

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

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

Report from Kampong Cham and Takeo
May 7-13, 2012

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1. Introduction



Quality Control Team Interviewing School Principle of Preah Sihanouk High School

On May 7-13, 2012, the twentieth quality control was conducted in Kampong Cham and Takeo province where the teaching of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history in the classrooms were observed and interviews of each provincial educational directors, school principles, teachers, students and villagers

were completed. The prime purposes of this quality control session was to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching the DK history, identify the challenges that are faced by all relevant parties, and recommend future improvements.

In order for the quality control team to conduct a comprehensive assessment, both teachers and students from each classroom were required to fill out an evaluation form and to write down their recommendations/suggestions for both the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). During the session, Mr. Ly Sok-Kheang and Mr. Dy Kamboly of DC-Cam and Ms. Mom Met and Chea Kalyan of the MoEYS sat in and observed individual classrooms independently to see how each teacher manages to integrate DK history in their lessons. After the observation, the two officials from MoEYS provided feedback to the teachers to enhance their effective instructional strategies. The table below is a brief summary of the evaluation conducted in Kampong Cham and Takeo 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 into daily instructional curriculum.
Data Collection	<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"> • Four schools (Chea Sim Tbeng Meanchey, Sangkum Thmei and Rovieng high schools and Choam Khsan lower secondary school)
Average number of students per class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 45 and 65
Approximate number of students with textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

2. High School Highlight

Six high schools were randomly selected for quality control evaluation out of hundreds of high schools in Kampong Cham and Takeo provinces. This quality control session began in Kampong Cham, a province known for its vast territory and rich land conducive to growing a tobacco, rubber, potatoes, banana and a variety of other vegetations. The large population of people in Kampong Cham calls attributed to the high demands of primary, secondary and high schools.

After selecting three high schools, the quality control team took keen interest in highlighting a few high schools in the province. In an interview with Mr. Tum Lim Yun, School Principal of Preah Sihanouk High School, he recalled that his school was built as a secondary school in 1941 by King Norodom Sihanouk. It was run by the French and most of teachers taught their students in French except for Khmer classes, which were of course conducted in Khmer. His school was changed into a

high school between 1945 and 1970. The school is known for its aerial view, the building structure has the shape of "Sihanouk" to honor the King.



Ms. Mom Met and Chea Kalyan Leading Classroom

Some of former Khmer Rouge revolutionaries such as Hou Nim, Hou Yun, Khieu Samphan, etc. attended this school. After the Lon Nol's coup on March 18, 1970, a civil war started. The KR revolution

increased the involvement of people, ranging from farmers to educated people such as Hou Nim. Mr. Lim Yun said that his father was a close friend to Hou Nim. Hou Nim was a frequent guest in his home during the election campaign for his Democratic Party. He also remembered when Hou Nim fled from Phnom Penh and vanished into the jungle to join the revolution.

While the KR expanded its forces, the fighting continued unabatedly. Most schools in rural areas were interrupted by constant armed fighting and bombardment. To meet students' need for schooling, a special high school was created and placed within the compound of Preah Sihanouk High School. Mr. Lim Yun also remembered that approximately 2,000 students from the provincial town and others districts such as Kroch Chhmar came to study at the special school. The KR's victory on April 17, 1975 transformed this educational institution into a storage facility of DK. The restoration of its original name was possible after the return of King Sihanouk to Cambodia in 1991.

Out of seven secondary schools in Cambodia, only Preah Sihanouk High School instructed their seventh grade students in Khmer and French. For example, mathematics, physics, and biology were taught in French. All the students were required to take an examination for two certificates. After passing the exam, students were able to attend the Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), Institute of Technology, and medical schools. In prior years, students received 50 scholarships each year, except this year. Once a year, the principal go to France to sign an agreement to send student to study at universities in France, Canada, and Belgium.

Most students who attended seventh grade were prepared in sixth grade at Oddar Primary School.

In regards to Stung Trang High School, Mr. Huot Leang Chheng, School Principal said that his school was built in 1960 by the late In Tam. It was named Preah Beida Eka Reach Cheat Secondary School. Mr. Yung Sim and Mr. Tit San were the school principal and deputy respectively. Like Mr. Lim Yun's comment on the



Students sharing views with other students

interruption of schooling, the schooling at Stung Trang high school was totally abandoned because of war. In 1975-79, some of the school buildings were turned into a communal eating hall. The school's reconstruction

commenced in the 1980s. Recently,

the school received a building with 30 classrooms from the Vietnamese government.

Each year, the school enrolled hundreds of students, especially students from the Cham community. They make up 10 to 20 percent of the student population. Other students come from Trea commune and Prek A-Chy communes of Kroch Chhmar district. According to Mr. Chheng's observation, they do well. Female Cham students can attend the classroom wearing the *Hijab* scarf around their head and face. However, they have to wear black scarf to complement the school uniform (white shirts and black/blue *samput*). Mr. Chheng at times discourages the Cham students from wearing the *Hijab* because it makes recognition of students difficult. Mr. Chheng wants to respect diverse culture and religion to and accept all students in school. He doesn't want to students to drop out because of their discomfort.

3. Pre-Evaluation Activities

After obtaining a permission letter from the MoEYS to conduct quality control and informing all administrative branches, the four-member team met with the officials of Kampong Cham province's Education Office on the afternoon of May 7, 2012 to present the letter and then request their endorsement letter permitting the team to observe classrooms in three high schools in Kampong Cham province. One of the officials expressed his content with the team's mission and gave a letter with

his seal of approval, as did Mr. Siv Sokhan, Deputy Director of Takeo Province's Education Office.

Both provincial officials thanked the team for coming to observe classrooms at their high schools. Furthermore, Mr. Sokhan provided some demographic information about the schools within his jurisdiction. He said that there are 46 high schools (including two high schools from private sectors) and 69 secondary schools in Takeo province. Some districts have few high schools, while secondary schools often existed at each commune. He believed that the easy access to schooling enable more students to go to school, while the drop-out rate is much higher in other provinces.

No.	High Schools	Teachers	Female Teachers	Students	Classrooms
1.	Preah Sihanouk	242	118	???	76
2.	Stung Trang	45	16	1,047	20
3.	Batheay	??	??	??	??
4.	Angkor Borei	49	16	1,327	26
5.	Kirivong	97	25	1,946	33
6.	Hun Sen Chheu Teal	53	16	764	20

Mr. Sokhan expressed the importance of teaching DK history to the young generation. He wants the students to be aware and to not repeat DK history.

4. Classroom and General Observation

Shortages of schools and teachers have been raised during the quality control session in Kampong Cham and Takeo provinces. For example, Mr. Tum Lim Yun, Principal of Preah Sihanouk High School said that there were insufficient classrooms to meet students' demand last year. This he said was due to the legacy of war between 1970 and 1975. Because of the shortage of classrooms, some students were taught inside the classrooms that were damaged by the bombardments of war. The burden of this high school was recently relieved because the four *Sangkats* in town have their own secondary schools. In the near future, Preah Sihanouk High School will be one of the top choices for high school students from secondary levels. Other students come from Kratie, Kampong Thom, and other surrounding provinces to study at this high school.

Regarding the integration of DK history in classrooms in the two provinces, most students took very strong interest in it, despite some challenges. However, the knowledge and understanding gained by students depend on the instructional methodologies of each teacher. Mr. Chrin Likeang, a geography teacher at Preah Sihanouk High School skillfully integrated DK history into his geography class. He recalled the previous lessons about the commercial link. Then, he asked the students about the commercial condition during the DK period. One student stood up and



One of the School Buildings inside Preah Sihanouk High School, Kampong Cham province

answered that the DK brought down the commercial sectors. When Mr. Likeang started a new lesson about the Cambodian tourism, he asked if any of his students knew whether there were tourists coming to visit Cambodia during the DK period. A female student responded that some foreign tourists, i.e. Chinese, did visit. Some remained skeptical over the mass atrocities. However, each teacher kept explaining and convincing the students during their implementation of the history lesson. After implementing such lessons, students seemed to change their minds and began to understand. Even Mr. Tum Lim Yun was confident that the narrative shared by the student's parents should be a good compliment.

After his class, Mr. Chrin Likeang reiterated that integrating the DK history into the lessons is a new thing for them. Thus, his idea is that we need to link DK history to every subject when appropriate. The Ministry's book should cite the example of each section/point. For example, curriculum about tourism should mention what tourism was like during the DK period. And the lesson about the DK history should be the starting point and a foundation for students. Thus, the integration would be more constructive and understandable for students when they do study this subject.

Ms. Yy Sophy, a history teacher at Stung Trang High School, devoted most of her teaching time to DK history. First she let her students spend five minutes reading the textbook. Then, she asked the students whether they learned anything about DK history. Students said that they learned about DK history through listening to stories told by their parents, relatives, neighbors, and teachers, and by seeing the physical evidence of Tuol Sleng prison, Cheung Ek killing sites, and Phnom Ty, Boeng, Veal Khsoh Khchal, Phnom Srei Phnom Pros, and materials such as books, magazines, and newspapers.. After activating students' prior knowledge, Ms. Yy linked KR atrocities to the mass graves and memorials in Stung Trang district in Kampong Cham province. As an activity, Ms. Yy divided her students into four groups and assigned four questions below for them to answer:

1. What were the KR's policies after April 17, 1975?
2. Why did KR evacuate the people (out of the cities and provincial towns)?
3. What is Angkar?
4. How many zones were KR divided into?

Four representatives from the four groups went to the white board and wrote down their answers, and each of their group members reviewed and commented on their response. Ms. Yy also responded.

At the end of the period, the quality control team interviewed Ms. Yy Sophy. Ms Yy has been a history teacher for 25 years. The team discussed her methodologies and effectiveness of integrating DK history. She said that she frequently integrated DK history her daily lessons even when she teaches other subjects. Previously, she faced difficulty teaching about DK history because she lacked materials. She resolved some of her challenges by showing the students



The compound of Stung Trang High School, Kampong Cham province

pictures of DK's labor camps. The pictures were of students' drawings done in primary school. In 2008, she obtained more materials for instruction. She was supported by a foreigner who volunteered to teach at her school. At that time, many

of the students did

not believe in the brutality of Khmer Rouge. They did not believe that the people were tortured, enslaved, starved, and killed by them. Ms. Yy took her own initiative to tell students about DK history. With DC-Cam's training on this history, she began to obtain new materials and documents related to the KR trial. The students often raised some doubts over why the KR killed people. In response, Ms. Yy showed the pictures and began to tell about the people being branded as the enemy.

Ms. Yy is worried at times because it's such a sensitive subject to talk about Dk history. Sometimes, she raised her concerns with school leaders and her colleagues and friends. She wants to make sure that her students and her students' families are comfortable about discussing this history. My Yy said that most of the former KR cadres often changed their residents where their past background was not known.

Cham people asked a lot of questions because they suffered from the mistreatment. They were forced to divide into different areas and to eat pork. Ms. Yy stated that when it comes to this topic, Cham students are very curious and interested in learning about the details of the history. In response to the students' interest, she documents she obtained from DC-Cam to affirm the history.

As for Mr. Por San, a history teacher at Kirivong High School in Kirivong district in Takeo province began his lesson by recalling the DK history. He asked students about what is the KR and the period that the DK ruled the country. Then he continued the lesson about the DK history (1975-1979). by asking questions to generate students' discussion. He asked each students to respond to the following questions:

1. Since French colonialism, Cambodia has gone through how many political regimes and during when?
2. Which regime caused the country to suffer the most and how did they suffer
3. What were KR leaders' policies?
4. What were their thoughts on the policies?
5. Who were the senior KR leaders during the DK regime?
6. Who are being tried now at ECCC

Focus Group at Hun Sen Angkor Borei High School

After observing three selected high schools in Kampong Cham province, , MoEYS Officials, Mom Met and Chea Kalyan on May 10, 2012 began their classroom observations on the instruction of DK history. They asked all the students whether they would like to learn about DK history, and they all raised their hands. They said that they want to learn about the people's living condition, state's governing structures, and other historical facts. They want to pass their knowledge on to other

young people. They said that the knowledge will help begin a political reform and prevent the reoccurrence of this history.

Some students expressed their discontent with the regime. One female student felt badly about her family's experience. The knowledge of DK history inspired them to respect and love their family members for surviving the atrocity.. Ms. Chea Kalyan, a national teacher from National Institute, asked if these students ever asked their parents about their living situation. A female student answered that her parents did tell them. Ms. Chea also asked about schooling under Khmer Rouge. A female student responded by saying that she heard about students studying under the shade of trees during that time period.

As for their thought about the low-level KR, most students did not react angrily to those KR cadres. A male student stressed that the low-level KR cadres were just followers, who were forced to implement the KR's policy. They are full of tolerance and leniency. Considering the trial of Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch, former Tuol Sleng prison chief, Khaun Ratana said Duch was responsible for the deaths of over 14,000 people. Even giving him a life sentence will just be a minor sentencing, said Sok Manh.

When students were encouraged to ask questions, they asked about who ruled the DK regime. Ms. Mom Met was flexible by inspiring students to think critically of who ruled the country. Ms. Hon Sam-aun said the leader was Pol Pot, while Ms. An Tola pointed to Khieu Samphan, Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary...etc. Students understood that all of these leaders were communists. A male student wondered if Ieng Thirith had a major role in the KR regime.

5. The Integration of DK History

Integrating the DK history into classroom is not an easy task. It depended on each teacher's methodologies to manage time to give lecture and to generate discussions with students. The teaching of DK history has remained a teacher-centered approach. Students have done nothing more than sitting and listening to what the teachers tell. A subsequent call for questions ended with little reactions from students. For example, Ms. Yy Sophy, a history teacher, kept narrating each point of the DK history, while her students repeated the points they heard and understood. According to Mr. Chrin Likeang, a geography teacher of Preah Sihanouk High School, thought that students' limited reactions may stem from the level of interest in social subjects. He emphasized that the social subject, i.e. history, received less attention from the students as they prefer real science such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.

Mr. San Savoeun, a history and geography teacher of Batheay High School, still had little knowledge on the reasons why the number of zones were named. It is very important to get the students to learn about the DK period and about reedom, rights and separation. This information will enable students to remember the regime. He expects that the problem might rise up with the issue of the KR time when students encounter problems of discrimination. He continued by saying that the children of the former cadres might get angry when teachers talk about KR. Some of Mr. Savoeun's students tended not to believe the barbaric nature of the Khmer Rouge. Mr. Savoeun just stressed that KR history did take place by using his personal experience as an example.

However, the teachers who were born after the DK period in fact expressed their strong desire to tell their students about the DK period. But such an inspiration was barred by their limited knowledge of the history, while non-history teachers faced the same challenges. For example, Ms. Sreu Muoy Kea, an English teacher of Preah Sihanouk High School, was born in 1990. She said her mother told her about the killing which was not generally known to many people. Her mother said eating rationed food was not enough except the fact that she managed to eat food. Her mother took the responsibility for carrying seedlings. She mostly believed in the existence of the DK history, although she has some doubts about it. Since she has limited knowledge about DK history, she is hesitant about teaching it to her students.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

After the general observation of six high schools in both provinces, challenges have been found in relations to the teaching of DK history in classroom. The integration has been sporadically made by some teachers, while others paid very



Student representing her team in answering the teacher's question.

little attention to it. One notable reason is that each teacher needs to wrap up their lessons as set out by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. To cope with these challenges, Mr. Chrin Likeang, a geography

teacher of Preah Sihanouk High School, suggested that at the start of each school year, a collective meeting on this history should be held at his high school to capture students' attention. He believed that students would retain their level of interest.

That's why Mr. Leang Chheng, Principal of Stung Trang High School was concerned about the physical evidence of the bones disappearing, raising doubts within the young generation over the mass atrocities in the KR time. It would be a good idea if each school manages to bring their students to visit any crime sites, i.e. Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, and provide them with a comprehensive explanation. Further efforts should be made to come up with dialogues between the KR survivors and the young generation. Students should be taught on how to interview villagers near the crime sites. This is how to get them connected with the older generation. This would also be an acknowledgement of the past suffering that the survivors experienced.

In other words, some teachers complained about the ambiguity in the writing of the DK history. Mr. Por San at Kirivong High School, Takeo province, said the content in books published by the Ministry seemed unclear, thus making it difficult for students and teachers to understand. He found it difficult to tell students about the DK history as there are some contradictory points. For example, Ros Nhim was written down, while other documents stated the name as Nhim Ros. The problem would cause teachers to decide and tell the students. However, Mr. San showed his less flexible position by mostly sticking to lessons related to the DK history. He said his teaching depends on the lesson in school books. So, he needs not to integrate into other lessons. He further explained that when it comes to any killings in other global context, he integrates that knowledge and let the students recall the KR atrocities, too.

The personal history of each teacher should be taken into serious consideration as it may stand in the way of teaching DK history. The feeling of grudge and malice may potentially lead teachers to bring up an impartial view on the history. Mr. Savoeun was a case in point. He personally got angry with the regime because his father died in the regime. He recalled a very emotional story when his father carried him and his sisters around his body to escape the armed fighting. After the regime, he never realized the existence of his father, while other children have their parents around. This story has a huge impact on the teaching of the DK history because of those losses. In the case of Mr. Savoeun, he did not hate his students. But he hated their parents with KR background. He said although some perpetrators lost their family members, their deaths were primarily caused by starvation.

In this case, students might be absorbed in unfavorable corner of history, if they were not explained explicitly. Mr. Pat Yoeun, a school Principal of Hun Sen Chheu Teal High School, said at that time, he believed strongly in the KR Angkar. His

chief believed in him, too. He even told the chief frankly about his study background. But he was so committed to the Angkar's work. He worked from eight to four (evening). There was only one meal for the unit. He said he did not think of communal eating as he could eat fruits of waterlily and catch snakes to cook.

He found out that Angkar produced a lot of outcomes for our society. For example, while people valued gold, the KR devalued it. This seemed to establish a society with equality and no gap between the rich and the poor. Every ten days, he attended a meeting about the previous achievements and mentioning about criticism and self-criticism. Those who criticized and commented on the Angkar's work were normally killed. He witnessed three deaths. All of the people had to speak good of the Angkar, even though the Angkar bad things. In some cases, he even said the killing was appropriate. For example, the Angkar has already warned that any bad acts such as stealing, sexual misconduct, etc., would be tantamount to death, and laziness and bad people would be better off dead. The only good thing that the KR regime did for our society is building dams and canals to grow summer rice plantation. Only during the cultivation season could the people eat rice. On the contrary, he acknowledged that there were numerous losses of the people who built dams and other works. At the end, he said that KR sowed the widespread killings that were completely different from what he was thinking about.

Therefore, Mr. San Savoeun asked that teachers should avoid showing personal grudges and try to maintain proper guidance to teach or convey messages to students. For example, DK textbook should be used as the core reference to discuss the historical facts of DK history. Teaching DK history should not be an act of revenge. People from all walks of life need to exercise tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

6. Conclusion

The integration of the DK history in the classrooms has



Buddha Statue on top of a mountain.

proven to be very limited. Some history teachers just devoted time to educating the students about DK when the quality control team observed the classes. However, other teachers (i.e. Mr. Chrin Likeang of Preah Sihanouk Hig School) showed their continuous efforts to mention about DK history to make connections to other related issues. However, there is a general claim about the need to finish up their study curriculum.

The shortages of instructional materials such as DK textbooks, Teachers' Guidebooks, Searching for the Truth magazines, news bulletin, and other KR-related publications are big challenges for both teachers and students. One important thing is that the integration of the DK history relies solely on teachers who were trained by DC-Cam's one-week workshop, while other teachers are not expected/required to teach that history. Thus, students were not able to obtain a broad knowledge through analyzing, comparing and contrasting the claims and views by teachers. To supplement this education, the stories of the older generation should help play a constructive role in this endeavor. This is the reason that DC-Cam's quality control team set up an informal public forum in villages. The team wanted to inspire the elders to engage in a dialogue with their children.

The effort by the team demonstrated a stark reminder to students and teachers to integrate this history in the classroom. Examination questions on DK history should capture their attention. Mr. Siv Sokhan Takeo Province's Education Office Deputy Director supported this idea by saying the quality control team plays a good role in reminding all the people and students of the history. He also said that questions on DK history should be included in the national examination. He even proposed to have some memorials to bring a fresh memory to the young people. He found it very beneficial to have our school children able to visit Tuol Sleng, Cheung Ek killing sites and ECCC.

APPENDIX I

Students' Perception on the DK History

Mr. Ly Seiha, 18 years old, is a student at Preah Sihanouk High School in Kampong Cham province. In addition to learning KR history in the classroom, Sieha also learned the history from his parents and grandparents who occasionally shared



Students working in groups.

with him about their experiences during the KR period. His mother often cried, while narrating the story to him. Seiha's mother was forced to do laborous work and sometimes had to sleep in the rain. She killings and one day

slept among the dead bodies unknowingly. Seiha's father was beaten because he stole rice to eat. The injury at that time continued to have side effect on his health until today. Both his mother and father were asked to work on the dam construction and the rice fields. His mother's older sister was taken to be educated and was never seen again. Seiha said that he believed what his teacher taught him because the lessons in the classroom are similar to what his parents have told him. In order to learn more on what happened during the KR period, Seiha goes to the Internet shop and Googled by using the the key words "Pol Pot History." Seiha said he visually learned a lot from the Internet as it allowed him to see the photos of the KR leaders and some events at that time. Seiha felt angry towards the KR and sympathized with the victims. Seiha wanted to know why Pol Pot killed his own people. He asked this question to his father who did not give him a satisfactory answer. His teacher told him that Pol Pot hated the city people. That's why many city people were executed. Seiha wanted to learn more about the KR history so that he could explain the history to foreigners if they ask him.

Khean Sreysar, 19 years old, is a student of Preah Sihanouk High School in Kampong Cham province. Sreysar said that she also learned about KR history from her parents and grandparents. During the KR regime, her father almost died because he was a teacher. The KR soldiers chased him, but luckily he escaped. Her mother was asked to work on the rice fields day and night. However, she was allowed to eat only rice porridge. Her parents told her about their experiences during the KR only when Sreysar asked them to do so. Although Sreysar learned



Students working in groups.

from both her parents and school, she said she partly believed in what she had learned so far. Sreysar did not believe that the KR asked people to eat porridge. Sreysar said that, "they never forbid people from eating hard cooked rice." However, she believed that the KR could kill people for just stealing a piece of potato to eat. Sreysar wanted to know why the KR wanted to arrest her father. She suggested that young generation should learn about KR history in order for them to know accurately what happened at that time.

Ros Limseng, 16 years old, is a student of Stung Trang High School in Stung Trang district which is one of the remote districts of Kampong Cham province. Limseng said that his mother, father and aunt used to tell him about their experiences during the KR regime. His father told him that he was evacuated from his home village to live in a far off village. He did not have enough food to eat and was forced to deliver soil. Later, his father was assigned to look after cattle and potato farm. His father used to steal potatoes and was luckily never caught.. His aunt was a teacher during the KR period. His aunt taught children to read and write basic Khmer scripts. His mother was just a kid at that time so she did not remember much. Limseng is interested about the January 7th event the most as it was the day the KR fell from power. He also wanted to learn more information related to the top KR leaders. He wanted to know more on how the KR harmed the people. In the future, Limseng wants to be a lawyer.

APPENDIX II

Public Education Forum with Villagers in Leaybo Commune

The forum was conducted in Angchan village, Leaybo commune, Tramkak district, Takeo province. There were about fifty participants in the forum. The forum was conducted under the house of the Secretary of the Village Chief, Ms. Nou Soviet.

Before the start of the forum, Mr. Sok-Kheang Ly introduced the team to the participants. Mr. Ly also introduced three kinds of documents to be distributed to the participants. They are *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979 textbook)*, the *Searching for the Truth magazine* and *Case 002 booklets*.



The Quality Control Team distributing materials to people in Leaybo commune, Takeo province

Mr. Ly asked the village chief to give a welcoming speech to the participants. The village chief thanked the team for conducting the forum in his village. He requested that all participants listen attentively and ask as many questions as

possible.

Mr. Ly followed by asking everyone if they had told their children about the KR history. Most participants said that they rarely talked about their experiences during the KR to their children. The forum could encourage the participants to start conversing with each other. Mr. Ly said that the reason this commune was selected as a location for the forum is because Leaybo was considered the “model commune” during the KR regime. Participants said that Leaybo was a model commune because the villagers worked much harder than the others to produce rice and any other kinds of constructions assigned by the “Super Great Leap Forward Angkar”. Another participant said that he was asked to climb 28 palm trees per day to collect palm juice to make sugar. The people did not have enough to eat. There were many

killings at that time. Some participants emphasized that they saw a string of villagers who were taken to the killing site. Soeun was Leaybo's commune Chief during that time period and he was shot to death by the people immediately after the fall of KR power.

National teacher Mrs. Mom Meth asked the participants to talk about food ration during the KR period. All participants stated that they did not have enough to eat. They had only rice porridge and there was very little grain of rice. The people's well-being was completely poor. One participant said that the KR allowed only two cans of rice for ten people. The food ration was determined by the chiefs. People were only able to eat hard cooked rice two months within a year. The hard cooked rice was served during the harvest season. However, the ration was very small.



People enjoying reading Case 002 book.

Mr. Yoak Hou, a participant said that he was mistakenly taken for execution. On the way to the pit, the KR cadres asked Hou about his background. Before the killing, Hou was allowed to eat a lot of rice and

other good food. The KR cadres

mistakenly thought that Hou was Mr. Ouk who wore a woman's shirt, which was considered a moral mistake. In preparation for the killing, the KR cadres lit a fire lighter to light their cigarette. By the light of their lighters, the cadres were able to recognize their capture. The captive was not Mr. Ouk who committed the moral mistake. Therefore, Hou was released. One cadre did not want to release Hou as Hou knew the location of the pit and the way the KR killed people. Mr. Ly said that similar incidents happened at other places around Cambodia at that time. Hem Oeun, a female participant said that she lost five members of her family including her husband and children. Oeun cried while telling her story to the participants.

Mr. Ly asked some historical events that took place on April 17, 1975 and 20 May, the remembrance day which is formerly the anger day. Participants had mixed answers on these historical events as they did not remember the date clearly. Mr. Ly explained

the reason why there were too many deaths during the KR period. He said that KR divided the people into two big groups “new people” and “old people.” The latter were indoctrinated to hate the former and were forced to conduct the killings. Participants said that the people hated the people from Southwest zone very much because the Southwest zone cadres oversaw almost the entire country and the killing of many people.

Mrs. Khuon Sinet said that she was asked to cut trees for wood. The task was so big. However, she managed to fulfill her assignment and survived the killing. She was asked to deliver sacks of rice which was impossible for women in the present day to do.



Village Chief talking to the people.

Some participants used to see Ta Mok, who came to observe the people's work. Ta Mok wore traditional black clothes and held one stick. First, the people did not recognize Ta Mok as they never saw him before. Later,

people talked spread from one mouth to another that the person was Ta Mok. When Ta Mok arrived, the people worked very hard. The people were so afraid of Ta Mok. After Ta Mok left, the unit chiefs convened meetings to reinforce the work assignment.

Mr. Ly asked how they dealt with the former KR cadres who committed bad acts on them during the KR period. All participants said that they did not want to hold anger against the former KR cadres because they were also their relatives and neighbors. The participants blamed on the leaders for the death of the people. The KR leaders led their cadres to commit the killing and forced labor.

Mr. Ly asked how the participants thought about the KR tribunal. The participants said that they had heard about the prosecution long time ago but did not see any result. However, they supported the KRT prosecution. They did not want the leaders to get acquitted. They should receive life imprisonment. Mrs. Doeun Soth said that she

knew that Duch was sentenced to life imprisonment. Mr. Duch Thuy said that the KR leaders should be executed so that the government doesn't have to waste rice to feed them in prison. Mrs. Oeun said that Duch killed a lot of people and wondered why it took so many years to prosecute him. Duch Thuy said that the tribunal should disseminate the information to all villagers in the remote areas so that the people are aware of who has been or is being prosecuted for their crimes and how they are being sentenced.

The participants agreed that the KR history should be taught in school so that the history will not disappear and the young generation can understand and know the history. One participant requested that the "Killing Field" film should be broadcasted on TV so that the children and adults alike can learn from the movie. The children want to know what life was like back then. Ouen requested that DC-Cam screened the movie in her village. Doeun Soth requested the Ministry of Education distribute a lot more educational materials for the students.

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