



TPO Cambodia Newsletter

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ស្រស់ឆាយ!
Happy Khmer New Year!

By Dr. Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director

Dear Friends of TPO,

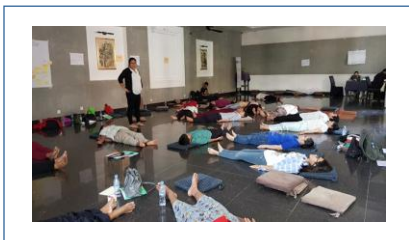
On behalf of the entire TPO team, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a Happy Khmer New Year and all the best wishes!

I would like to present to you our 1st quarterly newsletter. Thank you so much for your ongoing support to TPO's Mental Health program and services now since more than 24 years!

Special Focus: Psychological Self Care Program

TPO recognizes the importance of taking care of oneself first as to than be able to reach out to people in need and provide professional services to them. Only too often people working in the area of social services (like nurses, doctors, psychologists, social workers but also teachers and many more) put all their energy in supporting others while neglecting themselves and their own wellbeing. Poor health, fatigue and even burn out can be consequences when self care is neglected.

TPO has therefore created a platform for staff to engage in voluntary Self Care Sessions once a week for an hour. This not only boosts one's own emotional, mental and physical wellbeing, but also brings people from various departments of the organization once a week together as a team. The aim of the Self Care Sessions TPO is providing is engaging staff in practical exercises and to share tips on Self Care with each other while exploring different ways to stay physically fit, maintain a good mental health, and fulfill social and spiritual needs.



CCHR Self Care Workshop, facilitated by TPO's team, February 2019.

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TPO has started providing Self-Care Sessions also to its partners like CCHR, SOVANN KOMAR, Workplace Option, Azahar, Light for the World, EWMI, FIDR and Clinton-CHAI. This program is gaining now also more visibility and acknowledgment from external entities. More and more service providers also acknowledge the importance of Self Care for staff. TPO is in the position to provide to you and your team a general information session on the importance of Self Care and basic principles, but is also able to provide regular Self Care Sessions to your teams. If you are interested to learn more about our offers kindly contact us via our training unit at training@tpocambodia.org or call us using Tel no 095 666 827.

Psycho Social Awareness Raising

The Psychosocial Awareness Raising activity is one of TPO's main activities to promote a general understanding of the importance of mental wellbeing and how to take care of one self or someone in need and where to get professional psychological support services.

Therefore, in March 2019 TPO counselors, particular the Justice and Relief for Khmer Rouge Survivor project team have conducted this activity in five villages (Thmor Pich commune, and Perk, Thmor Pich, Cheas, Doung and Chambork villages). Approximately 450 villagers (men, women and children) participated in a total of five sessions. The focus was to engage men and women to learn more about what health and mental health is; how to identify signs of stress; what are potentially causes of stress, and how to constructively cope with stressful situations. It was also important to discuss on where to access mental health support if needed.

Ten participants (two out of each village) were randomly selected for interviewing to reflect on the intervention. The ten participants mentioned that they have learnt a lot about how to more constructively manage stressful situations and pointed out in particular the practical exercises share by the team as useful. It was also shared that the topic was perceived as very important and therefore all ten were encouraged to share the content from the session with their family members and other community members.

This activity is funded by the Civil Peace Service of GIZ and is part of the Project called: 'Justice and Relief for Khmer Rouge Survivors'.

International Women Day-#BalanceforBetter#IWD2019

On 6th of March, TPO organized a gathering with all staff at the TPO Phnom Penh office to celebrate the International Women's Day which is observed on the 8th of March 2019.

In the meeting, Dr.Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director expressed that, TPO women staff are the moving energy in building and developing families, organizations and society. We appreciate and respect all the efforts of female staff and keep promoting gender equality within the organization as always.

After that, all staff joined to spread message to promote women right, acknowledge messages with some wishes to all the women to get the rights, freedom, peace and development, happiness, healthy both mental and physical following by solidarity lunch together.



Psycho Social Awareness Raising Sessions in Chambork village, Thmor Pich commune, Tbong Khmum province, March 2019.



Woman day celebration on 6 March at TPO office

Funding Support from DAP

TPO's application for 'Prevention of suicide amongst Cambodia's youth through innovative technology' project was successful. The Australian Embassy's Direct Aid program (DAP) will support with funding (approximately USD 40,891) for the time period of one year. The project started in March 2019 and will end in March 2020.

This funding will allow TPO Cambodia to design contents of suicide prevention and develop an intervention strategy in consultation with other mental health professionals in Cambodia such as the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse of the Ministry of Health, the Department of Psychology of the Royal University of Phnom Penh and other stakeholders in Cambodia.

This will be done in collaboration with InSTEDD iLab Southeast Asia, which is an NGO that has extensive experience in ICT and/or similar work. They will be responsible for developing a Facebook Chatbox Application, organize consultative workshop and develop a Facebook campaign to reach out to the target group and making sure that this application runs smoothly.

As a partner, TPO Cambodia has had the great honor to join an exhibition about achievements during the launching of the project called 'Australia-Cambodia Cooperation for Equitable and Sustainable Services' organized by DFAT on 21 March 2019 at the Australian Embassy as well.



TPO's Executive Director explained Minister of MOWA about TPO's work during exhibition event of DFAT on 21 March.

Testimonial Therapy for Khmer Rouge Survivors of Torture in Svay Rieng

From 3-8 March, TPO facilitated Testimonial Therapy (TT) for a group of 5 Khmer Rouge survivors of torture at Svay Rieng province. This activity aimed to enhance the mental well-being of Khmer Rouge survivors by helping them to speak out about their painfully hidden memories and receive empathy and understanding towards their pains by their community members. During the TT sessions, each client worked cooperatively with his or her counselor in more a private and safe environment to process and recall traumatic experiences and life stories. Their written testimonies were shared on the last day in form of a TT ceremony. 121 people including commune chief, village chiefs, teachers and local authorities, students, survivors of torture and other community members have attended the ceremony.

During the TT ceremony, we organized for the commune chief to open the ceremony with a special remark, followed by the reading and presentation of the testimonies by a group of survivors. The ceremony was concluded with a Buddhist blessing for the deceased, the survivors and for the whole community. After the ceremony, the survivors of torture felt more relieved and hopeful.

This activity is part of the Healing and Reconciliation for Victims of Torture during the Khmer Rouge Regime Project and funded by USAID.



Testimonial Therapy Ceremony in Svay Rieng on 8 March.

Student from City University of New York visit TPO

On 16 January, TPO hosted a group of student to observe and listen to presentation from projects teams to learn about TPO's field work related to the community mental health program. Following projects were presented: Healing and reconciliation for torture survivors of the KRR and Justice and Relief for KR survivors.



Student from City University of New York in USA and TPO team in front of TPO's building on 16 January 2019

Meeting with Ministry of Interior Officials

On the 25th of March 2019, Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director and colleagues were invited to meet with H.E Pol.Gen. Chuon Sovann, Vice Chairman of the National Authority for Combating Drugs and H.E Pol.Gen. Meas Vyrith, Secretary General of the National Authority for Combating Drugs and his colleague at the Ministry of Interior to discuss about TPO's work in providing treatment to mental health patients in Cambodia and the possibility to collaborate with the Ministry in order to help mental health patients who are addicted to drugs and under the management of the authority.



The meeting between TPO National Authority for Combating Drugs of the Ministry of Interior on 25 March, 2019

Press and Media Highlight

The meeting between TPO and **National Authority for Combating Drugs** of the Ministry of Interior on 25 March, 2019 was published on website:

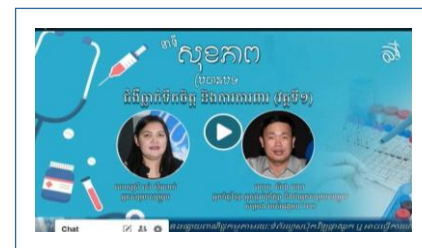
<http://www.nacd.gov.kh/%e1%9e%af%e1%9e%80%e1%9e%a7%e1%9e%8f%e1%9f%92%e1%9e%8a%e1%9e%98%e2%80%8b-%e1%9e%93%e1%9e%b6%e1%9e%99%e1%9e%a7%e1%9e%8f%e1%9f%92%e1%9e%8f%e1%9e%98%e1%9e%9f%e1%9f%81%e1%9e%93%e1%9e%b8%e1%9e%99-2/>

Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director was interviewed by the **Khmer Post** about TPOs work kindly refer to the article published on 20 March 2019. <https://bit.ly/2CHSGmM>.

Also read the recent article published in the Phnom Penh post about 'Overcoming mental health taboos in Cambodia' where **Dr. Chhim Sotheara**, TPO's Executive Director was interviewed.

<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/around-ngos-post-life/overcoming-mental-health-taboos-cambodia-chhim-sotheara?fbclid=IwAR1JIQnldhsCJCWBVVEYDM8NIMPYg6xvbZvPIKjbYKcYF-PYfV0E7YGCcb0>

Mr. Seang Leap, TPO project Coordinator and Counselor talked in Khmer about 'Understanding how to dealt with stress and how to prevent from stress' with **LotusRadio** on 7 March.



Mr. Seang Leap, TPO project coordinator and counselor talked about depression on Lotus Radio on 23 January 2019.

Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director interviewed (in Khmer) with **Cooperation Committee for Cambodia** about the fact that TPO now obtained the Good Governance & Professional Practice certification for three times.

<https://drive.google.com/.../1zdOzoH6doIJTwsbL1yXbAXWM8F.../view>

Mr. Seang Leap, TPO project Coordinator and Counselor talked in Khmer about 'What is Mental health illness and What kinds of mental health problems do people present with?' with **LotusRadio** on 21 March.

Mr. Seang Leap, TPO project Coordinator and Counselor talked in Khmer about 'Depression' with **LotusRadio** on 23 January.

Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO's executive Director interviewed with **Radio RFI Khmer** on 10 January about 'Depression'.



Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO executive Director at Radio RFI studio on 10 January 2019.