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# DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA

**GENOCIDE EDUCATION IS GENOCIDE PREVENTION**

## REPORT

**Classroom forum on “The Importance of Studying Khmer Rouge History  
(1975-1979)” for Prek Leap High School**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On 8 June, Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), in collaborated with Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport with the supported of United State Agency for International Development (USAID), the 23<sup>rd</sup> classroom forum in 2017 on “The Importance of Study History of Khmer Rouge (1975-1979)” at Prek Leab high school. This classroom forum is a part of Genocide Education Project in Cambodia.

The purpose of this classroom forum was aimed to educate high school students about history of democratic Kampuchea known as Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979, as well as to provide students’ opportunities to discuss ask questions and think critically about what happened during Khmer Rouge Regime in other to consider its impacts to the present and future of Cambodia.

The forum objectives are: 1) to provide students with opportunities to share and express their personal knowledge on what happened during Khmer Rouge regime. 2) To encourage students to think critically on the transitional consequences of this legacy to the current Cambodian society. 3) To encourage the discussion over this legacy in families and communities. 4) To distribute “History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)” textbook to participating students

This forum included two presentations. First, the presentation of the history of Democratic Kampuchea was presented by Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy. The second one was interview technique presentation by Mr. Long Dany. The classroom forum was conducted from 2 pm to 4 pm with 84 students participated in this forum.

## **II. PREK LEAP HIGH SCHOOL**



Prek Leap high school located in Prek Leap commune, Muk Kampaul district, Kandal province. It was built in 1980 as a school providing education from grade 9 to 12. In 1992, this high school had included and became one of high schools in Phnom Penh. Prek Leap high school moved to the current location alongside of national road number 6 in 2002. In academic year

2014-2015, Prek Leap high school have 4 buildings (32 rooms), 94 staffs included non-teaching staffs and teachers (36 female), and 1234 students (610 female). There are 28 classrooms used for grade 7 to 12. (Table 1)

**Table 1: Grade, Classroom and Student**

Grade	Classroom	Total student	Female students
7	5	225	113
8	4	176	83
9	4	174	93
10	7	286	146
11	4	192	86
12	4	181	89

### **III. STRUCTURE OF CLASSROOM FORUM**

#### **3.1. PRE-FORUM SURVEY**

At the beginning of the forum, Mr. Rasy introduced DC-Cam members and informed the forum's agenda to students and teachers. DC-Cam members started to distribute a pre-survey sheet for each student. This method aimed to identify what they have learnt or known, believed about Khmer Rouge Regime, as well as the discussion that they had or had not done with their parents or relatives.

#### **3.2. HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA PRESENTATION**

Before the presentation started, Mr. Rasy asked six questions to students that participated in this forum. Asking these questions was to measure students' level of understanding toward Khmer Rouge Regime. There were 5 students rise their hand one after another to answer questions. The questions were:

1. How many people have died in Khmer Rouge Regime?
2. What are the policies of Khmer Rouge Regime?
3. What kind of people Khmer Rouge Regime value?
4. How many hours people work in Khmer Rouge Regime per day?
5. What is the word "Khmer Rouge Regime" come from? Who is Khmer Rouge?
6. How can Khmer Rouge take over Cambodia in 17<sup>th</sup> April?



Most of all the answers responded by students were correct. LCD projector and power point's slides were used as teaching material in this forum. After that Mr. Rasy started his presentation about history of democratic Kampuchea. First, he talked about Khmer Rouge leaders with their biographies. Next, he explained about the organizational structure of Khmer Rouge Regime, policies and how they implicated them in Cambodia. All the students were attracted by the power point's slides and listened to Mr. Rasy because of the curiosity about the history of democratic Kampuchea and Khmer Rouge Regime. Before the presentation finished, Mr. Rasy continued to explain the ways that Khmer Rouge forced people to leave their home in a very short time as well as what happened during people traveled to other place. At the end of presentation, Mr. Rasy opened a session of Q&A for students to ask question. Instantly, there were 4 students raise their hand to ask questions. The questions were:

1. Why did Vietnam decide to help Cambodia?
2. What is "Purification"? Why were they applying it in Khmer Rouge Regime?
3. Were people in Khmer Rouge Regime have right to have child?
4. When children were born during Khmer Rouge Regime, why did they become Organization child or Angkar child?
5. What is "Classification"? New people and old people?

After they finish their questions, Mr. Rasy started to give satisfy answer to students one by one. Four of them were satisfied with the answers that Mr. Rasy has given to them. After the presentation finished, Mr. Rasy told students that there will be another session called the interview technique that presenting by Mr. Dany.

### **3.3. INTERVIEW SKILLS PRESENTATION**

The section focused on the "Interview Technique", presenting by Mr. Long Dany. He is a team leader of "Promoting Accountability" project of Documentation Center of Cambodia. This section included guiding students about the importance and value of interview skills, how to create questions, how to take note and ethic of interviewer as well as provided documents of pre-written script that described a fictional interview of interviewer and former

Khmer Rouge cadre interviewees. LCD projector, slides power point and paper were used as teaching material for this section. In this section, Mr. Dany has suggested a practical interview between student and DC-Cam member, Mr. Vannak. Student will played role as interviewer and Mr. Vannak acted as former Khmer Rouge cadre.



There was a male student sit in the front desk volunteer to participate in this practice. Both of them took 20 minutes to finish this interview. Student was excited to be able to have an opportunity like this as well as satisfied with this experience. There are three reasons in this practical interview. First, it will become significant skill for students when they become university student. Second, it will encourage students to ask their parents or relatives about what they have gone through in Khmer Rouge Regime. Finally, the played role will help students to understand the structure of questionnaire, what they have to do before during and after interview, and to have confident to do so. This interview skill will be beneficial to students in many ways for both study and career.

### **3.4. SHORT FILM SREENING**

After Mr. Dany finished his presentation, Mr. Rasy started to play video show entitled “Children of Kampuchea”. It was made immediately after 1979, which showed particular view after Khmer Rouge Regime. This video provided students a visual representation of the history they have learnt or heard from school or parents.

### **3.5. TEXT BOOKS DISTRIBUTION**

After screening the documentary film, DC-Cam members began to distribute “History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975-1979” textbooks to each student. These textbooks were given as learning material for student’s further research and learning, also helpful for student’s state exams as well. There are two reasons of textbooks distribution. First, give as learning material about Cambodia history. Second, enhance and promote reading culture to Cambodia students.

### **3.6. POST-FORUM SURVEY**

Before finished forum, DC-Cam member distributed another questionnaire sheets to each student. We used this method for explored student's knowledge and satisfactions after joined classroom forum. Questionnaire contains question of force transfer, what they have leant, the discrimination, student feeling after learning as well as satisfaction of this forum.



## **IV. PRE AND POST-CLASSROOM SURVEY RESULTS**

In other to identify knowledge and ideas of students before and after classroom forum about History of Democratic Kampuchea, two data collection techniques were applied. First, questionnaire survey was distributed during forum. This technique divided into two phases. Phase one was pre-forum survey that distributed questionnaires before forum started, to explored knowledge of what students have learnt from school or home. Second phase, was post-forum survey. We distributed questionnaires before forum end, in other to find out what students have learnt from forum as well as their satisfaction on the forum. Second techniques, is observation. We used to observed behaviors and attitudes of students during the forum. To analyze the data that collected from classroom forum, IBM SPSS software version 20 was used as data analyze tool in this report. There are 84 valid questionnaires that got from field

were checked carefully and input in SPSS software. Descriptive statistic, frequency analyze was used as analyze technique to find out quantities and percentage of samples.

#### 4.1. PRE-FORUM SURVEY RESULTS

According to Table 2 below, students who know a little about the DK period are 74 (88.1%), students know nothing about DK period is 9 (10.7%) and very knowledgeable about DK period is only 1 (1.2%). Second question, all of students (84=100%) believed that mass atrocities occurred during DK regime. Next question, students that have talked about the DK period with their parents or people who live during that time are 70 (83.3%), never talked are 13 (15.5%) and one student did not answer this question.

Forth question, all students (84=100%) agreed that the study of a history of DK is important. Fifth question, all students disagreed about discrimination if one of their friends is a son/daughter of perpetrator (84=100%). Next, 52 (61.9%) students agreed that the history of DK could be taught in junior high school, 29 (34.5%) for high school and 3 (3.6%) students for primary school. Q7, 84 (100%) students believed about the forced transfer during the DK regime. Last question, 83 (98.8%) students believed about the families were broken up during the DK regime and 1 (1.2%) student did not believe.

Table 2: Pre-forum Survey Questions N=84	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?</b>		
I know nothing about the DK period	9	10.7
I know a little about the DK period	74	88.1
I am very knowledgeable about the DK period	1	1.2
I know enough about DK period to teach other	0	0
<b>2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?</b>		
Yes	84	100
No	0	0
<b>3. Have you ever talk about the DK period with your parents or people who lived during this time?</b>		
Yes	70	83.3
No	13	15.5
No answer	1	1.2
<b>4. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?</b>		
Yes	84	100
No	0	0
<b>5. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?</b>		
Yes	0	0
No	84	100



<i>6. Does the history of DK could be taught in school in Cambodia?</i>		
Primary School	3	3.6
Junior High school	52	61.9
High school	29	34.5
University	0	0
<i>7. Do you believe about The forced transfer during the DK regime?</i>		
Yes	84	100
No	0	0
<i>8. Do you believe about the families were broken up during the DK regime?</i>		
Yes	83	98.8
No	1	1.2

## 4.2. POST-FORUM SURVEY RESULTS

According to Table 3, there are 57 (66.9%) students are very knowledgeable about the DK period, 25 (29.8%) students know a little about DK period and 2 (2.4%) students did not give answers. Next question, all students (84=100%) believed mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime. Third question, 84 (100%) students agreed that the study of the history of DK is important. Forth question, 82 (97.6%) students disagreed about discrimination if one of their friends is a son/daughter of perpetrator and 2 (2.4%) students agreed to discriminate against him/her. Next question, 84 (100%) students agreed that studying a history of DK encourage them to think of building peace in Cambodia. Question number six, there are 73 (86.9%) students agreed the study of the history of DK encourages them to think of healing, 9 (10.7%) students disagreed and 2 (2.4%) did not answers. Next question, 83 (98.8%) students agreed the study of a history of DK encourages them to think of reconciliation and only one (1.2%) student disagreed. Q8, all students (84=100%) agreed the study of a history of DK encourage them to think of the prevention of genocide in the future. Q9, 71 (84.5%) students did not feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK, 11 (13.1%) felt uncomfortable and 2 (2.4%) students did not give answers. Q10, all students (84=100%) believed about forced transfer during the Khmer Rouge Regime. Q11, there are 84 (100%) believed about the forced separation of families during Khmer Rouge Regime. Q13, besides studying Khmer Rouge history in classroom or in public space, all students (84=100%) agreed this history should be posted on social networks of additional learning and for learning material. Q14, all students (84=100%) are like this classroom forum. Q15, 84 (100%) students agreed this classroom forum are good and really develop their knowledge on KR history. Last Q, there are 81 (96.4%) students believed this classroom forum help them to develop their knowledge about KR history, remember history of DK and encourage them to have feel of empathy and

tolerance. In addition, there are 3 (3.6%) students believed this classroom forum help them to develop their knowledge about KR history only.

According graph below, students prefer to find History of Democratic Kampuchea documents or information from Facebook by 79 follow by Google+ by 48, Email by 21, Facebook Messenger by 18, Line by 17, Twitter by 9, WhatsApp by 5, Telegram Messenger by 3 to Instagram by 0.

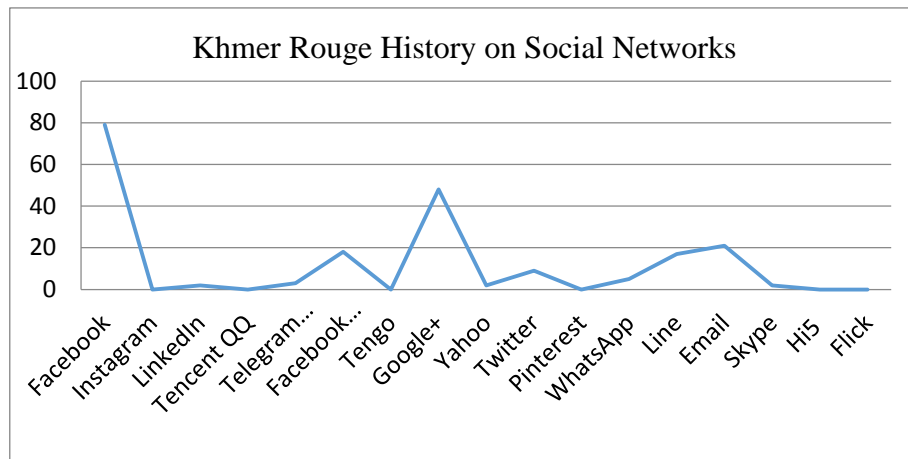


Table 3: Post-forum Survey Questions N=84		Frequency	Percentage %
<b>1</b>	<b><i>How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?</i></b>		
	I know nothing about the DK period	0	0
	I know a little about the DK period	25	29.8
	I am very knowledgeable about the DK period	57	67.9
	I know enough about DK period to teach other	0	0
	No Answer	2	2.4
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?</i></b>		
	Yes	84	100
	No	0	0
<b>3</b>	<b><i>Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?</i></b>		
	Yes	84	100
	No	0	0
<b>4</b>	<b><i>If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?</i></b>		
	Discrimination	2	2.4
	Don't discrimination	82	97.6
<b>5</b>	<b><i>Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of building peace in Cambodian society?</i></b>		
	Yes	84	100
	No	0	0
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of healing?</i></b>		
	Yes	73	86.9

No	9	10.7
No answer	2	2.4
<b>7 Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of reconciliation?</b>		
Yes	83	98.8
No	0	0
No answer	1	1.2
<b>8 Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of Prevention of genocide in the future?</b>		
Yes	84	100
No	0	0
<b>9 Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK?</b>		
Yes	11	13.1
No	71	84.5
No answer	2	2.4
<b>10 Do you believe "Forced Transfer" was happened during the Khmer Rouge regime?</b>		
Yes	84	100
No	0	0
<b>11 Do you believe "Forced separation of family" was happened during the Khmer Rouge regime?</b>		
Yes	84	100
No	0	0
<b>13 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?</b>		
Yes	84	100
No	0	0
<b>14 Do you like this classroom forum?</b>		
Yes, I like	84	100
No, I don't like	0	0
<b>15 What do you think about this classroom forum?</b>		
Good and really develop my knowledge on KR history	84	100
Not good and don't help anything to me	0	0
<b>16 What does this classroom forum help you?</b>		
Develop my knowledge about KR history	3	3.6
Help me to remember the history of DK	0	0
Encourage me to have feel of empathy and tolerance	0	0
All three above	81	96.4

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As the result shown in Table 2 & 3, most of students who joined classroom forum understand about Khmer Rouge history even before they joined classroom forum. Students who know little about Khmer Rouge history decreased from 74 (88.1%) to 25 (29.8%) after join forum and students who very knowledgeable about Khmer Rouge history increased from 1 (1.2%) to 57 (67.9%) after joining classroom forum. And students who know nothing about Khmer

Rouge history decreased from 9 (10.7%) to 0 after joining the forum. However, there was not student who know enough about Khmer Rouge history to teach other. The tables show that after joining 2 hours classroom forum, the number of student who understands about Khmer Rouge history increased significantly. All students believed that mass atrocities happened during Khmer Rouge regime that caused great pain to Cambodian people during that time. All students chose the word “Yes” on question: *Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?*

As the result in pre and post-surveys illustrated that students who discriminated toward children of Khmer Rouge cadres increased from 0 to 2 (2.4%) but that was still a small level of discrimination. However, majority of students said they do not discriminate against their friends who are children of former Khmer Rouge cadre. All students agreed that history of Khmer Rouge is important to study. Majority of students agreed the study of history of Khmer Rouge will encourage them to think of building peace in Cambodia society (100%), healing (86.9%), reconciliation (98.8%) and the prevention of genocide in the future (100%). However, some students (10.7%) said it can't heal easily since their families and relative died during Khmer Rouge regime. In addition, some students (13.1%) felt uncomfortable after learning history of Khmer Rouge and some of them felt afraid. All students believed about forced transfer (100%) and forced separation of families (100%) was happened during Khmer Rouge regime. In pre-survey, there was one student did not believe in the forced separation of families. However, after classroom forum all students have understood and believed about the families were broke up during Khmer Rouge regime.

Based on result from survey, all students agreed that history of Khmer Rouge should be posted on social network, especially on Facebook (94%), Google+ (57.1%) and Email (25%) for additional learning tools and learning material. On the other hand, all students said that they like this classroom forum and this classroom forum is good and really develop their knowledge about history of Khmer Rouge. Finally, majority of students believed this forum help them to develop their knowledge about KR history, remember history of DK and encourage them to have felt of empathy and tolerance.

In the conclusion, the classroom forum on 8 June 2017 from 2pm to 4pm by the DC-Cam genocide education project team provided a good opportunity for high school student to discuss about history of Khmer Rouge. Based on survey and observation, it cleared that students have enjoyed this classroom forum. Students were engaged in forum activities such

as question and answer, and interview skills practice that encourage by Mr. Rasy and Mr. Dany. It was an opportunity for students to improve their knowledge and self-confident from future study as well as career.