



TPO Cambodia Newsletter

16 November 2015
Issue 8

Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), TPO Building, #2-4 Okhna Vaing Road (St 1952), Sang Kat Phnom Penh Thmey, Khan Sen Sok, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, (855-23) 63 66 991-2-3
admin@tpocambodia.org
www.tpocambodia.org
www.facebook.com/tpocambodia

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Welcome!
- 1 In Focus: Pain School Project
- 2 Community-Based Truth Telling Ceremony
- 2 World Mental Health Day with Youth
- 3 Fundraising during German Unity Day
- 3 TPO Publication Launching Event
- 3 Consultation workshop with 51 civil parties
- 4 Workshop ON Bipolar affective Disorders
- 4 TPO New Publication
- 5 Acknowledgement
- 5 Press & Media Highlights

Welcome!

By Dr Chhim Sotheara, Executive Director

Dear friends of TPO,

Welcome to our November Newsletter!

This month, our publication wants to highlight TPO’s long term Pain School Project, the International Mental Health Day with Youth, a Community-Based Truth-Telling Ceremony, the Fundraising on German Unity Day Celebration, the launch of the TPO Publication on Forced Marriage and the Consultation Workshop with 51 civil parties on forced marriage.

We do hope you enjoy reading about the diverse topics in this newsletter.

In Focus: Pain School Project

The ‘Pain School’ is a group based education program for patients who suffer from chronic pain as a result of torture. Since 2011 TPO receives funding and technical support from the Danish Dignity Institute Against Torture www.dignityinstitute.org to learn, develop and implement a culturally appropriate treatment protocol to respond to chronic pain in Cambodia. TPO developed and tested a treatment form in a pilot study which revealed that therapists and clients found the Cambodian Pain School to be relevant and helpful.

From November 2014 onwards TPO tested the effect of the pain treatment with a controlled randomized trial involving civil party applicants at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The majority are suffering from PTSD-symptoms and their pain are mainly due to injuries inflicted through violence during the Khmer Rouge regime.

So far TPO achieved the following:

- The pain treatment manual in Khmer and in English was finalized
- Facilitation guidelines have been developed
- 300 clients have been randomly selected out of 4000 civil parties, interviewed were 156 respondents.
- 113 of the respondents were randomly assigned to 6 treatment and 6 control groups.



Treatment group practicing relaxation techniques in dealing with chronic pain with

Since 2011 TPO receives funding and technical support from the Danish Dignity Institute Against Torture www.dignityinstitute.org to learn, develop and implement a culturally appropriate treatment protocol to respond to chronic pain in Cambodia

- 6 treatment groups have been facilitated and the second and third assessment of the impact has been completed
- 6 groups from the waiting list have received pain-treatment to 6 waitlist groups.

Pain treatment service for clients who suffer from chronic pain is now available at TPO's treatment center. If you experience chronic pain, please contact TPO therapists at 023 63 66 991.

Community-Based Truth-Telling Ceremony

In Cambodia, Buddhism plays an important role for psychological and mental healing. Therefore TPO Cambodia has included Buddhist ceremonial rituals in some of its trauma treatments for those who want it, in particular for survivors of the Khmer Rouge.

On September 11, TPO organized a Truth-Telling Ceremony at the Balang Reangsey Pagoda in Krang Leav commune of Kampong Chhnang province. 6 Testimonies of victim survivors and of former Khmer Rouge were read aloud in presence of a large audience including representatives of USAID and DFAT, Rolea B'ier District Deputy governor, staff of provincial departments, commune and village chiefs, students, teachers and community members people, in total about 100 people. To quote the voice of a former Khmer Rouge: *'.....I am feeling so excited, even though I am a former Khmer Rouge, I will have a chance to talk about my bitter story. This will help me to relieve my suffering hidden in my heart for more than 30 years, which in this lifetime will never be forgotten.....'*

The TPO team integrated also Christian prayers for peace and forgiveness at the Buddhist pagoda for a Christian Khmer Rouge survivor. TPO strongly believes that one aspect of peace and reconciliation is the respect for the diversity of religious beliefs and participation in the healing process has to be inclusive by all means.

This activity is funded and supported by USAID under its project 'Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing - Towards a Shared Future' implemented by TPO (in partnership with Youth for Peace).

World Mental Health Day with Youth

TPO marked World Mental Health Day 2015 by co-organizing a large event for students at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) on 2 October 2015. This event brings the major players in the field of mental health together to raise awareness about mental health issues in Cambodia, particularly affecting young people. TPO contributed several information booths and introduced the students to its community mental health program and to some basic counseling techniques.

Through donation from Raksa Koma foundation <http://www.raksakoma.org/> and TPO, 200 bright yellow T-shirts were printed and distributed for promoting world mental health day with the youth and inviting the public and other partner organization to join the event. TPO displayed posters, publications and gave away a many brochures and leaflets to all interested participants.



Community-Based Truth-Telling Ceremony at Balang Reangsey pagoda, Krang Leav commune, in Kampong Chhnang province

TPO staff made themselves easily available to discuss the questions students had and also offered some part of art therapy, mini-counseling sessions, mindfulness exercises, a video film on Psychological First Aid and expert talks.

The event was a big success with more than 2000 visitors participating in the activities. It was a great opportunity to promote mental health to students and the young generation. Please see more photos on TPO Facebook: www.facebook.com/tpocambodia where TPO information to WHO: http://www.who.int/mental_health/world-mental-health-day/2015/en/ can also be seen on TPO Facebook as well.

Fundraising During German Unity Day

In the evening of October 5, the German Embassy in Cambodia celebrated the 25th Anniversary of German Unity. The German Ambassador and his wife had gracefully initiated fundraising on this occasion in support of TPO's project 'Operation Unchain'. This project was initiated in February 2015 by the King of Cambodia during his inauguration visit to TPO's clinic. It supports rural families of mentally ill patients with very little or no access to mental health services and shows them other options than chaining and locking in a cage or in the house.

With the received funding more patients can get psychiatric treatment and thus live a better life. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health TPO visits the patients and their families regularly and monitors the effect of the treatment. With the support of the German Embassy TPO received a total of **US\$3863.5** donated by cash and bank transfer.

TPO Cambodia extends its sincere thanks to H.E Ambassador of Germany and Madame, and to all who donated so generously to this project. This support will allow us to continue to treat more patients in the whole country. The fundraiser is still open in case, you also would like to contribute to this project. Visit www.tpocambodia.org or <http://tpocambodia.org/make-a-donation/>

TPO Publication Launching Event

On 22 October 2015, at Meta House in Phnom Penh, TPO launched a new publication 'Like Ghost Changes Body' which contains the personal life stories of 8 civil parties including a couple whose relationship remained intact up to this day. Many guests joined and discussed the ongoing psychological impact of the regime on individuals and Cambodian society, and what can be done about it.

For a copy of the publication in English or in Khmer, please contact TPO Cambodia via email admin@tpocambodia.org.

This publication and the event were funded by GIZ (German Society for international Cooperation).

Consultation Workshop with 51 civil parties

With funding from UN WOMEN <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/cambodia> 51 civil parties were invited to a one day workshop at Khmer Arts Theatre



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

*With the support of the German Embassy TPO received a total of **US\$3863.5** donated by cash and bank transfer*



H.E Ambassador of Germany and his wife with Dr. Sotheara Chhim, TPO Executive Director (left) during German Unity Day Reception at Le Royal Hotel, 5 October 15

in Takhmao on 22nd October 2015 to consult with 4 different organizations about a future reparation project titled ‘Pka Sla Krom Angkar’. The project intends to combine classical Khmer dance theatre and film documentary with community dialogue and psychosocial interventions to bring the experience of forced marriage and gender based violence to the attention of a larger audience aiming to overcome stigmatization and denial and offer healing and rehabilitation.

The consortium of NGOs (Khmer Arts, TPO Cambodia, Kdei Karuna and Bophana Centre) in coordination with the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC), Victims Support Section (VSS) and the Lead co-lawyers (LCPL) office has received a 100% approval of the consulting civil parties for the project design and is now developing the full proposal and a fundraising strategy.

Workshop on Bipolar Affective Disorders

On 26-27 October 2015, TPO Cambodia, in partnership with one of its donors, the Louvain Coopération LD (<http://www.louvaindev.org/>), organized a 2-day workshop in Phnom Penh for Cambodian psychiatrists, doctors and psychologists on ‘Bipolar affective Disorders’. The aim was to strengthen the Cambodian mental health professionals in the delivery of treatment and support of patients with these problems. The workshop was facilitated by medical experts from the Netherlands and covered the concept of Bipolar Affective Disorder (BAD), possible treatments (pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy) as well case vignettes.

24 mental health professionals from Provincial Referral Health Centers /Provincial Health Departments (Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Tboung Khmum, Svay Reang, Phnom Penh and Pursat province), from the Khmer Soviet Friendship Hospital and from TPO Cambodia participated.

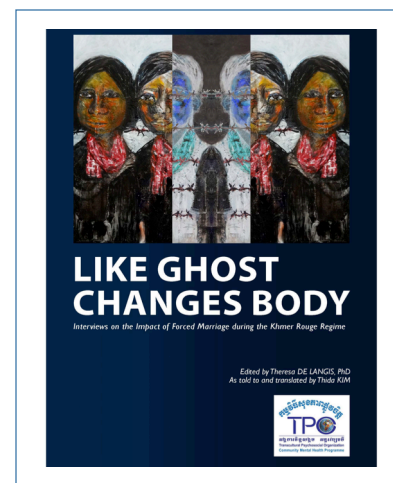
New TPO Publication

TPO’s latest research study about ‘Victims participation’ at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and Gender-Based Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime’ has been published now.

The research was conducted in 2014 as part of the “Women and Transitional Justice in Cambodia” project funded by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and implemented by the Victims Support Section (VSS) of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), Cambodian Defenders Project (CDP) and TPO. The study explores victims’ perceptions towards their participation in the Khmer Rouge trials as well as its impact. It gathers data about types and frequency of gender-based violence during the Khmer Rouge regime and examines whether victims have received support and how memories of such violence continue to impact victim’s thoughts and behavior.

Results are based on 222 interviews with civil parties of Case 002 of the ECCC.

For a copy of this publication, you may download from TPO’s website: www.tpocambodia.org.



Cover of TPO publication ‘Like Ghost Changes Body’



workshop on Bipolar Affective Disorders 26-27 October at TPO HQ

Acknowledgement

TPO Cambodia extends its sincere thanks to Ms. Karen Francis Mcleod Adair for the contribution of the amount of \$5000, H.E Ms. Chea Serey, founder of Raksa Koma foundation \$1000 and Cam32 \$832.91 and to all who has recently donated so generously to TPO's project 'Operation Unchain'.

Press & Media Highlights

Mr. Seang Leap, TPO Project Coordinator (Psychologist/counselor) and **Dr. Ang Sody**, psychiatrist talked about mental health issues and TPO's operation unchained project in helping mentally illness patients with **Khmer Times news**:

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/17180/chained-and-untreated-cambodia---s-mentally-ill-live-in-the-shadows/>

On 22 October, **Mr. Sang Seum**, TPO counselor, talked about 'Common Stress and Coping with stress' in Khmer on **Radio Cambodia Human Right**: <http://goo.gl/SiAIG3>

Dr. Muny Sothara, TPO Technical Advisor talked about "What are the Mental Health Problems of HRD?" in Khmer on **radio Cambodian Human Rights**:

http://www.cchrcambodia.org/index_old.php?url=follow_us%2Ffollow_us.php&p=audio_file_lists.php&a_id=872&id=4

In **CatalystAsia's** article about 'Cambodia's Growing Mental Health problem', **Dr Sotheara Chhim**, TPO Executive Director talked about TPO's services and programme for providing psychosocial support to victims and witnesses testifying in the Khmer Rouge tribunal:

<https://catalystasia.wordpress.com/2015/10/06/CAMBODIAS-GROWING-MENTAL-HEALTH-PROBLEM/>

Dr Sotheara Chhim, TPO Executive Director interviewed with **ABC Radio Australia** about mental health in Cambodia in order to celebrate World Mental Health Day.

<http://www.australiaplus.com/international/2015-10-06/meet-the-man-tackling-the-highest-rate-of-ptsd-in-the-world/1499326>

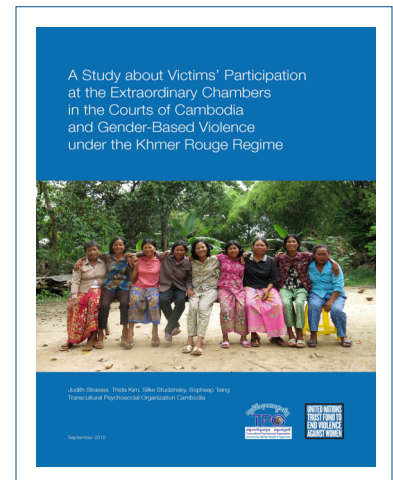
In the **Phnom Penh Post's** article 'The shackles of abuse' **Ms.Sok Phaneth**, TPO clinic manager said that 'severe traumatic events' often create a "fear of speaking out". Check out this link:

<http://m.phnompenhpost.com/post-weekend/shackles-abuse>

On 2 September, **Mr. Seang Leap**, TPO project coordinator (psychologist/counselor) talked on **CNC** (Cambodia News Channel) in Khmer about mentally ill patients who have been chained up. TPO's Operation Unchain project team travels the country to treat such patients and train their families and communities in mental health care.

Missed out? Want to know more?

Like us on <https://www.facebook.com/tpocambodia> for more updates.



The cover of TPO's publication 'Victims' Participation at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and Gender-Based Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime'



Consultation workshop on 22 October at Khmer Arts Theatre in Thakmao, Kandal Province