



TPO Cambodia Newsletter

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ស្រស់ឆ្លាត!
Happy Khmer New Year!



By Dr. Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director

Dear Friends of TPO,

On behalf of entire TPO team, I wish you a Happy Khmer New Year! May the spirit of this New Year bring you good health, prosperity and success!

Thank you so much for supporting us for over 23 years in promoting and providing mental health and psychological services to Cambodia!

Please enjoy reading our 1st quarter newsletter of 2018 as highlighted in this issue. For more information please follow our **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/> and **website** www.tpocambodia.org.

Psychological Services for Muslim (Cham) Survivors of the Khmer Rouge Regime

Assessments by TPO staff showed that there was a need for mental health services among Cambodian Muslims, who had been disproportionately targeted for persecution and extermination under the Khmer Rouge. It was found that many of the survivors still carried unresolved grief about missing family members or suffered from the impact of imprisonment and torture.

Since 2015 TPO staff became actively involved with Muslim communities through the project 'Justice and Relief for Khmer Rouge Survivors' funded by the Civil Peace Service of GIZ in order to identify individual and community needs and provide culturally sensitive psychological services. The measures taken are part of the larger reparations efforts by the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) for civil parties.



Female Cham (Civil Parties) who are involved in TPO's Self Help Group project

And when the ECCC proceeded with the hearings of Cambodian Muslims, TPO decided to support Muslim survivors with testimonial therapy, self-help groups, telephone counseling and individual psychological counseling sessions.

Although the majority of Cambodia's 16 million inhabitants follow Theravada Buddhism, the official state religion, around 500,000 Muslims call Cambodia home as well. During the first contacts and counseling sessions with Cambodian Muslims, TPO staff realized that there are actually diverse cultural and religious practices within the Muslim communities.

With the above project the staff identified four different groups of Muslims in the country and adjusted its psychosocial approach accordingly. And when the ECCC proceeded with the hearings of Cambodian Muslims, TPO decided to support Muslim survivors with testimonial therapy, self-help groups, telephone counseling and individual psychological counseling sessions. Since 2015 the project engaged 80 survivors (50 female) in psychotherapeutic activities and included 700 secondary beneficiaries in Kampot, Kampong Cham, Tbong Khmum and Kampong Chhnang provinces.

In early 2018, under the project 'Healing and Reconciliation for Survivors of Torture during the Khmer Rouge Regime' funded by USAID, TPO has expanded its work to treat the Muslim community in Kratie province. In this project, TPO facilitated Testimonial Therapy for a group of the Muslim Cambodians, and organized a community-based Healing and Reconciliation Ceremony for them and other community members. The team also started the process of forming male and female Self-Help Groups in Kratie and will continue to facilitate these two groups for the next 10 sessions in each group.

For an article about TPO's work with Muslim communities, see the following:

<http://tpocambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Muslim-TPO-article-final-for-publish.pdf>

LAUNCH EVENT 'Effects of Culture and Art in Dealing with Khmer Rouge Trauma'

On 30 January in Phnom Penh, TPO launched a video documentary on 'Testimonial Therapy with Cham' under the project 'Justice and Relief for Khmer Rouge Survivors.' The launch occurred in partnership with Khmer Art Academy, Kdei Karuna and Bophana Center supported by the ECCC and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Civil Peace Service of German International Cooperation (GIZ). TPO has been working with Cambodian Muslim survivors since 2015 together with its study on the 'Effects of Culture and Art in Dealing with Khmer Rouge Trauma' under the project 'Pka Sla Krom Angkar,' which was developed and implemented by a consortium of Cambodian and International NGOs to address the harm suffered by Civil Parties as a result of forced marriage. Using Art and Culture as catalysts for social and individual transformation has been at the core of another proposed judicial reparation project, to which TPO contributed its transcultural psychosocial expertise. The main findings of this study was presented during the conference.

Approximately 100 participants joined in this event. For a video of the event, please see the following: <http://tpocambodia.org/video-library/>



Launch event on 30 January 2018 at Sunway Hotel in Phnom Penh

Database project partnership with IRCT

TPO was selected as the Local Implementing Partner in Asia for a new data project undertaken by our long-term partner the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) <http://irct.org/who-we-are/about-the-irct>, based in Denmark. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Global Anti-Torture Evidence) has provided funding support for our partnership from January 2018 to December 2019 to work on data areas (how to use Anti-Torture Database (ATD), data quality and security). As part of this two-year partnership, TPO has received computers with database systems, two TPO staff members are in charge of Monitoring, Evaluation and Research have been receiving support from the TPO Nepal team on how to set up ATD, and piloting this new database system.

IRCT is a network of more than 160 torture rehabilitation centers in over 70 countries. The IRCT is the world's largest membership-based civil society organization specialized in the field of torture rehabilitation.



Database technical team from Nepal coaching TPO staff on the database systems (how to use, quality and security) on 6 February at TPO office

Continuous Medication Education on treatment for schizophrenia and addiction patients

Continuous Medication Education (CME) on treatment for schizophrenia and addiction was conducted in Kampong Cham and Tboung Khmum from 22-23 Feb 2018 with health staff (28 members) who are involved in mental health service. This CME was organized for building the capacity of mental service providers who work at health centers and referral hospitals in rural areas to be more understanding about how to making diagnoses and refine treatment skills for patients.

This training was conducted by Professor Jarques Van Hoof from Holland under the project Strengthening Local Mental Health Systems <http://tpocambodia.org/strengthening-local-mental-health-systems/> with funding support by Louvain Cooperation Cambodia.



CME on treatment for schizophrenia and addiction patients to health staff in Kg.Cham and Tboung Khmum, 22-23 February 2018.

Testimonial Therapy in Kratie province

From 12-16 February 2018, TPO facilitated Testimonial Therapy (TT) for six survivors of torture during the Khmer Rouge (KR) Regime at Chheu Teal Phluoh, Preaek Saman commune, Chhloung district, Kratie province.

This intervention aimed to enhance the mental well-being of Khmer Rouge survivors by helping them to share their painful hidden memories with their communities. In return, community members responded with empathy and understanding. During the sessions, each client worked cooperatively with his or her counselor in more private and safe environments to process and recall their traumas and other parts of their life stories. Their written testimonies were fully developed on the 4th day and on the last day a Healing and Reconciliation Ceremony was held.

There were 120 community members who attended the ceremony. These included survivors of the Khmer Rouge, family members, neighbors, youth, local authorities, and Muslim religious leaders. A short video of this TT was documented: <https://youtu.be/oQtFfx1bUYw>. This activity is part of the Healing and Reconciliation for Victims of Torture during the Khmer Rouge Regime Project funded by USAID.

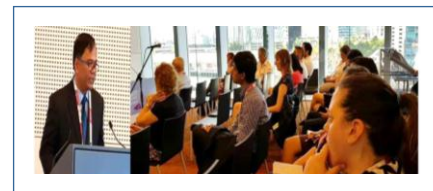


Testimonial Therapy in Kratie province from 12-16 February 2018.

Mission trip of TPO Executive Director overseas

In the last week of February 2018, Dr Chhim Sotheara has presented TPO's research on the 'Effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid in Cambodia: Randomized Control Trial Study' at the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) in Melbourne from Feb 25-28, 2018. Dr Chhim also takes the opportunity of his visit to meet with partners in Melbourne as well.

Also in the last week of March 2018, Dr Chhim Sotheara was invited by TPO's donor, Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to attend workshop to share lesson learn and experiences on the protection of victims of sexual violence. The participants of this workshop are mainly international lawyers, prosecutors, psychologists from Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia (Cambodia).



Dr. Chhim Sotheara presented TPO research on the effectiveness of Mental health First Aid on 28 February at the world congress of psychiatry in Melbourne

Press and Media Highlights

Mr. Bun Lemhour, TPO counselor, talked about 'how to reduce stress' on **Radio FM 99.5** on the 16 March night program from 8:00 to 9:00 pm

On 21 February 2018 in **the Fresh News** in Khmer **Dr. Chhim Sotheara**, TPO Executive Director, advised people who have mental health problems to seek help and not be shy

<http://freshnewsasia.com/index.php/en/localnews/79157-2018-02-21-07-06-05.html>

On 06 January 2018 in the **Sabay News** in Khmer, **Dr. Chhim Sotheara**, TPO Executive Director, talked about 'Stress'

<http://news.sabay.com.kh/article/898288>

The prestigious Dr. Guislain Award was offered to **Dr Chhim Sotheara**, TPO Executive Director, in recognition of his achievements with the TPO team during the past 23 years.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XISgg4PEUFw&feature=youtu.be>

Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO Executive Director, was interviewed by **VOA radio** in Khmer on 'Mental health illness' on 14 February 2018.

<https://khmer.voanews.com/a/4252292.html>

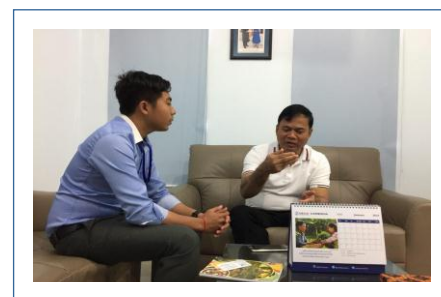
A Testimonial Therapy Ceremony on 18 January 2018 in Siem Reap province under the TPO's reconciliation and healing project was mentioned in **Joshua Prieto Photography**

<https://www.facebook.com/joshuaprietophotography/photos/a.1670897009615286.1073741907.182947001743635/1670897199615267/?type=3&theater>

Articles related to TPO launch event on 30 January 2018: The **Phnom Penh Post news** highlighted TPO's work with Cham in English 'Burden of trauma higher among Cham' <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/burden-trauma-higher-among-cham> and TPO's study on Effects of Culture and Art in Dealing with Khmer Rouge Trauma in Khmer:

<https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia/posts/1781569701900772>

Ms. Sok Phaneth, TPO training coordinator, conducted an interview with **Sea-globe**: 'Despite the severe mental health stigma in Cambodia, this psychologist won't give up on locals' <http://sea-globe.com/mending-minds/>



Dr. Chhim Sotheara, TPO executive Director interview with Fresh New at TPO office on 21 February 2018