



Learning to teach about the Khmer Rouge
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Education officials this week are learning how to teach more history about the Khmer Rouge regime, as a course from the Documentation Center of Cambodia gets underway.

In a one-week course that began this weekend, 24 officials from the Ministry of Education will hear from genocide experts and receive training from a new manual designed specifically for teaching about the regime.

Cambodian students have until recently learned very little about the traumatic period in their country's history, and studies indicate they sometimes learn little from their parents about it.

“Our teaching [on the Khmer Rouge regime] is unique compared to teaching on this genocidal topic in other countries 40 years ago or in the last century,” Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Center, told VOA Khmer. “Our teaching is to teach Cambodian victims to become educators, and we don't narrowly concentrate on our country.”

Among the trainers are David Chandler, professor of history from Monash University and a well-regarded historian on Cambodia, Ros Chantraboth, a Cambodian historian, George Chigas, associate director of Yale University's Cambodia Genocide Program, and Dy Kham Boly, the author of “A History of Democratic Kampuchea.”

“In this teacher's manual we organize the teaching chapter by chapter,” Dy Kham Boly said. “Students are asked to read survivors' accounts and later role play.”

Tuon Sa Im, secretary of state of the Ministry of Education, said that the 24 officials trained next week will then transfer their knowledge to history teachers at Cambodia's junior high and high schools. The ministry hopes to finish training teachers by 2010.