

Global Youth Connect

Cambodia Program Report

*Human Rights Delegation for Young Leaders
July 16 – August 15, 2006*

Organized in Collaboration with Youth for Peace (YFP)



“There is hope here.

Despite all the injustice, the corruption, the poverty that afflicts the people here, there is hope.

More than half of the population is under 25 and the enthusiasm, drive, and potential of all the young Khmer we’ve encountered during the course of the program gives ample reason to think that things will get better sooner rather than later.”

-Reflection from 2006 Delegation Participant

Introduction

Nestled between Thailand and Vietnam and overwhelmed by their development, Cambodia is likely to go unnoticed in the minds of many. After over three decades of war and isolation, Cambodia has emerged a bit battered and scarred, but bursting with hope and potential as represented by a bustling civil society made up of numerous local and international NGOs.

Anyone interested in Cambodia cannot escape learning about its gruesome history. By all accounts, the genocide takes center stage in Cambodia. This is especially true given the creation and the recent commencement of the tribunal for the Khmer Rouge, the Extraordinary Chambers for the Criminal Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The advent of the ECCC marks the first international process to hold Khmer Rouge leaders accountable for crimes against humanity. The international community and local monitoring bodies in Cambodia are closely eyeing the legitimacy of these courts and debating their appropriateness and effectiveness. It is no wonder that the ECCC is a focus of conversation in Phnom Penh, even though there are other more pressing daily issues facing Cambodians.

Land is one such concern...

The issue of land in Cambodia is deeply complex. Yet, access to land is at the heart of so many other challenges faced by Cambodians. Land is the basis for so many things that many of us in other countries take for granted. For example, having and owning land in Cambodia means a family has a better chance of being able to provide an education for their children. Owning land also means that there will be food to feed the family and people are less likely to get sick. Land is linked to prosperity, allowing Cambodians to eke out a living. Land is also a means of capital and, as such, assists Cambodians in moving up the social ladder.

With this knowledge in mind and the belief that the land issue provides a window into many of the human rights challenges faced by Cambodians, this human rights delegation to Cambodia chose to focus on the issue of land.

To the casual observer, it must seem like a grim irony; almost comic were its consequences not so brutally severe: Cambodia, a country of flatlands, of agriculture—of farmers, fields, and crops—is the home to countless thousands of people without land. Its brazen, unrelenting, and at times violent seizure from rural communities by government officials and outside business interests has become one of the most prominent and disturbing phenomena to emerge in Cambodia in recent years.

For a people so entrenched in and dependent upon a pastoral way of life, it is difficult to imagine a more offensive crime. What is perhaps most striking about such a practice is not the mere fact that it occurs, but that it occurs without shame, without fear of retribution from the perpetrators who have no qualms about depriving those already in poverty in order to enrich themselves.

--Excerpt from “Land of ‘Living Ghosts’: A Student Perspective on Cambodia’s Land Crisis”

With the land issue as our base of concern, we made sure to ask all organizations and institutions we interacted with about the land issue. What was their perspective? What could be done? What is being done? How can we help?

To further contextualize our understanding, we spoke to local residents about their concerns. It was through these interviews that we were able to glean the people's struggles, frustrations, and hopes. For, as we learned, state and national levels of government rarely trickle down to landholding peasant farmers. These individuals are the majority of Cambodia's population and their isolation from the state indicates serious state failure to reach out and provide for its citizens. Yet, there are many on-going efforts working to create awareness of the problems and to educate and help those in need.

GYC delegation members are currently finishing compiling a comprehensive report on their experience looking into the land issue in Cambodia. Entitled "**Land of 'Living Ghosts': A Student Perspective on Cambodia's Land Crisis**" will be published on GYC's website when finished and distributed to local and international NGOs and others interested in learning more about this important problem.

GYC Delegation

The 2006 delegation to Cambodia was comprised of twelve young people from the United States. All were chosen for their dedication to human rights and their commitment for peaceful change. Some delegates felt a personal connection to Cambodia or Southeast Asia, especially among the Cambodian-American participants. All were interested in pursuing human rights and social justice, and being part of active change.

Our partner organization, **Youth for Peace**, an organization that strives to develop capacity in young people while also promoting peace and democracy, helped organize the activities and provided an invaluable filter with which to help us understand the situation in Cambodia.

Alongside with YFP, Global Youth Connect in Cambodia worked very closely with several other local Cambodian organizations, including: **Khemara**, an organization whose focus is on vulnerable communities and **Ptea Teuk Dong**, an

organization in Battambang that provides hands-on training for poor, landless families.

All three organizations are part of an overall movement within Cambodian civil society to steer the country away from violence and impunity and towards an equitable and peaceful future. Thanks to the opportunity to interact and connect with these and other Cambodian organizations, our group was able to witness the change that is being made by Cambodian organizations working to build peace in a country still haunted by war by using education, community outreach, and training.



History, Human Rights & Hope Site Visits in Phnom Penh

We spent much of the first week developing a deeper understanding of Cambodia's history and becoming acquainted with the present human rights situation in the country. In Phnom Penh, we met with representatives of the **U.S. Embassy** and the **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – Cambodia** office. We also learned more about the work of the **Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)**, a leading Cambodian human rights NGO, and connected with leaders from our Cambodian partner organization, Youth for Peace.

Each group sketched out the history of Cambodia and colored in the present human rights situation. We discussed with them our possible role in the Cambodian struggle for social justice and peace and asked questions about what we could do to help. Of course, given our focus, we were particularly interested in hearing each organizations perspective on land issues. The information that we gathered

from them has been incorporated into GYC's report on the land issue in Cambodia.

Along with visits to different organizations, we spent the second day of the delegation in an emotional and thought-provoking visit to the Tuol Sleng genocide museum. The museum is housed in a former high school that was used as a prison and torture chamber by the Khmer Rouge where they, during their four years of terror, tortured and murdered thousands of citizens - men, women, children, Khmer, foreign, and members their own cadres. Because the Khmer Rouge were so fastidious in their documentation, photographs and records of "confessions" exist of every person they tortured and murdered. The Vietnamese were so invested in distancing their new regime in Cambodia from Pol Pot's regime that they established the museum. Every photo displayed is evidence of unspeakable cruelty and international apathy. The instruments of torture remain, as does every face and gaze affected by these horrors. The museum exists to commemorate this period in Cambodian history, but it is visited almost exclusively by foreigners which lends a strong sense of commercialization to the very real horrors that happened there.

As a complement to our visit to Tuol Sleng, we also viewed the documentary "S-21, Killing Machine" and spoke to a representative from the Cambodian Justice Initiative about the ongoing Khmer Rouge tribunal.

Near the end of the week, we visited the Stung Meanchey landfill, located on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. The site provides income for a community of garbage sifters who sell whatever salvageable materials they are able to amass. A kilo of the plastic bags used to store rice, for example, goes for about 10 cents.

Because the workers have no other way to make a living, the community developed an existence based around the dump. They live adjacent to it and comb its refuse for a living. Because it is a squalid, difficult existence, a handful of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have sprung up to offer assistance.

We visited with the **Vulnerable Children Assistance Organization**, which provides schooling and vocational training to the children

and adolescents of the garbage workers (when they aren't themselves sifting through the garbage).

Our visit began at the school located at the foot of the dump where we played with the children. The children were clearly used to foreign visitors and spent the time using the delegates' cameras to photograph themselves, and then peering into their own image, or sharing it with others. The Khmer phrase, "tuk muay" ("Take one photo!") was repeated over and over.

The garbage dump seemed to encapsulate every glaring social issue that had been brought up about Cambodia: the unlawful theft of land by the government, lack of education, lack of resources, and lack of funding. And yet, despite the squalid conditions, amid the impermeable stench that hung in the air, we found a new sense of hope—the children. Problems exist, but so do concerned individuals and organizations working to change the system. It was not the squalor, but the enthusiasm of the children in the school bordering the garbage, that made an indelible mark on our memory.





“The day we visited the landfill in Phnom Penh remains one of the most powerful and resonating memories I’ve taken from the program. The sight of little children barefoot and collecting scrap amid piles of garbage, vermin, and excrement, yet playing joyfully is both heart wrenching and inspiring in a way I’ve never quite felt before.”

-Reflection from 2006 Delegation Participant

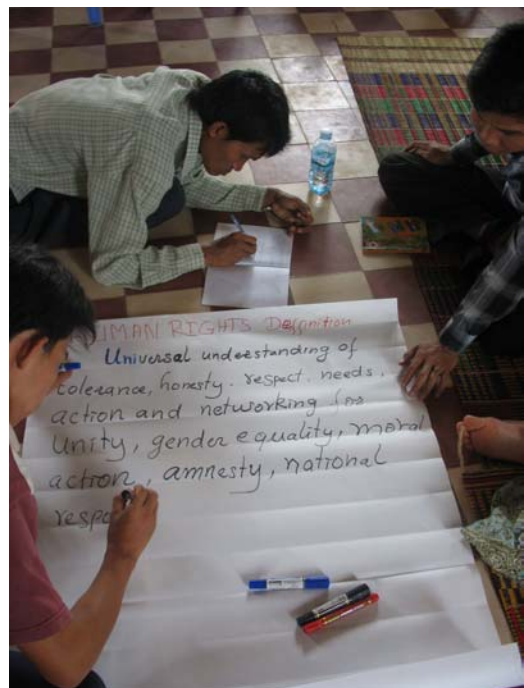
GYC workshops are *learning communities*, an experiential learning process to develop common frameworks of understanding, enhance knowledge of human rights, strengthen leadership skills, build supportive peer relationships, and develop collaborative projects to address issues of peace, justice and human rights. However, this dialogue is not always easy; often, participants experience frustration as they try to communicate complex ideas across cultural and language barriers. Yet, a profound sense of understanding and motivation for change can come from working through such challenges together in order to break down barriers that prevent us from bring our hearts and minds together to achieve common goals.

The first day of the learning community we worked to develop a framework of discussion based on a common understanding of participants’ perspective on the principles of human rights. We discussed our individual commitment to human rights, worked together to create a common definition of human rights, and discussed the shortcomings of and made suggestions for the United Nations, the Cambodian government, the United States government, and non-governmental organizations working in Cambodia.

Human Rights Learning Community Battambang

At the end of a week of site visits and meetings in Phnom Penh, we loaded into a bus and left for Battambang – Cambodia’s second largest city – where we would meet and work with Cambodian youth.

An important part of each GYC delegation is a series of human rights workshops with local Cambodian youth activists. Our Cambodian counterparts were all concerned with social justice and want to be part of change in their community and country. The workshop provided us with a portal for understanding Cambodia and allowed us to learn about the issue of land on a more personal level. The Cambodian participants became our friends. They helped us see and experience Cambodia through a different lens, making our experience in Cambodia more real and meaningful. In particular, they were generous with their time helping understand the land issue as it pertains to local villagers.



The second day of the workshop focused on expanding our knowledge and understanding of the history of land ownership in Cambodia and the factors that have created the present crisis of land grabbing, deforestation, and different land conflicts. A representative from the **Land Management and Administration Project**, Dr. Meach Samell presented the history of land laws in Cambodia and discussed his organization's attempt to systematically register titles to land-holders throughout the country, an onerous and seemingly limitless work. At the current rate of distribution, it will take fifty years for all of Cambodia's land to be completely titled and registered.



On the third day of the workshop we divided into separate groups focusing on a different project illustrating the land issue in Cambodia. The three group projects – an article, testimonials and a short film – were designed to offer us a chance to educate ourselves on the issue as well as to offer an opportunity to speak with Cambodians about problems and ascertain the perspective of local

residents. We designed and implemented the projects together, and pursued interviews and research over the next few days. One group went into the countryside to interview residents about their experiences with land. Another group met with two local NGOs and several of the residents at the Street Family Center (Ptea Teuk Dong).

The workshops culminated in hands-on projects focused on the land issue in which all the participants had the opportunity to interact and interview local residents in the surrounding area. This work helped to deepen our friendships with each other and many of the cultural barriers fell away. The Cambodian delegates were extremely generous with their time, resources, and knowledge. They were an invaluable component of our work.

Fieldwork Doing, Learning, & Appreciating

The last component of the program gave the participants an opportunity to engage in hands-on fieldwork projects. It is through such fieldwork that we engaged in “service” to the efforts already underway in Cambodia. This year, we had the opportunity to participate in three different projects which are discussed in more detail below.

Ptea Teuk Dong Street Families Center

Ptea Teuk Dong (Street Families Center) takes in approximately 20 poor families providing them vocational training (parents and young adults), education (children), and an opportunity to support themselves (they are encouraged to work in the rice fields and grow vegetables for their families and for the markets). For some families, this is a rare time of stability and empowerment. After the 10-month program, families are given a house (one is built for them), basic household materials, and seed money to get them started. It is an amazing program that provides the necessary tools for people to be more self-sufficient.

As part of our work fieldwork project with PTD, helped build the foundation of a house for one of the families “graduating” from the program. This family of five children headed by a single mother was overjoyed with the prospect of having a home. None of us had ever done any building, there were

not enough tools to go around, and at times, we slowed down the construction, but this was such a meaningful experience. We had the opportunity to do something for a family who showed their gratitude and appreciation smiles and tears. It was unforgettable!



Khemara

We also spent about a week working with Khemara, a Cambodian NGO focused on women. It was the first local NGO established in the country after the war. Khemara has implemented a variety of community-based programs, including two free kindergartens, counseling and testing for sex workers, home visits and support for people living with HIV and AIDS, and extensive community education programs.

“I was struck by the perseverance of many of the staff of the various NGOs we met and worked with . . . the realization that individuals can be so committed to and endure in their efforts to affect change really rubbed off on me.”

-Reflection from 2006 Delegation Participant

During our time with Khemara, we were able to see their work in action. In one of their programs with sex workers, we observed a community education classes for MSM (men having sex with men) sex workers where a doctor was explaining the ways that STDs were transmitted while sex workers were practicing applying condoms. Khemara provides much needed support to sex workers encouraging them to practice safe sex. We also accompanied Khemara staff on home visits of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA). These visits were an important component of the community health work.

Khemara is an example of how Cambodians are helping themselves. We were inspired by the courage and the strength of the people we interacted with. The impact this one small organization is inspiring!



Youth for Peace

Celebrating International Youth Day

The last fieldwork project we participated in was with our main partner organization, Youth for Peace (YFP). For the last several years, YFP has organized workshops and a rally for the youth in Kompong Chnang, a province about two hours outside of Phnom Penh. It's not unusual to have these kinds of programs in Phnom Penh due to the high number of organizations based in the capital. This is more of a rarity out in the provinces. Hence, the reason that YFP has chosen to hold their annual International Youth Day event in Kompong Chnang.

This year, there were over 150 young people from Kompong Chnang who came to take part in the workshops. They were drawn from junior highs, high schools and even a teacher's training program. The workshop topics included: gender and development, youth and leadership, peace and love, drugs and substance abuse, domestic violence, the environment, and HIV/AIDS. We assisted in the facilitation of the workshops and were able to learn how workshops and rallies were conducted in Cambodia. We were impressed at the inquisitive nature of the students who were vocal with their questions and quick with suggestions. At the end, each group created beautiful banners displaying their vision of the communities, of Cambodia.

The following day, there was a rally that drew local government officials as well as local members of the NGO community in Kompong Chnang. It was a time for the young people in the audience to vocalize their concerns to their community leaders while also reflecting on their roles as members of their community and Cambodia.



Next Steps

Our time in Cambodia was short, but in those short four weeks, we learned more about Cambodia, the human rights, and ourselves. We left Cambodia with new relationships, memories, hope, and a commitment to continue this work back in our communities. Some will write op-ed pieces for their local newspapers about this experience, about Cambodia. Others will organize events at their schools—colleges and high schools—to educate others about the situation in Cambodia, to share their stories. All will continue to be affected by their time here and work towards change.



U.S. Participant Bios

Selwyn Chu

Born and raised in Queens, Selwyn is a senior at New York University completing a dual B.A. in economics and politics with a minor concentration in English literature. His strong interest in social justice issues has led him to pursue a career in international human rights law. Upon graduating, he plans to spend two years abroad serving in the Peace Corps before returning to the States to attend law school. Selwyn currently works as an attorney's assistant and paralegal at a commercial law firm and in the past has held internships at The Legal Aid Society, working in the agency's juvenile rights division, and in the policy department of The Innocence Project, a non-profit legal clinic specializing in the exoneration of the wrongfully convicted using DNA evidence. He has extensive experience with service and civic engagement through his work with visually-impaired and handicapped children as a summer day camp counselor; after-school tutoring of local high school students; and his positions as philanthropy chair for his fraternity and the campus Greek community, and as a planning committee chair for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life at NYU—last year, coordinating a

sponsorship effort which raised over \$6,000 toward the cause. He recently traveled to Alabama and Mississippi with a group of fellow students to help with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts as part of NYU's inaugural Alternative Breaks program.

Allison Fajans-Turner

Allison's interest in Cambodia originated at a young age after reading a book entitled, The Clay Marble about a family forced to flee from the spill over of the Vietnam War. She is now a junior at Brown University double majoring in development studies with area focuses in Southeast Asia and Andean Latin America and modern European history. She is a member of the university intramural ice hockey team, Model UN, the Brown chapter of Democracy Matters fights for Clean Elections in Rhode Island, and a member of the Darfur Action Network. Allison has studied abroad in both France and Ecuador and as a result has advanced skills in French and Spanish. Her international experience also includes interning at an Ethnobotanical research laboratory in the Dominican Republic, spending a semester at an archeological field school in Sicily, and volunteering with a stone masonry guild in France. After graduating from Brown, Allison is considering teaching English abroad for a year before attending graduate school.

Kelly Hoerger

Growing up as a Korean adoptee in the US, Kelly is now a senior at Montana State University where she is studying political science and English writing. During her undergraduate studies, she has interned for the Network against Sexual and Domestic Abuse and is an advocate in MSU VOICE, Victims Options in the Campus Environment. She also has extensive volunteering experience, including youth camps and the Special Winter Olympics. She is currently pondering several options for post-graduation, including returning to school to pursue a master's degree in political science and international relations or working for an international nonprofit organization. In her free time, Kelly enjoys skiing, running, and playing the cello.

Siobhan Hogan

As Vanderbilt University's Michael B. Keegan Traveling fellow, Siobhan is currently living in Buenos Aires for 6-8 weeks. This program, designed to foster self-discovery, personal enlightenment, and cross-cultural consciousness, consists of one year of global travel. Her travels thus far have included Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Brazil, and Argentina and tentatively will include South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, India, Thailand, and Cambodia. Before embarking on this journey, Siobhan graduated from Vanderbilt University with a double major in communications and Spanish and a Latin



American studies minor. During her undergraduate studies, she spent a semester abroad in Madrid and held numerous leadership positions on campus. She has also participated in two alternative spring breaks focusing on poverty and health issues to Miami and Mexico, as well as a third to Guatemala as a site leader. Siobhan has also volunteered with Amigos de las Americas where she promoted sustainable development, built a home, and taught English in Costa Rica. After returning from her fellowship, she would like to work with a NGO or development agency and continue to complete a master's degree in international affairs.

Julie Holsinger

Julie is a law student at Tulane University Law School with a BA from Cornell University in government and an unofficial concentration in international relations. Last summer she worked at the Office of the US Attorney in New Orleans Criminal Division where she performed many tasks including assisting with the preparation of witness testimony, writing appellate briefs and motions and conducting in-depth research. During her undergraduate studies, she interned for the International Law Institute in Washington DC and has also at Heart of America. Julie has spent two summers studying abroad in Florence and Madrid, as well as time volunteering at an orphanage in the Dominican Republic. Her undergraduate thesis was entitled *Why Presidents Go to War/Presidential Use of Military Force Abroad* and specifically focused on the cases of Rwanda and Somalia. After graduating law school, Julie plans to become a prosecutor.

Christie Lee

Christie graduated from UCLA in 2003 with a degree in history and Southeast Asian studies. After graduation, she worked with AmeriCorps as a community health outreach worker for the Vietnamese community of Orange County. Through this position, she developed a Vietnamese literacy program for young children, provided education, training, and advocacy for low

income mothers, and conducted workshops on racial reconciliation. As an ethnic Chinese born in Vietnam and raised in California, issues of cultural sensitivity, identity, poverty, and social development have always been important to her. During her undergraduate studies, she worked at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at UCLA where she planned and organized colloquiums and symposiums. She has also studied abroad in Hanoi and Singapore. Christie plans to study international development in graduate school and someday join the Peace Corps. She also hopes to further her education and proficiency in Vietnamese so that she can one day be a Vietnamese interpreter. She is fluent in Vietnamese, Chinese, and English.



Ty Lim

Ty is a recent graduate in political science, Asian American studies, and ethnic studies from UC Berkeley. He is currently working as a documentarian for the Greenlining Institute producing films and public service announcements on issues such as low-income and affordable housing. Ty was born in Cambodia and brought to the US as a refugee with his family. He has studied abroad in both Hong Kong and Germany and is fluent in Chinese, English, and Spanish and conversational in Khmer and German. Also during his

undergraduate studies, Ty worked as a researcher at the Institute of Governmental Studies and School of Business at his university and served as a board member at the Lavender Youth Resource Information Center. He was also involved in the Asian Pacific Council, Academic Senate, and Third World Liberation Front. Ty plans to pursue a law degree with a focus on international and human rights law.

Lindsay McNicholas

Lindsay is currently working on her master's degree in international human rights at the University of Denver, Graduate School for International Studies. Her interest in social justice began at a very young age when she began traveling around the U.S. with her mother to work with Native American tribes. She received her undergraduate degree in human rights and sociology with an emphasis in peacekeeping and activism from the University of Redlands. Lindsay recently took a course entitled, *Hatred and Group Conflict* through which she wrote an extensive paper on the Khmer Rouge and child soldiers. Through this research, she was able to connect with Cambodian families in the Denver area and listen to their experiences. This research has developed an intense desire to travel to Cambodia and work in solidarity with Cambodian community organizations. Lindsay has been involved with numerous on-campus human rights organizations; such as Amnesty International and the Coalition for Non-Violent Activism and has also spent a semester studying abroad in Italy. Lindsay will be working as an intern this semester at the White House Project in Denver, where she focus on promoting women's involvement in the government. She is proficient in both Italian and Spanish.

Sameth Mell

Sameth is a refugee Khmer born in Thailand and immigrated to the US at the age of four. He is currently attending the University of Washington in Seattle where he is studying social sciences, a program that includes anthropology, sociology, women's studies, and communications. He plans to further his education by studying immigration and international law in a masters program. He is deeply involved with Rajana Society, an on-campus group devoted to the preservation of Khmer culture. He has also served as an intern at the Asian Counseling and Referral Service where he mentored teens in after school programs and is active in promoting HIV/STD awareness and diversity on campus. He is fluent in English and Khmer and has elementary language skills in both French and Spanish.

Julia Oakley

Julia is a sophomore at Wellesley College double majoring in peace and justice studies and French. Her primary areas of interest are human rights, sociology,

genocide, and conflict resolution. She is active on campus in Amnesty International where she serves as secretary and the Committee for Action and Awareness in Darfur. She has also worked as a camp counselor for children and is involved in Wellesley Words on Wheels, a kindergarten literacy program. This past summer, she interned at the Association for the Education of Young Children where she focused on public policy and also at The Legal Project. In the future, she sees herself pursuing either a law degree or a Ph.D. in a human rights-related field. She is committed to understanding the complexities of accomplishing peace and promoting human rights with a strong knowledge of and respect for varying cultures.

Katie Swartz

Katie has recently graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a BFA in painting and a MA in education. She is currently serving her second year of AmeriCorps through Public Allies in the Catholic Social Services Refugee Resettlement program, where she is working with refugees mostly from east and west Africa. Also through this program, Katie has focused on issues related to hunger, poverty, and the creation and maintenance of peace. She has spent time in El Salvador on a social justice trip with her school as well as Thailand with her employers from a local Thai restaurant. Among baking and traveling, one of her greatest passions is making artwork and she specializes in ceramic sculpture, crocheting, and painting. Katie hopes to become a classroom teacher concentrating in art while engaging her students in community and service based projects through a curriculum that incorporates both peace studies and art.



Jenelle Van Eynde

Jenelle's passion for human rights policy and nonviolent methods for conflict intervention was spurred by an introductory course entitled Human Rights in Theory and Practice at the University of Washington from where she graduated with a BA in

Culture, Literature, & the Arts and a minor in human rights. The University of Washington is also where she is presently pursuing a Masters of Arts in Policy Studies. In addition to her studies, Jenelle volunteers as part of the fundraising committee of the Nonviolent Peaceforce, an organization whose work focuses on Sri Lanka. She also has experience with children and young adults through her work as a private childcare provider and a past soccer and softball coach. Following the completion of her graduate degree, she would like to serve in the Peace Corps and then begin a PhD program in peace studies or conflict resolution.

Cambodian Participant Bios

Bopha Khoun

Bopha is a first year student at National University of Management. She is also a member of Citizen Action for Social Change (CAN) which works with youth to develop the country. She has taken part in several peace building trainings with Youth for Peace. She is interested skills and issues such as cross-cultural communication, program evaluation, community development, conflict resolution, environment, poverty and economic development. Her future goal is to work for a non-profit organization.

Lemhuor Bun

Lemhuor works as a volunteer for Youth for Peace on the peace building program and leads youth group field visits for YFP. He is the contact person in Battambang for YFP. He has participated in many social activities with NGOs on the promotion of peace and democracy. He is also a university student in Battambang town. He is interested in cross-cultural communication, advocacy, program evaluation, general human rights, children and youth issues and the environment.



Heung Kouluong

Kouluong holds a Bachelors of English from the University of Management and Economics at Battambang. He is a member of a youth group with YFP. From 1998-2000, he was a volunteer teacher of English at Buddhism for Development. He has also been a volunteer researcher for DC-Cam since Aug 2005. He has attended many peace trainings at YFP. He is interested women's issues, children and youth issues, human rights, cross-cultural communication, public education and program evaluation.

Sourn Seng

Sourn is a third year student at Build Bright University in Battambang. He is a member of Citizen Action Net for Social Change (CAN). From 2003 to 2005, he was a salesperson for Build Bright University. From 2005 to 2006, he was a marketer for People Service International (PSI). At the present time, he is interested in cross-cultural communication, community development, program evaluation, conflict resolution, environment and poverty and economic development. He has also participated in different peace trainings with YFP.

Vith Riem

Vith was a volunteer for DC-Cam in Aug 2006. He interview people in Kratie province for "Searching for the Truth," DC-Cam's magazine. He is now a third year student at Cambodian University for Specialty (CUS). He has completed several pace building trainings at YFP where he is a member of a youth group working to recruit volunteers. Vith is also a member of the Youth Council of Cambodia network along with Citizen Action Net for Social Change (CAN).

Dara Meas

Dara is a university graduate. In 2002-2004 he was the community development officer for the Institute for Social Development. He held the position of deputy director of the Foreign Language Center from 2004-2005. Now he is a branch officer for Entrepreneurs du Monde. He has experience teaching English for NGOs and many schools where he volunteered in such fields as administration and research. Dara has completed different course trainings Gender, Leadership, Health Education and Democracy.

Sara Chhay

Sara is third year student at Build Bright University at Battambang. He works as a peer educator for Khmer Youth Association (KYA). He was a storekeeper for the Mine Advisory Group in 2001. He also worked for the Agricultural Industry Development Community to assist the children and the elderly. Sara has completed course trainings on community development, administrative and secretary, and teacher training.



Bopha Pep

Bopha finished high school in 2005. She has completed different leadership trainings hosted by different NGOs on leadership, peace, and democracy. She is a volunteer with YFP in one of the youth group. She is also a volunteer for the Dhamayietra Center. During her spare time, she teaches English to young children. Bopha hopes to finish her university studies in a few years. She likes to work in teams and to share and exchange information with friends. Now she is interested in cross-cultural communication, community development, program evaluation, human rights, education and poverty and economic development.

Thuch Sok

Thuch is a third year student at Cambodian University for Specialties in Battambang. He was a monk and graduated from a Buddhism high school. In 2005, he worked as an administrator for the Department of Social Work. Today, he works for Sochiveak Thor organization. He is also an English teacher at a few private English schools. He also leads a YFP volunteer group in Battambang. He has completed skills trainings in IT, leadership, peace, administration, and pedagogy. He is also interested in human rights, democracy, education, conflict resolution, community organizing, program evaluation and action planning.

Bunchong Ream

Bunchong became a Buddhist monk at the age of 12. He is now studying at a Buddhist high school in Battambang. He has completed course in democracy. He is interested in cross-cultural communication, program design and implementation, public education, human rights, education and poverty and economic development. He wants to continue his study at university and become a teacher in the future. He believes teacher can share knowledge with other people.



Pheaktra Sem

Pheatra works as the administrative and financial manager for Aphivat Strey (Women Development Organization) which aims to empower women, orphans and the poorest people in the community. She is married. She was a teacher at secondary school in Battambang where she taught math and physics. She recently received her Bachelors from University of Management and Economics. In 2004, she also worked as a volunteer to assist the Hope of Children organization writing proposal, budgeting and documentation.

Chanthorn Sok

Chanthorn was born in Svay Reing and move to live in Battambang in 1998. He is in his second year at the University of Management and Economics. He has worked as a volunteer for the Development Remote Indigenous Village Education Project in Rattanakiri. He worked as a Peer Educator for the Reproductive Health of Cambodia and teaches English to poor people in the community. During the general elections, he was a translator for international observers in 2003. He is now working for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) as a translator and is also the director of Economic Development of Rural of Cambodia Organization (EDRCO).

Staff Bios

NAVIN MOUL

Cambodia Program Director

Navin is the Program Director for Cambodia and has organized three GYC delegations to Cambodia. She is a Cambodian-American currently pursuing a PhD at the University of California, Berkeley in the Ethnic Studies department. Her dissertation research is on citizenship with a specific focus on the deportation of Cambodian-Americans from the United States to Cambodia as means to look at incorporation politically, economically and socially.

She works as a graduate student instructor aiding in the teaching of ethnic studies, Asian American studies, and Southeast Asian studies to undergraduate students. Navin is also involved with the Berkeley Cambodian Student Association and serves as a mentor to Cambodian children adopted by American families. She has traveled to Cambodia several times conducting field-work, research and to visit family. Before attending graduate school, she was a first grade school teacher in Lynnwood, Washington. Navin holds a B.A in American Cultural Studies from Western Washington University and a Master's in Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley.



JESSICA GIBSON

Special Project Assistant

Jessica graduated from the University of Seattle in Washington State in 2001 with a degree in English language and literature and extensive coursework in the humanities and women's issues. After graduating from college, she took a job in a restaurant, which exposed her to people from a wide range of cultures. This experience led to her to learn more about immigrant and refugee rights. As a result, Jessica traveled to Thailand and taught English to workers in a Nike factory and environmental education to Thai and Japanese students at a multi-cultural camp. She currently volunteers at a non-profit organization-serving refugees in the U.S. and is studying multi-cultural education. She eventually hopes to work in the NGO sector as an advocate for refugee and immigrant rights and/or as an ESL teacher in the formal educational system. When she returned from the summer 2005 delegation to Cambodia Jessica spent the autumn working as a community programs intern at the World Affairs Council, planning events promoting international awareness and facilitating community discussions around foreign policy issues. At the moment she manages a restaurant and plans to attend graduate school in the fall. She was recently accepted into the

Monterey Institute of International Studies, where she plans to get her Masters in TESOL.

MUNY CHHIT***Project Coordinator, Cambodia***

Muny participated and assisted in the delegations to Cambodia in 2005. Since 1999 Muny has worked as a trainer for Youth for Peace, a Cambodian organization dedicated to providing education in peace building, conflict resolution, leadership, democracy and human rights to Cambodian youth. In his role as a trainer, he designs and facilitates workshops for youth ages 15-25 on topics such as building a culture of peace, conflict resolution, human rights, leadership and non-violence. He plans to assist YFP in developing a new human rights and democracy education initiative for Cambodian youth. Muny has also led field visits for YFP and is helping to build a network of Cambodian children and youth involved in peace building. He is also trained as a secondary school teacher and has taught English to Cambodia children and youth ages 8-20. Muny served as a member of the organizing committees for the Southeast Asia Youth Camp for Peace and the Adult Investment for Non-Discrimination (AIDS) Campaign. He also acted as an observer of the commune council election in Phnom Penh in 2002. Also in 2002, Muny attend the Youth Camp for Democracy and Peace in Indonesia as a Cambodian youth representative and in 2004 he participated in the Conference on Peace Education around the World in Munich, Germany. He is currently finishing a degree in Peace Studies at the University of Cambodia.