

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Genocide Education in Cambodia **The Teaching of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)** **Ninth Commune Teacher Training** **August 17-22, 2013, Takeo Province**

FIELD REPORT

By Sreyneath Poole

Introduction

On 17th-23rd August 2013, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (the Ministry of Education), conducted the Ninth Commune Teacher Training in Takeo Province. The training was conducted in the provincial Teacher Training School located in the center of the provincial town. One hundred participants took part in the training, consisted of various lower and upper schools from Takeo Province and Kampot Province (fifty participants from each province). Eleven trainers took part in the training period that included four national trainers, four provincial trainer, and three DC-Cam trainers. Teacher trainees were divided into four smaller groups; each consisted of twenty-five trainees. The Ninth Commune Teacher Training was conducted using the existing program, assignments, and materials agreed upon between DC-Cam and the Ministry of Education.

Each day consisted of a presentation of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history textbook and a presentation of teaching methodologies from the teacher's guidebook. The training also included other activities that included film screenings and guest speakers. Other materials used in the training were the student workbook and booklet on the Case 002 that detailed the biographies of the four Khmer Rouge (KR) Trial suspects and crimes they committed during the regime.

The Ninth Commune Teacher Training aims to ensure that history, Khmer studies, and ethics and morality teachers from Takeo Province and Kampot Province possess adequate knowledge of KR history and teaching methodologies to instruct this knowledge to their students. The training not only equip teachers with new contents and teaching methods, but also with critical thinking skills that teachers can utilize to help their students to write, summarize, analyze, evaluate, and research on specific subject matter. By extension, the training provides teachers the necessary means to guide their students to look at the past mass atrocities and help the country to move away from the old footprints. 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, democracy, and contribute to genocide prevention.

Project Goals

The goals of the Teaching of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" teacher training workshop ultimately aims to create a path towards reconciliation and peace, building on human rights, rules of law, and democracy.

The workshop is a dynamic platform that aims to achieve the above-mentioned goals in two respects. The first is to institutionalize a culture that values human rights, rule of law, and democracy. Second, in order to achieve an institutionalized culture, efforts to bolster historical empathy, critical thinking, critical reflexivity, and objectivity must be achieved. This is part of a larger framework in building a thriving democracy.

The guiding ethos of the teacher-training workshop is to learn by doing through discussions, interactive group works, and scaffold reading methods to use with their students.

Preparations for the Training

In preparation, the DC-Cam team met with Mr. Sambath Meach, the Takeo Province contact person, a day before the start of the training program. At the meeting the team discussed about the training preparations to make sure everything was organized.

After, the team came to meet the national and provincial trainers at the Teacher Training School where the training program took place. The team met with their counterparts where each team broke off into four groups that will lead the training, with one group consists solely of national and provincial trainers. Each team went over their tasks and schedule and also discussed about lesson plans, strategies, and methodologies.

It also gave the DC-Cam team, the national and provincial trainers a chance to get acquainted with each other to better enhance cooperation during the training period. The team also met with Mr. Chheun Prak, Deputy Director of the Teacher Training School, to check the school's conference hall where the opening ceremony took place to make sure that it was suitable to host the opening ceremony. The team also visited the four classrooms where the training sessions were held to check that the vicinity was adequate for training.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was held on the morning of August 17th at 8:00AM and was presided over by Under Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education Sa Im Ton.



The speakers at the opening ceremony.

Mr. Sokhon Siv, Director of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport of Takeo Province

Mr. Siv opened the ceremony and welcomed the trainers and teacher trainees to the Teaching of “A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)” training workshop. He talked about the importance of the training that would give the teacher trainees the knowledge and tools to strengthen their students’ knowledge. Their effort will help build a better and progressive society in the future.

Mr. Peou Dara Vanthan, Deputy Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia

Mr. Vanthan took to the podium after Mr. Siv and spoke of the importance of genocide education. He started by giving a brief overview of the DK history and how it affected Cambodia’s education and understanding of Cambodia’s contemporary history.

He also gave a short history of DC-Cam’s Genocide Education Project in its efforts to educate the population on the DK history. The project began with the publishing of DC-Cam’s history textbook, “A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979),” which was written by Khamboly Dy. Following the publishing of DC-Cam’s history textbook, with the joined effort of the Ministry of Education, the teacher’s guidebook was published to help facilitate a deeper understanding of the DK history in conjunction with using the textbook.

Lastly, he reminded the participants of the importance and the objectives of genocide education. The goal is to educate and foster a deeper understanding of Cambodia’s contemporary history in an effort to reconcile with the past. It is not a mean to foster sadness or anger.

Mr. Manara Sambo, Professor of Cambodian History

Mr. Manara Sambo took to the floor after Mr. Vanthan and talked about the importance of studying history. History, he said, is culture in which is the stepping-stone to building a society. History is more than learning historical facts. It is also about understanding the significance of those historical facts. Mr. Sambo went on to point out that one must be objective when looking at history because it is everyone’s responsibility to learn and pass on the knowledge to each other and to the younger generation. This will help rebuild the society in a progressive manner. He concluded by saying that each and everyone who is participating in the training workshop is making history because the teacher trainees will pave the way for their students to learn and better understand Cambodia’s history.

Mrs. Sa Im Ton, Under Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport

Lastly, Mrs. Sa Im Ton emphasized the importance of teaching KR history and the role of the teachers. She advised teachers to do extra research and readings so that they can improve their confidence in leading the student-centered teaching methods and to control the students’ interaction in the



Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport Sa Im Ton delivering her speech at the opening ceremony.

classrooms. She added that teachers are agents of peace, national reconciliation, and genocide prevention because they directly deliver the actual teachings and implements the genocide education curriculum. She concluded the opening ceremony by giving words of encouragement to the teacher trainees and concluded the ceremony.

Controlling Variables

Upon the conclusion of the opening ceremony, all participants took the pre-test multiple-choice questions that consisted of two parts, ten questions each. Part I tested participants' knowledge of the history of the DK, and part II tested participants on their knowledge of pedagogy/instructional methods.



Participants taking the pre-test multiple-choice questions.

Out of the one hundred participants, five were selected at random as the control variable group. The control group consisted of two females and three males. At the end of the test, the control group was asked not to participate in the entire training session. However, they returned on the last day of the training period to take the post-test. This research method aims to see if the training period was effective by comparing the knowledge of the teacher trainees who attended the training to the control group who did not participate.

Major Activities

The schedule of the training was generally consisted in two parts, with the exception of movie screenings and guest speakers. The morning session consisted of teaching from the DC-Cam history textbook, "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)." Each day, two chapters of the textbook were covered. The afternoon session was reserved for the teaching methodology training in which was covered in the teacher's guidebook. The methodology in the teacher's guidebook corresponds with the materials in the DC-Cam history textbook. Trainees were then assigned to conduct a mock teaching in class using the methodology in the teacher's guidebook. After each mock teaching, the participants were asked to give each other constructive criticism in order to help improve each other's teaching methods.

The first day of the training period started with both trainers and trainees building a working relation and to get everyone comfortable with one another. Group II trainers began the training and asked the teacher trainees various questions on their knowledge of KR history

such as “who coined the term ‘KR’?” and “what happened under the KR regime?” The trainees answered accordingly to the questions. The trainees were also encouraged to ask questions on anything they were not sure about such as historical facts or the teaching methodology. However, most trainees remained quiet. A possible explanation to the silence is because the trainees were trying to get comfortable to the class and lesson materials. Trainers went through lesson one and two from the DC-Cam history textbook with the trainees to the training.

In the afternoon session of the first day of the training, trainers talked about effective teaching methods to teach the lessons. The teacher trainees were paired up, assigned topics, and were asked to prepare a mock teaching using the methodology described in the teacher’s guidebook. Each mock teaching was only thirty minutes long.

On the second day of the training, Group I trainers began the class and reminded the teacher trainees the importance of studying the DK history. The trainer then asked the trainees to read out a section from the teacher’s guidebook and wrote down key concepts on the whiteboard. To keep the teacher trainees involved, the trainer often select the trainees to answer questions at random.



The teacher trainees conducting their mock teaching assignment from the teacher’s guidebook.

The key concept discussed in this particular group was differentiating between the terms “knowledge” and “understanding.” The trainers emphasized that the understanding of these two terms is key to building a better society. The teacher trainees’ task is to teach their students to understand and not simply just learn the material.

After, the trainers began lesson three and four from the history textbook. At first, it was hard for the trainers to encourage the teacher trainees to actively engage in the classroom. However, one teacher recounted his personal story when the KR came to power. After ten minutes, the rest of the teacher trainees were engaged in the story and voluntarily asked questions. This paved the way for the trainees to feel comfortable among each other and allowed greater classroom participation.

The trainees were particularly interested in the role of King Norodom Sihanouk during the KR period. They were also very interested in the KR national anthem. Using his iPhone, the

trainer searched the anthem on YouTube and played the KR national anthem to the rest of the class. This allowed the teacher trainees to become familiar with the tune incase they wish to show it to their students in the future.

In order to engage further interest from the trainees, the trainers mentioned that the trained teaching methodology applies across various disciplines and not just on the history of DK alone. As a result, the teachers took more interests in the teaching methodology because they can apply it in their own teaching subject.

In the afternoon, the trainees gave their mock teaching to the rest of the class according to their assigned topic. This simulated how the teacher trainees would teach their class. At the end of each mock teaching, the rest of the trainees gave constructive criticisms and on ways to improve the teaching method.

On the third day, group IV trainers began the class and reviewed the lessons from the previous day. The trainers also talked about the methodology learned the previous day and the challenges they met. New lessons from the history textbook and teacher's guidebook were introduced to the trainees. The teacher trainees also conducted their mock teaching lessons and were given constructive criticism by the class. The afternoon session was reserved for Mr. Christopher Dearing, Mr. Kok-Thay Eng, and Mr. Peou Dara Vanthan who came to the training as guest speakers.

On day fourth day, group III trainers (consisted solely of trainers from the Ministry of Education) conducted the lessons through reciting the lessons' texts from the book to the rest of the class. This approach did not allow the trainees to actively engage in the classroom. The teacher trainees often appeared to be distracted and were having side conversations. Questions that were asked in class by the trainers were often questions with expected and straight forwards answers that did not foster critical thinking skills. After the lessons, the trainees gave their mock teaching lessons. The afternoon session was reserved for the screening of the S-21 detention center and Phnom Baset prison.

Guest Speakers

Mr. Christopher Dearing, Legal Advisor and Editor in Chief of the Cambodia Law and Policy Journal at the Documentation Center of Cambodia.

Mr. Dearing, who co-wrote the teacher's guidebook, came to speak to the participants in the afternoon of August 19th at 2PM. His talk was divided into two parts. The first part was on defining and analyzing the legal definition of the term "genocide." Mr. Dearing listed the set of conditions in which defines genocidal acts, which was defined as the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, national groups, racial groups, religious groups, and ethnic groups.

Mr. Dearing also explained the controversies over the legal definition of the term 'genocide' and how genocidal crimes is different from crimes against humanity and war crimes. He also explained the controversy behind the protected groups under the Geneva Convention that decides if genocide took place.

He ended the first part of his talk and explained to the participants that even if a person cannot be prosecuted for genocidal crime, there are other instruments to prosecute criminals either for crimes against humanity or war crime.



Mr. Dearing talked to the teacher trainees about cooperative group work exercise activity.

The second part of Mr. Dearing's talk was on cooperative group work exercise. He opened up with the question, "what is the most important part about teaching a class?" He then talked about various problems that teachers encounter in a classroom such as lack of resource and time, too many students per class, and students who do not pay attention in class. However, Mr. Dearing emphasized that the biggest challenge that many teachers face is keeping their students engaged in a classroom of fifty to sixty students or larger.

Mr. Dearing led an activity that modeled a classroom activity. Five participants volunteered to be part of the model activity. Each participant was given a number that corresponds to a role. Participant number 1 was the leader of the group. S/he received direction from Mr. Dearing and wrote down the objective given and disseminated it to the rest of the group. Participant number 2 was the timekeeper whose responsibility was to keep the time of the activity. Participant number 3 was the recorder who took down notes of the group's activity and answers. Participant number 4 was the reported and presented his or her group's response to the rest of the classroom. Lastly, participant number 5 was the group's motivator who made sure everyone in the group participate and engage in the activity. The rest of the trainees were asked to form their own groups and conduct the same exercise.

Mr. Kok-Thay Eng, Deputy and Research Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia

After the cooperative group work exercise concluded, Mr. Kok-Thay Eng took to the floor and gave a talk on steps towards genocide. Mr. Kok-Thay used Cambodian historical examples to show the participants how genocide took place.

He explained the eight stages that lead to genocide. The first stage that he explained was 'classification' in which a group is classified by race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality. Next, he explained 'symbolization.' This is when names or symbols are given to the classified group. The first two stages are universal and do not necessarily lead to genocide. However, genocide can happen if the following stage occurs, which is 'dehumanization.' This happens when one group denies the humanity of another group. This is the stage where hate messages and propaganda campaign target a specific group to dehumanize them. Then 'organization' occurs in which an intent to commit genocide is organize, usually by the state, and this can

lead to ‘polarization’ where extremists drive the groups apart and continue with their hatred campaign and propaganda messages. Victims are indentified and ‘preparation’ for the death list of the target group is created. Targeted victims are forced to wear identifying symbols and are often segregated. This leads to ‘extermination’ of the target group and mass killings occurs as a result. The last stage is ‘denial.’ The perpetrator of genocide tries to cover any evidence of any mass killings and graves. They also deny of any crime they are accused of and often blame the event on the victims. Often the leader blocks any investigation into the crime and continues to govern until driven out of power.

Mr. Peou Dara Vanthan, Deputy Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia

After Mr. Eng concluded his talk, Mr. Vanthan gave an update on the trials of the former Khmer Rouge leaders in the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). He gave a brief overview on how the court operates and on the convicted leaders who are currently standing trial in Case 001 and Case 002 trials.

Dr. Sunbonat Ka, Khmer Rouge survivor and Cambodia’s leading psychiatrist.



Dr. Sunbonat Ka giving his talk on trauma and PTSD to the participants.

Dr. Ka came to speak to the teacher trainees on the morning of August 21st. He talked about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which many survivors from KR regime suffer from.

He explained what PTSD is, and why it is a disease. He gave various examples as to how a person might suffer from various traumas and PTSD. He continued and talked about how individuals cope with PTSD and how it affects that person’s daily life. Dr. Ka continued and talked about the difficulties teachers may face, especially those who survived the regime when teaching their students on the DK history.

Many participants were intrigued by the topic and much of the talk was geared toward answering participants’ questions. One topic of discussion dealt with the subject of revenge. Dr. Ka explained how an act of revenge is not beneficial for the parties involved and reiterated that revenge does not lead to healing any emotional wounds in the long run.

Another question that was asked to Dr. Ka was how a person could continue to live with his or her neighbors, knowing that his/her neighbors who have committed acts in the past that have caused people great emotional and physical pain during the KR regime. Dr. Ka

explained to the participants that one must learn to move on and not seek revenge because it can only cause further harm to everyone. Lastly, he explained that trauma and PTSD does not appear only for those who survived the KR regime. It can happen to anyone who experienced any form of severe trauma.

Film Screening

On August 20th, as part of the preparation for the next day's teaching, the teacher trainees were shown a short video footage of the S-21 detention center and Phnom Baset prison. The footage showed images of both prisons at the time when the Vietnamese force entered Cambodia.

Before the footage was shown, Mr. Khamboly Dy asked the participants 'why should Cambodians study the history of the Democratic Kampuchea?' Participants answered that it is important because it would help the citizens better understand their own history, help with the healing process, learn to forgive, and reconcile with the past. Reaction from participants after the screening of the footage varied from being horrified, upset, to being angry.

In the afternoon of August 22nd all of the participants came together for the closing of the training workshop. Footage from a short video called "Cambodia's Children" was shown in which depicted the condition of Cambodian children after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime. This allowed the teacher trainees some time to reflect on the aftermath of the DK regime.



Participants watching one of the film shown during the training period.

Closing Day

Mr. Sok-Kheang Ly of DC-Cam gave a presentation on the important elements to promoting reconciliation. Mr. Ly went through the definition of the term "reconciliation" and discussed the theory behind the process. He also pointed out that reconciliation is a personal issue and can be difficult to achieve. However, he argued that there are effective means to reconciliation. The process to reconciliation depends on local contexts that consist of culture, religion, tradition, politics, mentality, and others. Mr. Ly concluded his presentation by pointing out that the one approach to effectively promote reconciliation is through education, such as the Genocide Education Project, which he hopes that the younger generation would be more interested and search for the truth on their own.

The DC-Cam team then shared some of the pictures from the DC-Cam website that were taken throughout the training period to sum up everyone's experience and achievements. The teacher trainees were pleased to see their photos. These photos can be easily accessed on the DC-Cam website.

One participant shared his experience and wrote a poem to sum up what he had learned during the training period. The title of the poem was, "The Teaching of the 'A History of the Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)'." The poem was recited out loud by another participant to the rest of the group. The poem dealt with the history of the Khmer Rouge and it ended with the objectives and purpose in learning about the DK as steps towards reconciliation and peace.

Mr. Manara Sambo, professor of History, took to the floor and gave some parting words for the teacher trainees and congratulated them on their big achievement. He reminded the trainees that they are a key force in paving the path towards reconciliation. They are key instruments that will go on to teach the young generations to better understand Cambodia's history. Not only that, they will be the force that will foster the able-minded and educated young generation who will be the force that will continue to build a progressive society.

Mr. Khamboly Dy of DC-Cam concluded the training period and thanked all the participants, the hosting institutes and staffs, as well as the DC-Cam team for their participation in the project and their hard work. He reminded the participants of the importance of the teacher-training workshop and about the teachers' role in building peace and reconciliation. The success of this workshop depends on each individual teacher who will go on to pass his/her knowledge and teachings to the younger generation.

Challenges

Most challenges were more of logistics. One important challenge is that group III, consisted solely of trainers from the Ministry of Education and therefore the management of this group by the DC-Cam team was limited. Sometimes, the group finished class early. In some cases, trainers conducted the traditional teacher-centered approach with fewer interactions from the participants.

Provincial teachers' knowledge on history and competency on teaching methods remain a concern. For instance, a provincial teacher from group I and a national teacher from group IV could not deliver the lessons on DK history and explain the methods effectively. Students felt bored during their sessions and this ineffectiveness marginalized the objectives of the training. The situation required national teachers from DC-Cam to step in to elaborate the unclear points in both history and methodology.

Some other aspects that can be improved to further enhance the training period. The opening ceremony experienced some technical difficulties with the microphone and speaker system. This affected the speech delivery of the speakers because the teacher trainees had difficulties understanding the speakers due to poor sound quality. This problem was fixed for the guest speakers who arrived later during the training period.

All of the trainers held a meeting after the end of the first day of the training to discuss the challenges that they experienced. All four groups shared that the teacher trainees were quiet and some seems to be uninterested in the training. Two reasons were brought up at the

meeting that could have explained some trainees’ reaction. The first reason was that many trainees already knew the course materials or the DK history and therefore were not interested in paying extra attention to the course material. The second reason was that the course material was not part of the trainees’ expertise, especially those who are not history teachers. However, as the training period progressed trainees became more active and participated more in discussions because they realized that the methodology can be applied to their teaching subject and also both trainers and trainees built a better working relationship with each other, making the environment for everyone easier to cooperate.

Another problem that the team faced at the very beginning of the training period was that trainees were confused on how to use the DC-Cam history textbook with the teacher’s guidebook but after a couple of days it appeared that trainees learned how to use the two books together. As for the using the teacher’s guidebook, many trainees were confused about using the K-W-L chart teaching method because the trainees were accustomed to the Ministry of Education’s teaching methodology. It should be stated, however, that the K-W-L chart is not very different from the teaching methodology that was issued by the Ministry of Education.

Lastly, on the second day of the training session, one trainee became very ill and the DC-Cam team immediately gave its full attention to the trainee, drove him home, and made sure that he was safe. In addition, one female participant also delivered a baby only two months ago. Her husband accompanied her to the training and took care of the baby. The team, considering the gender issue, decided to give additional per diem to cover her husband's expenses during the training.

Training Team

DC-Cam	Ministry of Education
Dy Khamboly	Siv Thuon
Ly Sok-Kheang	Mom Meth
Ly Sok-Chamroeun	Srun Mardy
Mam Sovann	Hun Thy
Poole Sreyneath	Noeng Kiriya
Vanthan Peou Dara	Iv Sao Sokha
Eng Kokthay	Iet Bunleng
Chris Dearing	Sambo Manara
	Chhim Dina

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