



SLEUK RITH INSTITUTE
A Permanent Documentation Center of Cambodia
66 Preah Sihanouk Blvd | Phnom Penh
+855 23 21 18 75 | www.cambodiasri.org

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

A TEACHING OF A HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA (1975-79)

REPORT
CLASSROOM FORUM ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING THE HISTORY OF
DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA (1975-1979) PORNG TIK HIGH SCHOOL
4th APRIL 2016

TEAM:

PHENG PONG-RASY

MIN SANAS

SURA BEZHAN

OUCH MAKARA

TEAV SARAK MONIN

Reported by: Sura Bezhan



Introduction:

On a very hot afternoon on the 4th of April 2016, 30 Grade Twelve students from Pornng Toek High School made their way to the school's old wooden meeting room during school holidays, which they are currently raising funds to renovate. Fifteen females and fifteen male students travelled long distances to attend the forum set up by Mr. Pheng Pong Rasy and Ms. Min Sanas from the Documentation Center's Genocide Education Program, to learn about Democratic Kampuchea history and stimulate critical thinking amongst the students. To begin the forum, 30 surveys were handed out to students to test their level of knowledge on DK history, whether they believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime, if students have ever spoken about DK history with their parents or people who lived during this time, the importance of studying DK history, whether they would discriminate against children of perpetrators and if they think DK history should be taught in schools in Cambodia and ASEAN.

Following the pre-forum surveys, the Coordinator of the Genocide Education Program, Mr. Pheng Pong Rasy, asked students, what they wanted to learn about Democratic Kampuchea history and their answers can be seen in the methodologies section of the report. After writing the students' answers on the whiteboard, Mr. Rasy began by showing the students a short silent film about Tuol Sleng (S-21) Prison. Students watched in shock and horror as images of corpses, torture methods, and living conditions of the prison were displayed to them. Trailing the short film, Mr. Rasy gave his lesson about Democratic Kampuchea history whilst answering the questions that the students had asked at the beginning of the class. The final two parts of the classroom forum consisted of students filling out a post-forum survey and the distribution of the 'A History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975-1979' textbook to all participating students.

Objective:

The Documentation Center of Cambodia in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports established the Genocide Education Program in order to build on the national genocide education curriculum across high schools in Cambodia. The forum intends to instigate critical thinking, debate and discussion between students, teachers and Mr. Pheng Pong Rasy whom delivers the forum. The specific objectives of the forum is:

1. To provide students with the environment and freedom to share their knowledge of Democratic Kampuchea history with teachers and other students and create an atmosphere for discussion and debate
2. To encourage the discussion of Democratic Kampuchea history and its affects within families and the community

3. To encourage students to think about forgiveness, peace building, reconciliation and the prevention of another genocide
4. To distribute 'A History of Democratic Kampuchea: 1975-1979' textbook to all participating students

Methodology:

There were three key methodologies used throughout the Porng Tik High School forum to assist in the teaching of Democratic Kampuchea history and follow the affects of the forum on the students. Two surveys were used in the classroom forum (pre and post forum surveys), 'W' section of a KWL chart, and visual aid including a silent video and PowerPoint slides throughout the forum.

i. Pre-Forum Survey

After all the students were seated and attendance was taken, thirty pre-forum surveys were handed out to the students to complete within fifteen minutes. The pre-forum survey tested the students' level of knowledge about DK history, the importance of studying DK history, discrimination of the children of perpetrators and whether they believed mass killings took place.

ii. 'W' Chart

Following the pre-forum survey, students were asked what they Wanted to Learn about DK history. As each student stood up with their responses, Mr. Rasy wrote each on the whiteboard for students and himself to clearly follow throughout the lesson. Due to time restrictions, Mr. Rasy decided to just complete the 'W' section of a KWL chart to ensure he does not miss any topics or questions that the students are wanting to know in regards to DK history. This was a great activity to engage students with the topic and ensure they are more active throughout the lesson, as well as answer the questions that they have.

iii. Visual Aid

Throughout the classroom forum, there were two key uses of visual aid that included the silent short film about Tuol Sleng Prison, otherwise known as S-21 Prison, and a PowerPoint slideshow throughout the learning part of the forum. The silent film about Tuol Sleng was a powerful learning tool to help students visualize the horrors that occurred within the walls of the prison and the inhumanity of the Khmer Rouge in their actions. It was greatly placed in the classroom forum schedule as it provided the students an introduction to Democratic Kampuchea history and provides groundwork for the cruelty that occurred throughout this history. The short film on Tuol Sleng displayed images of the different torture methods that the Khmer Rouge used, the corpses left in cells, the small confined blocks of the prisoners, children and adults who were clearly starving, and the images taken by the Khmer Rouge of the prisoners.

The use of a PowerPoint slideshow allowed students to follow the learning part of the forum clearly and the images on the slideshow once again aided in the visualization of the regime.

iv. Post-Forum Survey

The purpose of the post-forum surveys was to see the affect of the classroom forum on the students' knowledge of DK history, how they felt about learning DK history, whether they would discriminate against the child of a perpetrator, and whether they think about the concepts of building peace in Cambodia, healing within the community, reconciliation and the prevention of genocide in the future. It is a great assessment tool to see the level of effectiveness of the classroom forum and what could be improved.

Results:

i. 'W' Chart

Table 1.

'What I WANT to learn'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the Khmer Rouge regime occur? • Who was the Khmer Rouge? • What was Khmer Rouge's leadership structure? • Why did the Khmer Rouge take an easy step to take over the country from the Lon Nol Regime? • How many Khmer Rouge Zones and Regions were there? • Why did the Khmer Rouge kill intellectuals? • Why did the Khmer Rouge force people to farm? • Why did the United Nations ignore what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime? • What happened to the ECCC recently?

ii. Pre and Post- Forum Surveys

The two surveys had four questions that were the same which measured the level of knowledge of the students, whether they believe mass atrocities occurred during the DK period, the importance of studying DK history and whether they would discriminate against a child of a perpetrator. There was no difference in the pre and post-forum survey that asked students whether mass killings occurred during the KR regime (100% answered yes) and if it was important to study DK history (100% answered yes). The other two questions asked students to describe their level of knowledge of the DK period, with an increase of 77% of students stating

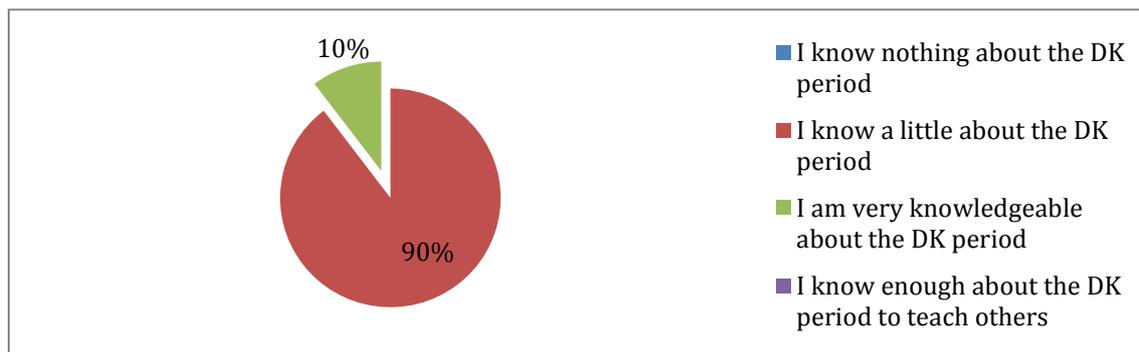
that they are very knowledgeable about the DK period. The second question asked whether students would discriminate if one of their friends were a child of a perpetrator, with a surprising change of results as in the pre-survey, 100% of the students stated they would not discriminate. The post-survey revealed that 7% changed their minds following the learning part of the forum and stated that they would discriminate. It is important to try and understand why students have changed their minds about discriminating against the children of perpetrators and to try and adjust that mentality. It is essential for students to understand the importance of not discriminating in order for the country to work towards peace building, healing, reconciliation and prevention of genocide.

Analysis of Results:

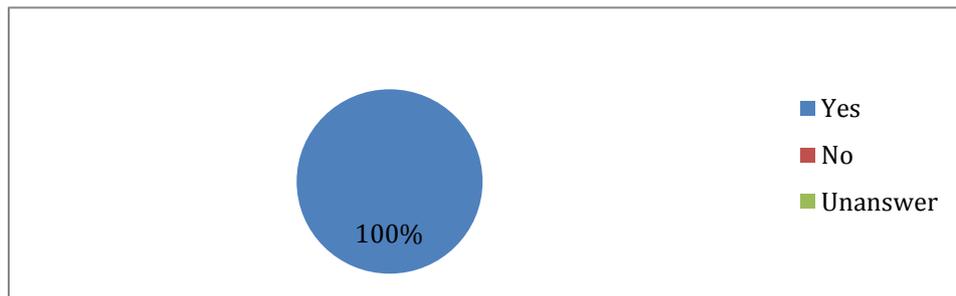
Both graphs and pie charts below have been created with Microsoft Excel by both the data from the pre-forum and post-forum surveys were inputted into Microsoft Excel and these graphs were created.

Pre-Forum Survey Analysis

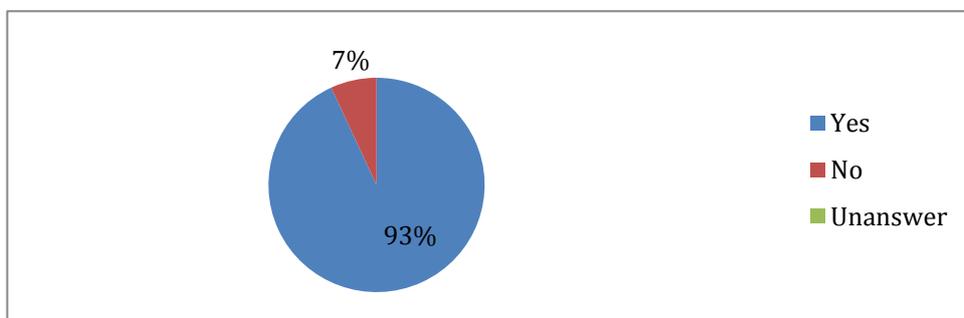
Q1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?



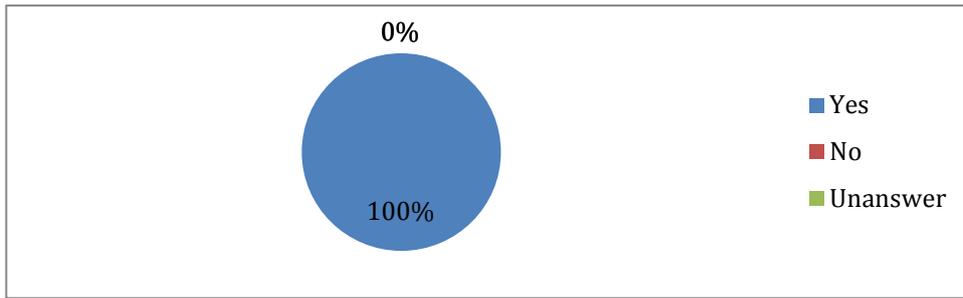
Q2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?



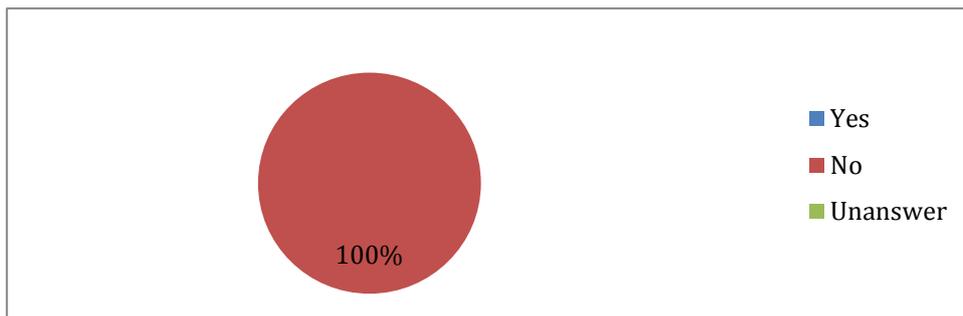
Q3. Have you ever talked about the DK period with your parents or people who lived during this time?



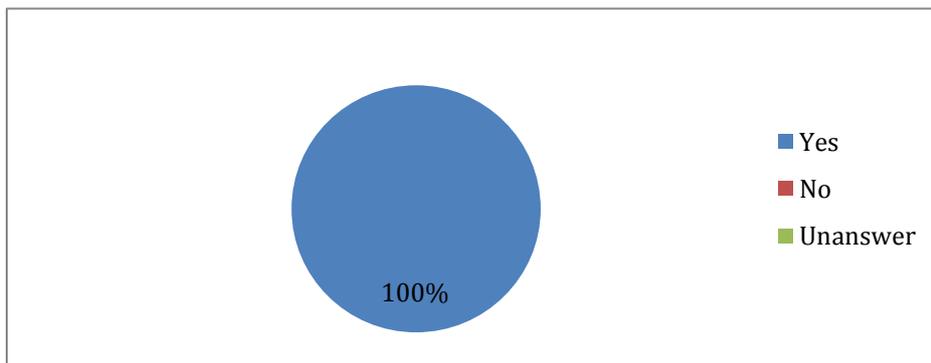
Q4. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



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

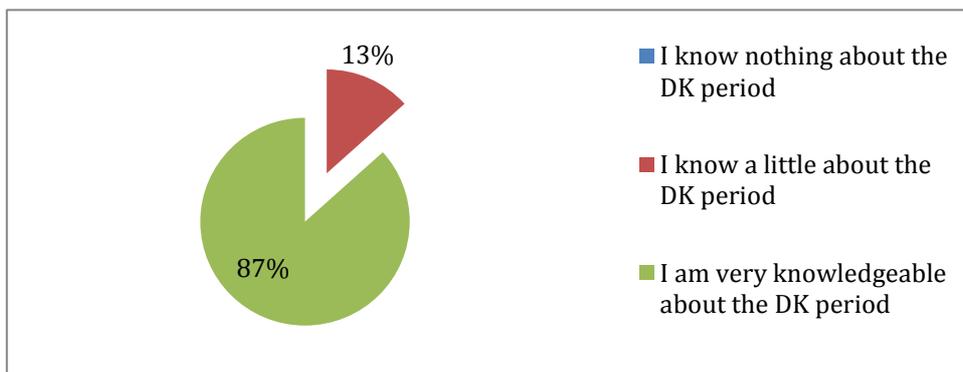


Q6. Should the history of DK be taught in schools in Cambodia and ASEAN?

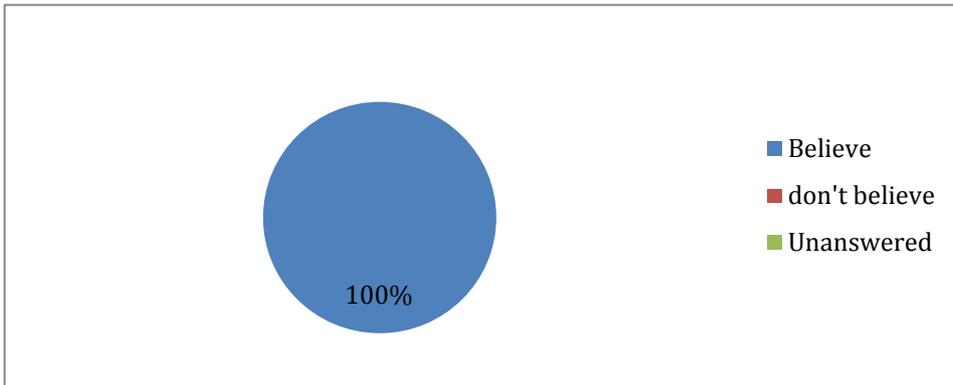


Post-Survey Analysis

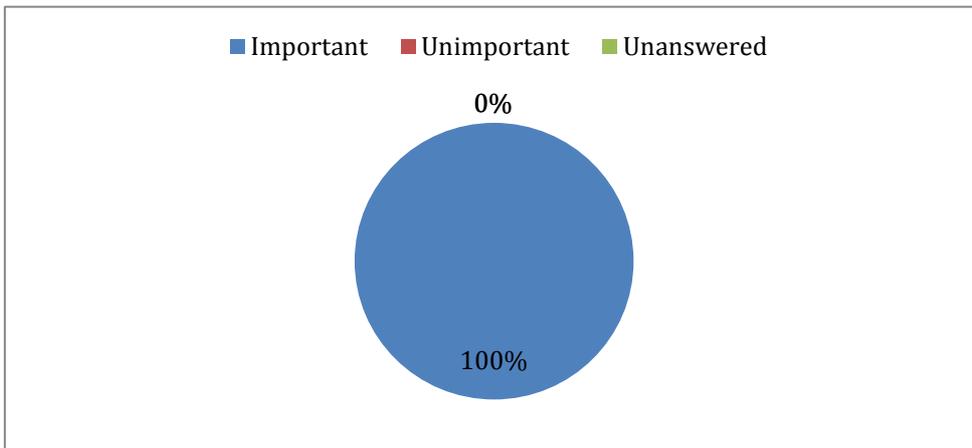
Q1. Do you satisfy this classroom forum? Students' knowledge.



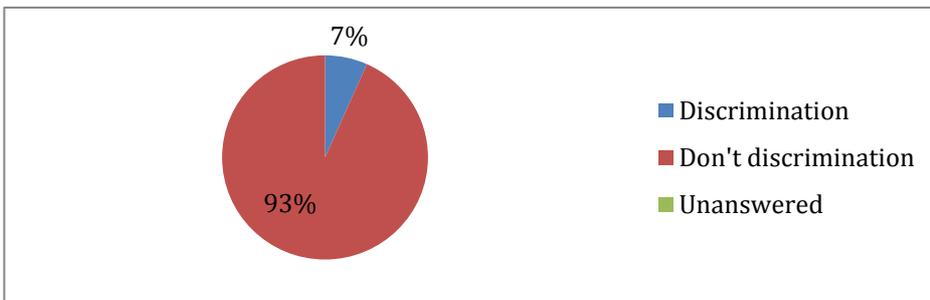
Q2. Do you believe mass atrocities occurred between 1975-1979?



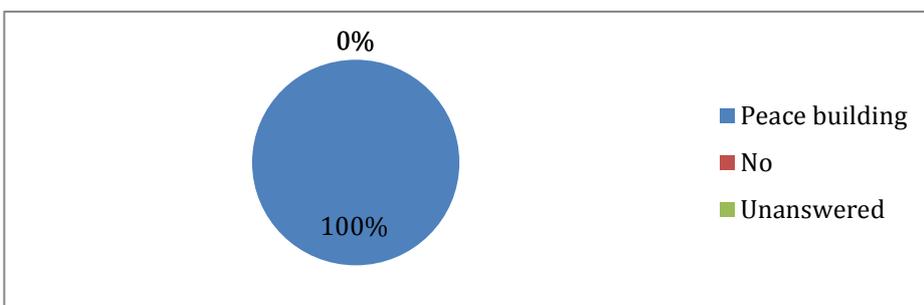
Q3. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



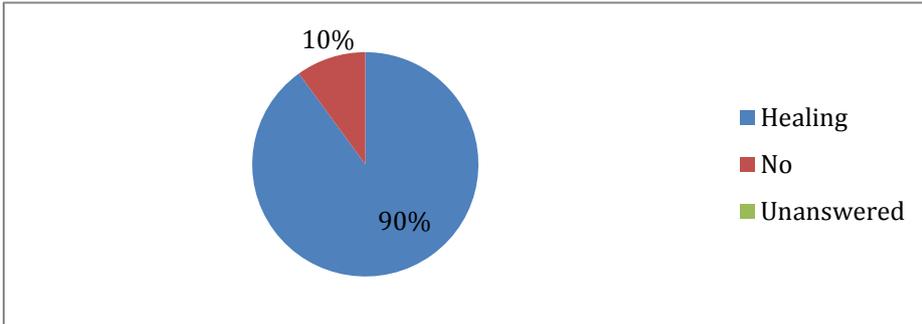
Q4. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?



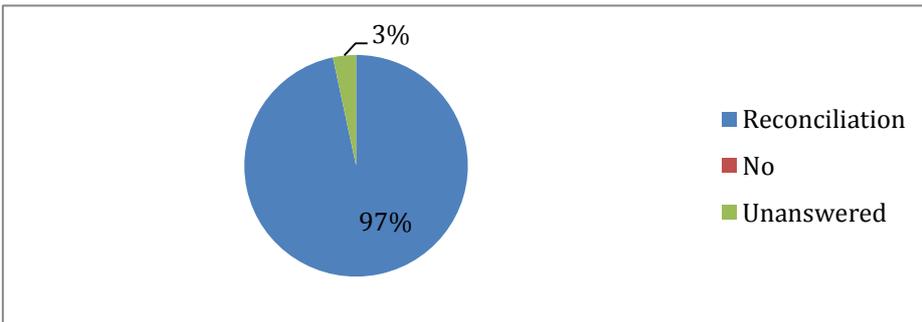
Q5. Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of building peace in Cambodian society?



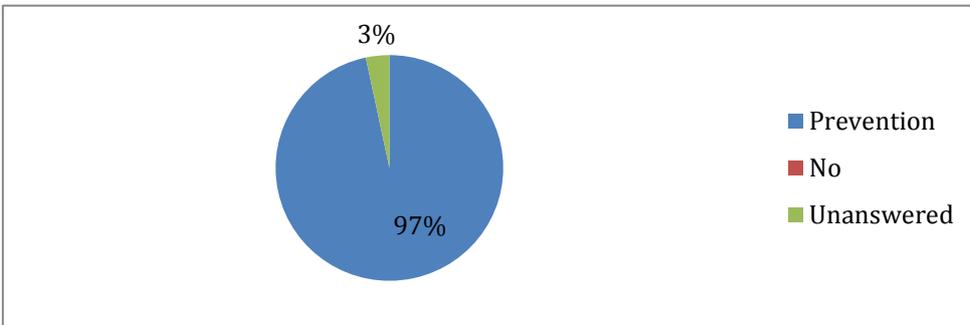
Q6. Does studying DK history encourage you to think of healing?



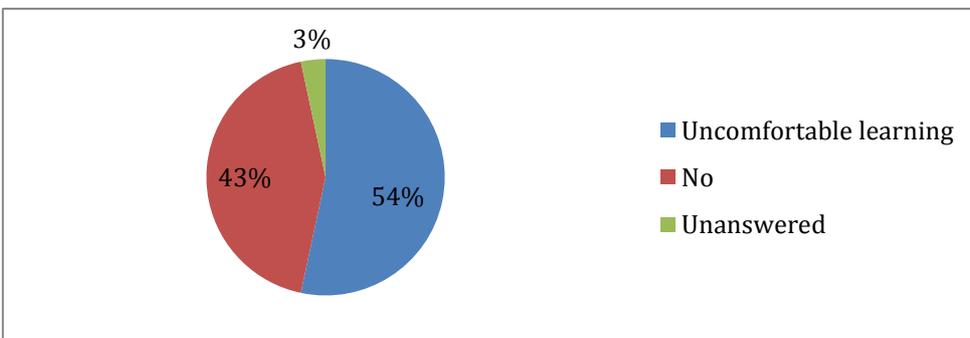
Q7. Does studying the history of DK encourage you to think of reconciliation?



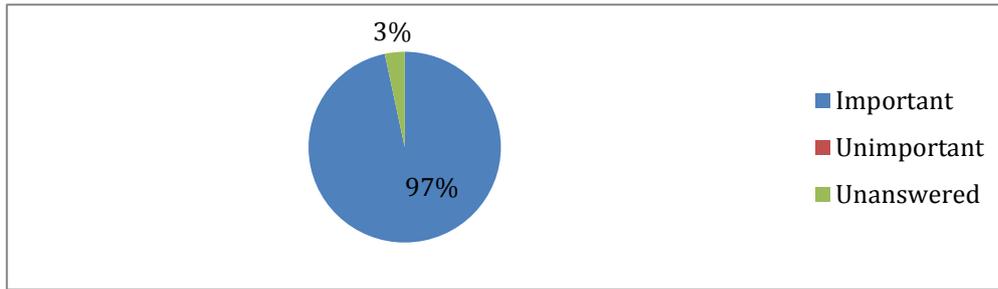
Q8. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of prevention of genocide in the future?



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



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



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

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

Facebook	26
Instagram	13
LinkedIn	1
Tencent QQ	0
Telegram M	1
Facebook M	8
Tengo	6
Google +	19
Yahoo	6
Twitter	8
Pinterest	0
WhatsApp	10
Line	17
Email	9
Skype	4
Hi5	4
Flickr	1

Analysis and Interpretation

It is evident from the analysis of results from the pre-forum and post-forum surveys that students became more comfortable and very knowledgeable about Democratic Kampuchea history. The classroom forum helped students to critically think about the concepts of peace building, reconciliation, healing and prevention of genocide, which were the main objectives for the classroom forum. *Table 2* below outlines the difference of results between pre-forum and post-forum.

Table 2.

	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
<i>How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?</i>	90% of students stated they know a little about the DK period 10% stated they are very knowledgeable about the DK period	87% of students stated that they are very knowledgeable about the DK period 13% answered they know a little about the DK period
<i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?</i>	100% answered yes	100% answered yes
<i>Have you ever talked about the DK period with your parents or people who lived during this time?</i>	93% of students stated yes 7% said no they have not	
<i>Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?</i>	100% answered yes	100% answered yes
<i>If one of your friends were a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?</i>	100% answered no	93% answered they would not discriminate 7% stated they would discriminate
<i>Should the history of DK be taught in schools in Cambodia and ASEAN?</i>	100% of students agreed that DK history should be taught in Cambodia and ASEAN	
<i>Does studying the history of DK encourage you to think of:</i> a) <i>Building peace in Cambodian society?</i> b) <i>Healing?</i> c) <i>Reconciliation?</i> d) <i>Prevention of genocide in the future?</i>		a) 100% answered yes b) 90% answered yes 10% answered no c) 97% answered yes 3% did not answer d) 97% answered yes 3% did not answer
<i>Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of</i>		54% said they felt uncomfortable

<i>DK?</i>		43% they were not uncomfortable 3% did not answer
<i>Is it important to remember the history of Democratic Kampuchea?</i>		97% answered yes it is important 3% did not answer

Conclusion

The pre-forum survey states that 97% of the students had spoken to their parents or someone who lived during the DK period about its history, yet 90% of the students in the pre-survey suggested that they knew little about the DK period. Through the classroom forum, it was evident that the objectives were achieved to encourage students to critically think about building peace in Cambodian society, healing, reconciliation, and prevention of genocide in the future. By conducting these successful classroom forums, it allows students to share their knowledge with others in their communities and families, which would help in the right direction towards reconciliation of Cambodia. The final part of the forum was the distribution of the ‘A History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975-1979’ textbook that will be the basis of the students’ classes about DK history and a great resource for not only the students but also the schools to use within their curriculums. One aspect that should be addressed is why 54% of students indicated that they felt uncomfortable learning Democratic Kampuchea history. It needs to be understood exactly what is making them uncomfortable and needs to be tackled in a way to ensure students are both comfortable and confident in learning about Democratic Kampuchea history.