

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Report on Presentation
The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor:
A Discussion with University Students
Svay Rieng University, December 7th, 2012



Attendees:

DC-Cam: Phalla Chea, Pronh Chan, Sovannandy Kim, Socheata Dy, Rutherford Hubbard

Svay Rieng University:

200+ Students of the Business Faculty

10 University Professors

The Rector of the University

Location:

Auditorium of the Svay Rieng University



Report:

On December 7th, 2012, Cambodia Tribunal Monitor and Trial Observation Teams of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) traveled to Svay Rieng University and implemented an extensive workshop. Included in the workshop were presentations and discussion on the textbook, *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-79)*, The CTM Website and the process and importance of the ECCC. In attendance were more than 200 University Students in the Business Faculty, 10 university professors and the Rector of the University. The event took place in the Universities new auditorium, an august building, fitting for the gravity and importance of this even.

Upon the arrival of the Rector, the event opened with the playing of the National Anthem and words from his Excellency, who expressed his pleasure at the opportunity to host this meeting at his university. He was particularly laudatory of the 500 textbooks DC-Cam delivered to the University and he highlighted the role of memory in building Cambodia's future.

Chea Phalla, acting as a master of ceremonies, introduced the subjects and schedule for the remainder of the meeting, discussed the background of DC-Cam and introduced the staff present. Turning to the subject at hand, she asked who amongst the students knew what S-21. Surprisingly, only a dozen students raised their hands, highlighting the importance of the kind of education DC-Cam delivers throughout the country.

A showing of the brief documentary film prepared by the Vietnamese journalists who found Tuol Sleng Prison in 1979 created a strong and visible impact on the students. Even one student, who had visited the Tuol Sleng museum, raised his hand and volunteered that the film had had a stronger effect on him than his visit.

Phalla followed the film showing with a discussion of the prison itself, and what life was like there for both inmates and jailers. She emphasized that many of those who worked there are part of our society today, and we need to understand what this means to the country. She also provided an introduction to the textbook and encouraged the students to learn more on their own.

A lively question and answer period followed, stretching from the mundane (how far is it from Tuol Sleng to Choeung Ek?) to the philosophic (why did the well-educated Khmer Rouge leaders target those with education?). It was clear that the students were excited to learn more, but with much information to cover, the first question and answer period had to be drawn to a close.

Sovandanny Kim spoke next, introducing the CTM website and walking students through how it could be used. Not one student had heard of the website, but they listened carefully as its many functions and were explained. With a direct link from the website to the big screen, students could actually see how to use the website. The following discussion period raised a number of challenging questions about the creation of the Court and the role of the international community in bringing the Khmer Rouge leaders to justice. It was clear that these students were thinking about what the Court means to Cambodians, and with their newfound knowledge of the website, they can learn more on their own.

The questions led naturally into the final session, which explored the ECCC in some detail. Socheata Dy's information-rich presentation was perhaps difficult for some of the business

students to follow, but as Friday afternoon came to a close, the students remained in the hall, eager to learn more. As she explained the technical details of the Court, students responded with detailed questions on Court functions.

The energy really started to flow with the final question and answer period, as students explored the many facets of the presentations. Questions surprised the presenters with their insight, including a question about whether the accused Khmer Rouge leaders had taken responsibility for their actions. Other students wanted to learn more about the role of the international community during the Khmer Rouge and even UN politics were covered. Pronh Chan, who had supported the presentation as cameraman and technical advisor, jumped in to answer some difficult legal questions as well. Unfortunately, time ran out, but the “last question” turned into a few more and some healthy discussion, before the session came to a close. After a group picture with the students, it was time for them to go home with their new knowledge, new resources and new perspectives.

The enthusiastic reception from Svay Rieng University and its Business Faculty students provided an affirmation of the importance of Genocide Education and information sharing on the ECCC process. Despite being university level students, those in attendance knew little of the subject matter, but it was clear that they desired to learn more. Through the donation of 500 textbooks, as well as copies of Searching For the Truth Magazine and other resources, DC-Cam is confident that this presentation will have a lasting impact on the students and the University.

