

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) »**

Prey Phnoeu High School, Prey Veng Province
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November 19, 2019



Students at Prey Phnoeu High School fill in the Questionnaire

Introduction

On November 19, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) supported by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted 44th classroom forum entitled *The Importance of Studying the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* at Prey Phnoeu high school, Prey Veng province. The classroom forum is part of the Genocide Research and Education in Cambodia Program. Prior to the forum, the DC-Cam team visited the school to inform the school's director about the program objectives and request cooperation to conduct this event.

The aim of the classroom forum is to educate high school students about the History of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) from 1975 to 1979 and give opportunities for students to discuss, ask questions, and think critically about the Khmer Rouge regime. Approximately 63 students, including 30 female students, participated.

Documentation Center of Cambodia (ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បីការចងចាំនិងយុត្តិធម៌)
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There are five objectives of the classroom forum:

- (1) Provide students opportunities to express their own perspectives on what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime;
- (2) to encourage students to think and analyze the effects of Khmer Rouge legacy on present-day Cambodian society;
- (3) To encourage discussion of Khmer Rouge history within families and communities;
- (4) To distribute the textbook: The History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979);
- (5) To provide a deep understanding of genocide and genocide prevention;
- (6) To disseminate information about Prey Veng Documentation Center located in Prey Veng RTTC and its objectives.

Prey Phnoeu High School

The high school is located in Prey Phnoeu village, Prey Phnoeu commune, Pea Rieng district, Prey Veng province. The compound of Prey Phnoeu high school rectangular and consists of five buildings with thirty-one classrooms. The school was first established as middle school to educate students by the initiative of Chief Monk Sos Buth. to educate students. The school's first academic year was 1988-1989.



The school is located 74Km from Phnom Penh city on National Road No. 8. In 2007, the number of students greatly increased and the school added a high school the same year. Currently, there are sixty-four teachers and administrative staff, fifteen of whom are female.

<i>Table 1: Classes and Students</i>			
<i>Grade</i>	<i>Classrooms</i>	<i>Total students</i>	<i>Female</i>
7	6	749	400
8	5		
9	4		
10	4	470	233
11	4		
12	4		

The Forum Activities

Pre-Classroom Forum Survey



Students fill in the pre classroom survey

Before starting the forum, the school director, Mr. Chhay Peng Chhan, welcomed the DC-Cam team and encouraged students to stay focused on today's lecture. Mr. Pheng Pong-Rasy introduced himself and his team to students and then explained the objectives of the classroom forum. Next, the DC-Cam team gave pre-classroom forum survey sheets to each student to fill out. To maximize the validity of the questionnaires, the DC-Cam team explained the questions to students one by one and went through the survey together until they finished. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. We used this survey to explore students' prior knowledge about the Khmer Rouge regime. The survey also identifies what they have discussed with their families and communities about the Khmer Rouge period.

The Presentation on Khmer Rouge History

Before starting the presentation, Mr. Rasy introduced four questions. (1) Have you ever heard about Khmer Rouge history? (2) What is the meaning of the word “Khmer Rouge” and where did it come from? (3) When did the Khmer Rouge come to power? (4) What are the policies of Khmer Rouge? The answers to these questions are then illustrated in the slide presentation. Next, Mr. Rasy began to explain about the policies of Khmer Rouge one by one. These policies included:

- 1) Forced transfer of people from Phnom Penh
- 2) Banning of the free market
- 3) Banning of the use of currency
- 4) Banning of religion and worship
- 5) Purification/Purge
- 6) Creation of cooperatives throughout the country
- 7) Evacuation of Vietnamese minority from the country
- 8) War with Vietnam



Mr. Rasy presenting about Khmer Rouge history to student

Mr. Rasy explained that the Khmer Rouge leaders wanted to transform Cambodia into a modern agricultural state. After that, he outlined the organizational structure of the Khmer Rouge and its policies to students. All students were focused on the presentation and interested in the photos and videos.

Documentary Films Screening

The next activity was screening the documentary film entitled “Children of Cambodia”. This film was created after the fall of Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, and reflected the situation of Cambodian

children after the regime fell. Most students watched silently and with sad faces at the sight of starving children eating leaves and without proper clothing. The film contained images of flies near dead bodies in chains. A few students laughed nervously, but also you could hear the slightest grunt from the students when they saw what the children were eating. After the students watched the film, Mr. Rasy told them that all the children in the video were walking from place to place from where they had lived during the Democratic Kampuchea regime in the Western Zone. Some of the children were adopted by foreigners and some remained in the country with their families or lived in orphanages, and many other died from malnutrition.

Genocide Definition and Genocide Prevention

The last part of the presentation focused on 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. The components of genocide are:

- Killing members of a group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Genocide is an act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide affects individuals, communities, and a whole country. In order to prevent genocide, we must:

- Prevent all forms of violence, promote a peaceful resolution to resolve conflict and create unity.
- Protect individual rights of members of communities without thinking of race and political affiliation.
- Prevent violence through education and foreign relations
- Recognize the steps leading to genocide

At the end of the forum, we introduced the Prey Veng Documentation Center to students located in Prey Veng RTTC. The Prey Veng Documentation Center is responsible for providing research and education on the history of Democratic Kampuchea or the Khmer Rouge regime. The center is also a research center and information center for distributing information and documents of Khmer Rouge history to the local communities.

Classroom Post-Classroom Forum Survey

Before finishing the classroom forum, the DC-Cam team distributed a post-classroom forum survey 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.

Book Distribution

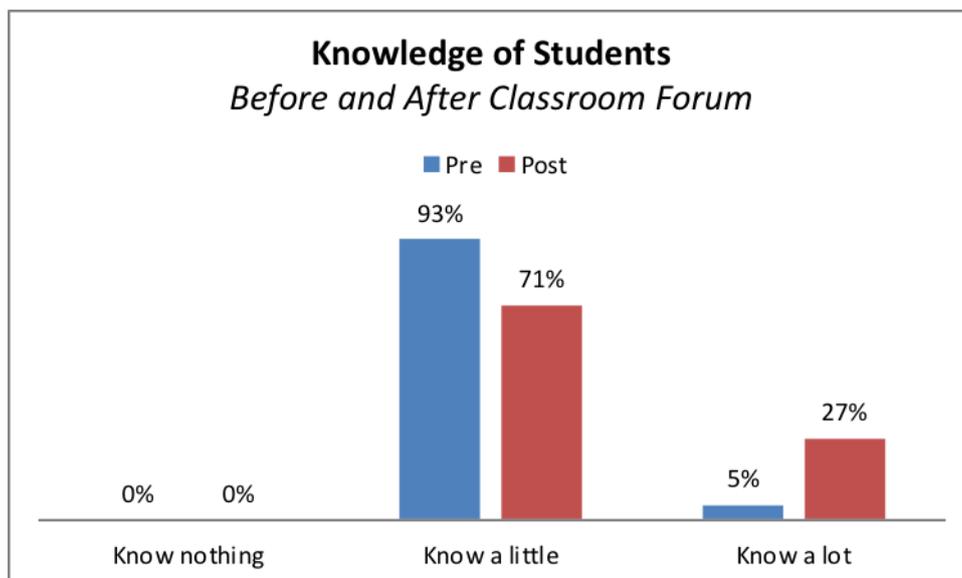
After the post-classroom forum survey, the DC-Cam team distributed the History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbook (English version) and the book *Cham identity in the Globalized Age* books to all students. These textbooks are provided as study materials for further research and for national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

Results from Pre-Classroom Forum and Post-Classroom Forum Surveys

In order to determine the students' knowledge before and after the class forum on Democratic Kampuchea history, two types of data collection methods were used: questionnaires and observations. The first method is divided into two parts, the first is a pre-classroom forum survey, distributed before the forum starts to measure the knowledge students have learned at school and at home. The second part is a post-classroom forum survey to find out what students have learned from the classroom forums. The second method is to observe the student's behavior during the forum.

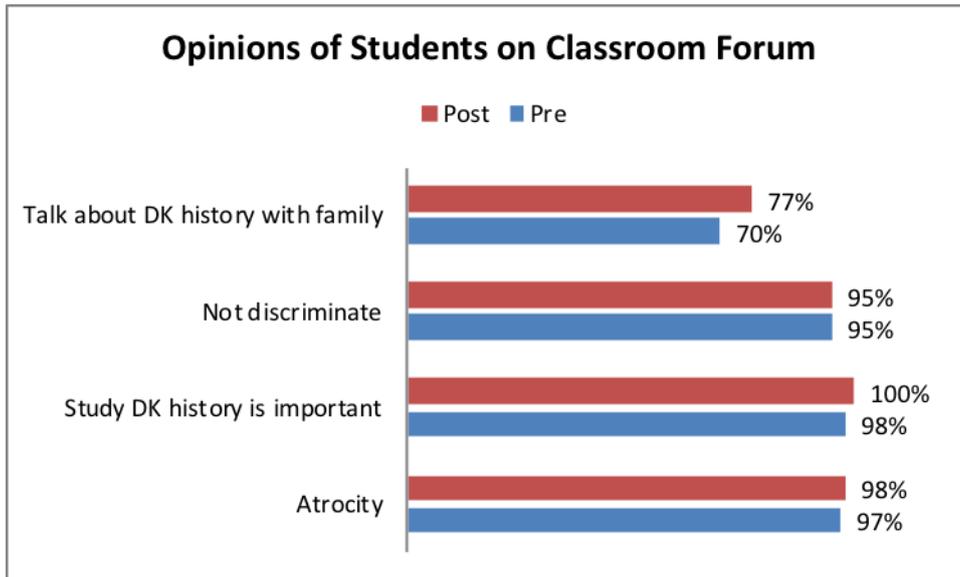
Results from both surveys were analyzed in "SPSS IBM 25" software to measure student knowledge before and after the conference. The following are the results from the analysis:

According to the following chart below, most of the students attending the class forums already have some background in Khmer Rouge history. Students who were most aware of the Khmer Rouge regime increased from 5% to 27% after attending the forum.

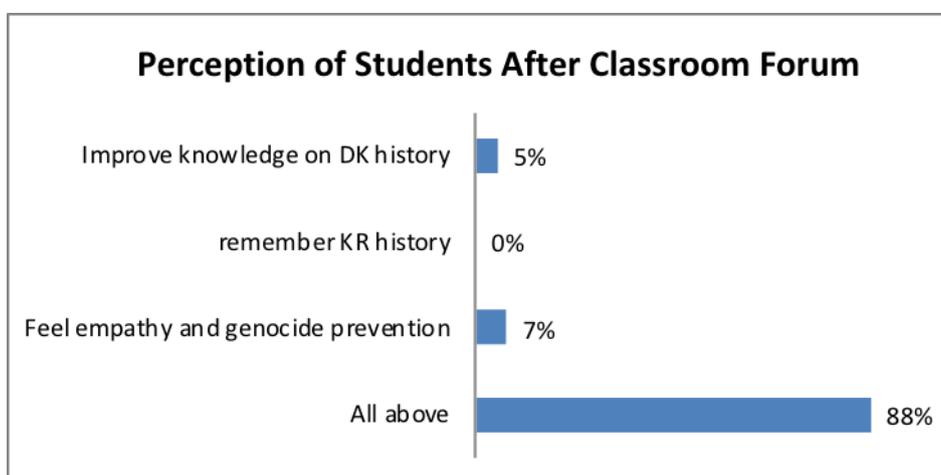
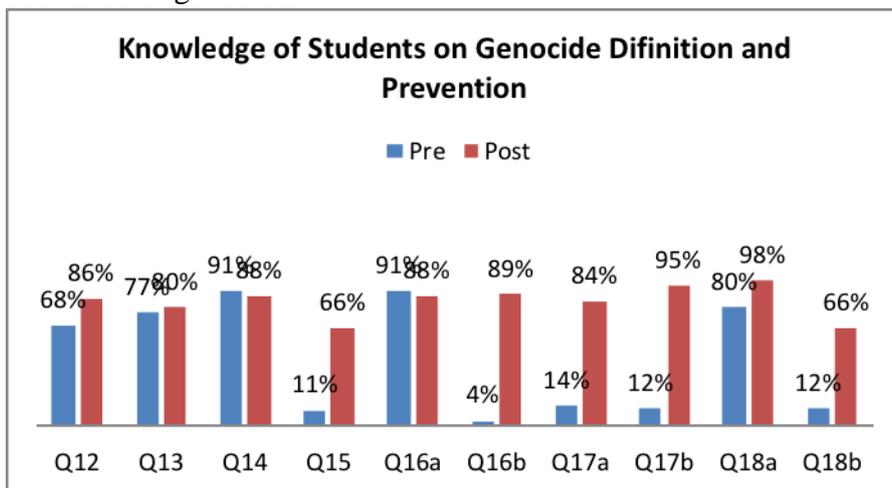


All the students believed that the atrocity really happened during the Khmer Rouge period and brought the suffering to Cambodians at that time. Results from the survey before and after the classroom forum showed that 95% of students did not agree with the discrimination against former

Khmer Rouge cadre children. All students agree that studying the history of Democratic Kampuchea is important.



All students agreed that studying DK history is important and contributes to peace building in Cambodia society, healing the deep wounds of survivors, and promoting the reconciliation process, to prevent the recurrence of genocide.



Conclusion

In conclusion, the classroom forum, held on November 19, 2019 from 8:30 pm to 11:00 pm by the Genocide Research and Education in Cambodia program, provides a critical opportunity for Prey Phnov High School students to discuss the History of the Khmer Rouge. Our surveys and observations make it clear that all students maintained interest and a positive attitude during the classroom forum. In addition, all students actively participated in the activities of this classroom forum, such as the pre- and post-surveys, discussion, and slide presentations. Students were encouraged by the staff of the Documentation Center of Cambodia to increase their knowledge and their self-confidence for future studies and their careers.

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Support by : MoEYS and USAID

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Photo Link : <https://photos.app.goo.gl/9pt61AD13HnP7XBj6>

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>	26	46	26	46
	<i>Female</i>	30	54	30	54
<i>History of Democratic Kampuchea Knowledge</i>					
1	<i>Would you describe your know ledge of Democratic Kampuchea period?</i>				
	I know nothing	0	0	0	0
	I know a little	52	93	40	71
	I know a lot	3	5	15	27
	I know enough to teach others	0	0	0	0
2	<i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during Democratic Kampuchea period?</i>				
	Yes	54	97	55	98
	No	2	4	1	2
	N/A	0	0	0	0
3	<i>Have you ever talked about the Democratic Kampuchea period with your parents or people who experienced that period?</i>				
	Yes	39	70	43	77
	No	17	30	13	23
	N/A	0	0	0	0
4	<i>Do you think the studying of Democratic Kampuchea history is important?</i>				
	Yes	55	98	56	100
	No	1	2	0	0
	N/A	0	0	0	0
5	<i>If one of your friends is s son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate against him/her?</i>				

	Yes	3	5	3	5
	No	53	95	53	95
	N/A	0	0	0	0
6	<i>Which school level should Democratic Kampuchea history should be taught in?</i>				
	Primary school	0	0	0	0
	Junior school	21	38	20	36
	High school	33	59	36	64
	University	2	4	56	100
	N/A	0	0	0	0
7	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of peace building in Cambodia?</i>				
	Yes	54	96	56	100
	No	1	2	0	0
	N/A	0	0	0	0
8	<i>Does the study of Democratic Kampuchea history encourage you to think of healing?</i>				
	Yes	46	82	45	80
	No	10	18	11	20
	N/A	0	0	0	0
9	<i>Does the study of Democratic Kampuchea history encourage you to think of reconciliation?</i>				
	Yes	53	95	54	96
	No	2	4	1	2
	N/A	0	0	0	0
10	<i>Does the study of Democratic Kampuchea history encourage you to think of genocide prevention?</i>				
	Yes	56	100	53	95
	No	0	0	1	2
	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	47	84	36	70
	Do not want to know	0	0	0	0
	Feel empathy to victims	9	16	16	29
	Boring	0	0	0	0
	N/A	0	0	0	0
<i>Human Rights Knowledge</i>					
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	8	14	7	13
	Arresting leaders of a religious group with the intent to undermine the practice of religion	7	13	0	0
	<i><u>Deliberately starving an ethnic group with the intent to destroy the people</u></i>	<u>38</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>86</u>

	Killing enemy soldiers who are shooting at your soldiers during war	3	5	0	0
	N/A	0	0	0	0
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.	3	5	2	4
	<u>Individuals mourn the loss of family and friends who were tortured and/or killed.</u>	43	77	45	80
	Individuals are not impacted by genocide. Genocide only affects groups of people.	1	2	3	5
	Only children are impacted by genocide by the loss of parents.	9	16	5	9
	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	0	0
	Only poor families ever suffer during genocide. Rich families never suffer during genocide.	1	2	1	2
	<u>Genocide can impact families and communities in many ways for generations.</u>	51	91	49	88
	Genocide impacts communities but families can always escape by fleeing to another country.	4	7	4	7
	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 large to be impacted.	5	9	2	4
	Countries suffer from genocide only when it is occurring. They can rebuild quickly.	45	80	15	27
	<u>Countries can be impacted by genocide for generations.</u>	6	11	38	68
	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	1	2	0	0
	<u>Individuals can prevent violence by speaking against such violence</u>	51	91	55	98
	Individuals can encourage violence against their enemies	4	7	2	4
	<u>Individuals can denounce violence and encourage peaceful solutions to conflicts</u>	2	4	50	89
	NA	0	0	0	0
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</i>				

	<i>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>	8	14	47	84
	Communities can protect the individual rights of the majority group at the expense of minorities in order to preserve peace, order and stability	0	0	3	5
	Communities can prevent violence by identifying minorities and requiring them to live separate from the rest of the community.	44	80	3	5
	<u>Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate human diversity through education about different cultures, religions, and communities.</u>	6	12	53	95
	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.	8	14	15	27
	Countries can prevent violence by attacking enemies before they are attacked	0	0	1	2
	<u>Countries can prevent violence through education and diplomacy</u>	44	80	55	98
	<u>Countries can identify and publicly denounce circumstances that support genocide.</u>	6	12	35	63
	N/A	0	0	0	0
<u>Opinion on the Forum</u>					
19	Factors that can be lead to genocide in Cambodia				
20	What do you think about this classroom forum?				
	Good			55	98
	Not good			0	0
	N/A			1	2
21	What this classroom forum can help you?				
	Improve my knowledge on Khmer Rouge history			3	5
	Help to memorize the Khmer Rouge history			0	0
	Encourage to feel empathy and genocide prevention			4	7
	All above			49	88
	N/A			0	0
22	Feedback to improve the forum				