

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

**PREY VENG DOCUMENTATION CENTER
KHMER ROUGE'S EASTERN ZONE ARCHIVE**

GENOCIDE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

**Report of
Classroom Forum on
«The Importance of Studying the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) »
Ba Phnom High School, Prey Veng Province**

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December 5, 2019



On November 19, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted its 45th classroom forum *The Importance of Studying the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* at Ba Phnom High School, Prey Veng Province.

The objective of the classroom forum is to educate high school students about the history of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) and give them opportunities to discuss, ask questions, and think critically about the Khmer Rouge regime. Students are encouraged to study history and work together for peace in Cambodia. The structure of the classroom forum allows students to take ownership of their own history and to recognize the truth. In this sense, learning about Democratic Kampuchea history creates a dialogue that can be fruitful in peacemaking, healing, and future genocide prevention for the younger generation. Approximately 44 students, including 19 females participated.

Ba Phnom High School was built immediately after Cambodia received full independence from France, and celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2019. The school consists of a large

compound containing an older school building and a variety of trees which provide shade for students. The school is located in a long-standing historical area of Cambodia. After gaining independence from France in 1954, King Norodom Sihanouk, the head of state for the Kingdom of Cambodia, took note of this historic site and in 1959 built Ba Phnom High School. In 1960-61, the school operated under the administration of Director Danh So. After the change in government brought about by the coup of King Sihanouk on March 18, 1970, many teachers and students rose up against the coup, some fleeing into the jungle with the Kampuchean United Front for power, and others fleeing to Phnom Penh to escape the war. Ba Phnom High School was closed in 1972 and reopened after the end of the KR period in 1979. In 1990-1991, the school was converted to Ba Phnom High School.

Activities of Classroom Forum

Duration	Agenda
5 min	Introduce the team and objectives of the forum
20 min	Pre-classroom forum survey
30 min	Presentation on Democratic Kampuchea history
15 min	Documentary film screening “Children of Cambodia”
15 min	Q and A session
20 min	Presentation about Genocide Definition and Genocide Prevention, and introduce Prey Veng Documentation Center
20 min	Post classroom survey
10 min	Textbook distribution and refreshment

Pre-Classroom Forum Survey

The pre-classroom forum survey was distributed to all students to complete in 20 minutes. This survey is used to measure students' knowledge of KR history before they participate in the forum. (See the results of this survey in the "Results of the survey before and after the classroom forum" on the next page.)

Presentation on Democratic Kampuchea History

Before starting the presentation, Mr. Rasy introduced himself and his team to students. He also explained the mission and vision of Prey Veng Documentation Center. Next, he started the presentation by explaining the word “Khmer Rouge” and its origin to students. After that, he began to explain the eight policies of Khmer Rouge ideology. The eight policies were:

1. Forced transfer people from Phnom Penh and other locales;
2. Banning of the free market and currency;
3. Destruction of pagodas and disrobing of monks;
4. Closing school and other educational institutions;
5. Killing intellectuals, government officials, and other people;

6. Establishing cooperatives throughout the country;
7. Separation of family member;
8. Forced evacuation of the Vietnamese minority and war with Vietnam

The Khmer Rouge implemented those policies to transform Cambodia into a modern agriculture state in a very short period of time. All students were interested in the rare photos included in the slide presentation. They focused on and noted all the important information. After the presentation, students were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Questions from students
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did America bomb Cambodia? 2. In 1970, Lon Nol overthrew the Sangkum Reas Niyum regime, but in 1975 Pol Pot helped liberate the country for King Sihanouk. Why did Pol Pot turn against King Sihanouk? 3. How did the Khmer Rouge regime gain control of Cambodia? 4. When did the Khmer Rouge regime control Cambodia? 5. What were the differences between the Khmer Rouge regime and the Lon Nol regime?

Documentary Film Screening

A short video entitled "Cambodian Children" was screened for students to reflect on children's lives in Cambodia from the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime to the present. This short video gives students an in-depth look at living conditions, education, and children's rights. After the screening, some students asked the following questions:

1. Why do children hold flowers and walk in a line? What does it mean?
2. Why did all the children cook their own food if the Khmer Rouge established a cooperative?
3. While others traveled to find their families, why did all the kids still stay in one place?
4. Are the bones that I saw in the previous video from a victim of killing or starvation?

Presentation of Genocide Definition and Genocide Prevention

The last part of the presentation is about the meaning and prevention of genocide. Mr. Rasy pointed out one question "What is Genocide?" and to answer this question, he explained the components of genocide to students. He explained that genocide are acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide affects individuals, communities, and nations. In order to prevent genocide we must:

- Prevent all forms of violence, and promote a peaceful resolution to resolve the conflict and reunite;
- Protect individual rights of members of communities without thinking of race and political views;
- Prevent violence through education and foreign relations.

Post-Classroom Forum Survey

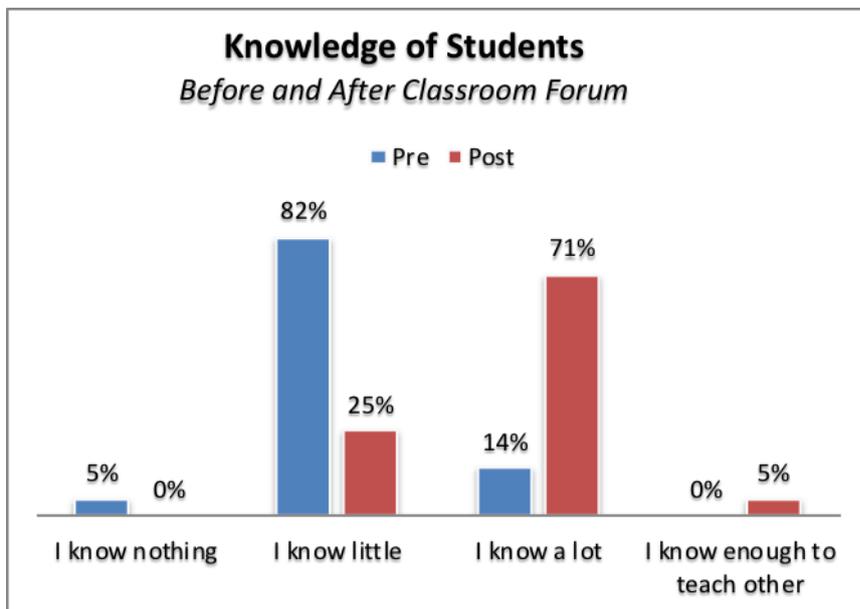
Before finishing the classroom forum, the DC-Cam team distributed another questionnaire to each student. To make it easier for students, the team guided and explained each question and acted as a facilitator in completing the answers. We use the survey to help us identify if we have met the forum’s objectives for student learning. Additionally, the survey helps us to identify student learning and satisfaction, so we can improve our methods and delivery.

Textbook Distribution

After the post-classroom forum survey, the DC-Cam team began distributing the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbook in English, and the book *Cham Identity in the Globalized Age* to all students. These textbooks are provided as study materials for further research and preparation for the national examination. There are two reasons for distributing these textbooks. The first one is to provide educational material on Cambodian history, and secondly to promote a culture of reading for all students in Cambodia.

Results from Pre- and Post-Classroom Forum Surveys

There are two steps in order to identify the results from classroom forum. The first one is to observe students' activities during the forum. The second one is analysis of the data from the surveys. Using SPSS software. The second method results are discussed in the next part of the report.

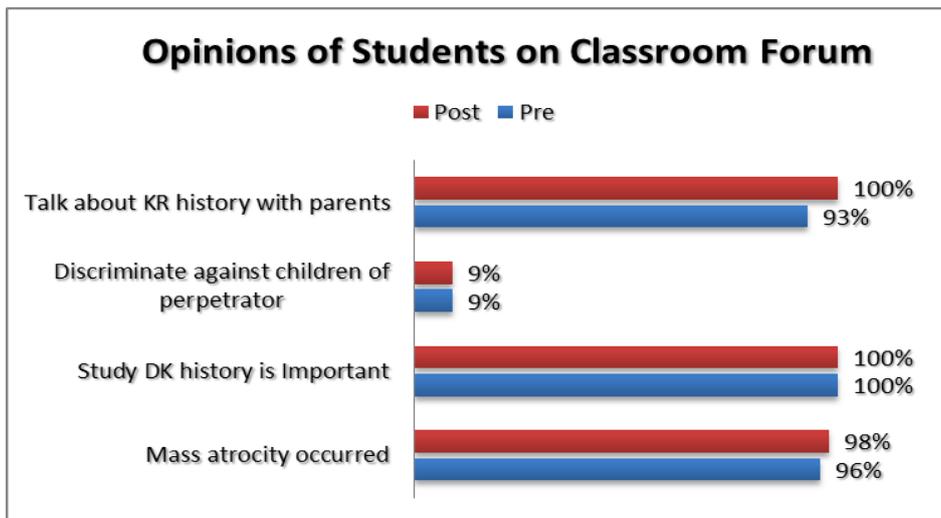


According to the chart, of the 44 students (100%) only two or three students (5%) were unaware of the Khmer Rouge regime between. That number decreased to zero after the classroom forum. Therefore, all of the students had knowledge of the Khmer Rouge period and history after the forum.. In addition, we

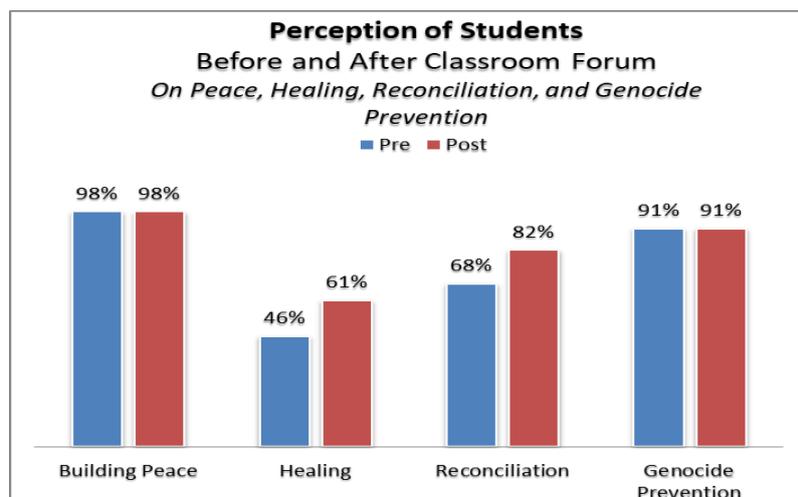
found that most students (82%) said that they knew only basic Khmer Rouge history before participating in the classroom forum. The percentage dropped to 25% after the forum. The students who said they had a lot of knowledge about the Khmer Rouge regime before the forum were only 14% (6 students). After the forum, the percentage increased to 71%, (31

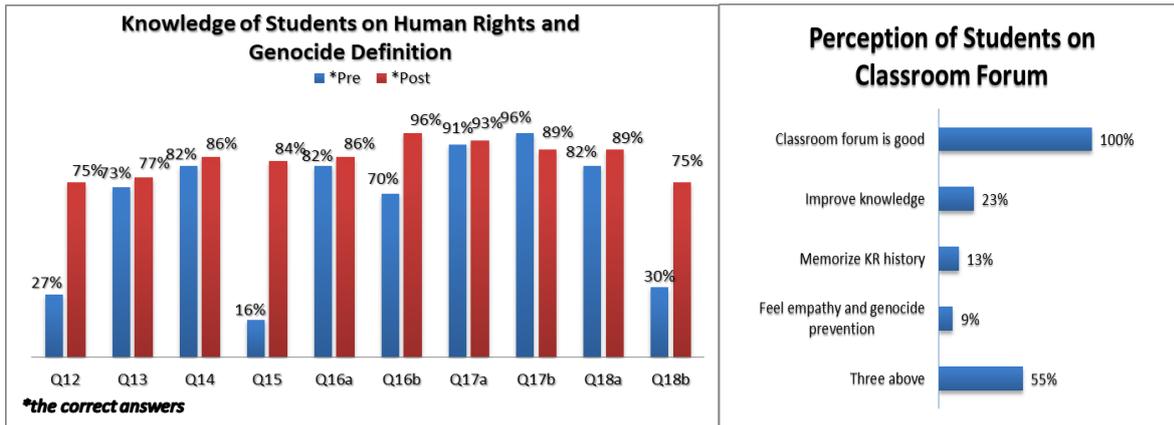
students) who reported having increased knowledge. As a result, the percentage of students that gained basic knowledge of the Khmer Rouge is 57% (more than half or 25 out of 44 students). Lastly, after the forum, 5% of the students reported that they have enough knowledge to be able to teach others.

All the students believed that the atrocities and suffering happened during the Khmer Rouge period.. Results from pre- and post-classroom forum surveys showed that 91% of students did not agree with discrimination on the children of Khmer Rouge cadres. All students agree that studying the history of Democratic Kampuchea is important.



All students agreed that studying the history of Democratic Kampuchea would promote peace in Cambodian society, heal the victims of the regime, create reconciliation, and prevent future genocide.





Conclusion

A number of Ba Phnom High School students participated in classroom forums on Khmer Rouge history and preventing genocide in the future. The students demonstrated great enthusiasm and commitment to learning about Khmer Rouge history. As a result, the students increased knowledge about both the history of Democratic Kampuchea and the genocide. This knowledge is key to preventing genocide in the future.

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 Support by: MoEYS and USAID

Photo link: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/iiszwvMKjM8K4vx88>

Appendix

<i>N</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
		<i>Pre</i>		<i>Post</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	25	57	25	57
	<i>Female</i>	19	43	19	43
<i>History of Democratic Kampuchea Knowledge</i>					
1	<i>Would you describe your know ledge of Democratic Kampuchea period?</i>				
	<i>I know nothing</i>	2	5	0	0
	<i>I know a little</i>	36	82	11	25
	<i>I know a lot</i>	6	14	31	71
	<i>I know enough to teach other</i>	0	0	2	5
2	<i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during Democratic Kampuchea period?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	42	96	43	98
	<i>No</i>	2	5	1	2
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
3	<i>Have you ever talk about Democratic Kampuchea period with your parents or people who experience that period?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	41	93	44	100
	<i>No</i>	3	7	0	0
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
4	<i>Do you think the studying of Democratic Kampuchea history is important?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	44	100	44	100
	<i>No</i>	0	0	0	0
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
5	<i>If one of your friends is s son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate against his/her?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	4	9	4	9
	<i>No</i>	40	91	39	89
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
6	<i>Which school level that Democratic Kampuchea history should be taught in?</i>				
	<i>Primary school</i>	4	9	4	9
	<i>Junior school</i>	14	32	15	36
	<i>High school</i>	27	61	25	57
	<i>University</i>	1	2	3	7
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
7	<i>Does the study of Democratic Kampuchea history encourage you to think of peace building in Cambodia?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	43	98	43	98
	<i>No</i>	0	2	1	2
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
8	<i>Does the study of Democratic Kampuchea history encourage you to think of healing?</i>				

	Yes	43	98	43	98
	No	1	2	1	2
	N/A	0	0	0	0
9	<i>Does the study of Democratic Kampuchea history encourage you to think of reconciliation?</i>				
	Yes	20	46	27	61
	No	24	55	17	39
	N/A	0	0	0	0
10	<i>Does the study of Democratic Kampuchea history encourage you to think of genocide prevention?</i>				
	Yes	40	91	40	91
	No	4	9	3	7
	N/A	0	0	0	0
11	<i>How do you feel about the studying of Democratic Kampuchea history?</i>				
	Want to know and understand about this history	36	82	26	59
	Do not want to know	0	0	1	2
	Feel empathy to victims	8	18	17	39
	Boring	0	0	0	0
	N/A	0	0	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	22	50	8	18
	Arresting leaders of a religious group with the intent to undermine the practice of religion	4	9	1	2
	<u>Deliberately starving an ethnic group with the intent to destroy the people</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>75</u>
	Killing enemy soldiers who are shooting at your soldiers during war	5	11	0	0
	N/A	0	0	0	0
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.	2	5	1	2
	<u>Individuals mourn the loss of family and friends who were tortured and/or killed.</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>77</u>
	Individuals are not impacted by genocide. Genocide only affects groups of people.	0	0	1	2
	Only children are impacted by genocide by the loss of parents.	10	23	8	18
	N/A	0	0	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	1	2
	Only poor families ever suffer during genocide. Rich families never suffer during genocide.	6	14	0	0
	<u>Genocide can impact families and communities in many ways for generations.</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>86</u>
	Genocide impacts communities but families can always escape by fleeing to another country.	2	5	4	9
	N/A	0	0	0	0
15	<i>Which response below is the best description of the impact of genocide on <u>countries</u>?</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.	3	7	0	0
	Countries suffer from genocide only when it is occurring. They can rebuild quickly	34	77	5	11
	<u>Countries can be impacted by genocide for generations.</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>86</u>
	N/A	0	0	0	0
16	<i>Which response below is the best description of two important strategies that <u>individuals</u> 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	8	18	2	5
	<u>Individuals can prevent violence by speaking against such violence</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>86</u>
	Individuals can encourage violence against their enemies	12	27	6	14
	<u>Individuals can denounce violence and encourage peaceful solutions to conflicts</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>96</u>
	NA				
17	<i>Which response below is the best description of two important strategies that <u>communities</u> 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>40</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>93</u>
	Communities can protect the individual rights of the majority group at the expense of minorities in order to preserve peace, order and stability	2	5	3	7
	Communities can prevent violence by identifying	4	10	5	11

	minorities and requiring them to live separate from the rest of the community.				
	<u>Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate human diversity through education about different cultures, religions, and communities.</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>89</u>
	N/A	0	0	0	0
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.	31	71	9	21
	Countries can prevent violence by attacking enemies before they are attacked	8	19	6	14
	<u>Countries can prevent violence through education and diplomacy</u>	36	82	39	89
	<u>Countries can identify and publicly denounce circumstances that support genocide.</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>75</u>
	N/A	0	0	0	0
<u>Opinion on the Forum</u>					
19	What do you think about this classroom forum?				
	Good			43	98
	Not good			0	0
	N/A			1	2
20	What this classroom forum can help you?				
	Improve my knowledge on KR history			10	23
	Help to memorize the KR history			6	13
	Encourage to feel empathy and genocide prevention			4	9
	All above			24	55
	N/A			0	0