

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA

Genocide Education in Cambodia

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

Training for Army Officers

Organized by Documentation Center of Cambodia
in Collaboration with Army Institute of Ministry of Defense

June 6, 2013

The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), in collaboration with the Cambodian Ministry of Defense, is pleased to announce the Genocide Education Training for Cambodian Army Officers.

DC-Cam, in collaboration with the Cambodian government, has been laying the foundations for a new form of transitional justice that centers on education. Education is a powerful medium for cultivating peace, reconciliation, and ultimately a culture that values human rights and democracy. With these aims in mind, since 2007, DC-Cam has been working with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport to integrate the history of Democratic Kampuchea in all secondary education schools throughout Cambodia.



With the tremendous success of this initiative, the Cambodian government sought to expand the curriculum beyond secondary education. Since October 2009, all first year university students are required to study the history of Democratic Kampuchea. The teaching of DK history in higher education parallels the instruction taking place in secondary and high school levels. To facilitate this expansion, on December 6, 2010, DC-Cam provided professional development training on the history of Democratic Kampuchea to university professors and lecturers. In addition, on July 25-27, 2011, DC-Cam organized and conducted a second-round of professional development training for higher education faculty members

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66 Preah Sihanouk Blvd. • P.O.Box 1110 • Phnom Penh • Cambodia
t (855-23) 211-875 • f (855-23) 210-358 • dccam@online.com.kh • www.dccam.org

from all over Cambodia, which consisted of approximately 100 lecturers and professors from 94 higher education institutions.

This professional development training initiative was successful and has built a continuum for hundreds of thousands of male and female students to learn about DK history. The mandatory teaching of DK history in the foundation year in college enables students to develop a more in-depth understanding of their nation's history based on their prior studies in high school. Moreover, the curriculum provides an opportunity for students to select Khmer Rouge history as a concentration or major.

Because of the professional development success, DC-Cam is planning to organize and conduct a similar training for pre-service teachers at the National Institute of Education (NIE). This training will center on the teaching of DK history and prepare pre-service teachers for their future teaching career.

In addition to providing professional development to educators on the teaching of DK history, DC-Cam has expanded the initiative to include other sectors and government institutions. For example, DC-Cam recently collaborated with the Army Institute to conduct a one-day training session twice a year. The goal for this collaboration and training is to enable army officers to engage in a discussion—led by national and international presenters/guest speakers—on the history of Democratic Kampuchea. This opportunity allows the guest speakers to share their knowledge, expertise, and experience with the participants. The participants learn about the Khmer Rouge experience from different perspectives, and they are encouraged to critically analyze the historical context and impacts of history on the present. The participants also learn about the roles of security forces in DK ideology and how these concepts were used to legitimize horrific policies that ultimately caused the death of nearly two million people.

Educating the public, and in particular government institutions, on the controversial past is challenging. Personal trauma and political affiliations inevitably influence the ability of the community to engage in an open-minded discussion. With this consideration and sensitivity in mind, DC-CAM understands the instructional implications for teaching students about DK history. Students may be the sons and daughters of Khmer Rouge perpetrators and/or Khmer Rouge victims.

Despite these challenges, obtaining a proper knowledge of history is important for all individuals and in society. As His Excellency Im Sethy, the Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport stated: *"Younger generations of Cambodians must understand and know about this grave past in order to learn from past mistakes, prevent such events from happening again, and recognize and know when to stand up for fundamental principles of humanity, integrity, and justice."*

During the third round of training being held in June 2013, two hundred and fifty army officers will be expected to understand DK history; analyze and evaluate DK ideology and policies; value survivors' knowledge; identify the root causes of genocide; examine state terror in the lead-up to the killings; evaluate the current effects on Cambodian society; foster compassion, empathy and reconciliation; and think critically about how to prevent future mass atrocities in Cambodia and in the global context.

Training Army officers is a critical task in the Genocide Education Project's efforts to prevent future genocide and promote tolerance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This expanded training outreach will allow the Genocide Education Project to engage a wider Cambodian community to critically discuss the history of Democratic Kampuchea, the

relationships between the government and its people, the definition of democracy, and the value of human rights.

Presenters

Prof. Ros Chanthaboth, Royal Academy of Cambodia

Mr. Christopher Dearing,^{*} DC-Cam Legal Advisor

Dy Kamboly, author of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)"

For more information, please contact

1. Mr. Sok San
Professor of Politics and History
Army Institute
Tel: 097 642 0319

2. Mr. Ly Sok-Kheang
Project Coordinator
Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)
Tel: 012 57 04 65
Email: truthlysokkheang@dccam.org

Location

Army Institute, National Road No.4, Thlok Trasek village, Treng Traying commune, Phnom Sruoch district, Kampong Speu province (About 90 kilometers from Phnom Penh).