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*By Dr. Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director*

Dear Friends of TPO,  
 As the year 2018 comes to an end, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! And we would like to Highlight some of our activities from the last quarter of 2018. We hope you enjoy reading about them!

Thank you very much for all your support for TPO's Mental Health program and services.

## In Focus: Strengthening Local Mental Health Systems project

In line with strategic plan of the Ministry of Health related mental health services, TPO has continued activities in Tboung Khmum and Kampong Cham provinces with the objective of 'strengthening local mental health systems.' The project, funded by Louvain Coopération <https://www.louvaincooperation.org/?lg=en> aims to ensure that 'Cambodian people, especially the vulnerable groups (women, children and old people) will have access to the highest quality of mental health service through promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, contributing to a long and healthy life.' Target groups are out-patient department staff working at Referral Hospitals and Health Centers as well as Village Health Support Groups. Patients and their families as well as community members also benefit from the project.



*Psycho-education by nurse at referral hospital in Chamkarleu*

*In line with strategic plan of the Ministry of Health related mental health services, TPO has continued activities in Tboung Khmum and Kampong Cham provinces with the objective of 'strengthening local mental health systems.'*



*Mr. Pich Panha, TPO Project Coordinator and Clinical supervisor, talked about mental health coping strategies at an RUPP event, 25 October 2018*

The project began in Kampong Thom province in 2006 and expanded its successful and sustainable model to other health centers and referral hospitals in Kampong Cham and Tboung Khmum provinces through various activities:

- Training of Village Health Support Groups in basic mental health (knowledge of disorders such as anxiety disorders, depression, psychosis and addiction problems) and equipping them with the basic support skills of mental health first aid, which enable them to identify, manage and refer people with mental problems or illnesses to public mental health services (clinics and referral hospitals).
- Setting up mental health clinics and training medical staff in mental health care. To achieve this, TPO provided mental health training to physicians and nurses in the targeted health centers and referral hospitals and worked with them to ensure that staff were qualified to provide treatment to mentally ill patients.
- Strengthening referral hospitals' capacity to deliver mental health care to ensure that they are able to diagnose and treat walk-in or referral patients with mental disorders and provide follow-up, and can play a role in mental health education, counseling, and community based-care.
- Planning visits to determine the daily life context of clients regarding family relationships, resources, support from the community and follow up medical treatment.
- Publishing guidelines in counseling, psycho-education and home visits for mental health service providers.
- Conducting action-research on prescription of psychotropic medications and a prevalence study on Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), which is the disorder most commonly diagnosed by physicians working in mental health services in Cambodia. Helping develop a simple diagnostic checklist of GAD to assist physicians and nurses at health centers and referral hospitals to make a proper diagnosis and provide appropriate treatment.

For more information about this project please see:

<http://tpocambodia.org/strengthening-local-mental-health-systems/>

## Youth Mental Health Day

TPO joined Youth Mental Health Day activities at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in October to raise awareness about mental health and psychosocial problems, as well as offer tips to the numerous youth who participated. Main activities included distributing leaflets, a book display, experts talking about mental health and self-care activities coordinated by TPO's technical group.

## TPO's Executive Director mission in JAPAN

From 9-11 November 2018, Dr. Chhim Sotheara attended the 25th Academic Meeting of Japanese Transcultural Psychiatry Association to speak about 'Baksbat and the community mental health intervention approach of TPO.' He then met with team members of Japan Support Center for Suicide Countermeasures (JSSC) to discuss potential collaborations with TPO. His visit was warmly welcomed by Dr Aoki Tsutomu, President of the Association (host) who show him the Japanese Hospital Model in Tokyo.



*Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director, speaks at the 25<sup>th</sup> Academic Meeting of Japanese Transcultural Psychiatry*

## Capacity Building Workshop in Tanzania

Two clinical supervisors and one monitoring & evaluation staff member from TPO had the opportunity to attend an annual workshop called 'Partners in Trauma Healing.' It was organized by the Center for Victims of Torture <https://www.cvt.org/> (CVT-USA, TPO's long-term partner) and funded by USAID for one week from 3-7 December 2018 in Tanzania.

This workshop offered CVT's partners from various countries capacity building opportunities related to 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.



*All participants of Partners in Trauma Healing workshop in Tanzania*

## Belgian Ambassador visited TPO's project

TPO Executive Director Dr. Chhim Sotheara and the management team of Louvain Coopération Cambodia (TPO's donor receiving funding from Belgium) accompanied Philippe Kridelka, ambassador of H.M. the King of Belgium, to Kampong Cham province. During the trip, from 29-30 November, Ambassador Kridelka met with stakeholders and beneficiaries of TPO's project 'Strengthening local mental health systems in Cambodia.' <http://tpocambodia.org/strengthening-local-mental-health-s.../>.

The Ambassador met with doctors who provided mental health services in Chamkarleu hospital to observe treatment with medication, counseling, and mental health awareness raising/education. He also met with a village support group and the head of the district health department in Chamkarleu to discuss project planning and sustainability.



*Belgian Ambassador, LC & TPO Management team meeting with beneficiary group in Chamkarleu hospital.*

## 16 days of Activism against GBV

During the international annual campaign against Gender-Based Violence from 25 November to 10 December, TPO promoted messages from the campaign to thousands of people via Facebook. TPO also organized an event with its partner, the Victims Support Section of the ECCC, on 4 December 2018 at Pannasatra University in Phnom Penh to raise awareness about 'ending violence against women and girls'.

With hundreds in attendance, the TPO team organized to have three beneficiaries share about their suffering related to GBV during the Khmer Rouge time followed by banner displays of their stories with messages such as '#HearMeToo,' and 'Strong Hands Stop Violence against woman and girls.' Photos are on TPO's website <http://tpocambodia.org/16-days-campaign-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls/> and TPO's Facebook.

## Feedback of Self-help group members

A short video clip (in Khmer) of 'feedback from men and women after self-help group session' in O Sandan commune, Krawkor district, Pursat province is available at <https://youtu.be/2dVXLz dq3VE>

This video was prepared by TPO team working in the project 'Reconciliation and Healing' project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



*16 days of Activism against GBV event, 4 December, 2018.*

## Governance and Professional Practice Certificate-3<sup>rd</sup> time

In October 2018, TPO Cambodia has again obtained certification of compliance with the Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia, known as NGO Governance & Professional Practice (NGO GPP), which is valid for three years from the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC). TPO received its first certificate in 2010, and second in August 2017.

In honor of TPO's efforts to comply with NGO GPP, TPO's representatives were invited to receive a certificate and an award during the certificate awarding ceremony on 13 December 2018 organized by CCC. For further info about this code, see the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia's (CCC) website: <http://www.ccc-cambodia.org>



*TPO's representative received NGO GPP-Certificate at awarding ceremony on 13 December*

## TPO Annual Conference 2018

In the second week of December, all TPO staff met together for one day in Phnom Penh to discuss TPO's current situation, to learn and reflect about the past year's achievements, lessons learned and challenges, as well as to practice a self-care session. After that, TPO organized a staff retreat to Thailand. The time in Thailand was a special occasion for TPO staff to explore and experience another culture and use time for team building, staff care and encouragement.

Photos of TPO staff participating actively and happily during the 2018 Annual Conference in Phnom Penh and retreat to Thailand together are available on TPO's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/>



*TPO staff meet together in front of TPO's building for TPO annual conference 2018*

## Acknowledgements

TPO Cambodia would like to express our sincere thanks to the following generous donors for supporting our 'mental health care to Cambodians (Operation Unchain)' project from January to December 2018:

- The German Embassy and generous donors for a gift of \$875 and organization of an event 4 October to commemorate the 28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of German Unity after the country had been divided for 46 years.
- Ms. Karen Mcleod Adair for her ongoing support of TPO this year and generous gift of \$6725 in May.
- Fundacja Klub Heban (KHF) in Poland, represented by Wojciech Tochman, President of the Management Board, who helped to raise \$11,975 for TPO in May and September.
- Dr Var Chivorn, Executive Director of RHAC and a Chairman of the TPO Board of Directors, who made a personal donation of US\$1,000 on 5 July.
- Mr Wisidh Wattanachet and Mr Kanchit Vhaivpassatorn and their families, of Thailand, for their generous donations in the amounts of US\$500 and US\$150, respectively, to TPO's Operation Unchain Project in order to treat mentally ill patients who are chained in rural Cambodia.
- To all generous donors via online fundraising who helped raise \$4,912 (<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/mental-health-care-cambodians/updates/#progressReports>) for TPO Cambodia.



*TPO received a donation from Dr. Var Chivorn, Executive Director of RHAC and a Chairman of the TPO Board of Directors on 5 July 2018.*