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**DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA**  
**Genocide Education in Cambodia**  
**The Teaching of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)"**

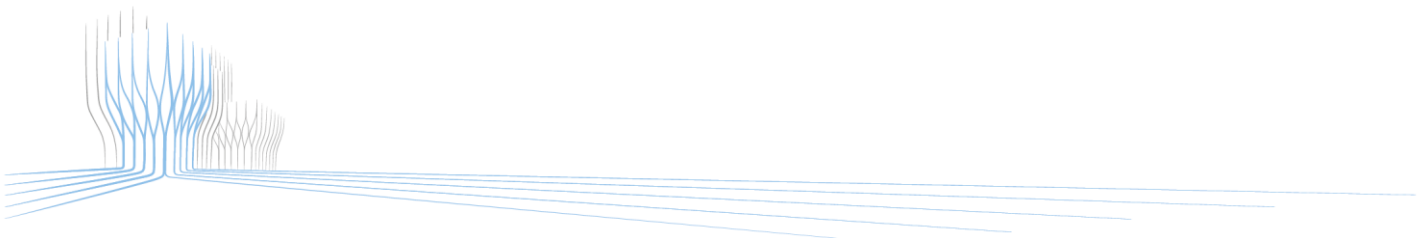
**Regional Pedagogical Training Center, Kandal Province**

**March 29-April 2, 2016**

**Day 4—April 1, 2016**

Today's themes: The trainees had an intensive day of history lessons today, starting with a documentary on Tuol Sleng and working their way through the prisons of DK, its foreign policy, to the regime's downfall. In the course of the day they studied some of the worst facets of the DK period and those that eventually caused its demise. This afternoon they also had a large group training to focus on some of the ideas behind the teaching methodology they've been learning all week.

Today was the last full day of classes in the Pre-Service teacher training at the Kandal Province Pedagogical Training Center. This morning's session started off with a large group assembly where the trainees learned about the horrors of Tuol Sleng and heard stories of those that survived it. They watched *Behind the Wall* which interviewed three people who lived through Tuol Sleng: Bou Meng and Chum Mei, who were prisoners there, and Him Huy, who was forced to work there as a guard. The interviewer asked Bou Meng and Chum Mei about their experiences as prisoners at Tuol Sleng (TSL), and they detailed being confined, shackled, beaten, and the constant threat of death. The former guard also explains how he was brought from the messenger unit to work at TSL, despite requests to be transferred to the battlefield. He also gives a chilling account of the methodological transfer of prisoners to Cheung Ek and their execution there, including his own experience being forced to execute a prisoner. After the film ends the students sat silently, still processing what they had just watched. While there was space for them to ask, no one raised their hand to ask a



question, instead continuing to work through the difficult information with which they were just presented.



*Mr. Chris Dearing (right) gives his presentation on teaching methods*

Following the documentary, the students split up into their four classrooms again for history classes. I observed classroom 2 during this session and their class began with a review of their previous lesson on the security centers. The trainer introduces an activity focusing the experiences of a victim of the KR who lost both of her sisters during that time and writes that they were

sacrificed to the regime. The trainer goes through the objectives but pauses at objective 2 “reflecting on the desperation of the DK regime” to bring in her own experiences, talking about the fears that she had and that she felt all people had during this time about the safety of their families. Adding, that for most it felt like a hopeless time. Next, the students read through the account given in their book from Mok Sin Heang’s account. She was the only one of her family who survived the KR, even after her sister married a KR soldier in an effort to protect the family. Before coming back to the content of the lesson, the trainer pauses to review KWL with the students again. She is reminding the students of the many exercises she has demonstrated for them and wants them to keep in mind each of the teaching activities that they have learned so far. She starts back on the lesson by asking the students what they already know about the security centers and life under DK, noting down their answers of forced labor for 12 - 15 hours per day, forced marriage, and a lack of sufficient food, a lack of



clothing, lack of medicine, and the list of “lacks” went on. The experiences that the article recounts lend to an easy connection to the next lesson that deals with the content of this morning’s film. The trainees discuss how Him Huy describes being brought to Cheung Ek for the prisoners’ execution and his role in having to kill. This also brings up the broader conversation of how prisoners were transferred from Tuol Sleng to Cheung Ek and they discuss what they saw in the film about how people were documented, tortured, and killed. In this discussion, they also recount the activities that took place in S-21, most students started listing the usual answers: torture, starvation, forced confessions, and then one student comments “they made prisoners marry each other,” the trainer responds quickly “no, there was no marriage in prisons” and the students all laugh. While this is of course a very serious topic, it is in good spirit that the student tried to make a joke and add some levity to a dense morning of history. After their discussion, the trainer has the students write a response to the film, which should also help them process the information that they watched — much of was fairly intense — and hopefully gain a better understanding of those experiences. The second session of the morning wraps up and the trainees head to their small groups for some more practice teaching before the break for lunch.

The afternoon session starts off yet again with a dense history lesson, this time on the foreign relations of the Khmer Rouge and then a discussion of their downfall. This afternoon, I returned to observe classroom 3. The lesson is taught mostly lecture style, but the trainer engages the students throughout by asking questions about the material and keeping them involved in the lesson. He breaks down the issue of foreign relations into component parts of politics, economics, and community. After talking through what each of these means in this context, he demonstrates how these are interrelated. During that time, politics, economics, and community all played a role in dictating the countries and manner with which Democratic Kampuchea engaged. They had relations with only other communist countries and traded rubber, rice, and animal skins with China. At this point, one of the students asks about the role of China, despite the closed country. She asked whether China knew what was going on or if they were supporting the KR. He explains that there were Chinese advisers or counselors who were helping the KR, but they were not able to go out and explore on their own - they did not know about the mass killings or violence that was taking place.

They spent a bit too much time on this first chapter of the afternoon, so the next were somewhat condensed discussions on the fall of the KR due to a weakened population, party purges, and war with Vietnam. This led to a conversation about how DK ended as well as the lasting effects of this period on Cambodian society.

This afternoon ended with a big group session on teaching methods, where the trainees worked through a teaching method as well as the logic behind the activities. Guest trainer Chris Dearing from DC-Cam taught this session, which began with a focus on what makes a great teacher. He told the trainees that it is key to keep learning because there will always be things they can learn from their peers and students. The trainees who practice taught in small group 3c had a mini-lesson earlier today on the importance of feedback – focusing on both giving each other feedback on their teaching to help their peers improve and as a practice in learning from their peers, something they will have to do in their future schools as well. In the full trainee group he stressed that the guidebook was meant as a tool to use to come up with their own lessons. Further, he stressed that there are some questions with no



*National Trainer Cheng Hong teaches the class*

fixed answers which instead require thinking critically about history. This is something that has been stressed in several of the sessions this week and critical analysis skills have been a consistent theme in the training. The trainees finished their last full day of classes with an activity comparing several genocides around the world, which brought together their analytical skills, teaching methods they've been learning, and applying



what they learned about the Khmer Rouge in the past week. It was a very fitting activity to bring together and apply the themes that this training hopes the trainees will bring to their own future teaching.

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**Organized by the Sleuk Rith Institute-A permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with Pedagogical Training Center, Kandal Province, of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS)**

**Funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**