

# Handa Center's 'Community of Practice': Teaching Human Rights



**Saturday 29 April 2017 – 9am**  
**Topic: Teaching Human Rights Introduction**

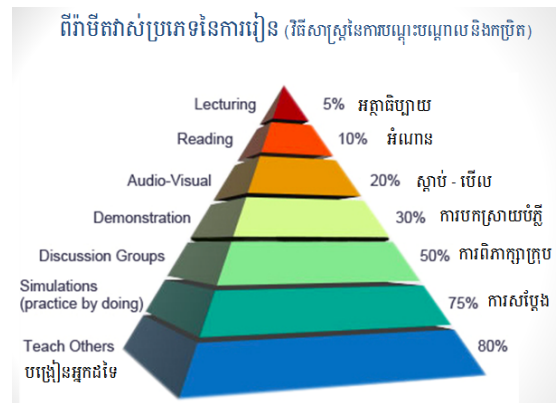
The WSD Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice has updated the format for its regular 'community of practice' sessions. The first session in this new series was held at the Handa Center's office on Saturday 29 April 2017. 15 law lecturers and legal professionals from different universities attended the event, including those from Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia, Royal University of Law and Economics, Cambodian University for Specialties, University of Management and Economics and the Royal University of Phnom Penh. The main purpose of this first session was to explore the various types of teaching and learning forms that lecturers use, the challenges faced in applying new teaching methods in the classroom and effective solutions to these challenges using participatory and interactive methodologies.

Mr. Tay Lina, Acting Director of the Handa Center's Cambodia programs, opened the session by welcoming new participants and introducing the Handa Center's current programs in Cambodia. The Center has been working to support capacity-building in law universities in Cambodia since 2013 through English and Khmer-language fair trial rights courses which emphasize interactive pedagogies.

As a warm-up, participants were first asked to brainstorm three challenges they had personally faced or expected to face when teaching human rights courses to their students. Participants were then asked to share their findings in small groups to discover common issues. This process revealed many faced problems encouraging participation from students, and found students often lack interest in the topic or motivation to do prior reading. Teachers' own lack of knowledge of engaging teaching methodologies was also found to be a limitation.



Once these challenges had been identified, the group as a whole began to discuss potential solutions. Participatory or student-centered approaches were introduced to my Mr. Tay, who encouraged those present to think of themselves as facilitators more than lecturers in the classroom. The value of participatory approaches in maximizing learning in the classroom was further explored using the learning pyramid (pictured).



After a short coffee break, participants were then asked to re-form small groups to discuss ways to apply participatory approaches in the classroom by designing new interactive learning activities. Each group chose a human rights topic such as business and human rights, women’s rights and fair trial rights, and designed an activity that would motivate students to learn the content of the chosen topic. Groups were given templates to help them design their activity by clearly outlining the objective, key content, learning method, learning materials and allotted time for each action. After they had finished, each small group shared their planned activity with the whole group.

In addition to the structured session, participants were also encouraged to share their own methods of teaching interactively with the larger group. For example, lecturer Ms. Kim Dinath shared her knowledge of Bloom’s Taxonomy, which she said had been useful for her when establishing the objective of her activities or courses. Bloom’s Taxonomy outlines different forms of learning, from understanding and remembering to more complex forms such as applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating new concepts and ideas.

Overall the new format of the ‘Community of Practice’ sessions was very successful and offered the 15 attendees the chance to network, support each other and exchange ideas. A series of four more sessions is planned over the coming months.



The next Community of Practice session will be held on **27 May 2017** and will focus on ‘Teaching Human Rights and Research’. To join the Community of Practice or for more information please contact Mr. Tay Lina via email on [lina.tay@handacentercambodia.org](mailto:lina.tay@handacentercambodia.org) or by phone at (885) 96 8181 145.