



# Healing through Buddhism Project Voice of Former Khmer Rouge Project Narrative Report

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## **I) Executive Summary**

*Healing through Buddhism project (HTB)* and *Voice of Former Khmer Rouge project (VFKR)* are new projects of Youth for Peace which integrates the Buddhism approach, and radio program as the tools to integrate youth, victims, and perpetrators into the process of seeking justice, healing the past wounds, and building peace.

Regarding the Buddhism as the main religion in Cambodia, Healing through Buddhism Project was designed to train the monks about the Khmer Rouge history, transitional justice, monks in Peace building movements in different Asian countries, roles of monks in peace building in Cambodia and other facilitation skills. Several activities were conducted by the monks who work closely with survivors and youth after the HTB training. This is quite unique and new case that today monks start taking action on peace building and Transitional Justice processes within community.

In brief, HTB and VFKR aim to integrate the monks in peace building process through Buddhism approach and to promote the understanding and discussion between former Khmer Rouge and victims in order to prevent the passing on of hatred and violence to future generations.

The project called *Voice of Former Khmer Rouge* was developed specifically targeted the former Khmer Rouge soldiers or cadres. Within this project the Radio call-in-show program: *You also have a Chance*, and child soldiers speaking out through the 25 minutes documentary film *Your Chance* and by inviting some former child soldiers (from Cambodia, Liberia and Sudan) to the annual Peace Conference this group was targeting.

## **II) Introduction**

As one of the only local organizations, YFP for 10 years has implemented its project to bring peace education and leadership skills to Cambodian youth throughout the country. Youth for Peace is well equipped to take on this duty. It has also gained a lot of experience and expertise while working since 2007 in the field of Transitional Justice.

It is important for the former Khmer Rouge to have an opportunity to share their past experiences considering that many are carrying around a lot of guilt and regret for their actions. Due to the fear of being discriminated by neighbors and friends, many of them have never talked about their past and even hide those stories from their family members. By giving them a chance to speak is a crucial step towards truth telling, taking over responsibility and building peace.

Without reaching out to former Khmer Rouge and without addressing their problems and healing their trauma, the violent culture will continue and be transferred to the next generation. More than that, the children of the Khmer Rouge may get defensive about their parents. Such confusion and misdirected anger reflects a dangerous potential for the legacy of Cambodia's transitional justice efforts.

### III) Program Progress

#### 1) Healing through Buddhism Project

##### *A. Healing through Buddhism Workshop*

As the monks are the mediators between the victims and perpetrators, monks in Cambodian society today play the main important role in the Transitional Justice process. This is why YFP designed the project *Healing through Buddhism* (HTB) which was designed to empower the monks to actively participate in the peace building process. The main theme of this workshop is to strengthen the monk role in the transitional justice process. This project also aims to extend the role of monks in Cambodians healing process, to make solidarity among survivors for long lasting peace, and to encourage the local initiative idea and action for healing and memory activities.

The monk training is designed as a six days workshop. The monks have gone through the following topics such as Khmer Rouge history, Extra Ordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC), the meaning of reconciliation and justice, role of monks in different countries, transitional justice process and setting up an action plan. Eight trainings so far have been conducted in Battambang, Svay Rieng, Kompot, and Takeo where 190 monks fully participated. After attending the course, the monks give some impressions of what they have learned:

Molyka 25 (Monk at Preytom Pagoda, Kompot Province)

*“Before I have heard a little information about the ECCC and I was not interested because I thought it isn’t my problem. These days, I think that I have to know about the Khmer Rouge history and the ECCC because my relatives died in this dark regime.”*



Morn Samnang 21 (Monk at Wat Bhothanung, Battambang province)

*“From the training, I personally understood that Cambodian people have suffered from decades of civil war and genocide. I want to conduct the training on healing trauma and peace building process to the community. I dream of having both sides the survivors and the killers living together.”*

Mou Bunthoeun 18 (Monk at Wat Svay Chrum , Svay Rieng Province)

*“I enjoyed the HTB workshop because I could learn more about the Khmer Rouge history that lead to the death of nearly 2 million lives. As I understood, there were no educational institutions during the Khmer Rouge period because the intellectual people were tortured and killed.”*

Chhundeoun 40 (Monk at Wat Preytom, Kompot Province)

*“I am a survivor of the Khmer Rouge period, and I am 40 years old. However, I don't remember clearly what was going on during the KR as I was a young boy. I am curious to know about the regime that is the reason I am attending this course. I hope the topics of the Khmer Rouge history will be integrated in the Monks' school curriculum, so that the monks who did not have a chance to be in the training will be able to learn about the causes and effects of the regime.”*

Within the HTB workshop, the monks learn the different topics in a quiet participatory way. The monk trainers prepared the curriculum carefully and integrated many different methods: role plays, group discussions, TV show, mind mapping, market presentation, small group reading, homework, doing interviews with people in the village, presentation and many more. The trainer reflected the methods with the monks in order that they had the possibility to learn the different methods. To make the monks to become the key actors of the project, there is one step further called *Capacity Building* for the monks.



## ***B. Capacity Building for the Monks***

In this additional two days *capacity building*, monks are trained to focus on particular skills such as how to be a trainer, how to do the lesson plan, to request a small grant, and to write the report of their own activities. Like for the HTB training, also for this training a special manual was designed to fit the needs of the monks as those skills are not taught at high school.

There were 140 monks from Battambang, Svay Rieng, and Kompot who attended the capacity building workshop. It was the remarkable point that in Takeo province 40% of the HTB participants had a tight schedule at the monks' school, so they did not come for the capacity building workshop. In order to form a new group of monks in Takeo, trainers needed to ask formal permission again from the chief of monks in Provincial Religion Institution. Even though YFP trainers got the authorization from the head of monks, most senior high school monks were on personal religious duty. As the result, only primary school monks who are not our target beneficiary were able to attend the workshop. Therefore, the project could not be implemented in Takeo due to the low understanding of Lork Nen (monk under 18 years old) towards the topic.

Based on the pre-test and post-test of the activity, about 80% of monks are aware of their roles in the healing process, and willing to set up the training activities in their community. Moreover, around 70% of the monks claim that they are able to facilitate in the workshop. There are several stories of change from the monks after they attended the capacity building.

Yerm Vanna 22 (Monk at Wat Kandal , Battambang province)

*"I have never heard the word facilitation before. Now I understand what it means plus I am able to facilitate the Khmer Rouge related topics. I enjoyed attending the workshop as it is beneficial to me and my community."*



Sam Bunn 20 (Monk at Wat Champou Preouksa, Svay Rieng Province)

*“Before participated in the workshop, I was so trembled to stand in front of many people. After taking the capacity building course, I can explain the history of Khmer Rouge, ECCC process, and even trauma topic to the Khmer Rouge survivors, to the students, and to the whole community. Furthermore, I am able to share the role of monk in peace building to Buddhism followers.”*

Chheang Sophal 22 (Monk at Wat Chhumkreal, Kampot province.)

*“I thought that writing the report or proposal is not the subject the monk like me should learn, but after my second time attending the capacity building of the Youth for Peace, I changed my mind. I started seeing how important these skills are. Although I cannot write the report properly, I believe I am lucky to involve in the learning process.”*

Chan Sung 23 (Monk at Wat Bacha, Battambang province)

*“My classmates and I would conduct the workshop on 11 of March 2010 because we want to raise the awareness of the villagers and junior high school students about transitional justice process. Without the capacity building support from the YFP, I didn’t feel confident to conduct this workshop.”*

At the end of the workshop, the monks were asked to form a volunteer group. Then they are free to select their members and to name their group. To ensure that the monks are able to use what they have learned in the capacity building workshop, the grant (\$250) is provided to the group of monks who submit their proposal writing and teaching plan.

Mostly the active monks send their lesson plan and teaching schedule with budget plan to YFP office one week before the workshop starts. While they are writing proposal, the monks can contact their trainers if they feel doubt on any points. After the approval was made by the Project officer, at least one HTB trainer will go to the target areas to follow up the monks conducting the training. At this time, monk will report their activities using what they have learned in the capacity building workshop.

### **C. Initiative Support of the Monks**

Following up or Initiative Support of the monks’ activity the last or third stage in *Healing through Buddhism* project is: Monks organize their own workshop, event or project. This can be a workshop where the monks invite the villagers, chief of the commune, and junior high school students as the participants. The training material, snack, and drink are also prepared by the monks. Therefore, the monks can have a chance to work closely with the community people outside the pagoda’s hierarchy.

According to the activity reports, 60% of the monks became active facilitators in the peace building and healing process while 40% of them hesitate to conduct the workshop or determine to do the activities related to other issues such as land eviction, poverty, and domestic violence.

With positive courage, monks wrote a project request asking for supporting their workshop of various topics. However, we selected only seven projects which are relevant to the objective of HTB project. For the rest projects of the monks which are not dealing with Khmer Rouge history and healing process, we provide them the technical support. In favor of financial support, we furthermore encouraged the

monks to collect money from the community and the pagoda to do their own activities and with it have sustainability.

Through out the informal survey on the participants from the workshop conducted by a group of monks which shows that around 50% of survivors stated that they gradually reduced anger and hatred towards the former Khmer Rouge. About 80% of people including in the survey said that they recognized how crucial Buddhism in healing process is.



Kha Sarath 18 (Monk at Wat Bacha Battambang province):

*"I was shaking when my trainer asked me questions. While I was a trainee, I was not confident that I could become a trainer. This was my first time to involve in setting up the workshop, so I was nervous. But now I am able to manage the workshop, lead the group discussion, and even writing the activity report."*

Morm Sari 22 (Monk at Wat Chhumpopreksa , Svay Rieng Province):

*"I was reluctant to do the workshop because I was worried that the elderly people who have a bitter experience living in the Khmer Rouge regime would ask me critical questions. I was born after the regime collapsed, so how I can become the trainer of the Khmer Rouge topic."*

Chel Doun 61 (Female participants, Kompot province):

*"Many of my relatives were killed during the Khmer Rouge time, so I am full of hatred. As I am a Buddhist follower, it is wrong to take my revenge on the former killer. I am practicing religious theory for peaceful mind. I strongly believe the monk's training will contribute to non-violence act towards future peace of Cambodia."*

Chab Sonita 18 (Female participants, Svay Rieng province):

*"I have never seen the workshop conducted by monks, so it was strange for me at the beginning. However, I really enjoyed it so much. I think the duration of the*

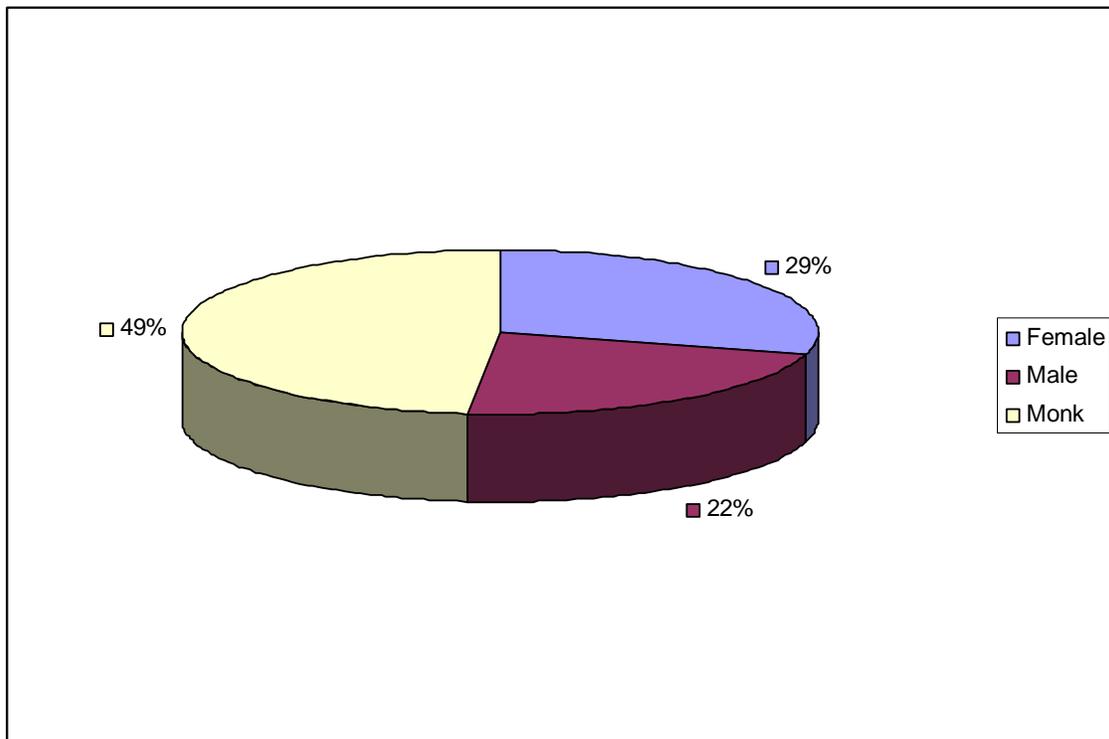
workshop was very short as it lasted only one day. I suggest having more workshops like this in my village with longer period. ”

Roth Vonn 48 (Village Chief, Kompot province):

“For me, it is acceptable for monks to go outside the pagoda and do some activities to help the community. I persuade the villagers not to have negative aspects towards the monks, but I don’t know if they understand. I like the workshop especially the mediation part because it makes people calm down their anger and rest in peace.”



Besides monks’ participation, there were elderly and youth who joined the activities. The high school students are important inside the process as youth are the agent of social change. Totally, there were 790 participants who have attended the *Healing through Buddhism* Project. The pie chart below illustrates the percentage of the participants.



## 2) Voice of former Khmer Rouge Project

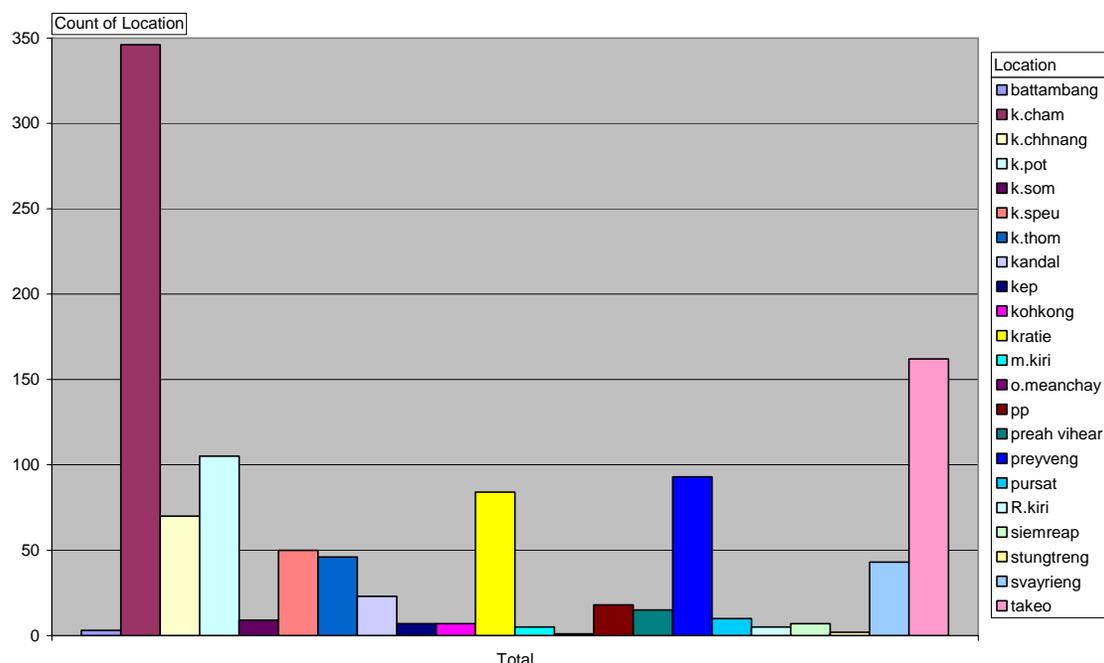
### A. Radio Program

The radio call-in-show program called ***You also Have a Chance*** seeks to show the real experience of the former Khmer Rouge to both the survivors who lived under the Khmer Rouge as well as to the youth who were born after the collapse of the regime so that not only the elderly but also the youth have an opportunity to listen, to share and to discuss about this past history. The objective of the program is to encourage the former Khmer Rouge to talk in media about their involvement in crimes. By recording all the stories, the audio program will be used as the educational tool in the future.

Since August 2009 to March 2010, the radio team had produced 34 programs which were broadcasted at Radio National Kampuchea AM918 and 28 programs rebroadcast at VOD FM106.5. In each program, there are Vox Pop (around 1minute voices of different people towards the topic), Insert (4-5minutes interviewing of the expert or vital person related to the up-dated issues of the Khmer Rouge), and the provocative discussion between callers and the guest speakers.

Before the callers are allowed to talk on air, they were selected by the live producer based on their experiences and their expression. Moreover, we promise to keep the callers' personal background confidential. Some of them can even talk on air by using their nick name, fake name, or remaining anonymous. For security reason, the former Khmer Rouge callers are able to hide the location they are calling from. According to our weekly callers' note, there were 1111 callers (963 male callers, 148 female callers) calling from Phnom Penh City and all provinces of Cambodia. In some aspects, the countryside listeners are more interested in the Khmer Rouge topic than the capital city audiences, or at least most of the callers called from the provinces.

The bar chart illustrates the callers' location within the whole program. The highest numbers of callers come from Kampong Cham province, with around 350 callers. The second remarkable numbers of callers is from Takeo province followed by Kampot. The lowest amount of callers is from Oddar Meanchey province.



A population-based survey conducted by Berkeley Study in January 2009 shows that 80% of Cambodian people know about the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) through the radio, 44% from television and only 11% from the newspaper. Therefore, the radio is the most effective source of information and also a safe media channel for the former Khmer Rouge to confess their past story (according to the before mentioned reasons).

The following table shows the different radio shows:

No	Topics	Live RNK AM 918KHz 11:00-12:00 PM (Saturday)	Rebroadcast FM 106.5 MHz 10:00-11:00 AM (Sunday)	Guest Speaker
1	Part of our Past (KR regime)	August 08, 2009	August 09, 2009	Mr. Long Khet, Youth for Peace Executive Director  Mr. Sin Chan Chhayya, chief of Sin Sisamut Association
2	Why did we talk about the past? (KR regime)	August 15, 2009	August 16, 2009	Dr. Munny Sothara, psychologist of TPO  Mr. Sambo Mannara, lecturer of history of Royal University of

				Phnom Penh
3	Is it true that talking about the past will provide advantages for the future?	August 22, 2009	August 23, 2009	Mr. Peoudara Vanthan, Deputy Director of the Response Team Project: Documentation Center of Cambodia
4	Youth's opinion about Khmer Rouge stories	August 29, 2009	August 29, 2009	Ms. Sin Putheary, Project Officer of YFP  Mr. Thay Seila, Student
5	Your true stories can be a worth experience for the next generation.	September 05, 2009	September 06, 2009	Mr. Chorn Pond Arn, Former child soldier
6	Is it possible that reconciliation starts from community level?	September 12, 2009	September 13, 2009	Mr. Meas Kin, Takeo commune chief
7	<b>Mix three topics together(Rebroadcast, PHCHUM BEN DAY)</b>	September 19, 2009	September 20, 2009	
8	The Role of Buddhism in Reconciliation process	September 26, 2009	September 27, 2009	Monk. Eun Sam Ar, Ounaloum Pagoda
9	Youth and Reconciliation	October 03, 2009	October 04, 2009	Mr. Chea Vibol, YFP trainer  Mr. Chan Pheakdey, YFP trainer
10	Can you forgive the killer if you know the true?	October 10, 2009	October 11, 2009	Mr. Ouy Sarin, Ex-KR soldier
11	Is it necessary to build memorial site?	October 17, 2009	October 18, 2009	Mr. Ing Chheng, Farmer from Kompong Speu Province
12	A bunch of sticks cannot be broken.(Khmer Proverb)	October 24, 2009	October 25, 2009	Pro. Vong Sotheara, Deputy director. Department of

				History: Royal University of Phnom Penh
13	<b>Rebroadcast (YFP staff were at review and planning)</b>	October 31, 2009	November 01, 2009	
14	Is it possible to ask for forgiveness if we committed a crime?	November 07, 2009	November 08, 2009	Mr. Him Huy (Former Guard at S-21)
15	Who can file the complaint for case 002?	November 14, 2009	November 15, 2009	Mr. Hang Vannak, Chief of the Complaint Department, Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC)
16	Teacher during the Khmer Rouge time	November 21, 2009	November 22, 2009	Mr. Touch Man (Former Teacher during KR)
17	Why were religions banned during the Khmer Rouge time?	November 28, 2009	November 29, 2009	No Guest
18	Is it more choices than to kill?	December 05, 2009	December 06, 2009	Mr. Hun Sovannarith, Former messenger in Democratic Kampuchea
19	Accepting the word "Sorry" does not mean forgiveness.	December 12, 2009	December 13, 2009	Mr. Vann Nath, Painter at S-21
20	Former Khmer Rouge Comrades building the massacre memorial site	December 19, 2009	December 20, 2009	Mr. Nhem En, Former Photographer at S-21 and the initiator of Photo Museum in Anglong Veng
21	Footprint of Khmer Rouge Time	December 26, 2009	December 27, 2009	Dr. Munny Sothara, psychologist & Project Coordinator at Tran cultural

				Psychosocial Organisation
22	History of Democratic Kampuchea in formal education Program	January 02, 2010	January 03, 2010	Professor Sambo Manara, Vice-Dean of History Department of Royal University of Phnom Penh.
23	Art of Memory	January 09, 2010	January 10, 2010	Mr. Long Khet, Youth for Peace Executive Director
24	Confrontation between the former Khmer Rouge and the victims	January 16, 2010	January 17, 2010	Mr. Nou Sari, former Khmer Rouge Soldier
25	Story from the Ground	January 23, 2010	January 24, 2010	Mr. Niem Chheng, writer in Publication project of YFP
26	Responsibility or Acting Order	January 30, 2010	-	Mr. Bou Ern, former KR soldier
27	Should we compile the story of the former Khmer Rouge?	February 06, 2010	-	Mr. Puy Kea, Head of Cambodian Journalist Club and KJODO reporter
28	<b>Rebroadcast</b>	<b>February 13, 2010</b>	-	
29	Do you realize the true within the case 001?	February 20, 2010	-	Nong Chanphal Orphan of the S-21 prison
30	Educate History of Democratic Kampuchea through tourism	February 27, 2010	-	No Guest
31	Why are young people interested in Khmer Rouge history?	March 6, 2010	-	Female Youth Eang Kimly YRDP
32	Will forgiveness lead to reconciliation?	March 13, 2010		Chum Mey, former prisoner at S-21
33	Killing list controller	March 20, 2010		Vin former Khmer Rouge clerk from Kompong Cham
34	Former Child soldier	March 27, 2010		Bou Orn former child soldier from Takeo

So far, we got more than fifteen former Khmer Rouge callers but only seven of them are willing to share their hidden experiences during the Democratic Kampuchea. Few former Khmer Rouge callers were later on asked to be the guest speakers of the program. All the programs are transcribed and exist in written English; the following parts should give an overview about some discussions in the shows.

**Case 1: Him Huy 50 (from Kandal province) former guard at S-21 Prison**

Him Huy said that he was 16 years old when he became a soldier in 1976. He continued that one day in the same year his commander sent him to be a guard in at Phnom Penh prison known as S-21. Seeing the prison cell made him scared, so he asked his boss to go back in the battle field because he rather wanted to die alone in fighting rather than working in the prison where his whole family members would be killed if the higher Khmer Rouge accused him of committing something wrong. But in the end, Him Huy became a guard at S-21 prison where around 12300 lives were taken.

**Case2: Arn Chorn Pond 43 (from Battambang Province) a former child soldier**

Arn Chorn Pond claimed that he was 9 years old when he was sent to, the Khmer Rouge Child Center, EK Phnom pagoda in Battambang. During the Khmer Rouge time, his job was to take off the prisoners' clothes before they were hit and pushed down into the pitch. He witnessed the killing three to five times a day, and even heard the screaming sound of the victims during the midnight. He remembered that he was told to kick the prisoners into the bloody ponds, but he felt like he did it in a dream.

Presenter: *Were you asked to kill people?*

Arn: *Sometimes, not often. I think I was too young to remember. Now I am old and I have been to many countries around the world, so this makes me feel better.*

Presenter: *Were you scared when the Khmer Rouge ordered you to kill?*

Arn: *Of course, even now when I talk about this my hands start sharking automatically. At that time, I did not feel doubt to do what they ordered me. I just knew that if I did not do I would also be in the same pitch of the victims.*

Presenter: *How do you feel when you heard that Arn used to kill people?*

Caller: (Mr. Tim 53 Takeo): *I am not angry with him. I know that he followed the order. If I was him, I would do the same.*

Caller: (Ms. Si As 48 Kampung Cham): *I have not known Arn, so I have no idea towards him, but if the perpetrator who I recognized during the Khmer Rouge is alive, I would complaint to the court.*

**Case 3: Phal 59 and Sari 58 (from Prey Veng province) former soldiers**

Phal is a former Khmer Rouge soldier and also former Khmer Rouge cadre. He confessed that he killed hundreds of *New People* in his village. He called to the radio program *You also Have a Chance* because he wanted to apologize the public for what he did. *"I want victims to forgive me and other former Khmer Rouge who had low position during the regime. I used to be a chief, and I was forced to kill people. From 1974 to 1975, I killed the prisoners of war if they refused to answer my*

*questions. I freed them if they begged for life. Later I was jailed for six months because I showed sympathy towards to prisoners as they cried. Right now, I feel regret on what I did."*

Responding to Phal's speech, Van Nath, survivor of S-21 prison said: *"I really appreciate him; he is the first person dare to share all his activities. It is really great, and it is very different from S-21 security guard. He is a good model for the others, and we should respect you," said Van Nath.*

Sari 58 is a former armed colleague of Phal was surprised to hear the confession of Phal on radio program because he did not know in advance that Phal is brave or able to ask for forgiveness. Sari is now blind because of one bomb which was exploding during the fighting. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge he lives quietly with his wife in Prey Veng province. Through out many efforts of the radio team and plus his own courage, Sari finally decided to be a guest speak in our radio program on the topic: *Confrontation between the Former Khmer Rouge and the Victims.*

Unlike Phal, Sari claimed that he is a former soldier, so his duty was to protect the Cambodian border and kill the Vietnamese enemies and spies from America. He believed that the Khmer Rouge did not force the soldiers to kill their own people. He thinks that the direct perpetrators are another group known as the Khmer Rouge security guard. Although in the radio program he was facing many challenging questions, Sari was willing to share his life as the soldier. *"I decided to tell my story as I am old and I believe that the young generation won't know about the Khmer Rouge if we don't tell them," he said.*

#### ***Case 4: Ouy Sarin 55 (from Kampung Cham) former Khmer Rouge soldier***

Ouy Sarin is the first former Khmer Rouge soldier who called into our radio program. He is a significant listener who telephones our radio team every show. He later on was invited to be the guest speaker on the topic: *Can You Forgive the Killer if You Know the Truth?*

In 1972, he joined the Khmer Rouge as a soldier. When Khmer Rouge gained power in 1975, he became the head of timber factory in Kampung Cham province where he was involved in killing of what he called enemy, in organizing Force Marriage Ceremonies, and other important events of the Khmer Rouge Party. His father was accused of destroying the Angkar's property (the Khmer Rouge's collective property) and was killed by his cousin in 1978. This led his name to be also on the black list of the Khmer Rouge. He left Kampung Cham secretly and escaped from one province to another by walking through the forest.

Presenter: *We are talking about telling the truth. Based on what you heard from the Khmer Rouge tribunal, will you forgive Duch if he confessed the truth?*

Caller (Mr. Roath 45 Prey Veng): *Many years ago before the tribunal started, I heard my neighbors saying they really want to burn the perpetrators' houses or even kill them. However, my neighbors cannot commit crime against the former Khmer Rouge because we need to respect the Cambodian law.*

*For Mr. Sarin, have you ever heard victims said that they would fight the former Khmer Rouge?*

*Sarin: Sure, I used to say that sentence also. I am very angry with my cousin, who killed my father, and I really want to take a revenge on my cousin who is still alive now, but my mother calmed me down as she believed killing is like a circle. She told me that if I killed my cousin, his son would kill my son, my wife or me. So the best choice is to keep calm.*

**Case 5: Bou Orn 50 (from Takeo province) Khmer Rouge Child Soldier**

Bou Orn carried a rifle when he was 14 years old. He stated that he was forced to be a Khmer Rouge soldier in 1976. When Khmer Rouge troop came to his village in Takeo, they separated him from his parents, and sent him to the Child Unit. He said that he was told not to feel pity on anyone and that his gun would be his powerful friend.

Presenter: *What was your job at that time?*

*Orn: Khmer Rouge sent me to the Cambodian-Vietnamese border. When I arrived they said that I was so small. Hence, they asked me to stay at the central border line. If anyone attempted to escape across the border, I would catch him or her.*

Presenter: *Did the people listen to you not to move from village to the border?*

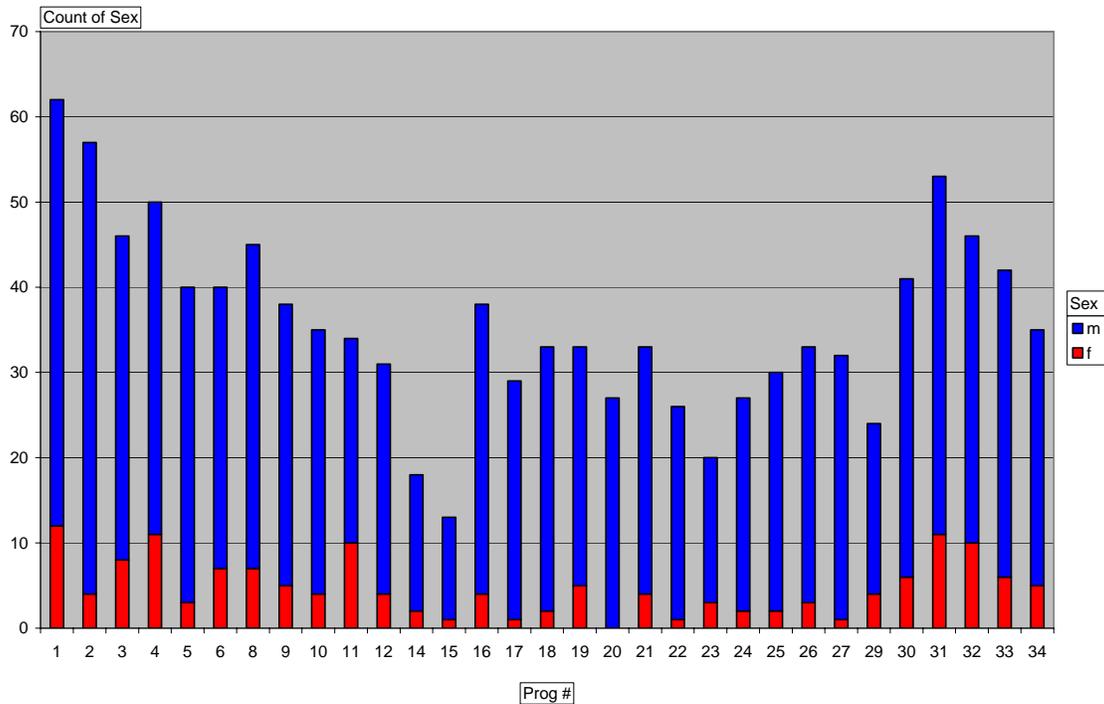
*Orn: Sure, because they saw my gun. In my child group, there were four to five guards with guns. We arrested villager who walked alone. We tied the elderly people who we thought want to flee, and we sent them to our chief.*

Presenter: *Did anyone fight against you when you arrested them?*

*Orn: No, they didn't because we had guns.*

Additionally, this radio program exposed unexpected stories of the individual former Khmer Rouge, making understanding, ask for responsibility and forgiveness of their actions possible. However, we found out that there is low percentage of female callers within the whole program even though the atrocity of the Khmer Rouge affects male, female, and Trans gender.

The bar chart below shows the proportion of callers on each program classified by sex. The chart gradually fluctuated from 60 callers to less than 20 callers, and goes up again to more than 50 callers. Compared with other programs about the ECCC topics the YFP radio gets more callers than other radio programs, due to the fact that people can listen radio in the whole country and also because the topic seems quite important for former Khmer Rouge at that time. This indicates the right way YFP is going, trying to face more the topic of the perpetrators and not only the victims.



### Group discussion and Evaluation of the radio program

On the 31 of January 2010, around 60 of villagers and youth were waiting for the YFP radio team in Thlok Pagoda Svay Rieng province. Before the evaluation had started, radio producers selected five proactive radio topics, edited the programs into 25 minutes, and copy these audio clips in CDS. Within the group, no one has ever listened to the radio program *You also Have a Chance*. Therefore, the program is fresh for them. After listening to the radio program once, there was the discussion among the group with some guiding questions from the team for around two hours.

During the discussion, survivors of the Khmer Rouge gave the impression that the radio program is balance because they could hear both the victims' voice and the former Khmer Rouge. More than that, the radio program provokes the debate of how the Khmer gained power, why the Khmer Rouge killed, and who is responsible for the atrocity. Third, the program provided the variety of voices towards the Khmer Rouge topic. However, several listeners said the program make them deeply grief as they suddenly reflected back their bitter experiences in the Khmer Rouge time. For example, 48 years old lady cried when she imagined the picture of her sister were taken to be killed. All in all, they were glad to here the voice of the former Khmer Rouge through the program.

In the group, youth thought that the program is a part of recording the Khmer Rouge history. They continued that this radio show acts as broadcasting evidence for the younger generation who were born after the collapse of the regime. Additionally, youth feel that the radio program is so useful for the audience who is illiterate. For instance, one female youth said that when she listened to this program, she strongly believed to what her parents and her teachers have told.

In contrast to Svay Rieng, in Por Bram village, Kompong Cham, the radio team found the regular listeners of the call-in-show program. Those villagers were energetic

listeners and active callers. Among them, there were a few former Khmer Rouge soldiers. They claimed that they listened to program because they would like to know what is going on especially on the Khmer Rouge tribunal. Furthermore, they admired the radio program as they have never heard about the former Khmer Rouge story before on the radio. This is the first time that Por Bram villagers are able to hear the former Khmer Rouge voice from other parts of the country.

At the end of the evaluation program, each group of participants was given three 25minutes radio program CVs, and three walkmans. The purposes of providing the materials are to gather people listen and discuss about the program, to give a space for villagers to reflect of what had happened in their community during the past 30 years, and to motivate youth to be active in critical think of the Khmer Rouge topic.

## **B. Former Child Soldiers Speak Out**

### **a) Conference in Siem Reap**

The Conference in Siem Riep, organized by YFP with around 250 participants for six days focused on the topic of *Collective Memory and former child soldiers*. YFP manage to invite three former child soldiers (from Cambodia, Liberia and Sudan). Arn Chorn Pond never talked before in public in Cambodia (only in other countries) about his involvement as a child soldier in Cambodia. Arn Chorn Pond until now only trust YFP as a organization and do not work with other NGOs or talks with the media about his life. Only with YFP he openly speaks and works.

All of the former child soldiers, who spoke publicly in the Conference, had to have special treatment by the YFP staff, due to the fact that all of them still had problems to talk. Although they freely talked, and wanted to talk, they were still traumatized. Not only for the speakers it was difficult to talk about their crimes in the public, also for YFP staff and the listeners it was difficult to face the topic of responsibility and talk out the crimes, which normally is not yet much addressed by any other NGO in Cambodia. The following gives you a small impression on what the former child soldiers have been talking, for detail information see the report about the Conference.

#### ***Arn Chorn Pond (Former Child Soldier in Cambodia)***

Youth are normally listening to the victim's stories but not to the stories of the former Khmer Rouge. This is the reason why Arn Chorn Pond, the famous flute player and former child soldier was invited to the YFP conference in Siem Reap on September 2009. Arn ChornPond explained that it is the first time in Cambodia that he decided to come as a speaker telling about his life during Khmer Rouge Regime. He said that it was hard to speak in front of a huge audience.

After his speech, one girl wanted to know why the Khmer Rouge killed especially the educated people. Arn Chorn-Pond said he can't understand it, either. He guessed that one reason is that the Khmer Rouge wanted to create something called *Year Zero* and start to build a new country from the beginning with only farmers.

The next question was if he had any plans for the future concerning youth. He said that he has traveled from one place to another to educate youth. He appealed to the youth not to forget the ancestors and the culture, especially Buddhism.

The last question was what kind of ideology the Khmer Rouge was used to brain wash child soldiers. Arn told that the Khmer Rouge called the children to the meetings which they held almost every day. All children were told that only Angkar that lead them to the right direction, so we must obey Angkar. The Khmer Rouge spoke bravely to show that they are strong and right.

***Nicolas Davis (former child soldier from Liberia)***

Nicolas Davis is a former child soldier from Liberia who has been working with the Veteran Child Soldier Association of Liberia (VCSAOL) in Ghana since 1997 and Birthdev organization from the Philippines since 2009. Born in 1979, he was recruited as a child soldier in 1990 by the Small Boys Unit of President Charles Taylor. He was recruited as a child soldier at the age of eleven.

During the panel, Nicolas Davis talked very openly about his past and expressed many emotions and fears he felt as a soldier. He was taken to a camp where he learned to use a gun, torture other people and use drugs such as marijuana mixed with gunpowder and cocaine to suppress the pain.

Nicolas Davis talked about the battles he had to fight, kill, and capture prisoners. He said that at the beginning of his life as a soldier he was superior, but soon he realized that the horror of being a child soldier would destroy his life. "There was no future, no hope, in less than one hour you could die," he said.

During peace discussions of the Liberian conflict parties in 1996, Nicolas Davis was arrested by peace-keeping troops and kept in torture for at least one month where he was beaten every day.

*"If you want peace, you have to do it yourself – people from outside cannot do it for you. We need to be peace-keepers and war is not a child game, the war is tearing us apart – we have to work for peace together,"* Davis spreads his message to the youth.

***Emmanuel Jal (former child soldier from Sudan)***

Emmanuel Jal is a former child soldier, an internationally recognized speaker, and a musician who travels around the world in order to speak about his life and his work. He was born in Sudan, a country in which was divided into the Islam-dominated north and the Christian south.

He was taken from his family home in 1987. When he was six or seven years old, and was recruited a child soldier for the rebel army. He said that thousands of children were collected to fight for them. They got trainings how to use a gun and how to attack a town.

After nearly five years of being a child soldier, he was rescued by a British aid worker called Emma McCune who smuggled him into Nairobi. He started to go to school. After Emma's death, he went to church every Sunday where he started to love singing.

During the conference in Siem Reap, he explained to the audience that it is not comfortable to talk about his life as a former child soldier. Yet he has a chance to

aware the world about the today situation of thousands child soldiers who are in the battle field not on the stage like him.

Impression of youth:

*"It was very exciting to listen to Emmanuel Jal. I have never heard a story like his story before. It was very important for me that he was here. Before his speech, I knew little about Sudan. I did not even know that the country was in war. When I thought about war, I only thought about Cambodia," 22-year-old youth from Pailin.*

After the Conference in Siem Riep there was also a Press conference in Phnom Penh with the former child soldiers was organized. The Press Conference was shown in different television channels, radio and articles can be found in different newspapers.

### ***b) Documentary Film: Your Chance***

A 25minutes documentary film *Your Chance* captured mainly a profile of the former Cambodian child soldier Arn Chorn Pond with the combination of the other two former child soldiers Nicolas Davis from Liberia and Emmanuel Jal from Sudan during the formal invitation for YFP conference in Siem Reap.

In Cambodia, the topic child soldier is not widely discussed although the judicial process of the Khmer Rouge tribunal is going on. There are few documents recorded about children who were engaged in civil war and war crime of Cambodia. To complement this loophole, *Your Chance* was produced by a young Cambodian team who were born after the Khmer Rouge regime with the financial and technical support from German Development Service (DED). It is one of the successes of this film, that the film is done by young Cambodian, who deal with their own history. It gives the film more value, because normally easily foreigners take the space and produce films about the Cambodian history. DED especially wants to supports the work of the Cambodian.

Furthermore this film was pre screened in Battambang in February to get some feedback from the people in the community. After that the film was finalized. Already before screening the first time, interviews with the production team in different radio shows were made, even from foreign countries. The production team afterwards got a lot of callers, who wanted to know more about the film.

This documentary film was publicly screened on 22 March 2010 at Cambodian-Japan Cooperation Center (CJCC) where around 300 national and international participants attended this event. Arn Chorn Pond the main character in the film was invited for audience's questions.

*Mr. Chea Sopeap, from Bophana Center, asks Arn Chorn Pond two questions.*

- 1. What encourage you to reveal your own past?*
- 2. Why other Khmer Rouge child solders do not dare to talk about this?*

Arn Chorn Pond: *“After I met my god father who took me to United States, I did not dare to talk about my experiences. Then I wanted to raise some money to help my own country, so I publicly told my story to the international viewers. By just sharing my story as a child soldier, I could earn hundred thousands dollars to help street child, prostitutes, and disable people in Cambodia.”*

*“It is really hard question for me when someone asks if I kill when I was a child soldier. Yes, it is true I killed people. If I did not do, I would also have been killed. Anyway, in the war if you did not shoot the enemies, enemies would have shot you. I don’t know myself whether I am a victim or perpetrator because my parents were also killed during the Khmer Rouge regime,”* said Arn Chorn Pond.

Arn Chorn Pond added *“for the second question, I don’t know why other former child soldiers do not dare to talk about their story like me, maybe they are afraid.”*

The film does not only show about the dark life of child soldiers but also explores the transitional point that three of them Arn, Nicolas, and Emmanuel turn to build the positive change in society which is contrasting to what they have committed in the past. All three of them are fighting for justice, for truth and for human rights, for not abusing child soldiers in the war and for stopping all wars now. More than that, the film producer provides the space for the youth and the Khmer Rouge survivors to express their critical view towards the main characters. Buddhism is also integrated into this film as one tool of healing both sides the victims and perpetrator.

This film furthermore gives now the possibility to open up more discussions about former child soldiers and perpetrators in Cambodia and how to support them and how to show youth a different perspective of war, not only from the victim’s perspective. The film is designed to be used as the educational material.

The film will be screened publicly one more time in Metahouse on 27. of May 2010.

#### **IV) Staff Capacity Building**

For the short term capacity building of the staff within the project, the project officer were sent to attend the *Contribution of Victim Participant and Civil Society in Transitional Justice Processes* workshop for four days in Marburg Germany. The two trainers of the HTB project were sent to Development Recourse Institute (CDRI) for the Training of Trainer which focused on the peace facilitation skill. On the additional skill, one trainer was allowed to study for one week on Consumer Education in Malaysia.

For the long term capacity building, the project officer has been supported to attend the Master Program on Applied Conflict Transformation Studies at Panhasastra University of Cambodia by DED.

#### **V) Networking**

We worked in cooperation with different stake holders. They are Head of Buddhist Monk, Monks, Former Khmer Rouge, Director of National Radio Station, and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal- Public Affair and Victim Unit. With the cooperation with other NGOs who work in similar topics, which sometime we join the actions such as Tran

cultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee(CHRAC), International Center for Conciliation (ICFC).

For media institutions, there is a strong Cooperation with the well known print and electronic media covering the news of our project especially on the film screening event. Those media agents are Radio Free Asia, Voice of American, Radio Australia, Radio France International, the Cambodia Daily, the Phnom Penh Post, and other local newspaper. As the Project Officer comes from the media background it is easily to have the important connections and Cooperation with these media field organizations. It is furthermore quiet important to have all these connection for the public relations of YFP.

## **VI) Challenges, Resolutions, and Lessons Learned**

Besides the achievement, we had some challenges to take on the *Healing through Buddhism* project.

First, the project and it's topic were build up completely. As there was the pressure from the beginning to do many activities, the time for preparing the curriculum and lesson plan was limited and the topic and concept was not clear for all the project staff. So it was more like training, learning from the training and continuing to write the lesson plan and the curriculum. In the end the curriculum is well prepared and was shared with different institutions, such as the University of Psychology in Phnom Penh or the Free University from Berlin.

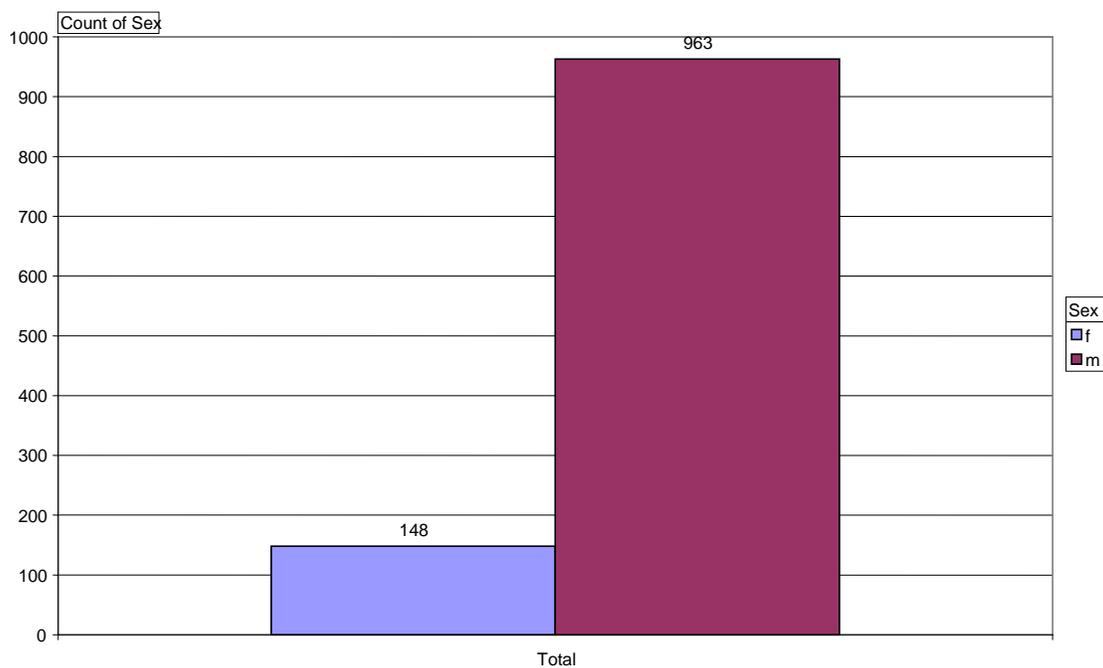
Second, trainers were facing hard time exploring the Buddhism theory that fit with daily activities of the monks as the elderly monks or head of the monk have their own political mindset that slow down the process of our training.

Through out the lesson learn of implementing the project, we had a regularly meeting to reflect on the scoop of our understanding towards transitional justice or other related topics. Therefore, we shared responsibility in our team to research on the subject matter. For next project, we would like to ask for a formal training permission from the Head of Religious Institution in advance. By doing this, we are able to avoid misunderstanding among the chiefs of monk in pagoda. Moreover, we contact TPO for more support on Healing Trauma topic. We are still trying to encourage the villagers to see the important of the Khmer Rouge history for their future if they discuss about the bitter experience of the past.

The terms former Khmer Rouge, victims, and perpetrators are the key point for discussing on the radio show. The reason we stated these words because we do not categorized any callers to those terms. In our project context, former Khmer Rouge means the one who used to work for the Khmer Rouge in any positions such as cook, village chief, soldier, or clerk. However, the former Khmer Rouge soldiers or former Khmer Rouge guard defended themselves as the victims because they also lost their relatives and family members during the regime. This provokes the struggling debate among the callers to distinguish who is the real victim.

Based on our observation, we found out that whenever we broadcasted the information related to ECCC (Khmer Rouge tribunal), there was less former Khmer Rouge calling into our program for a few weeks, but there were more victims called in. However, this radio program is the only show that provides the platform for the former Khmer to talk about their past life, to share their story, and to some extent take the responsibility of the tragedy in whole Cambodia.

Although we encouraged women to talk, we received only around 14% of the female callers. There is assumption of the radio team that woman play a role as the listeners meanwhile man occupy the telephone and become caller. Furthermore, masculine is the superior gender which is still practiced in the Cambodian perspective. Nevertheless, there is no formal survey has been done to prove the reason why there is lack participation of the ladies.



Within the radio project period, we got three radio producers working for the project. The first YFP radio producer has worked for two and a half months and left for another NGO. The second YFP radio producer has worked for three months and turned back to his former working Organization. The third producer has just organized the programs for a few weeks the program ended. These changes lead to the ineffectiveness of work flow and quality of the radio program. These changes could be managed because during the whole period the Program Manager of YFP was the presenter at the show and the Project Officer at YFP (both local experts of DED) was managing the whole process during the whole time of the radio show

To solve the issues of the radio program mentioned above, we had a weekly meeting with the radio team to discuss about the content of each radio program. As we know that working with former Khmer Rouge or perpetrator is a sensitive topic, we tried not to minimize bias perspective towards those people as the purpose of our program is to promote the former Khmer Rouge's voice.

For encouraging the women to involve in the discussion about the Khmer Rouge history, we will find new strategies to integrate the ladies inside the program such as inviting more female guest speakers, and setting up the topic specifically for the lady.

## **VII- Conclusion**

The original purpose of *Healing through Buddhism* project is to use the monks as the bridge between victims and the perpetrator. However, during the training workshop conducted by monks less perpetrators appeared. Most of the participants were youth and villagers who claimed themselves as victims. We can conclude that the former Khmer Rouge try to hide their story because of security reason.

This does not mean that the HTB project failed to reach its objective. The real practical experiences of implementation the HTB became the primary step to break out the line among the monks, survivors, and the youth. The most significant goal of the project is to empower the role of monks in the participatory way, to mobilize people towards accountability and to raise the awareness of the Khmer Rouge history to community where economical issue is being more concern than the past atrocity topic. These expectations are achieved by the strong efforts and the high commitment of the training team.

For the *Voice of the Former Khmer Rouge* project, we got a high number of former Khmer Rouge measuring to our project indicator. The reason that many former Khmer Rouge soldiers share their story on the radio and are brave enough to be in the documentary film is unclear. We just assume that former Khmer Rouge are more comfortable talking on radio than choosing the face to face communication.

Up to now, these community based projects HTB and VFKR are the supplementary parts of judicial system of Extra Ordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC). The participatory methods have applied within the projects, so the target groups can show their ownership. In short, the projects provide a room for the survivors and the youth to discover the hidden story, to debate the unacceptable accusation from the perpetrator, to promote voice of the former Khmer Rouge, and to prevent the hatred and brutality of the next generation.

Written by Sin Putheray, Project Officer VFKR

## VIII) Appendixes

### Appendix1: Pictures of Activities

