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*By Dr. Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director of TPO*

Dear Friends of TPO,  
 As the year 2017 comes to an end, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Thank you very much for all your support towards TPO's Mental Health program and services.

The last newsletter of 2017 will highlight the Dr.Guislain award given to TPO Executive Director, TPO's activities during Mental Health Day for youth, capacity building workshop in South Africa, TPO Self Care session with Bophana center, Self Help Group activity with GBV survivors, the connection of TPO's research with partners in USA, campaign to end violence against women, TPO annual conference and TPO in the press and media in this last quarter.

## In Focus: TPO Executive Director receives Dr. Guislain Award

Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO's Executive Director received the 2017 Dr. Guislain award "Breaking the Chains of Stigma" in Ghent, Belgium on the World Health Day of 10 October 2017. The award with a \$50,000 prize honors Dr. Sotheara's efforts in developing Mental Health services in Cambodia and his initiative to launch the "Operation Unchain" project providing treatment to the mentally ill who have been chained or caged by their caretakers.

Dr. Sotheara was among the first generation of Cambodian psychiatrists to graduate after the Khmer Rouge in 1998. Dr. Sotheara expressed: "I am honored to receive the 2017 Dr. Guislain award and look forward to expand my work bringing more awareness of mental health issues to communities throughout Cambodia".



*Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO ED (middle) received Dr. Guislain Award from Br. Dr Rene Stockman, brother of charity of Dr. Guislain Museum (left) and Dr Stefaan Heylen head of Janssen Research & Development*

*Dr. Sotheara expressed:*

*"I am honored to receive the 2017 Dr. Guislain award and look forward to expand my work bringing more awareness of mental health issues to communities throughout Cambodia".*

The \$50,000 price will go to the Operation Unchain project <http://tpocambodia.org/operation-unchain/>. So far 76 mental ill patients from different provinces across Cambodia have been treated, 38 patients were unchained and live now a more productive life.

This award is sponsored by Janssen Research & Development and the Dr Guislain Museum in Belgium. It honors the legacy of Joseph Guislain, a Belgian psychiatrist who promoted science based treatment for mental illness. For detail information about the award check out this press release: <http://tpocambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2017-Dr-Guislain-Award-Press-Release.pdf> and this website: <http://www.drguislainaward.org/>

## Mental Health Day for and with Youth

To mark the World Mental Health Day 2017, TPO Cambodia joined the Royal University of Phnom Penh in a special event on 24 Oct to address the youth. It intends to raise awareness about mental health & psychosocial support to deal with challenges the young population may be facing. TPO provided information about its activities and contributed with expert talks, self-care techniques & self-help group activities.

For more photos on this day is available on TPO's Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/posts/1676638562393887>

## Capacity Building Workshop in South Africa

Four senior staff of TPO in charge of clinical activities, monitoring & evaluation and organizational development had the opportunity to attend an annual workshop called "Partners in Trauma Healing (PATH)". It was organized by the [Center for Victims of Torture \(CVT-USA\)](#) in collaboration with the hosting partner Center for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) <http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php> in South Africa for 1 week from 23-27 October. This workshop offered CVT's partners from various countries to build their capacity of mental health counseling, monitoring and evaluation, and organizational development. The aim is to provide more effective treatment for torture survivors, to build communities across all areas of technical expertise, and share the overall vision of CVT to mitigate suffering of torture survivors. It was also an opportunity to learn about CSVR in South Africa and their great achievements.

With the support of CVT, our long term partner, TPO is able to expand its capacity to help trauma victims.

## TPO Self Care Practice Session with Bophana Center

TPO has developed a format to teach self-care to individuals and teams to improve well-being, reduce stress and prevent mental and physical disease. Bophana Center was one of the first to try it out on 13th October 2017 with 15 employees. They utterly enjoyed to learn practical self-care with mental and physical activities and appreciated all the new knowledge they received asking for a 2nd workshop.



*TPO's counselor introduced self-care techniques to a group of youth during Mental Health Day at RUPP*



*Four TPO staff and CVT partners attended PATH workshop in South Africa on 23-27 Oct, 2017.*



*Self-care session for staff of Bophana Center on 13 Oct 2017.*

## Self Help Group Reflection with GBV survivors

In October, TPO conducted six Self-Help Groups (SHG) sessions in Kampong Chhnang, Pursat and Banteay Meanchey province to reflect about the benefit they realize from the self-help group activities. 63 women who experienced gender based violence (GBV) under the Khmer Rouge Regime were among the participants invited to comment and suggest to the TPO facilitation team what helped them to heal and what they would like different. They also discussed how they could keep connected with each other after SHGs end. Overall there was great satisfaction such as: *“SHG helped to understand my emotions and how to control them better.”* Participants felt very much relief after sharing with the group.

This activity was conducted under the project “Promoting Gender Equality and Improving Access to Justice for Female Survivors and Victims of Gender-Based Violence under Khmer Rouge Regime” in collaboration with the Victim Support Section of the ECCC and funded by the UN-Trust Fund.

## The connection of TPO’s research with partners in USA

In November, Sopheap TAING, TPO’s Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator traveled to the US to present at the 33rd annual convention of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) in Chicago about “Idioms of Distress in Female Survivors of Forced Marriage and Gender-Based Violence during the Khmer Rouge Regime in Cambodia”. It was also an opportunity to connect with trauma experts from around the world, join a clinical session, learn more about research and methodology from other presenters, and share about TPOs work in research.

Ms Taing’s contributions received much attention and were highly appreciated at the convention. She continued to present her topics to faculty staff and researchers of DePaul University in Chicago and to interested staff of UNTF & UN Women in New York City.

## Campaign to End Violence against Women

In support of the international annual campaign “16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” from 25 November to 10 December, TPO Cambodia cooperated with the Victim Support Section of the ECCC and the University of South East Asia to join with activities funded by UN-Trust Fund on 30 November in Siem Reap Province.

The message about “Leave No One Behind: End Violence against Women and Girls” was spread to hundred of people including high school students, authority polices, monks and youth groups.

This campaign was also published on TPO’s website & facebook as well as GBV’s facebook which reach to thousand of people as below link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/videos/1718304111560665/> &  
<https://www.facebook.com/151437704957133/photos/pcb.1205414129559480/1205406352893591/?type=3&theater>.

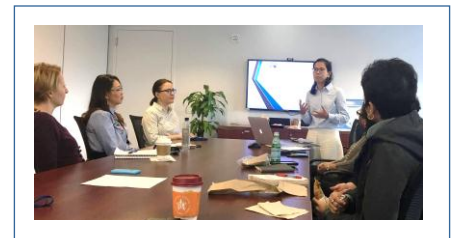


*Meditation at the end of SHG Reflection in Banteay Meanchey*

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*On 16 November, Ms. Taing Sopheap, TPO Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator presented TPO’s research to staff of UNTF and UN Women in New York, USA*



*Campaign to end violence against women conducted in Siem Reap province on 30 November*

## TPO Annual Conference 2017 in Malaysia

All TPO staff travelled this year together to Malaysia to learn and reflect about the past year's achievements and challenges. One day in Phnom Penh was spent to refresh on the Unified Clinical Approach (UCA). Upon arrival in Malaysia all counselors were invited to visit the Rehabilitation Unit for chronic patients at the Hospital Permai in Johor Barhu and learn about their Mental Health programme to gather some more ideas for developing the mental health services of TPO further and network with the hospital. Of course the time in another country was a special occasion for TPO staff to explore and experience an other culture and use the time for team building, staff care and encouragement.

More photos available on TPO's Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/posts/1726908620700214>



*Photo of all TPO staff in front of twin tower building, Malaysia during TPO Annual conference 2017*

## Press and Media Highlight

Congratulation messages and information about **Dr. Sotheara Chhim**, TPO Executive Director wins Dr Guislain Award 2017 on Breaking the Chain of Stigma in Mental Health was shared in TPO's partners' facebook:

**Louvain Coopération (LC) Cambodia:**

<https://www.facebook.com/Louvaincoopkh/posts/184244175456114>

**Center for Victim of Torture (CVT):**

<https://www.facebook.com/CenterForVictimsOfTorture/posts/10156823007919768>

**3PC:** <https://www.facebook.com/3pccambodia/posts/1579163988788792>

**Website Dr. Guislain:** <http://www.drguislainaward.org/>

**Phnom Penh Post:** <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/psychiatry-prize-given-cambodian> and <http://mailchi.mp/714771ec5253/information?e=52fafa48b1>

On the **Child Soldier International News**, **Dr Chhim Sotheara** commented about 'Child Soldier during the Khmer Rouge time'. <https://www.child-soldiers.org/news/a-childs-haunting-view-of-life-under-the-khmer-rouge>

**Dr. Chhim Sotheara**, interview in Khmer with **Sea Radio** about 'Depression' on 8 September.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9Q45Y-Nj2Z9aVA1UDIfN2tvN1k/view>

TPO Counselor **Mr. Men Sokhan** talked about 'Rights related to physical and mental health' on **CCHR radio** on 5 September.

[http://www.cchrcambodia.org/index\\_old.php?url=follow\\_us%2Ffollow\\_us.php&p=audio\\_file\\_lists.php&a\\_id=1261&id=4&lang=khm](http://www.cchrcambodia.org/index_old.php?url=follow_us%2Ffollow_us.php&p=audio_file_lists.php&a_id=1261&id=4&lang=khm)

TPO counselor **Mr. Bun Lemhour**, talked about 'Lack of emotional support from parents cause mental health problems in children' in **Radio Cool FM** programme on 19 August.

<https://www.facebook.com/coolfmp/videos/1429489627141542/>



*All TPO's therapist visited Rehabilitation Unit of chronic patients at Hospital Permai, Johor Barhu in Malaysia on 6 Dec during TPO Annual Conference 2017.*



*Mr. Bun Lemhour, TPO Counselor on Radio Cool FM studio on 19 August 2017.*

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