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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)

**WAT PHNOM HIGH SCHOOL
6 MAY 2016**

TEAM:

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ABSTRACT

The Genocide Education Program seeks to establish a genocide education curriculum across all high schools in Phnom Penh and distribute ‘A History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975-1979’ textbook, which was published by the Documentation Center of Cambodia with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. To be able to establish a foundation of genocide education, classroom forums are held at each high school to ultimately give them their first lesson on DK history. On May 6th 2016, DC-Cam/SRI launched its 10th classroom forum at Wat Phnom High School for 41 grade-11 students. The aim of the forum was to help students gain a better understanding of the Democratic Kampuchea era and think about ways to help better the Cambodian society.

INTRODUCTION

On May 6th, 2016, the Documentation Center of Cambodia in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, conducted another school forum as part of its Genocide Education Program at Wat Phnom High School. Twenty-two females and nineteen males all in Grade eleven attended the school forum. The 41 students were given a pre-survey to fill out before the forum began to test their level of knowledge about Democratic Kampuchea history, the importance of studying DK history, whether they have communicated to their parents about the DK period and whether they would discriminate against children of perpetrators.

The learning part of the forum consisted of asking students what they already knew (K-chart) about DK, which was written on the classroom's whiteboard. Next, presenter asked students to express their questions about what they wanted to learn (W-chart) about DK history, which was written down in another column next to the 'K-chart' list so that students were able to follow this list throughout the program (see Table 1).

Following the learning portion of the forum, students were given a post-forum survey to fill out which once again tested their level of knowledge on DK history, importance of DK history, whether they would discriminate against the children of former KR cadre, if learning DK history encouraged the students to think about healing, reconciliation, peace building and prevention of genocide in the future. At the end of the school forum, students were each given a DK History Textbook and Searching for the Truth Magazine.

OBJECTIVE

The aim for the school forum was to help the 41 Grade eleven students from Wat Phnom High School gain a solid understanding of Democratic Kampuchea history. The importance of learning about DK history and the difficult past Cambodia has endured was also a main objective in order to be able to get students thinking about working towards building peace in Cambodia, encourage students to think of healing, reconciliation and prevention of genocide in the future. The classroom forum intended to educate all students whom attended, about DK history and give them an opportunity to voice what they already know and encourage dialogue about questions the students had about DK history. By providing students with a foundation about DK history, the next objective of the Genocide Education Program was to expose students to the 'A History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975-1979' textbook,

which every student whom attended the forum received. The textbook is the only and leading material for learning about the Khmer Rouge genocide in high schools across Cambodia.

The Genocide Education Program intends to help develop a sufficient framework and curriculum of studying Democratic Kampuchea history within schools.

METHODOLOGY

Throughout the school forum, there were four main practices that were used, including two surveys (pre-survey and post-survey), a K-W-L chart, a documentary film screening and Q&A session.

i. PRE-FORUM SURVEYS

At the beginning of the forum, forty one surveys were handed out to students to test their level of knowledge about DK history prior to the informative part of the forum, whether students have spoken to their parents about the Khmer Rouge period, whether they believe it is important to study DK history and whether it should be taught in schools, and whether students would discriminate against children of perpetrators. Students had fifteen minutes to complete this survey.

ii. K-W-L CHARTS

The next portion of the forum was to complete two parts of a K-W-L Chart, with the two sections that were completed included the ‘What Students Know’ and ‘What Students Want to Learn’ sections. With the ‘L’ section, which is ‘What Students Learned’, being completed after the learning part of the forum and before the post-survey was completed. The purpose of a K-W-L chart is to differentiate what the students already know from what they want to learn, and finally at the end of the forum, to see what the students learnt from the forum and visual presentation. K-W-L charts allow the students to be more interactive all throughout the forum and helps regulate thinking and self-consciousness about the students’ own feelings and thoughts about DK history, as well as help students to set personal objectives for the forum. K-W-L’s are a great use of an interactive form of assessment to maintain focus and enthusiasm throughout the forum. The results from the K-W-L chart will be presented later along the report.

iii. THE WORKS SECRET OF S-21

Following the ‘Already Know’ and ‘Want to Learn’ sections of the K-W-L chart, the education part of the forum began with exposing students to the horrors that occurred in Prison S-21, also known as Tuol Sleng Prison and what happened at Tuol Sleng after Khmer Rouge regime through a documentary film entitled “The Works Secret of S-21”. The documentary film was about a teamwork that worked on the Khmer Rouge documents stored at Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

iv. POST-FORUM SURVEY

Post-forum surveys measured the students’ level of knowledge after the learning section of the forum. The survey asked students whether they believe mass atrocities took place, whether it is important to study DK history, whether they would discriminate an individual if they found out their parent was a perpetrator and asking students how they now feel about building peace in Cambodia, healing within the community, reconciliation and the prevention of genocide in the future. The post-forum survey also assesses how students feel about studying DK history and which topics of DK history are the most important for them to learn about within school curriculum.

RESULTS

i. K-W-L Chart

Already **KNOW**- most students, two-third of student were female, from Wat Phnom knew about Democratic Kampuchea history and had only heard this history from their parents and family. Some statements were repeatedly expressed – for example – separation, starvation and execution.

Table 1. ‘What I Already KNOW’

What students already KNOW about DK History
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pol Pot kill a lot of people - Not enough food to eat - No personal/private properties were kept at home - Husband and wife lived separately as well as children - The period of the Khmer Rouge regime was 3 years, 8 months and 20 days - People were evacuated from city

- Torture
- Tuol Sleng prison

Want to **LEARN** – There were many questions floating around that students wanted to learn the answers with many of the questions centered on disbelief that Cambodians could do this to their own people.

Table 2. 'What I want to WANT to learn'

What students WANT to learn about DK history
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why did the Khmer Rouge establish a regime? - Why did they kill the Cambodian people? - What were the ideologies used during the Khmer Rouge regime? - Who was the top leader? Was it Pol Pot? - Why did Khmer Rouge evacuate people from the city? - Why didn't the UN help Cambodia at that time? - Why people did not struggle against the Khmer Rouge? - Why was this regime created? - Who were leaders after the Khmer Rouge regime?

What students **LEARNED**- the educating part of the forum started with visuals presentation of a brief of DK history, and then explaining the W-Chart. Table 3 below shows what students learned from the forum.

Table 3. 'What I LEARNED'

What students LEARNED about DK history
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pol Pot was the top leader - The regime began in April 17, 1975 and ended in January 1979 - The ideologies of the Khmer Rouge - Killing - Starvation - Separation - The Four-year plan - Tuol Sleng

- Security offices of the Khmer Rouge
- Tortures
- Conflict between Khmer Rouge with Vietnam
- UN work after Khmer Rouge regime.

ii. Pre and Post Surveys

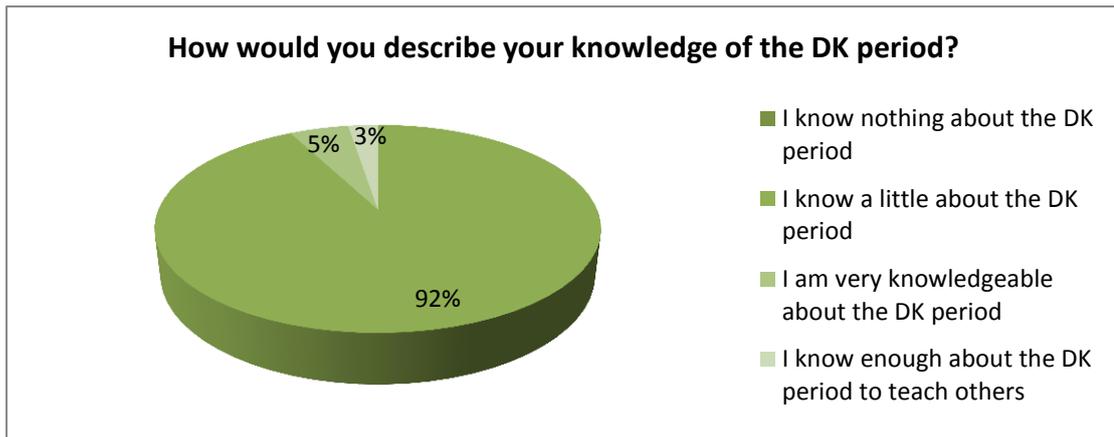
There were four of the same questions that were asked in both the pre and post forum surveys to be able to compare the difference that the forum made to their level of knowledge and understanding about DK history. The biggest change from those four questions was the very first, which asked students to describe their knowledge of the DK period. In the pre-forum survey, 2% of students said they know enough about the DK period to teach others and 5% claimed that they were very knowledgeable about the DK period. However, a significant majority (92%) of students said that they know little about the DK period. The post-forum survey say a big change, with 73% of students believing the forum made them very knowledgeable about the DK period, 24% of students still believed they know a little about the DK period and 3% said they know enough that can teach others. The other question that stood out was the question ‘If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?’ It was surprising to see that the pre-survey saw that 95% of students stated that they would not discriminate, with 2% answering that they would discriminate and 3% did not answer the question. The post-forum survey was a shift of opinions with 98% suggesting that they would not discriminate, and that 2% did not answer. It is important to note that only 39 Pre-forum surveys were collected from students as two students left the forum during the process of testing their knowledge before the forum started. But they came back again during the presentation session, and they could complete the post-survey.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

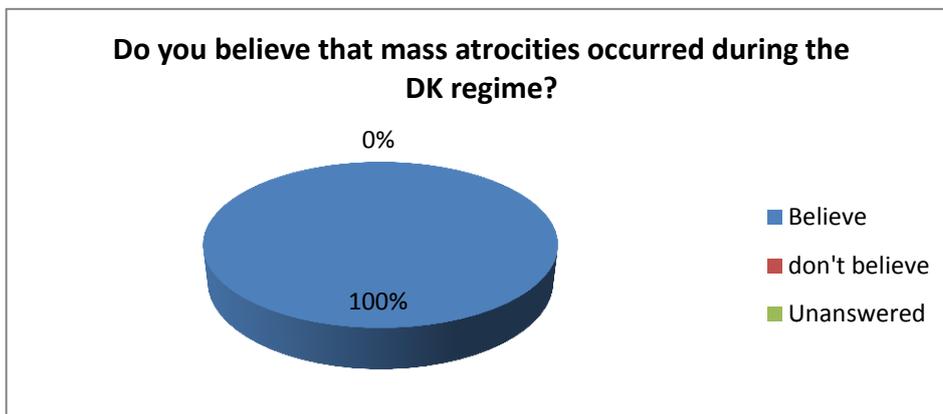
Graphs and pie charts below have all been created with Microsoft Excel where the data from both pre-forum and post-forum surveys were inputted to create these graphs and charts.

Pre-Survey for classroom forum:

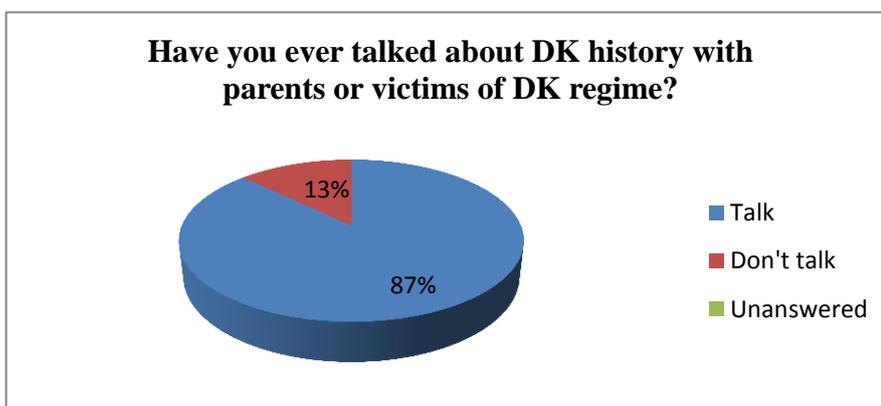
1. How would you describe your knowledge of a history of Democratic Kampuchea



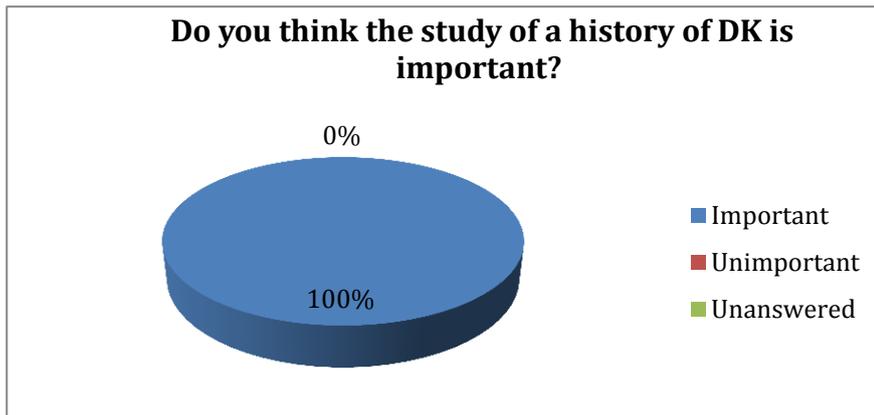
2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?



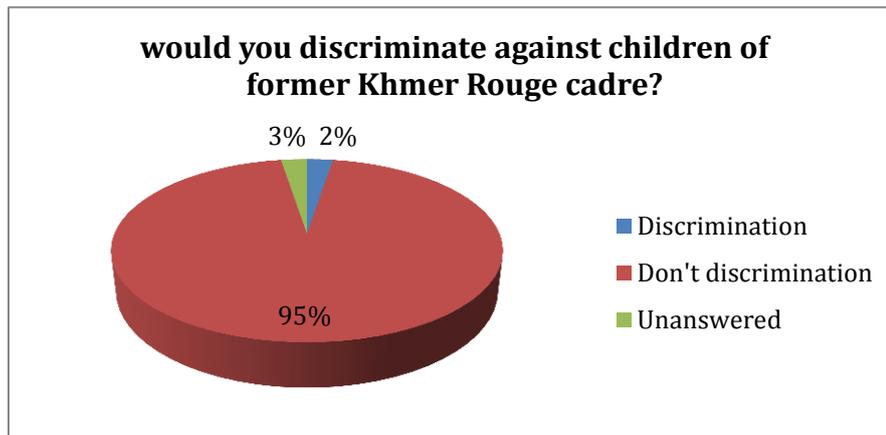
3. Have you ever talked about DK history with parents or victims of DK regime?



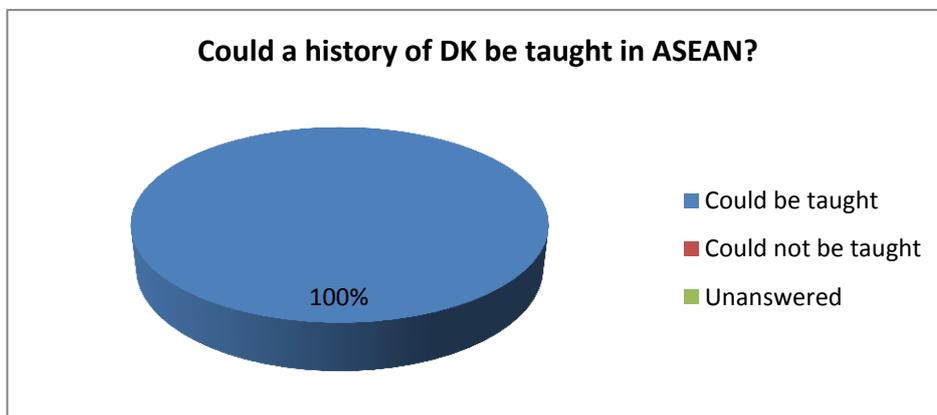
4. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



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

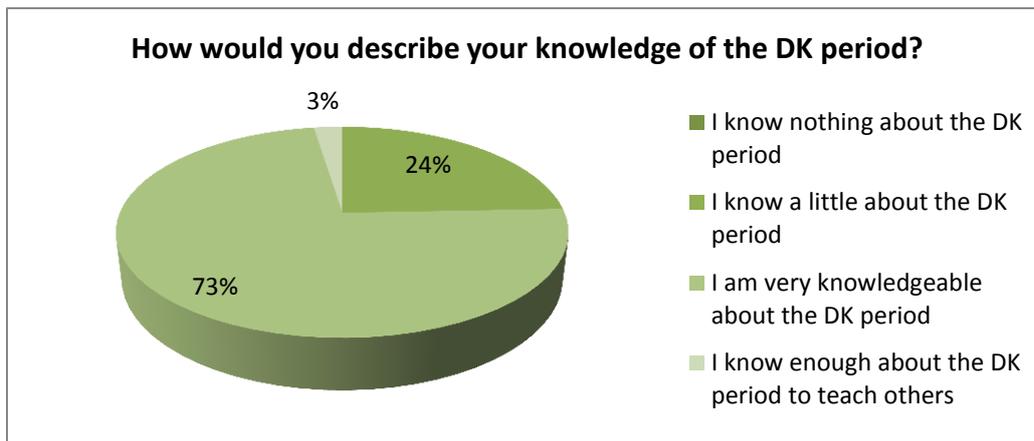


6. Could a history of DK be taught in ASEAN countries?

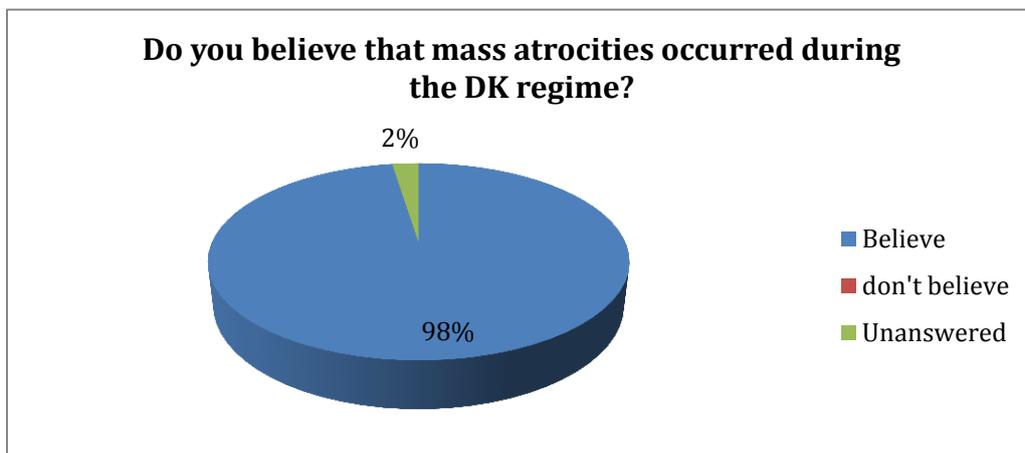


Post-Forum Survey Analysis

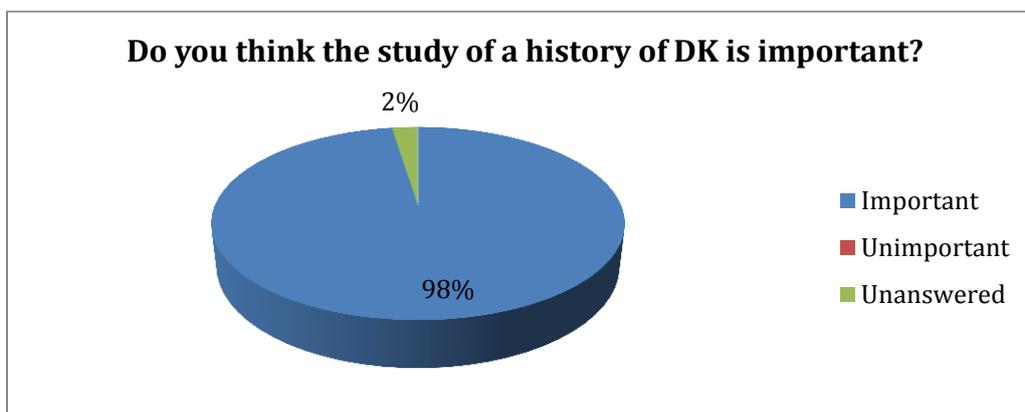
Q1. How would you describe your knowledge of the DK period?



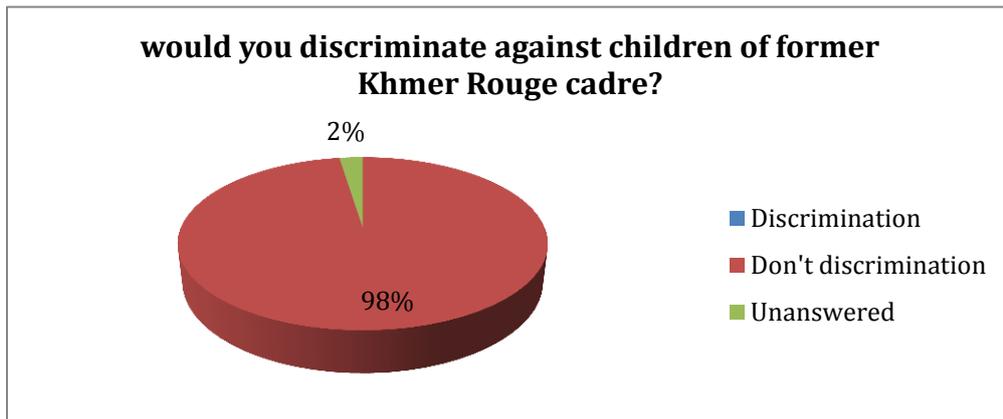
Q2. Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?



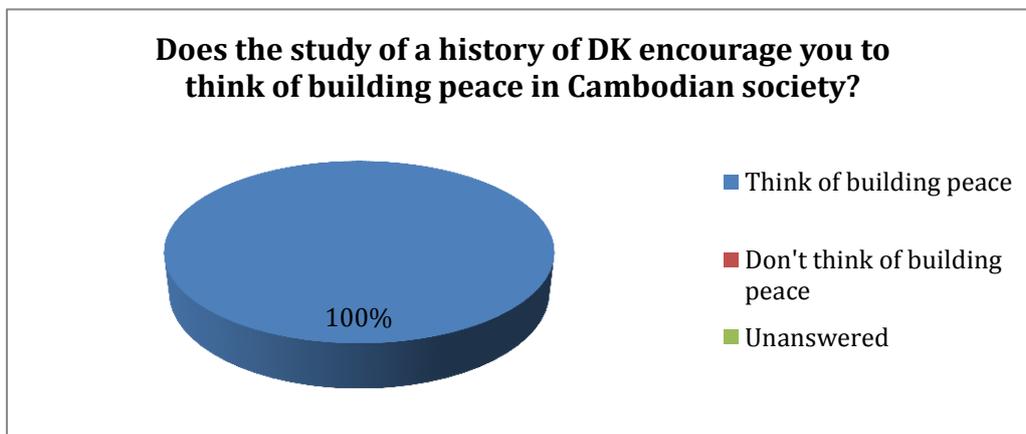
Q3. Do you think the study of a history of DK is important?



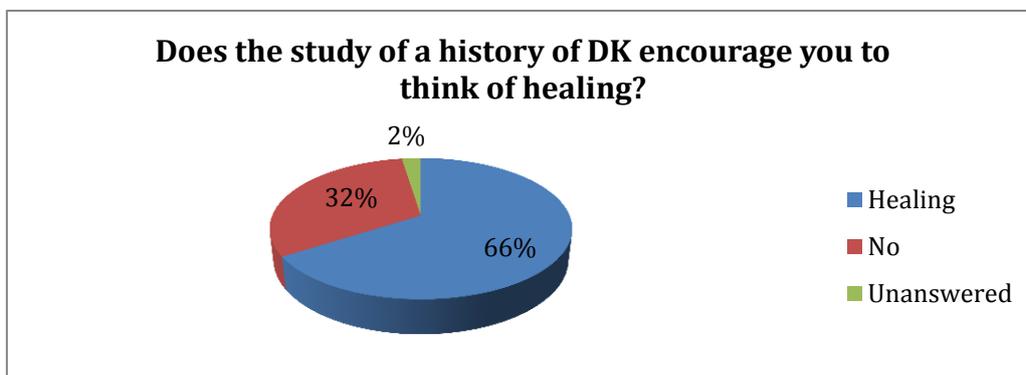
Q4. If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him or her?



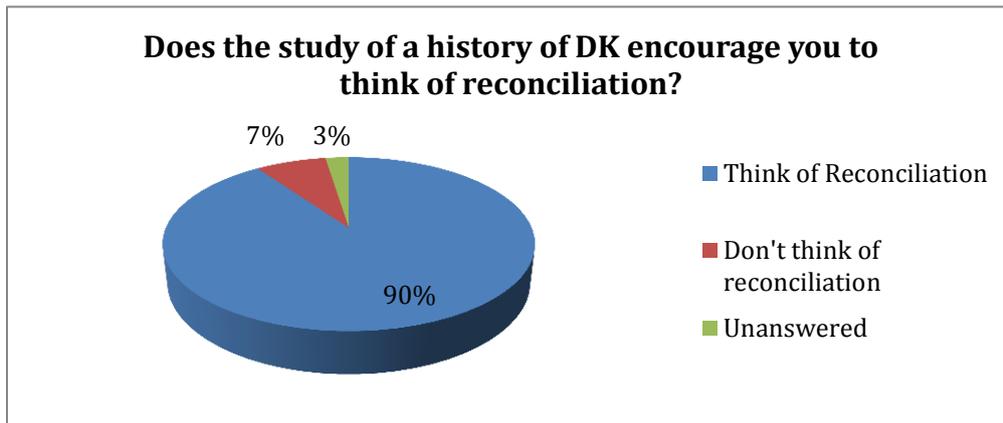
Q5. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of building peace in Cambodian society?



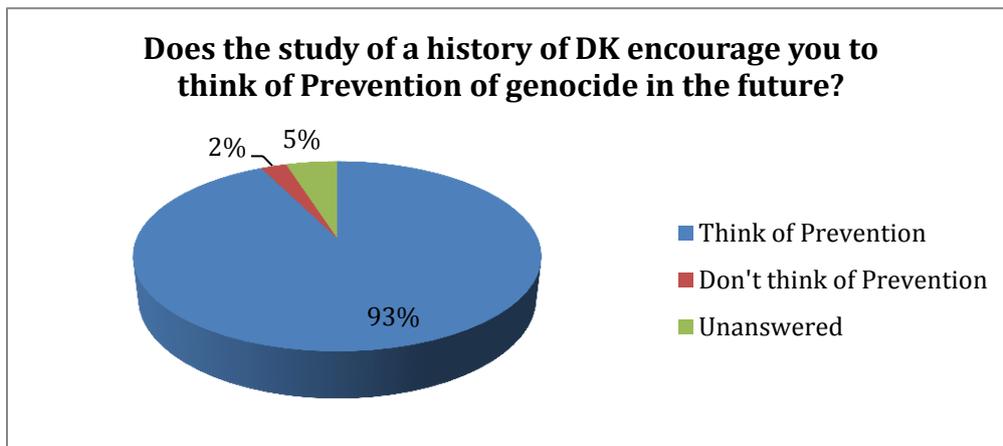
Q6. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of healing?



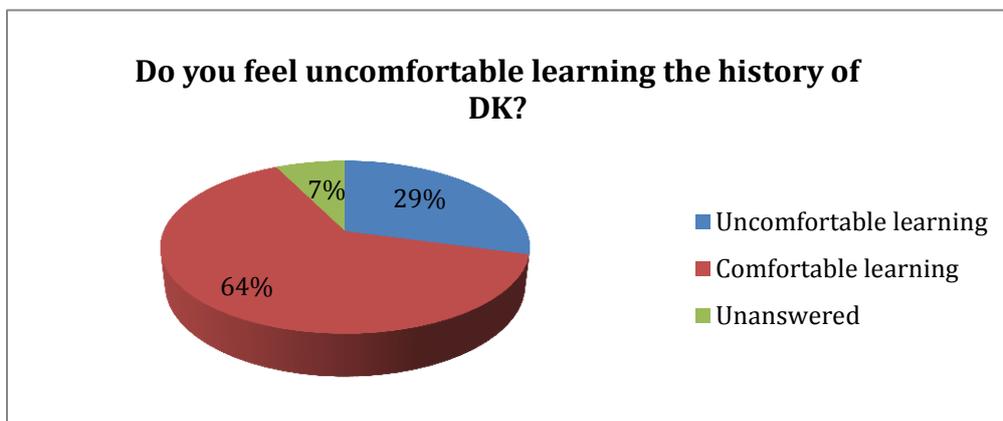
Q7. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of reconciliation?



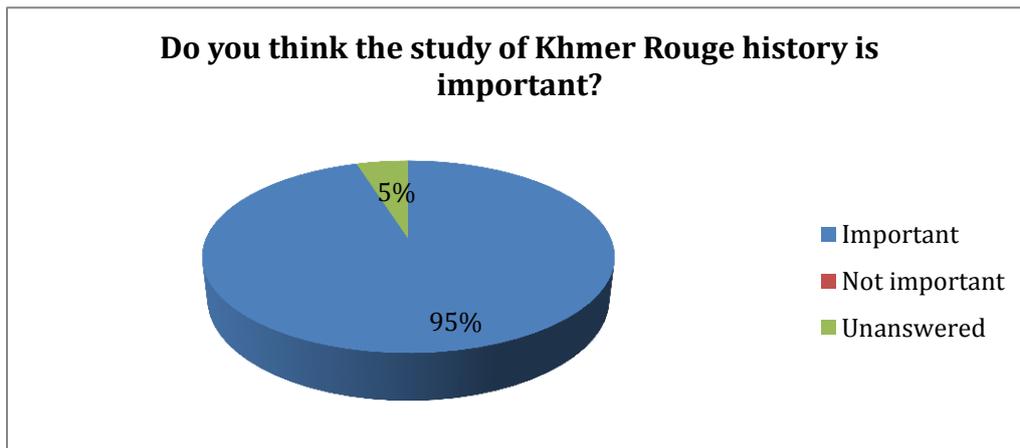
Q8. Does the study of a history of DK encourage you to think of Prevention of genocide in the future?



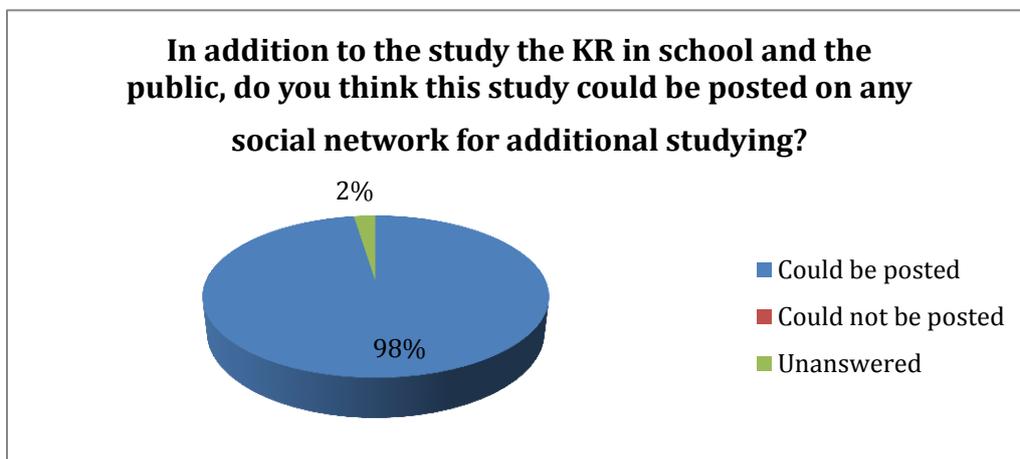
Q9. Do you feel uncomfortable learning the history of DK?



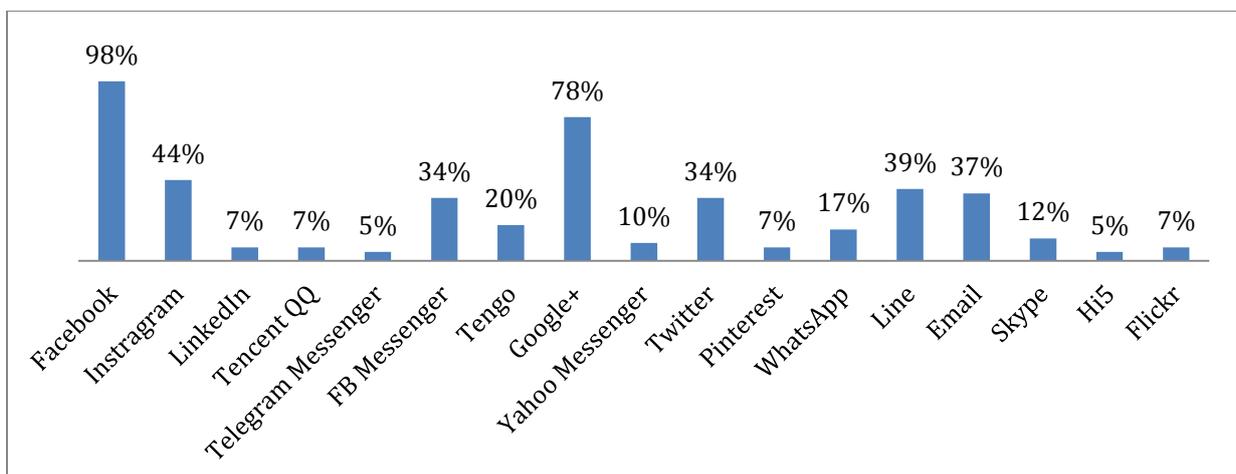
Q10. Do you think the study of Khmer Rouge history is important?



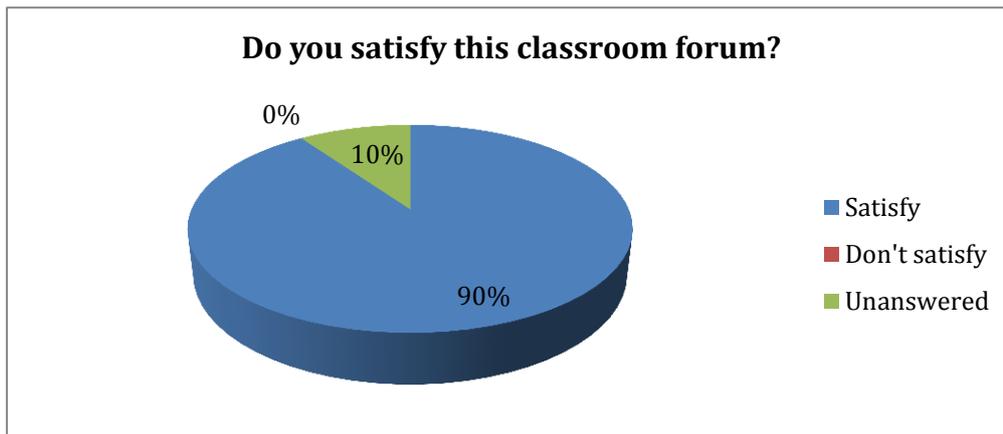
Q11. In addition to the study the KR in school and the public, do you think this study could be posted on any social network for additional studying?



If yes, what networks are best for you?



Q12. Do you like or dislike this classroom forum?



ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 4:

Category	Pre-forum	Post-forum
Knowledge of the DK history	92% Know little about the DK period 5% Are very knowledgeable about the DK period 3% Know enough can teach others.	73% Are very knowledgeable about the DK period 24% know a little about the DK period 3% did not answer
Do you believe mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime?	100% said yes	98% do believe mass atrocities occurred during the DK regime 2% did not answer
Spoken to parents or people who lived during this time about the DK period	87% answered yes 13% answered no	
Do you think the study of DK history is important?	100% answered yes it is important	98% answered it was important 2% did not answer
If one of your friends is a son/daughter of a perpetrator, would you discriminate against him/her?	95% answered no they would not discriminate 2% answered yes they would discriminate 3% said nothing	98% would not discriminate 2% did not answer
Does the study of DK history encourage you to think about:		

a) Building peace		a) 100% answered yes
b) Healing		b) 66% answered yes 32% answered no 2% did not answer
c) Reconciliation		c) 90% answered yes 7% answered no 3% did not answer
d) Prevention of genocide in the future		d) 93% answered yes 2% answered no e) 5% did not answer

CONCLUSION

Unlike the last decade, younger generation get to know or learn Khmer Rouge history from the community before they receive this knowledge at school. This is a basic and very general knowledge of the Khmer Rouge history. This knowledge has been extended through public learning, peer, and teachers. From school, they would be built a critical thinking of peace, reconciliation, genocide prevention after they received a formal teaching or public classroom forum by teachers and expert who has experienced years of teaching this history. Moreover, they would be created a thought of nonviolence against their friends who are children of former Khmer Rouge perpetrator.

End.