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## **KHMER ROUGE HISTORY EDUCATION**

### **REPORT CLASSROOM FORUM TUOL SVAY PREY HIGH SCHOOL 15 JANUARY 2016**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Sleuk Rith Institute (SRI) – a permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia, in collaboration with Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) with support from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has established a Khmer Rouge History Education’s Classroom Forums programme for high school students in Phnom Penh.

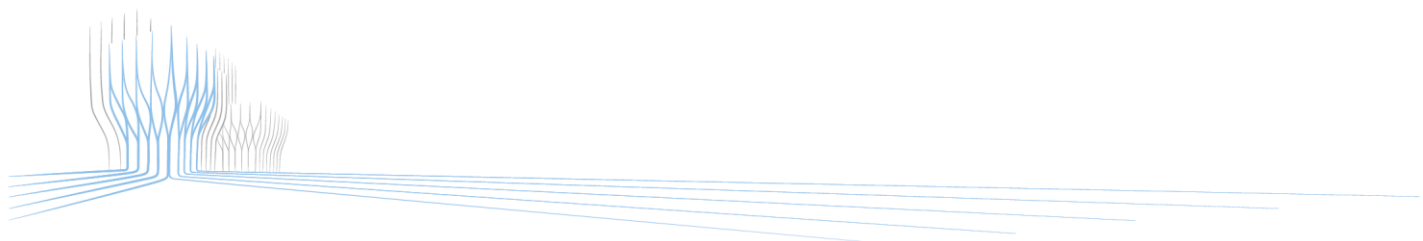
The Classroom forum set out to raise the importance of studying a History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) and to provide students a discussion on contents of a History of Democratic Kampuchea as well as to encourage the students to express their prior knowledge of a history of Democratic Kampuchea (what the students know about Khmer Rouge regime). In addition, the forum provide a space for students to get understanding more about the regime by letting them to express what they want to learn about Khmer Rouge regime.

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016, DC-Cam/SRI conducted its second classroom forum at Tuol Svay Prey high school with over 60 grade-12 students. The school principal, Mr. VONN Vinaro, attended and opened the forum session. After his remark, the forum started its well-prepared programme with students as follow:

- 1) Introducing project staff and briefly DC-Cam’s work for genocide education;
- 2) Pre-survey for students;
- 3) K-W Chart session with students;
- 4) Film screening, “Children of Kampuchea”;
- 5) L- Chart session:
  - a. Explaining the W-Chart;
  - b. Presentation of “Tuol Sleng Prison or S-21”;
  - c. Presentation of “The importance of studying a history of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979).
- 6) Post-survey for students; and
- 7) DK textbook distribution

#### **OBJECTIVES**

With a focus on historical narratives as contents and critical thinking, debate, and reflection as process, this classroom forum is crucial to build sustainability of genocide education in the capital of Phnom Penh. The forum will build on schools’ pre-existing genocide education programme that





was established using DC-Cam/SRI's curriculum and it will provide additional opportunities for students learning as well as teacher monitoring.

The purposes of this forum will be to educate students on the history of Democratic Kampuchea as well as provide a forum for encouraging critical thinking, dialogue, and debate on how the country's past informs its present-day problems and future. The forum's objectives and activities are:

- 1) To provide students with an opportunity to share and express their personal knowledge on what happened during the Democratic Kampuchea regime;
- 2) To let students think critically on the transitional consequences of this legacy to the current Cambodia society;
- 3) To encourage discussion over this legacy in families and communities;
- 4) To distribute Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbooks to participating students;
- 5) To facilitate monitoring opportunities between trained SRI/DC-Cam/MoEYS officials and local teachers

#### **FORUM PARTICIPATIONS**

- 60 grade-12 students from Grade 12A, 12B, and 12C. The list of the participating students is attached as Appendix 3;
- 1 school principal, Mr. VONN Vinaro. He was the one who evaluated the forum. The evaluation form is attached as Appendix 1;
- 4 DC-Cam/SRI project staff: PHENG Pong-Rasy, MIN Sanas, OUCH Makara, and KRY Suyheang. The evaluation sheet is attached as Appendix 2.

#### **PROGRAMME FOR THE FORUM**

The programme was designed to provide a range of opportunities for the participating students to engage and contribute activities. It included:

##### **A. Opening the classroom forum:**

Mr. VONN Vinaro presided over the today forum and explained to students why the study of history of Democratic Kampuchea is importance as well as gave a memory of his experience during the Democratic Kampuchea regime to the forum.

Vinaro was 18 years old during the Democratic Kampuchea. He was separated from family and asked to work for mobile work Bridget with others. He tried to work hard at that time because he wanted enough food. He said "even if I tried to work hard, I received very little food." Vinaro did not expect that he could live nowadays and he did not think that he could speak his experience during the atrocity regime in front of his students at this time. Due to his hard experience, he encouraged all students to study the history of Democratic Kampuchea so that the students will not follow the same leadership of the regime's top leaders.

In addition to what he presented, the school principal encouraged the students to express and discuss more about Khmer Rouge history. To reflect what he said, the principal added that the students that the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport will select the history of Democratic Kampuchea to be one among several subjects which appear during the final comprehensive examination on August this years. “All of you should ask a lot questions about Khmer Rouge history so that you will know how to answer the questions during your final national examination at the end of your academic year.”

Last, the school principal thanked DC-Cam/SRI for providing students more opportunities to study Khmer Rouge history, and he expressed his personal feeling regarding the event that the forum was really importance for his students to turn back to see what happened during Khmer Rouge regime. “You are lucky to have this book with detail explanation of the history during this forum. Thus, you will have enough time to read and think back to what happened during the regime, and you need to ask what you want to learn about the history.”

### **B. Pre-survey session:**

Before discussion on “what students KNOW” and “what students WANT to know” about Khmer Rouge history, teamwork of the project distributed the pre-classroom forum survey form to students. This took 15 minutes for students to complete the survey.

*[Statistics Data will be here....]*

### **C. K-W session with students:**

#### K Chart (what student KNOW):

Immediately after the teamwork collected the pre-surveys from the students, Rasy discussed prior knowledge on Khmer Rouge history with students. Walking through rows of student’s tables, Rasy took notes of student’s knowledge on Khmer Rouge history. Figure 1 below is a table of what students know:

*Table 1: What students KNOW about Khmer Rouge history*

<i>K Chart (What students KNOW)</i>
Starvation
Execution
Torture
Overwork

#### W- Chart (what student WANT to know):

With a set of most atrocity events that the students know about Khmer Rouge history, some students raised their hands and expressed what they want to know about Khmer Rouge regime. Some students raised the same opinions of why and how the Khmer Rouge regime happened

while others asked if the regime was really happened. Below is a table of what students want to know:

*Table 2: What students WANT to know about Khmer Rouge history*

<i>W Chart (What students WANT to know)</i>
Why the Khmer Rouge existed?
How the Khmer Rouge drove the country?
What purpose of the top Khmer Rouge leaders?
Who created the Khmer Rouge regime?
What was the Khmer Rouge's policy?
Why did people receive lack of food?
How did people get married during the regime?
Why did Khmer Rouge kill its people?
While the official name of the regime was "Democratic Kampuchea", why did Khmer Rouge respect the majority of people?

#### **D. Film screening, "Children of Kampuchea":**

A seven-minute documentary film entitled "Children of Kampuchea" was screened to the participants. Before screening, Makara presented a brief of the film. The film was about Cambodian children who survived from the regime. The students showed their emotions and felt pity to the children they saw in the film. After screening, Makara additional explained that the children who were born before Khmer Rouge regime were completely different from the children who were born after the regime. Makara did a comparison that the children in a modern society have almost everything they want. Unlike the children in 1975-1979, they had nothing to eat. Moreover, they worked very hard in worksites and were separated from family. No questions were asked during the screening.

#### **E. L Chart (What students LEARNED):**

##### **a. Explaining the W-Chart;**

After the film screening, Rasy spent 20 minutes to explain W-Chart to students. Each question was answered clearly. Most students expressed their understanding through raising their hands when Rasy requested them to clarify their learning.

##### **b. Presentation of "Tuol Sleng Prison or S-21"**

A chapter, chapter 9, from a History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbook was selected to be presented to students. The selection was made under decision of the students who want to understand more about the S-21. This decision was satisfied by the school principal because he has planned to bring his students to visit Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in the short future.

c. Presentation of “The importance of studying a history of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)

Before end of presentation, Rasy explained 5 important reasons to study a history of Democratic Kampuchea, which 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 analyse the events of the genocide in the world through a comparative study of genocide in other countries.

*Table 3: What students LEARNED about Khmer Rouge history*

<i>L Chart (What students LEARNED)</i>
Khmer Rouge’s movement
Khmer Rouge came to power
Khmer Rouge leaderships
Khmer Rouge’s policy
Four-year Plan of Khmer Rouge that led people to meet starvation
Forced married
Reason of execution
Democracy during Khmer Rouge regime
S-21 building background
Prisoners at S-21
S-21’s regulations
Prison condition
Interrogation at S-21
S-21’s organizational structure
S-21’s execution
Critical thinking of a history of Democratic Kampuchea
Genocide prevention
Peace building
Reconciliation
Harmony

**F. Post-survey for students**

A length of 15 minutes was given to students to fill in post-classroom forum survey. The post-survey contains 30 questions. Some questions require students to answer personal understanding about Khmer Rouge history while some are multiple choice and “yes/no”. Within 15 minutes, most students could not complete the survey. *[Statistics Data will be here ...]*

### **G. DK textbook distribution**

60 copies of DK history textbooks were distributed to 60 students for the last session of the forum. The school principal requested the remaining copies of the textbook (15 copies) for school library.

### **OUTCOME**

The school principal saw this forum as important forum which help him and his students to understand more about the history of Democratic Kampuchea. Mr. Vinaro publicly mentioned that he will write his personal experiences during Khmer Rouge regime so that students and teachers could learn from his story.

### **CHALLENGES AND LESSON LEARNED**

- 1) Within a length of 15 minutes to fill out the surveys (Pre- and Post- surveys), most students could not complete all the questions. Some students copied the answers from another. Learning from this experience, we would want to review the surveys again so that some unnecessary questions will be deleted.
- 2) While we expected the attendance of the students less than 60, the participating students were over 60 during the forum day. As plan and schedule to meet each school principal prior to the forum, we requested 40 to 50 students to attend the forum. Thus, we prepared the logistics to fit the forum size and number of the participations. However, the second forum taught us how to prepare the logistics and improve our communication with local high school where we conduct the forum.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Appendix 1: Evaluation Form**



evaluation form  
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### **Appendix 2: Observation Form**



Observation Form  
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### **Appendix 3: Participating students list**



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