

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA KHMER ROUGE HISTORY EDUCATION

Classroom Forum on
“The Importance of Studying
the History of Democratic
Kampuchea (1975-1979)”
at 15 High Schools in Phnom Penh



Above: NorngChen KimTy, daughter of a child survivor at S-21's Khmer Rouge secret prison, Norng Chan Phal. Photo by Ouch Makara. Below: Students at Youkunthor High School in Phnom Penh. Photo by Heng Sinith.

The Sleuk Rith Institute (SRI)—a permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), in collaboration with Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) with the support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is pleased to announce a classroom forum on “The Importance of Studying the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)” at 15 High Schools in Phnom Penh. The one-day forum will start its work in January and end in July 2016. SRI/DC-Cam will work closely with local school administration to ensure maximum participation of students, in particular from grade 12.

With a focus on historical narratives as content and critical thinking, debate, and reflection as process, these forums are crucial to building sustainability of genocide education in the capital. They will build on the schools’ pre-existing genocide education programs that were established using SRI/DC-Cam’s curriculum, and they will provide additional opportunities for student learning as well as teacher mentoring.

The purpose of this forum will be to educate students on the history of Democratic Kampuchea (known as Khmer Rouge) as well as provide a forum for encouraging critical thought, dialogue, and debate on how the country’s past informs its present-day problems and future. The forum’s objectives and activities include:

1. To provide students with an opportunity to share and express their personal knowledge on what happened during the Democratic Kampuchea regime.
2. To let students think critically on the transitional consequences of this legacy to the current Cambodian society.
3. To encourage discussion over this legacy in families and communities.
4. To distribute Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbooks to participating students.
5. To facilitate mentoring opportunities between trained SRI/DC-Cam/MoEYS officials and local teachers.

Based on feedback and the results of the program, SRI may also seek to expand this initiative to other regions for the future.



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OVERVIEW

Since 2004, USAID has been a key supporter of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), which is investigating and preserving records of the Khmer Rouge period, and promoting understanding and awareness among today’s young Cambodians.

DC-Cam holds the world’s largest Khmer Rouge archive, and with USAID support, DC-Cam continues to collect and maintain the documentation, ensuring that it is available to the public.

DC-Cam was integral in the establishment of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), and the organization continues to serve as a key source of documentary evidence to the ECCC.

To raise public awareness about the Khmer Rouge period, DC-Cam has succeeded in incorporating genocide studies in the high school curriculum, as well as a variety of other social institutions ranging from museums, universities, and the officer academies of the police and army. DC-Cam continues to educate Cambodia’s younger generations about what happened in their country through public education outreach that reinforces and enhances the ECCC’s work.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Community public education forums in rural areas of Cambodia for more than 5,000 adults and local youth
- Preparation, publication and distribution of 1,000,000 copies of the textbook, History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975–1979 to over 1,700 secondary schools in Cambodia
- Teacher training workshops for the training of over 5,000 history, literature, and ethics teachers in content and methods for teaching the history of Democratic Kampuchea IAW DC-Cam and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport guidance and standards
- Genocide education memorials in over a dozen communities and exhibits in a number of provincial museums detailing the history of Democratic Kampuchea.