

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA
DK HISTORY EDUCATION

REPORT
CLASSROOM FORUM ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING
THE HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA (1975-1979)
ARUN VORTEY HIGH SCHOOL
4 MARCH 2016

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ABSTRACT

The Khmer Rouge History Education's classroom forum is mainly focused on the importance of studying Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) at Arun Vortey high school. The forum engaged a total of fifty-four (54) students, who. The students will be taught the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) historical narrative as well as provide them a forum for encouraging critical thinking, dialogue, debate, and reflect on how the country's past informs its present-day problems and future. Also, the forum will build on schools' pre-existing genocide education program that was established using DC-Cam/SRI's curriculum and it will provide additional opportunities for students learning as well as teacher monitoring. The forum's objectives and activities are to: 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 the transitional consequences of this legacy to the current Cambodia society; 3) encourage discussion over this legacy in families and communities; 4) distribute Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbooks to participating students; and 5) facilitate monitoring opportunities between trained SRI/DC-Cam/MoEYS officials and local teachers.

The findings presented the role of students in studying the DK history and highlighted student's prior knowledge of the DK history and the knowledge after attending the forum as well as their feeling to study the DK history and their beliefs of finding peace, healing, reconciliation, and preventing genocide in the future.

INTRODUCTION

On March 4, 2016, Sleuk Rith Institutes (SRI) in collaboration with Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) conducted its sixth classroom forum at Arun Vortey high school, located in Dang Ko district, a suburb of Phnom Penh, with 54 grade-12 students who will formally study the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history at the end of this academic year. A team of three project staff – Pheng Pong-

Rasy, Min Sanas and Ouch Makara – were responsible for coordinating the forum with students, school principal and history teacher from Arun Vorthey high school.

Prior to the forum, the team came up with two important events with the students. These events happened in the morning at around 10 a.m. inside the school compound. First, the students were tested their prior knowledge on Khmer Rouge history by letting them answer an important question, *"I want to know why the Khmer Rouge left their own country in such terrible condition."* SRI's filmmaker, Ouch Makara, captured this activity and recorded the answer for a two-minute film. Second, a mobile exhibition on the impact of the Khmer Rouge regime after this regime collapsed in January 7, 1979. Four black-and-white photos were selected among hundreds photos to exhibit with the students inside classroom forum's space. The students looked at those pictures with sad faces and thought of what happened in the past of Cambodia during the civil war and genocide crime. The pictures were placed on the walls of the classroom. A group of students, about 10 students, who always stay inside the school during lunch time waiting for studying at the afternoon shift had more times to look at the pictures and discussed among the group about what they saw about the pictures.

The forum started at 2 p.m. at the same day. First of all, a project assistant, Min Sanas, introduced the SRI project staff to the students and history teacher who sat on table at the last row. Then she asked the students to complete the pre-survey organized to measure the prior knowledge of the students before the forum. Secondly, Pheng Pong-Rasy took a stage to present a brief of the DK history and the importance of studying DK history along with questions and answers. Thirdly, the post-survey was conducted to measure the student's knowledge about the DK history after the forum. Lastly, 75 copies of the DK history textbook were distributed to each student who attended the forum.

METHODOLOGY

The general purpose of the forum was to explore and help building deeper knowledge of students and history teachers about the genocide education which is part of each academic year's school curriculum. The forum was specifically intended to develop framework of studying of the DK history inside classroom and provided the concept of the importance of studying the DK history. The methodology that was used during the classroom forum was multiple activities set for students to gain more understanding the DK history and create opinion of thinking of building peace, reconciliation, healing, and genocide prevention.

The forum involved one educational institution in Phnom Penh. 54 grade-12 students who were free from their morning-regular class from Arun Vortey high school and one history teacher were selected to attend the forum. The responsibilities of the students were to listen to the presentation of SRI project staff about the DK history and the importance of studying the DK history, discuss the history, write down their knowledge about the DK history, question about what they want to know more about the DK history, and think critically about the DK history. The history teacher was responsible for monitoring the classroom forum as well as observing and evaluating the session of the forum.

The instruments used for the forum were pre- and post-surveys, K-W-L chart, observation and evaluation form which took place before and after the forum to measure student's knowledge on the DK history and the whole forum session.

The pre- and post-surveys were distributed to students so as they can express their knowledge before and after the forum.

K-W-L chart (K = what I KNOW about the DK history, W = what I WANT to know about DK history, and L = what I LEARNED about DK history) were applied with the students as an important activities during the forum to capture the student's knowledge on the DK history. These activities involved with conversation between students and their family as well as their teacher about the history of DK.

Moreover, these activities encouraged the students to think critically of what happened during the DK regime.

An evaluation form was completed by a history teacher who attended the forum and acted as a monitor and coordinator during the forum.

The book distribution was the last step of the forum. Each student received a copy of DK history textbook, a copy of DC-Cam's Searching for the Truth Magazine (Khmer version), and a copy of Khmer Rouge Timeline. These learning materials will be additional materials for them to learn about the DK history.

RESULT

1) Pre- and Post-classroom forum survey:

Fifty-four (54) pre-classroom forum surveys were initially distribute to the students. Out of the 54, 53 pre-surveys were collected and considered to be legitimate and useable for this forum. All students were allowed to fill out the survey within 15 minutes. The survey consist of 6 questions which include: 1) level of students' knowledge on Democratic Kampuchea (DK) history; 2) students expression on the happening of DK history; 3) dialogue with family about DK history; 4) students think of the importance of studying DK history; 5) level of discrimination of students again their friends who are children of former Khmer Rouge cadre; and 6) students' opinion on the teaching of DK history in ASEAN.

Another fifty-four (54) post-survey were distributed to students after the forum. The 54pre-surveys were collected and considered to be legitimate and useable for this forum. A length of 15 minutes was given to students to complete the post-classroom forum survey. This survey consisted of 10 questions, which first five questions are copied from the pre-survey. The additional five questions were created to measure knowledge of the students on the important of studying DK history and their feeling to study the DK history. The questions include: 1) Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of peace, healing, reconciliation and genocide prevention? 2) Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK? And 3) what

topic(s) in the DK period do you think *must* be taught in schools? The other two questions, question 4 and 5, are about to measure the forum session.

2) K-W Chart:

K Chart (what student KNOW):

Immediately after the teamwork collected the pre-surveys from the students, team members discussed students' prior knowledge on DK history with students.

Table 1 below shows prior knowledge of students:

Table 1: What students KNOW about DK history?

<i>K Chart (What students KNOW)</i>
Killing with no reason
Overwork
Starvation
No rights to control own properties
Lack of medicine and careless
Forced marriage
No education
Killing intellectuals
Separation of family

W- Chart (what student WANT to know):

Most students from Arun Vortey High School want to learn more about KR history. Many questions were raised but some questions were appeared the same and did not wrote on the whiteboard. Table 2 below shows a list of "what students want to know":

Table 2: What students WANT to know about DK history?

<i>W Chart (What students WANT to know)</i>

Why was the Khmer Rouge regime created?
Why did the Khmer Rouge eliminate education system?
Who created the Khmer Rouge regime?
Which country did Khmer Rouge sell rice production to?
Why did Khmer Rouge force people to do overwork and offer lack of food?
Why did Khmer Rouge kill intellectuals?
Want to know Pol Pot's leadership.
Why did Khmer Rouge separate couple who just getting marriage?
Who was behind the leadership of Pol Pot?
Was the leadership of Pol Pot can bring the country to be more develop?
Why did Khmer Rouge offer people lack of food?
Why didn't Khmer Rouge pay more attention to injures and ill people?
How did the Khmer Rouge regime end?
Why this regime was called "Khmer Rouge"?

3) L Chart (What students LEARNED):

Presentation of a summary of DK history

The presentation started with "What is Khmer Rouge?" 'Khmer Rouge' was the name that King Norodom Sihanouk gave to his communist opponents in the 1960s. Along with the creation of this name and some events afterward, Khmer Rouge came to power in April 17, 1975. There were three important reasons of evacuation of city dwellers to the rural of the country. First reason was that the Khmer Rouge cadres asked all people to leave only three days and no need to bring along with any valuable property or heavily equipment. Second reason was that Ieng Sary, former deputy prime minister, claimed that the evacuation came from the lack of facilities and transportation to bring food to the city, and the third reason was declared by Pol Pot at the time he visited China in 1977 by saying that the evacuation was to break up an "enemy spy organization."

With a very brief of the DK history, the presentation was focused on few more events such as: the division of people (Old and New people), separation of family, torture, confession, enemies of Angkar (internal and external enemy), mass killing, purges, security office of KR, and the fall of DK regime in January 1979.

Presentation of “The importance of studying a history of Democratic Kampuchea

Five important reasons to study a history of Democratic Kampuchea were presented to the student after the presentation of a chapter of DK history textbook. They include: 1) study to find the origins of social behaviors which lead up to mass murder: i.e.: prejudices; stereotypes; racisms; religious hatreds; ethnic hatreds and discriminations; 2) study to understand the causes of crime which affect the economic development of the country, political and cultural traditions; 3) study to deeper understand the human rights, violations, personal responsibilities and the dangers of remaining silent; 4) study to prevent genocide which would happen again in the future and to engage development of the countries through peace-building and reconciliation from the grassroots level to the national level; and 5) learn to analyze the events of the genocide in the world through a comparative study of genocide in other countries.

Explaining the W-Chart and Q&A session

All questions from table 2 above were answered clearly. Table 3 below shows what students have learned from the forum.

Table3: What students LEARNED about DK history

<i>L Chart (What students LEARNED)</i>
Understood why the Khmer Rouge regime was created
Understood where the Khmer Rouge sold rice production
Understood why Khmer Rouge forced people to do overwork and offer lack of food

Understood why Khmer Rouge killed intellectuals
Understood the leadership of Pol Pot
Understood why Khmer Rouge separated people and couple who just getting marriage
Understood who was behind the leadership of Pol Pot
Understood why Khmer Rouge offered people lack of food
Understood why Khmer Rouge pay less attention to injures and ill people
Understood the cause that Khmer Rouge regime collapse
Understood why this regime was called “Khmer Rouge”

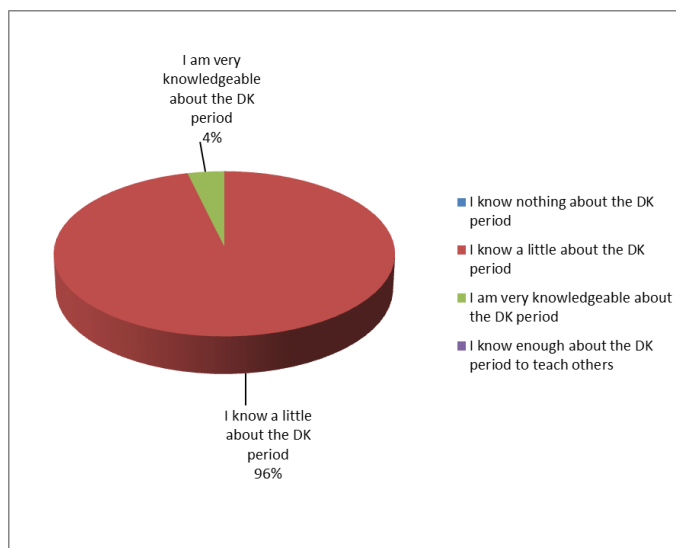
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION

Data Analysis

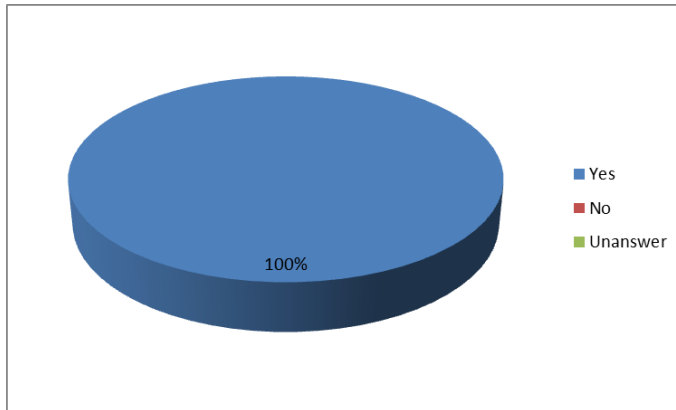
All questions in pre- and post-surveys are analyzed using Microsoft Excel to find accurate percentage of knowledge of the participants before and after conducting the forum.

Pre-survey Analysis:

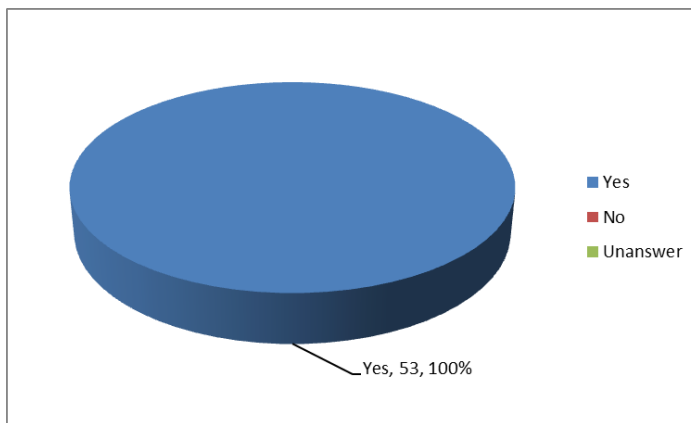
Q1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?



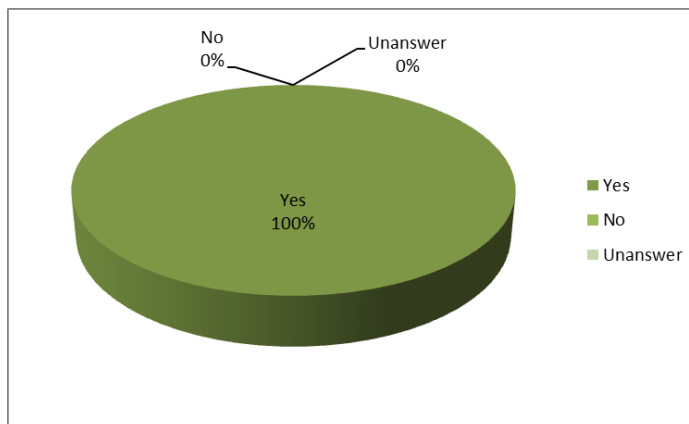
Q2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?



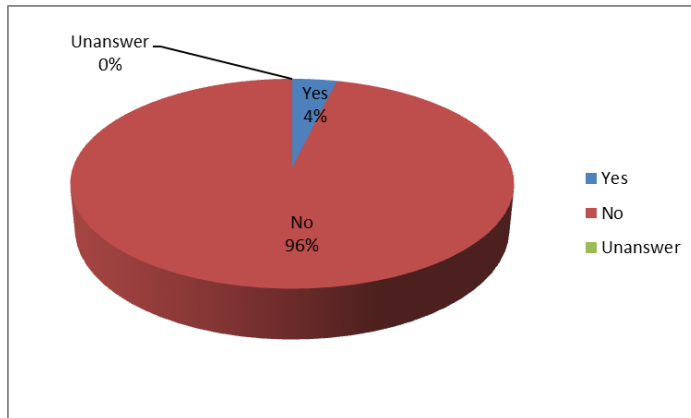
Q3. Have you ever talk about the DK period with your parents?



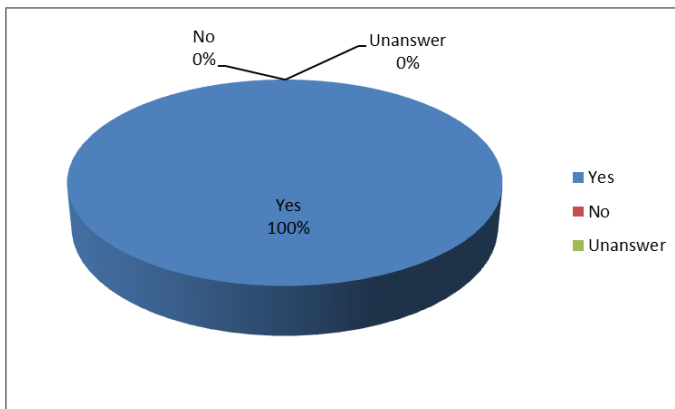
Q4. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



Q5. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?

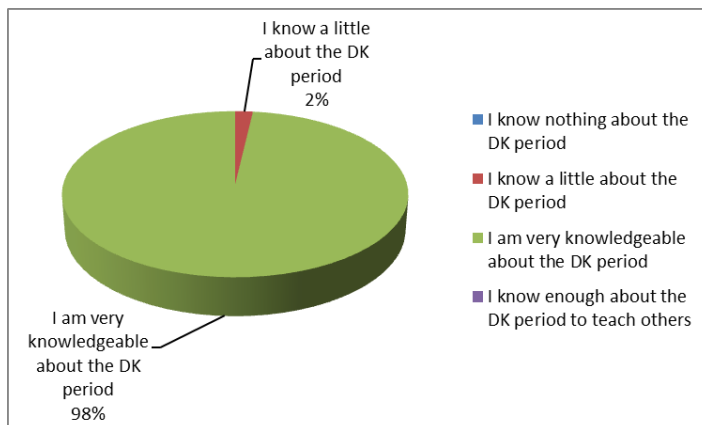


Q6. Does the history of DK could be taught in school in Cambodia and Asian?

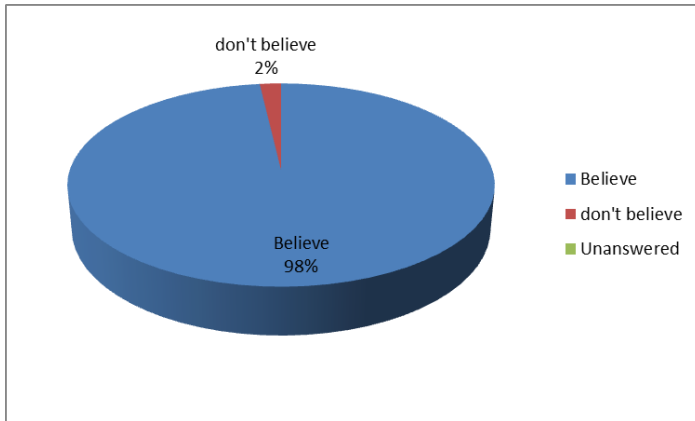


Post-survey Analysis:

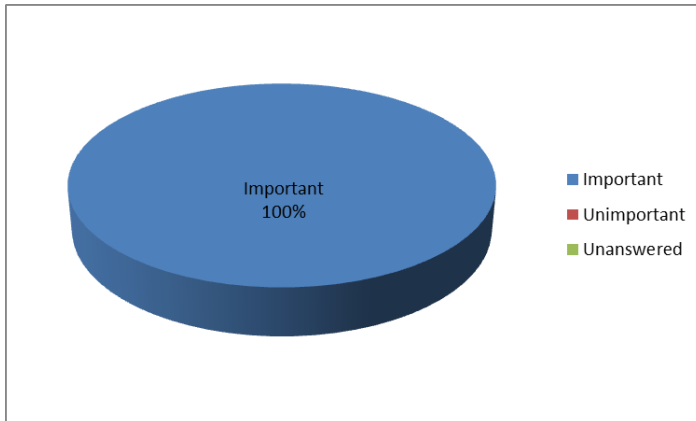
Q1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?



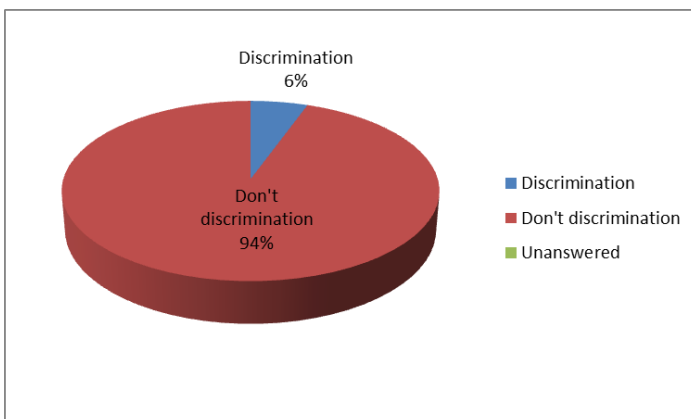
Q2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?



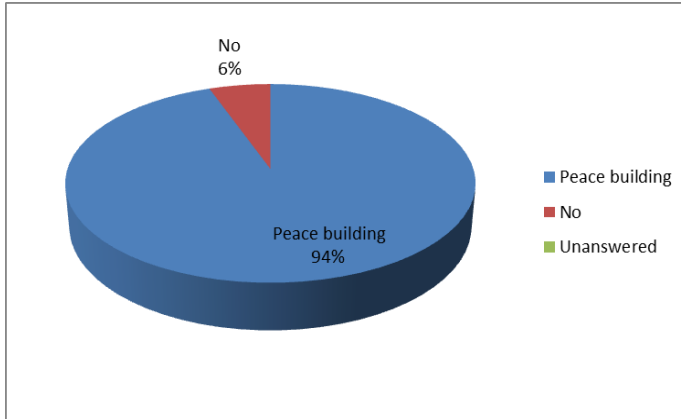
Q3. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



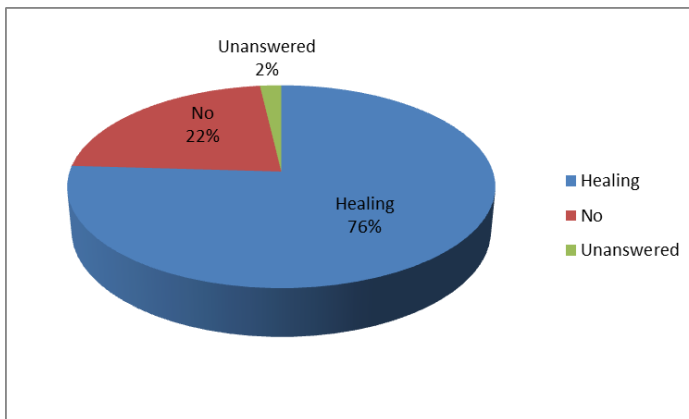
Q4. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?



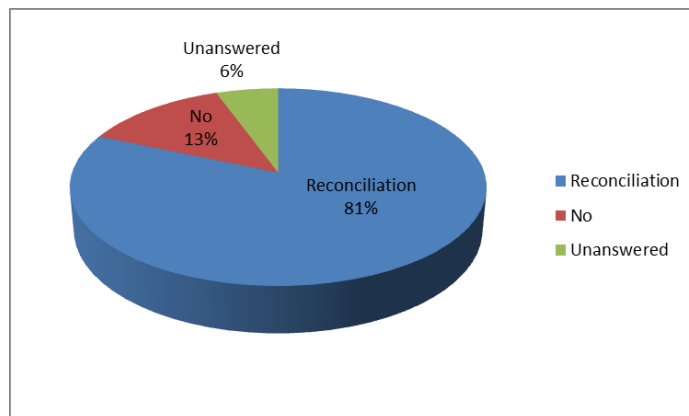
Q5. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of building peace in Cambodian society?



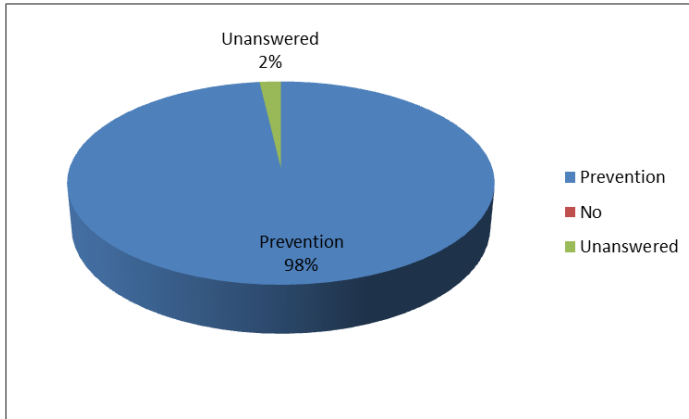
Q6. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of healing?



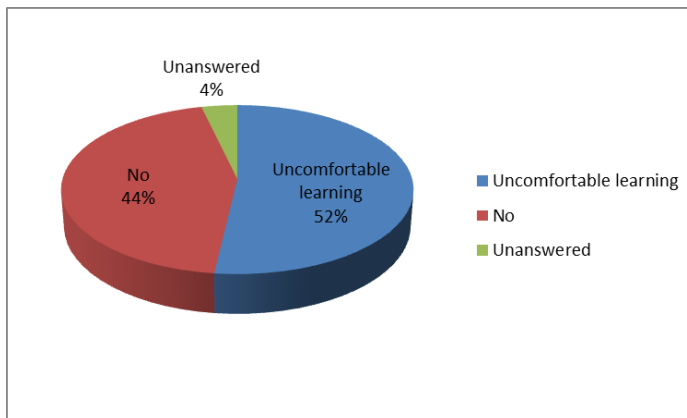
Q7. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of reconciliation?



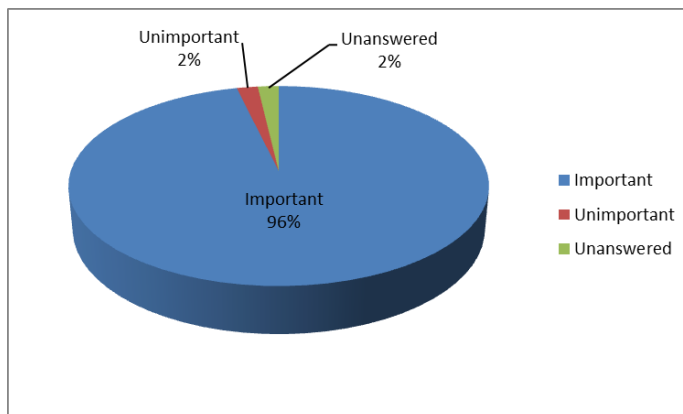
Q8. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of Prevention of genocide in the future?



Q9. Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK?



Q10. How to remember the history of Democratic Kampuchea is important?



Interpretation

The result of the pre-forum shows that 100% of students believed the mass atrocities were really happened during the DK regime. However, this number was decreased to 98% after they attended the forum. From her description, Sitha explained that there was only killing, but not any atrocity happening during the DK regime. She believed that Khmer Rouge usually brought victims to be killed when those victims committed mistakes.

In addition, most students (96%) have known little bit about DK history before they attended the forum and that only 4% of respondents were very knowledgeable about the DK history. If compare to the post-forum, the percentage of students who very knowledgeable about the DK history was highly increased from 4% to 98%. In contrast, there are only 2% of respondents needed more learning and teaching about the DK history. As mentioned in the project's objective, the classroom forum will encourage students to think of peace, reconciliation and genocide prevention. The evidence show that the most respondents responded positive that they have thought of building peace (94%), healing (76%), reconciliation (81%) and genocide prevention (98%). Table below shows the comparison of students' knowledge and their thought about the DK history.

Category	Before forum	After forum
Knowledge on DK history	96% - Know little bit about DK history. 4% - very knowledgeable about DK history.	98% - very knowledgeable about DK history. 2% - Know little bit about DK history.
Happening the mass atrocity	100% - believed the mass atrocity happened during DK.	98% - believed the mass atrocity happened during DK. 2% - did not believe the mass atrocity happened during DK.
Dialogue	100% - talk about KR period with parents/family	
Importance of studying DK	100% - think the study of DK history is important.	100% - think the study of DK history is important.

history		
Discrimination	96% - Don't discriminate against children of former KR cadre. 4% - discriminate against children of former KR cadre	94% - Don't discriminate against children of former KR cadre. 6% - discriminate against children of former KR cadre
Peace Building		94% - KR history education help students to think of building peace. 6% - KR history education does not help students to think of building peace.
Healing		76% - KR history education help students to think of healing. 22% - KR history education does not help students to think of healing.
Reconciliation		81% - KR history education help students to think of reconciliation. 13% - KR history education does not help students to think of reconciliation.
Genocide prevention		98% - KR history education help students to think of preventing genocide. 0% - KR history education does not help students to think of preventing genocide. 2% - did not answer.

Comparative Studies

Different from other schools, all students from Arun Vortey high school said they have talked about the DK history with their parents or family. This is very excellent that the dialogue between younger and older generations can create an environment of increasing knowledge about the history. As can be seen in the pie-

chart, there were 100% of respondents responded that they discussed the Khmer Rouge history with their parents, family and relatives while other schools such as Chumpou Voan has 84% and 76.5% of the students from Chhouk Va high school have talked about the DK history with families before they attended the forum. Because of this happening, all students (100%) expressed that the study of the DK history is important.

However, few of them (less than 6%) still think that they discriminated against children of former Khmer Rouge cadres, while most of them (more than 94%) said they have never thought that they discriminate against the other who children of former Khmer Rouge cadre. If compare to other school, the level of discrimination of the students from Arun Vortey high school is still lower than Chhouk Va and Chumpou Voan high schools.

CONCLUSION

As their ages below 20 and they were born at least 15 year after collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, the students from Arun Vortey high school have first learned the DK history from their family and community. Still waiting for arrival of the DK history curriculum which will be in semester 2 of the academic year, more than 95% of the students are very knowledgeable about the DK history and more than 76% of them said that the study of the DK history will encourage them to think of peace building, healing, reconciliation, and preventing genocide in the future. Moreover, the majority of the students feel free of discrimination of children of former Khmer Rouge cadre, and most of them thought that those children have not committed the crime and they will never repeated the actions like their parents. These are considered as a crucial key to build peace and reconciliation and prevent the genocide or Khmer Rouge regime happening again in Cambodia in the future.

APPENDIX 1: PRE-CLASSROOM FORUM SURVEY FORM

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

DK history Education

Classroom Forum for high school students

Pre-Survey

Name:	Age/Date of Birth:
Gender:	Grade:
Date:	

DIRECTIONS FOR POST-TRAINING SURVEY: Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions in this survey. Your answers are very important to the Ministry of Education and the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Your answers and any personal information you provide will be solely used for educational and research purposes of improving the genocide education project. Below you find three distinct surveys. If you are a student, you only need to answer the student survey; if you are a teacher, you only need to answer the survey for teachers; and if you are not a student or a teacher, please answer the survey for “others.” Thank you again for your participation and your help in the Genocide Education Project.

<p>1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period? Choose one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I know nothing about the DK period. b. I know a little about the DK period. c. I know some facts about the DK period, but I am not very knowledgeable. d. I am very knowledgeable about the DK period. e. I know enough about the DK period to teach others.
<p>2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime? (Yes or No) Explain why or why not.</p>
<p>3. Have you ever talk about the DK period with your parents or people who lived during this time? (yes or No). What was the talking about?</p>
<p>4. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important? (Yes or No) Explain why or why not.</p>
<p>5. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her? (Yes or No) Explain why or why not.</p>
<p>6. Does the history of DK could be taught in school in Cambodia and Asian? (Yes or No). Explain why or why not:</p>

APPENDIX 2: POST-CLASSROOM FORUM SURVEY FORM

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

DK history Education

Classroom Forum for high school students

Post-Survey

Name:	Age/Date of Birth:
Gender:	Grade:
Date:	

DIRECTIONS FOR POST-TRAINING SURVEY: Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions in this survey. Your answers are very important to the Ministry of Education and the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Your answers and any personal information you provide will be solely used for educational and research purposes of improving the genocide education project. Below you find three distinct surveys. If you are a student, you only need to answer the student survey; if you are a teacher, you only need to answer the survey for teachers; and if you are not a student or a teacher, please answer the survey for “others.” Thank you again for your participation and your help in the Genocide Education Project.

<i>After this classroom forum....</i>
1. Do you satisfy this classroom forum? Yes or No
2. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period? Choose one. f. I know nothing about the DK period. g. I know a little about the DK period. h. I know some facts about the DK period, but I am not very knowledgeable. i. I am very knowledgeable about the DK period. j. I know enough about the DK period to teach others.
3. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime? (Yes or No) Explain why or why not.
4. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important? (Yes or No) Explain why or why not.
5. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you

<p>discriminate against him or her? (Yes or No) Explain why or why not.</p>
<p>6. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of:</p> <p>a) Building peace in Cambodian society?</p> <p>Yes or No</p> <p>Describe your opinion:</p> <p>b) Healing?</p> <p>Yes or No</p> <p>Describe your opinion:</p> <p>c) Reconciliation?</p> <p>Yes or No</p> <p>Describe your opinion:</p> <p>d) Prevention of genocide in the future?</p> <p>Yes or No</p> <p>Describe your opinion:</p>
<p>7. Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK? (Yes or No) Explain why or why not.</p>
<p>8. What topic(s) in the DK period do you think <i>must</i> be taught in schools?</p>
<p>9. What does this classroom forum could help you?</p>
<p>10. Do you have comments on this classroom forum?</p>