

# មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

## GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

### **The Teaching of *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* A Public Education Forum between teachers, students and parents**

#### **A REPORT FROM TRAPEANG KRAHAM COMMUNE Kaun Mum District, Ratanak Kiri Province**

**March 20, 2011 -- Written by Pheng Pong-Rasy and Ser Sayana**

On Friday March 18th, 2011, the Documentation Center of Cambodia's (DC-Cam) Genocide Education in Cambodia conducted a public education forum in Trapeang Kraham Commune, Kaun Mum District, Ratanak Kiri Province. The forum was held in the compound of Wat Trapeang Kraham, which was built in late 1991. Approximately 140 participants attended the forum. Among this number, there were about 50 villagers, 85 students, six teachers and one monk.

The purpose of the Genocide Education Project public education forums is firstly to discuss the lives and experiences of people under the Khmer Rouge (KR), who renamed the country Democratic Kampuchea (DK) during their regime, and to encourage communication between the younger and older generations about the importance of genocide education. Secondly, the forums aim to link the textbook material to the particular stories of the communities in order to allow teachers and students to make the best use of their own resources. Thirdly, the forums encourage the villagers to participate with teachers in educating the younger generations about the KR history in the classroom. With this approach, the villagers not only help their children understand the various factors that led to genocide in Cambodia but also bring their own stories to life in a manner that is useful for educational purposes. Lastly, the forums also engage community members who may not have otherwise had access to the textbook or knowledge of DK history as a whole. During the Trapeang Kraham Commune forum, the project's team members distributed copies of the textbook *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* and demonstrated a mock lesson of a chapter from the textbook for the forum participants. A booklet entitled "Genocide" was among the materials distributed during the forum.

The forum was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and funded by The Asia Foundation (TAF) (Phnom Penh, Cambodia) with the core support from the Swedish International Agency for Development (Sida) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE FORUM**

During the first morning session in a dining hall of Wat Trapeang Kraham, Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy, a member of the project, introduced the team members from the Documentation Center of Cambodia who would be conducting the forum and

explained the purpose of the forum. Mr. Pheng also explained DC-Cam's work for in pursuing Memory and Justice for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge. Following Mr. Pheng's introduction, a second commune council member, Mr. Suon Heang, gave his opening remarks. After his words, the team members distributed the book *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* while pre-forum surveys were distributed to all participants to gauge their understanding of the Khmer Rouge regime.

After the participants turned in their completed surveys, a villager gave a brief speech about his perceptions of the Khmer Rouge's background and encouraged participants to pay attention and learn from the forum. A head monk, Prum Saroeun, shared his hardship experienced during the Khmer Rouge regime by describing the arrest and killing of his parents during the civil war and the Khmer Rouge time. Afterwards, Mr. Pheng led the presentation of chapter two from the Democratic Kampuchea history book by using the K-W-L chart methodology from the teacher's guidebook. The chapter is entitled "Who were the Khmer Rouge? How Did They Gain Power?" The presentation was followed by a question and answer session with participants. Following the session, the post-forum survey was distributed to participants to review their knowledge. The forum was finished within three and half hours in the morning, running from 8:30 am to 12 pm. In the afternoon, the team members conducted 6 interviews with one monk, two villagers, one teacher, and two students.

## **BACKGROUND AND GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION**

RATANAK KIRI is a province in northeastern Cambodia that borders Laos to the north, Vietnam to the east, Mondul Kiri Province to the south, and Stung Treng Province to the west. For over a millennium, Ratanak Kiri has been occupied by the highland Khmer Leu people, who are a minority elsewhere in Cambodia. In 1966, the Communist Party of Kampuchea headquarters was moved to Ratanak Kiri, and hundreds of Khmer Leu joined CPK units. During this period, there was also extensive Vietnamese activity in Ratanak Kiri. Between March 1969 and May 1970, the United States undertook a massive covert bombing campaign in the region, aiming to disrupt sanctuaries for communist Vietnamese troops. Villagers were forced outside of main towns to escape the bombings. In June 1970, the central government withdrew its troops from Ratanak Kiri, abandoning the area to Khmer Rouge control. The Khmer Rouge regime became increasingly oppressive. The Khmer Leu residents were forbidden from speaking their native languages or practicing their traditional customs and religion. Presently, residents generally live in villages of 20 to 60 families and engage in subsistence shifting agriculture. KAUN MOM District comprises seven sub-districts and twenty-three villages. According to a mapping report from 1999, the population of this district totals 9,362 -- 5,269 Khmer, 3,149 ethnic Kroeng, 559 people of Lao descent, and 402 ethnic Tum Puon. The report also mentioned that Mr. Phat Sovann, age 72, of Sre Angkrang village, Sre Angkrang Sub-district, Kon Mom District, saw human bodies in a canal, about 400 meters west of his house. This canal is called Samroang Pen Canal. He also saw human bones in front of his house. Mr. Sovann also informed us of another canal

called Kbal Along Ptel Canal, another site at which he says the Khmer Rouge had killed people. He did not know where the victims came from nor how many were killed in these two particular places. These two canals are arms of Sre Pork River -- each is about three meters wide and three meters deep. Mr. Sovann said in sadness that forty members of his family were killed by the Khmer Rouge.

The Kaun Mom district office is located about 10 kilometers from **Trapeang Kraham** communal hall, which stretches along National Road number 78A. The commune has three villages bordered on the southwest and east side by Trapeang Chreh commune, on the south by Sre Angkrang commune in Kaun Mom district, on the west by Krabey Chrum village, Kbal Rormeas commune, and on north by Talat commune of Sesan district.

According to the commune administrative assistant Mr. Keo Savet, in 1968 Trapeang Kraham was just a village in Sre Angkrang commune of Lumphatt district. In 1979 it became a commune in Lumphatt due to a growth in population that made it difficult for administration. Since 1987, the commune has belonged in Kaun Mom district. The commune's statistics in 2011 show the population of Trapeang Kraham as 2,447 with 571 families. 95% of the residents are farmers and peasants, 2% are workers, 1% are merchants, 1% are government officials, and 1% are elderly. Trapeang Kraham commune covers land space of over 35,139 hectares. There is one high school and one secondary school.

Trapeang Kraham means "red pond" in Khmer. Mr. Hem Chhoam, a layman, said the name came from an old pond in village three of the commune in which the water is red like iron's rust.

Preah Puth Kiri Ratanaram Trapeang Kraham pagoda, where the public forum took place, was built on December 13, 1991. There are two temples in the pagoda compound. One is set on the flat ground and another temple is located on the mountain top. The two temples are about 30 meters from each other. There is one chief monk, three monks, one layman, a few laywomen, and several orphan boys.

### **PREPARATION FOR THE PUBLIC FORUM**

A week prior to the forum, the team contacted a provincial teacher, Mr. Un Meun, who had received training organized by the Documentation Center of Cambodia with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport on how to teach the Democratic Kampuchea history. According to Mr. Un, there are three high schools in Ratanak Kiri, one in Kaun Mum district and two in the provincial town. The team decided to hold a forum in Kaun Mum district, about 40 kilometers from Ratanak Kiri provincial town. Mr. Un assisted with communication to the principal of Trapeang Kraham High School, Mr. Taing Sophea, to invite students to attend the forum. The team also talked to commune chief Mr. Em Oeun about our purpose to hold a forum in his commune. After listening to his recommendation, the team contacted the district governor for permission.

On Friday March 18, the team traveled in the early morning from Phnom Penh to Trapeang Kraham commune, Kaun Mum district, Ratanak Kiri province. At about 4:30 pm, the team arrived in Trapeang Kraham commune. The team tried to meet Mr. Em to inform him of our arrival but unfortunately he was asked to solve a problem in another village before the team reached his home. The team then decided to meet a head monk of Trapeang Kraham pagoda to request use of a dining hall to use as a meeting place between students, teachers and parents. In the dining hall, the team observed the head monk teaching two children how to read and write Khmer words. After speaking with him, he said that he received information about the forum from commune chief. He was happy to talk and share with the team stories about his life during the Khmer Rouge regime. He said that he has been an orphan since 1979. His mother, Srey Ton, died in 1972 of the US bombing in Svay Rieng and his father, Prum Than, was killed in 1976 after he was accused of serving as a Khmer Sar member and being a monk in Lon Nol regime.

Below is the brief story head monk Prum Saroeun told during an interview with the team:

*"I was evacuated from my home in Svay Rieng to live in Chumreak Tret village, Chheu Teal commune, Kien Svay district, Kandal province in 1978. I worked in a Special Child Unit. My Unit chief was named Sokha. She came from Takeo province. She was a vicious lady who used to hit me and throw pieces of soil at my head. She used to teach me soldier's theory and revolutionary songs. The teaching was in late 1978.*

*Before my father was arrested, he used to be a soldier during French colonization, a monk during Lon Nol regime, and then he was a group chief during the Khmer Rouge time. Because he used to be a monk, sometimes he secretly prayed at night. That was a noted point for the local cadres to report to the higher ranking cadres. My house was in Ta Na village of Kampong Ro district. One day, cooperative cadres came to arrest my father from home. A few cadres tied and transported him by bicycle to be imprisoned at a place called Wat Lar. He was shackled with many prisoners in the prison. Ta Prum was a commune chief at the time. My sister, Savoeun, came to meet my father at the prison after she got permission from Prum. My father sent a message through her to tell me that he needed me to get revenge on a few cadres for arresting and hitting him. Until now, I have never thought to get revenge on someone. I am now a monk. I will not think about this anymore.*

*A few days later, my father was sent to be killed at Wat Russei Sanh Chas [where DC-Cam's Mapping project has researched since 1995]. Chim was chief of Russei Sanh prison.*

*In 1978, Ta Prum, Chim and many Eastern Zone cadres were arrested and killed by cadres from the Southwest zone. I knew that Ta Prum and Chim were arrested in Thmar Sar, very close to Svay Chrum district town, while they were forcing villagers to leave their homes. At the same time, many villagers were evacuated and forced to live far away from Svay Rieng. Some went to Pursat, Battambang and Kandal province, and some fled to Vietnam. My sister and I were forced to live in Kien Svay district of Kandal. Sre Ampil area, which is located in*

*Kien Svay district, was my last place of residence during the Khmer Rouge regime. Ny was a chief of Chheu Teal commune, and Yeay Bo was a Kien Svay district chief.*

*In January 1979, my sister and I returned home. I heard that Yeay Bo was arrested by Vietnamese troops at a river bank in Kien Svay district. In 1980, I became a monk at Chumpou Priksar Pagoda in Svay Rieng. A moment later, because I wanted to serve as a soldier to protect the country, I resigned from being a monk and chose to be a soldier. A long time later, I became a monk and have been since then."*

Mr. Pheng took time to explain to him a recently process of the ECCC and told him the top five Khmer Rouge leaders who are now in the ECCC's custody. Replying to a question asked by a team member of the project on the tribunal, the head monk answered, *"I support the tribunal in bringing the top five Khmer Rouge leaders to be tried because people, especially those who have experiences during the Khmer Rouge regime, would be happy to see and reach justice. For my own opinion, the tribunal should try more Khmer Rouge leaders who were in charge of the zones or regions in Cambodia beside the top five because it will archive the feelings of the victims and allow real justices and peace."*

He added that *"ordinary people or victims would act in revenge upon those KR leaders in the 1980s if their faces appeared like this but are to be tried by the tribunal for national compensation in the last 30 years after the Khmer Rouge. "*

At the end of the interview, Mr. Pheng turned to topic of the holding a forum. He agreed with the request and volunteered to share his experience during the Khmer Rouge with the participants in the forum's process. He said that he had never shared his experiences with anyone for more than 30 years but he would provide this to participants because he wants them to learn of the events that happened to him. He also added that he wants villagers to tell their stories to students and the younger generation to help them understand and convince them that the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia from 1975-1979.

At around 5:50 pm, the team left for the commune chief's home. The team provided him with a DK textbook and booklet and described the aim of the forum. He said that he would not attend the forum because his health was not good. Instead, he sent three commune council members to attend the meeting and they would describe the commune situation to the forum.

After meeting with the head monk and commune chief, the team began the trip to Ratanak Kiri provincial town to find a guesthouse and to have dinner.

## **PROGRAM OF THE PUBLIC FORUM**

### **1. Opening Remarks - by 2<sup>nd</sup> commune council member Mr. Suon Heang**

Before starting the forum, Mr. Pheng invited Mr. Suon Heang to talk about the background of Trapeang Kraham commune and give remarks to open the morning forum. Mr. Suon gave the following remarks to participants: *"First, I would say that all of you are lucky because you have the chance to get the DK history book and to sit in one place listening to the team members from DC-Cam talk about the Khmer Rouge regime.*

*Second, you all should pay attention to the forum because this forum will give you more knowledge about the Khmer Rouge regime.”* At the end of his speech, he informed the participants publicly of the opening of the forum and told them to try hard to listen at the forum.

Mr. Pheng thanked to Mr. Suon and took time to explain the purpose of the forum. He said the forum would encourage the participants to talk and discuss the experiences during Khmer Rouge regime. Children or students who attended the forum would be able to listen to their parents or elders talk about their hard work during the Khmer Rouge regime. As an example for the students or children born after the Khmer Rouge regime, Mr. Pheng asked the participants to raise their hands if they lived under the Khmer Rouge regime. Some participants raised their hands and said that life under the KR was very difficult, and this was like a lesson to the younger generation. Mr. Pheng continued to explain that the public education forum is to encourage students to ask questions about the KR to their parents or elders in order to gain extra knowledge after they have learned from school. Moreover, the forum will lead to building peace and reconciliation, locally and nationally, in Cambodia.

Some participants, especially younger children, did not hear or know the name “Khmer Rouge” while the other students knew it clearly from their school and parents.

To gauge the knowledge of the participants, Mr. Pheng asked them the meaning of the two words “*Khmer Rouge*” and “*Democratic Kampuchea*”. Most of the participants knew that these two phrases have the same meaning but they were used in different ways. People around Cambodia like to use “*Khmer Rouge*” in daily life and in informal ways but “*Democratic Kampuchea*” was used formally. Mr. Pheng added that besides these two phrases, we often use another phrase: “*Pol Pot Regime*”. In detail, Mr. Pheng gave an explanation that people in different locations use different phrases or names to describe the regime. For example, people in Malai, Samlot or Pailin use “*Democratic Kampuchea*”. But some people in other provinces such as Kandal like to use “*Khmer Rouge*” or “*Pol Pot*” instead. However, the three different phrases serve the regime that occurred from 17 April 1975 to 6 January 1979.

After the introduction of the team and the opening remarks from the second commune council, Mr. Pheng opened the forum by outlining the details of the program and the objective of the day.

## **2. Distributing DK history book and Pre-forum survey**

Before distributing the book to the participants, Mr. Pheng explained that the book contains 11 chapters covering the topics of how the Khmer Rouge gained power, the reign of the Khmer Rouge, and its fall. Mr. Pheng continued to state that the book is short but concise in its treatment of the events during the Khmer Rouge.

After his remarks the team distributed the book “A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)” to participants. At the same time, pre-forum surveys were distributed to the participants to fill in to measure their knowledge of the Khmer Rouge before they received a chapter lesson from the team members of the project. In order to do this consistently, Mr. Pheng divided participants into groups of students, parents and teachers. Team members of the project helped the group of villagers who cannot read and write complete their surveys. Mr. Pheng led the group of students by guiding them through each question. All pre-forum surveys were collected and the program continued. The team members allowed participants to take rest for 15 minutes and then went through to listen to the guest speakers tell their stories about life during the Khmer Rouge and observed the model teaching by Mr. Pheng.

### **3. Guest Speakers – by Hem Yoeun and Prum Saroeun**

Before giving a mock lesson from the textbook, Mr. Pheng asked for volunteers to speak about life under the Khmer Rouge regimes to the participants. Mr. Hem Yoeun agreed to speak to the meeting. In the meantime, Mr. Pheng took time to explain to students the importance of taking notes of what the guest speakers talk about. Mr. Pheng told the group that he would ask one of the participants to summarize all important events from the guest speakers.

Mr. Hem Yoeun, a villager in village 2 of Trapeang Kraham commune, talked about life under the pressure of the Khmer Rouge from 1970-1979. Here are his remarks:

*“Today I have a great opportunity to speak to all participants about the dispute between 1970 and 1975. After Lon Nol’s coupe d’état on Prince Norodom Sihanouk, a civil war was started in Cambodia. From the end of 1972 to 1973, the US dropped B-52 bombs almost everywhere around the country. For example, Prey Lvea, Sai Va, Batt Rokar, Chambakk and others markets in Takeo province were destroyed by the B-52 bombing. Many people were killed and injured. I saw many events happen at many places in Takeo because I always went to the bombing place to see the accidents. As evidence, some wells or ponds that still keep water for daily use by people in the rural areas were created by the US bombing. I would remind all of you that the Khmer Rouge movement started a long time ago, not just in 1970. In conclusion, there have many important events that all of you, especially students, should remember. They are: Coup D’état on 18 March 1970, The victory of the Khmer Rouge on 17 April 1975, The life under the regime of 3 years 8 months and 20 days, The creation of Revolutionary Front on 2 December 1978 and the victory over the Khmer Rouge on 7 January 1979.”*

At the end of his speech, he mentioned that life under the Khmer Rouge was very hard, and all people’s lives were in the hands of the Khmer Rouge cadres who could be killed at anytime.

After the first guest speaker, the head monk of Trapeang Kraham pagoda Prum Saroeun took spoke to the participants about his life during the Khmer Rouge and the death of his parents in the regime. He cried when he spoke about his experiences. All the participants listened to him quietly. Some students took notes about what the head monk said. He lost his mother when he was 10 years old. His

mother died in the US bombing in Svay Rieng province while she was holding his elder sister standing under the palm tree. When he was 14, in 1976, his father was arrested and killed at Russei Sanh Chas Prison. In 1978, he was forced to move to live temporarily in Kien Svay district of Kandal province where he was hit many times with handle of a shovel. Working for almost one year in Chheu Teal commune of Kien Svay district, he noted that Yeay Bo was an unpleasant district chief. Later, he heard that Yeay Bo was arrested by Vietnamese troops in January 1979 at the bank of Mekong River located in Kien Svay district. After January 1979, he and his sister went back to his home in Svay Rieng.

At the end of his speech, he pointed out that this was the first time he told his story to anyone besides his neighbors 30 years after the collapse of Khmer Rouge regime. He continued to say that he goes to his birthplace in Svay Rieng every Khmer New Year and Phchum Ben festival to offer food and pray for his parents. He apologized to villagers attending the forum for leaving the pagoda during these two occasions.

#### **4. The Presentation of Chapter 2 “Who were the Khmer Rouge? How did they gain power?” - by Pheng Pong-Rasy**

Mr. Pheng opened his presentation of chapter 2, “Who were the Khmer Rouge? How did they gain power?”, by dividing participants into groups of four with each group taking different reading responsibilities. Group 1 read “The Early Communist Movement”; group 2 read “The Creation of the Khmer People’s Revolutionary Party”; group 3 read “The Workers’ Party of Kampuchea (WPK); and group 4 read “The Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK)”. Mr. Pheng gave the groups 15 minutes to read the chapter.

After reading, Mr. Pheng asked a representative from each group to summarize what the group has read. Before allowing participants to read the chapter, Mr. Pheng explained how to take notes and grasp the important events. First, group 1 spoke very briefly about the early communist movement. Group 2 also offered a brief summary of their section. But for groups 3 and 4, the representatives were smart and knew how to summarize the chapter well. Additionally, Mr. Pheng explained to students again how to take notes and summarize the lesson.

For the next step in the presentation the chapter, Mr. Pheng talked to participants to gauge their knowledge of taking notes, summarizing the lesson and listening to the teacher or speaker. Mr. Pheng wanted students to practice using these four skills at the same time. Mr. Pheng kept the group of students in the same place and permitted them to listen, take notes, summarize and think about what the presenter said. After that, Mr. Pheng asked each group to read and speak loudly to the larger group about what they had written and remembered. All groups demonstrated understanding of the chapter through their summaries.

At the last presentation session, Mr. Pheng opened the session of question and answer for participants. Few questions relating to the chapter were asked by villagers and students.



## **5. Distributing the Booklet “Genocide” and Post-Forum Survey**

After the question and answer period, the team distributed the booklet titled “Genocide” and post-forum surveys in order to assess how the knowledge and attitude of the participants toward studying KR history had or had not changed after attending the forum. After about 15 minutes, the surveys were collected and Mr. Pheng thanked all participants for their attendance and the engaging discussion.

## **OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS**

Upon arrival, the team met with different key stakeholders to organize the forum and to learn about the important historical events related to Trapeang Kraham commune and Kaun Mom district as a whole. The team visited the forum site in order to ask for permission from the head monk Prum Saroeun to conduct the forum. We met the chief monk who was teaching two students (orphan boys of about 8 to 11 years old) to read and write. The team as well as the forum was warmly welcomed by the monk and he also assured the team that the hall could be used for as long as the forum goes. Talking to the chief monk, the team also learned about his life and experiences during the Khmer Rouge. He told us with tears about his father who was tortured to death by the Khmer Rouge cadre and his mother and his baby sibling who died in a bombing. The monk agreed to talk about his experiences in the forum and told the team that he is very thankful for the opportunity to share with the participants because he never had the chance to talk and tell anyone about his experiences from the Khmer Rouge. He added that he has been to Tuol Sleng Museum to see the brutal evidence and he bought two books about the Khmer Rouge regime.

When the team arrived at the place for the forum at around 7:50 am, the participants included students, parents and teachers who were waiting for and helped the team to carry boxes of books and some equipment for the forum. Teachers, who the team had contacted and asked for help during the forum, worked as facilitators to organize the sitting for students and parents. Three days prior to the forum, the principle of Trapeang Kraham High School told the team that there were approximately 50 students from his school who could attend the forum. The team actually observed that there were about 85 students attended the forum. The team learned that some students were from a school nearby, Trapeang Chres Secondary School. The students rode their bikes for a long distance enduring hot weather and dusty roads to join the forum.

The head monk helped to prepare the place by spreading out mats and cleaning the whole place.

Two teachers from Trapeang Kraham High School asked for copies of the DK history books to distribute to all teachers in their school and to keep in the school library for further research. The team member told them that these books will be provided when the book is again published within this year.

Many villagers who attended the forum listened quietly to the presentation of chapter two. For more than 30 years after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge, many people in the location in Ratanak Kiri still have little knowledge about the Khmer Rouge. They have just known that they used to serve the Khmer Rouge movement through someone's propaganda. For instance, Mr. Hou Chea, Kawett Ethnic, joined the revolution in 1963 (see appendix for his background) and later he was selected to work as Ieng Sary's bodyguard. He told the team that the explanation from the team member about how the Khmer Rouge gained the power was very clear. Many people agreed with the description of the chapter.

After the introduction and pre-survey, Mr. Pheng asked for volunteers to talk about their experience and opinion about the Khmer Rouge. A villager Mr. Hem Yoeun, 58, offered to speak about his experience and view of the Khmer Rouge. He gave a brief summary of Lon Nol and issues around the bombing from his point of view. He asked the students and older participants to think critically about the events and to focus on the forum.

According to the interview conducted in the afternoon with students, parents, monk and teachers, the Khmer Rouge history must be taught in school to prevent genocide from happening again in the country. Moreover, the local authority needs the team to continue to hold forums like this in many places in his commune and district. Additionally, the large group of villagers attending the forum requested to watch Khmer Rouge documentary film, especially the film of first creation of Khmer Rouge in early 1970.

## **CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The team selected chapter two from the textbook for presenting, which seems to take longer to present than other chapters, and that caused some villagers and students to leave in the middle of the forum. The presenter should provide a brief introduction and summarize important key points to explain to participants since most of them have access to the book and are able to read.

The project team members, when addressing participants, frequently referred only to students while ignoring the presence of the villagers and teachers. This could cause the villagers and teachers to feel uncomfortable and out of place.

The team brought only 100 copies of the textbook and a few more participants did not receive one in hand. The team promised to send more books through the commune chief and teachers for distribution.

The team observed that the numbers of participants from Trapeang Kraham are a bit less than number of participants from Trapeang Cheh. Mr. Men Narin, a teacher of Trapeang Kraham high school, told us that some students went home for it is nearly school vacation. They need to help their parents in the rice fields, farming and managing the household. Some students earn their living by picking cashew nuts. Other factors include the fact that Trapeang Kraham is more remote and lacks

vegetables and water while its neighbor Trapeang Chreh is near the district hall where most people are sellers and merchants at the nearby market, so their children have more time to attend the forum.

Passengers have difficulty traveling even during the day on the National Road because it is very dusty and smoky. Travelers cannot see objects ahead on the road even with the assistance of headlights and flashlights.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Hou Chea: Kawett Ethnic Revolutionary Person**

Hou Chea, 53, Kawett Ethnic, joined the revolution in 1963. Later Chea was recruited as a cadre of Ieng Sary's office who was responsible for the commerce office, controlling machinery work, the telegram office, and the child unit.

Hou Chea was born in Kiri Bass village, Santepheap commune, Siem Pang district, Stung Treng province. Chea has 7 siblings. In 1964, after Chea got married his Kawett ethnic wife, he joined the Khmer Rouge revolutionary movement in Chhouk district of Kampot province. Song, Dam and Vong introduced Chea to the revolution. Song, Dam and Vong convinced Chea to join the revolution to liberate country of corruption, to build peace and to develop the country.

Chea left home for Stung Treng province to live in the forest with Ieng Sary, Son Sen and other Khmer Rouge cadres. The movement was supported by local people in Stung Treng. At that time, Chea worked as an office defender. Chea was educated and trained in how to defend Angkar and the office of the Angkar.

In 1970, Chea returned home for vacation. In the village, Chea saw that many Kawett and other ethnics volunteered to join the revolution through Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk's propaganda.

After going back to his unit, he was assigned by the Angkar to work at the State Commerce Office. Chea was in charge of exchanging salt and fish-paste with money, duck, rice and chicken from villagers. After collecting money or other equipment, Chea delivered all to Ya, a secretary of Northeast Zone.

After 17 April 1975, Chea was promoted to cadre and was responsible for controlling trucks and tractors in Stung Treng provincial town. One year later, Angkar moved Chea to work at Telegram Unit in O Chum district of Ratanak Kiri province. Chea said that before sending telegrams out of the office to top ranking cadres, all cadres had to send the telegrams to Chea to read first. Chea stated that almost all telegrams were about the conflicts along the Vietnam-Cambodia border and the activities of traitors.

In 1977, Chea was transferred to hold a position of chief of the Child Unit. The unit consisted of 70 children who were children of lower cadres and rubber plantation workers.

When Vietnamese troops attacked the Khmer Rouge regime in early 1979, Chea and some children from his unit fled to Tbeng village of Preah Vihear province. Unfortunately, Chea and other 40 Khmer Rouge cadres were arrested by the Vietnamese troops. Chea was released from the prison after he had been imprisoned for five months.

Returning back to his birthplace, Chea found that he had lost one sister and his father was killed after he was accused of having a plan to flee to Laos.

Presently, Chea is a village chief of village 1, Trapeang Kraham commune, Kaun Mum district, Ratanak Kiri province.

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