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**PREY VENG DOCUMENTATION CENTER
KHMER ROUGE'S EASTERN ZONE ARCHIVE
GENOCIDE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA**

REPORT

CLASSROOM FORUM ON

**THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING
“THE HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA (1975-1979)”**

**AT HUN SEN KAMPONG LEAV HIGH SCHOOL
June 5th, 2019**

TEAM:

PHENG PONG-RASY

PHAT SELA

MIN SANAS

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SUMMARY

In light of inspiring the learning on the History of Democratic Kampuchea, the 42nd Classroom Forum was launched and presided over the lecture by Mr Pheng Phong-Rasy, Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center with the support from his team at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School with the participation of more than 100 students.

Having located just 1.5 kilometers away from the Prey Veng provincial town, Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School is home to more than 1 000 local students. It has opened to the students since its inception in 1997. After the twenty-year-on operation in education, in 2017 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has supported the school in constructing the new buildings, which permits the students to enjoy the study with well-equipped materials and better environment.¹

With the focus on the historical narrative, discussion and reflection, the forum stands significant in encouraging the sustainability of KR History Education in the local high schools in Prey Veng province, which continues to build on the existing genocide education curriculum and the students' learning on the KR History along with the teachers' practicing.

PURPOSE OF KHMER ROUGE HISTORY EDUCATION

Why teach the history of Democratic Kampuchea? – It is because Borne out of the belief that Cambodia's future is directly correlated to its understanding of the past, this project was launched to provide a holistic, balanced and detailed analysis of the Khmer Rouge period to high school students. By providing this analysis to Cambodia's youth, the objective is to ensure this history is not lost before it is reconciled and that lessons have been learnt from it.

Beyond giving students a solid factual understanding of Democratic Kampuchea history, the forums aim to demonstrate the *importance* of learning about Cambodia's difficult past as a way to promote peace, reconciliation, healing and, ultimately, prevention of genocide in the future.

Thus, the forums intend to show the value of studying history as an effective medium of change going forward. By altering the attitudes students have to their own Country's past, this project wants to inspire a generation more conducive to collaboration and peace. The structure of the forum encourages students to take ownership of their history; to recognize its proximity to their own lives and to their families. In this way,

¹ GENOCIDE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN CAMBODIA | 42nd CLASSROOM FORUM | HUN SEN KAMPONG LEAV HIGH SCHOOL, DC-Cam, Phnom Penh, 2019
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history education, specifically genocide education, hopes to create long-lasting dialogue that bears the fruit of peace, healing and genocide prevention for future generations. As an overarching goal, the Genocide Education Program aspires to lead the development of a sufficient framework and curriculum for studying Democratic Kampuchea history within schools across Cambodia. These high school forums intend to be a catalyst for the establishment of a formal curriculum.

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) opened the classroom forum on "the Importance of the studying DK History (1975-1979)" at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School in the suburb of Prey Veng Provincial Town. The forum took place with the objectives and activities as below:

- Encourage students to share and express their prior knowledge on what happened during the Democratic Kampuchea regime (1975-1979).
- Encourage the students to understand the transitional consequences of legacy left to today Cambodia's society.
- Build the intergenerational dialogue on the legacy in families and communities.
- Distribute A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbooks to the participating students for self-learning.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activities</i>
8:00	Opening remarks and filling the pre-survey
9:00	KR history lecture by Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy
10:30	Q & A session and Reflection
11:30	End of Forum

THE FORUM

In response to the needs of the students in learning the KR History, on the 5th of June 2019, the 42nd Classroom Forum the importance of studying the history of Democratic Kampuchea was held at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School attended by more than 100 students.

Of the school's location in Prey Veng province, the team led by Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center with his staff members Ms Min Zanas, Mr Phat Sela and Mr Seang Chenda departed from Phnom Penh a day before an arrival of the forum. The team arrived in Prey Veng provincial town in the afternoon of the 4th of June 2019. As the day of the event came, the team left for it at 7.00AM by van along National Road No. 11. It took the team approximately 15 minutes to be at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School. Upon an arrival at 7.15am, the team left the van and made a

phone-call to Mr Huon Bun, a school principal, for his instruction on where the forum was to be taken place. While all the educational materials were placed in the van, Mr Bun sent some of his students to assist the team in bringing them all to the forum hall and installing the slide projector and book preparation for distribution with the support from the school principle and his staff. In the meantime of this, more and more students appeared in the hall and in readiness to partake the KR History Education Forum. Of this mutual collaboration between the school and the team, all were prepared on time to be conducting the session. The forum started and ended as scheduled between 8.00AM and 11.30AM.

OPENING REMARK

As the principle of Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School, Mr Huon Bun opened an insightful but also inspiring remark for this session to all attending students who are at Grade 11th and Grade 12th. He then moved to thank Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy and his team members for the commitment to educate his students about the KR History. After the end of his opening, Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center continued to open the session by first of all thanking the school principle, teachers and all students and introducing the team members including Ms Zanas, Mr Sela, Mr Chenda and Ms Savina who is a PhD Candidate on Peace and Development Research School of Global Studies at University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Before the beginning of the lecture on A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979), Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy handed the pre-forum survey paper over the students for 15-minute completion. The pre-survey form was utilized to enable the team to be aware of where students' prior knowledge and understanding of the Khmer Rouge history stand while they have a story narrated by their parents and grandparents of what happened to them in the regime. At the end of the pre-survey completion, Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy took the lecture on Khmer Rouge History.

KHMER ROUGE HISTROY LECTURE

Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy moved to the next session of the presentation on KR History. It is the historical-based session taken to narrate but rather to explain the cause of how the Khmer Rouge from the existence came to power, the KR leadership, the forced transfer and the KR policy used leading to the death of nearly 2 million Cambodians from starvation, overwork, disease and execution. This chronological-based explanation of the KR History enabled to respond the needs of the students in what they did not know.

In attempt to increasing the understanding on what happened in the past, Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy timely screened three documentary films entitled "KR Liberation Zone 1973", "Phnom Penh Ghost City", "Children of Kampuchea", and "Duch Forgiveness." The visualization from the films used as education with the different theme to allow the students to explore and shape their understanding what the Khmer Rouge did and left

its legacy. Importantly, narrative visualization of the film could give the extensive discussion and explanation of the KR History to the students.

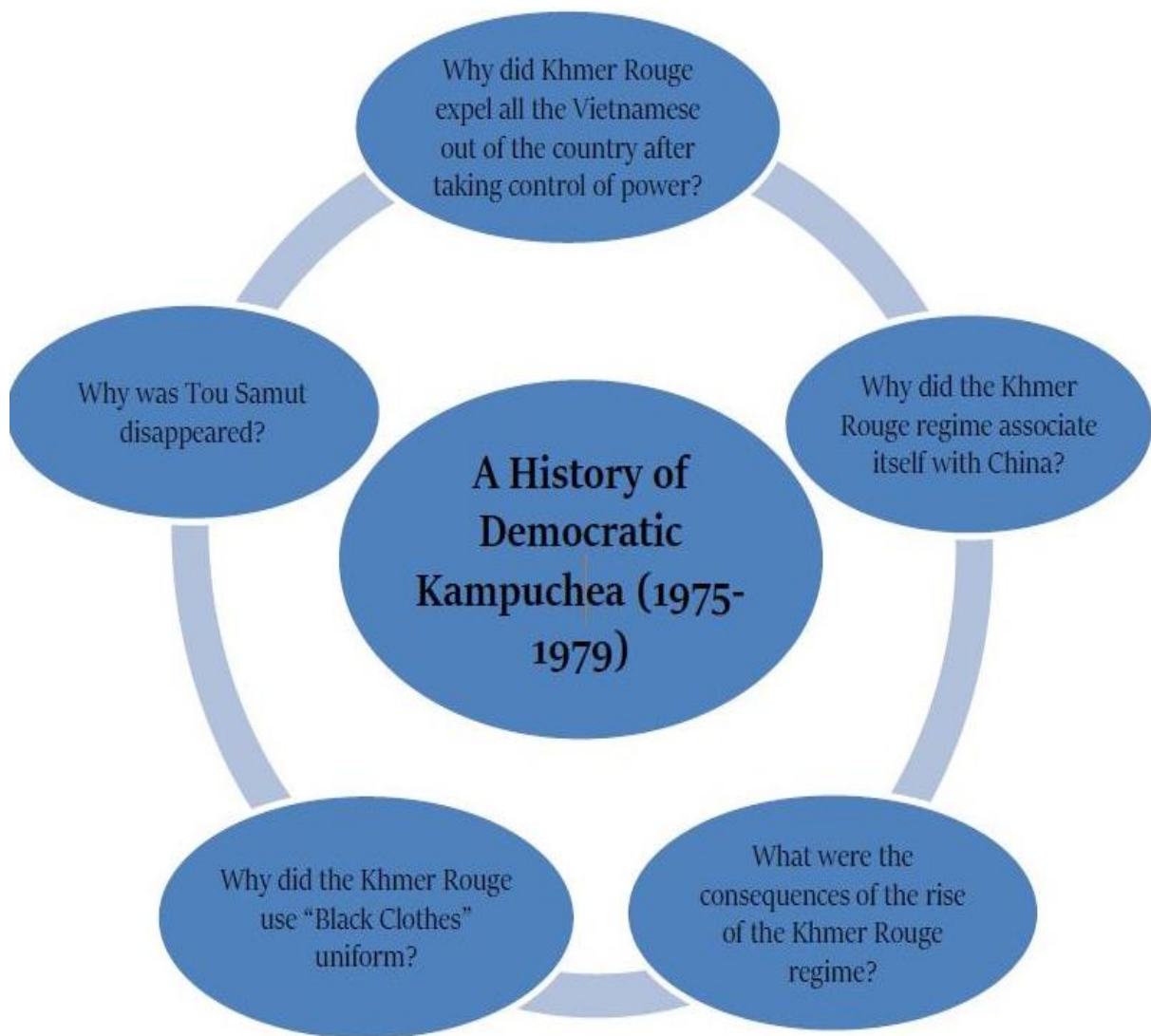
Below is the diagram reflecting the themes of the films:



Q & A SESSION / REFLECTION

At the end of the presentation, Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy encouraged all students to ask questions to allow him to continue to explain in what they are uncertain on the understanding as some of them shared their reflection on the history

Below diagram shows the questions from the students during the discussion:



Here is the reflection of Hun Sen Kampong Leav High Schoolers from the Classroom Forum:



Chhuon Vireak Bot (M), Grade 12th at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School:

I think the Classroom Forum on the importance of studying a History of Democratic Kampuchea has given me a lot of knowledge about the Democratic Kampuchea regime and the post-war consequences. There were many explanations of what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime, including the mass killings of Cambodian people, the brokenness of the national unity, suffering, and sympathy. All are the lessons for me to be learned the past bad experience which caused

people suffered and to prevent the future genocide happening again.

Chea Vicheka (F), Grade 11th at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School: I am very happy today because I have the opportunity to study the Khmer Rouge history through the Classroom Forum on the importance of studying A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979). I've got a lot of knowledge and understanding about this history. While the teacher (Mr Rasy) was explaining the history of the Khmer Rouge regime, I was reminded of my grandmother who told me about her experience. I will bring this to ask my grandmother and we will understand more about what happened at that time.



Luk Bunna (M) Grade 12th at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School I gain more knowledge about the history of the Khmer Rouge, and program of the Classroom Forum on the importance of studying a History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) is really good for me.

POST-SURVEY COMPLETION & BOOK DISTRIBUTION

As the presentation and Q & A session came to an end, DC-Cam's team members delivered a post-forum survey sheet to the students. The paper aimed at evaluating the post-session understanding on the KR history and their point of view on the tolerance and reconciliation in Cambodia's society. After the completion on the post-survey, more than 200 copies of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" "Cham Identity" and "CASE 002" textbooks were delivered to all students in the session as supporting materials. It intended to permit them explore their understanding of the history. At the end, the students showed great thanks and appreciation on all sessions of the insightful lecture and textbooks.

CONCLUSION WITH ITS IMPACTS AS SUCCESS STORIES

The forum at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School went into the completeness with the great success. It happened through the better collaboration between DC-Cam team and the high school principle and staff as well as students. As proven, the students increased their knowledge and understanding on the KR History. After the forum, the students continually create more dialogues on the past history at home and in school to get the complete story from what happened during the Khmer Rouge as reflected in the following students:



Khem SreyThim (F), Grade 11th at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School said: ***"I am reminded of the loss of my grandfather during the Khmer Rouge regime"***

Srey Thim lives in Skar Dach village, Dangkor commune, Po Reach district, Prey Veng province. Srey Thim has been to Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School since Grade 10th. Srey Thim has learned about the

history of the Khmer Rouge at school and known the story of what happened at that time by the narrative from her father. He told her of his childhood during the Khmer Rouge regime as a living in the child unit, a family separation, a daily work with inadequate food and the loss of his father during the regime. Nonetheless, Srey Thim has shown less attention and curiosity, thinking about the hard moment in the past. Now her father's story is raised by the Classroom Forum on KR History (1975-1979). She is touched by especially on the suffering and loss of life and it reminds her of losing her grandfather at that time. Srey Thim has gained a lot of knowledge on the history, especially during the Khmer Rouge regime. Srey Thim will take all historical insights she gets and the topic of her grandfather death during the regime to discuss with her father at home.

Chhuon Samnang (M), Grade 12th at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School said: **"My grandfather is a genocide survivor"**. Samnang, 19, male, is a Grade 12th student at Hun Sen Kampong Leav High School. Samnang has some prior knowledge on the KR History through a narration from his grandfather Chhuon about the events that took place during the Khmer Rouge regime. [Ta] Chhuon



told Samnang about his life during the KR regime. It included the daily living as overwork, little food and risk of life at any time. His grandfather survived the regime and becomes a living document for Samnang to learn and understanding the life experience and the loss of the life of Cambodian people at that time. Getting extensive knowledge on the KR History through this classroom forum will enable Samnang to increase more discussion with the history at home with his grandfather.

Genocide Education and Research's Members:

Pheng Pong-Rasy, Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center

Min Zanas, Researcher

Phat Sela, Researcher

Photo & Report by Seang Chenda,

Visiting Scholar

Savina Sirik, a PhD Candidate on Peace and Development Research School of Global Studies at University of Gothenburg, Sweden

REFERENCE

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Appendix

<i>N</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
		<i>Pre</i>		<i>Post</i>	
	<i>Age: 18</i>				
	<i>Male</i>	57	54	39	46
	<i>Female</i>	49	46	46	54
<i>History of Democratic Kampuchea Knowledge</i>					
1	<i>Would you describe your know ledge of DK period?</i>				
	<i>I know nothing</i>	11	10	10	12
	<i>I know a little</i>	90	85	64	75
	<i>I know a lot</i>	3	3	9	11
	<i>I know enough to teach other</i>	1	1	1	1
2	<i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during DK period?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	83	78	73	86
	<i>No</i>	14	13	5	6
	<i>N/A</i>	9	9	7	8
3	<i>Have you ever talk about DK period with your parents or people who experience that period?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	66	62	60	71
	<i>No</i>	37	35	20	24
	<i>N/A</i>	3	3	5	6
4	<i>Do you think the studying of DK history is important?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	100	94	76	89
	<i>No</i>	6	6	6	7
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	3	3
5	<i>If one of your friends is s son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate against his/her?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	7	7	7	8
	<i>No</i>	93	88	72	85
	<i>N/A</i>	6	6	6	7
6	<i>Which school level that DK history should be taught in?</i>				
	<i>Primary school</i>	7	7	5	6
	<i>Junior school</i>	27	26	21	25
	<i>High school</i>	65	61	54	63
	<i>University</i>	6	6	5	6
	<i>N/A</i>	1	1	0	0
7	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of peace building in Cambodia?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	98	93	79	93
	<i>No</i>	3	3	6	7
	<i>N/A</i>	5	5	0	0
8	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of healing?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	71	67	65	76

	No	30	28	18	21
	N/A	5	5	2	2
9	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of reconciliation?</i>				
	Yes	90	85	74	87
	No	8	8	9	11
	N/A	8	8	2	2
10	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of genocide prevention?</i>				
	Yes	92	87	73	86
	No	5	5	6	7
	N/A	8	8	6	7
11	<i>How do you feel about the studying of DK history?</i>				
	Want to know and understand about this history	86	81	73	86
	Do not want to know	0	0	2	2
	Feel empathy to victims	19	18	8	9
	Boring	0	0	2	2
	N/A	1	1	0	0
<u>Human Rights Knowledge</u>					
12	<i>Which response below is the best definition of genocide as stated in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide?</i>				
	Killing members of a political group with the intent to destroy the entire group because of their political agenda	40	38	29	34
	Arresting leaders of a religious group with the intent to undermine the practice of religion	5	5	12	14
	<u>Deliberately starving an ethnic group with the intent to destroy the people</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>33</u>
	Killing enemy soldiers who are shooting at your soldiers during war	16	15	12	14
	N/A	9	9	4	5
13	<i>Which response below is the best description of the impact of genocide on individuals?</i>				
	Individuals suffer as a result of lower wages and job growth.	9	8	9	11
	<u>Individuals mourn the loss of family and friends who were tortured and/or killed.</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>54</u>
	Individuals are not impacted by genocide. Genocide only affects groups of people.	10	9	10	12
	Only children are impacted by genocide by the loss of parents.	22	21	19	22
	N/A	3	3	1	1
14	<i>Which response below is the best description of the impact of genocide on families and communities?</i>				

	Individuals suffer during genocide but generally families and communities are unharmed.	1	1	2	2
	Only poor families ever suffer during genocide. Rich families never suffer during genocide.	9	9	1	1
	<u>Genocide can impact families and communities in many ways for generations.</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>84</u>
	Genocide impacts communities but families can always escape by fleeing to another country.	13	12	10	12
	N/A	1	1	0	0
15	<i>Which response below is the best description of the impact of genocide on countries?</i>				
	Countries are not impacted by genocide.	1	1	2	2
	Countries can be impacted by genocide but the world is too big to be impacted.	3	3	9	11
	Countries suffer from genocide only when it is occurring. They can rebuild quickly	92	87	68	80
	<u>Countries can be impacted by genocide for generations.</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	N/A	0	0	4	5
16	<i>Which response below is the best description of two important strategies that individuals can do to prevent and avoid circumstances that are supportive to violence and possibly future genocide?</i>				
	Individuals can ignore violence when it occurs because there is nothing they can do	4	4	5	6
	Individuals can prevent violence by attacking their enemies before they are attacked	28	26	20	23
	Individuals can prevent violence by staying quiet and not criticizing violence	25	24	27	32
	<u>Individuals can prevent violence by speaking against such violence</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>45</u>
	Individuals can encourage violence against their enemies	3	3	6	7
	Individuals can encourage victims to be silent because speaking out against violence will only encourage more violence	27	25	17	20
	<u>Individuals can denounce violence and encourage peaceful solutions to conflicts</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>47</u>
	Individuals can encourage perpetrators to commit their violence without public attention, which only aggravates the situation	2	2	2	2
	N/A				
17	<i>Which response below is the best description of two important strategies that communities can implement to prevent and avoid circumstances that are supportive to violence and possibly future genocide?</i>				
	<u>Communities can protect the individual rights of all community members, regardless of religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political opinion or</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>43</u>

	<u>other characteristics</u>				
	Communities can protect the individual rights of the majority group at the expense of minorities in order to preserve peace, order and stability	9	9	15	19
	Communities do not need to protect individual rights; rather, they must always seek to maintain peace, order and stability	11	10	8	9
	Communities do not need to protect individual rights because this is always a state responsibility	4	4	3	4
	Communities can prevent violence by identifying minorities and requiring them to live separate from the rest of the community.	6	6	5	6
	<u>Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate human diversity through education about different cultures, religions, and communities.</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>25</u>
	Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate their own culture and identify ways to protect it from outside influence.	49	46	25	29
	Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth how to protect themselves and their communities through self-defense training	12	11	14	16
	N/A				
18	<i>Which response below reflects two important strategies that <u>countries</u> can implement to prevent and avoid circumstances that are supportive to violence and possibly future genocide?</i>				
	Countries can prevent violence by censoring information and news.	36	34	29	34
	Countries can prevent violence by attacking enemies before they are attacked	14	13	11	13
	Countries can never prevent violence but they can assist in peaceful resolution.	35	33	16	19
	<u>Countries can prevent violence through education and diplomacy</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>47</u>
	<u>Countries can identify and publicly denounce circumstances that support genocide.</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
	Countries should never denounce other countries because it will weaken future diplomacy.	16	15	6	7
	Countries should only denounce enemies that support violence or genocide. Countries should never denounce allies involved in genocide because they are allies.	15	14	10	12
	Countries should only help people who deserve to be helped. Some genocide is necessary to preserve peace and order.	13	12	30	21

	N/A				
<u>Opinion on the Forum</u>					
19	Do you have strategy to prevent Genocide or Mass Killing in Cambodia in the future?				
	Yes	38	36		
	No	56	53		
	N/A	12	11		
24	What do you think about this classroom forum?				
	Good and help develop my knowledge		77	91	
	Not good, did not help anything at all		2	2	
	N/A		6	7	
25	What this classroom forum can help you?				
	Improve my knowledge on KR history		28	33	
	Help to memorize the KR history		7	8	
	Encourage to feel empathy and genocide prevention		11	13	
	All above		33	39	
	N/A		6	7	