

**June 24, 2010**

Teacher training in Svay Rieng province began today. In attendance were members of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), ten national teachers, Ke Chan, the Provincial Minister of Education and Sou Sithan, Deputy Director of the school. In conjunction with DC-Cam, Cambodia's national teachers will train 100 provincial teachers in genocide education.

*Early Morning Session:*

Each of the 100 provincial teachers received eight publications and two laminated maps. The publications are the following:

1. Textbook on the History of Democratic Kampuchea (DK)
2. Teacher Guidebook
3. Student Exercise Book
4. Glossary of Terms
5. *Searching for the Truth* (DC-Cam Magazine)
6. Publication Re: Case 002
7. Publication Re:DK Prisons
8. Publication Re: The History of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

The two maps included a map of the mass graves throughout Cambodia and a map of Cambodia.

Mr. Dara of DC-Cam, Mr. Chan, the Provincial Minister of Education and Mr. Sithan, Deputy Director of the school spoke at the opening ceremony.

Mr. Dara explained the program for the week. The trainings will take place from 7:30am-5pm. The group of 100 teachers will be broken down into two groups of 50 and later 10 small groups of 10. The national teachers will teach the provisional teachers about the content of the textbook as well as the teaching methodology. Teachers will be required to attend every day. They will also need to demonstrate their knowledge of the concepts by teaching the material to their peers and in front of the national teachers twice.

Mr. Dara talked about the history of the genocide education program. He noted that DC-Cam has already trained a number of national teachers with the support of Sweden. In its first year, 180 national teachers were trained in genocide education. In 2009, 239 teachers were trained in Kratie, Ratanakiri and Bantey Meanchey provinces.

Mr. Dara concluded his talk by speaking about the new signs that the Ministry of Education has allowed DC-Cam to hang in each school to promote genocide prevention. He noted that the goal of the whole training program is to teach the new generation about DK, to promote national reconciliation and to prevent future genocide. He asked that the teachers pay attention, ask questions, and do their best to teach accurately and clearly.

Mr. Chan spoke second. He thanked DC-Cam as well as the national teachers. He also spoke about the need for an accurate history of DK. He mentioned that most teachers only knew about DK through their parents or grandparents. Mr. Chan also asked that the teachers pay close attention to the lessons because if they get the wrong information they will teach the wrong information. He asked them not to edit the textbook. He concluded by encouraging them to teach more about traffic laws, to encourage the students that safe driving is part of what it takes to be good citizens.

Mr. Sitha, the Deputy Director of the school, spoke last. He spoke about the importance of making everyone feel comfortable when teaching the material and to teach about the tribunals. Mr. Sitha also reminded the teachers that they must attend every session each day. If they miss a single day, they will not get the certificate and thus cannot teach the class.

#### *Late Morning Session:*

The provisional teachers were then divided into two groups of fifty. A national teacher gave an introduction about the book and the subject of history itself. In particular, he asked a series of rhetorical questions: What does history mean? What does historical education mean? He encouraged the teachers to ask questions and think critically during their training.

Chapters one and two were covered in the session. Chapter one provides a brief history of DK, the Khmer Rouge and the tribunals. Chapter two required a more in depth discussion about who the Khmer Rouge were and how they gained their power. In addition, there was discussion about communism: where it originated, how it evolved and how it was incorporated into Cambodia. The different political factions and leaders of the 1960s – Lon Nol, Pol Pot, King Norodom – were also discussed. A timeline of the different conflicts from colonialism to the United States bombing to the Khmer Rouge takeover was also given.

#### *Afternoon Session:*

The afternoon session focused on pedagogy. Teachers were told to introduce and teach the material by using the following three steps: launch, explore and summarize. To launch is to give a general overview or background to the students.

To explore was to give the students a chance to read the material and to share their own ideas and experiences. To summarize was to come away with the big idea and to evaluate what the students have learned.

The teachers practiced this using the student workbook. The practice example was a photograph of Ieng Thirit. The teachers read different passages that expressed different experiences people had with Thirit and during the Khmer Rouge regime. They were asked to compare the versions and write their thoughts on the issue. The goal of the lesson was to have their students understand that there is no single history, but many different experiences. It is also a way to integrate the vocabulary from chapter one.

Another way to explain the methodology was to use the letters K, W, L. K stands for what we already KNOW; W stands for what we WANT to know; and L stands for what we LEARNED. The idea was to ask the students what they know already about a certain term or person, then what else they want to know that is related and then after they are told more or read more, the teacher must evaluate what they have learned.

The provincial teachers practiced this methodology with the question: Who is Pol Pot? Each row was assigned a letter – K, W or L – and required to write a word or two about Pol Pot on the board. In a real classroom, the students would be required to write a small essay in the workbook.

There were some questions and concerns from the provincial teachers. One, they were worried about keeping the students' discussion on point. They were reminded to follow the steps discussed above. The national teachers also suggested that the teachers ask questions that engage and challenge the students so that the students will want to participate.

*End of Day Assessment:*

DC-Cam and the national teachers discussed their takes on the first day. The national teachers said they felt that most students were paying attention, but that it was difficult to see how much they had grasped. The national teachers said that the new methodology was very challenging and, thus, it may take a bit for the provisional teachers to feel comfortable. One said he felt that the provincial teachers understood maybe 50 percent of what took place. They believe the teachers in training will know more once they read the books and participate in the mini-lessons.

There were recommendations for improvements in the national teachers' approach. The teachers said they would try to be clearer and more specific and to use lots of examples in order to illustrate their points.