



TPO Cambodia Newsletter

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Plenty to share!

By Dr Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director

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Dear friends of TPO,

On this occasion, I have the pleasure of sharing plenty of good news and information with regards to TPO Cambodia's activities from August to October 2014.

In this newsletter, we also highlight our two research reports on Gender-Based Violence and Forced Marriage during the Khmer Rouge launched recently. You can download 'LIKE GHOST CHANGES BODY' via this link: <http://tpocambodia.org/index.php?id=105>

We hope you find it interesting and enjoy reading it!

Thanks for your support and wishing you all best.

Governance and Professional Practice Certificate

In September 2014, TPO Cambodia has again obtained certification of compliance against the Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for NGOs in Cambodia, known as NGO Governance & Professional Practice (NGO GPP) which is valid for 3 years. TPO received its first certificate in 2010. In doing so, NGO GPP recognizes and appreciates TPO's efforts in complying with the standards and being a role model for other NGOs thereby strengthening the NGO sector in Cambodia. The code has been recognized internationally and has been called the best tool to promote accountability within civil society organizations in Cambodia. For more info about this code see Cooperation Committee for Cambodia's (CCC) website: <http://www.ccc-cambodia.org/index.php/what-we-do/ngo-governance-and-professional-practice>



Logo of Governance and Professional Practice

Center for Victims of Torture workshop

Our partner and supporter Center for Victims of Torture (USA) hosted their annual Partners in Trauma Healing (PATH) training workshop in Cambodia. TPO Cambodia had the honor to assist in hosting this event in Cambodia and two TPO staff specialized in trauma work attended the full workshop alongside partners from various countries. For all participants, TPO organized a visit to Toul Sleng 'Genocide Museum S21' and welcomed the delegates from Bosnia, Egypt, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Russia, Spain, South Africa and the USA at their offices in Phnom Penh.

With the support from the Center for Victims of Torture, TPO and the other organizations are expanding their skills in helping trauma victims tell their story and heal.

This year's workshop theme was 'Telling the Trauma Story'. With the support from the Center for Victims of Torture, TPO and the other organizations are expanding their skills in helping trauma victims tell their story and heal.

The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT, <http://www.cvt.org/>) works with torture rehabilitation centers throughout the world to expand their ability to provide high quality mental health services to survivors and to build stable, well-functioning organizations.

A New Community Mental Health Project starts

In October, TPO started a new Community Mental Health program in Chi Kreng commune, Chi Kraeng district (Siem Reap province). Like in many communities around Cambodia, violence against women and children is common in Chi Kreng. This community has an urgent need for support in helping to address this issue. Together with our program partners This Life Cambodia (TLC, <http://www.thislifecambodia.org/>) and Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS, www.icsasia.org), we are providing that support with our 'Community Responses to Violence Against Women' project. In this 2014-2015 pilot project, which is funded by ICS, the 3 NGOs will work in the community, with members of the community, to address gender inequality, develop more positive and non-violent family relationships, and increase the accessibility and availability of health care services. TPO will focus on improving the mental well-being of survivors of gender-based violence through:

- raising community awareness about mental health issues, psychosocial problems, and the causes and effects of violence.
- identifying and training local Community Resource People in basic mental health care.
- running self-help groups for survivors of gender-based violence and community members with a drinking problem.
- providing individual counseling for those who need extra help or individual attention.
- creating effective referral mechanisms with other organizations so that support for female survivors of gender-based violence is maximized.

Working with our partner NGOs, TPO will also ensure that the living conditions of the families of survivors of gender-based violence improve by providing appropriate support, for instance encouraging saving groups as a means of income generating support.

Youth Mental Health Day 10 October

TPO marked World Mental Health Day 2014 by co-organizing the Youth Mental Health Day at RUPP (Royal University of Phnom Penh) on Friday 10 October 2014. This day brings together the major players in Cambodia in the field of mental health (including TPO) to raise awareness of mental health issues in Cambodia, particularly those affecting young people. TPO ran a well-attended information stand where we displayed all kinds of posters and publications many of which we distributed for free to all interested participants. At the stand we also had TPO staff available to talk with the visiting students.

It was a fun-filled day with many activities run by TPO such as art therapy, mini-counseling sessions, mindfulness exercises, forum theatre as well as expert talks.



TPO welcomed delegates participating in the workshop of Center for Victim of Torture, September 2014



Consultation Meeting between ICS, TLC and TPO's staff to prepare the project implementation

Visitors were able to participate in the activities, ask questions and engage with experts on a wide range of topics throughout the day to learn about Mental Health.

The RUPP Youth Mental Health Day 10 October was a big success: more than 1700 people attended and participated in the activities. It was a great opportunity for TPO to promote mental health to youth. You can see activities via TPO facebook: www.facebook.com/tpocambodia

Two New TPO's studies Launched

On 31 October 2014, at the Sunway Hotel in Phnom Penh, TPO Cambodia launched two new reports [A Study of Gender-Based Violence during the Khmer Rouge Regime](#) and ['Like ghost changes body'- a Study on the Impact of Forced Marriage during the Khmer Rouge Regime](#). These reports significantly contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature and extent of gender-based violence and, in particular, forced marriage under the Khmer Rouge (1975-79), topics that all too often have been suppressed in public historical discourse in Cambodia. The reports are unique in that they focus on the impacts of these violations which continue to be felt by victims until today, almost 40 years later. Both reports reflect the work and findings of studies TPO Cambodia recently conducted with Civil Parties of Case 002 of the ECCC. TPO provides psychological support for survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime at the ECCC.

Based on ample research data and laced with first-hand testimonies, these studies make it crystal-clear that the survivors of these crimes continue to suffer and that they need support in the form of recognition of these crimes, justice, social services and psychological healing.

During the launch TPO and the authors presented and discussed the findings of these two studies and made concrete recommendations to the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), civil society, NGOs and practitioners to address the lasting impact of widespread and sexual gender-based violence, and in particular forced marriage, under the Khmer Rouge regime. The commitment of donors and the international community in support to NGOs and service providers remains vital. With this launch, TPO also aimed to stimulate public discussion of the impact of gender-based violence and forced marriage under the Khmer Rouge and ways of redress for the victims who mostly still suffer the consequences today. Above all, these reports highlight that the work to redress these crimes has only just begun and must continue through a concerted effort of all stakeholders.

The studies were made possible thanks to our donors: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation, GIZ) and the UN Trust Fund To End Violence Against Women.

You can download 'LIKE GHOST CHANGES BODY' via this link: <http://tpocambodia.org/index.php?id=105>

In the meantime, the Phnom Penh Post has issued an article about these reports and the issue of Forced Marriage:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/ties-still-bind>



Participants check out the TPO material displayed and take free leaflets at RUPP Youth Mental Health Day

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Press & Media Highlights

On the occasion of TPO's launch on 31 October of our new reports on Gender-Based Violence and Forced Marriage during the Khmer Rouge, **The Phnom Penh Post** issued an article that sums up well the magnitude of the problems of Forced Marriage and Gender-Based Violence in Cambodia, then and now, and the role the government could play in dealing with the fall-out. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/ties-still-bind>

The **Phnom Penh Post** contacted **Dr Sotheara Chhim**, TPO Executive Director, for his views on the well-being of people with psychosocial disabilities or other mental health problems who find themselves held at the Prey Speu Social Affairs Centre. Dr. Sotheara expressed his concern pointing to the possible adverse effects of the lack of formal psychological care and fears that the centre could become a place to dump those with all manner of mental health problems.

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/%E2%80%98hell-life%E2%80%99-prey-speu%E2%80%99s-history-oppression>

BBC World News reported extensively about TPO's trauma healing work in Cambodia with a five minutes video. BBC joined TPO at Choeung Ek to learn about how we help heal those who suffered trauma under the Khmer Rouge with our culturally adapted trauma treatment 'Testimonial Therapy'. The video offers a concise and clear insight into TPO's approach and work, as well as what it means for the survivors. Recommended:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-29188641>

You can also watch an extensive interview (in Khmer) about mental health with **Dr Sotheara Chhim**, Executive Director of TPO Cambodia on the TV/Video news channel of the **China-Cambodia Friendship Radio (CCFR)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5Rwk-d6taY>

On **CNC TV LIVE** program **Mr Leap SEANG**, TPO counselor, trainer and project leader, talked in Khmer about suicide. This happened in the lead-up to the annual World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September. On **Radio Free Asia** he talked about possible strategies to deal with mental health issues. The interview (in Khmer) was recorded during RUPP's Youth Mental Health Day under great interest from the public.

<http://khmer.rfa.org/khmer/news/health/Youth-forum-on-psychological-health-10112014060707.html>

The Phnom Penh Post also interviewed **Mr. Long Borom**, TPO Prison Project Leader, about the lack of support for the mentally ill in Cambodia prison system and TPO's work in helping inmates with mental health problems in 4 of the 26 prisons.

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/mentally-ill-lack-support-prison>

Last but not least, and in context of the 7 August guilty verdict in case 002/01 at the ECCC, TPO's live radio show on **FM 102MHz** <http://www.wmc.org.kh/live> was dedicated to 'Healing the hurt: reparations and non-legal measures'. **Mr. Sarath YOUN**, TPO counselor and project leader, talked about how reparations can help Khmer Rouge victims recover from their painful past and how education, rehabilitation and reconciliation all play a role. Via this program listeners can hear, learn or talk about the purpose and types of reparations for victims of the Khmer Rouge regime. Listeners can call in and ask questions during the show (in Khmer). The show is funded by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and reports under TPO's USAID-funded project.



Panel discussion, during the launch of TPO's study reports on 31 October