

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA
DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA HISTORY EDUCATION

REPORT
CLASSROOM FORUM ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING
THE HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA (1975-1979) AT HUN SEN
KAMPONG PORPIL HIGH SCHOOL
June 26th 2019

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SUMMARY

Genocide Research and Education in Cambodia stands pivotal in preserving the memory and building the sustainability of the genocide education to the Cambodian students. With the obligation in inspiring the learning on the history of Democratic Kampuchea (DK), Mr Pheng Phong-Rasy, Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center with the assistance from his team members launched the 43rd Classroom Forum at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School, which attracted more than 150 students, most of whom are in Grade 12, to attend the session.

The forum is aided by the historical testimony, documentary, discussion and reflection. All is the importance in promoting the continuous development with the sustainability of the KR History Studies in the local high schools in Prey Veng province. We, in this regard, continue to make progress on the current genocide education curriculum and the students' learning along with the teachers' practicing in the DK History Education.

KAMPONG PORPIL HIGH SCHOOL

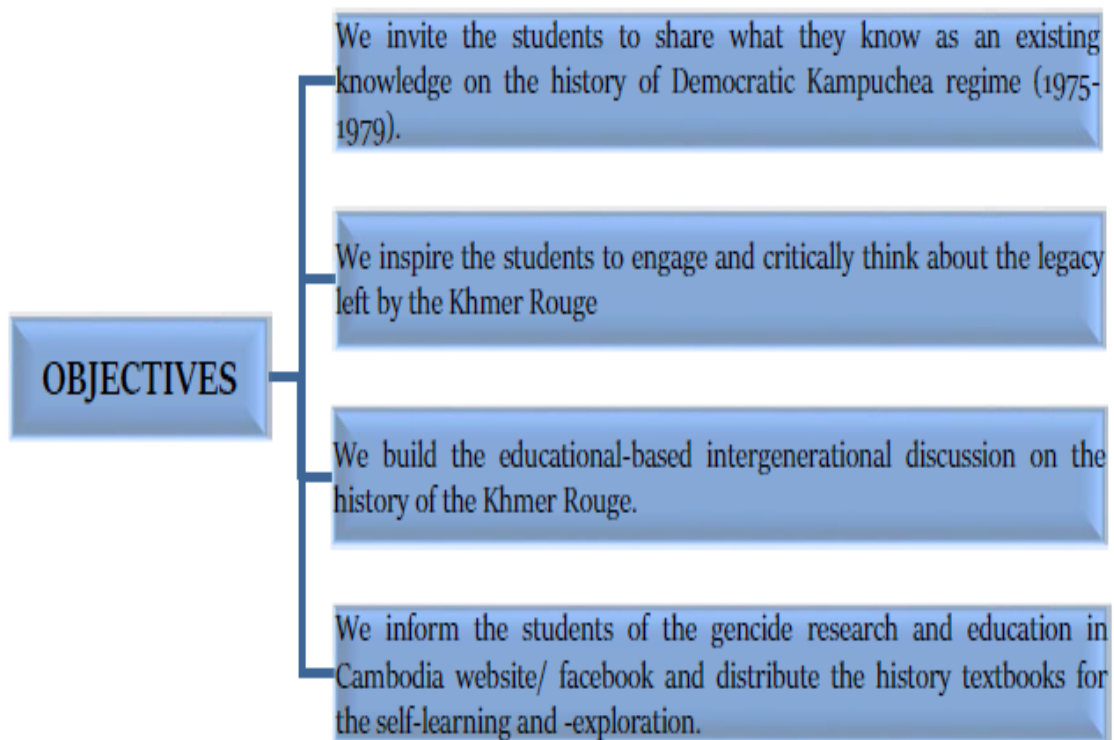
Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School locates in a distance about 50 kilometers away from Phnom Penh city. The school is home to nearly 2 000 students. Of the educational mission, the school initiates the vision that is to educate all students to be knowledgeable, practical and virtue in order to pursue higher education. Kampong Porpil is originated from the term "Kampong Purthi Pi" vaguely called by the ethnic Chinese. In reality, this was the riverfront where there were two big Buddha trees grown. In Kampong Porpil commune, there had not been primary schools. Until 1982, Venerable Ke Yeun, Head of Kampong Porpil Pagoda, established the primary school and then it was developed to the secondary school. In 1997, the school established four buildings with 20 classrooms from the support by the Royal Government of Cambodia. Since then, the school has been changed to Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School. In 2001, the Venerable Ke Yeun passed away and this marked the great loss for the people in the community. Until 2005, Mr Mong Chhun comes to office as the high school principle and makes more developments in school.

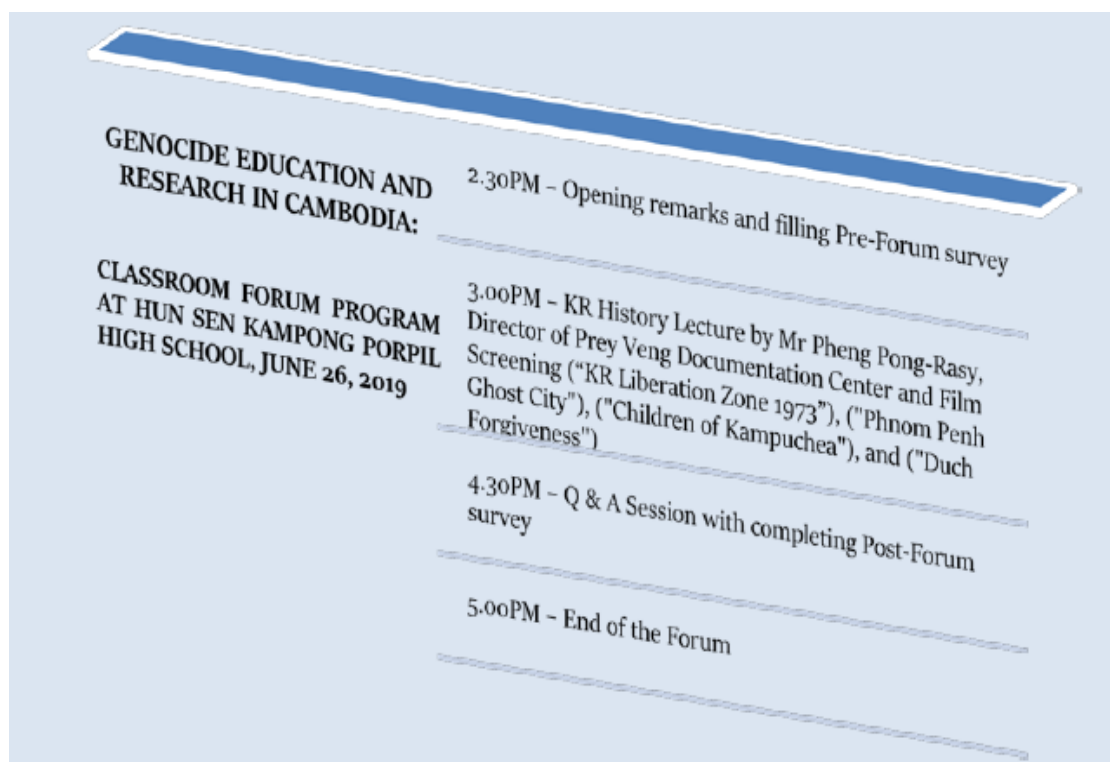
PURPOSE OF KHMER ROUGE HISTORY EDUCATION

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, 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.

While the KR History Education stands being required through the national curriculum to be taught in the high school history curriculum, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), with the endorsement from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted the classroom forum on "the Importance of the studying DK History (1975-1979)" at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School of Prey Veng province. The forum was implemented following the objectives and activities as below:





THE FORUM

June 26th, 2019 marked the 43rd Classroom Forum on the importance of studying the history of Democratic Kampuchea convened at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School. The forum welcomed approximately 160 students.

The Genocide Research and Education in Cambodia team led by Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center with his staff members Ms. Min Sanas, Mr. Phat Sela and Mr. Seang Chenda left Phnom Penh on an early morning of 26th June 2019, for twofold purposes: first to have the preparation at the Prey Veng Documentation Center for the coming official visit from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) delegation and second to timely install the equipment for the forum. Upon an arrival in Prey Veng provincial town at 10.00, the team went to the new center to examine and prepare the exhibits and general work for the next day event of the official visit of Her Excellency Chumteav Tun Sa-Im, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and her delegation. After the preparation was all done, the team went to have lunch at 11.30AM. Until 12.30PM, the team left for the school along National Road No. 11. It took about nearly an hour to arrive at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School. Then, the team members left the van and called Mr Mong Chhun, the high school principal, for his instruction on the location in which the forum took place.

However, as Mr. Chhun was on the way back from the provincial town, it did not enable him to respond the preparational need. Around 2.10PM, the school principle arrived and helped command the forces of his students to install the educational materials and equipment. All including the slide project, book preparation and pre- and post- forum

survey were put in place in the meeting hall where the forum was set to happen. The forum went as scheduled, starting at 2.30PM and ended in 5.00PM. The forum could not happen without the mutual and good collaboration between the school and the team.

OPENING REMARK

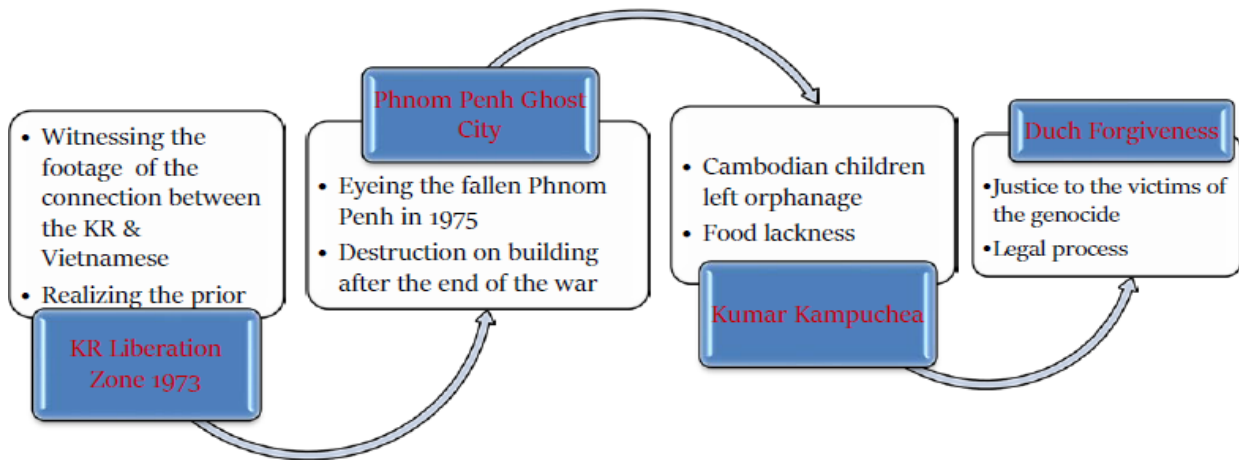
Mr. Mong Chhun, the school principal opened the welcoming remark by first thanking Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy, Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center, and his team members for coming to teach the students about the history of Democratic Kampuchea, known as the KR history. He continued in 2013 the students from Hun Sen Porpil High School visited the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC) to learn the legal process in the trial. In the meantime, during their visit in Phnom Penh, they went to the killing field to understand what happened to the people during the regime. As all of the students are in Grade 12, the forum is even important. He went on sharing all of what he knows from the regime and asks the students to join forces to prevent such an atrocious regime from recurrence. At the end, he strongly encouraged all the students in this session to put attention on the lecture.

Followed by his speech, Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy gave an orientation opening by introducing himself as well as the team members Ms. Min Zanas, Mr. Phat Sela and Mr. Seang Chenda. With no delay, he moved to the pre-survey completion. Mr. Rasy handed the pre-forum survey form over the students for 15-minute completion. The pre-form survey was used as an instrument to know the level of the students' current knowledge and understanding of the Khmer Rouge history as they have the lesson in school and the story told by their family members who lived through the regime. When the pre-survey complete ended, Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy brought all students to the lecture.

KHMER ROUGE HISTORY LECTURE

The forum commenced with the presentation on the history of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) by Mr Pheng Pong-Rasy, Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center. Mr Rasy gave the students the historical-based lecture from the narrative and explanation on the root of the existence of the Khmer Rouge, the KR leaders, the rise to power, the forced evacuation and the radical policy. All of these resulted in the loss of nearly 2 million Cambodians' life through the overwork, arrest, starvation, torture, disease and execution. In every end of the slide presentation, Mr. Rasy screened each of four documentary films entitled "KR Liberation Zone 1973", "Phnom Penh Ghost City", "Children of Kampuchea", and "Duch Forgiveness." The film screening gave an visualization and image explanation within the purpose of "Seeing to Understanding" to enable the students further understand what the Khmer Rouge did to the people and resulted the catastrophic consequence of the death of million Cambodians. It is significantly noted the narrative visualization in the film could attract the students to be exposed in the past but also give a lively discussion.

Below is the diagram of the documentary film and the Khmer Rouge History:



Q & A SESSION / REFLECTION FROM THE STUDENTS

When the presentation and the film screening came to an end, Mr. Rasy encouraged the students to ask any questions that they are holding. In the meantime, some of them stood up and shared their reflection on what they just learned in the session on the history of the Khmer Rouge.

Tha Sreykeo (F)
Grade 12 at Hun Sen
Kampong Porpil High
School



As a student who participated in the forum on the importance on studying the "History of Democratic Kampuchea", I learned about the history particularly the genocide taking place in 1975-1979. I know some history from my grandparents. It was painful from the cruel act of torture, torture and murder in the prison with no wall. All killings were practiced with no judicial progress. I understand more about the history on what happened to all grandfathers and grandmothers. It really happened. It was atrocious regime of the starvation, overwork and execution; also, I see the positive from the regime that all was equal in the society.

Sot Molica (F)
Grade 12E at Hun Sen
Kampong Porpil High
School



I have some prior knowledge on understanding the history through the teacher in class. I know more about what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime. People at that time lived in shocking and painfulness, and all were forced to overwork. The Khmer Rouge used the word Angkar to cover the face and put thousands of people to death. This forum has nothing to do but it is very good to build more understanding on history. As a suggestion, there shall be more programs as such at school to allow the Cambodian all generations to learn about it by not letting it come back again.

Vichet (M)
Grade 12 at Hun Sen
Kampong Porpil High
School



I am happy to be in this forum of Democratic Kampuchea history. I gained a lot of historical knowledge, especially in the mistreatment, suffering and the loss of the Cambodian people. The Khmer Rouge regime not only killed millions of Cambodians but also eliminated the fundamentality of human rights, religion and culture. Thus, as a next generation and a student, I need to join the obligation to preventing this regime from happening again.

POST-SURVEY COMPLETION & BOOK DISTRIBUTION

After all sessions, Ms. Min Sanas and Phat Sela, team members of Genocide Research and Education in Cambodia handed the post-forum survey forms over to the students for the complement. The post-forum survey was included in attempt to evaluate the students' knowledge and their perspective on the healing in today Cambodian society. At the end of the survey filling, the students received a copy of the DC-Cam's publications including A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) and FROM THE KHMER ROUGE TO HAMBALI: Cham Identities in a Global. These textbooks are of the supporting materials for the self-study and -research. In addition, Mr. Rasy shared the students with w: www.khmerrougehistory.com and facebook page: [Genocide Education in Cambodia](https://www.facebook.com/GenocideEducationinCambodia).

CONCLUSION WITH THE POST-FORUM IMPACTS AS SUCCESS STORIES

The 43rd Classroom Forum on the importance of studying the history of Democratic Kampuchea convened at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School ended well. The success came from the good collaboration and the tireless effort between the DC-Cam's team and the school. As reflected, the students gain more knowledge and understanding on the history of the Khmer Rouge; more importantly, they will continue to talk about it with their family. Moreover, the forum assumes an important role in shaping the today generations' perception from the historical understanding as proven as following:

POST-FORUM IMPACTS

"Education on the history of KR helps lead the way for the students to move on the good path"



Lorn Bunny, female, 56, is a snack seller at Hun Kampong Porpil High School

Lorn Bunny, the survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime, thinks that this classroom forum is so important because all students were born after the Khmer Rouge and that it remains difficult for them to believe or understand what happened during the Khmer Rouge. *This educational forum on the history of Democratic*

Kampuchea (1975-1979) not only teaches all students the history, but also helps lead the way for the them to move on to a good path.

"Why Khmer cannot love Khmer?"

Sin Sreyneath (f) is in Grade 12D at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School

In prior to the forum, I have some knowledge on the history of the Khmer Rouge as narrated by my grandmother, [Yeay] Yan who is aging 84. During the Khmer Rouge period from 1975 to 1979, my grandparents and other local people were in the extreme difficulties including little food, overwork, and family separation. I really cannot imagine what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime. *Why Khmer Killed Khmer? Why Khmer cannot love Khmer?* At the Forum on teaching the history of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979), I gained a lot of historical knowledge and understanding on the root causes of the killing of Cambodians. I will bring all knowledge and understanding to discuss with my grandmother again.



“Why did the Khmer Rouge do this to Cambodian people?”



Chuor Vannthada (m) is in Grade 12B at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School.

“I have the pre-forum knowledge about the history of the Khmer Rouge through my parents who had lived and survived from the Khmer Rouge regime. During the Khmer Rouge regime, people were killed, using the word "reeducation" as a cover. I realized that the Khmer Rouge evacuated people from the city to work in the

countryside labor camp. And my father was among the evacuees forced out of Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975. *Why did the Khmer Rouge do this to the Cambodian people?* After I studied this history in class and the educational forum, I learned a lot about the realities of Democratic Kampuchea, including transferring people to the labor camp, killing people, forcing to overwork and starvation. I have increased my knowledge on the Khmer Rouge history, and I will continue to talk about it as shared with them and discuss more with my parents.”

Support by: MoEYS and USAID

Genocide Education and Research's Members:

Pheng Pong-Rasy, Director of Prey Veng Documentation Center

Min Sanas, Researcher

Phat Sela, Researcher

Photo & Report by Seang Chenda: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/1d9KsfX2itTkCT769>

REFERENCE

PREY VENG DOCUMENTATION CENTER (Khmer Rouge's Eastern Zone Archives) – Genocide Research & Education's Classroom Forum at Hun Sen Kampong Porpil High School, June 26th 2019.

Appendix

N	Questions	F	%	F	%
		Pre		Post	
	Male	37	36	50	38
	Female	65	64	82	61
<u>History of Democratic Kampuchea Knowledge</u>					
1	<i>Would you describe your know ledge of DK period?</i>				
	I know nothing	4	4	1	1
	I know a little	71	70	77	58
	I know a lot	21	21	52	39
	I know enough to teach other	0	0	2	2
2	<i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during DK period?</i>				
	Yes	99	97	131	99
	No	1	1	0	0
	N/A	2	2	1	1
3	<i>Have you ever talk about DK period with your parents or people who experience that period?</i>				
	Yes	89	87	118	89
	No	12	12	13	10
	N/A	1	1	1	1
4	<i>Do you think the studying of DK history is important?</i>				
	Yes	100	98	130	99
	No	2	2	1	1
	N/A	0	0	1	1
5	<i>If one of your friends is s son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate against his/her?</i>				
	Yes	7	7	12	9
	No	95	93	120	91
	N/A	0	0	1	1
6	<i>Which school level that DK history should be taught in?</i>				
	Primary school	4	4	7	5
	Junior school	33	32	43	33
	High school	59	58	79	60
	University	3	3	2	2
	N/A	3	3	1	1
7	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of peace building in Cambodia?</i>				
	Yes	95	93	129	98
	No	3	3	3	2
	N/A	4	4	0	0
8	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of healing?</i>				
	Yes	82	80	108	82

	No	17	17	23	17
	N/A	3	3	1	1
9	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of reconciliation?</i>				
	Yes	95	93	122	92
	No	0	0	7	5
	N/A	7	7	3	2
10	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of genocide prevention?</i>				
	Yes	99	97	127	96
	No	0	0	2	2
	N/A	3	3	3	2
11	<i>How do you feel about the studying of DK history?</i>				
	Want to know and understand about this history	81	79	87	66
	Do not want to know	0	0	1	1
	Feel empathy to victims	18	18	44	33
	Boring	0	0	0	0
	N/A	3	3	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	24	23	30	23
	Arresting leaders of a religious group with the intent to undermine the practice of religion	8	8	9	7
	<u>Deliberately starving an ethnic group with the intent to destroy the people</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>58</u>
	Killing enemy soldiers who are shooting at your soldiers during war	8	8	14	11
	N/A	6	6	2	2
13	<i>Which response below is the best description of the impact of genocide on <u>individuals</u>?</i>				
	Individuals suffer as a result of lower wages and job growth.	7	7	10	8
	<u>Individuals mourn the loss of family and friends who were tortured and/or killed.</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>81</u>
	Individuals are not impacted by genocide. Genocide only affects groups of people.	3	3	4	3
	Only children are impacted by genocide by the loss of parents.	4	4	11	8
	N/A	5	5	0	0
14	<i>Which response below is the best description of the impact of genocide on <u>families and communities</u>?</i>				
	Individuals suffer during genocide but generally families and communities are unharmed.	0	0	0	0
	Only poor families ever suffer during genocide.	2	2	3	2

	Rich families never suffer during genocide.				
	<u>Genocide can impact families and communities in many ways for generations.</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>89</u>
	Genocide impacts communities but families can always escape by fleeing to another country.	5	5	11	8
	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.	0	0	0	0
	Countries can be impacted by genocide but the world is too big to be impacted.	10	9	16	12
	Countries suffer from genocide only when it is occurring. They can rebuild quickly	86	84	107	81
	<u>Countries can be impacted by genocide for generations.</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>
	N/A	0	0	0	0
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	9	9	17	13
	Individuals can prevent violence by attacking their enemies before they are attacked	16	16	32	24
	Individuals can prevent violence by staying quiet and not criticizing violence	37	36	45	34
	<u>Individuals can prevent violence by speaking against such violence</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>46</u>
	Individuals can encourage violence against their enemies	0	0	1	1
	Individuals can encourage victims to be silent because speaking out against violence will only encourage more violence	19	19	20	15
	<u>Individuals can denounce violence and encourage peaceful solutions to conflicts</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>61</u>
	Individuals can encourage perpetrators to commit their violence without public attention, which only aggravates the situation	1	1	0	0
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 other characteristics</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>65</u>

	Communities can protect the individual rights of the majority group at the expense of minorities in order to preserve peace, order and stability	4	4	5	5
	Communities do not need to protect individual rights; rather, they must always seek to maintain peace, order and stability	10	10	6	5
	Communities do not need to protect individual rights because this is always a state responsibility	1	1	6	5
	Communities can prevent violence by identifying minorities and requiring them to live separate from the rest of the community.	7	7	7	6
	<u>Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate human diversity through education about different cultures, religions, and communities.</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>41</u>
	Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate their own culture and identify ways to protect it from outside influence.	39	38	60	56
	Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth how to protect themselves and their communities through self-defense training	8	8	32	24
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.	37	36	43	33
	Countries can prevent violence by attacking enemies before they are attacked	4	6	13	10
	Countries can never prevent violence but they can assist in peaceful resolution.	22	22	36	27
	<u>Countries can prevent violence through education and diplomacy</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>57</u>
	<u>Countries can identify and publicly denounce circumstances that support genocide.</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>14</u>
	Countries should never denounce other countries because it will weaken future diplomacy.	13	13	11	8
	Countries should only denounce enemies that support violence or genocide. Countries should never denounce allies involved in genocide because they are allies.	26	25	22	16

	Countries should only help people who deserve to be helped. Some genocide is necessary to preserve peace and order.	22	22	40	30
<u>Opinion on the Forum</u>					
19	Do you have strategy to prevent Genocide or Mass Killing in Cambodia in the future?				
	Yes	82	80		
	No	16	16		
	N/A	4	4		
24	What do you think about this classroom forum?				
	Good and help develop my knowledge			130	99
	Not good, did not help anything at all			1	1
	N/A			1	1
25	What this classroom forum can help you?				
	Improve my knowledge on KR history			15	11
	Help to memorize the KR history			1	1
	Encourage to feel empathy and genocide prevention			7	5
	All above			108	82
	N/A			1	1