

កម្មវិធីឯកសារឯកសារកម្ពុជា

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA

GENOCIDE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM IN CAMBODIA

Report of Classroom Forum on

*“The Important of Studying History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975- 1979”*

*At Mesang High School, Prey Veng Province*

*February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

*By Phat Sela*



## Introduction

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in collaboration with Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) supported by United State Agency for International Development (USAID) have conducted Classroom Forum on the Important of Studying History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) with students at Mesang High School, Chy Phoch village, Chy Phoch commune, Mesang district, Prey Veng province.

## Prey Veng Documentation Center and Classroom Forum in Eastern Zone

Prey Veng Documentation Center (Khmer Rouge Archive, Eastern Zone) is a newly research center and a part of DC-Cam which aims to enhance the accessibility of catalogue of DC-Cam’s archive and increase access to information and achieve a

sustainable grassroots network of information sharing. Prey Veng documentation Center located in a building in the compound of Prey Veng Regional Teacher Training Center (RTTC) will act as research, library and archive center which hold historical and legal archive of DC-Cam and ECCC related public information. There are three essential activities in the center which are *Research, Training and Forum*.

Classroom forum is a part of Forum Activities of Prey Veng Documentation Center which aims to disseminate the important of studying History of Democratic Kampuchea (KR regime) and as the way to promote building peace, healing, reconciliation, tolerance and genocide prevention to high school students. The objectives included: 1) Increase the awareness of students on DK history. 2) Give opportunities to students to ask questions and 3) Encourage to discuss and critical thinking on this history. There were 133 students (75 female) participated in this classroom forum. All these students were from grade 12 of Mesang High School.

## Methods

The classroom forum included Pre- and Post-forum survey, Presentation on History content, Q&A session, and History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) textbook distribution. Pre and Post survey was aimed to explore students' knowledge about DK history before and after the Classroom forum. The questionnaire included the questions of students' opinion of DK history; the discrimination; peace, reconciliation, healing and preventing the genocide; human rights knowledge; and students' opinion on classroom forum (see in the appendix).



After the forum, questionnaires of both pre and post survey were collected and checked carefully to identify the invalid one. There are 102 of questionnaires from pre survey and 98 from post survey. Next, the answers were entering the analysis software SPSS version 21. Descriptive statistic and frequency analysis were used to identify the percentage of student on each answered questions. Microsoft Excel was used to create and design chart (column, bar, line).

## The Forum

The forum began with surveys being handed out by DC-Cam staff to students. The survey's purpose was to find out what the students knew about Democratic Kampuchea. Topics covered include the origin of the name *Khmer Rouge*, and the events leading up to the 17<sup>th</sup> of April. A significant amount of time was spent going over the eastern zone Mesang district and main policies of Democratic Kampuchea, including, among other things, the forced evacuation of the cities, the banning of capitalist practices, closing of educational institutions and murder of educated persons, targeted exterminations, and purges, the war with the Vietnamese. Additionally, various DC-Cam archival pictures from the period were shown to the students to aid in their comprehension of the subject matter. Two online sources were also provided to the students, *Khmerrougehistory.org*, and the DC-Cam's Facebook page "*Genocide Education in Cambodia*". Finally, another survey that will be compared to the first was handed out to the students to gauge how much they had absorbed from the forum.



## Results from Pre and Post-survey

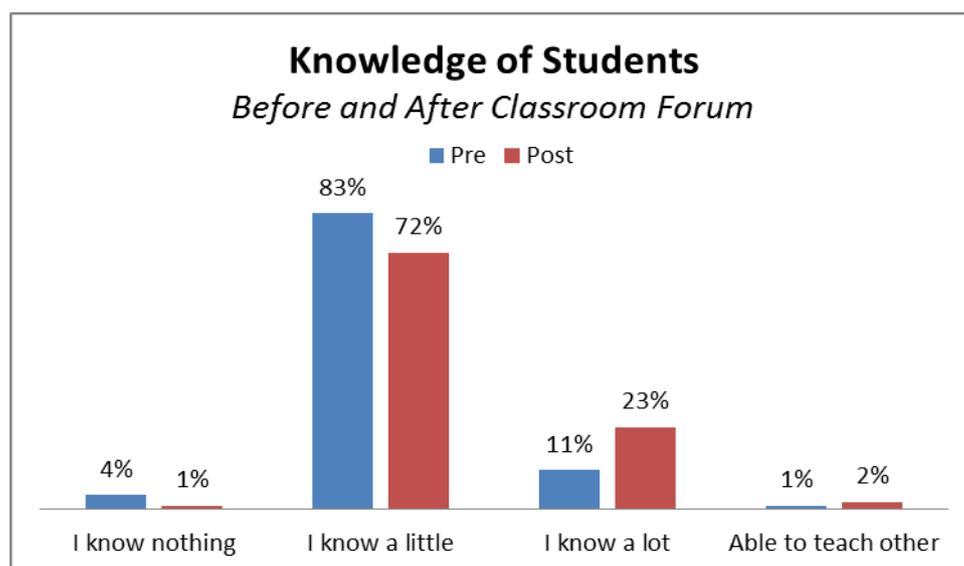
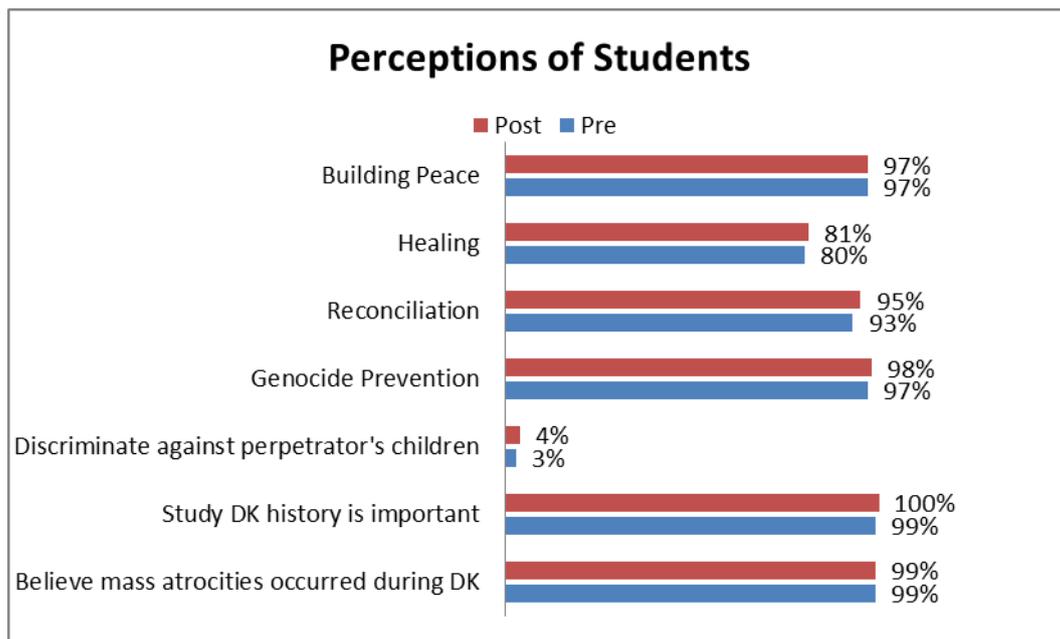


Figure 1: Knowledge of Students before and after classroom forum

After two hours classroom forum, students were able to understand more about History of Democratic Kampuchea (DK), also known as Khmer Rouge (KR). Before started the presentation of DK history, DC-Cam team was distribute the Pre-Forum Survey in order to measure their level of understanding on DK history. As we can see in the figure1, 4% of students know nothing about DK history in pre-survey and goes down to 1% in post survey. Students who know little about this darkest history decrease from 83% to 72% in the post-forum while students who gain a lot of Knowledge of DK history are significantly increase from 11% to 23% in the post-forum survey.



**Figure 2: Opinion of Students on Classroom Forum**

After participated in this forum, majority of students believe that the mass atrocities really happened during the KR regime. All of them believe the study of this history is essential in Cambodia society. The discrimination against children of perpetrators still happened. The result in figure 2 illustrated that the level of discrimination decrease from 3% to 4% after two hours lecture. This is the reason that Genocide Education needed in Cambodia Education context. In post survey, the majorities of student believe that study of DK history could help them to think of Building Peace (97%), Genocide Prevention (98%), Reconciliation (95%), and Healing (81%).

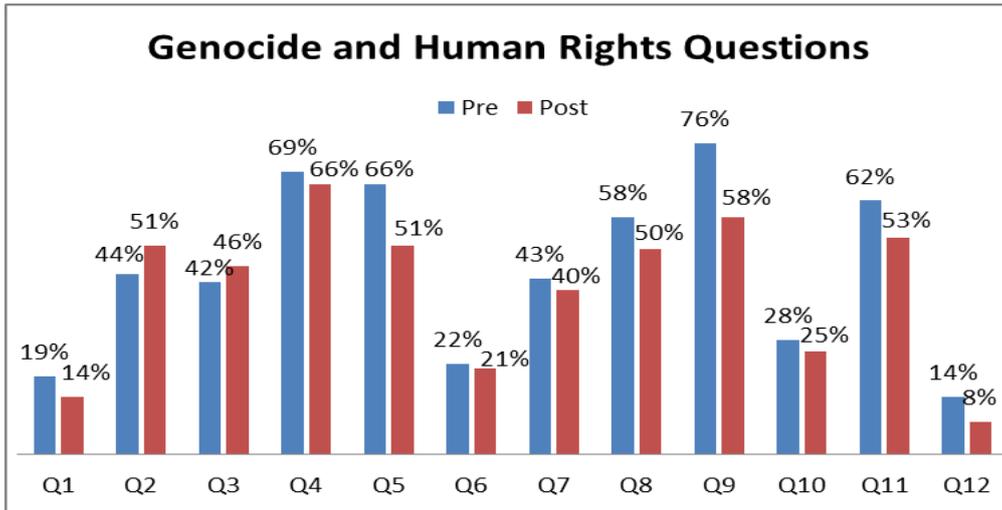


Figure 3: Knowledge of Students on Human Rights and Genocide Definition

Human Rights and genocide knowledge were included in the forum through the presentation about the violations that KR regime abuse to Cambodian in different scenarios. Figure 3 show the 12 questions about Human Rights and Genocide Definition in form of multiple choices (appendix). The percentage in figure above represented percentage of students who answered correctly in pre and post survey. The average percentage of students who answered correctly is 45.25% in pre-survey. However, It is decrease to 40.25% in post-survey.

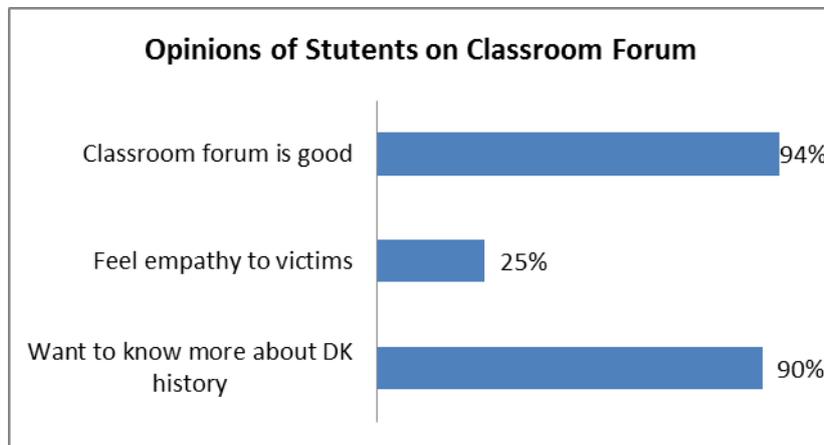


Figure 4: Opinions of Students on Classroom Forum

Figure 4 illustrated the perception of students on classroom forum. 94% of students believe this forum is really good. 25% of students felt empathy toward the victims. 90% of them want to know more about DK history.

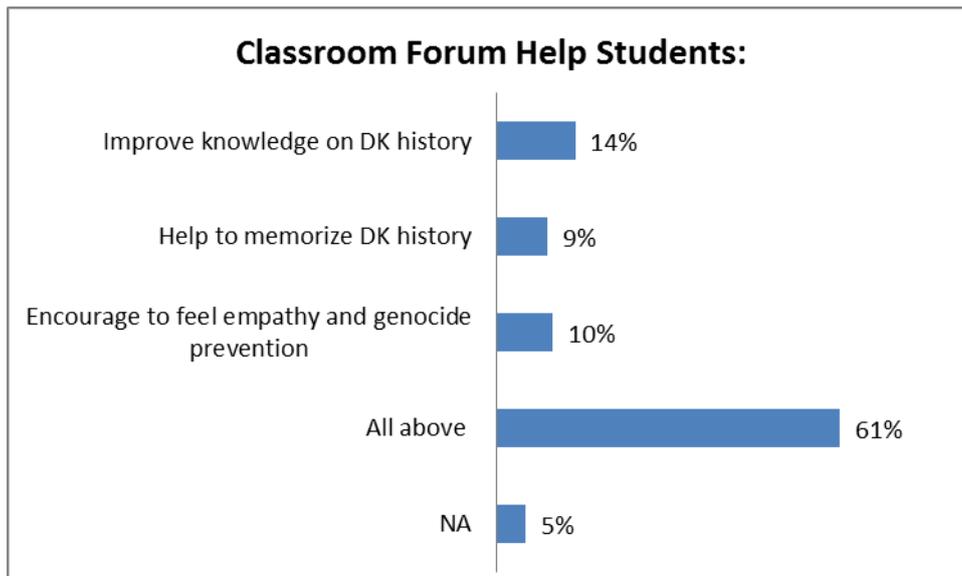


Figure 5: Classroom forum can help students

14% of them believe that this classroom forum has improved their knowledge, memorize KR history (9%), encourage them to feel empathy and think of genocide prevention (10%) and 61% of students choose the three above.

### Conclusion

Classroom forum at Mesang high school was successful conducted with the effort of DC-Cam team, cooperation with host school, and enthusiastic participation of students. These are the reason which Genocide Education should continue educate young people about the genocide in our country to people understand and to increase their awareness. Base on observation, students were focus on the lecture and showed the appreciation after the forum finished.

**Supported by: USAID and MoEYS**

**Team: Pheng Pong-Rasy, Min Sanas, Phat Sela, and San Bunsim**

Photo Link: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/hjME2NCs1UrLzeVm7>

## Appendix

<b><i>N</i></b>	<b><i>Questions</i></b>	<b><i>F</i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>	<b><i>F</i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
		<b><i>Pre</i></b>		<b><i>Post</i></b>	
	<b><i>Average Age: 18</i></b>				
	<i>Male</i>	41 (40%)		40 (41%)	
	<i>Female</i>	61 (60%)		58 (59%)	
<b><i>History of Democratic Kampuchea Knowledge</i></b>					
<b>1</b>	<i>Would you describe your know ledge of DK period?</i>				
	<i>I know nothing</i>	4	4	1	1
	<i>I know a little</i>	85	83	71	72
	<i>I know a lot</i>	11	11	23	23
	<i>I know enough to teach other</i>	1	1	2	2
<b>2</b>	<i>Do you believe that mass atrocities occurred during DK period?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	101	99	97	99
	<i>No</i>	1	1	1	1
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	<i>Have you ever talk about DK period with your parents or people who experience that period?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	82	80	89	91
	<i>No</i>	20	20	9	9
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	<i>Do you think the studying of DK history is important?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	101	99	98	100
	<i>No</i>	1	1	0	0
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	<i>If one of your friends is s son/daughter of perpetrator, would you discriminate against his/her?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	3	3	4	4
	<i>No</i>	98	96	93	95
	<i>N/A</i>	1	1	1	1
<b>6</b>	<i>Which school level that DK history should be taught in?</i>				
	<i>Primary school</i>			9	9
	<i>Junior school</i>			45	46
	<i>High school</i>			41	41
	<i>University</i>			4	4
	<i>N/A</i>			0	0
<b>7</b>	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of peace building in Cambodia?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	99	97	95	97
	<i>No</i>	3	3	3	3
	<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of healing?</i>				
	<i>Yes</i>	82	80	79	81

	No	19	19	3	3
	N/A	1	1	1	1
<b>9</b>	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of reconciliation?</i>				
	Yes	95	93	93	95
	No	7	7	5	5
	N/A	0	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	<i>Does the study of DK history encourage you to think of genocide prevention?</i>				
	Yes	99	97	96	98
	No	2	2	2	2
	N/A	1	1	0	0
<b>11</b>	<i>How do you feel about the studying of DK history?</i>				
	Want to know and understand about this history	55	54	90	90
	Do not want to know	0	0	0	0
	Feel empathy to victims	20	20	25	25
	Boring	0	0	0	0
	N/A	27	27	0	0
<b><i>Human Rights Knowledge</i></b>					
<b>12</b>	<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	36	35	49	50
	Arresting leaders of a religious group with the intent to undermine the practice of religion	34	33	29	30
	<b><u>Deliberately starving an ethnic group with the intent to destroy the people</u></b>	<b><u>20</u></b>	<b><u>19</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
	Killing enemy soldiers who are shooting at your soldiers during war	9	9	3	3
	N/A	3	3	3	3
<b>13</b>	<i>Which response below reflects circumstances that support violence and possibly future genocide in community?</i>				
	Students engaged in peaceful protest against a school policy	39	38	33	34
	<b><u>Local leaders requirement to force members of a religious group to live separate from the rest of the community</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>	<b><u>44</u></b>	<b><u>50</u></b>	<b><u>51</u></b>
	Police arresting persons who trespass on government property	4	4	2	2
	Immigrants from another country seeking to settle in a community	11	11	13	13
	N/A	3	3	0	0
<b>14</b>	<i>Which response below reflects circumstances that support violence and possibly</i>				

	<i>future genocide in a country?</i>				
	<b><u>Religious leaders who describe members of another religion as “sub-human” and “worthy of death.”</u></b>	<b><u>42</u></b>	<b><u>41</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>	<b><u>46</u></b>
	Religious leaders who encourage their members to pray for members of another religion.	9	8	10	10
	Political leaders who encourage everyone to vote.	38	38	35	36
	Individuals who petition their government leaders to adopt a policy.	5	5	6	6
	N/A	8	8	2	2
<b>15</b>	<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.	5	5	6	6
	<b><u>Individuals mourn the loss of family and friends who were tortured and/or killed.</u></b>	<b><u>70</u></b>	<b><u>69</u></b>	<b><u>65</u></b>	<b><u>66</u></b>
	Individuals are not impacted by genocide. Genocide only affects groups of people.	2	2	10	10
	Only children are impacted by genocide by the loss of parents.	22	22	14	14
	N/A	3	3	3	3
<b>16</b>	<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.	1	1	9	9
	Only poor families ever suffer during genocide. Rich families never suffer during genocide.	6	6	11	11
	<b><u>Genocide can impact families and communities in many ways for generations.</u></b>	<b><u>67</u></b>	<b><u>66</u></b>	<b><u>50</u></b>	<b><u>51</u></b>
	Genocide impacts communities but families can always escape by fleeing to another country.	21	21	22	22
	N/A	7	7	6	6
<b>17</b>	<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	2	2
	Countries can be impacted by genocide but the world is too big to be impacted.	20	20	19	19
	Countries suffer from genocide only when it is occurring. They can rebuild quickly	52	51	50	51
	<b><u>Countries can be impacted by genocide for generations.</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>	<b><u>21</u></b>	<b><u>21</u></b>
	N/A	8	8	6	6

18	<i>Which response below is the best description of an important strategy 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	5	5	9	9
	Individuals can prevent violence by attacking their enemies before they are attacked	12	12	10	10
	Individuals can prevent violence by staying quiet and not criticizing violence	33	32	35	36
	<b><u>Individuals can prevent violence by speaking against such violence</u></b>	<b>44</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>
	N/A	8	8	5	5
19	<i>Which response below is the best description of <u>another</u> important strategy that <u>individuals</u> can do to prevent and avoid circumstances that are supportive to violence and possibly future genocide?</i>				
	Individuals can encourage violence against their enemies	4	4	8	8
	Individuals can encourage victims to be silent because speaking out against violence will only encourage more violence	28	28	31	32
	<b><u>Individuals can denounce violence and encourage peaceful solutions to conflicts</u></b>	<b>59</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>50</b>
	Individuals can encourage perpetrators to commit their violence without public attention, which only aggravates the situation	8	8	6	6
	N/A	3	3	4	4
20	<i>Which response below is the best description of an important strategy that <u>communities</u> can implement to prevent and avoid circumstances that are supportive to violence and possibly future genocide?</i>				
	<b><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></b>	<b>79</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>58</b>
	Communities can protect the individual rights of the majority group at the expense of minorities in order to preserve peace, order and stability	5	5	10	10
	Communities do not need to protect individual rights; rather, they must always seek to maintain peace, order and stability	12	12	21	21
	Communities do not need to protect individual rights because this is always a state	4	4	3	3

	responsibility				
	N/A	2	2	7	7
<b>21</b>	<i>Which response below is the best description of <u>another</u> important strategy that <u>communities</u> can implement to prevent and avoid circumstances that are supportive to violence and possibly future genocide?</i>				
	Communities can prevent violence by identifying minorities and requiring them to live separate from the rest of the community.	2	2	2	2
	<b><u>Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate human diversity through education about different cultures, religions, and communities.</u></b>	<b><u>29</u></b>	<b><u>28</u></b>	<b><u>25</u></b>	<b><u>25</u></b>
	Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth to appreciate their own culture and identify ways to protect it from outside influence.	57	56	42	43
	Communities can prevent violence by teaching youth how to protect themselves and their communities through self-defense training	10	10	19	19
	N/A	4	4	10	10
<b>22</b>	<i>Which response below reflects an important strategy 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.	9	8	14	14
	Countries can prevent violence by attacking enemies before they are attacked	3	3	6	6
	Countries can never prevent violence but they can assist in peaceful resolution.	23	22	11	11
	<b><u>Countries can prevent violence through education and diplomacy</u></b>	<b><u>63</u></b>	<b><u>62</u></b>	<b><u>52</u></b>	<b><u>53</u></b>
	N/A	4	4	15	15
<b>23</b>	<i>Which response below reflects <u>another</u> important strategy that <u>countries</u> can implement to prevent and avoid circumstances that are supportive to violence and possibly future genocide?</i>				
	<b><u>Countries can identify and publicly denounce circumstances that support genocide.</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>	<b><u>8</u></b>	<b><u>8</u></b>
	Countries should never denounce other countries because it will weaken future diplomacy.	4	4	4	4
	Countries should only denounce enemies that support violence or genocide. Countries should	19	19	17	17

	never denounce allies involved in genocide because they are allies.				
	Countries should only help people who deserve to be helped. Some genocide is necessary to preserve peace and order.	62	61	62	63
	N/A	3	3	7	7
<b><u>Opinion on the Forum</u></b>					
<b>24</b>	What do you think about this classroom forum?				
	Good and help develop my knowledge			92	94
	Not good, did not help anything at all			1	1
	N/A			5	5
<b>25</b>	What this classroom forum can help you?				
	Improve my knowledge on KR history			14	14
	Help to memorize the KR history			9	9
	Encourage to feel empathy and genocide prevention			10	10
	All above			60	61
	N/A			5	5