

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា
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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

27th Classroom forum on

"the Importance of Studying the Khmer Rouge History 1975-1979"

at Chea Sim Chamroeunrath High School

December 13, 2017



Report by: Seang Chenda

Data Entry and Analysis by: Min Sanas and Phat Sela

Documentation Center of Cambodia (constituted in 1995) ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បីការបង់បំណុលយុត្តិធម៌
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66 Preah Sihanouk Blvd. • P.O.Box 1110 • Phnom Penh ២ Cambodia
t (855-23) 211-875 • dccam@online.com.kh • www.dccam.org

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Overall Summary¹

The 26th Classroom forum of academic year 2017-2018 on the importance of studying the Khmer Rouge history was launched at Chea Sim Chamroeunrath High School with the participation of around 70 students. Needless to say, the day of the forum marked the tireless effort of the team was endeavoring the history education while number of problems were encountered. However, through our commitment dedication, these technical matters were resolved and everything went well as planned.

Upon receiving an official letter from the ministry, the team hurriedly went to meet the high school principle with threefold of (1) examine the reality of the location of the high school and (2) inform high school principles of the incoming forum and (3) install "Forced Transfer" Exhibition. It demonstrated of the team's preparedness for the forum just two weeks away.

On the day of the event, the team took van and drove along National Road 5 filled with crowded traffic. Chea Sim Chamroeunrath High School locates in the suburb of Phnom Penh, just about 40-minute drive. As the traffic was a bit busy, it took us about an hour. Upon the team's arrival around 8.30am, there appeared quietness in the hall where the forum was expected to be conducted. With no delay, the team took all equipment and materials to the hall for the forum preparation. A moment later, the school principle came out saying the students would soon come in. As the forum installation ended, all students arrived and the school principle and his staff facilitated the classroom well-preparedness for the forum. With the great help by the school principle, all was accelerated as students of 69 (30 female/ 39 male) were in readiness for the opening. Well preparedness and mutual collaboration created an environment that permitted the forum to flow as scheduled between 9.00am to 11.00am.

Not immediately after the preparation finished, the school principle gave an insightful remark the importance of the studying of the KR history. After the end of his talk, Mr. Long Dany opened his speech to the students and then moved with no delay to the pre-forum survey part, aiming at ascertaining the students' knowledge about the KR history through the narration by parents. K-W-L method was inevitably utilized in students' thought-provoking about the KR history writing their existing knowledge on the whiteboard.

¹ Photo of Activities:

<https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipOHEVb1Uoo8Pj5YIdM6qEeia0gK8nhcpIcFSPzZN1SkVWVrIGPFSi2d0UL6sOpnfg?key=cEd0Z1c4dmZoUU5tSUFzUHDvVXB6X2NFbkdDM0xB>

Two short documentary films "Kampuchea Children" and "Liberation zone in Kampong Cham in 1973" were also screened. This permitted the students to learn how the KR rose to power and to be aware of how the suffer of the children after the genocide was. Instilling the knowledge and awareness through the documentary films in the students, Mr. Dany did the presentation about the KR history. As the forum went almost finished, the team began the textbook distribution of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) and the guiding of the "Forced Transfer Exhibition." In addition, as today all information can be reached out in the palm of our hand, the team provided notes on the whiteboard consisting of necessary website http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide_Education.htm, and Facebook page of Genocide Education in Cambodia, as well as history of Khmer Rouge website that just opened for public use recently (<http://www.khmerrougehistory.org/>), which beneficial for their self-study and research.

Purpose of the forum

Today (December 13, 2017), the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched the 26th classroom forum on academic year 2017-2018 on "the Importance of the studying DK History (1975-1979)" at Chea Sim Chamroeunrath High School in the suburb of Phnom Penh.

The forum aims at educating the high school students about the Democratic Kampuchea history (DK), commonly known as the Khmer Rouge (KR) by engaging their intellectual curiosity to build critical thought and insightful discussion. In addition, the study of the KR history also allows the students to (1) increase an awareness of the suffering and loss of the victims and instill an understanding of the human value, (2) Inspire critical thought of the KR legacy continuingly existing in society, and (3) Invoke further discussion of the KR history outside the class. The forum led by Mr. Long Dany, coordinated by Mr. Sok Vannak, Ms Ry Lakana, Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy, Ms Min Sanas and Seang Chenda, and publicized by Mr. Ho Thona, was designed upon following agenda:

Activities	Time
Opening remark	8.30 am – 8.45 am
Pre-forum survey completed by the students	8.45 am – 9.00 am
K-W-L Method	9.00 am – 9.20 am
Screening of documentary films	9.20 am – 9.40 am

Presentation on the importance of studying DK history (1975-1979)	9.40 am – 10.15 am
Q & A session	10.15 am – 11.15 am
Forced Transfer Exhibition	11.15 am – 11.30 am
Closing remark	11.45 am

Forum

I. Opening remark

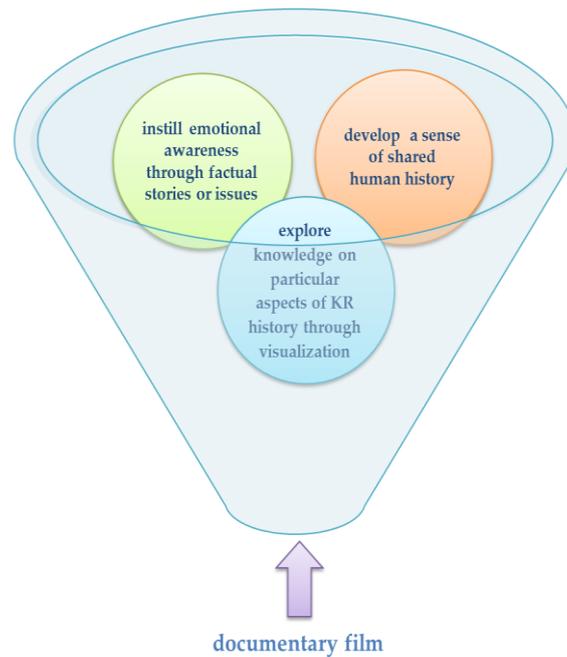
Warmly welcomed by the students in readiness to learn the KR history, [Louk Krou] Dy Tep Kosal, the school principle, gave an inspiring remark before the opening of the forum, highlighting his life experience during the Khmer Rouge regime in attempt to the strengthen the importance of the study of the history for the later generations to learn so that such a man-made disaster will not ever re-happen. He finally continued to thanks to DC-Cam team endeavoring to educate the students to learn about the past history.

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

As the school principle open remark ended, Mr. Dany launched his quick opening speech to the students introducing the team members and began to hand of the pre-forum survey sheet students' completion taking about 15 minutes. The survey helps the team aware of the current level of students' knowledge and experience. After the completion of the survey, Mr. Dany moved it to the K-W-L (method) session in which two flipcharts were already placed on the wall along side of the whiteboard. It aimed at inspiring thought-provoking and self-critical understanding as the students were encouraged to stand up and come to share the information written on the papers. This is the moving step as the students were not only encouraged to share the knowledge to others but provoked their critical thinking about the history.

III. Documentary screening

Two short documentary films screened to the students in the forum were "Cambodian Children" and "Liberation in 1973." The film functioned as a particular role with the specific theme in exploring and shaping the students' understanding of the Khmer Rouge history through the visualization from the movie. It has threefold in the educational program to:



To sum up, the documentary film resumed a particular educational role in help explain the history through narrative visualization.

IV. Presentation of DK history and Q & A

Upon the ending of the screening of the documentary movies, Mr. Dany conducted the historical-based presentation of the Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979). He narrated and explained some essential matters as of the originality and rise of the Khmer Rouge, mass evacuation, and KR policies leading to starvation, execution and death of more than one million people along with political changes in the context of Indochina during the cold war. The presentation was prepared as based on a chronological narration of the past history and in attempt to response what the students **wanted** to know in K-W-L flipcharts of the students' perspective. After he ended his presentation, Mr. Dany encouraged the students to ask any questions that they would want explore and left his message that the study of the past history is very important to know what happened in the past not to walk on the same path.

V. Democratic Kampuchea History Text Book Distribution

As the presentation and Q & A session ended, sixty-nine copies of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" textbooks were handed over to all students in the forum as purposed to help them improve their understanding of the history through such additional reading material. Of course, each of them expressed his/ her expression of appreciation for not only the insightful presentation by Mr. Dany but the receiving of the book.

VI. Post-forum survey

To be able to evaluate the understanding of the students participating to learn about the Khmer Rouge history, DC-Cam's team members distributed a post-forum survey paper to be completed. The post-forum survey also includes some questions applying to navigate the students' perspective towards the Khmer Rouge history aiming to encourage the tolerance and reconciliation in the Cambodian society.

VII. Forced Transfer Exhibition

The exhibition titled "Forced Transfer" was integrated in this educational forum to provoke a new dialogue amongst the students. It includes survivors' story related to the forced evacuation and daily life conditions during the DK as well as brief biography of Khmer Rouge top leaders. The display of the exhibition was very moving as the striking photographs, survivors' narration and folktales encouraged for remembrance and hour of the suffering of the victims under the Khmer Rouge.

Pre- and post-forum data

All questionnaires for Pre and Post-forum were collected and checked carefully before enter into statistic software. IBM SPSS software version 20 was used a tool to analyze the data from questionnaires by using Descriptive statistic, Frequency method to determine the percentage of respondents who answered the questions. Microsoft Excel was used to create and design pie charts for this report.

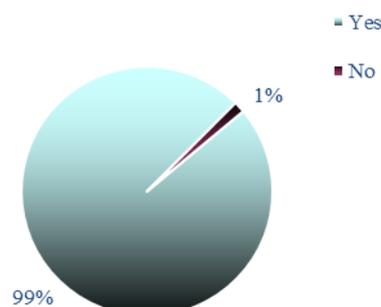
Data Analysis

◆ **Pre-forum survey** aiming to elicit the students' existing knowledge and perspective-provoking of the KR history was built upon six insightful questions as following:

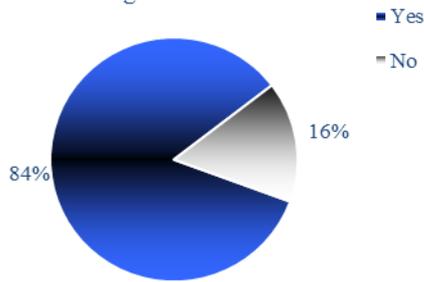
Q1 Would you describe your knowledge of DK period?



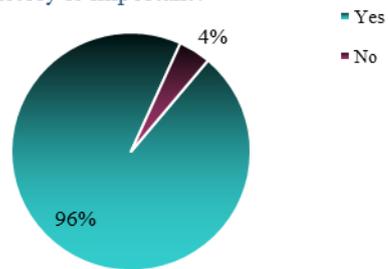
Q2 Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during DK regime?



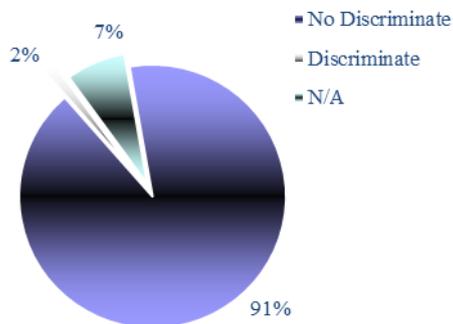
Q3 Have you ever talk about the DK period with your parents or people who lived during this time?



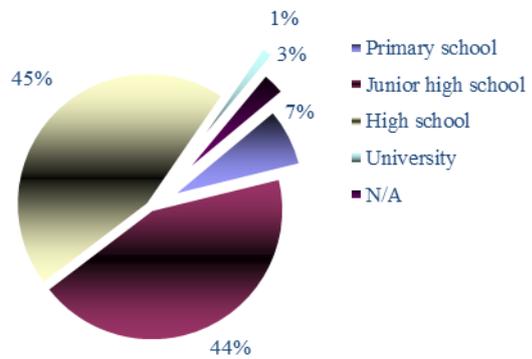
Q4 Do you think studying of DK history is important?



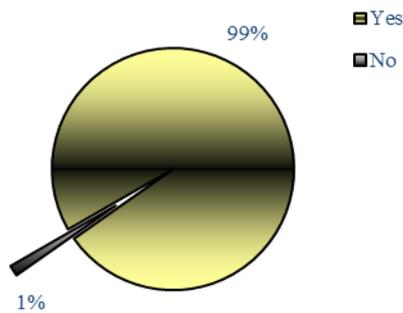
Q5 If one of your friends is a son/ daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate him/ her?



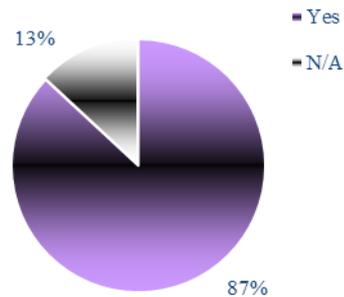
Q6 Which type of school in Cambodia that DK history should be taught?



Q7 Do you believe about Forced Transfer during DK regime?

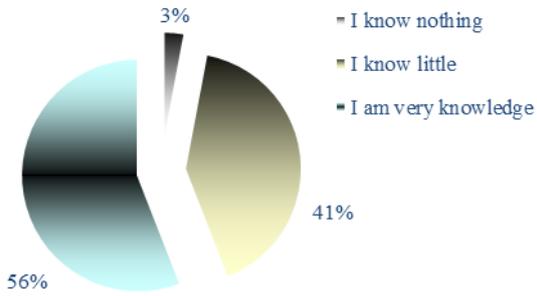


Q8 Do you believe that families were broken up during DK regime?

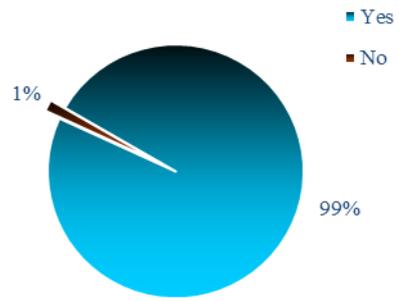


◆ **Post-forum survey** is created to examine the development of the students' knowledge after the end of the forum. Below are 17 questions in this post-forum sheet:

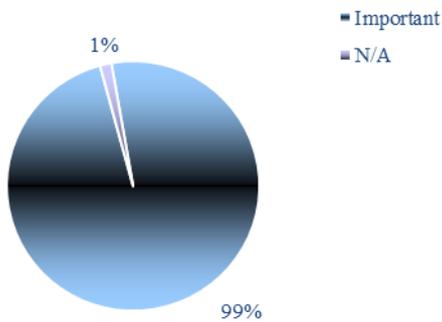
Q1 How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?



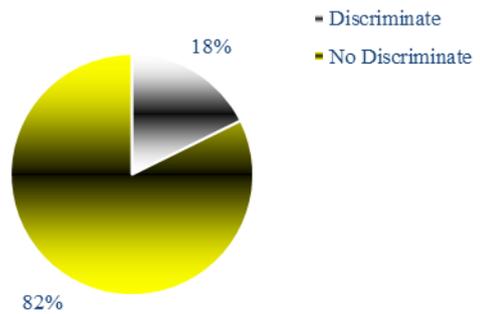
Q2 Do you believe that Mass Atrocities occurred during DK regime?



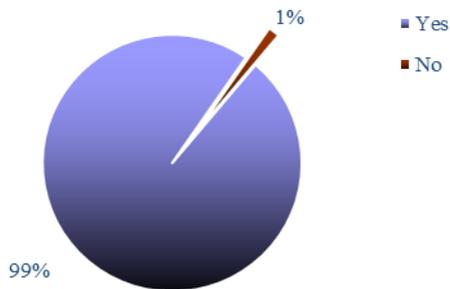
Q3 Do you think the study of DK history is important?



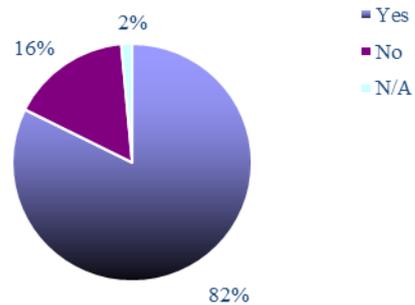
Q4 If one of your friends is a son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate him/ her?



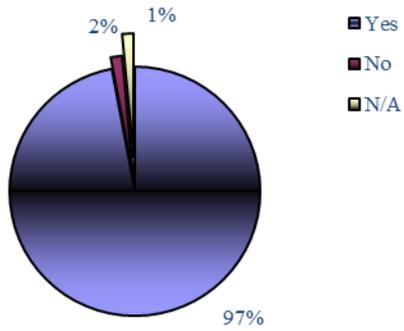
Q5 Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of building peace in Cambodia society?



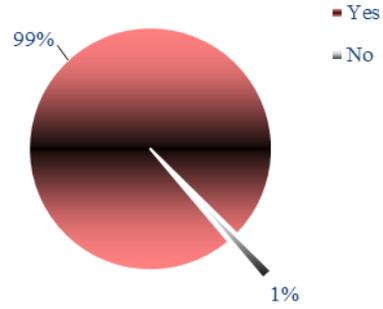
Q6 Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of healing?



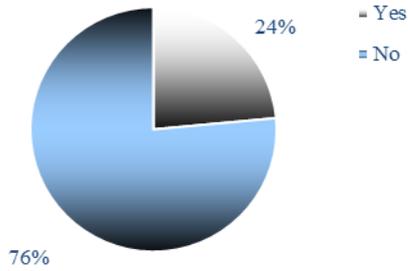
Q7 Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of reconciliation?



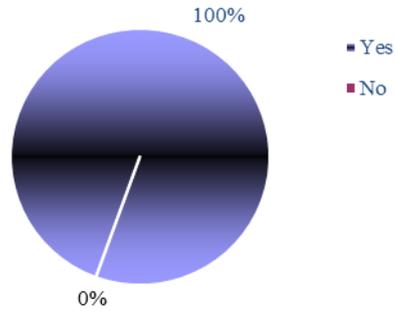
Q8 Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of genocide prevention in the future?



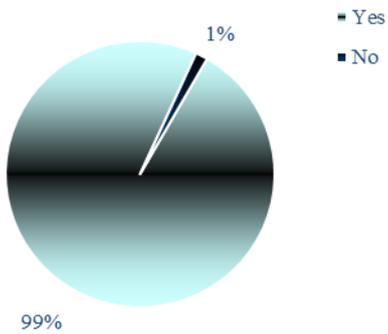
Q9 Do you feel uncomfortable when learning DK history?



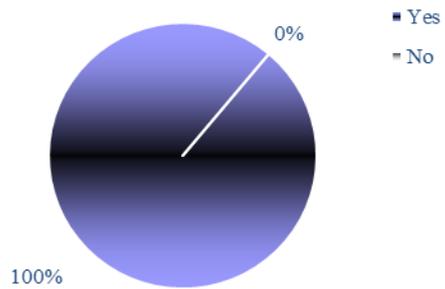
Q10 Do you believe the “Forced Transfer” happened during DK regime?



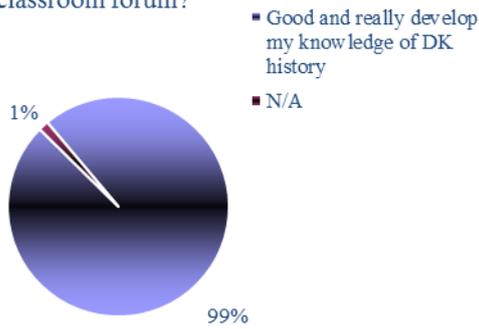
Q11 Do you believe the “Forced Separation of Families” happened during DK regime?



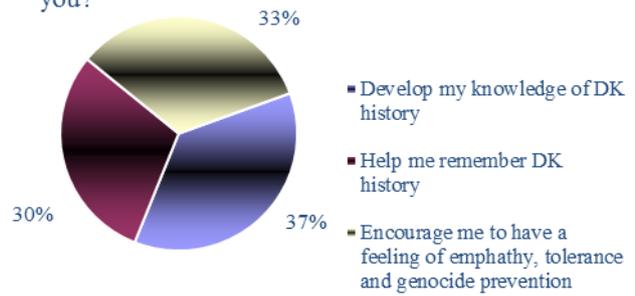
Q12 Besides the study of DK history inside classroom or public space, do you think the history should be posted on social network for additional learning and learning materials?



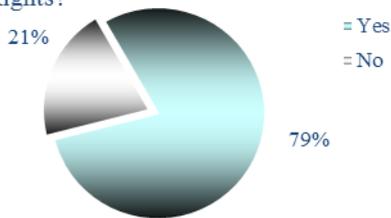
Q13 What do you think about this classroom forum?



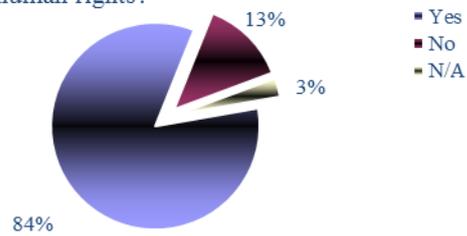
Q14 What does this classroom forum help you?



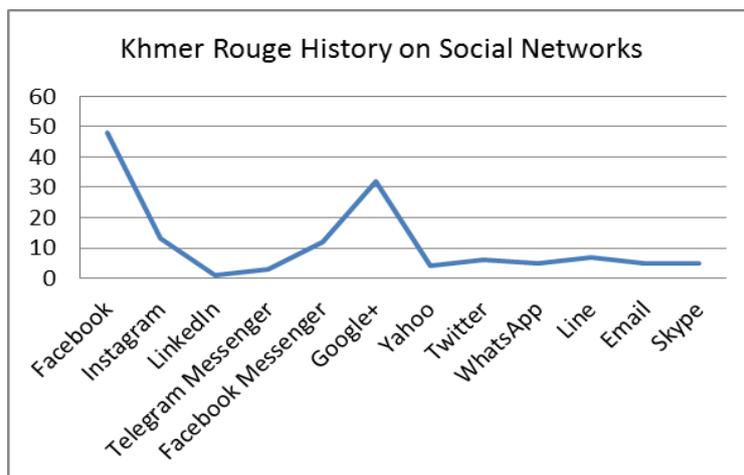
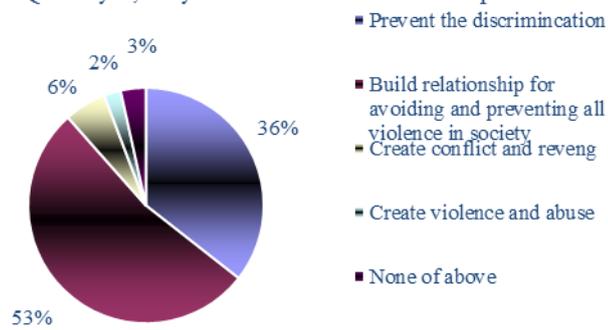
Q15 Do you think the studying of DK history encourage you to value Human Rights?



Q16 Do you think the studying of DK history can help you to understand human rights?



Q17 If yes, do you think what could be helped?



Results

Results of the pre- and post-forum surveys, there appeared a great shift in students' knowledge on the history of Democratic Kampuchea. First of all, students provided an answer indicating the slight decrease of "know nothing" just 1%. Before the forum, 93 percent of students responded "know little" with the declined trend by 52 %. It is good to get that the decreased percentage of the previous trends contributes an increase of the students' wider knowledge on this history, for 53 percent of the students answered "very knowledgeable," which indicates of their "much" knowledge on the KR history afterwards.

As the results from Post survey, the percentage of student who believed that mass atrocities really occurred during KR regime remains the same in Post survey (99%). As for students who believed that the studying of DK history is important rise up from 96% (Pre-survey) to 99% in Post-survey.

Discrimination resulted from the KR history remains a concerning matter in the post-Genocide society in which tolerance and reconciliation continued being rebuilt. It, therefore, can be questioned of how the discriminative perspective and reaction against the second/ third generation of the former Khmer Rouge cadres are. Before the forum, 91 percent of the entire students chose *the non-discriminative stance against the perpetrators' children* as the rest gave a response applying to discrimination. However, the post-forum survey showed a surprisingly reversal result that would deteriorate the reconciliation and tolerance building because of the decline of 11 percent of "no discrimination" whilst the number of students taking "discrimination" increased up to 16 percent (see figure). It reflects of a still existence of "discrimination" against the former KR cadres' offspring in the society. However, most of the students still believed that study DK history encourages them to think of building peace (99%), reconciliation (97%), prevent genocide (99%), and healing (82%) in Cambodia. They (99%) also mentioned that this classroom forum really good and develop their knowledge on DK history.

As an easiness of smart device is now in palm of our hand, students find it very accessible to search for any related information to DK history online — on diverse social network website. *Facebook and its messenger* take the first stand of the most popular accessibility of its convenience for obtain information, sharing ,and transfer; *Google+* the second and *Instagram and Telegram* the third.

As we know, during the KR regime, the Human Rights was declined to zero, all private properties were abolished, public speeches for individual were banned, as well as the rights to protest. After classroom forum, students believed that the studying of DK history can help to promote the respect of Human Rights (79%). They also believed that promote the respect of Human Rights could prevent the discrimination (46%), and build relationship of avoiding and preventing all violence in society (68%). Finally, 84% of students agreed that study DK history can help them to understand Human Rights.

Conclusion

Classroom forum at Chea Sim Chamroeunrath High School marked a successful accomplishment through mutual collaboration between DC-Cam team and the high school staffs in accelerating the operation of the forum to flow well. It proved that the students increase their knowledge on the history after the forum and show of much appreciation on the presentation and other activities in the forum by the team. There is a hope that further discussion about the KR history will be continuingly made and provoked by the students in class and at home in order to deepen more understanding about it.