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Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)

Genocide Education is Genocide Prevention

Education on Democratic Kampuchea History in Cambodia (1975-1979)

Report

**29th Classroom forum on “the importance of studying the
Khmer Rouge history (1975-1979)”**

at Chea Sim Santhor Mok High School

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February 04, 2018

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Table of Contents

Overall Summary.....	3
Purpose of the forum.....	4
Forum.....	5
I. Opening remark.....	5
II. Pre-forum survey and K-W-L chart.....	5
III. Documentary film screening.....	6
IV. Presentation of DK history and Q & A.....	6
V. Democratic Kampuchea History Text Book Distribution.....	6
VI. Post-forum survey.....	7
VII. Forced Transfer Exhibition.....	7
VIII. Results and Discussion.....	7
IX. Conclusion.....	10
Appendix.....	11
Pre-Forum Survey.....	11
Post-Forum Survey.....	12

Overall Summary

27th Classroom Forum on the importance of studying the Khmer Rouge history was conducted at Chea Sim Santhor Mok High School, participated by nearly 200 grade-10th students. This forum marked as successful and important prompted by not only the effort and commitment of the DC-Cam team and full participation of the students and especially Mr. Jean-Marc Gorelick, Ms. Alison Bird and Mr. Ou Makara from USAID. As the day of the forum headed just a few days away, the team went to the high school in attempt to 1) Inform High School principle of the coming classroom forum, 2) Install "Forced Transfer" Exhibition and 3) Examine it all of the hall, facility and location. It reflected of the team's well preparedness for the forum.

Nonetheless, there appeared unexpectedness the team encountered. It was caused by the confusion like Khmer Rouge educational forums of other institution's outreach program and poor collaboration of Mr. Lao Molina the school principle who concerned of the students' parents complaining of the lateness of home coming time. With all of these, only grade-10 students were allowed to be in the forum as our main target is grade-12 students who are in final-examination year of High School.

Chea Sim Santhor Mok High School locates in Phnom Penh, just about 5 kilometers away from DC-Cam. As the day of the event arrived, the team left the office at 7.15am by van along Norodom Blvd, heading to the high school. It took less than half an hour to be in Chea Sim Santhor Mok High School. Upon our arrival in the high school compound around 7.45am, the team went to look for re-instruction of the high school principle but found just the deputy who is very open and friendly. He guided the team to the hall in which the forum was expected to be held. The team then took off all educational materials to the hall in coming preparation of the event. A moment after, almost of all grade-10 students were instructed to partake in the educational-based forum deepening an awareness and understanding of the Khmer Rouge history. As the team was continually installing it, more and more students arrived. 163 of students (86 female/ 77 male) filled the hall and waited for the opening of the event. Well-preparedness and collaboration between the team and the high school staffs pushed a good environment to allow the forum to flow as scheduled between 8.30pm to 11.00am. Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy opened his speech to the students of Importance of Studying of KR history and encourages them to more focus on it. He then moved it to the pre-forum

survey session in attempt to navigating the students' prior knowledge about the KR history by parents' narrative and build thought-provoking of the Khmer Rouge history as flipchart method took effectiveness, concluding their existing knowledge on the whiteboard.

Screening of Documentary Film "Kampuchea Children" followed all above program. It allows the students to learn how the KR came to power and aware of how the suffering legacy of the children after the genocide. Instilling of the knowledge and awareness by the screening of the documentary films in them, Mr. Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy did the presentation about KR history. As it went almost to an end, the team started textbook distribution of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" and brief guiding them to the "Forced Transfer Exhibition." Almost finished but not yet, as today all information can be reached out in a palm of our hand any time and where, the team wrote notes on the whiteboard consisting of necessary website [http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide Education.htm](http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide_Education.htm) and facebook page of Genocide Education in Cambodia. It is very helpful for their self-study and research.

Purpose of the forum

Today (30 January, 2018), the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) with the support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched 27th classroom forum on "the Importance of the Studying DK History (1975-1979)" at Chea Sim Santhor Mok High School in Phnom Penh.

To build sustainability of genocide education, the forum aims at educating the high school students about the Democratic Kampuchea history (DK), commonly known as the Khmer Rouge (KR) by inspiring their intellectual curiosity to historical narratives as content, critical thinking, debate and reflection on how the country's past informs its present-day problems and future. The forum's objectives and activities include:

1. Provide students with an opportunity to share and express their personal knowledge on what happened during the Democratic Kampuchea regime.
2. Let students think critically on transitional consequences of legacy to Cambodian society.
3. Encourage discussion over this legacy in families and communities.

4. Distribute Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbooks to participating students.

Activities	Time
Opening remark	8.30am – 8.45am
Pre-forum survey completed by the students	8.45am – 9.00am
Flipchart	9.15am – 9.30am
Screening of documentary films	9.30am – 9.35am
Presentation on the importance of studying DK history (1975-1979)	9.35am – 10.30am
Q & A session	10.30am – 10.45m
Forced Transfer Exhibition	10.45am – 11.00am
Closing remark	11.00am

Forum

I. Opening remark

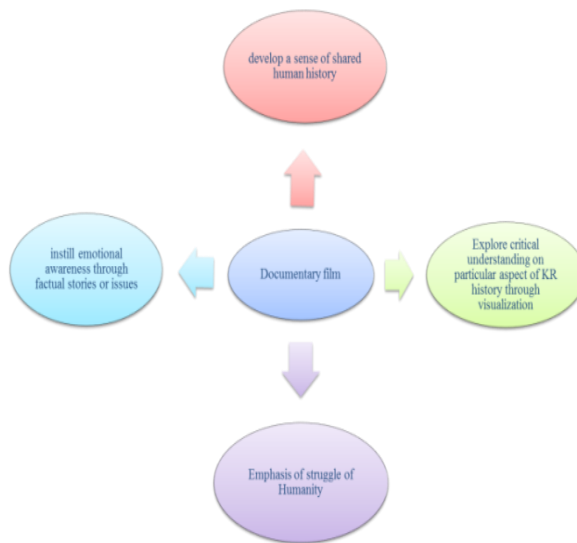
With warm welcome, anxiety and readiness to learn the KR history, Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy gave an opening remark on the forum, highlighting the importance of the study of the history as the young generations - 1) Knowledge of DK history, Memory, Prevention of such man-made disaster from happening again and 4) Critical Thinking of the past history as a shape of the contemporary society. Then Mr Rasy launched the quick introduction of the team members who endeavor in encouragement of History Education.

II. Pre-forum survey and K-W-L chart

Then Mr Rasy moved it to the pre-forum survey session, starting to hand over the sheet to the students for 15-minute completion. The survey allowed the team to be aware of the current existence of students' knowledge and understanding of DK history. Followed by the pre-forum survey, Mr Rasy opened the next session of the K-W-L as two flipcharts already put on the whiteboard. It built twofold aims at 1) Inspiring thought-provoking and 2) Self-critical understanding that permitted all of students to be encouraged raising hand, standing up and coming to share their existing knowledge on papers. This is very moving as the students are not only inspired to share what they know and learn but permitted to think of the event critically.

III. Documentary film screening

Documentary film entitled "Cambodian Children" was displayed to the students. It functioned to be more educational consisting of specific theme in attempt to permit the students explore and shape their understanding of KR history on the movie visualization. All in all, narrative visualization of the film screening provided the students further explanation of the past history.



IV. Presentation of DK history and Q & A

After the documentary movie screening, Mr Rasy did a lecture on Democratic Kampuchea history (1975-1979), narrating and elaborating causes of how the Khmer Rouge came to power, the mass evacuation, and the KR policies leading to starvation, execution and death, resulting of the loss of nearly two million of lives. All were presented based on chronological and critical narration of the past history as well as in attempt to response what the students **wanted** to know in K-W-L flipcharts of their perspective. Upon the end of the lecture, Mr Rasy encouraged the students to ask questions to explore their understanding.

V. Democratic Kampuchea History Text Book Distribution

While the presentation and Q & A session ended, more than 200 copies of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" textbooks were distributed to all students participating in the event as additional materials. It intended to allow them find out more understanding of the history. The students much appreciated of all insightful lecture and textbooks.

VI. Post-forum survey

Later, DC-Cam's team members handed over the post-forum survey sheet to the students for another 15-minute-long completion. It attempted to evaluate their understanding on the history after full participation of this educational-based forum. The post-forum survey was also applied to navigate their perspectives towards the Khmer Rouge history with specific objectives of Tolerance and Reconciliation in Cambodia's society.

VII. Forced Transfer Exhibition

After all sessions in class, the exhibition entitled "Forced Transfer" was integrated in this educational forum. As the exhibition was installed in another nearby building, students were guided to explore the knowledge and provoke the dialogue through its content consisting of survivors' story during the forced evacuation and daily life conditions during the DK as well as brief biography of Khmer Rouge top leaders. The showing of the exhibition was deemed to be very moving as the striking photographs, survivors' narration and folktales encouraged for remembrance and value of the suffering of the victims in the Khmer Rouge regime.

VIII. Results¹ and Discussion

According to table below, after participated in 2 hours classroom forum, the knowledge of students increase significantly from 4% to 35% (I am very knowledge).

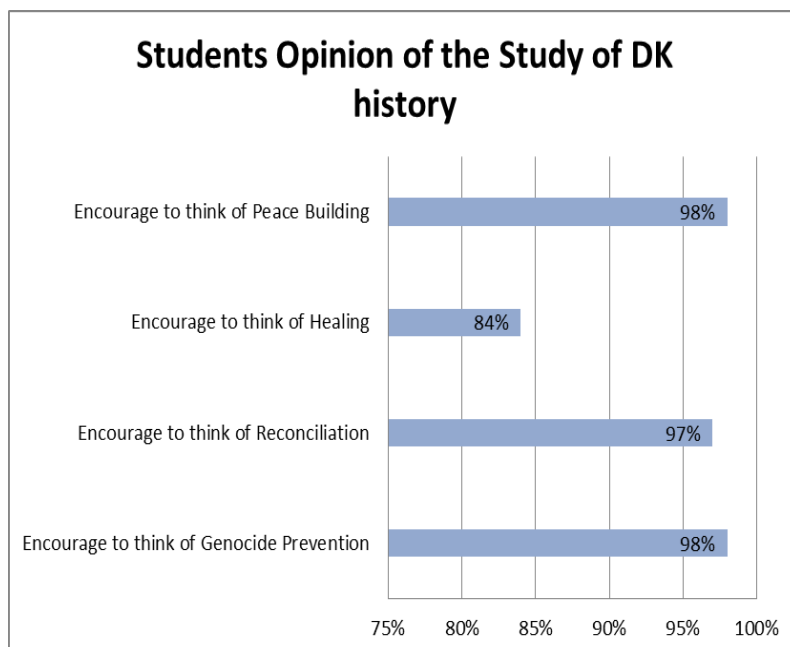
<i>Knowledge of Students on DK history</i>	<i>Pre-forum</i>	<i>Post-forum</i>
I know nothing	25%	6%
I know little	71%	57%
I am very knowledge	4%	35%

Base on table below, most of students already aware of the mass atrocities which happened during DK period. 79% of students had been discussed about DK period with their family. In addition, students who agree that the study of DK history is important

¹ See the appendix for detail tables of results

decrease 1% in post-survey due to the number of students changed during the post-survey section (see appendix). The percentage of students who disagreed on the discrimination and their opinion in the forced transfer reduce 6% after attended the forum. These are the reasons that why we should continue on teaching DK history to them.

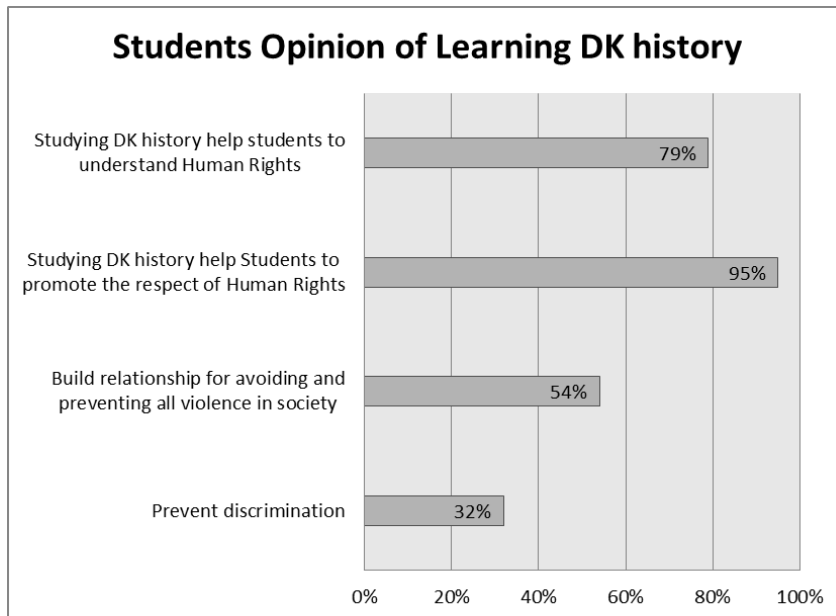
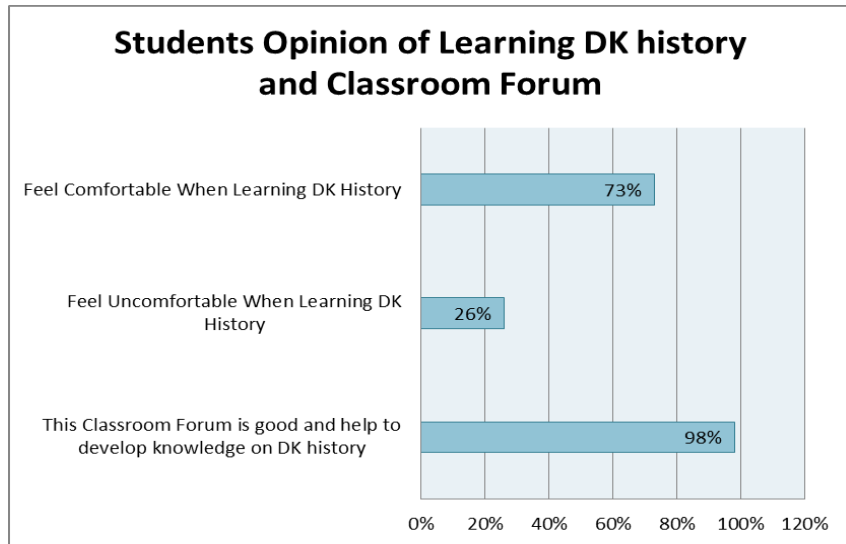
Questions	Pre-forum	Post-forum
Students believe in mass atrocities occurred during DK regime	98%	99%
Students discuss about DK period with their family	79%	
Study DK history is important	98%	97%
Students disagree on discrimination	89%	83%
Students believe on Forced Transfer	97%	91%
Students believe that families were separated during DK regime	94%	98%



Classroom forum with high school student is essential for disseminate the history of DK period as well as to promote the peace building, nation reconciliation, and prevent the genocide repeat itself again in Cambodia. After two hours lectured, 98% of students think that the studying of DK history encourage them to think of

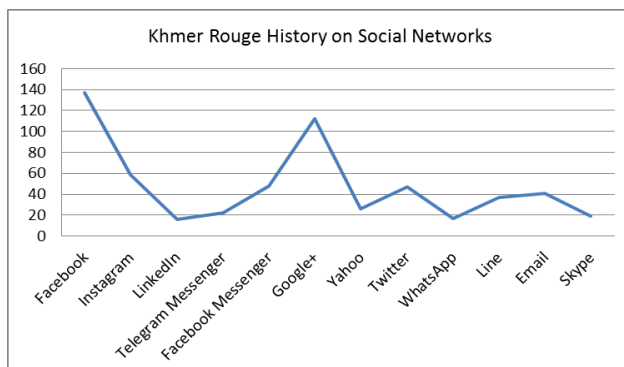
Peace Building and prevent genocide (reoccur) in Cambodia society. 97% of students think that studying DK history encourages them to think of reconciliation while 84% thinking about healing.

Most of students (73%) felt comfortable when learning DK history while some other (26%) felt uncomfortable. Most of them believe that two hours lectured was significant and help them to develop their knowledge on our darkest history.



After classroom forum, 79% of students agree that the study of DK history help them to understand Human Rights through the violations of brutal KR regime to its own people. Most of students (95%) believe that studying DK history could help to promote

the Human Rights in Cambodia society, as well as build relationship for avoiding and preventing all violence (54%) and the discrimination (32%).



94% of students agree that more DK history documents should be posted in social media as additional learning material. There are popular social media which students believe that DK history should be post in. Facebook is the highest one follow by Google+ etc.

IX. Conclusion

The classroom forum at Chea Sim Santhor Mok High School successfully ended through the team's strong commitment and flexibility although there emerged not-so-well collaboration the high school principle. As a consequence, increase of students' knowledge and critical understanding on the history was proven so that dialogues on KR history will continue being provoked by the students in class and at home increasing understanding and independent perspective.

Appendix

Pre-Forum Survey

Pre-Survey of Classroom Forum (157 students)			
<i>N</i>	Questions	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender			
Male		63	40
Female		94	60
<i>1</i>	<i>Would you describe your knowledge of DK period?</i>		
	I know nothing	40	25
	I know little	111	71
	I am very knowledge	6	4
<i>2</i>	<i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during DK regime?</i>		
	Yes	154	98
	No	3	2
<i>3</i>	<i>Have you ever talk about the DK period with your parents or people who lived during this time?</i>		
	Yes	124	79
	No	32	20
	N/A	1	0.6
<i>4</i>	<i>Do you think studying of DK history is important?</i>		
	Yes	154	98
	No	3	2
<i>5</i>	<i>If one of your friends is a son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate him/her?</i>		
	Discriminate	10	6
	No Discriminate	140	89
	N/A	4	5
<i>6</i>	<i>Which type of school in Cambodia that DK history should be taught?</i>		
	Primary school	11	7
	Junior high school	67	43
	High school	74	47
	University	3	2
	N/A	2	1
<i>7</i>	<i>Do you believe about Forced Transfer during DK regime?</i>		
	Yes	152	7
	No	4	3
	N/A	1	0.6
<i>8</i>	<i>Do you believe that families were broken up during DK regime?</i>		
	Yes	147	94
	No	1	0.6
	N/A	9	6

Post-Forum Survey

Post-Survey of Classroom Forum at Koh Dach High School (163 students)			
N	Questions	F	%
Gender			
Male		77	47
Female		86	52
1	<i>How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?</i>		
	I know nothing	9	6
	I know little	93	57
	I am very knowledgeable	58	35
	I am know enough to teach other	2	1
	N/A	2	1
2	<i>Do you believe that Mass Atrocities occurred during DK regime?</i>		
	Yes	162	99
	No	0	0
	N/A	2	1
3	<i>Do you think the study of DK history is important?</i>		
	Important	159	97
	No	5	3
4	<i>If one of your friends is son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate him/her?</i>		
	Discriminate	25	15
	No Discriminate	136	83
	N/A	3	2
5	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of building peace in Cambodia society?</i>		
	Yes	160	98
	No	2	1
	N/A	2	1
6	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of healing?</i>		
	Yes	137	84
	No	22	13
	N/A	5	3
7	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of reconciliation?</i>		
	Yes	159	97
	No	1	0.6
	N/A	4	2
8	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of genocide prevention in the future?</i>		
	Yes	160	98
	No	3	2
	N/A	1	0.6
9	<i>Do you feel uncomfortable when learning DK history?</i>		
	Yes	42	26
	No	119	73
	N/A	3	2
10	<i>Do you believe the "Forced Transfer" was happen during DK regime?</i>		
	Yes	149	91
	No	12	7

	N/A	3	2
11	<i>Do you believe the “Forced Separation of Families” was happen during DK regime?</i>		
	Yes	161	98
	No	0	0
	N/A	3	2
13	<i>Beside study DK history inside classroom or public space, do you think the history should be posted on social network for additional learning and learning materials?</i>		
	Yes	154	94
	No	0	0
	N/A	10	6
14	<i>What do you think about this classroom forum?</i>		
	Good and really develop my knowledge of DK history	160	98
	Not good and do not help anything	1	0.6
	N/A	3	2
15	<i>What does this classroom forum help you?</i>		
	Develop my knowledge of DK history	43	26
	Help me to remember DK history	14	9
	Encourage me to have a feel of empathy, tolerance, and genocide prevention.	17	10
	Three above	90	55
16	<i>Do you think the studying of DK history promote the respect of Human Rights?</i>		
	Yes	155	95
	No	2	1
	N/A	7	4
17	<i>If yes, do you think what could be helps?</i>		
	Prevent the discrimination	53	32
	Build relationship for avoiding and preventing all violence in society	89	54
	Create conflict and revenge	3	2
	Create violence and abuse	2	1
	None of above	17	10
18	<i>Do you think the studying of DK history can help you to understand human rights?</i>		
	Yes	129	79
	No	23	14
	N/A	12	7