



## PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH: THE POLITICS OF POWER IN CAMBODIA

June 28 – July 20, 2008

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The East-West Center's Partnership for Youth (P4Y) program is a civic program, offering experiential learning in Cambodia as well as a hands-on opportunity to develop leadership and media literacy skills, personal growth, and cross-cultural relationship building. **The application deadline has since passed.**

"The Politics of Power," 2008 program examines international and regional relations, and social, political and economic power-relations in the Cambodian context. Students will examine the changing power dynamics of Southeast Asia, in particular the importance of China within the region, Cambodia's current and historical relationships with Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, and the role of Western influences, including the U.S., in the history of the region. In addition, students will examine Cambodia's foreign aid relationships and the influence of multiple foreign donors on national policy. Further, the issues of political, social and cultural marginalization, and attitudes of cultural superiority/inferiority within the region will be examined. These issues will be explored through the paradigms of the international media, the education systems of Cambodia and others in the region, religious institutions, social-service organizations, forums for civic engagement, and from the perspectives of justice, gender, and international relations.

Participants will also have the opportunity to witness an event of international significance as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal is implemented in Phnom Penh. As part of their analysis participants will examine the role of journalism in covering an event of international importance and the role, more generally, of the media in shaping the democratic process, civic engagement, and international relations. Working in teams and with expert guidance, participants will document their program experiences through audio/radio programming, aimed at informing their peers back home about the views of the Cambodians they met, lived with, and spoke to on the challenges, opportunities, daily realities, and changing dynamics of Cambodia today. In doing so, participants will examine cross-cultural perspectives on government, citizenship, community and national identity, drawing on the firsthand accounts of Cambodians and specialists consulted with during the program. Importantly, they will develop skills in critical analysis, investigative and multi-sourced research, and writing, organizing, editing, and presenting information in a way that challenges the dominant political and cultural paradigm.

During their time in Cambodia, participants will also get a rare glimpse of daily life through a village home stay, where they will have a chance to contribute to their host community through volunteer teaching and work with local children in a formal classroom environment as well as informal group settings. These experiences will enable participants to "connect" not only with topics and places, but also with individual people in Cambodian villages.

Participants should plan to arrive in Honolulu on June 28, 2008.

## **DRAFT ITINERARY**

- June 29 – July 2:** The program begins with orientation in Honolulu, Hawaii, where participants will work with journalists/media professionals, government specialists, community organizers, and Cambodian studies academics as they engage in comparative analysis of the civic process, including forms of government, the importance of an independent media, and the role of civil society along with other significant factors such as religion, history and culture.
- July 3 – 8:** Depart for Cambodia, a country still struggling to overcome the legacies of its genocidal past. It is believed that an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians (or nearly one out of four Cambodians) died from starvation, overwork, disease, torture, and execution during 1975-1979, when the Khmer Rouge controlled the country. Our goal in Cambodia is to better understand this tragic past without losing sight of Cambodia's vibrant society today. Participants will spend several days in the capital Phnom Penh working with and learning from Cambodian university and high school students. They will visit the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum, formerly Tuol Svay Prey High School taken over by Pol Pot's security forces and turned into Security Prison 21 or S-21, which became the largest center of detention and torture for perceived dissidents within the ranks of Khmer Rouge. Between 1975 and 1978, more than 17,000 people were held at S-21, and the detainees who died during torture were buried in mass graves at the "Killing Fields" in Choeung Ek, which we will also visit. Importantly, they will learn about the progress of the Khmer Rouge Trials (formally known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, or ECCC for short) by visiting the site of the Trials and interviewing UN/ECCC officials, key NGOs providing assistance with the ECCC process, and journalists covering the Trials. To better appreciate Cambodian perspectives of the Khmer Rouge Trials, they will team up with Cambodian university students to interview local families and hear their views on the Trials as well as their hopes and dreams for their own future and that of their country.
- July 9 - 13:** Participants will relocate to different villages to experience daily life and culture in Cambodia today. Traveling in smaller groups to three to five different rural communities, they will spend five days living with a host family (one participant per family), volunteer teach at an English language school, help with a community project, and will job-shadow a member of their host family. In the process, they will forge meaningful relationships with their Cambodian hosts and develop cross-cultural awareness based on personal interactions.
- July 14-18:** Following their home stays, participants will travel to Siem Reap, a former Khmer Rouge stronghold and home to the spectacular Angkor Wat temple complexes. You will visit the famous Temple of Angkor Wat and other World Heritage sites dating back to from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century Khmer

Empire. They will meet with villagers living in the 'shadow' of Angkor Wat to explore its influence on the Khmer identity as well as on the village economy and its ways of life. They will take a guided excursion to the Tonle Sap Lake, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia (covering 27,000 hectares in dry season and 150,000 hectares during the rainy season), and nearby villages, to learn about the changing ecology and economy of communities that are part of the Mekong River ecosystem and how these changes are affecting families and lifestyles. They will also work alongside monks and other community leaders, as they teach children in an orphanage, a street children center, or a school run by Buddhist monks, further broadening the scope of their exploration of Cambodia.

**July 18-20:** Return to Honolulu for debriefing and planning for follow-up activities.

**July 20:** Participants return home with more than new knowledge and skills; they bring back unforgettable memories and new friendships spanning across cultures.

We are looking for students with an interest in international affairs and commitment to raising awareness of an important and under-reported international issue. Students should be committed to contributing to positive change in their own communities and in the world and have a demonstrated interest in the media, government, and international affairs. In addition, we encourage applications from students who have experience in working on a school or community newspaper, production of short films or websites, or who have been involved in the creation of other forms of media; and/or student government, local council, advocacy groups, or other civic-related groups.

**Important:** All applicants must be committed to engage in pre-program readings, discussions, and reflective writing assignments in the two months preceding the program, and to writing and publishing articles, presenting in their schools and communities, and editing and producing their radio piece with their program peers upon their return home for the remainder of the year.

**Schedules are still being finalized and dates and activities may change.**

Student leadership positions may be offered to participants of the 2006 and 2007 "Partnership for Youth" Programs. Interested students should contact the AsiaPacificEd Program at the points given below.

The application deadline has passed.

For more information, contact:

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