

Genocide Education in Cambodia

The Teaching of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)"

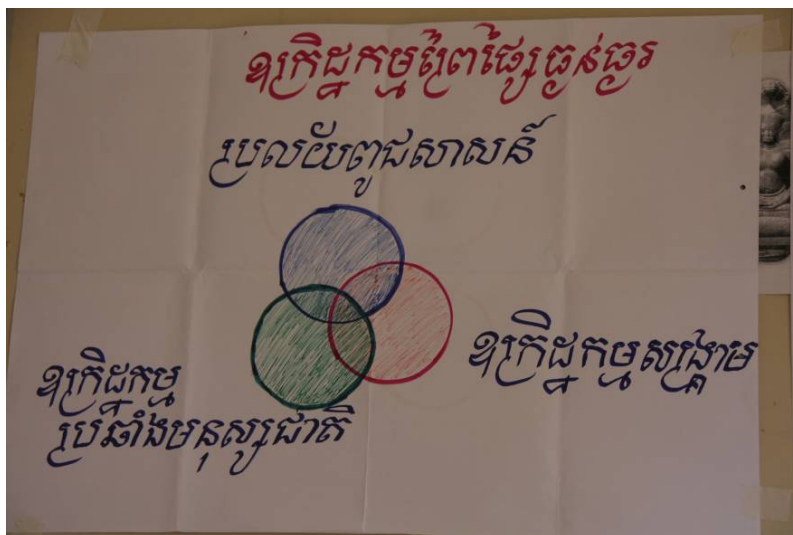
Report for Eighth Commune Teacher Training

Battambang, September 17-23, 2011

By Khamboly Dy, Peou Dara Vanthan and Dany Long

Introduction

On 17-23 September, 2011, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS), conducted the eighth commune teacher training in Battambang Province. The training was conducted in Preah Monivong High School, located in the center of the provincial town.



Mass Atrocities: Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, and War Crimes

Seventy-two participants from various lower and upper secondary schools across the province attended the training. Trainers included six national trainers and nine provincial trainers (seven from Kandal, one from Kampong Cham and one from Prey Veng Provinces). Participants were divided into three large groups; each group consisted of twenty-four participants.

The eighth commune teacher training was conducted by using the existing program, assignments, and materials. The training was held for seven days in a row. Each day consisted of a presentation on the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history textbook and presentation and model teaching on the teacher's guidebook. The training also included other activities such as film screenings and guest speakers. Other materials used in the training were the student workbook, booklet on Case 002 detailing the biographies of the four Khmer Rouge (KR) Trial suspects and crimes they committed during the regime, the magazine Searching for the Truth, a chronology on the KR Tribunal, a book on some KR prisons, an administrative map and killing field map.

The eighth commune teacher training was highlighted by a speech by Dr. Ka Sunbaunat, a national psychiatrist who talked about the effects of the KR atrocities on the Cambodian population, including both the direct victims and those born after the regime. He also shared his expertise on how traumatized people could deal with certain mental problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). More importantly, Mr. Mei Meakk (former personal

adviser to Pol Pot and currently Deputy Governor of Pailin Province) came to talk about the DK policies and its implications on Cambodian people. Mei Meakk's presentation complemented the textbook in which participants had a chance to ask a lot of questions about Pol Pot and the DK government.

Like the previous trainings, the eighth commune teacher training aims to ensure that history teachers from Kampong Speu Province possess adequate knowledge of KR history and methodologies to transfer this knowledge to their students. The training not only equips teachers with new content and teaching methods, but also with critical thinking skills that teachers can utilize to help their students to write, summarize, analyze, and research on specific subject matters. By extension, the training provides history teachers the necessary means to guide their students to look at the past mass atrocities and help the country to move forward away from the old footprint. Namely, students will be guided away from anger, hatred, and a sense of revenge. Through the DK history textbook and other teaching materials, students will be able to grasp how the KR movement came to power and implemented the harsh policies that put to death nearly two million Cambodian people. Understanding the rise, rule, and demise of the DK regime, both teachers and students can work to enhance peace and democracy and contribute to genocide prevention.

Preparations for the Training

The training was originally planned to be held in the compound of the Regional Teacher Training School. However, the school and many other parts of Battambang Province were flooded this year, which did not allow the team to conduct the training as originally planned. Upon receiving information about the flood, the team quickly contacted the Provincial Education Office to seek advice on how to deal with the problem. The head of the Provincial Office of Education, Mr. Ngy Set suggested that the training be conducted in a different location. The education office and the team decided to choose a new location which is Preah Monivong High School.

After meeting the education office, the team met Mr. Sok Chamroeun, principal of Preah Monivong High School. The school principal was at first reluctant to host the training as it was close to the new school term. The official starting date of the school was September 23, which was the last day of the training. After the discussion, the school principal offered to host the training. The team also talked to the principal about other arrangements such as the classrooms, sanitation, and snack, banner and meeting hall. The team put up announcements about the change of the location for participants. In the morning of September 17th, the training went smoothly. Only a few participants came late because of the change of the location.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was held in the morning of September 17th at 8:00 AM and was presided over by Mr. Ngy Set (head of education office), Mr. Peou Dara Vanthan (DC-Cam's deputy director), and Mr. Khamboly Dy (author of *A History of Democratic Kampuchea*).

Mr. Peou Dara Vanthan was the first speaker in the opening ceremony. On behalf of DC-Cam and director Youk Chhang, Mr. Vanthan welcomed and thanked all participants for their time and efforts to participate in the training. Mr. Vanthan talked in detail about work related to DC-Cam's Genocide Education Project. He said that commune teacher training was one of

the seven activities of the Genocide Education Project. The other activities include university lecturer training, quality control, public education forum, anti-genocide memorial, textbook distribution and annual teacher workshops. He stressed that these activities contribute to the genocide education, genocide awareness and genocide prevention in Cambodia as well as in the world. Mr. Vanthan added that DC-Cam holds more than one million pages of documents, over six thousand photos, over two hundred documentary films and over four thousand interviews. The participants can travel to DC-Cam and get any documents they need for their teaching. To conclude Mr. Vanthan once again thanked the participants and encouraged them to pay attention and gain as much knowledge as they could from the training.

Mr. Khamboly Dy

received the floor from Mr. Vanthan to address the participants. Mr. Dy talked about the objectives of the training and the importance of genocide education. Mr. Dy said that Battambang was the last site for the commune teacher training in 2011. So far DC-Cam, in collaboration with MOEYS, has provided training to over three thousand history



The Opening Ceremony

teachers nationwide. Both institutions will continue to conduct the training in the following years, which will extend to Khmer Studies and Citizen Morality subjects. The training aims at providing history teachers with knowledge on KR history and the methodologies to teach the history to their students in the classrooms. He said that it is important that Cambodia's younger generations who are born after the regime are educated about what happened to their parents, grandparents and relatives between 1975 and 1979. Knowledge of KR history would enable students to find a way to lead their country away from genocide and to establish peace and national reconciliation. In their classrooms, teachers should guide students away from anger, hatred and a sense of revenge. Through the teaching methods in the guidebook, teachers will instill a sense of sympathy in their students. He added that currently both the victims and the perpetrators live side by side in the same villages. Both children of the victims and those of the perpetrators are studying in the same schools. It is important for the national reconciliation that these two groups of people live peacefully with each other.

Mr. Ngy Set, head of the Provincial Office of Education, was the last guest speaker. Mr. Ngy said that the remarks by the previous guest speakers made him recall his story during the KR regime. He said that he was a youth at that time and was put in the mobile unit. Those who are thirty-five years old and up will have experienced the regime. He said that Nuon Chea's

house was close to his house. In the late 1990s, when Nuon Chea defected to the royal government and came to live in his home village in Battambang, Mr. Ngy visited Nuon Chea in order to ask for some truths about the KR regime. He asked, "Do you know about the killing during the KR regime?" Nuon Chea said, "No." Mr. Ngy said that he was speechless, did not say anything more, and went back home. He added that Cambodian people suffered tremendously under the KR rule. Every family has at least one family member who died during the KR. In some cases, the entire family was killed. His aunt lost her husband and all of her children. She almost became crazy, being unable to bear the pain. Mr. Ngy said that the training workshop is extremely important. Some children do not believe when their parents tell them about life under the KR. He added that his own children find it hard to believe when he narrates his life during the KR to them. He encouraged all participants to try to listen to the trainers and take the knowledge back to their respective schools to teach their students. Last, Mr. Ngy announced the official opening of the workshop.

Film Screening

In the morning of September 18, three documentary films were screened to provide background knowledge on the five-year civil war before the KR actually came to power. The films include: *The 1973 KR liberated zone*, *Tuol Sleng Prison* and *Prison in Baset Mountain*. Before the screening, Mr. Vanthan introduced the background of each film to the participants so that they would have some basic information in advance.



Participants in the Training

During the screening participants watched the films with great interest as it was the first time they had seen such kinds of films. They murmured to each other when they saw the Vietnamese delegations, the reactions from the villagers welcoming the Vietnamese delegates, and some of the KR leaders, especially Khieu Samphan, who is now under the custody of the KR Tribunal. Participants were even more shocked when they watched the Tuol Sleng film in which they saw prisoners who were disemboweled and the bodies of the last prisoners who were left swollen in the detention rooms. They talked about the four surviving children, one of whom was dying as he had not had food for many days. The other two children were Norng Chanphal and his brother Norng Channy, who are still alive today.

After the film screening Mr. Vanthan opened the floor for questions from the participants. One participant asked about the Vietnamese delegation who visited Cambodia in 1973. Mr. Dany Long said that the delegation was the provisional government of the South Vietnamese. They were received by Khieu Samphan, Hu Nim, and Koy Thuon.

Mr. Youk Chhang then took the floor to discuss the films. He said that the films are among the important teaching materials that teachers can use to teach students. He said the teachers should have a lot of questions on the films. Mr. Chhang thanked all participants for coming to the training. He said the training is very important for national reconciliation. He said that history is very important in post-conflict countries, but that post-conflict countries do not give much emphasis on the subject of history as they are occupied with economic recovery. Mr. Chhang encouraged the participants to do more research and stated that DC-Cam will continue to provide additional materials for the teachers. Moreover, Mr. Chhang wanted the participants to pay attention to the definition of the word genocide. He said that DC-Cam and the Royal Government of Cambodia agree that genocide is a mass atrocity and has great impact on the country and the people. The world agrees that genocide has to be prevented. The prevention can be done through education in which students grasp the knowledge on genocide and will lead the country away from it. He said that teachers play an important role in educating students about the genocide. He asked if anyone knows the definitions of genocide in the legal sense. One participant said that genocide is the annihilation of the nation. For example, Hitler killed all the Jews. He believed that in the Cambodian case it is the act of massacre in which other nationals were also killed. Mr. Chhang said that the world usually is confused about the definition of genocide in which allows genocide to happen again. Another participant stood up and said that genocide was the act of killing one own national.

Mr. Chhang said that the historical context is different from the legal context. Mr. Chhang explained the legal definition of genocide. He said that genocide has three components. The first one is the intent to commit an act of genocide by an institution or state. Second, the violence affects the population in part of in whole, regardless of the total number of people affected. The third component is targeting specific groups, such as national, racial, ethnical, or religious groups. These three components constitute genocide. Mr. Chhang emphasized that teachers convey the wrong message if they teach students that genocide is the act of killing the entire population of one nation. Mr. Chhang said that the Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were signed at the same time, which was on 10 December 1948. The Genocide Convention was signed two hours ahead of the signing of the Human Rights Convention. Mr. Chhang asked why the world pays attention to Human Rights Day but not the Genocide Convention. He said that it is because the world pays less attention to genocide, which is the reason why genocide continues to exist in many parts of the world. Only lately has the world begun to see the importance of studying about genocide to prevent it from happening.

Then Mr. Chhang talked about the world reconciliation. What is the relationship between teaching and reconciliation? One participant said that teaching allows students to see an ideology that is against the interest of the general population. Another participant said that teaching helps to end the conflict between the victims and the former KR cadres. The teaching also shows that the KR regime is about the older generation. It has nothing to do with the younger generation even though some students are the children of the perpetrators. The studying of KR history helps to reconcile between the two groups and discourage the younger generations not to have friction among each other. One participant said that the teaching will prevent the genocide. Another participant said that the teaching allows students to summarize the good and bad deeds of past acts. Then students will choose the good ones to follow while rejecting the bad ones. Mr. Chhang asked how the

teachers teach students who are the children of the perpetrators. One teacher said that the book talks only about the senior leaders. The book does not address the lower ranking KR officials. So it does not generate any frictions among the former cadres in the villages.

Mr. Chhang asked how the teachers from Kamrieng District (a former KR stronghold) define the terms victims and perpetrators. Mr. Chhang said that teaching KR history at the communities where both victims and perpetrators live side by side could cause conflict during the lessons. One participant said that teaching the history helps to avoid leading students toward anger, hatred or revenge. This helps guide students toward demonstrating pity toward all people. Mr. Chhang said that the teaching may affect the emotions of the students. Therefore, DC-Cam's training team invited Dr. Ka Sunbaunat to talk about strategies to deal with mental health problems. Mr. Chhang said that even if only one student is affected by the subject, teachers have to pay a great deal of attention to this issue.



A Participant Asking a Question

Mr. Chhang gave some examples of how two teachers assigned more work for students who are the children of the former KR commune chiefs. Mr. Chhang said that teaching this history can affect both students and teachers, and teachers have to emphasize reconciliation. He said that DC-Cam and the Ministry of Education will continue to stress the importance of genocide education. He encouraged all teachers to provide broader education on KR history to their students so that they can pass the national exams. Recently, KR history has been integrated into the official curriculum. The Ministry of Education provides ten hours for KR history in twelfth grade. Mr. Chhang said that if the teachers can teach

students effectively, hundreds of thousands of students will

benefit from their teaching. It is a long-term goal. Teachers may not see results within two or three years. But in the future teachers will be proud to see some of their students become great leaders either in their communities or at the national level. Therefore teachers have to be patient to see this goal.

Last Mr. Chhang allowed participants to ask any questions related to DC-Cam and genocide education. One participant asked if Cambodia was part of the genocide convention. If

Cambodia signed this convention, why the DK regime committed this act? Mr. Chhang said that the KR leaders never admitted that they committed acts of genocide. DC-Cam has a million pages of documents and other physical evidence that can prove that the KR leaders committed crimes.

In the morning of day 5, another documentary film *Behind the Wall of S-21* was screened. The film is about thirty minutes. Some participants laughed when they heard Chum Mei talk about his experiences when he was imprisoned in S-21. He talked about how the prison guards bit him and used strong words to curse him. Mr. Vanthan, who coordinated the discussion, asked why participants laughed. One participant said that it was wrong if people laughed at the suffering of the KR victims. Another participant said that the laughing was not to mock the victims but rather to laugh at the unimaginable and inhuman acts that the prison guards did to the prisoners. Mr. Vanthan then asked whether the victim or the perpetrator told the truth. Only one participant raised his hand in support of the perpetrator. He explained that the perpetrator seemed to tell the truth as he talked clearly in each point. However he did not give any convincing points in support of his idea. Another participant who was among the victim supporters raised his hand. He said that the perpetrator would never say the truth. He said that his father was killed during the KR. Even though it was over thirty years ago, the experiences during the KR are still recent to him. He said that he understands about the objectives of the training, which is focused on national reconciliation. But it is hard to reconcile. The child of the person who killed his father is his friend. Immediately after the KR regime, he wanted to kill the perpetrator but he held back his anger. Until now, he still recalls the suffering, and he finds it hard to reconcile with the children of the perpetrator as he clearly knew that their father killed his father.

Some Highlights of Teaching Practices

Sour Sambo Presenting Chapter 7, Lesson 2: My Diary during the KR Regime



A Participant Reading Her Note

Mr. Sambo started the lesson by explaining the objectives of the lesson. He said he wanted participants to be able to describe the living situation during the KR and imagine that they were living during the KR and write their own diary based on the knowledge they have learned and their imagination. Then he

asked two participants to read the diary of Doeun Sereylen aloud in the class. After the reading, the Mr. Sambo summarized Sereylen's story to the participants. He asked participants to imagine that they were a young child

living in the KR regime and to write a one-page diary of their own. Participants had five minutes to complete this work. After the writing, one participant came to the front of the classroom and read their diaries. Next, Mr. Sambo explained about life during the KR. He wrote some terms “cruelty, torture, and death” on the board to show how the KR period affected the general population mentally and physically. Mr. Sambo asked participants to turn to the student workbook on page 66 to write how the experiences during the KR shape their lives today. One participant stood up and explained his imaginative experiences. He said that if he were Doeun Sereylen, he would feel frightened and find it hard to live in such a condition. Another participant said that if Cambodia fell into the KR regime again, he would be able to find a way to survive such a regime, based on the experiences he learned from Doeun Sereylen. At the end, Mr. Sambo said that though participants can see the suffering that occurred during the KR, they are not expected to create a sense of hatred or anger in their minds. They should use this lesson as a foundation for reconciliation.

Mr. Chan Narong Presenting Chapter 7, Lesson 3: Interview

Before starting the lesson, Mr. Narong introduced the objectives of the day. He asked, “What is the importance of interview?” He told participants that interviews could allow teachers and students to learn more about what happened during the KR regime. He asked how they could approach a survivor if they wanted to conduct the interview. Mr. Narong explained the method to conduct interviews. First, the interviewer has to greet the interviewee and ask for basic personal information such as name and occupation. Then they could ask what the interviewee did during the KR regime. Next, they could proceed to ask about life under the KR. He said that this was the interview process. After explaining the interview technique, he asked participants to work in pairs and conduct mock interviews. Then, he asked two participants to come to the front of the room to do a mock interview for the rest of the class. At the end, Mr. Narong re-explained the interview technique. He emphasized that at the end of the interview, the interviewer should thank the interviewee for spending time to talk about her/his experiences during the KR.

Ms. Phlong Chhorvit, Presenting Chapter 9, Lesson 2: Film “Behind the Wall of S-21”

Before starting the lesson, Ms. Chhorvit recalled the old lesson covering Office S-21. She asked several questions to see if participants still remembered and understood the old lesson. Then she explained the objectives of the new lesson. She introduced a new film entitled *Behind the Wall of S-21* to the participants. She said that the characters in the film included Bou Meng, Chum Mei and Him Huy. The last one was former S-

21 cadre. After that, she played the film for the participants. After the film screening, she summarized the film for the participants. She asked participants to turn to the student workbook to page 75 and write a summary of the film. After the writing, she asked a few participants to report their writing to the class.

Closing Day

At the end of the training on day seven, the team distributed the evaluation form to the participants who had fifteen minutes to answer all the questions in the form. Participants also had the chance to ask questions about DK history, methodology, and general questions and to make their final comments.

One participant asked if he could take an extra text from other books to teach students. Mr. Vanthan said that teachers' and students' knowledge is not limited within the content of one textbook. However, there is a concern that teachers are not able to finish even the DK



Park inside Preah Monivong High School Compound

history textbook within one academic year. If

teachers are able to teach the entire contents of the textbook, it would be great. Teachers can improve their knowledge on DK history by reading extra books. Some participants asked for extra materials such as KR songs and documentary films for their classroom teaching. One participant said that the reasons for the fall of the KR are limited. The textbook should add extra reasons such as poor foreign relations. Another participant said that the book should include cruel photos such as killings and torture. Mr. Vanthan explained that the book is designed for national reconciliation and peace. We do not want to introduce violence through the book. Mr. Sros Tit said that the training is really important. The methods in the guidebook are easy to understand and use to teach students. One challenge is the lesson related to guest speakers. He finds it hard to invite guest speakers to the class. Mr. Vanthan said that guest speakers are not hard to find. Teachers can find a number of survivors who are willing to talk to the students. The key is how teachers approach the survivors, some of whom may be happy to share their experiences with the younger generations.

At the end, Mr. Vanthan invited all trainers for a modest and friendly dinner to thank them for their efforts and hard work within the seven-day period.

Outcomes and Impacts

Teaching DK History in Schools: Many participants reported that their schools received copies of the DK history textbook in 2009. They have since taught parts of the textbook to their students. However, the teaching was conducted through the traditional methods. They expressed delight in participating in the training so that they can obtain proper methods to teach DK history. Mr. Koeung Sovathanak said that he had had a hard time teaching DK history as he did not have any reference materials and specific methods. He was so happy to be invited to participate in the training workshop. He learned a lot of history and methods which he can later apply in the classroom. He requested that DC-Cam work with the Ministry of Education to provide extra time to teach the entire DK history textbook in school. In addition, the head of education office Mr. Ngy Set confirmed that his office has known about the integration and the teaching of DK history at the secondary school level. The office will continue to encourage and enforce this teaching in the school.

Mr. Chim Keo, a provincial trainer from Kandal Province, said that he had collected a number of books, magazines, and documents and installed these documents in the school library for students' use. He said that he had conducted intensive teaching of DK history in his school. He said that his students had learned a lot from the textbook in school but not from the historical sites. He requested that DC-Cam offer to bring about fifty students from his school to visit Tuol Sleng, Cheung Ek, and the KR Tribunal. This study trip would enhance the students' knowledge of DK history in addition to learning from the textbook.

Learning from the Historical Place: Some participants live in the same villages as Nuon Chea and Sieu Heng. Nuon Chea was deputy secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) and president of DK People's Revolutionary Assembly. Nuon is currently under the provisional detention of the KR Tribunal for the crimes he allegedly committed during the KR period. Sieu Heng was Nuon's uncle. Heng was the second secretary of the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP) when Son Ngoc Minh fled to Vietnam in 1954. Nuon and Heng were born in Wat Kor Village about four kilometers from the provincial town. Nuon's house which was built in the 1960s still exists today. It is currently occupied by his niece who is a former teacher. Living near Nuon's house, two participants knew extensively about Nuon Chea's family's lives. They shared this knowledge with the other participants. Surprisingly, the head of Battambang Office of Education, Mr. Ngy Set, has blood relations with Nuon Chea. His wife was Nuon Chea's niece. When Nuon Chea defected to the Royal Government in 1998, Mr. Nge visited Nuon Chea and asked about Nuon's time during the KR. Nuon politely replied that, "Don't ask about the past. Talk about the present and move on to the future." Mr. Nge, as noted in his speech above, shared this knowledge with the participants during his speech at the opening ceremony.

One teacher from Anlong Vil High School said that ten of her students were invited to visit Tuol Sleng and the KR Tribunal. She requested that DC-Cam create a program to bring students and teachers to visit the court. Mr. Chhang informed the participants about the anti-genocide memorial which the Ministry of Education has allowed to be placed in all high

schools nationwide. Another teacher, Mr. Chan Narong, said that students in Battambang have never had a chance to visit Tuol Sleng and Cheung Ek. He requested that DC-Cam offer to bring at least ten students from his school to visit these historic places so that the students could learn directly from the field trip.

Challenges and Recommendations

Disorientation of Participants' Attitude toward Education: Very often, participants believe that history is all about date and place. As long as students are able to grasp all of the historical events in each chapter, teachers would be able to achieve their educational objectives. Therefore, during the training, participants asked a lot of controversial and open questions while demanding short and concise answers. They said, "I need only one absolute answer so that I can answer my students' questions." The controversial questions include: "What were the causes of the 1970 coup to depose Prince Sihanouk from power? What are the reasons of the fall of the KR regime? Why did the KR kill their own people?" To answer such kind of questions, trainers need to provide a number of different accounts and arguments, which participants found unbearable as they did not receive one absolute satisfactory answer. The team explained to the participants that history is not just about dates and locations. Students should have the opportunity to analyze and debate historical events so that they can build up their thoughts and critical thinking skills. The team added there is no absolute answer to these questions. Students can agree or disagree with the teachers when addressing these questions. Teachers should not try to dictate the answers.

Frame of the Workshop: The teacher training workshop is conducted in seven days consecutively. The workshop aims at helping participants to gain knowledge on both DK history and teaching methodologies. The workshop is not designed to provide other topics such as political science, the theory of international communism or international relations though these topics may be relevant to some respects. Trainers are not expected to go too far out of the frame of the workshop; otherwise, its objectives would not be achieved at the end of the workshop. One trainer is well educated and has read a number of books. The trainer is proud of his knowledge and wants to share with the participants. He talked extensively about the theory of policies, world war and other international conflicts, which did not comply with agendas and programs of the workshop. These extra activities took a great amount of time from the substance that he was supposed to present, and he was not able to finish the presentation and model teaching as planned. All trainers should pay attention to the program, agenda and objectives of the workshop. They have to bear in mind that they are not able to provide a variety of topics within the seven-day period.

Explanation of Historical Events: Trainers should not try to explain any historical events of which they are not clear or lack references. It is even more dangerous when trainers give wrong information/answers to the participants. If one trainer is not clear on the choice of answers he/she wants to give to students, he/she can seek assistance from their fellow trainers ensuring that the given answers are not distorted. If participants receive wrong information, hundreds of students who study from the teachers will be guided incorrectly on DK history. This loophole could jeopardize the objectives of the training which aim to provide accurate and unbiased knowledge on DK history.

Timing of the Training: According to the six trainings conducted in 2011, participants found it hard to come to the class on time. The morning session ends at 12 noon, and the afternoon

session starts at 1:30 PM. Technically, participants have only one hour and a half for lunch. A number of participants said that this amount of time would be sufficient enough if it is just for lunch only. However, participants have to travel back and forth between their houses and the training site. Between four to five participants conduct teaching lessons in the afternoon. Most often, the afternoon session ends at 4:30 PM. Therefore, the afternoon session can start at 2 and end at 5. This would allow participants to be well prepared for each session.

Appendix 1: Speech by H.E. Mr. Mey Meakk, Deputy Governor of Pailin Province



Mr. Mey Meakk, Former Adviser to Pol Pot and now Deputy Governor of Pailin Province

[Mey Meakk was born in Smoang Village, Tralach Commune, Traing District, Takeo Province. Meakk graduated from college in 1969 after which he worked as a tour guide in Siem Reap Province. Meakk joined the Khmer Rouge (KR) revolution right after the March 1970 coup. His primary

purpose was to restore Prince Sihanouk back to power. He worked as a military radio communication operator. Between 1975 and 1979, Meakk worked as a middle-ranking cadre at the Pochentong airport under the supervision of Sou Meth, Secretary of air force Division 502, and Son Sen, Democratic Kampuchea's (DK) Defense Minister. Meakk worked as a plane operator to prepare the flight plans. At the airport, he met a number of national and foreign guests, including Prince Norodom Sihanouk. He also met a number of DK senior leaders such as Pol Pot, Nuon Chea and Ieng Sary. On January 6, 1979, Meakk was the person who organized and navigated the flight of Prince Sihanouk and his family to flee to China. Later Meakk fled to the Thai border. In the border area during the period of the 1980s and early and mid-1990s, Meakk worked in Office 131, which was headquarters of the provisional government of DK. He taught English, French, Thai, Khmer study, administration and revolutionary literature to the KR cadres. In addition to his teaching job, Meakk was a radio broadcaster and assistant to Pol Pot. He was made responsible for gathering and analyzing military information from various national and international media and reporting to Pol Pot in writing and orally. Working as a minute meeting reporter, he had been to a number of meetings with Pol Pot both inside and outside the country. Meakk defected to the Royal Government of Cambodia in 1996 with Ieng Sary (DK Foreign Minister) and Y Chhuan (now Governor of Pailin). Meakk is currently the deputy governor of Pailin Province. In spite of the fact that he had been with the KR movement for twenty-six years from 1970 to 1996, Meakk

denied any relations to the crimes committed by the KR between 1975 and 1979. Meakk claimed that he worked on technical issues and had no blood on his hands. "I am also a victim of the regime," Meakk said.]

H.E. Mr. Mey Meakk started his speech by thanking DC-Cam for inviting him to participate in the training. He stressed that the textbook by Khamboly Dy has narrated extensive details about the DK regime. He would like participants to ask questions so that he could elaborate according to the need of the teachers. Below is his speech.

I participated in the KR movement since 1970 until the 1990s. Later, I was integrated into the government under the leadership of Y Chhean, who believed that only participating with the Royal Government, did he survive. The integration was part of the win-win policy of the Prime Minister Hun Sen. If we continued to stay with the DK government; we did not know the purposes of their cause. We only worked for the KR and contributed to their crimes. We could not see any progresses during the stay with the KR movement. Khamboly's textbook said that there were Chinese and Thai experts who helped the KR movement. But in fact only Khmers worked on their own. However, because Thailand was afraid of Vietnam, Thailand decided to help the KR. The KR movement independently worked along the Thai border. If the KR received assistance from China, they would lose the integrity. China provided financial support through Thailand, who cut five percent of the budget. In some cases, Thailand fought into the Cambodian border. We tried very hard to push Thai troops back into their country.

Once again, I would like to deeply thank DC-Cam for inviting me to participate in this training. It is an honor for me to be a guest speaker in the training. I am like a piece of water in the jar. I don't know much about history. Today I am very honored to help improve the knowledge of history. DC-Cam has tried hard to enlighten society about what happened during the KR regime. However, the content does not cover all the crimes that happened in DK. There were a lot of matters such as security actions in the regions, districts, and communes. And also daily life of the people during DK. Forced labor and not enough food contributed to the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK). CPK tried very hard to improve the country but did not allow people to eat enough. What were the negative impacts on CPK? What were the contradictions to the international law? The KR leaders were well educated but lead the country to this way. There are a number of issues to be elaborated so that students are able to understand so that we can contribute to the prevention of genocide and that this regime will not happen again. Teachers should teach particular points so that students know clearly. H.E. Y Chhean suggested that education is very important. There were a number of stories in the villages. For example, my father and my father-in-law were killed. In Kirivong District in Takeo Province, a truck delivered food to the troops. The food fell down on the street. The April 17 people picked up the food to eat. The people were arrested and killed. This

is an example of a painful memory. If we look at DC-Cam's textbook, it is not enough to learn the whole thing about the KR regime. It is important to know the details on the ground so that we can contribute to genocide prevention. These problems reflect back to Cambodian society.

In this world, no single country implements such a policy. There are a lot of socialist countries in the world, but those countries take people above all. They try hard to make sure that people live peacefully. The revolutionary theory states that if there is persecution, there will be rebellion. This is completely true in the real society.

I would like to explain the brief summary of DK history to you. I understand that you understand Khmer history since the pre-history time. You all are historians in school. I abandoned studying the subject of history a long time ago. I am now just an administrative person in a province. I was a student in 1965. I graduated from Back II. After that I became a guide in Siem Reap. After working for a year, the coup happened. I ran into the forest in order to restore King Sihanouk to power.

Let me talk about some of Cambodian history so that you will easily understand the political leadership. I want to summarize the leadership of Cambodian leaders so that you can compare how the leadership had changed from time to time. In the pre-historical time, Khmer had a complete and sovereign state with a king as its leader. It was an absolute monarchy. The King represented the God. Liv Yi was Cambodia's Queen. She led troops to fight with King Hun Tien from India. This shows that Khmer was a complete state since pre-historical time. It is not like some commentators who say that Khmer was established by the Indians. Khmer is a courageous clan. We preserved our identity. In the 1st century, though Indians entered Cambodia, we still could preserve our country, integrity and sovereignty. According to history, we have always been able to preserve our land as long as we unite. In the Phonan period, Khmer had clear a state, led through an absolute monarchy. **(He then talked extensively about Cambodian history from the first century to the present day.)** DK said that both the East and the West wind were not strong. This was stated during the meeting at Olympic stadium in 1976. This means that DK underestimated the international relations with Vietnam and Thailand. This is dangerous for the DK as the regime was too proud of itself. In summary, Cambodia has been up and down up to the present day. Although Prince Sihanouk's regime was prosperous, there emerged Lon Nol's period and then Pol Pot's regime and State of Cambodia regime.

In 1954, the Khmer Issarak was in fragile. Son Ngoc Minh and Sieu Heng and a thousand followers escaped to Hanoi. Cambodia was in full peace after the 1953 independence under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk. The current period can be said from the 1970 to the present. In 1970 Lon Nol deposed Prince Sihanouk, who had established the island of peace since 1953. The King led the country effectively with democratic election and multi-party system. The Prince received the majority of votes. If not for the Lon Nol's coup, the Prince would have been able to hold power

longer. He led Cambodia for seventeen years. However, he led the country peacefully with little corruption. Government officials received enough salary. If the Prince led the country up to the present day, Cambodia would be highly prosperous. Lon Nol led the coup on March 18, 1970 and held the country until April 17, 1975 with assistance from the United States. Lon Nol wanted to lead Cambodia through democracy with no King. Even though Siri Matak was a royal family member, he did not like monarchy. The DK movement, which was called Khmer Rouge, was the real red movement that King Sihanouk had named since the 1960s. It was a force that prevented the progress of King Sihanouk's Popular Socialist Regime. The KR adopted the Marxist-Leninist and Maoist theories. They took the red color as the symbol of their communist state. It is normal that all regimes adopt a particular ideology to lead the country. For instance, Pol Pot learned communism when he studied abroad. He strongly focused on the red ideology. Pol Pot adopted a number of French communist documents. He also adopted Chinese communism. He joined the CPK in 1960. Sieu Heng later returned back to Cambodia to lead the communist movement in Cambodia. He became party secretary. As he lost the election in 1955, Sieu Heng sought assistance from Lon Nol. Heng later betrayed the party.

Pol Pot told a story to me. There was a king who played chess with a guard. He said that if I win the game, you have to leave the city and go to the countryside. But if you win, I will nominate you to be prime minister. The guard was very skillful but he pretended to lose. At last, although he lost the game, the king still nominated him to be prime minister. Pol Pot wanted to tell me that I should not have behaved arrogantly toward him. I had to present true, accurate and clear information. The third component was to present solutions to the problem. However, before I presented my analysis to him, I always said, "Please forgive me if I present incorrectly." If I behaved arrogantly like Hu Nim and Hou Youn and Chou Chet, I would have been killed a long time ago. As long as one behaved gently toward him, one could survive.

DK was strong and was able to win over the Lon Nol's regime because they had assistance from Prince Sihanouk. At the time of the 1970 coup, the KR movement was so happy. They roasted cows to celebrate the coup. Pol Pot believed that with Sihanouk on his side, he would be able to hold power soon. Pol Pot believed that the struggle inside the country would not be successful. Therefore, he adopted Maoist ideology in which the countryside surrounded the cities. Therefore, Pol Pot established a number of bases in the countryside. He created Office-100 in Ratanak Kiri Province. He gathered all forces in the countryside in order to take power. Ta Mok and Chou Chet were based in the Southwest Zone. They traveled for about one month to meet Pol Pot in Ratanak Kiri. They prepared radio broadcasts with assistance from Vietnam. It was a good relation with Vietnam at that time. Pol Pot traveled to China through Ho Chi Minh Trail. He described the journey through the trail to me. He analyzed the Vietnamese and Chinese tendencies for me. After coming back from China, Pol Pot was so happy when he received strong support

from China. He prepared more forces to be ready to fight for power. Khieu Samphan ran into the forest in 1967, but he could no longer stay inside the country because he could no longer resist the government. Long Boreth was the one who persecuted Khieu Samphan. He sought refugee with protection from Ta Mok. The villagers helped him by providing him food.

The KR created a very good policy. The cadres were not allowed to pick up even a chilly of the people. They did not announce the revolution. The liberated zone was enlarged. The progress of the zone was because of the appeal from the King. The Lon Nol government with assistance from the United States did not have time to develop the country. At that time, I was responsible for radio communication to see where Lon Nol's aircrafts came from. The United States and Lon Nol's forces dropped a lot of bombs but could not help to prevent the Lon Nol's government from falling down. I controlled the radio communication, so I knew clearly where they wanted to drop bombs. Then I signaled the information to the movement to escape from the targeted places. They could not hit us, even with the B-52 bombs. I called all radio operators for a meeting in order to find a way to protect against the B-52 bombs. I controlled all the bombing plans of the United States, so I gave information ahead of the time. The people and troops escaped from the targeted areas. We did not have high education, but we tried altogether to deal with the issues. Most of the time, the bombs did not hit the people and bases. We tried very hard to escape the bombs which were dropped for 200 days and nights. Lon Nol was able to hold to power for five years because of the support from the United States. However, the United States could not help because over 85 percent of the population supported the King. On April 12, 1975, the United States called Mayaguez boat to Kampong Soam to take the people to Thailand because they realized that they could no longer withstand with the KR. We could take over all strategic places such as the Pochentong airport. Sirik Matak and Long Boreth thought that they could desert the people. They thought that they could negotiate with the King to survive. Siri Matak wrote a letter to the United States with three emphases. First, he thanked them for offering to take him to freedom. Second, that the situation could not be saved. Third, that he had made only one mistake, which was to believe in the United States.

I have talked a lot so far. I want to hear from you, so that I do not talk alone. We have to unite to prevent genocide in our country. Can we strengthen our country? What are the reasons that we could not prevent our country from disaster? We can talk about the leadership of DK regime. What are the benefits and losses of the regime? Guerrilla war is light, quiet, mobile and flexible.

I want questions from all of you rather than talk alone. I just would like to emphasize that the Lon Nol regime could not prevent from failure. The KR movement was very strong. The movement adopted the ideology from China and the Soviet Union. However, they were socialist countries. Although they swept clean their enemies, they did not kill a number of people to its destruction like the DK. It was a mistake to

lead the country that way. Our population was only about seven to eight million. If they killed so many people like this, we would not have people to prevent and build up the country. The killing strongly affected the country. The KR cleaned up all kinds of people: the landlord, the capitalists and the businessmen. There was no medicine to treat the people. Office S-21 strongly affected the people. It was so painful. The KR regime left a number of problems in the country. They stopped believing in Buddhism. Bad deeds will for sure receive bad results. The results will reflect back immediately. For instance, Lon Nol had a lot of sins. He could hold power for only five years. Pol Pot had more sins than Lon Nol. He held power for only nearly four years. Our father of independence had a lot of achievements. He resigned in 1976. We offered him to resign with conditions that he could not have relations with foreign countries, to make declarations, or to travel anywhere. He had a lot of gratitude for the country and the people, but Pol Pot put the King in house arrest. This is really a sin. That's why Pol Pot could not hold power for long.

I was at the Pochentong airport. We could make use of some of the old planes. However, our planes were shot down very often. Therefore, we believed that plane attack was not effective. The new planes from China could not be used because we did not have pilots. Some children of the leaders learned how to operate the planes in China but could not drive. I did not know the situation when I was at the airport. But the leaders whispered to me that the situation was bad. The negotiations with Vietnam failed many times. Pol Pot did not like Vietnam; he believed that Vietnam took a lot of advantages from Cambodia. He continued the policies to continue fighting with Vietnam. I thought why don't the leaders soften their attitudes and negotiate? When they fought, only the small cadres died. The KR took a lot of divisions from the Southwest and the East to fight with Vietnam. This made the other parts of the border became weak. We could not resist the Vietnamese as our forces became weaker and weaker. I heard a lot of arrests from Vietnamese radio. On January third, Pol Pot phoned me and asked me if the plane could land somewhere else besides Pochentong. I told him that the plane could not land. It required over one kilometer of running lane. The leader at the airport told me about the situation. I did not know about the killing. I only knew about preparing the landing and radio communication. The leaders told me that we had to run into the forest again. What's about the King? The King would work on foreign relations. We did not have to keep the King in the country. At the end the KR turned to ask assistance from the King. Therefore, the Standing Committee decided that they would allow the King to go to the United Nations (UN), but that they would keep some of the royal family. But the King did not agree. After negotiations, all family members were allowed to leave the country. To please the King, the KR leaders brought all royal family members to meet the King. In the evening of 5 January 1979, the Chinese plane arrived. The plane stayed at the airport for one night and took off the next day. The King was so happy. I thought in my mind that the King would leave the country so that we would have hope in the future. I organized the take-off successfully. Three minutes later, the radar showed that there was another plane chasing from the east. However, the

King's plane was far away and could escape from Cambodia safely. There were a lot of people at the airport. Some people cried at the airport, wanting to board the plane. But there were not enough planes. In the evening, I called the leaders but no one picked up the phone. There was only a letter asking to prepare plans for the assault. Three hours later, there were bombs to the west of the airport. I contacted the Secretary of Division 502 but could not reach. So I had to escape. The next day, there were leaflets spreading around on the road. I saw that the troops of the Heng Samrin were everywhere. So we had to change our dress to be like ordinary citizens to escape. The people did not talk to us. We asked for rice from the people who did not want to give us rice. They asked us not to return back. Ta Mok, even at that moment of failure, continued to arrest the cadres from the East. At the west border, the KR radio began to have shape and did propaganda.

We are DK cadres but we are also the victims. We had difficulty as we were former KR cadres. Therefore, we continued to live with Pol Pot's movement. We have been persecuted many times. We could liberate ourselves only in 1996. We have come up against a number of hardships. We had to cope with the daily living. At the same time, we had to fight with the Vietnamese. Some of us stepped on mines and died. We could not find enough food to eat. We received some small amount of assistance from the UN. Where did they take the money to? They took the money to support the troops only. Therefore, we had to think of integration with the government. We were so happy to have the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement. The Chinese advisers said to the KR that "I heard you are strong. Why don't you take over the country?" Son Sen said that "because the Vietnamese are full in the country." However, the KR did not have enough forces and food to eat while the State of Cambodia forces became stronger. They operated with guerrilla war which was to take small to fight the big; light to fight the heavy, fight the enemies to take weapons from them, use mines to attack the enemies. Pol Pot said that the failure was from the internal conflict. Y Chhean said that he could no longer live with Son Sen, who persecuted him. Y Chhean negotiated with H.E. Tea Banh but failed. Then Hun Sen asked what we wanted. Y Chhean told Hun Sen that he wanted to have his own troops. Hun Sen agreed. Therefore, he tried to live with the government. After testing, Y Chhean led his forces to defect to the government on August 14, 1996. Y Chhean was successful in integrating the government. Many KR senior leaders became high officials in Pailin. Then we arrested a number of KR cadres but we released them back and explained to them to live with us. Y Chhean was very considerable on this problem. We did not want to kill each other. Pol Pot died on April 15, 1998. At the end, he was cremated with car tires. Ta Mok was very courageous, but he was eventually arrested in March 1999. They had a lot of achievements but they also had a number of disadvantages. If they had taken care of the people well, their regime would not have failed.

From 1979 to 1999, what were the administrative and military structures of the DK government? Pol Pot believed that he could take power back not through political means, but rather military measures. All leaders should take people as their priority.

Doing so, the country will progress permanently. We now live peacefully, what else do we need? Do we need assistance from the foreign countries? We now have enough rice and potatoes which are enough for the people to eat. We do not need anything else. In Pailin, Y Chhean and I have put this matter into strong consideration. We will not sell our products cheaply to Thailand. We will not sell our products to Thailand at a lower price. The people in Pailin have to ask the provincial leaders before they can sell products to Thailand. This is my understanding in the capacity as a leader of a small province.

Let me finish my speech. I am happy to receive questions from you.

Deth Sophorn from Wat Kor Lower Secondary School: What were your positions and responsibilities during DK regime? Who assigned these positions and responsibilities to you?

Answer: I was a leader at the airport. My boss was secretary of Division 502 and Son Sen. I knew all the guests who came in and out of the airport. From 1979 to 1996, I was the assistant to all leaders. I recorded all the meeting minutes and worked as a radio operator. I don't have many documents with me, only in my brain. I still have some notebooks. I recorded the words of Pol Pot, who wrote the policies on the wall, for example, the three no's policy. I don't have blood on my hands like Ta Mok. I only analyzed the foreign radio broadcasts for Pol Pot. My analyses had to stand on the DK position although the DK walked wrongly. I could not use the word "but" too often. Otherwise, I would be accused of being an enemy.

Sour Sambo from Anglong Chrey Lower Secondary School, Thmor Kol District: You lived with the KR from 1970 until 1996. Why were Pol Pot's policies so influential that the people were so afraid of these policies? What were your life conditions during the cruelest parts of the KR regime?

Answer: Pol Pot is not different from an absolute monarchy. If you did not follow him, you would be killed. We had to try hard to feed our family. The KR tied our families tightly. Therefore, we had to be absolute in order to survive. You would do the same thing if you lived in that time. With regard to my life conditions in DK, we had to turn through the KR polices. Those who could not turn instantly were killed. I had to be gentle toward the leaders. We had to turn on any corner. But I never killed anyone. I don't admire myself that I never killed anyone. You can investigate me. I collected jewelry and gave it to the leaders. I was honest to the leaders. When the planes landed, we were asked to wear nice clothes. When the plane took off, we had to change our clothes to the normal ones and work in the fields like the farmers.

Chim Keo, a provincial teacher from Kandal Province: As you lived with Pol Pot, please describe the daily life of Pol Pot. Did he have pleasure activities after work? Did he believe in Buddhism? What was his belief to lead DK in that way?

Answer: I went to Takeo in 1976 and saw my villagers eat rice porridge. I asked why they did not allow people to eat enough. What was the purpose of the regime? They said that the rice was to sell to foreign countries to be number one in Asia. They cooked rice for me. I said I didn't need rice. I wanted to eat with the people. They investigated my family background many times. They found out that I had a good background. I ate watery rice porridge and allowed the villagers to eat hard rice. In the DK five-flag magazine, only the central party had the right to arrest the people. I only know things related to the airport. Although I worked with the KR, I did not have trust on this regime. But I was forced to continue working for the regime. After 1979, I continued to live with the KR in order to survive. They knew that I used to work at the airport, so they continued to investigate me. I did not have a salary. I lived in Thai territory for a short period of time and returned back to the border. I had to rent Thailand to live. The living was so hard. Only after 1991, we had some relief. I went to Kratie to solve the problem of capturing a UN plane. Division 920 captured this plane. There were mines around the planes. I rescued the UN forces who did not say anything to thank me. I believed that it was not right if we captured the UN forces after the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement. Pol Pot did not have pleasure activities. He thought of only work. He sometimes went to Thailand for pleasure. He did not allow his subordinates to get married. He kept the women to deliver weapons. Later, he had a second wife; we were also allowed to get married. There were internal conflicts. When Pol Pot asked Y Chhean's 515 Division for help, the other divisions got envious. Pol Pot went to Thailand and ate good food. I thought about how communism was implemented. Pol Pot had a lot of money and family. I did not have any single money on hand. I did not even have money to buy cake for my children. I don't have to answer the question on Buddhism. Communism does not have religion. They believed that monks did not do any work. No religion could survive the regime.

Sros Tit, a teacher from Kamrieng District: According to your speech, you lived close to Pol Pot. What are your opinions on Pol Pot's leadership? Have you ever heard any people who admire Pol Pot's policies?

Answer: You lived in Kamrieng; you may be the new people. That's why you doubt this point. He did not take democracy as a priority, though the regime was named Democratic Kampuchea. In some cases, only two people decided on the policies but Pol Pot told the masses that he took the masses' opinion as priority. In reality, no one dared to oppose his ideas. I thought there would be failure if he continued to lead like this. In the end, he failed. The majority of the people, ninety percent, do not love the regime. They have studied about human rights and democracy, so they do not like Pol Pot. About ten percent of the people still like him. They admire Pol Pot's regime as it had no corruption. Some people are still proud of Pol Pot.

Cheng Hong, a national teacher from Phnom Penh: In the documents, each zone used a code number. What is the meaning of these code numbers? You talked about sin.

For me, it is a curse that led the regime to fall down. What is your idea for national reconciliation? Third, I like your idea about guerrilla war. Can you summarize this war? Can you talk about the eight-point and eleven-point policies? What were the eight-point policies when the KR entered Phnom Penh?

Answer: You have a lot of questions, but I think you already know the answers. The code numbers of the regions were given by the revolutionaries. You don't have to doubt about this. Second, you said it is a curse. Let me limit it to sin. The two words are not much different. They have a lot of sins until the present day. Some are living in a poor condition. Some live in fear of the Case 003 and Case 004. I don't want to have more prosecution. We should follow the recommendation of Samdech Hun Sen. Case 002 should be enough. With regard to guerrilla war, the leaders have to find a way to win the war. They have to gain trust from the people and give enough food to the people. I don't remember the eight and eleven points of the KR. If you know, you tell the others. When the KR fought into Phnom Penh, his strategy was to evacuate all the people from the city. When Pol Pot did this, it was like pushing the people away from him. Let me summarize these points.

Siv Thuon, a national teacher from Phnom Penh: According to your speech, Kieu Samphan ran into the forest in 1967 with forceful condition. Did Khieu Samphan adopt the red ideology before or after he ran into the forest? What about Hu Nim and Hou Yuon? I knew that Hu Nim disappeared after confronting with Sihanouk in Prey Tortoeng. Please explain.

Answer: I don't know clearly about that. I asked him why he ran into the forest. He said that the situation forced him to do so. Long Boreth arrested and handcuffed him until he had a scar on his hand, which he still has to the present day. The situation was ripe enough. The situation inside the country was more and more tense. There were anti-Sihanouk and anti-Lon Nol leaflets. Khieu Samphan ran to the West. I don't know much about Hu Nim and Hou Yuon. At the airport, Tiv Ol, Hu Nim and Hou Yuon were very proud. They said that the situation of the country was good. Phouk Chhay also said that same thing in which the situation was good. Later, Hu Nim was killed. They expressed the wrong ideas against Pol Pot, who did not like intellectuals. He was afraid that they would turn against him. When I was at the Thai border, I taught English, French and Thai to the cadres. Pol Pot said that "Don't teach them. The more they know, the more they oppose us." The intellectuals who could stay with Pol Pot had to adapt gently to him; otherwise, they would be killed. In summary, Khieu Samphan, Hu Nim and Hou Yuon ran into the forest for two reasons: personal safety and communist belief. They were labeled as pink or red they bargained in the National Assembly.

Neak Saman from Moang Russey High School: What are you feelings today? Do you have fear of revenge from the people?

Answer: I was frightened during each self-criticism. I described all my mistakes to Angkar. The revolutionary wheel would run over us if we missed the line or had opposite ideas. I was so afraid of the party. Even I had only a pair of short trousers; I had to say that "I will follow the party forever." I was lucky that I worked as a technical person. I did not fight in the battle field. I did not kill anyone. If I did not follow their policies and orders, I would be killed. I was fearful all days. When I visited my home village, spies stayed under my house to spy on me. I knew that they were secretly under my house, so I talked of all of the good things about the regime. I survived. We had insecurity in mind.

Chivorn: The DK regime adopted the red ideology as its base. Can you elaborate on this red theory?

Answer: Everything was red at that time including the flag, clothes and other things. The theory was also red. It represents the international communism which is to raise the status of the workers and peasants. The DK regime was unlike the other socialist countries. Only a few people decided on the policies. They did not take people into consideration. They did not implement the free market policies. The red theory was absolute, courageous and fierce. To dig the grass, one has to dig up even the root. This is the same with the Chinese ideology. I just thought in mind that this was the wrong path, but did not dare to give any opinion.

Last, I thank all of you for your attentive listening. I don't think I can elaborate on all the points. I just gave some foundations for your consideration. The study was a glass to reflect for the goodness of the society. We should solve the problems peacefully and take national interest as a priority. My talk is just a bit of a piece of the history. I always think of the people and peace. Our country has turned back and forth many times since the Angkorean period. I hope our country will continue to progress so that we can develop our country permanently. We share knowledge among each other to improve our knowledge and to produce human resources. Our next generations will have higher knowledge. We do not lose hope. We will be able to go forward. Our current trend proves that we can go forward. Under the leadership of H.E. Y Chhean, we think about the progress for the people in the province. We contact the companies and the government for the interests of the people. Thank you.

Appendix 2: Speech by Dr. Ka Sunbaunat, Cambodian Leading Psychiatrist

Dr. Ka gave a speech in the morning of day seven about the effects of the KR atrocities on Cambodian people. Before starting his presentation, he briefly described his experiences during the KR as some participants wanted to know his background. He said that his life was not different from those of the general population. He had family members who died during the KR period. He was almost killed by the KR. Luckily, he survived the regime. Then Dr. Ka

talked about his current work in which he is holding a number of positions and responsibilities in regards to how Cambodia deals with mental health problems. He said that he has trained over forty psychiatrists in Cambodia. He will continue to train more experts, ensuring that Cambodia has enough human resources to treat the mentally effected population.

After that Dr. Ka distributed a survey to the participants containing four questions related to the teachers' feelings before, during and after teaching DK history. One question is about the reactions from students when they learn DK history in the classroom. He gave participants ten minutes to fill in the survey and then encouraged all participants to express their ideas and ask any questions they have in mind. He stressed that the knowledge on mental health issues in Cambodia is still low. After filling in the survey, Dr. Ka thanked all participants for their contribution, which is important for the people nationwide. Their comments help him to analyze the problems effectively and he is able to provide the right recommendation to those problems. He said that if participants dared not ask him directly, they could write the questions on the paper.

Mom Meth: "I am a national teacher. I came through the KR period. Whenever I watched the films, I could not hold back my tears. The events seem to be happening in front of me. I lost a husband and a child. I ran across the artillery. One day, the shells fell near my school. This event happened in late 1974." Dr. Ka asked if she had



Dr. Ka Sunbaunat, a Leading Psychiatrist in Cambodia, Giving a Presentation to Participants

seen the acts of killing or arrests. "I never saw the arrest and the killing. But my husband and other people were taken away and disappeared. They said that they would come and take me later."

Dr. Ka said that what Mom Meth experienced was called trauma. The sound of the bombs immediately affects the feeling. Anyone who was in the Pol Pot regime got frightened of many things and actions, such as orders and looks from the KR cadres. Dr. Ka said that he saw a number of corpses near Preah Monivong Bridge. As he was too hungry, he jumped into the river and drank the water. Coming up from the water, the corpses were near him. Meth's loss of husband was a real trauma though this event has been over for more than thirty years. Whenever there is a sound or picture that is similar to an event that she experienced, she is immediately affected. Dr. Ka said that Meth could go to his clinic at any time and that he would provide treatment free of charge. Dr. Ka gave another example of a

person who wanted to eat pork. Upon hearing this, the KR cadres arrested her and bit her for one week. She developed trauma since that time. She could not hear the pig sound or read the word "pig". Whenever she heard the pig's sound, her feelings would be strongly affected. Dr. Ka said that it took him many years to treat this patient. He said that the treatment used both medicine and counseling as well as psycho therapy. Dr. Ka advised Ms. Mom Meth to stay away from the events that affect her feelings.

Mr. Sour Sambo said that some students are quiet in the classroom when they begin studying KR history. Sambo learned that these students are children of the former KR cadres. He wanted Dr. Ka to give him advice on how to deal with this issue.

Dr. Ka said that this is a good case. He used to meet Pol Pot's daughter. When he met her, he behaved normally toward her. He acted friendly toward her. He encouraged her not to think about the atmosphere around her that put pressure on her. He said that she is a new person although her father committed crimes in the past. She wants things like the general people, regardless of her background. Dr. Ka advised Mr. Sambo that there should not be any discrimination in the classroom. He said that some children of the perpetrators can become good people in the future. Mr. Sambo should call these students to meet him personally and comfort them that they will not be discriminated against in the class and that no students in the class will take any action or behavior toward them even though their family members were perpetrators in the KR regime. Dr. Ka said that this case is related to one's identity. If older generations were thieves, people would say that all family members are thieves. Dr. Ka said that this is a misperception in society. Dr. Ka advised that teachers should abide by the teachers' code of morality. In the classroom, teachers will provide education and treatment to all students equally. Although the students' parents used to harm the teachers, the teachers should not act against their children in a kind of revenge. This is against the teachers' code of morality.

Another teacher said that when he watched the film with cruel actions and suffering, "I felt that I wanted to cry. Can you explain the reason why?" Dr. Ka said that the teacher may have watched the previous films or read the sad stories, which could make the teacher feel that he could not hold his tears. Even fiction stories can make people feel like crying. This demonstrates that he is a human being because the teacher has compassion, love and happiness in mind. Namely, the teacher has Buddhism principles in mind. This goodness makes the teacher put himself into the story and cry. Some people cry a lot while others cry a little. This is the particular behavior of each person. This characteristic marks the identity of each person from birth until death. This personality has been developed gradually since birth through their experiences, and people have different personalities.

Mr. Chim Keo from Kandal said that one teacher in his school was the victim of the KR regime. When she taught KR history, the students laughed. She got so angry at the students. She said that she could not hold the anger toward the students who laughed at her suffering. She could forgive the killers but she could not forgive the students who laughed at her painful experiences. Mr. Chim Keo wanted Dr. Ka to explain if this is a kind of mental illness. Dr. Ka said that this case is not different from the Mom Meth's case. Her father was killed, and she was forced to do labor work. Therefore, she developed trauma. Trauma can appear in two forms. The first one makes people feel frightened and cry. The second form is that the victim feels anger toward anything that makes her recall the past. Dr. Ka said that

perhaps the students laughed because they find it hard to understand and to believe what happened at that time. The students may not want to laugh at her story. The teacher should not get angry at the students, which is against the teachers' moral code. However, we cannot blame her. Her suffering was too much that she could not hold the anger. She may not want to curse at the students, but the anger in her heart was too strong to hold her anger. She could not control her feelings, and that trauma makes her act out. Dr. Ka recommended that she go to his house for treatment. He will not charge a fee from teachers, which he considers as the most respected career. Teachers produce human resources for the nation.

Mr. Heng Samnang from Kampong Cham said that he was a child during the KR regime. He was about three years old. But he remembers some events. Currently, whenever he hears a loud sound such as a truck or thunder, he is frightened. He cannot hold back his tears when he watches a sad film or experiences a sad event. He asks if this is a kind of trauma or his own personality. Dr. Ka asked if Samnang slept well at night. "Have you had a feeling that you wanted to die? Have you felt that your neighbors look down on you? Have any of your family members died?" Dr. Ka said that this case is called "depression". Depression makes people feel sad and lose hope. These people have too much feeling and compassion toward other people, and are vulnerable to many things. They will cry quickly when they encounter sad stories. This is called depression.

Another teacher said that he was in the mobile unit during the KR. He gets affected and frightened quickly whenever he has similar experiences to those in the KR period. Dr. Ka said that one person was so frightened when she saw liver. This fear happens without reason; she could not remember what experience she had that makes her feel afraid of the liver. After one year of treatment, she recalled that during the KR, she saw a KR cadre kill people and cut out human livers to make food. Witnessing this event with her own eyes, she developed trauma and was afraid of liver. Dr. Ka said that the teacher has also developed trauma. Dr. Ka suggested that the teacher should stay away from the events that affect his feelings for a while. When he is able to control his feelings, he can watch the sad films again.

Cheng Hong from the National Institute of Education asked "Why do human brains only record negative events that affect the feeling?" Dr. Ka said that the memory center was at the back of the head. The memory process has its own stages. The first one was to see, then understand. After that there will be interpretation and recording the strong memory into the brain. The memory center is not different from the computer's hard disk. "When you listen to the teachers but your feeling flies somewhere else, you cannot remember well. Why are bad memories recorded more effectively in the brain than positive memories?" Dr. Ka said that negative memories have a strong intensity. This will create impulsion and make the patients sick. The impulsion can make people crazy. Between the person who talks loudly and the person who is quiet, which one is more dangerous? The answer is the person who is quiet. In the counseling process, patients are encouraged to talk a lot to help fade away the impulsion. If the patients do not talk, the impulsion will be stored and accumulated bigger and bigger. One day, the impulsion will explode like a bomb. The same thing applies to the KR victims. When the victims do not talk, the suffering they experienced during the KR will be accumulated and will explode when they encounter similar events to what they experienced during the KR.

Another participant said that when she listens to her aunt, she feels like crying but her actions do not respond the same way as her feelings. She feels pity on her aunt but she appears to laugh at her aunt's story. Dr. Ka said that this is called the "denier." This kind of person is honest and easily cheated by the others. Dr. Ka said that the teacher should not lie any more. The teacher should show direct action toward her aunt.

Ms. Ly Somony said that her son was hit by a car. After the incident, she always feels that she will be hit by a car. She wakes up at night and cannot go back to sleep. She constantly feels that a car is about to hit her. Somony said that this incident makes her feel trauma. She could not almost see the accident site. She does not want to ride in a motor across the site which reminds her about the accident. After the accident, her husband met the driver. But she believes that she cannot change the situation as it is already over. She asked for advice from Dr. Ka. Dr. Ka asked if she had family members who were taken for execution. Dr. Ka said that Ms. Somony has had bad experiences since the KR regime. When she saw her son hit by a car and fly ten meters from the car, she felt frightened. This accident recalls her past trauma. Together they make her feel frightened and recall the past. Whenever she hears people talk about the car and her son, she will experience what is called a "flash back," the movement of recalling the past experiences immediately when one encounters a new experience. Dr. Ka said that this is part of trauma. Ms. Somony needs counseling and medicine for treatment.

Another teacher stated that he was arrested by a guard. His older brother was taken for execution. He was detained for two hours. The cadres said that he would be taken for execution after that. He thinks about the execution all the time. When he sees a cooking pan, he recalls his arrest. He has felt frightened ever since. Nowadays, when the inspectors visit his school, he feels frightened. He wanted Dr. Ka to recommend what he should do to get rid of this fear. Dr. Ka said that a person would for sure feel frightened when he has had the experience of being arrested. Dr. Ka said that this is a kind of flash back. The teacher keeps thinking about that event for over thirty years. The teacher has developed trauma and needs to be treated.

Ms. Sam Mayura said that she knows a friend and wants to forget that friend. She asked how to forget that friend immediately? The second question is how to forget the bad words from her sister. Dr. Ka said that this is a vulnerable attitude. He advised that nothing is perfect in the world. The traditional disciplines and Buddhist principles advise us not to take strong actions against people who behave aggressively toward us. It takes time for a person to understand our good deeds. Dr. Ka said that, "in some cases, you don't have to please one particular person. Many people like you. If you don't do anything wrong, you don't have to feel guilty. With regards to missing someone, I used to miss my brother very much. He died in 1972. Whenever I drive across Santuk Mountain, I miss him. But we should not allow the sentiment to affect our work. You have to be able to divide between feelings and work. However, you should not try to forget things too quickly. It will only serve to harm you." Dr. Ka gave an example of how he recalled the experience of ignoring a friend who got very sick during the KR. His friend asked for his assistance, but he ignored his friend because he was afraid of being killed. His friend died as a result. Dr. Ka still recalls this story until the present day. However, hard work for many hours per day makes him forget this painful experience.

Ms. Sokhavy said that she has developed depression because of her own experience in her family. She broke up with her husband. Her parents also broke up. She has one child, and she takes care of the child. Dr. Ka said that breaking up in the family strongly affects the reputation and identity of the women. When a woman gets married, she seems to lose her social status. Before breaking up, there may be physical and mental violence. Culturally, women are inferior to men. When the couple breaks up, children will, for sure, receive mental harm because of the experiences they get from the parents. This experience makes her lose a sense of strength. Dr. Ka said that she has developed a severe depression. There are three kinds of depression: mild, moderate and severe depression. She needs medicine, counseling and psycho therapy for treatment. It takes a long time to treat this severe depression. Dr. Ka advised that the teacher should stay away from her parents who broke up. She could seek advice from monks and nuns for counseling. She should not listen to friends who advise her to go back to her husband. Dr. Ka said that these are the Cambodian ways for treatment. However, she does need medical treatment.

Question: What are the differences between depression and craziness? There are many kinds of craziness. Some people are crazy with wine, girls or games. This is not crazy but obsession to a particular thing. So in the Cambodian context, the word "craziness" is different from its direct meaning. Dr. Ka gave another example of craziness in the Cambodian context. If a group of people are naked and only one person dresses up, then the one who dresses is identified as crazy. Dr. Ka explained that the above examples are not craziness. The real craziness is the behavior that is completely different from that of general people. Namely, craziness is the behavior that cannot be understood. Dr. Ka advised that mental illness such as trauma or depression is not crazy. It is a big confusion in Cambodian society. We can see people's minds through their activities, speech, facial expression, way of dressing, talking alone with endless topics, etc. Dr. Ka said that there have to be a number of diagnoses to identify a particular trauma or depression. People should not easily judge or mark someone as having a mental illness. They may have mental problems but not mental illness. Dr. Ka explained different terms related to mental health in order that participants will not incorrectly apply terms such as depression or mental health patients.

One participant asked if Pol Pot had a mental illness. Dr. Ka said that Pol Pot did not have a mental illness because he had leadership abilities and led the whole country. But he was too obsessed to an ideology. Some Cambodians who went to study in France received this ideology, especially from the Chinese. Pol Pot was very patient and worked secretly for the sake of the revolution. He was surrounded and brainwashed by an ideology. It is called psycho-politic.

Mr. Heng Samnang asked the second question related to Khieu Ponnary. He said Khieu Ponnary was considered the mother of the revolution. She was sick at that time. Mr. Samnang asked if Khieu Ponnary had a mental illness. Dr. Ka said that this is a tough case because he has never met Khieu Ponnary. He saw some photos of Ponnary when he was studying in France. The term "mother of the revolution" was a political issue which is beyond his understanding. Dr. Ka said that Ponnary had a mental illness. She used to live in the forest with constant fear. Between 1970 and 1975, everyone was living in fear of death. Dr. Ka said that Mrs. Ponnary faced a great depression and trauma. She died as a result. However, Dr. Ka did not determine the type of Ponnary's mental illness.

Mrs. Seng Pisethneary talked about her feelings when she watched the film “Cambodian Children”. She could not sleep for several days after watching the film. How could she deal with the problem? Dr. Ka asked several questions about her experiences during the KR if she saw the beating or killing of the children. She never saw the beating of children but the KR cadres accused her father and mother of being Lon Nol’s soldiers. Her mother was beaten and forced to do labor work. After watching the film, she developed fearfulness. Returning back home, she hugs her children with fear of losing them. She is afraid that the past events could happen to her children. Dr. Ka said that her experiences may make her over-protect the children. The film makes her recall her story from when she was a child. Dr. Ka said that she developed depression and trauma. She can go to his clinic free of charge. He will not charge money from teachers.

Ms. Sophy asked what the effects of the KR atrocities on Cambodian mental health are. Dr. Ka said that this is a big question. He has travelled to many places in Cambodia as well as Cambodian Diasporas. The effects of the KR regime on Cambodian people are huge. According to his research, the effects such as trauma, mental disorder and depression can be found in both young and old people. These cases happen to many survivors. The mental illness causes physical illness. Some mental patients choose to drink to cure their mental problem, which develops from a small drinking problem into a large one. Finally, this may lead to domestic violence. For this kind of sickness, he has to provide treatment to the whole family. We have to find the root causes of domestic violence in order to develop a permanent treatment.

Finally, Dr. Ka thanked the participants for their patience in listening to his presentation and explanations. He wished all the teachers to have good health. He also thanked DC-Cam for making this event happen. He would be happy to contribute to future trainings.

Appendix 3: National Entrance Exam for High School Students

To encourage the study of *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has placed questions on DK history in the nationwide national entrance exam for high school students for three consecutive years. The questions on DK history also appear in several other exams, such as the exams for outstanding students. The history subject accounts for seventy-five points in all, and questions on DK history alone accounts for ten points. The questions that appeared in the third year national high school exam are as follows:

1. How many kinds of people were divided under the DK regime?
2. What are the characteristics showing that DK is an inhuman regime?
3. After April 17, 1975, what were the policies that the national liberation armed forces received from the secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea?

Battambang Training Team

DC-Cam’s Staff	National Teachers	Provincial Teachers
Mr. Peou Dara Vanthan	Ms. Mom Meth	Ms. Chhouk Srey Montha
Mr. Kamboly Dy	Ms. Seng Piseth Neary	Mr. Chhim Socheat
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Mr. Sovann Mam		Mr. Sok Thy Mr. Chim Keo Ms. Sok Somony Mr. Heng Samnang Ms. Phong Soeng Leang Mr. Hun Thy
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