



TPO Cambodia Newsletter

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*យើងយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ និង គាំទ្រសុខភាពផ្លូវចិត្តរបស់ជនរងគ្រោះ ពីអំពើហិង្សាស្រីក្នុងសម័យខ្មែរក្រហម *

We Care and Support the Mental Health of Survivors of Torture during Khmer Rouge Regime

UN International
Day in Support of
Victims of torture
26 June



By Dr. Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director

Dear Friends of TPO,

As we do every year, we marked and celebrated the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture with the UN this year!

In our newsletter this month, we would like to highlight about 'healing for survivors of sexual violence and forced marriage under KR regime through testimonial therapy', 'training project with HelpAge Cambodia', 'community outreach about GBV under Khmer Rouge regime', 'meeting with delegates from overseas to exchange mental health programs', 'mental health service with Sovann Komar', 'UN Day in support of survivors of torture' as well as TPO's presence in the press in the last three months.

We do hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. Thank you!

In Focus: Healing for survivors of sexual violence and forced marriage under KR regime through Testimonial Therapy

Breaking the silence and overcoming trauma-related symptoms through comprehensive exposure to past traumatic experiences is a long-term coping mechanism leading to psychological healing for survivors.

However, survivors have often not shared experiences related to sexual violence due to the sensitive nature of such topics and potential stigma.



TPO staff with messages to raise awareness for victims of torture-UN day 26 June

Through Testimonial Therapy, civil parties can be healed by restoring their memories of the past, strengthening their resilience, acknowledging their suffering, and also through spiritual practice.

TPO's Testimonial Therapy (TT) provides a safe and confidential environment for survivors to discuss and document their experiences with sexual violence. Testimonial Therapy is a culturally-sensitive trauma treatment that combines therapeutic and religious practices.

Moreover, TPO's role in promoting reconciliation and psychological healing is extremely important to the transitional justice process in Cambodia. Thus, under the project 'Promoting Gender Equity and Improving Access to Justice for Female and Survivors of GBV under the Khmer Rouge Regime' for the past three years TPO has aimed to involve 110 civil parties who are survivors of forced marriage and GBV during the KR regime to join TT (22 sessions have been conducted, which 5 clients participating in each session). This project has been undertaken in partnership with the Victim Support Section (VSS) of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) www.eccc.gov.kh with funding support from UN-Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. During TT sessions, TPO staff always invite community members, students, and at times lawyers, to listen to the survivors' stories, to discuss, share emotional support, to learn and to understand the painful experience of survivors.

As recently as 28 May-01 June 2018, TPO facilitated Testimonial Therapy for five civil parties of the ECCC who witnessed or experienced many forms of sexual violence including forced marriage and marital rape. The therapeutic sessions were conducted at the TPO office in Phnom Penh, while the TT ceremony - conducted after an 'exposure' tour at Toul Sleng Genocide Museum - was held at Toul Tompong Pagoda and incorporated Buddhist rituals. 50 students from the department of history at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the National Institute of Business attended the ceremony.

Through Testimonial Therapy, civil parties can be healed by restoring their memories of the past, strengthening their resilience, acknowledging their suffering, and also through spiritual practice. **Ms. Seng Sy** from Prey Veng, commented '*this event helped me get to know and establish a good relationship with other civil parties who are living in the same community and I feel that these relationships will be long-lasting. We will try to visit each other after returning to the community*'. **Sy** also found the Buddhist ceremony to be very important and meaningful to her in the way that it directly focused on her brother and other people who died during the KR regime.

TT was not only beneficial to the individual civil parties, but also helped raise awareness among members of the younger generation. Some of their comments are below:

'I am very shocked to learn how people were tortured during the KR regime. It is my first time visiting Toul Sleng and learning more about the KR regime. My family has not talked about it much...'

'Through the TT event, I was informed about sexual harassment and rape. I feel it was so cruel, and that woman had no value at all. I think young Cambodians should know our history in order to prevent it from happening again.'

'By knowing about the past, I could empathize and give my compassion to the civil parties while listening to their stories.'

For Testimonial Therapy with other beneficiaries under other projects of TPO please follow our website <http://www.tpocambodia.org> and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/>.



Testimonial reading of 5 civil parties (KR victim survivors) at Toul Tompong Pagoda on 01 June, 2018

Training Project partnership with HelpAge Cambodia

HelpAge Cambodia has initiated a two-year partnership with TPO (2018-2019) to implement the training project 'improving health and mental wellbeing and reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion of civil parties and other vulnerable older people in Cambodia'. With funding support from the United Nation's Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), HelpAge Cambodia (<http://www.helpagecambodia.org/en/>) and TPO will address the livelihoods, social inclusion, and mental and physical health needs of selected civil parties and also a broader unrepresented population of victims, primarily vulnerable older people in Cambodia who are survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime. The purposes of this partnership include:

- To support and strengthen the Older Persons Association (OPA) network and their federation by empowering and socially connecting older people and other community members. Also, increasing older persons' voices to realize their rights and entitlements,
- To address the more immediate physical and mental health needs of people in the target communities through administering basic primary health care and through providing basic mental health education and intervention at the community level,
- To increase the income security of vulnerable older people, including survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime,
- To increase the recognition of the rights of vulnerable older people, including survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Main activities: TPO will train the HelpAge beneficiaries: health center staff, NGO project partners and Volunteers' Health Support Group (VHSG) to recognize signs and symptom of mental health issues in 81 villages in three provinces: Siem Reap, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey.

The project beneficiaries include 3,635 older people (150 civil parties) and 9,720 people of other age demographics in 81 rural communities. 8,000 community members will indirectly benefit from the project.

Community Outreach to raise awareness about GBV under Khmer Rouge Regime

TPO's community outreach was conducted on 03 May 2018 in Ou Chroy Commune, Prey Nub District, Preah Sihanouk Province. The outreach sessions aim to address and initiate discussion on the issue of Sexual and Gender Based Violence under the Khmer Rouge regime and in the present, and about its psychological impact. The session started with welcoming remarks from a representative of the commune chief and then a discussion session on psychological trauma and coping mechanisms as well as on Gender Based Violence under the KR. A psychological debriefing with all participants after the discussion about their horrible experiences was facilitated by TPO staff.

This activity is under the project 'Promoting Gender Equality and Improving Access to Justice for Female Survivors and victims of Gender-Based Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime' with cooperation from VSS and funded by UN-Trust Fund.



Training on Mental Health First Aid to beneficiaries of HelpAge Cambodia at Ek Phnom district, Battambang province on 13 June 2018

HelpAge Cambodia and TPO will address the livelihoods, social inclusion, and mental and physical health needs of selected civil parties and also a broader unrepresented population of victims, primarily vulnerable older people in Cambodia who are survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime.



TPO staff facilitated a psychological debriefing with all participants after the discussion about their horrible experiences

The meetings between TPO and delegates from overseas to exchange Mental Health programs and services

From May to June 2018, TPO has welcomed three groups of delegates from Asian Countries:

- On 31 MAY, Dr.Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director, welcomed 5 delegates of Kaohsiung Municipal Kai-Syung Psychiatric Hospital in Taiwan. The purpose of this visit was to share their work experiences with Mental Health programs and services in Taiwan and to learn about the work of TPO Cambodia in this field. They also discussed whether both organizations can partner with each other in the future in terms of technical and capacity building. The delegates met with TPO's psychiatrists and were introduced to the process at the TPO treatment center as well.
- On Monday 11 June, four delegates from the Cross Cultural Foundation in Thailand met with TPO senior management staff to share information about their foundation's programs. They also sought to learn more about TPO's torture treatment program and elements of the treatment model in order to gather more ideas for creating a rehabilitation center at their foundation in Thailand.
- 22 master of arts students in Guidance Counseling from Rizal Memorial Colleges in the Philippines visited TPO during their educational field trip and learned about TPO's community mental health program with Dr.Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director, on 12 June.



TPO psychiatrists and delegates from Kaohsiung Municipal Kai-Syung Psychiatric Hospital in Taiwan at TPO office on 31 May 2018



TPO senior management team meeting with delegates from Cross Cultural Foundation from Thailand at TPO office on 11 June 2018

Mental Health Service partnership with Sovann Komar

On 14 June 2018, a ceremony was held at TPO's Phnom Penh office to sign an agreement for provision of services between TPO Cambodia and Sovann Komar/Golden Children's organization <http://sovannkomar.org/>. According to the agreement, the Sovann Komar organization will receive services from TPO related to individual or family counseling, training for parents and group sessions for parents as well as for children/adolescents.

This agreement is for one year and will be renewed for a longer-term period upon mutual agreement between both parties. Activities will start this year.

UN Day in Support of Survivors of Torture

On the special occasion of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June of this year, TPO Cambodia has joined to raise awareness to honor torture survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime.

TPO's staff at the Phnom Penh headquarters and beneficiaries who are victims of torture in Pursat province under the 'Healing and Reconciliation for Survivors of Torture during the Khmer Rouge Regime Project' funded by USAID were involved in this activity. Key messages included, 'We care about and support the mental health of survivors of torture during the Khmer Rouge regime;' 'We stand together to fight against torture;' 'We join together to end gender-based violence;' 'We work together to stop discrimination against survivors of torture.'



Dr.Chhim Sotheara, TPO executive Director, and master's students from Philippines-TPO office on 12 June.



Signing an agreement between TPO & Sovann Komar on 14 June, 2018



TPO's Beneficiaries in Pursat province Join to awareness raising-UN Day 26 June.



Mr. Bun Lemhour, TPO counselor, on the National Radio AM 918KHz station on 25 May 2018.

They have been disseminated to the public digitally. They were highlighted in a video clip, which was published on TPO's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/> -- which is followed by nearly 10000 people! -- and on our website via this link <http://tpocambodia.org/un-day-in-support-of-survivors-of-torture-2/>

Press and Media Highlights

Mobile Exhibition and Intergenerational Dialogue on 'Forced Marriage During the Khmer Rouge Regime' on Thursday, 28 June, 2018 at Koh Kong Theater under the project 'Promoting Gender Equality and Improving Access to Justice for Female Survivors and victims of Gender-Based Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime' with cooperation from VSS and funded by UN-Trust Fund was published in Khmer in [BTV Cambodia](#) and [RASMEINews](#):

<https://www.facebook.com/BTVCambodia/posts/1980979882193891>

<https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/posts/1945132792211128>

[Dr. Chhim Sotheara](#), TPO Executive Director, was invited to a movie & debate about psychiatry with [Le Club International](#) on 27 June from 17:30-20:00 at the French Cultural Institute.

<https://www.facebook.com/1966140753668916/photos/a.1981219242161067.1073741828.1966140753668916/2066282370321420/?type=3&theater>

TPO facilitated Testimonial Therapy for five civil parties of the ECCC who were survivors of GBV under the KR regime, from 28 May-01 June, 2018 was posted in [GBV Facebook](#) on 26 June 2018.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1387248221376069&id=151437704957133

[Friends International](#) and [3PC](#) mentioned TPO's post about psychological support and hygiene activity for children on 11 June, 2018 with commented 'excellent work from 3PC partners!'

https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/notifications/?section=activity_feed&subsection=mention&target_story=S%3A_I110256006459%3A10156417667331460

<https://www.facebook.com/3pccambodia/posts/1822529007785621>

[NSSF](#) mentioned about meeting with TPO staff on 8 June 2018 related to insurance benefits.

<https://www.facebook.com/nssfpage/posts/1920826497988123>

[Mr. Bun Lemhour](#), TPO counselor, talked in Khmer about 'failure leading to loss of motivation' in the first step program on National [Radio AM 918KHz](#) and [FM 105.70KHz](#) on 25 May at 11:00 am to 12:00 am.

On 17 May 2018, [Dr. Chhim Sotheara](#), TPO Executive Director, was interviewed in Khmer with [CNCTV](#) about 'understanding depression' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTqrCbjOGQw>

[GVB Facebook](#) mentioned TPO Outreach on 03 May, 2018 in Ou Chroy Commune, Prey Nub District, Preah Sihanouk Province https://www.facebook.com/pg/Gender-based-violence-under-the-Khmer-Rouge-151437704957133/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1377354025698822