

ប្រជុំបណ្តុះបណ្តាលគ្រូបង្រៀនកម្ពុជា

Genocide Education in Cambodia

The Teaching of “A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)”
13th and 14th Commune Teacher Trainings in Prey Veng and Kandal

March 25-30 and April 5-10 2014

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I. Introduction

In March and April 2014, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (the Ministry of Education) held two commune teacher training workshops. The first workshop (the 13th commune teacher training) was held on March 25-30 in Prey Veng Regional Teacher Training School in Prey Veng province, and the second one (the 14th commune teacher training) was conducted on April 5-10 in Kandal Regional Teacher Training School in Kandal province. One hundred participants participated in the training in Prey Veng while only fifty participants participated in the Kandal training. In each training, ten national and provincial teachers from the Ministry of Education and four DC-Cam staff members led the training. The training aims at providing the trainees with pedagogy and baseline knowledge on the history of Democratic Kampuchea.

The core training materials are the textbook *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* and the *Teacher's Guidebook*. Other supplements include DC-Cam's monthly magazine *Searching for the Truth*, the bulletin *The KRT Observation* and booklet on ECCC's case 002. In addition, three documentary films (*Behind the Wall of S-21*, *Cambodian Children*, and *Prisons in Tuol Sleng, Prey Veng and Baset Mountain*) were screened. Dr. Kar Sunbunat and ECCC's officials (Mr. Nicolas Koumjain, international co-prosecutor, and Mr. William Smith, international assistant co-prosecutor) were the key guest speakers for both teacher training workshops.

The program and the overall processes of the trainings replicate the previous ones. This report highlights the specific activities and events in Kandal province as an exemplar of the two trainings.

The Opening Ceremony

The Kandal training started with the opening ceremony presided over by H.E. Ms. Ton Sa Im, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education and education officials from Kandal province. Three guest speakers addressed the opening ceremony.

Mr. Ly Chong Theng, Head of Kandal Provincial Office of Education, was the first speaker for the opening remark. He welcomed the training and thanked the participants for their presence. July 24, 1979 was the rebirth of the education system, he said. Teachers, students and intellectuals who survived the notorious Khmer Rouge regime were called upon to help the Ministry of Education. Since that day, the education system in Cambodia has improved; especially in the 2013-2014 academic year, the education system in Kandal province has upgraded impressively with the total number of teacher of 8,749 among which 4,056 are female. The number of students is 239,036. To ensure that the young generation is aware of its own national history, the teaching of KR history is a must, Mr. Ly stated.

The second speaker of the opening ceremony was Mr. Vanthan Peou Dara, DC-Cam's Deputy Director. During his speech, he placed a great emphasis on development and outcomes of the genocide education project led by Mr. Dy Khanboly, the author of *the History of Democratic*

Kampuchea (1975-1979). From 2004 to 2007, DC-Cam had a lot of great achievements and two of them were the launch of *the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* book, and the commencement of the genocide education project. More importantly, DC-Cam in the close collaboration with the Ministry of Education published *the Teaching of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)"* alongside the history book. Genocide education is one of the crucial methods in preventing genocide and achieving reconciliation in nation level. Before ending his speech, Mr. Vanthan provided the participants with two meaningful quotes: *Talking about experiences during the Khmer Rouge regime is to promote reconciliation and to educate children about forgiveness and tolerance. Learning about the history of Democratic Kampuchea is to prevent genocide.*

H.E. Ms. Ton Sa Im, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, was the last speaker of the opening ceremony. She stressed that it was a must for Cambodian students to learn about their society's history. The teaching of KR history had to be conducted in a careful manner. Instead of just memorizing, students should understand and be able to analyze the past events and this was teachers' responsibility. Before concluding the opening ceremony, H.E. Ms. Ton Sa Im and DC-Cam staff distributed copies of *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* to the approximately 400 participants among whom are the villagers from the nearby villages and pedagogical students from Kandal Regional Teacher Training School.

II. The Teaching of Democratic Kampuchea History and Methodologies

Every morning throughout the training, all the trainees received intensive lectures on the history of Democratic Kampuchea and the teaching methodologies. The trainees' general knowledge of the Khmer Rouge is somehow limited and this certainly poses a challenge, since they are the ones who would teach the children of tomorrow on this subject matter. For this reason, it made the lecture on the history of Democratic Kampuchea compulsory. In every class, the trainees were encouraged to ask question, to participate in class, and share their viewpoints or experience since some of them are the Khmer Rouge survivors while learning the Khmer Rouge history.

The core material for the methodologies is the teacher guidebook, *the Teaching of the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*. There are a variety of useful teaching methodologies in this guidebook that the trainees can later on use to teach not only the Khmer Rouge history but also other subjects. Those teaching methodologies range from reading comprehension, defining key terms, K-W-L chart, role-play, interview, pair or group work, jigsaw activities and many more. All of these methods share one particular feature, the underlying student-centered learning approach. Every afternoon the trainees were required to do thirty-minute teaching practice in which they used methods they had learned in the morning. Once the teaching practice was over, the instructors and their fellow trainees would take turn to give constructive feedback.

Teaching Practicum

April 6, 2014

Chapter 3: The Khmer Rouge Comes to Power

Lesson 1: Actively Reading Chapter 2

Taught by Ung Sem

At 3:30 p.m., Ung Sem began the class. From the broad the smile that she had, anyone could tell she was confident in herself and could not wait any longer for the class to start. On the white board, a poster was adorned with neatly written three objectives of today session; Sem

explained each objectives in minute detail. To hook everyone's interest, she asked the classes what happened on April 17, 1975. One of the trainees raised his hand and said Khmer Rouge occupied Phnom Penh and the evacuation was carried out.

To give the students more insights into what really happened on that day, Sem invited one of the trainees, a former Phnom Penh resident who was evacuated to the rural on that day, to recall her experience regarding the day before, the day of and the day after the Khmer Rouge arrived. Fifteen minutes ticked by, the speaker finished his story and Sem, then, asked the class to open their guidebook to page 27.

Sem explained to the class that based on the photos from page 27 to 31, there was a mixed emotion on that day regarding the forced evacuation. As the photo on page 27 and 28 showed, people appeared confusing and fairly scared just like what the speaker felt when he was forced to leave his home. The photos on page 30 and 31, however, told different story; in there, the Khmer Rouge soldiers and pedestrians somehow looked genuinely happy.

After that, she asked the students to write a one page news report based upon the photos and the guest speaker's testimony. When everyone finished their report, Sem went around the class to collect the reports. Before ending the class, one student was assigned to tell the class what they had learned today.

Comment: Cheng Hong, the national teacher, praised her for giving such a well-prepared and interesting session. There was no denying that all the students were so engrossed in the lesson. Sem's session flew at ease because she had a good linkage from one stage to another which made the lesson not hard to follow. Overall, her teaching session was impressive and she should keep on doing good job.

April 7, 2014

Chapter 5: Divisions of Democratic Kampuchea

Lesson 2: Victim-Khmer Rouge Cadre Role Playing Activity

Taught by Heng Eng

Heng Eng started the classed by learning the trainees' prior knowledge before recalling the previous lesson—the administrative division of Democratic Kampuchea. From many incorrect responses, one could not help but noticed that most of the trainees did not remember much of the lesson that they had learned from the previous lesson. Without any further delays, Eng informed and explained the class about the three objectives of today session. The first objective was students' role-play using interview transcription of both the victim and the Khmer Rouge cadre. So she selected one student to play a role as the victim in the testimony 1 on page 41 of the teacher guidebook.

While the student was portraying her role, Eng interrupted her for a moment to inform the class that they needed to take note as they were watching. Once the role play came to an end, the class was given 5 minutes to write a report using the note that they had taken. When Eng noticed that all the students finished writing, she called out one student sitting on the second row to read out her report and that was the last activity of Eng class.

Comment: Long Danny, DC-Cam trainer, pointed out that there were quite a few things that Heng Eng had to improve. First of all, there was no activity to achieve second objective about the examination and critical thinking about people's behavior and beliefs within the context of life under the Khmer Rouge. Besides, interruption during the role playing activity could

lead to a loss of concentration so she should avoid doing this next time. Eng should have informed the class about taking notes before the activity started definitely not during. Last but not least, there was only a role-play for the victim but not the KR cadre so the first objective was only partially accomplished.

April 8, 2014

Chapter 6: The Four-Year Plan (1976-1980)

Lesson 4: Analysis of the Khmer Rouge Ideology

Taught by Chheang Kim Sar

Due to the heavy rain, a lot of trainees were late and class did not start until 2:10 p.m. Despite the lateness, the class commenced smoothly. Kim Sar started the class by asking the students to read aloud the four objectives of the lessons and then, he explained each objective in great detail. To ensure that the students would be able to interpret the KR slogan accurately, he wrote the term “politics” on the whiteboard and asked one student to define that technical term. To that student, politics may be defined as the tactics and ideologies that the leaders used to lead the people during the KR regime. Kim Sar informed the class that the given definition was a bit narrow in term of the meaning so he went on writing a correct definition on the whiteboard. He explained the definition to the class and asked the students what were political policies under the KR. “Eliminating the social class and developing the economy based solely on the farming were the two deliberate political policies” one student answered.

After praising for the student’s excellent answers, he proceeded with the lesson by telling the students to turn to page 2 of the KR history textbook and interpret one of the most famous Khmer Rouge slogans: “Secrecy is the key to victory. High secrecy, Long survival.” Two minutes was past, the teacher asked one student sitting in the first row to tell the class about her interpretation. She said that during the Khmer Rouge regime, keeping the secret was the only way to survive. Picking the fruits and vegetable growing around your house was regarded as an act of stealing but that was the only way of fulfilling the constant hunger and those who did it had to do it secretly. Otherwise, they would be caught and executed.

Nevertheless, another student had different view from the former. He believed the slogan applied to only the KR cadres- all the KR cadres had to keep Angkar’s existence in secret during the Lon Nol era. Instead of saying which definition was right or wrong, Kim Sor wisely chose to explain to the class that there was no absolute interpretation for this slogan and it varied from time to time. At first, only the KR cadres used this slogan among themselves but later on, this slogan somehow became relevant to people too; for this reason, both definition were correct. Kim Sor ended the lesson by asking one student to summarize what they had learned.

Comment: Ros Sophea, the national teacher, described Kim Sar’s teaching as an amazing job. He was well-prepared which made the class went well and more importantly all the objectives were achieved. However, he should have revised the previous lesson in the warm-up stage. Besides, grouping or pairing students to interpret the slogans would make the experience different for the students- it allows students to work and interact independently.

III. Film Screening

In the afternoon of the third day, the screening of three documentary films- *Behind the Wall of S-21*, *Cambodian Children in 1979*, and *Tuol Sleng Prison* were screened. There had been an electrical cut since 1 p.m., which made the organizers to cancel the film screening and had

a discussion on the KR history for the second session of that afternoon instead. Fortunately, the electricity came around 3:10 p.m., which made it possible for the film screening. Because of the time constraint, it was not possible for the Q&A session to be carried out.

IV. Guest Speakers

Disaster and Mental Health by Dr. Kar Sunbaunat

In the afternoon of the fourth day, Dr. Kan Sunbsunat made a presentation on disaster and mental health. He began his presentation by asking several audiences to define the term disaster. One audience replied that a disaster is usually caused by nature with widespread damage. Another teacher sitting at the back of the hall defined the disaster as an accident that destroys everything on its path. These two definitions were partially correct, Dr. Kar said.

Disaster is a large-scale destruction resulted from a catastrophe. Occurrence of disaster did not always affect human being and it does not mean that every disaster leaves behind severe damages. To be precise, disaster is an event that caused mass destructions to buildings, crops, or roads, and claimed many lives. In the aftermath of disaster, people still felt terribly frightened. All of these contribute to phenomenon known as disaster.

Disaster is generally caused by two main factors: nature and human. The changes in the environment usually results in disaster. Flood, drought, lightening, storm are common disasters in Cambodia. Japan encounters more than one earthquake every year. Recently, scores of people died because of the mudslide in the United States. Another deadly natural disaster is volcano, the lava coming out of the volcano is as hot as two thousand degree and everything just melts if it flows across. Dr. Kar told the audiences of witnessing the ocean storm. Luckily, it did not cause any damages since it took place in the sea far away from the coast and there were no fishing boats on that day too. This was the classic example of the disaster with no damages, Dr. Kar added.

Kidnapping, rape, burglary, and holding someone as captive are all classified as disaster caused by human. Not only the victim but also the family suffered from such offenses. To illustrate, there was one man who madly obsessed with this beautiful woman. The man proposed her but received a rejection. So, he decided to kidnap her. Both the woman and her family suffered the same fate. In the time of war, the word mercy does not exist, the bullets and bomb does not discriminate whom they hit, scores of civilians died as a result. During the KR regime, homicide was widely committed. Those who witnessed or somehow were aware of this crime became really paranoid, and they kept on thinking when it was their time. The deprived of basic rights such as freedom of expression and torture left sever psychological scar.

When man-made disasters or natural disasters befall on us or destroy our property, both our physical body and emotion are negatively affected. If the degree of disaster is so severe, the chance of the victims facing what we called trauma is high. In psychological term "trauma" refers to a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time.

Physical illness is not hard to spot. If someone broke his or her arm, we can see that person's arm was in a cast. Mental illness, however, is not that transparent and it is usually long overdue before someone takes notice. In this case, the patients suffer not only a chronic

mental illness but also the physical problem. Trauma is a kind of mental illness and usually has negative impacts on the patients' physical health.

The inquiries from the participants after the presentation:

1. How to determine someone's personality?
2. Is a person who likes to sit and laugh alone a psychological patient?
3. Most students don't like learning history. Are there any strategies that we can use to make them like learning subject?
4. How can a person lose their sanity?
5. How can we protect the future generation from war and genocide?
6. Do the participants' mental health affect when they get only 10 US dollar per day for attending this training?

Mr. Nicholas Koumjian

The ECCC's International Co-Prosecutor, Nicholas Koumjian, gave a presentation on the establishment and the ECCC's accountability process on the fifth day of the training. Firstly, he welcomed the participants by thanking them for sparing their valuable time in participating in the presentation. Mr. Koumjian stated that all participants played an important role in preserving the legacy of the KR crimes. They were the ones who taught the Khmer younger generation about their society's darkest history. In the meantime, the ECCC, better known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT), also has a share in this tremendous effort.

The initial discussion of the trial establishment between the United Nations and the Cambodian government began in 1997 and not until 2003 was the Framework Agreement to establish ECCC reached. A year later, the Cambodian National Assembly passed a law, or the ECCC law, to govern the tribunal proceedings. In the ECCC's judicial chambers, there are both Cambodian and international judges and each of these chambers has a majority of national judges and votes by a supermajority, meaning that the vote of at least one international judge is required for any decision. According to the ECCC Law, one national and one international are in the office of two Co-Prosecutors, and they carry out preliminary investigations in concert.

Mr. Koumjian briefly discussed about the tribunal jurisdiction. The tribunal is narrowly focused on the responsibility of the senior Democratic Kampuchea leaders and those most responsible for serious crimes committed between April 17, 1975 and January 6, 1979. Besides, the ECCC law gives the tribunal the mandate to prosecute only a few serious international and national crimes- genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Additionally, he touched upon a brief update on the progress of Case 002. Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith, the four senior Khmer Rouge leaders, are supposed to be on trial in Case 002. The charges are crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and genocide against the Muslim Cham and the Vietnamese. However, the charge against Ieng Sary was dropped on 13 March 2013, the same day he passed away while Ieng Thirith, later on, was publicly notified to be unfit to stand trial.

Case 002 was split into two parts- Case 002/001 and Case 002/02. The commencement of Case 002/01 was on 21 November 2011 and this case focuses mainly on the alleged crimes against humanity related to the forced transfer of the population from Phnom Penh and the execution of Khmer Republic soldiers at Tuol Po Chrey execution site. The hearing of

evidence come to an end on July 23, 2013 and the closing statements concluded on October 31, 2013. A judgment is expected to be out in the first half of 2014.

Mr. Koumjia took some time to define the terms genocide and crimes against humanity. Legally, genocide acts may include the following: killing member of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction; or forcibly transferring children from one group to another.

Article 5 of the ECCC stipulates that crimes against humanity as acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, on national, political, ethnical, racial or religious grounds. The term, itself, includes a broad range of acts and one of them is rape. Despite the severe punishments for rape, this so-called offense still occurred, Mr. Koumjia added.

The inquiries from the participants after the presentation:

1. Why did it take so long to establish the Khmer Rouge Tribunal?
2. Why does the court try only the most responsible persons and senior leaders but not the other leaders?
3. In your opinion, do you think that all the victims would be completely satisfied with the Khmer Rouge Tribunal's judgment?
4. Are all the defense lawyers Khmers or foreigners? Have they been through the Khmer Rouge regime?
5. Why did the tribunal charge only Duch in Case 001 but so many people in Case 002? Is it the tribunal procedure or what?
6. Why does the Cambodian Co-Prosecutor oppose the Case 003 and 004?
7. There are abundant of evidences but why does Nuon Chea reject all the accusations?

V. Conclusion and Challenges

The 13th and 14th teacher trainings in Prey Veng and Kandal provinces received a lot of compliments mostly on the areas of historical content, teaching methods, and knowledge on the related topics. Lai Samang, a teacher from A-nouvot High School, said that the training was well-organized. He learnt a great deal about the KR history and more importantly the teaching methodologies that he surely would use to teach his students.

However, there were a few challenges that the organizers faced. To begin with, this was the first training ever that there were so many absentees. Only fifty out of a hundred actually showed up and completed the training successfully. The absence might have caused by the fact that the training was held quite near the celebration of Khmer New Year on the 14th and some of the trainees might have gone back to their hometown early to prepare for the upcoming Khmer New Year celebration. The electricity unreliability was also a problem. There were constant electric cut which caused delay for film screening and Mr. Nicholas Koumjia's presentation. Both the trainees and instructors found this a bit irritated. Furthermore, the student workbook should have been distributed to the trainees because a lot of methods in the teacher guidebooks referred to the exercise books.

Training Team in Prey Veng

DC-Cam	Ministry of Education
Dy Kamboly Vanthan Peoudara Mam Sovann Ly Sok-Khenag Ly Sokchamroeun	Siv Thuon Mom Meth Sek Sokha Ben Neang Ly Romney Yit Sopheak Pum Sokunthy Khim Sothea Sean Va Suy Sopheap

Training Team in Kandal

DC-Cam	Ministry of Education
Dy Kamboly Vanthan Peoudara Long Dany Mam Sovann Ly Sok-Khenag Pheng Pong Racy Kan Penh Samnang Yan Nicola Say Solyda	Siv Thuon Mom Meth Chhim Dina Va Vuthy Seng Pisethneary Cheng Hong Keo Sivutha You He Nong Nop Ros Saophea

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