

**GENOCIDE EDUCATION IS GENOCIDE PREVENTION**

**EDUCATION ON KHMER ROUGE HISTORY IN CAMBODIA (1975-1979)**

**REPORT**

**Classroom Forum on “The importance of Studying Khmer Rouge History (1975-1979)”**

**At Preah Yukunthor High School**

*Report by: Pheng Pong-Rasy and Orn Vannara*

**January 19, 2017**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On January 19, 2017, 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), conducted its 16<sup>th</sup> classroom forum on “The Importance of Studying a History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)” at Preah Yukunthor High School in Phnom Penh. The purpose of this forum was to educate students on the history of Democratic Kampuchea (known as Khmer Rouge) as well as to provide a forum for encouraging critical thought, dialogue, and debate on how the country’s past reflects its present-day problems and future.

The forum’s objectives are to (1) provide students with an opportunity to share and express their personal knowledge on what happened during the Democratic Kampuchea regime; (2) encourage students to think critically on the transitional consequences of this legacy to the current Cambodian society; (3) encourage discussion over this legacy in families and communities; and (4) distribute Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbooks to participating students.

This forum incorporated three activities, such as the presentation of the Khmer Rouge history and the importance of studying a history of Democratic Kampuchea by Pheng Pong-Rasy, the presentation of interview technique by Long Dany, and the exhibition on “Forced Transfer” of People during the Khmer Rouge Regime by Sirik Savina and Men Pechet.

An approximately 60 participating grade-12 students attended the forum conducting at exactly 9 a.m. in the meeting hall of the school.

## **II. PRE-CLASSROOM FORUM**

A day prior to the classroom forum, the team went to meet school principal to discuss the program of conducting the classroom forum with his students, the installation of the exhibition of “Forced Transfer” and the request of students. The official letters from MoEYS and the Municipal Office of Education were given to the school principal. The exhibition team members went around the compound of the school to see the location to install the exhibition.

## **III. CLASSROOM FORUM FRAMWORK**

### ***1. Opening with Pre-Survey***

To get the forum started and after the introduction of the team, pre-survey was handed to all students with a purpose of gathering information related to their knowledge and perspectives on Khmer Rouge history. This survey was limited to 5-10 minutes for the students to complete all the questions.

### ***2. K-W-L Chart***

The K-W-L (Know-Want-Learn) chart session was discussed with the students. Pieces of paper were distributed to groups of students to fill in what they know about KR history and what they want to

know more about KR history. This activity took 5 minutes to complete the work. After time up, all the sheets were collected. (See appendix A)

### **3. *Presentation of summary of DK history***

The presentation led by Pheng Pong-Rasy, team leader of the genocide education in Cambodia. Because there was technical problem on connecting computer to slide projector, he decided to give the students a very brief presentation of the Khmer Rouge history, including the arrival of the Khmer Rouge at Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975, the force evacuation, the elimination of classes in the society, the overwork, tortures, and the last Khmer Rouge stronghold. In addition, the students were asked some critical questions to test them for level of understanding. Most students paid much attention to the presentation while some were taking notes and some paid less attention.

### **4. *Presentation of the importance of studying KR history***

Following the presentation of the Democratic Kampuchea history, the important points of studying this history were explained to the students. All the participating students were encouraged to discuss the history of DK with their family to see the pig picture of what happened during the KR regime and to listen to the experience of their family, especially their parents or grandparents. This process called “building peace, healing and reconciliation among the family and community.” Moreover, similar explanation was provided to the students. That was about genocide prevention process that led the country to walk away from genocide. “When the communities understand ways of building peace, reconciliation and healing, the country will be away from genocide”, Rasy said.

### **5. *Presentation of the interview techniques***

Long Dany, team leader of the Promoting Accountabilities Project, gave an hour presentation on the interview techniques to the students. The interaction between the presenter and the students were very active. First, Dany explained a technique of how to conduct the interview. Then encouraged the students to think of topics to do interview. Last, the students were taught to be a good interviewer by saying “thank you” to the interviewee after ending the interview. Next activity was that Dany assigned few groups of two students to practice the lesson in front of the class. One student acted as KR victim and another as former KR perpetrator. The sitting-on-the table students watched carefully and paid interest in the conversation.

### **6. *Democratic Kampuchea textbook distribution***

After ending interviewing practice, all participating students received copies of DK textbook. Fifty-nine (59) copies of DK textbook “*A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*” were distributed as supplementary reading material. The students were happy to receive the history book. The leftover copies, 25 copies, were given to the school principal to keep in the school’s library.

### 7. *The Force Transfer Exhibition*

To end the forum, Sirik Savina and Men Pechet provided a guided tour to student participants through the Forced Transfer Exhibition inside the school’s compound. Savina explained to the students some facts about the forced evacuation during the Khmer Rouge Regime and how the evacuation separated family members. The panels of Forced Transfer Exhibition were kept several days inside the school’s compound after the classroom forum. According to the school principal who later was interviewed by Journalist from Phnom Penh Post, most students seemed very interested in visiting the panels and discussing over the texts (Khmer and English) attached next to each photo appearing on the panels. (See Appendix B)

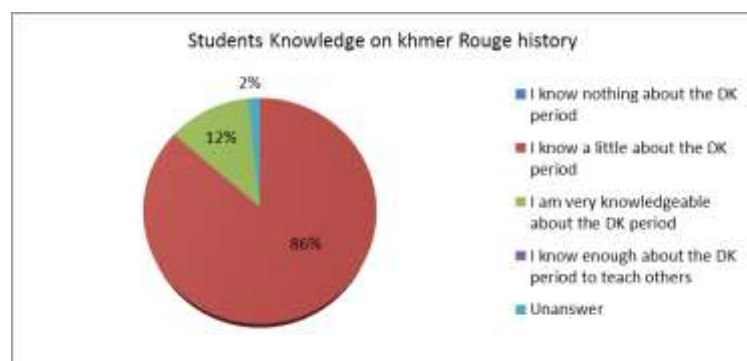
## IV. RESULT

Raw data gathering from pre- and post-classroom forum survey were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to measure students’ knowledge and respective feeling on KR history before and after attending the two-hour classroom forum.

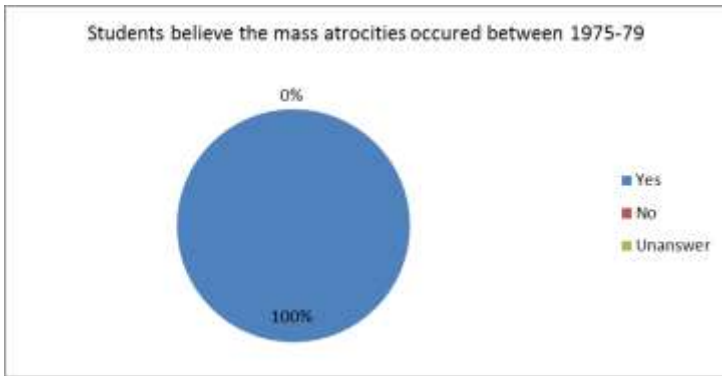
### 1. *Pre-Classroom Forum Survey*

Fifty-nine (59) pre-classroom forum surveys were initially distributed to the students. The Pre-survey consists of eight (8) questions including: 1) students describe knowledge of the DK period; 2) students’ expression on the happening of DK history; 3) students show intergenerational dialogue with family about DK history; 4) students’ thought of the importance of studying DK history; 5) students’ level of discrimination against their friends who are children of former Khmer Rouge cadre; 6) students’ opinion on the teaching of DK history in schools in Cambodia; 7) student’s awareness of “Forced Transfer” during KR regime; and 8) student’s awareness of “Family separation” during KR regime. All 59 surveys were collected and considered to be legitimated and useable for this forum.

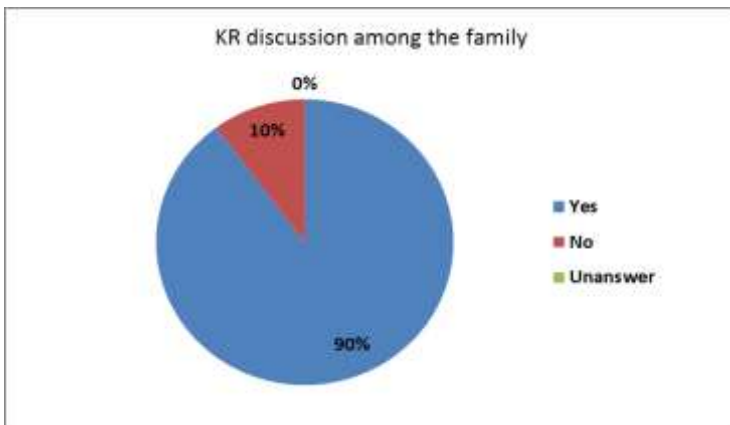
*Q1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?*



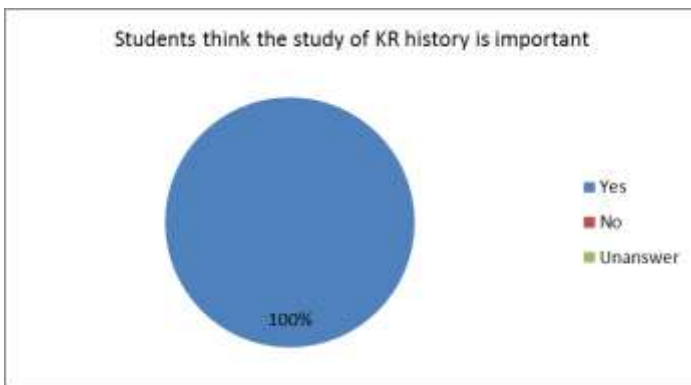
Q2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?



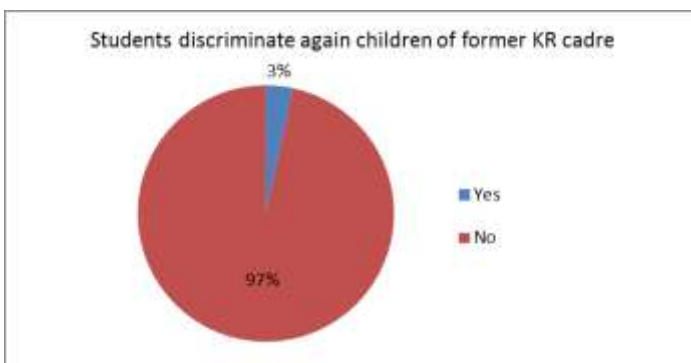
Q3. Have you ever talk about the DK period with your parents or people who lived during this time?



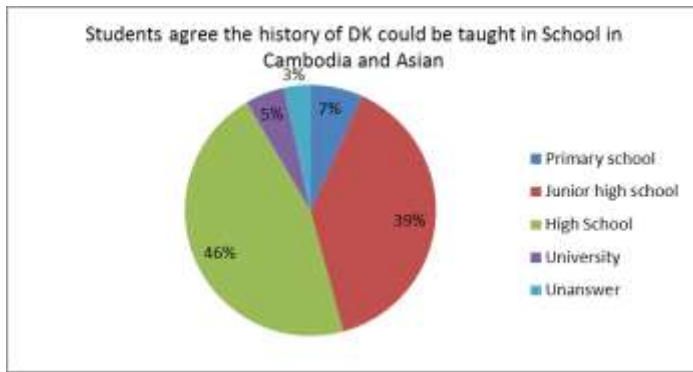
Q4. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



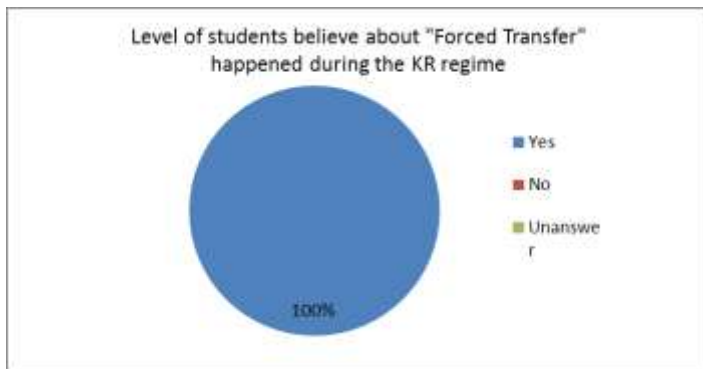
Q5. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her



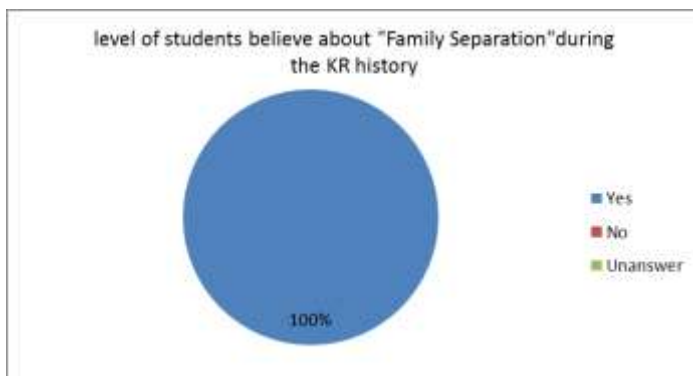
*Q6. Does the history of DK could be taught in school in Cambodia?*



*Q7. Do you believe about The forced transfer during the DK regime?*



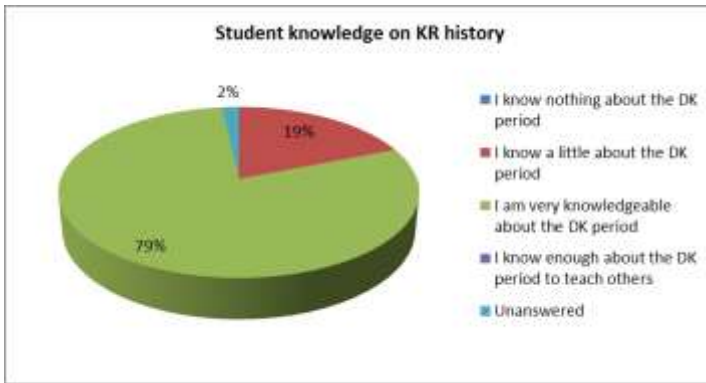
*Q8. Do you believe about the families were broken up during the DK regime?*



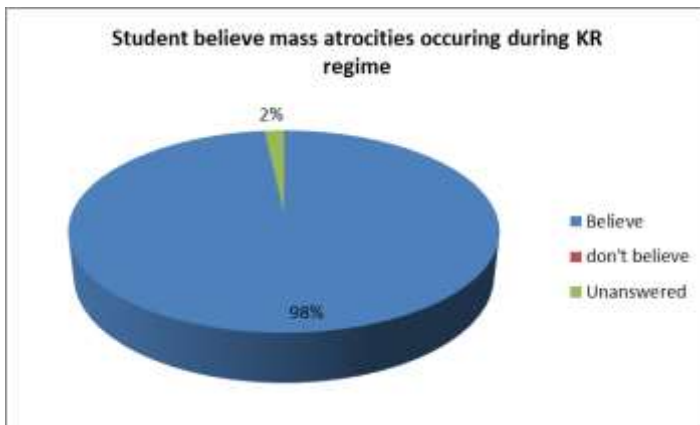
## **2. Post- Classroom Forum Survey**

Another fifty-nine (59) post-survey were distributed to students after the forum. Out of 59 participants, 58 post-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 16 questions. Six questions from the Post-survey are same as pre-survey, and the additional 10 questions were created to test student's knowledge about the purpose of studying DK history and to get comments to improve the Classroom Forum.

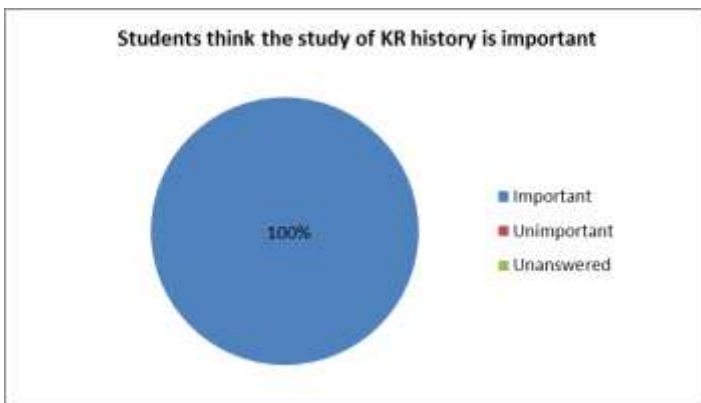
Q1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?



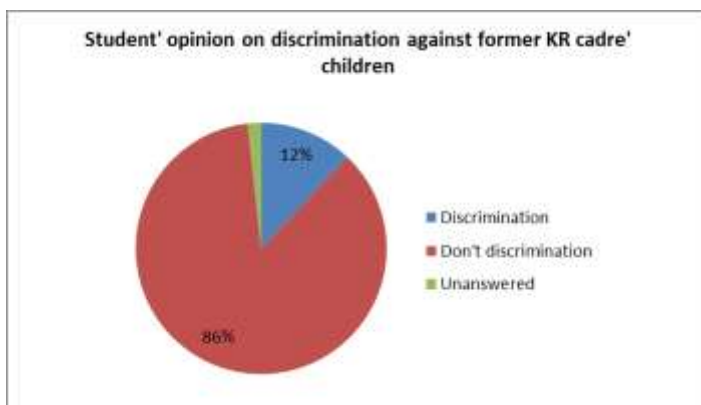
Q2 Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?



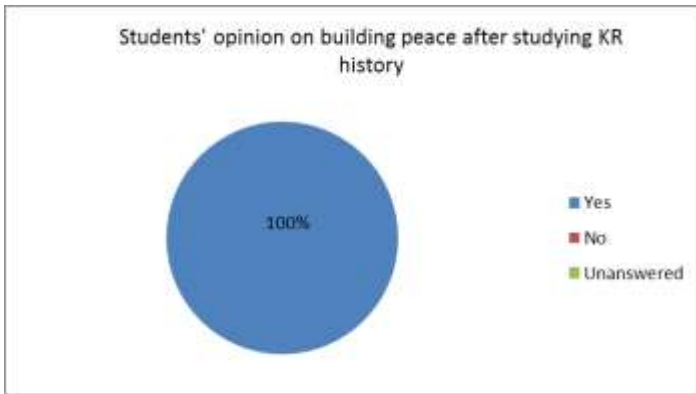
Q3. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



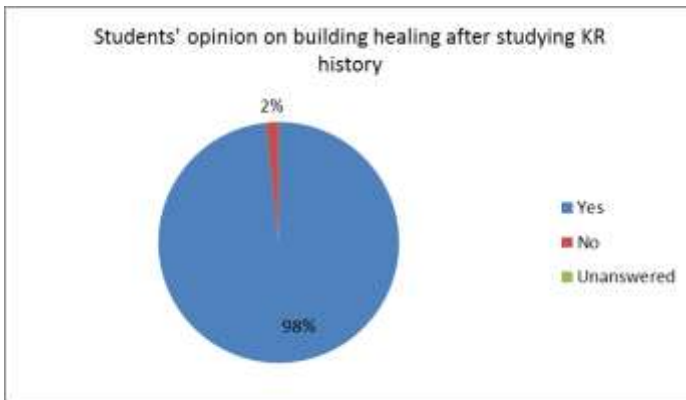
Q4. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her



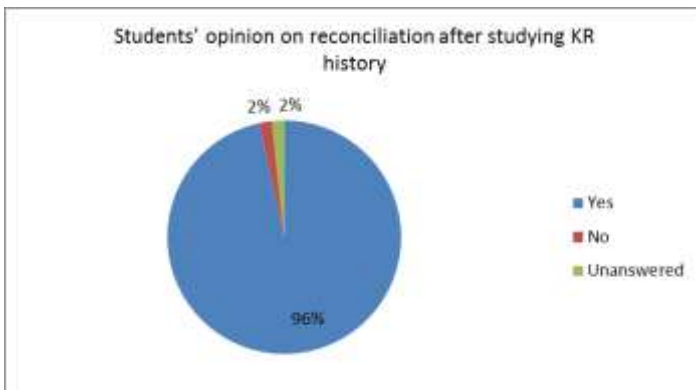
Q5. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of building peace in Cambodian society?



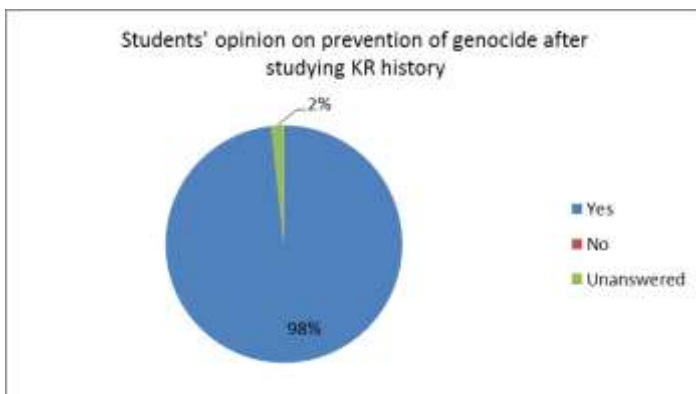
Q6 Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of healing?



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

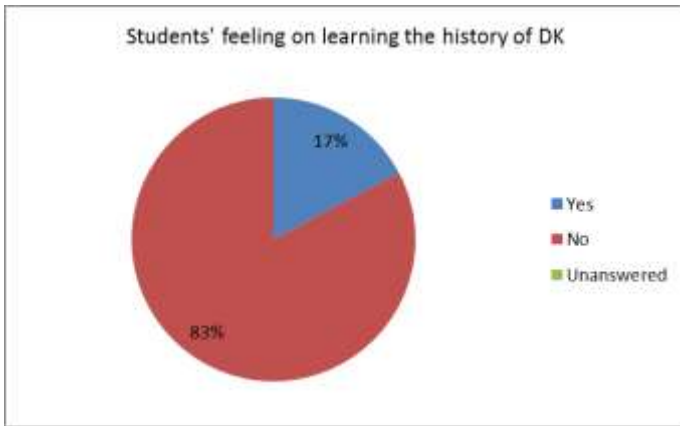


Q8 Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of Prevention of genocide in the future

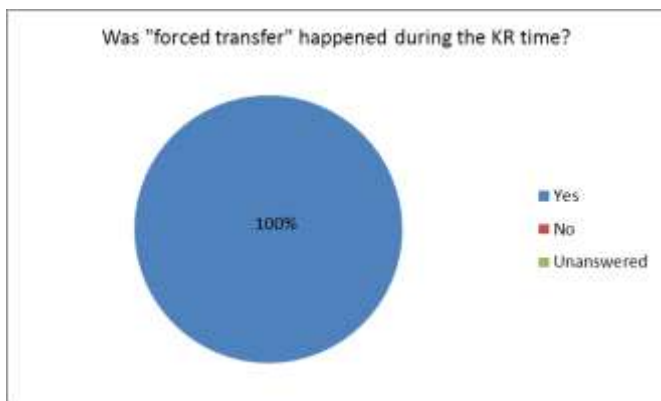




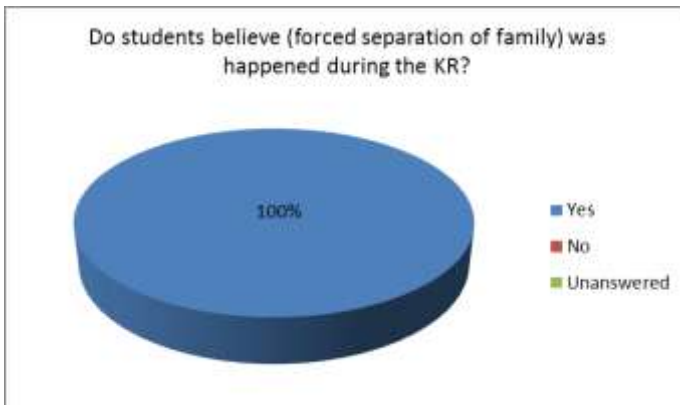
Q9 Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK?



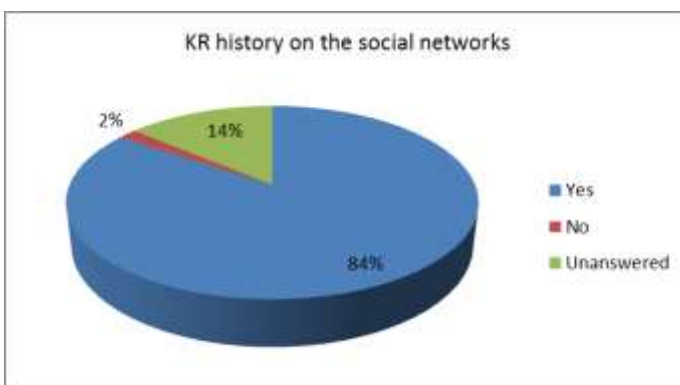
Q10. Do you believe "Forced Transfer" was happened during the Khmer Rouge regime?



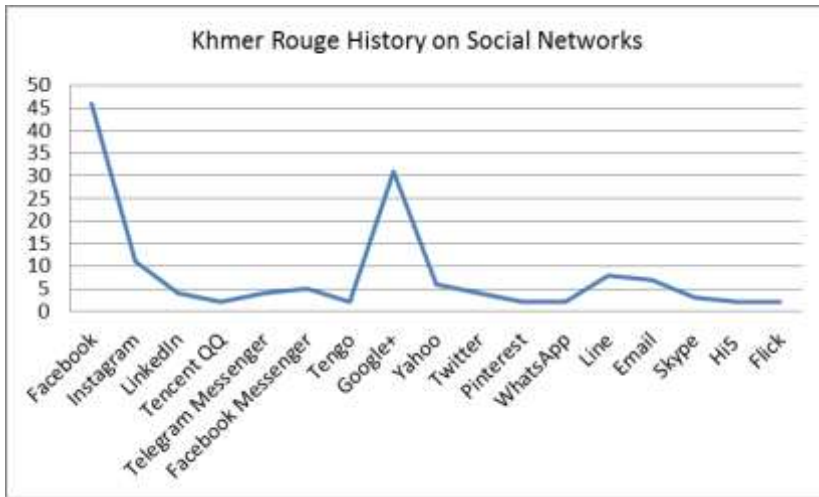
Q11. Do you believe "Forced separation of family" was happened during the Khmer Rouge regime?



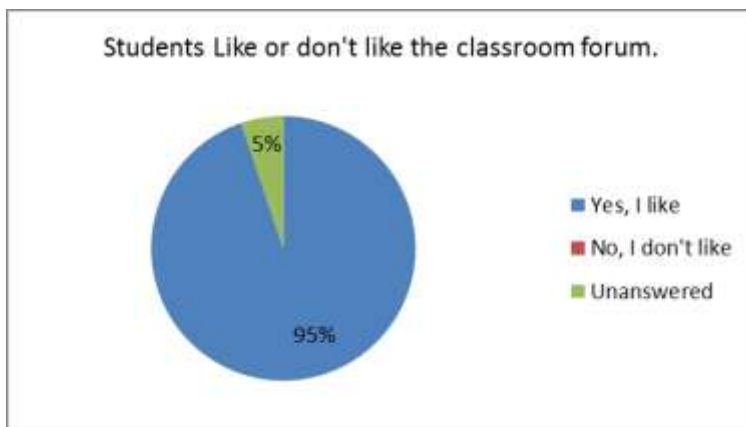
Q13. Besides studying Khmer Rouge history inside classroom or in public space, do you think this history should be posted on social networks for additional learning and learning materials?



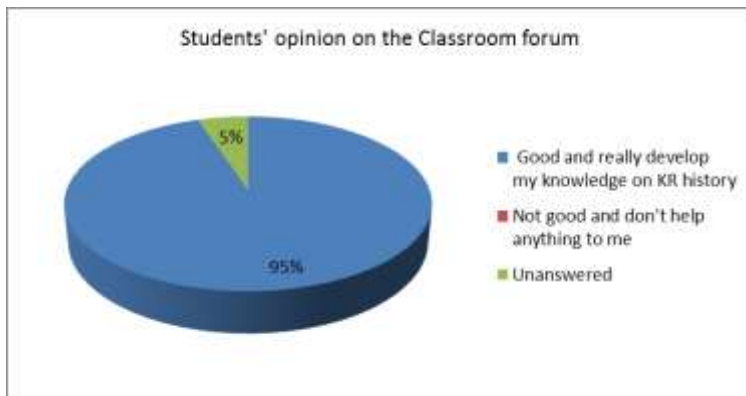
Q13a. If yes, which social networks are the best for you?



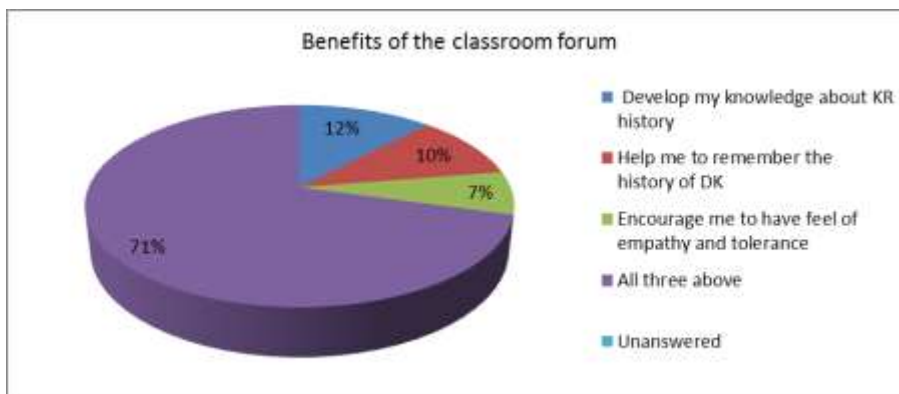
Q14. Do you like this classroom forum?



Q15. What do you think about this classroom forum?



Q16. What does this classroom forum help you?



## V. DISCUSSION

### Student's knowledge on Khmer Rouge History

Table 1: Knowledge of KR history

	Know nothing	Know little	very knowledgeable	Know enough
Pre-Survey	0%	86%	12%	0%
Post-Survey	0%	19%	79%	0%

Table 1 shows that all students whose age are under 20 years old understand the Khmer Rouge history before they attended the classroom forum about Khmer Rouge history. This understanding was in different level. As shown in the table above, majority of the students, 86%, said that they have little knowledge on Khmer Rouge history while a small number of the students, 12% said they are very knowledgeable about Khmer Rouge regime. However, these numbers changed after they attended the classroom forum on January 19, 2017. According to the table drawing from the pie-charts, students who have little knowledge decreased from 86% to 19% after two-hour classroom forum, and increased from 12% to 79% for students who are very knowledgeable about Khmer Rouge history. Even if the level of understanding the Khmer Rouge history of the students goes higher, all of them still have limited knowledge. No one could understand much about this history that could teach others about the Khmer Rouge history.

### Students' expression on mass atrocities occurring between 1975 and 1979

All students believed that crimes against humanity were happened during Khmer Rouge regime with people in the country. No one hesitate to answer "Yes" to the question: *Do you believe that mass atrocity occurred during Democratic Kampuchea regime?*. Following this question, some students wrote that their parents told them about the crime of killings, events of evacuation, overwork and separation.

### Level of discrimination of students to the children of former Khmer Rouge cadres

Table 2 below shows that level of discrimination of students goes up from 3% before they attended the forum to 12% after the forum. However, this still small numbers of discrimination if comparing to the level of discrimination. As shown in the table above, almost all students said they don't discrimination against their friends who are children of former Khmer Rouge cadres.

Table 2: Level of discrimination of students against children of former KR cadres

	Discrimination	Don't discrimination	Don't answer
Pre-Survey	3%	97%	0%
Post-Survey	12%	86%	2%

In all, the high-school students who were born 38 years after Khmer Rouge regime were trained to be good human and to retain feeling of emphasizing how the experiences of victims of Khmer Rouge are important.

### **The importance of studying Khmer Rouge history**

According to the survey and discussion with students, no one rejected that the study of Khmer Rouge history is not important. All students (100%) agreed that the history of DK is important to study. Within hours of conducting the forum, the students paid much attention to the presentation and explanation of a history of DK. More questions about Khmer Rouge regime were asked, and most answers by presenters were responded accordingly to the students. Following this session, the process to build peace, reconciliation and healing was presented. Table 3 below illustrates ideas of students on the process of building peace, reconciliation and healing, and genocide prevention in Cambodia.

*Table 3: Student's expression on the importance of studying Khmer Rouge history*

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't answer</b>
<b>healing</b>	98%	2%	2%
<b>building peace</b>	100%	0%	0%
<b>Reconciliation</b>	96%	2%	2%
<b>Prevention of Genocide</b>	98%	0%	2%

According to the evidence in table 3, only 2% of all students said that the study of Khmer Rouge history did not encourage them to think of healing and reconciliation in Cambodia. This means that those students need more explanation on how important to study the history of DK. However, all students (100%) agreed that the study of the history of DK will encourage them to think of peace building, and the majority (98%) said “yes” to the question that mentioning about prevention of genocide in Cambodia. Exceptional 2% of the students felt unsure whatever the study of the history of DK is important to prevent the genocide in the future.

### **Students' feeling on learning the history of DK**

When asking “Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK?”, 83% said “No” and 17% said “Yes”. This means that over 50% of students feel comfortable learning the history of DK, excepting less than 20% of them feel uncomfortable learning this history. From this, the slightly percentage of students might be affected by crime of killing, overwork, separation, and torture during Khmer Rouge regime. Nevertheless, most students supported to have a study of DK history through some kind of social networks in Cambodia.

## Khmer Rouge History on Social Networks

According to table 4 below, highest percentage of students supported to have Khmer Rouge history on social networks went to Facebook (79%) and Google + (53%). The most slightly percentage went to Tencent QQ, Tengo, Pinterest, WhatsApp, Hi5 and Flickr.

Table 4: List of social networks which most interest

Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Tencent QQ	Telegram Msg	Facebook Msg	Tengo	Google+
46	11	4	2	4	5	2	31
79%	19%	7%	3%	7%	9%	3%	53%

Yahoo	Twitter	Pinterest	WhatsApp	Line	Email	Skype	Hi5	Flickr
6	4	2	2	8	7	3	2	2
10%	7%	3%	3%	14%	12%	5%	3%	3%

## VI. CHALLENGES

Technical problem: there was an unexpected problem with LCD projector. It did not work even we changed laptop. Consequently, we could not screen documentary film and slide PowerPoint. However, Mr. Rasy and Dany did a good work by including the students in their presentation. As a result, the students were engaging in lively discussion during the forum.

Time Constraint: time was a matter because two hours seemed a bit short to explain the students about the history of Democratic Kampuchea and interview technique. For the last 10 minutes, students started to lose their attention on the classroom because they had to hurry back home for lunch and private classes.

Limited knowledge of the students on the Khmer Rouge history: we have observed that some students did not know much about the Khmer Rouge history. The pre-survey did a good job for the class instructor whether or not to discuss the Khmer Rouge history in whole or in part with the students based on their knowledge about the history.

## VII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Some interesting questions were rise up during the classroom forum:**

1. Were there any journalists in the period of Democratic Kampuchea?

ANSWER: Of course, there were some journalists from socialist country and Khmer rouge bring them to nice place to get good news of Khmer Rouge.

2. What was the cause of Khmer Rouge and where were they coming from?

ANSWER: this group emerged to fight against France colony, and the name Khmer Rouge was given by the King Sihanouk.

3. Were there any people who tried to fight against Khmer Rouge regime?

A) Yes, there were some people who tried to fight against Khmer Rouge regime but not in the big picture, they couldn't do any action, so they just didn't support the regime.

4. What we shouldn't ask during interview?

ANSWER: You shouldn't ask any question that puts blame on former Khmer Rouge and try not to put any pressure on them.

5. What could we do if there is an important disagreement when conducting interview?

ANSWER: Try to explain them the importance of interview and usefulness for the next generation.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

The classroom forum on January 19, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. by the DC-Cam's Genocide Education Project provided a good opportunity for the high school students to discuss about the Khmer Rouge history in addition to their classroom. The students paid good attention to Mr. Pheng's, Mr. Long's and Ms. Sirik's presentations. They were enthusiastic and curious to know and learn more about Khmer Rouge history.

APPENDIX A:



Adobe Acrobat Document

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

តារាង K-W-L

<p><b>K = what I Know</b>  <b>អ្វីដែលខ្ញុំបានដឹង</b></p>	<p><b>W = what I Want to know</b>  <b>អ្វីដែលខ្ញុំចង់ដឹង (ទម្រង់សំណួរ)</b></p>	<p><b>L = what I Learned</b>  <b>អ្វីដែលខ្ញុំបានរៀន</b></p>
<p>- រយៈពេលសង្គ្រាមកម្ពុជា ១៩៧៥ - ១៩៧៩                      - ឈ្លាប់ បង្កគ្រោះថ្នាក់ ធ្ងន់ ធ្ងន់ បំផុត បំផុត                      - កាត បង្កាត់ ជាមហាសេនា                      - ប្រជាជន ខ្លាច ខ្លាច ខ្លាច ខ្លាច ខ្លាច ខ្លាច ខ្លាច ខ្លាច                      - ឱ្យ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន                      - ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន                      - ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន</p>	<p>- តើ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន?                      - តើ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន?                      - តើ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន?                      - តើ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន?                      - តើ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន?                      - តើ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន?                      - តើ ប្រជាជន រស់ រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន រាន?</p>	

**APPENDIX B:**

**Dc-Cam: ការបង្រៀនប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហម គឺដើម្បីកុំឲ្យអំពើប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍ ត្រលប់មកវិញ**

Tue, 24 January 2017, Phnom Penh Post

រ៉ន ដារ៉ា

**ភ្នំពេញ:** មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា (Dc-Cam)សហការជាមួយក្រសួងអប់រំយុវជន និងកីឡា បានដាក់បញ្ចូលការសិក្សា ប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហមបន្ថែមដល់វិទ្យាល័យចំនួន ១៥ នៅរាជធានីភ្នំពេញ សម្រាប់សិស្សថ្នាក់ទី ៩ និង ទី១២ ដើម្បីឲ្យ ពួកគេយល់ដឹងពីប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហម និងទប់ស្កាត់អំពើប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍កុំឲ្យកើតមានឡើងវិញ។

លោក ជេង ពង្សារ៉ា ស៊ី ប្រធានគម្រោងស្តីពីការសិក្សាអំពីប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍នៅកម្ពុជា នៃ Dc-Cam បានថ្លែងប្រាប់ LIFT ឲ្យដឹងថា «កម្មវិធីថ្នាក់រៀនសម្រាប់សិស្សវិទ្យាល័យ» ពីការសិក្សាប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហមនេះ បង្កើតឡើងដើម្បីឲ្យ សិស្សបានយល់ដឹងបន្ថែម ពីអំពើប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍ បន្ទាប់ពីការសិស្សរបស់ពួកគេ ហើយអាចឲ្យពួកគេទទួលបាន ចំណេះដឹងកាន់តែច្រើនពីលោកគ្រូអ្នកគ្រូ។

លោកបន្តថា៖ «ការបង្រៀនប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រនេះ វាសំខាន់ណាស់ ដែលមានទំនាក់ទំនងទៅនឹងការកសាងប្រទេស និងការ ទប់ស្កាត់អំពើប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍ កុំឲ្យត្រលប់មកវិញ» ។

បង្កើតគម្រោង កម្មវិធីថ្នាក់រៀនសម្រាប់សិស្សវិទ្យាល័យ តាំងពីខែមករា ឆ្នាំ២០១៦ លោក ពង្សារ៉ា ស៊ី បន្ថែមថា ក្នុងនោះ មានវិទ្យាល័យចំនួន ១៥ នៅភ្នំពេញ ដែលមជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា បានចុះទៅបង្រៀន និងមានសិស្សចំនួន ៩៥០ នាក់ បានចូលរៀនភាគច្រើនជាសិស្សថ្នាក់ទី ១២។

លោកបានឲ្យដឹងទៀតថា «ការបង្រៀននេះបានជួយដល់សិស្សច្រើន ទាំងការរៀនប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រ និងវិធីសាស្ត្រនៃការគ្រិះ រិះពិចារណាស៊ីដម្រៅ ថាតើការរៀនប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រនេះ អាចជួយកសាងប្រទេសតាមវិធីណា ព្រោះការបង្រៀននេះ បាន បង្ហាញឲ្យពួកគេចេះផ្សះផ្សាគ្នា ចេះអត់ឱនឲ្យគ្នា ទោះមានសិស្សខ្លះជាកូនរបស់ជនដៃដល់ ហើយកំពុងតែសិស្សានៅ ថ្នាក់រៀនជាមួយគ្នាក៏ដោយ» ។

លោក នង ប៉ុនហេង នាយកវិទ្យាល័យយុគន្ទ បានថ្លែងថា ទោះកម្មវិធីសិក្សានៅវិទ្យាល័យរបស់លោក មានការសិក្សាពី ប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រនេះហើយក៏ដោយ ប៉ុន្តែសិស្សនៅមិនសូវចាប់អារម្មណ៍ចំពោះការសិក្សាពីប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហមនេះប៉ុន្មាន ទេ។

លោកបន្តថា «ក្រោយទទួលបានការបង្រៀនបន្ថែមពីមជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជាពីរបបប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍ខ្មែរក្រហម សិស្សចាប់អារម្មណ៍ប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហមនេះច្រើនបើតាមការអង្កេតផ្លូវចិត្តរបស់សិស្ស ។ ដូចជាស្លាកដែលបំពាក់នៅ សាលាអញ្ចឹង ខ្ញុំឃើញសិស្សចេញចូលសាលា ពួកគេតែងតែជុំគ្នាមើល ពិសេសសិស្សដែលត្រូវប្រឡងមធ្យមសិស្សឆ្នាំ នេះ ព្រោះពួកគេគិតថាអាចទាក់ទងដល់ការប្រឡងរបស់ពួកគេ» ។

យុវតី រឿន ស្រីលក្ខ សិស្សថ្នាក់ទី១២ នៃវិទ្យាល័យយុគន្ទ បានឲ្យដឹងដែរថា កាលពីមុននាងមិនសូវចាប់អារម្មណ៍ចំពោះ ការសិក្សាប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហមនេះទេ គ្រាន់តែធ្លាប់ដឹងពីចាស់ៗខ្លះប៉ុណ្ណោះ ។

យុវតីរូបនេះបានបន្តថា «ពីមុនខ្ញុំគ្រាន់តែធ្លាប់បានឮរឿងនេះតាមរយៈម៉ាក់ខ្ញុំនិយាយ តែមិនដែលចាប់អារម្មណ៍ទេ តែឥលូវ ខ្ញុំដឹងច្បាស់ ហើយខ្ញុំគិតថា វាអាចទាក់ទងដល់ការប្រឡងបាក់ឌុបរបស់ខ្ញុំឆ្នាំនេះថែមទៀត»។

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