



TPO Cambodia Newsletter

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ស្រស់ឆ្លាត្នី!
Happy Khmer New Year!

By Dr. Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director

Dear Friends of TPO,

I wish you a Happy Khmer New Year, may the spirit of Khmer New Year bring you good health, prosperity and success!

After plenty of project activities and events all year round, TPO staff joyfully celebrated TPO's 22nd birthday on 21 February and asked for blessings from the monks on 7 April to enter the annual festival of Khmer New Year.

The Newsletter's 13th edition presents TPO's approach towards alcohol abuse, it's involvement in the proposed reparation project Pka Sla Krom Angkar, TPO's latest approach towards family trauma healing and followed by different project activities and events from the first quarter of 2017. For more information, please see www.facebook.com/tpocambodia.

Thank you so much for your cooperation and support!

Counseling and psychoeducation to mitigate alcohol abuse and domestic violence

To help Cambodians maintain or achieve good mental health and social relations, much of TPO's work has been invested to provide psychoeducation in communities and psychosocial interventions for those suffering from domestic violence and/or abuse of alcohol. TPO trains community resource persons such as village health workers, monks, traditional birth attendants, village leaders, commune council members and other respected villagers and facilitates self-help groups for alcohol abusers, for domestic aggressors and for victims of repeated domestic violence. TPO offers individual counseling to those with special needs.



Role play on counseling to alcohol users-TPO training to The Asia Foundation's Partners

TPO also published and distributed many posters, leaflets and brochures to educate communities about alcohol abuse and how to seek help.

It approached its partners, other NGOs and stakeholders to reach out to their beneficiaries. With the expertise of many years' experience working in communities to raise awareness and reduce alcohol abuse, TPO has now been approached by The Asia Foundation (TAF) www.asiafoundation.org to help produce counseling guidelines for community resource persons working with alcohol abusers and provide a trainer training (TOT) for TAF's partner organizations (PKKO and PDP-Center) as well as for community resource persons with networks in Svay Rieng and Kratie province. The 2 year programme runs from February 2016 to June 2017, supported financially by the Australian Government (DFAT) through TAF.

For more information, check out the training and treatment service of TPO at www.tpocambodia.org or Tel 023 63 66 991 (treatment center) 023 63 66 993 (training).

'Phka Sla Krom Angkar', a proposed reparation project to bring the impact of forced marriage into public focus

On the weekend of 20-22 January, Chaktomuk Theatre in Phnom Penh hosted a performance not seen before. The ensemble of Khmer Arts narrated stories of forced marriage under the Khmer Rouge regime through intriguing music and the expressive movements of classical Khmer dance with a modern interpretation. The theatre was packed on all 3 occasions. In the audience sat 150 civil parties invited from different provinces who had endured forced marriage under Khmer Rouge and for whom the performance was created as part of the ongoing 'Phka Sla Anchor Krom' project, proposed as reparation and planned and implemented by a consortium of 4 organizations (Khmer Art Association (KAA), TPO, Kdei Karuna (KdK) & Bophana) with funding from GIZ, SDC and USAID. During all 3 performance nights, TPO counselors supported the civil parties in the audience, as the vivid scenes of violence and suffering touched their affective memory and triggered strong emotional reactions.

TPO not only supports the victims of forced marriage, but also the KAA dancers, musicians and other staff involved in this project. Additionally TPO conducts a qualitative study on the combined effect of art and psychology towards trauma healing which will be published in 2018.

Capacity Building Programme with CVT

CVT, the Center for Victims of Torture www.cvt.org is a long term supporter of TPO through PATH, the Partners in Trauma Healing project. This year TPO continues its collaboration with PATH through funding from USAID from February 2017 to December 2018, focusing on 'capacity building in the areas of organizational development, program evaluation and clinical services'. For five days, from 13-17 February, CVT conducted a needs assessment with TPO to create an overarching vision and formulate a plan of action. Through the use of the PATH methodology, TPO identified next steps and action items which will yield increased capacity and institutional effectiveness.



TPO counselor provides psycho-education and stress release to CPs before the performance at Chaktomuk Theater Hall

During all 3 performance nights, TPO counselors supported the civil parties in the audience, as the vivid scenes of violence and suffering touched their affective memory and triggered emotional reactions



Capacity Building Assessment workshop with CVT, 13-17 February 2017 in Phnom Penh

TPO supported Khmer actors of Hollywood film and met with Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie

TPO was honored to take part in the Hollywood film 'First They Killed My Father' produced by Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie and filmmaker Rithy Pan. During the film production, TPO provided psychological support to the actors of the film including their relatives. During the film premiere in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh in February, TPO was again requested to provide psychological support to the audience, as for many the film was emotionally quite uprooting. More information about the filming, check out at <http://m.phnompenhpost.com/.../jolie-unveils-new-film-first-t...>

On 21 February, the British Embassy in Cambodia hosted an event for Angelina Jolie, who is also UN Special Envoy and co-founder of an initiative to prevent sexual violence, to meet with Cambodians engaged in efforts to combat sexual violence in conflict and gender-based violence in present-day society. TPO Executive Director Dr. Chhim Sotheara, informed her about the psychological treatment of TPO for survivors of GBV and torture under the Khmer Rouge to which Ms Angelina Jolie responded that 'TPO is doing a very important job for survivors in Cambodia'. TPO Cambodia would like to extend its sincere thanks to the British Embassy and Ms. Jolie for their interest in TPO and their trust in its psychosocial services



Dr. Sotheara Chhim, Executive Director of TPO Cambodia met Angelina Jolie at the British Embassy and explained her about TPO's work

Awareness on Sexual violence under KR

Under the project 'Promoting Gender Equality and Improving Access to Justice for Female Survivors and victims of Gender-Based Violence under Khmer Rouge Regime' a film which addressed sexual violence or GBV under Khmer Rouge regime was shown to 84 community members at the Bakan secondary school in Pursat Province. The audience included elders, teachers, members of village/commune and students and was encouraged to express their opinions and feelings about the topic looking to the past but also into the present situation. The audience was informed how to get help from TPO's service. This activity was organized in cooperation with the Victim Support Section of the ECCC and funded by the UN-Trust Fund



Community people participated in a film outreach on sexual violence in Pursat on 09 February

Family Approach to Trauma Healing

TPO was invited to contribute to the international conference - Dealing with the Past, Engaging in the Present- organized by HBF-Cambodia www.boell.de/en from 23-27 January, discussing trauma healing in families and communities. The presentation of TPO psychologist Mrs. Solida Sun, gave an insight of TPO's trauma healing approach with families of Khmer Rouge survivors. She pointed out how difficult it still is for families, to find the right moment and adequate words to open up to one another about the past. But she and her team also found very encouraging results with survivor families who had kept silent for decades concentrating on everyday survival issues. When the elder and the younger are supported to gradually get in touch and into dialogue with one another, a family can re-discover and experience a level of felt trust and emotional intimacy, they did not live by before. Facilitated intergenerational dialogue about the past can contribute to healing in survivor families and strengthen the younger generations. The presentation was shared to an audience of 50 international researchers and experts of transitional justice.



Ms. Solida Sun, TPO's psychologist at the HBF-Cambodia Conference

Project Launching Event

In collaboration with Kdei Karuna (KdK) www.kdei-karuna.org, TPO Cambodia held a launching event for the project ‘Healing and Reconciliation for Victims of Torture during the Khmer Rouge Regime’ funded by USAID www.usaid.gov/cambodia on 30 March.

At the event, posters with photographs and brief narratives from former Khmer Rouge members and victim-survivors who had received therapy from TPO were displayed revealing their personal journey towards healing. After welcoming remarks by TPO Executive Director Dr. Chhim Sotheara, and USAID Deputy Mission Director Mr. Sean Callahan, TPO Project Coordinator Ms. Om Chariya & KdK Project Officer Mr. Heng Sokong, gave an overview of the project activities. Then the international advisor Dr. Edward Palmer explained the results of the project’s baseline study, followed by numerous questions & answers. The event was attended by around 50 participants, including representatives from the US Embassy, USAID, the ECCC, and other national and international organizations and institutions. More information about the project is available at <http://tpocambodia.org/healing-and-reconciliation-for-victims-of-torture-of-khmer-rouge-trauma/>.



Project launching event at Phnom Penh Hotel on 30 March

Press and Media Highlight

VOA reported about ‘Operation Unchain Project’ of TPO <http://www.voacambodia.com/a/operation-unchain.../3769149.html>.

Dr. Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director talked about ‘Suicide’ in Khmer on **Banyon TV** broadcast on Friday 31 March and 03 April.

Friday 23 March, on the **PNN TV** live show, **Dr. Chhim Sotheara** commented about ‘the traffic jam in the city effects people’s feelings/mental health’. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/chained-out-sight-desperate-families-often-keep-mentally-ill-relatives-squalid-conditions>

The programme **TIME TO SPEAK OUT** (1-6) in Khmer about the ‘prevalence of forced marriage during KR’ reported about case 002/02 at the ECCC, some relevant research, present some of important testimonies from witness, experts and victims (TPO work is included). <https://www.youtube.com/watch...>

Dr. Chhim Sotheara with **Phnom Penh Post/Khmer** on 20 January commented about lack of funding for mental health patients in Cambodia. <http://www.postkhmer.com/post-plus>

Phnom Penh Post’s article, **Jennifer J Esala**, a researcher at the Center for Victims of Torture in Minnesota, and **Taing Sopheap**, a researcher of TPO Cambodia found that testimony therapy reduced symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety among war trauma survivors. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/.../survivors-even-short-testimo...>

Bring mental health care and psychosocial support to Cambodians struggling with problems related to the Khmer Rouge, domestic violence, and substance abuse via Global Giving <https://www.globalgiving.org/.../mental-health-care-.../updates/>.

Sabay News, **Dr. Chhim Sotheara**, Executive Director talked about ‘Stress’ <http://news.sabay.com.kh/article/898288>



All staff in Phnom Penh celebrate TPO 22nd Anniversary



Blessing Ceremony for Khmer New Year on 7 April in TPO office