should be taught in the classroom to improve students' knowledge on this history. He is angry with the KR but hates them because they killed so many people. However, he does not hate the children of the former KR cadres, but he wants to stay distance from them.

Many students in the remote areas such as Sambor district of Kratie province live far from the school, which is as far as ten kilometers. Some students, in order to continue their study, have to stay with teachers, relatives whose houses are nearby school or the villagers. These students visit home once a week in order to take food supplies and extra money from their parents for their daily living. Some students ask the school director for several days off to help their family's businesses. Students in Koh Kha-nhe secondary school of Sambor district, in some cases, take off from school for two weeks to work at the gold mine sites in the forest where they can earn some money.

Siang Sreynich is a 14-year-old student in Hun Sen Snuol High School. Sreynich said that she heard that the KR harmed people and exploited people's labor. The KR killed their own Khmer race. She learned all of this information from television and her father who at that time was in the children unit. Her father was asked to carry soil to make fertilizer. Her grandparents also used to tell her about their story during the KR period. Sreynich learned from her grandparents that people were allowed to eat only rice porridge. People got married in mass ceremony. Sreynich wanted to know more about why people got married in such a way and why traditional Khmer weddings were banned. However, Sreynich rarely has time to chat with her parents or grandparents about this story as they all are busy with their respective businesses.

Chheng Chenda and Sao Samay, grade 9 students from Hun Sen Keo Seima High School, said that they had heard their parents talked about KR history. They learned that Pol Pot allowed people to eat only porridge, forced people to over work and transferred people out of their home villages. The KR hated the rich and wanted all people to be equal. In addition to parents' description, they also learned KR history through the textbook *A History of Democratic Kampuchea*. Only three copies of the textbooks were said to be available at the library by teachers and students as references.. They also learn KR history through TVs and the KRT hearing broadcasted through CTN. However, they had not learned much from their teachers as the teachers just talked briefly and occasionally on the topic. They really want to learn more about the history. They want to know why the KR created the communist party and implemented such policies that put to death so many people. They have questions such as why the KR created war? Who were the original leaders of the KR?

Chenda and Samay said that they wanted to have copies of the Democratic Kampuchea textbook. They are so interested in the textbook, especially the slogans part. At the end of the interview, Chenda and Samay were each given one copy of the textbook.

Community Commentary

Thuoy Kuy-Eng is the mother of Soa Sreyneang, who is a student of Koh Khanhe Secondary School in Sambor district. Kuy-Eng said that she wanted her children



Villagers attending public forum, Sambo district, Kratie province.

to learn about the KR history and she occasionally told her children about her experiences during the KR regime. She said,

"At that time, I ate only porridge mixed with papaya tree, potatoes and several kinds of fruit. It was like the food for pig. I learned to steal potatoes when I was assigned to look after potato farm. If I was

caught, I would for sure be killed. I was put in a women unit. I was asked to work harder than the other women as I had white skin and was identified as Chinese ethnic. I was moved to live in several places in Sambor district. One day in a meeting, I was accused of being a capitalist because I held notebook in between her armpit. Luckily, I was not taken for execution."

Kuy-Eng said that she narrated this story to her children. However, she could not tell whether or not her children believe in her story. She said that the children did not pay much attention as the story is too far from their understanding. Kuy-Eng compared this condition of thought to her knowledge and feelings when she heard her parents talked about the Issarak period or French colonial period.

With regards to the villagers' opinion on the teaching of DK history in the classroom, many villagers in the most remote areas do not have any critical comments whether or not the subject is important or should be included in the school curriculum. Like Kuy-Eng, Bronh Vorn, a 76-year-old woman living in Cheung Paut village, Koh Kha-nhe commune, Sambor district, Kratie province said that "it is up to the upper leaders to decide." She had no idea what to do with this matter. Similarly, Bronh Chea, a 43-year-old woman living in the same village as Vorn wanted the young children to study DK history. However, she had little knowledge and/or could not comment on the advantages of learning DK history. Chea commented that the children in her village do not care much about the studying of DK history. They care only about pleasurable activities or making a living.

The comments above may reflect the knowledge and level of interest of the young children who are in the lower secondary school level, grade 6 to 9. Most children at the high school level, grade 10 to 12 have more interests and understandings about the DK history. Theam Ra from Snuol district of Kratie province strongly advocates for the teaching of DK history in the classroom. Ra suggested that, "as Khmers, the students at least should know the history." Ra said that the children should learn DK

history so that such cruelty will not reoccur. For him, the KR regime is more cruel than a tiger. "The KR period is the most atrocious in Khmer history because in some case, children even killed their own parents." The point he wanted students to learn the most is the daily life of the people at that time.



Phnong couple returning from fishing, Bou Sra district, June 2012.

Ra was a child during the KR period and was forced to live in the children's unit away from his parents. For almost four years, Ra never received the comfort and love from his parents. In 1978, Ra was recruited to live in the mobile unit, where he was required to deliver food supplies to the battle fields, where people were fighting against the Vietnamese. Ra said he wanted young children to know what he went through.

FOCUS GROUP IN CLASSROOM

On June 13, 2012, Mr. Khamboly Dy and Mr. Kong Hak led a discussion on KR history with students at Keo Seima High School. Mr. Dy asked if the students recognize the word "Khmer Rouge." Half of the class raised their hands. One student stood up and said that the KR took power in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. Another student stood up and said that she heard about some KR leaders such as Duch (Head of Tuol Sleng prison), Khieu Samphan, Nuon Chea, Pol Pot, Vorn Vet, Ieng Sary and Son Sen. Mr. Dy asked all students to turn the textbook to page 26 so that they could see the structure of KR leadership.

Mr. Dy asked if the students knew the life of the people during KR period. Sraung Phearun stood up and said that life during KR regime was full of suffering. The people did not have enough food to eat, were over worked and were sick without medical treatment. Mr. Dy asked if the rest of the class agreed with Phearun. Everyone voiced their agreement. Mr. Dy added that usually children were separated from their parents as parents were assigned to live and work differently. The students said that people were forced to work on the dam and canal constructions and plant rice.

Mr. Kong Hak then asked if the students knew the marriage arrangement during the KR regime. One student said there were many couples in each wedding ceremony. Mr. Dy added that the KR did not allow the traditional wedding ceremony to take place. To get the details of the wedding during the KR regime, Mr. Dy asked Sim Chhorvy to read aloud from the textbook while the rest of the students read through silently.



Mr. Kung Hak Leading as class discussion.

Mr. Dy asked if the students wanted to know more about what happened and what life was like during the KR. Mr. Dy said that the easiest way was to ask the survivors who survived through the KR regime. Mr. Dy invited teacher Kong Hak to share his life during the KR regime to the students.

Mr. Kong Hak said that he was in the children unit at that time. In the morning, he was assigned to pick up cow dung to make fertilizer. Some other children were asked to work on the dam constructions. Children did not have chance

to live with their parents. The children were asked to live in the children unit. They did not have chance to have proper breakfast. The children were not allowed to walk freely or to pick up chicken eggs to eat privately. Mr. Hak witnessed a child who took one chicken egg to eat and was punished by having her hair shaved off. Mr. Hak asked the students if life today is different from life during the KR period. He asked students to talk to their parents if they did not believe him. He added that in the morning, he and other children held one plate and one spoon each on their hands and prepared to eat food which was not enough for everyone. In addition, he said that the KR asked children to build embankments which were half meter deep in the water.

One student asked if small kids were allowed to stay with their parents. Mr. Kong Hak said that parents needed to go to work in the morning. So the parents had to keep their small kids in the children units in which the kids were cared for by several old ladies. Parents would collect their children back in the evening. Mr. Hak gave one example of his sister who was a kid at that time. In the children unit, his sister was left unattended. Her face was full of dirt.

Another student stood up and asked about the purposes of creating the KR movement. Mr. Hak said that the KR was created in order to take power from the Lon Nol regime. However, the regime killed a number of people. If the KR wanted to kill any people, they would tell people that they wanted this or that person to attend the



Road to Koh Nhek Secondary School, Mondul Kiri province, June 2012.

education session. On a separate issue, people had to attend the meeting after work every day. In the meeting, the people had to put themselves for advice from the KR organization which identified themselves as "Angkar." Mr. Hak added that if the people committed mistakes, they would be

taken for education which in some cases means execution. Mr. Hak asked if the students knew what the word "Angkar" was. No one fully understood this word. He explained that Angkar was the KR leaders who introduced the policies or instruction to the people to implement. If people could not complete the assignment, they would be taken for education as he explained above.

Another student asked who worked for Angkar. Why did they kill their own people including their own parents in some cases? Mr. Kong Hak said that the KR did not use intellectuals to lead the country but the poor peasants. He agreed that some children took their parents for execution because these children were illiterate and believed in the KR ideology. Another student asked if there were any degrees or

certificates at that time. He laughed and said that there was no single certificate. Children were educated under the trees or people's houses. He emphasized that the degrees or certificates could be found on the rice fields. He said that the children in the present day are very lucky as they have everything including TVs to watch for pleasure. During the KR regime, children had to get up very early in the morning and in some cases they slept on the rice fields directly under the sky.

At the end, Mr. Kong Hak and Mr. Dy Khamboly encouraged the students to ask their parents to learn more about the KR regime. They both distributed the DK history textbook to all students in the class.

VILLAGE FORUM: HEARING PARENTS' COMMENT ON DK HISTORY

On June 8, 2012, the team conducted a public education forum in Koh Khne commune, Sambor district, Kratie province. There were about 50 participants in the forum.

Before the start of the forum, Mr. Ly Sok-Kheang, introduced the team to the villagers and gave the floor to the village chief to give an opening and welcoming remark to the villagers.

The commune chief greeted DC-Cam team members and the representative of the Ministry of Education. He thanked the villagers for spending their time to participate in the forum. He said that the villagers do not have much chance to learn the KR history and the KR Tribunal. He encouraged the villagers to listen to DC-Cam's coordinator attentively so that they could learn more about KR history and the new development of the tribunal. He declared the formal opening of the forum at the end.

To open the forum Mr. Ly asked for the old people, namely the ones who lived in Sambor district during the KR period. Most villagers responded that they suffered so much at that time. They showed their willingness and eager to share their experiences during the KR regime.



Mr. Ly Sok-Kheang leading public education forum.

Mr. Ly asked whether the villagers think the teaching of KR history in the classroom is important or not. One villager said that he believed that it is important to study this history so that they

learned about the hardship and violence at that time. The teaching gives an example for the current and young generations not to commit violence in their daily life.

Domestic violence could become a national violence if we allow violence to go on nonstop like the one during the KR period. One villager said that the violence in the present day could be an implication from the KR period.

Many people in Koh Khne commune lived in the cooperative as Kratie was under the KR immediately after the 1970 coup. There was no major evacuation of the based people to other provinces. The evacuations existed only within the districts. However, only one or two families were transferred to other villages. For example, some people from Koh Khne were evacuated to Vathanak village. Individual evacuation was not considered an evacuation. This small number of people was evacuated out of the cooperative because they bargained with the cadres about shortage of food, for example. The based people did farm and planted rice in their respective cooperatives. In addition, the villagers saw a number of evacuees from Phnom Penh and Eastern zone.

Chet was the district chief, who was famous of being a woman-killer. He was a former teacher of Khmer Literature at Preah Kosamak High School. When he was interrogated, Chet confessed that he had relationships with about 120 women and had killed 100 of them. Chet had an office in Koh Khne commune. He was described as being very cruel when he was a district chief. Chet was executed as a result.

Cham people were forced to eat pork. The KR cadres made food from pork and asked the Chams to eat. In one case, the KR made a cake from pork and distributed to all people both Khmer and Cham. They asked their spies to keep an eye on the Chams to see if they ate the cake. If the Chams did not eat, they could risk their lives.

Nak was a former KR chief of Company, fighting the battle field in Kampong Cham. Asked if the villagers felt hatred toward him, another villager said that he did not have any bad feeling toward Nak because Nak did under the order from the leaders.

The village chief was a former art performer of Sambor district. He said that the performance at that time was to mobilize forces against the capitalists and feudalists. For example, his art team performed a story entitled Keo Nhel, who was the struggler against feudalism. The objective of the art performance was to



A Woman making flour in Sambo district, June 2012.

propagandize the people to hold hatred toward the rich, capitalism and feudalism. Some villagers used to watch the art performance but during the war period. The performance stopped in 1973.

In general, the villagers said that life during KR regime was painful. The good points were that there was no moral mistake. However, the leaders were able to commit all kinds of mistakes, for example, Chet committed moral mistakes over one hundred times. Almost all villagers said that they had lost one or more family members. Those who were executed were accused of being the former officials of Khmer Republic regime or Prince Sihanouk's regime. The killer and chief of cooperative, Mon, is now a priest in Vatanak pagoda. To cope with the past, some villagers told their children about their experiences while some chose to remain silent because of their trauma,



Avocado, a popular fruit in Mondul Kiri province, June 2012.

Mr. Ly reemphasized the objectives of the forum at the end. He said that the forum provided a platform for the villagers to talk and converse in order to find a common ground for all to reconcile, unite and live together. Likewise, the teaching of KR history aims to guide the young generation away from violence. Mr. Ly agreed with the villagers that people should respect the law and avoid violence. Mr. Ly encouraged the villagers to look for the village and commune chiefs in case they have problems.

The village chief thanked the team for coming to distribute and disseminate the KR history and the KRT to his villagers. He noted that the villagers took turn to share their opinion to make the forum a platform for sharing the truth. He said that communication and the sharing of information are important for searching for the truth. Moreover, the conversations

helped promote the reconciliation process and build unity regardless of the background of each person. He said that we should learn from past and help each other develop the country. At the end, he wished the participants happiness and good health.

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