

**Seattle University School of Law
Cambodia Legal Internship
Intern Report – Summer 2013**

TO: Junsen A. Ohno, International Programs Administrator
FROM: Barbara Serrano, Summer Associate, Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)
RE: Summer 2013 Report

Dates of Internship: June 13, 2013 - August 16, 2013
(nine weeks)

Supervisor: Christopher Dearing, DC-Cam Legal Advisor

Internship Work Assignments:

1. Model Legislation on Private Museums

Chris compiled a list of proposed projects from which we could choose. My project was based on a personal request from the director of the National Museum in Phnom Penh. He has become increasingly concerned with the private museums being established in Cambodia. Though private museums reflect the country's growing popularity with tourists, the government currently has no authority to regulate their quality and operations. Nor can the Cambodian government vouch for the authenticity of private museum collections. My task was to research museum laws in other post-conflict nations and propose model legislation for private museums.

I love art and museums, so the project was a good fit for me. I spent several weeks looking for museum statutes via the UNESCO database, as well as Google and other website recommended by Chris. In addition, I researched the larger topic of cultural heritage and looting and trafficking in relics and antiquities. One of the reasons post-conflict countries regulate private museums is so they can verify the provenance of collections. Cambodia has had its share of problems with looting at temple sites in Siem Reap and Koh Ker, so it is not unreasonable to worry that some of the stolen items might end up in the display case of a private museum.

Chris guided my work throughout the project and suggested specific countries to study, for example, Kosovo and other ex-Balkan states. He also provided me with a framework for drafting a memo that would highlight key aspects of the legislation. Given Cambodia's Buddhist identity, I took particular interest in Vietnam, Thailand, China, South Korea and Japan. There is not much secondary research in this area of cultural heritage law, so much of my research was drawn from the statutes.

If anything, I wish we had met with the National Museum director earlier in the project. (Chris, DC-Cam's museum director, and I met with Mr. Vireak on August 8, 2013.) I asked for a meeting as soon as I accepted the assignment but was told the museum director was too busy. When we finally met with Mr. Vireak, the DC-Cam folks and I learned that a volunteer attorney at the National Museum and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts had been working on the same

museum law project. The volunteer attorney was just as unaware of my work and the role of DC-Cam as we were about her. It was an awkward situation. Nonetheless, I proceeded to outline my proposed legislation and why I thought it would help strengthen and preserve Cambodia's cultural heritage. The National Museum director seemed quite receptive.

I remain very interested in this project and have asked the National Museum director to consider allowing me to continue working on it from the States. Chris also has said he will work with me to submit a journal article on private museum laws in post-conflict nations.

2. Editing for the Cambodia Journal on Law and Policy

Several summer associates were asked to help edit articles for the new Cambodia Journal on Law and Policy, which is scheduled to launch publication in 2014. I was assigned an article written by a Washington DC attorney on the lack of enforcement of international labor standards. Chris asked me to do a substantive edit, i.e. edit for content.

The assignment probably took me about five days to complete. I did both a substantive and technical edit. The article required some reorganization, but was otherwise in good shape. The author was very cooperative and said he would likely incorporate all of my suggested changes.

It would have been helpful to have more direction from Chris as to what he expected in a substantive edit. I am not involved with any law journals at Seattle U, so I sought advice from another summer associate who edits a journal at Yale. She gave me tips about what to look for in the article, along with the copy of a letter she wrote to an author summarizing her suggested edits. I used that letter to outline a similar letter to the author of the article on international labor standards.

3. Cambodia Tribunal Monitor Outreach

In late June, I went with three members of the DC-Cam staff to Kampong Thom Province to attend a presentation to college students. Ashlee, a summer associate from Vermont Law School, and I volunteered to go on the weekend trip so we could observe the presentation and then write an article for the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor website. The presentation was one of many DC-Cam has held over the past 18 years to promote awareness among Cambodians about the Khmer Rouge regime.

The presentation at Kampong Thom was held at Cambodian University of Specialties and was attended by about 100 people. Though I walked in with a general background of what occurred under the Khmer Rouge government, I could not help but be touched by the emotion. The presentation began with a seven-minute video that shows conditions at Tuol Sleng Prison on January 10, 1979, a few days after the Khmer Rouge fled Phnom Penh. Students saw black and white images of men shackled by iron chains, their bodies emaciated from starvation and withered by torture. Pick axes, shovels, metal locks, cameras, and an array of harrowing photographs were scattered nearby.

Phalla, a member of the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor team, opened the discussion by asking students for feedback. She also encouraged them to share the personal stories they have heard from their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, anyone in the family who was touched by the Khmer Rouge. I stayed for most of the presentation, but I ducked out a few times to interview students. Ashlee and I had decided to focus our article on two or three students who attended the presentation, so we could tell the story through their eyes, rather than write an article summarizing the presentation. Once we returned to Phnom Penh, it took us about two days to get the story written and edited. The article was published as a PDF on the Cambodia Tribunal website under News for June 22, 2013: <http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/category/news/page/7/>. (Copy attached).

The trip to Kampong Thom Province was one of my favorite experiences in Cambodia. Outside the presentation, I got to spend time with DC-Cam staff and see Cambodia's lush countryside. Ashlee and I became fast friends with Dany, Cheytoath, and Phalla. They introduced us to fish with mango, passion fruit shakes, banana-leaf cake and some of Cambodia's delicious fruit, like mangosteens. We even accepted the offer to try fried tarantula and cricket, and enjoyed it!

Before we returned to Phnom Penh, Dany drove us to the Sambor Prei Kuk temples, built in the 7th century and older than Angkor Wat. We also drove to a reservoir located just outside the city of Kampong Thom that was constructed during the Khmer Rouge period. I found the road trip to the temples the most fascinating. On our way to the temples, we passed through remote villages, where I saw homes built on stilts, families gathered together to share meals, and people working in rice paddies. How lucky we were to be traveling with DC-Cam staff; they explained many of the things that struck our curiosity – why, for example, people put small wooden alters outside their homes and pointed out that every tree on the land has a purpose.

4. Attendance at ECCC Court Hearings

I spent one day at the court hearings. All summer associates were encouraged to attend even if our individual project was not related to the hearings being held at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The ECCC hearings, where former Khmer Rouge leaders are being prosecuted, have drawn quite a bit of news coverage and controversy.

I attended the prosecution's questioning of Stephen Heder, a former journalist-turned-professor who had interviewed top Khmer Rouge officials. Though the testimony was not particularly dramatic, Heder provided interesting description of what Phnom Penh was like just before the Khmer Rouge took power. It is worth attending ECCC court at least once, if nothing else but to see the busloads of people traveling from the far reaches of Cambodia to see the proceedings. Dany and Cheytoath or the person writing about the court proceedings can help you determine the best day or days to attend. Ideally, you will want to be in court if any former Khmer Rouge leaders actually get on the stand.

DC-Cam Staff

The men and women who work year-round at the DC-Cam office made this internship even more special. Many of the summer associates and I developed strong and lasting friendships with Cheytoath, Dany, and others. We organized outings to the movies, Sunday night potlucks, local bars, and the outdoor exercise classes near the Friendship Memorial. A few of the guys also played soccer with the DC-Cam men's team on Monday and Wednesday nights. Toward the end of our stay, my roommates and I hosted a party at our apartment that was attended by just about every DC-Cam employee (more than 30) as well as the summer associates.

We were told that this year's summer associates socialized with Cambodians much more than past groups. I hope future summer associates continue the tradition. Many of us were eager to learn the language and soak up everything we could about Khmer culture, so that probably helped break down any perceived barriers. Cheytoath and others really appreciated our willingness to try foods that other Americans might have frowned at. A handful of DC-Cam staff members have studied in the United States and Hong Kong, yet they are all quite proficient in English. They will go out of their way to make you feel comfortable and provide any tips or information you need (for example, where to buy towels and pillows for your new apartment). Seek them out as friends. Once you get to know them, you cannot help but be inspired by their personal stories and their ambition.

Before the Trip

- Plan travel dates and buy plane tickets.

Try to leave extra time at the end of the internship to travel. DC-Cam will allow you about a week of free time during your time there.

- Buy travel insurance

It's worth the money (about \$125). My father passed away shortly before my scheduled trip. With travel insurance, I was able to recover the cost of changing tickets and canceling guesthouse reservations. AAA has an excellent plan that also covers theft, lost baggage and most importantly, medical evacuation (should you be seriously injured and or become ill).

- Take two passport photos to Phnom Penh

You will need more photos for visa renewals in Cambodia and visas to other countries. (Seattle U will advise you to take six photos.) Be aware that passport photos are much cheaper in Phnom Penh than Seattle. Buy them at Lucky Digital Printing, about three blocks west of the DC-Cam office on Sihanouk Boulevard.

- Connect with other future DC-Cam interns

See if one or more summer associates would be a good fit for sharing an apartment. This was how I connected with Dana, a law student from Fordham Law School in New York. (I met my other roommate, Simon, in Phnom Penh.) One associate set up a Facebook page so we could communicate with each other before arrival. We used the page often during the summer to post dinner invites and photos.

- Reserve a room at a guesthouse

You will need a place to stay for at least three or four nights in Phnom Penh. We moved into our apartment on four days after I arrived. I stayed at Okay Guesthouse, which was fine for me. (\$14/night). But Dana, who booked separately, would not stay there again. They put her in a windowless room. DC-Cam will recommend that you stay at the Golden Gate Guesthouse on Street 278. It's situated near good restaurants, ATM machines and Lucky grocery store. Two summer associates decided to live there for the entire summer.

- Buy at least one guide book on Cambodia

I took the National Geographic book, which has excellent overviews for each province as well as shopping, restaurant, and hotel recommendations. Also, I recommend reading "The Killing Fields" by Haing Ngor. I read it on the plane to Phnom Penh. After reading it, I became obsessed with the Khmer Rouge period and also read "When the War Was Over: Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution" by Elizabeth Becker (a former Washington Post war correspondent) and "Cambodia Year Zero" by Francois Ponchaud (English translation).

- Schedule an appointment with your doctor

I debated whether to get malaria pills because of the cost. In the end I'm glad I splurged. I traveled through jungles and the countryside without worry. Also, rather than risk buying prescriptions in Phnom Penh, stock up on what you need before leaving Seattle.

- Buy Jungle Juice at REI

It's the most effective mosquito repellent (so says my doctor). If you are sensitive to mosquito bites like me, use it sparingly but use it daily. One bottle lasted me the summer.

- Pack at least one bath towel and a wash towel

Furnished apartments are limited as far as linens. Dana and I bought what we needed at the Russian Market, but it would have been cheaper to take my own towels.

Living in Phnom Penh

- Budget about \$300 to \$450 for rent

Dana, Simon and I were lucky to find a spacious apartment near the Russian Embassy. It was about a 12-minute walk from DC-Cam. The landlady charged \$900 for three of us. We paid separately for electricity service, which was about \$50 a month. We had AC in the bedrooms, which was all we needed. The three of us acclimated to the humidity and had fans in the living room.

- Finding an apartment

The DC-Cam staff will encourage you to look for vacancy signs in the neighborhoods you want to live in (BKK1 or the area where we lived, between Norodom and Sothearos) as soon as you arrive. But that proved fruitless, probably because we went apartment hunting relatively late in the summer (mid June). We found our apartment through a realtor who had listed our apartment on an expat website. The building did not have 24-hour security, but a locked gate and the watchful eye of our landlady.

We were lucky because our apartment also came with a recommended tuk tuk driver, Mr. Molis. We relied on him for rides across the city and to the airport. Many drivers like Mr. Molis stake out certain streets and parking spots so they can develop relationships with residents (and summer interns). Try to find a tuk tuk driver like Mr. Molis, someone you can depend on and who knows his way around the city.

- Buy a cell phone

The Nokia phone I bought on Sihanouk Boulevard cost about \$35. I was going to get a SIM card for my iPhone, but it would have taken several days to “unlock” it and I was at risk of losing all my contacts. You can get the Nokia set up in minutes.

- Buy a USB stick for your laptop

Our apartment did not come with Internet service, so the three of us relied on USB sticks to connect at home. The wireless service at the DC-Cam office was fairly unreliable, so it was a worthwhile purchase. I carried it everywhere with me.

- Exercise

I joined the Muscle Fitness Center in the Kham Chankamron neighborhood. It’s not fancy but has treadmills, weights, bikes and elliptical machines, as well as lockers and a shower. The fees are reasonable. The only downside is that it’s situated too far from DC-Cam or BKK1 to walk there. The best option is to take a tuk-tuk there and ask the driver to wait for you to finish your workout and then take you home.

There are also outdoor exercise/dance classes near the Friendship Memorial. Be sure to try them! They run from about 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and cost 1000 riel (25 cents) per class. The instructors play everything from hip hop to Cambodian pop songs. If public exercise is not your thing, try yoga classes near Norodom Boulevard. The fee was about \$7 per class, so I only attended two classes. In retrospect, I wish I had gone there all summer. The studio provides a nice respite from city life and is located a short walk from DC-Cam. <http://www.yogaphnompenh.com/>

- Shopping

Go to U-Care pharmacy, located near DC-Cam for toiletries and over-the-counter medicine. D’s Books on Street 240 for books and smoothies. The Russian Market has all the household goods you may need, as well as gifts. Street 240 and Street 178 have excellent shops for scarves and unique gifts. Plus, they are just fun to walk through on a lazy Saturday afternoon. Stop in at the Shop on Street 240 or Daughters of Cambodia on Street 178 for breakfast or lunch.

Restaurants

Phnom Penh has a wide selection of western fare, along with Thai, Japanese and other Asian food. The best Cambodian food is cooked on the street, but choose carefully. Ask Dany and Socheata take you to the Cambodian restaurant on Street 178 (dinner costs \$2), and try the sticky buns (50 cents) on Street 360 near the corner of Mao Tse Tung Boulevard.

Meals are relatively inexpensive compared to Seattle. But if you eat out every night (as I tended to do), you can blow through your budget quickly. I ate dinner at home at least a couple

times a week to ease the hit on my pocketbook. You can take lunch to work, but it is hard not to want to spend time with other associates over a shared meal.

Most guidebooks will direct you to Lucky grocery store on Sihanouk Boulevard for groceries, but Lucky is expensive and the produce is not good. I found it more convenient to shop at the Elephant Market on Street 294 near the corner of Sotheiros Boulevard for essentials. Rather than prepare salads at home, I made regular trips to Vego. Also, you can get iced coffee for 50 cents from the women who run the stand around the corner from DC-Cam rather than spend \$2 for iced coffee at Java.

My favorite restaurants are:

- Warung Bali (Indonesian)
- Taste Buds (Indian)
- Vego
- Taqueria Corona
- Piccola (pizza)
- Daughters of Cambodia café (upstairs)
- Java Café (upstairs)
- Tamerind (Mediterranean and Cambodian)
- Malis (upscale Cambodian)

Safety

I felt very safe in Phnom Penh. The more I became familiar with the streets and neighborhoods, the more comfortable I became walking home at night (though I never carried my laptop in the dark). The biggest hassle was that I was constantly offered rides by tuk tuk and moto drivers – day or night. Still, I always guarded my backpack and camera when sitting in a tuk tuk. Purse snatching still occurs, unfortunately, which is why you will notice that many tuk tuks have installed screens to protect their patrons.

Please stay off the motos. My roommate Dana was in an accident while riding as a passenger; a few days later, she saw a man seriously injured when an SUV slammed into his bike. Toward the end of summer, another associate was hospitalized after he took a bad turn on his bike. Cambodia has a high traffic accident rate, largely because few moto drivers and passengers wear helmets and because few drivers follow traffic rules. Cambodia requires helmets, but the law is not consistently enforced. There is an organized chaos to the traffic that you will come to appreciate, but you still have to be careful whether you're riding a tuk tuk or walking across the street.

Travel

Within Cambodia, I traveled to Siem Reap, Battambang Province, and the island of Koh Rong Saloem off the coast of Sihanoukeville. The three-day trip to Battambang Province was organized by DC-Cam (thanks to Youk Chhang, the director, who agreed to pay for the hotel rooms and transportation).

Outside Cambodia, I went to Burma (Myanmar) and Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). My only regret is that I didn't take more trips. It became a matter of trying to balance time and money to explore Phnom Penh and Cambodia with other parts of Southeast Asia.

If you can afford the airfare, go to Burma (Myanmar) and carve out as much time as you can for the trip. It's a country trying to catch up to the rest of Asia at warp speed. What you see there now will be vastly different in a few years. Take the 10-hour bus ride to Bagan to see the temples (and splurge for the bus that has a three-seat configuration. It's worth \$19). These temples are nothing like Angkor Wat or Koh Ker. Bagan is what Siem Reap was 10 years ago, i.e. no tourist crowds, which makes temple hopping far more enjoyable.

- It costs \$20 to get a visa through the Burmese consulate in Phnom Penh. To save time, you can pay \$30 and get a visa on arrival at the airport.
- Take clean \$100 bills. ATMS are only now being introduced into the country.
- Beware any person who presents him or herself on the street as a moneychanger. My friends and I were too trusting and got ripped off. These thieves work the area near the pagoda. Stick to official money-exchange offices if you need cash.

Spend a weekend in Saigon. The city has beautiful architecture, delicious food, and a vibe that you'll find both exhilarating and exciting. Check out the War Museum, the tunnels, the rooftop bars, and of course, Vietnamese coffee.

- Carry cash and other valuables in your pockets when walking in Saigon. My first night there, a woman on a moto tried to snatch a purse I was wearing crosswise across my body. She didn't get my purse, but the experience left me feeling much more cautious.

Finally, Agoda.com is excellent for researching airfares and hotel rooms in Cambodia and Southeast Asia. I found the reviews very helpful and current.