The Past and the Present of Forced Marriage Survivors

experience toward healing
The archive of forced marriage in Khmer Rouge
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Dedication

I dedicate this book to all those who died and the survivors who suffered from all types of gender-based violence during the Khmer Rouge Regime. May the spirits of the dead stay in peace and free from suffering. I also pray for the survivors to find justice for their suffering soon.

I particularly call for and encourage couples, whether in forced marriages or not, to stop violence and turn to loving and supporting each other. Remember that violence destroys you and your family.
ការដឹកជញ្ជូន

ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រការពិតទៅនិងការស្វែងរាជ់បទពិសោធន៍ប្រក�
Foreword

The Khmer Rouge regime collapsed more than three decades ago but every time survivors from this regime talk about their sufferings they are still emotionally aroused and cannot bear nonstop tears as it was a very horrifying they never believed they could survive. They were constantly worried about their lives and the killings. So far, Cambodian people have not considered much about violence against women.

Women were raped by Khmer Rouge before they were killed. This fact was a mystery or at least only few people knew this because the victims died. There are not many rape survivors and they do not want to be reminded or talk about it because they wonder what they would get if they talked about it, where they could find the perpetrators and who was responsible for it. Some women were forced to marry Khmer Rouge soldiers whom they did not love. They had to accept their destiny that someone else set for them. Many men were killed but women experienced different types of violence. They lived with sadness and missed their husbands and children who were taken to be killed by the Khmer Rouge; they witnessed their beloved children starving and being forced to work without proper food and rest. There were also Khmer Rouge female cadres who were raped by their commanders or their heads of unit who then accused them of committing mistakes.

What happened in the past should never happen again. Therefore, this book is very important to prove to the next generation what happened in that regime. The Khmer Rouge themselves claimed that their leadership was free of corruption, a regime under which men and women were treated equally, and where any act in relation to sexuality is considered a misconduct, but in fact it was a dictatorship.

The connection between the past violence and the present violence is important to consider as well. We cannot change the past but to live in the present happily for a happy and prosperous future we need to face the past. Seeking psychotherapy is a good solution to deal with past traumas. Women are not objects that man can use. They are born with the same rights as every human being. Together we can end violence against women!

I hope this book contributes to the awareness on what happened during the Khmer Rouge era and especially to understand the impact of forced marriage on women’s lives.

SOK Sam Oeun

Executive Director
Cambodian Defenders Project
សេចក្តីថ្លែងការណ៍

ប្រទេសកម្ពុជាមានសត្វព្រៃបាស់ទៅជាមួយនឹងសត្វឆ្កោតម្តាថែក។ សត្វឆ្កោតម្តាថែកមានតម្លៃដូចជា ឈីដំក់ស្រីដែលគ្រប់គ្រាន់ទៅ។ ទំនើបលើអំណាចនេះអាចរួមទំនាក់ទំនងជាច្រើនប្រភេទ។ ប្រភេទមួយមានតម្លៃដូចជាអីនេះដែរ។

អំពីរឿងរឿងចម្រៀង

អំពីរឿងរឿងចម្រៀងមានតម្លៃដូចជា ប្រភេទទៅហើយប្រភេទ។ ទំនើបលើអំណាចនេះអាចរួមទំនាក់ទំនងជាច្រើនប្រភេទ។ ប្រភេទមួយមានតម្លៃដូចជាអីនេះដែរ។

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សំណង់ច្បាប់

សំណង់ច្បាប់អាចមានតម្លៃដូចជា ប្រភេទទៅហើយប្រភេទ។ ទំនើបលើអំណាចនេះអាចរួមទំនាក់ទំនងជាច្រើនប្រភេទ។ ប្រភេទមួយមានតម្លៃដូចជាអីនេះដែរ។

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ប្រយោជន៍ដ៏សំខាន់សម្រាប់ប្រជាជន៖ កម្ពុជាគឺជាប្រជាជនដ៏សំខាន់ប្រសើរបំផុតដ៏ច្រើនបំផុតនៅតូចៗក្នុងបរទេសអង់គម។ ប្រជាជនជាប្រជាជនដ៏សំខាន់ប្រសើរបំផុតនៅក្នុងបរទេសអង់គមនេះមកដល់ពីសកលវត្តមានទាំងអស់។

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តាមប្រភេទប្រភេទ
បានទទួលបានសេដ្ឋកុមារ។
បានឈ្នះទៅដល់ឈ្នះ
ដែលជាពួកគេបានប្រឈួតប្រាក់ឆ្នាំក្នុងស្នូលកុមារ។''

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... I found myself much happier since my husband died.
He was drunk
nearly every day, he beat me, he spent all the money I saved...```

Introductory and Background
Introduction and Background of the book

Democratic Kampuchea, known as the time of the Khmer Rouge (KR) regime, ruled Cambodia from 17 April 1975 to 6 January 1979. Under its ideology and leadership 1.7 million people died. In the nearly four years in which the KR ruled the country the entire populations were treated inhumanely. Human rights and dignity were taken away from people by the KR, who commonly referred to their regime as the “Angka revolution” or “Angkar”. The whole population suffered from forced evacuation from one place to another, forced separations from love ones, forced labor without proper food, starvation, killing, slaughter, disease, and torture on a daily basis. On a global level rape is considered to be a weapon of war; and this crime occurred during the KR era as well. There were many types of sexual violence that happened during this time, including rape, sexual mutilation, sex trading, sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Younger generations heard stories from the older generation that during the KR era, engaging in sexual relations was considered to be gross misconduct by Angka, punishable by death. They have therefore questioned whether these forms of sexual violence actually occurred. In reality, these acts were rarely committed by normal people, it was the KR themselves who perpetrated these sexual crimes.

As part of the Cambodian Defenders Project’s (CDP) Gender Based Violence Project (GBV) a psychologist has been working with survivors of the KR through Self Help Groups to facilitate the healing process. In one of these groups, the psychologist works with a group of eight women who suffered from forced marriage under the KR regime. This project started in June 2011 and ran until June 2012. Four of the group members are widows and four are still married to their husband (two from the forced marriages, and another two who remarried during the 1980s). Two of the group members are living in chronically violent relationships which could be caused by poverty and the trauma that both of the women’s husbands suffered during the KR regime. The husbands release their suppressed feelings of anger, hatred, jealousy etc. by blaming and beating their wives. They don’t learn about healthy ways to manage or release anger, and they refuse the offer of help from our experts. It is common for domestically violent men not to realize that their behavior is wrong. This is partly because of how much they suffer from trauma.

The wives in this situation have also greatly suffered from the traumas that they experienced during the war including those arising from forced marriage, rape, starvation, separation, forced labor etc. These two women continue to suffer from violence at the hands of their husbands - the very person who should be the one to support them to come to terms with their past traumas.
Working with them, the Psychologist has found that they very rarely experience happiness in life. Furthermore because of their own trauma, they do not dare walk away from their painful relationships. The Psychologist is concerned about the risk of that they will pass their traumas onto their children and grandchildren. Research has proven that trauma can be passed to future generations.

The other four victims whose husbands have died, state that their life is better since their husbands passed away. Although they are required to work harder to raise their children on their own, their life is happier than working hard and getting beaten. One of them said “...I found myself much happier since my husband died. He was drunk nearly every day, he beat me, he spent all the money I saved...” A few years ago one group member was proposed to by her neighbor, but she refused and told the group during the meeting “...I was happy to get out of the prison, why should I walk into it again?”

The Psychologist found that many types of violence occur because there is something in the violent person’s past that remains unsolved and makes them behave differently from how they were before this event took place. The person is not bad - these behaviors are a result of traumas that they have suffered. Complex traumas definitely change people’s personalities. Therefore, psychotherapy is significant and necessary to change behavior is a positive way.

The self-help group for these eight women was a one year project which met once a month. The group had twelve meetings, seven of which occurred in Phnom Penh and three in Pursat (in their house). The three meetings in the province aimed to encourage group members to commit to organizing more meetings at their own places when the project finished. There were many group activities involved in the GDP program, such as art and play therapy, some trauma confrontation technique therapy, team-building activities aimed at building trust between group members, and other learning-related exercises and relaxing exercises.

In this book, individual in-depth interviews by psychologists were employed to collect information from our participants. All the interviews were conducted in a private and quiet place at the participants’ preference or in a private room in one of the participant’s house. Each interview lasted about one and a half to two hours according to the story shared by the participants. A voice recorder was used during the interview to make sure the information is accurate when using it for writing. At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer informed the participant of the purpose of the book, explained the potential benefits and risks and emphasized the importance of their participation. An informed consent was obtained. Respect, dignity and privacy were maintained throughout the interview process.
Acknowledgments

This book would not be possible without the support from my colleagues at Gender Based Violence during the Khmer Rouge Regime at Cambodian Defender Project (CDP). Special thanks to Mr. DOUNG Savorn, project coordinator and Ms. Beini YE, senior advisor to the project for their support and comments in the process of making this book. Thank you to Ms. LEANG Charyya, the project assistant, for her support throughout the process and Ms. SREA Ratha for her help interviewing some clients with me. I would also like to say thank you to Mr. SEOUNG Sothearwat for editing the Khmer text and Ms. Katie ROBERTSON for her kind work editing the English text. Thank you to the donor Medica Mondiale who financed the self-help group and the printing of this book.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the eight strong women of this self-help group for their courage and trust in the process supporting them to come to terms with their past. Their willingness and brave attitude to confront their traumas is highly appreciated and should be a good role model for many other survivors.
ដំណើរការសំខាន់ៗក្នុងការអោយមនុស្សយល់ឃើញរឿងរបស់ខ្លួនឯង ក៏អាចមានបញ្ហាដូចជា ការស្លាប់សិល្ប៍ ការសម្រេចការស្លាប់ពីសុខាភិបាល ការសម្រេចការស្លាប់ពីយើង។ ការស្លាប់គ្រប់គ្រាន់នេះ ក្នុងការប្រកួតប្រជែងការប្រកួតប្រជែងក្នុងការស្លាប់ដ៏ស្រស់។ គ្មានក្រុមហ៊ុនប្រជាជន មានកម្មវិធីជាច្រើនដែលអាចប្រឈមប្រាក់ប្រាក់សម្រាប់ការស្លាប់ ដើម្បីធ្វើឱ្យមនុស្សមានកម្រិតសុខិត្យជាតិ។ គ្មានក្រុមហ៊ុនប្រជាជន មានកម្មវិធីជាច្រើនដែលអាចប្រឈមប្រាក់ប្រាក់សម្រាប់ការស្លាប់ ដើម្បីធ្វើឱ្យមនុស្សមានកម្រិតសុខិត្យជាតិ។
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Ms. Pen Sokchan

Ms. Pen Sokchan, 51, lives at Beoung Chhouk Village, Khna Tor Teung commune, Bakan district, Pursat province. She is a poor peasant and a widow with six children: five girls and a boy, who is the youngest.

Before the Khmer Rouge era, Ms. Sokchan lived in Kampong Kdei Village, Outapong commune, Bakan district, Pursat province. Ms. Sokchan was the second child to her mother, who was a housewife and her father, who was a soldier. She could not go to school because the whole family had to move with the father, who was required to serve in the war in different locations. During the Khmer Rouge era, her family was evacuated from Kampong Kdei commune to Beoung Chhouk, a village where she now lives.

As a youth during the Khmer Rouge regime, she was assigned to the women’s mobile group, a forefront group whose job it was to produce fertilizer from human excrement and carry soil for building dams. After that, she was assigned the sole task of stirring human excrement using her bare hands and feet. “Turning 16 was the most painful year for me,” said Ms. Sokchan. “The Khmer Rouge forced me to work even harder. I was separated from my parents and siblings and was forced to marry someone I didn’t know as a very early age. I witnessed with my own eyes, my father being dragged away. Although I did not see him being killed, I knew he was killed after they arrested him. To this day, disease or death suffered by neighbors, relatives or even people I don’t know can cause me a lot of distress,” she added.

When she returned from the rice field late one evening at around 9:30 to 10:00 pm in Dem Roka commune, late 1978, Ms. Sokchan was told that she must marry a man she did not even know — she did not even know his name. Fifteen couples were married by the KR against their will. Ms. Sokchan was the youngest — she had not yet reached puberty — of all the women (her development was delayed due to malnutrition and hard labour). “I was scared to death and cried heavily,” said Sokchan. That night it rained heavily, allowing her to avoid being forced by the Khmer Rouge (KR) to consummate her marriage for the first night. On the second night, Ms. Sokchan was raped by her husband. She was slapped on the face and both of her hands were held tight underneath her back, as she laid flat on the floor facing up. Her clothes were forcefully removed. On the third night, she was so frightened that she resolved to run away and find her mother. Luckily, she found her mother.

For years, Ms. Sokchan never told her story of forced marriage, nor did she ever think of telling it to anybody. Her intention was to bury the story with her so that it remained secret forever. Now many people in her village, including her children, know about her forced marriage after she decided to film her biography for a documentary called “Red Wedding.” Her children were shocked and surprised by her story, however, they turned to be very supportive of her decision to make the documentary.

She has never seen her husband since she escaped three days into the relationship. She later overheard that he was killed by the KR. In 1980, Ms. Sokchan remarried.
This marriage was different because it was agreed upon by the couple’s parents. Her second husband was a soldier who had separated from the woman he had married during the KR era. The happy time—the time of love, understanding and intimacy—did not last for many years. The relationship became sour when they had their third child. She was beaten and abused sexually and emotionally because her husband committed adultery. Ms. Sokchan and all her children had to live with her mother. As a single parent with three children and an older mother to care for, Ms. Sokchan made a living as a peasant. In order for her to earn enough to feed her hungry family, she, also bought fruit from the village and transported it to sell at the town market. Poverty prevents her children—the four girls—from having a proper education. The whole family, now, is supporting the youngest son through higher education. Living in a violent marriage, Ms. Sokchan described the violence against her as being threatened with gunshot to the air and on the ground and/or pointed at her head. Her husband died in 1993. *If my husband was still alive, I would not be alive today...*, said Ms. Sokchan. She did not remarry again. She says that she barely survived living in a domestically violent jail and would never want to be in this borderless jail again. She compared her married life and her life during the KR era as equally painful. Ms. Sokchan always avoids seeing and hearing about domestic violence.

In June 2011, Ms. Sokchan and other eight women with similar experience attended a self help group organized by CDP’s GBV project. The self help group last for one year in which time the group members met each month. Ms. Sokchan was so happy with this support group because everyone seemed to be nice to and understand each other. The group and group activities contributed so much to the healing of her psychological wounds. The group meeting allows her to think deeply about her problems and gain strength to face her traumatic problems. Ms. Sokchan’s favorite activity was drawing and the group discussion to find out possible solutions, and seek support for her problems. Her other favorite activities included fun exercises, the tree exercise, breathing exercises that helps her with her anger and ability to sleep, and the closing ritual using sand. She is determined to continue supporting members of the self help group by continuing to meet them even at other social occasions. Ms. Sokchan believes that having a self help group which consists of people with similar experiences is useful because they can share feelings and support each other. The group activities made her see meaning in life and take action to stay healthy and look after herself. Ms. Sokchan noticed changes in herself as a result of joining the self help group, for example she feels more able to control her emotions, she feels less fearful and less frustrated, she has more patience and shows less violence towards the children. She doesn’t keep things to herself as much and has learnt to express herself more often. She has gained weight and sleeps well. She wishes to encourage other survivors of forced marriage and sexual abuse to think positively about life and themselves, to stand up for themselves and seek support by not keeping the trauma to themselves.

To some extent, the bad dream continues to affect her daily life, however, she will continue to understand and accept her problems as well as continue to self-treat her psychological problems. Ms. Sokchan thinks of stopping work and becoming a grandma who looks after her grandchildren so that her children can focus on making money.
រឿង អំកសាខៗ

អំពីរឿងនេះ

ការពន្លាណរឿងនេះបានបង្ហាញពីកិច្ចប្រជុំរបស់កូនបារ
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ការពន្លាណរឿងនេះបានបង្ហាញពីកិច្ចប្រជុំរបស់កូនបារ

ជាកិច្ចប្រជុំរបស់កូនបារ
ដូចជា ព្រែកអ្នកឈឺមាន ក្នុងខ្មែរ ដែលសម័យជាងគេអាចត្រូវបានការពារ។ អ្នកឈឺមានត្រូវតែប្រឈមប្រារីដើម្បីបញ្ចប់សង្កាត់។ សូមស្វែងយល់ការពារអន្តរជាតិដូចជា ប្រការពារអន្តរជាតិ។ សូមចង់ឱ្យអ្នកឈឺមានប្រឈមប្រារីដើម្បីអនុវត្តការពារអន្តរជាតិ។
Ms. LAY Kimchhean

Ms. LAY Kimchhean, 54, is a widow lives in Krouch Serch village, Khna Toteung Commune, Bakan district, Pursat province. She is a peasant with three daughters and two sons.

Before the Khmer Rouge era she lived in Thmey village, Leach commune, Kravanh district, Pursat commune. Later she was forced to evacuate to Pursat town. Before the coup against King Sihanouk, she was 13 years old and was in grade 10 at school (the equivalent of grade 5 today). Following the coup, however, she was no longer able to attend school as all schools were closed. In 1975 she was 16 years old and lived in Krouch Serch village, Khna Toteung commune where she was assigned to the mobile women’s group. The mobile women’s groups were required to build dams and make fertilizer by stirring human stool. Ms. Kimchhean is a close friend of Ms. PEN Sokchalin because of a piece of potato that she stole and hid from Angka to give to Sokchalin when she escaped from her forced marriage.

Towards the end of 1977 Ms. Kimchhean was forced to marry to a man who she had never met. The marriage took place with nine other couples (Ten pairs in total: of the women, seven were virgins and three were widowers). Her new husband was not a cruel man initially. Although the Khmer Rouge (KR) cadre were on watch, she was lucky that she was not forced to consummate the marriage for the first three days. On the fourth day however, she was taken for ‘education’ by the KR and told that if she didn’t agree to have sex with her husband they would draw a line for her to walk, which meant that they would kill her. They also threatened that her husband might be taken for ‘education’ by Angka. That night, she could not avoid it anymore; she was raped by her husband who at first tried to strangle her, then tore her clothes. After living with him for about three weeks she ran away from her husband to live in another cooperative. She was lucky that Angka didn’t kill her but instead told her that she must visit and stay with her husband once a week. Ms. Kimchhean pretended to visit her husband, but in order to avoid seeing him instead slept on the way and returned to her cooperative in the morning. When Angka found out about this, they told her husband to come and meet her instead. When her husband came to see her, she felt ashamed in front of the other women and told him not to come again. They did not meet again until early 1979 when he came to her and asked her to reunite with him. Following pressure from her mother and older sister she agreed to return to him.

To this day, the residents of this village who have lived there since the KR era know about Ms. Kimchhean’s forced marriage. She has also talked to her children about the forced circumstances of her marriage but is too ashamed to tell them about the circumstances in which the marriage was consummated. When the children heard this story they asked for more information but they did not seem to believe it. Ms. Kimchhean spent five years in the relationship and had two daughters with her husband through forced marriage.
Her five years with him was like living as a widower as she spent most of this time living in the military base where he was a soldier and was only able to visit sometimes when the commander allowed it. He lived far away and never showed concern or care for his family about whether they had enough food to eat or if anything happened to them. She said that "I...he came to me only when he needed sex. He never cared what happened to his wife and children." In the five years of their relationship she never felt any love for him. He also had affairs with a few other girls in this time. He died in 1983 during combat with KR soldiers at the front line.

In 1985 Ms. Kimchhean remarried another man following agreement by the parents. She liked her new husband a lot because he was a good man. He loved her and the children. He helped out with household work and was a hard-working person. Sadly, he died of malaria and dengue fever in 1997 after returning from the forest where he had been cutting wood. Although she spent a lot of money trying to treat his condition she was unable to save his life. She became a widower once more with six children under her care and responsibility. She had to work harder at both men's and women's work, both in the rice fields and growing vegetables and crops to sell in the market with her children in order to make a living. Because of the economic problems she could not afford to send her children to school. The relationships between her and all of her children is good. Both her and her second husband treated the children from her forced marriage equally.

Ms. Kimchhean feels that, as a result of the war, she isn’t in a good health which has a big impact on the family finances. Before joining the self-help group she always felt like she was not a valuable or strong person, and would always compare herself to other people, getting upset because she felt lonely, weak, as she was forced to marry. She thought that because of these reasons people did not value her as a person. She felt like she was an unfortunate person. She used to regularly experience suicidal thoughts when she was stressed or sick and especially when she thought about her huge responsibility to the family. When she joined the self-help group she began to feel a lot better. She stopped having suicidal thoughts and she tries her best to stay in good health. She loves the empathetic and trusting relationship that exists between her group members.

The group activities and team spirit that exists between group members encouraged her to trust the other members and share the difficulties that she has experienced in life, which is a great relief to her. In every meeting she enjoyed the time spent sharing difficult experiences where the group would listen and show support. She also enjoyed engaging in some drawing and painting activities including drawing the river of life and the tree, the tour in the city and the closing ceremony which involved using a sand tray. She thinks it is very useful to establish a group of people who share similar experiences like this group because it greatly helps in strengthening group member’s relationships, and provides a space in which they can discuss and share their concerns.
She thinks that she is a lot different compared to before she joined the group as she feels her mind is more relaxed, she sleeps better, is more open-minded and patient and has let go of her anger. Importantly, she no longer experiences thoughts of self harm or suicide. “I do not suffer from my past as much as before because I have more knowledge, I know more people who I can share my difficulties with, I listen to monk chanting and advice, and I think more positive thoughts about life, etc.” said Ms. Kimchhean.

She wants to tell other survivors of forced marriage and sexual abuse not to hide or keep their pain to themselves as there are many any people suffering the same thing. Be strong! She thinks that her life nowadays is a lot happier, the country is stable and peaceful, schools and hospitals are accessible everywhere, and most importantly there is freedom. She thinks that in the future when all her children are married she will help them and care for her future grandchildren. She goes to the pagoda whenever she wants to pray for goodness for this life and the next.
ទារកើតកញ្ចក់ក្នុងស្លុយស្រីប៉ុងរយៈពេល ១១ ថ្ងៃក្រោយដោយកង្កឹតក្រងក្រម ប្រឈមមូលដ្ឋាន ប្រការបុគ្គលិកៗ និងអ្នកបង្រៀនរួមក្រោយ បានធ្វើប៊ូតថ្មីបន្ត។ មួយឆ្នាំមកបន្តការបង្រៀនបញ្ហាជាមួយអ្នកប្រឈមមូលដ្ឋាន។ រុក្ីរុក្ីក្នុងការបញ្ហាលើកនេះ អាចបញ្ហានោះបានបញ្ហាណូវទៅក្នុងការសម្រួលរើសីយដោយអ្នកប្រឈមមូលដ្ឋាន។ មកបន្តការបង្រៀនបញ្ហាផ្លូវទៅក្នុងការបង្រៀនលើកទី២។ បញ្ហាជាមួយអ្នកប្រឈមមូលដ្ឋាននេះបានបញ្ហាណូវទៅក្នុងការសម្រួលរើសីយដោយអ្នកប្រឈមមូលដ្ឋាន។ អ្នកប្រឈមមូលដ្ឋានបានស្រែត្រូវបានបំពេញការសម្រួលរើសីយ។
ប្រយោគពីរប្រយោគទៅជាការបញ្ជាក់ប្រយោគសម្រាប់ប្រការដ៏ល្អិតនិងមានលក្ខណៈសម្រាប់ដែលអាចប្រឈមប្រាស់បានពីការប្រឈមប្រាស់ប្រការដ៏ល្អិត។ ប្រយោគពីរប្រយោគទៅជាការបញ្ជាក់ប្រយោគសម្រាប់ប្រការដ៏ល្អិតនិងមានលក្ខណៈសម្រាប់ដែលអាចប្រឈមប្រាស់បានពីការប្រឈមប្រាស់ប្រការដ៏ល្អិត។
Ms. DEOUK Sam  Ms. DEOUK Sam is 58 years old. She is a widowed farmer who lives in Derm Roka village, Khnati Toteng commune, Bakan district, Pursat province. She is a farmer and a rubbish collector, collecting recycled materials. She has seven children: four males and three females. Before the Khmer Rouge era she lived in Phnes Sla village, Khnati Toteng commune, Pursat province where she worked as a farmer.

During the Khmer Rouge era, Ms. Sam was evacuated from her home village to Suykantreang village, Kunthea commune, Bakan district, Pursat province where she worked with the farmer groups. After a short time she was told to move to the carrying group where she was required to carry the people who had been killed or wounded in the fighting. She was then put in prison and severely tortured by Khmer Rouge (KR), who accused her of being a member of the Vietnamese KGB – a traitor to Angka. Almost every day, she was severely tortured by KR who administered electric shocks and beat her in order to force her to confess that she was a traitor to Angka. Despite these torture tactics, she refused to make these false confessions and instead answered that she would never betray Angka and was always faithful to the revolution. During the course of her one month imprisonment she was handcuffed every day. Later she was released to work as a cook for the other prisoners.

About one month later the KR transferred her to Aren village Corporation to look after the children and grow vegetables. One day in January 1977, while she was tending to her vegetables, a messenger (KR cadre) arrived who ordered her to get on a truck which would take her to meet the chief of the corporation. At that moment, she felt as if her soul was flying away from her body because she recognized the truck as the same vehicle that normally drove people to the killing sites. She thought that was going to be one of the last moments of her life. When she arrived at the kitchen of Aren village at about 4 p.m., however, she was told by the chief of the corporation that she must get married to somebody she had never met. There were seven other couples arranged to be married at the same time. That night she agreed to consummate her marriage as ordered by Angka because she was scared that Angka would kill her. Just after the liberation in January 1979, her husband (through forced marriage) decided to leave her and go back to his mother despite the fact that by then they had two children together (one girl and one boy).

To this day, everyone in her village including her children know about the forced marriage between her and her (now) ex-husband and they are compassionate towards her and admire her for her hard work in raising the children.

In 1985 Ms. Sam remarried. The relationship between her and her second husband was only happy for the first few years. They loved, understood, and helped each other and she is unsure why her husband began to drink alcohol and act violently to her and her children. Over time, his alcohol consumption increased to the point that he was drunk and beat her and the children on a daily basis.
As a result of his heavy drinking he drowned. She used to say in the group that she found herself happier since her husband’s death because nobody hurt her physically and emotionally anymore. Her physical and emotional condition seemed to improve a lot compared to the time when she lived with her drunken and abusive husband. The relationship between her and her children from the forced marriage is as good as her relationship with the children from her second marriage. She loves them and they love and care for their mother a lot.

When the war ended Ms. Sam earned her living by running a small shop from home. Although the KR regime had collapsed, Cambodian society was still not stable or peaceful throughout the country. There was still fighting between the Para, the Viennese and the government soldiers up until the national reintegration took place in 1998. It was not until then that the country became stable, although a lot of robberies continued to happen. Her family was robbed by a group of robbers that broke in to her house at night, tied her and her husband up, beat them with a gun, then stole every item she owned. This incident continues to have a huge effect on her life today. She is full of fear nearly every night since that incident happened. This makes her very anxious and she always feels on guard. Ms. Sam believes that the war (including her forced marriage) has had a huge impact on her life especially in relation to her physical and mental well-being. Freedom to make decisions about anything, and a life free of poverty and hardship - these were taken away from her by war. She also continues to feel sadness about being an orphan and having no relatives.

Ms. Sam said that the eight members of the self-help group make it a good group which fosters strong and trustworthy relationship that makes her feel happier. She feels relief from having a chance to share her difficulties and stress with the group, especially when other group members offer her good ideas to deal with her problems. The group activities and members have contributed a lot in terms of supporting and her to move forward with the difficulties in her life. The activities that she likes the most include the learning-related exercises, body exercises, breathing exercises and art exercises such as drawing, painting, sand tray, etc.
Ms. Sam thinks that she will continue to be involved in the group in order to help the other group members feel better and feel supported in dealing with their emotional wounds. Although the group activities organized by GDP have finished, she thinks that she will continue to facilitate the group by trying to meet more often. She said that by sharing her experiences with the group members who are good listeners and receiving constructive comments from them continues to help her to feel much better. She thinks that having a group of people that have experienced trauma and share similar suffering such as this is very useful because the group members are able to share their experiences and difficulties, and as a result strengthen existing relationships and build new ones. Ms. Sam sees herself differently since joining this group. Before joining the group, she felt that she was a complicated person constantly experiencing difficulty, to the extent that at times, she contemplated committing suicide.

Now she is happier, has more patience, and at times can actively decide not to concern herself with problems which help her to be less angry and worried. Ms. Sam would like to meet other survivors of forced marriage and sexual abuse and speak with them in the hope of making them happy like her. She would like to tell them not to contemplate suicide as they have a better future to plan for.

Although she is not one of the richer families in her village, Ms. Sam is satisfied with her current situation in life. She is going to work as she can afford do it. She can relax if she doesn’t feel well to work or she can take rest whenever she wants because only doing this she can feel happy with herself. In the future she wants to see her family especially her children grow with a secure economy while she lives her life just doing some house work and going to the pagoda.
អង្គិរាយ៉ាអាចត្រឹមត្រូវបានដែលដឹងអំពីការសិក្សារបស់ពួកគេអំពីអត្ថបទក្នុងការប្រការដៃអំពីប្រព័ន្ធមូលដង្គើរដោយពួកគេ។ ទីនៃពួកគេក្នុងការសិក្សារបស់ពួកគេដែលបានបង្កើតឡើងដោយមានការរៀបចំប្រភេទរបស់ពួកគេដោយអត្ថបទក្នុងការសិក្សារបស់ពួកគេ។ ទីនៃពួកគេក្នុងការប្រការដៃអំពីប្រព័ន្ធមូលដង្គើរដោយពួកគេ។

ការសិក្សារបស់ពួកគេអំពីប្រព័ន្ធមូលដង្គើរដោយពួកគេ។

ពួកគេអាចបង្កើតពាក្យសម្រាប់ប្រការដៃអំពីប្រព័ន្ធមូលដង្គើរដោយពួកគេ។

The Tree
Ms. HENG Kuylang

Kampung Preang commune, Sangke district, Battambang province. Ms. Kuylang has seven children, four girls and three boys. She makes a living by growing crops, and also works as an assistant cook for a mobile food supplier team.

Before the Khmer Rouge (KR) era, she worked as a maid for a family in Toul Sleng Prey, Phnom Penh. When the KR came to power she was evacuated to Doing village, Takeo province and was forced to work producing crops and digging canals. She was later evacuated again to Mouk Kampol district, Kandal province. After only six months, she was again forced to move to Battambang province.

In 1977, around 9:00 am, she was forced to marry a man she didn’t know, together with two other couples. Despite the forced circumstances of their marriage, she and her husband are still together to this day. The relationship with her husband is not good and they do not love each other. They married only in order to stay alive. They raised children together but still they did not love each other. Ms. Kuylang is an orphan therefore doesn’t have relatives who she can seek support from, if she ever decides to leave her husband. The biggest reason she feels unable to break up with her husband is the children. Ms. Kuylang endures suffering from abuse of a mental, physical and sexual nature. She told everyone in the village, including the children that she and her husband were joined by the KR, and not properly married as a result of love and through a parental arrangement. People seemed to not be surprised hearing this. Others thought that if they had been in the position of Ms. Kuylang they wouldn’t have allowed the forced marriage to happen.

Their marriage, at one point, nearly ended. She couldn’t do it because she did not want others to look down on her children as the children of a single mother. She was supported emotionally by members of her self-help group who explained the impact and effect of living in a domestically violent relationship. Despite their encouragement, Ms. Kuylang could not make radical decision to leave her husband.

Ms. Kuylang indicated that ever since the war ended, she has supported her family with her bare hands. She worked extra hard—producing crops on her small piece of land and worked for others to feed her seven children. Her husband did not help by bringing in as much income. He also sometimes worked for other people but kept his earnings for himself as pocket money. Working hard to feed seven children is not something to complain, explained Ms. Kuylang. The greatest suffering has come from the sexual violence she has experienced at the hands of her husband.

As of 2000, Ms. Kuylang’s husband has becoming increasingly consumed by jealousy, as he suffers from the delusion that his wife is seeing another man. He constantly accuses her of betraying him, committing adultery and forces her to have sexual intercourse with him every day, even if she’s not well.
Her husband, according to Ms. Kuylang, has strange sexual habits. He has a high sex drive, and demands sex. He also suffers from hallucinations in which he sees his wife’s lover come through the wall to have sex with his wife in front of him. In the recent past, his hallucinations were so vivid that he became furious. He pulled out a chopping knife and attacked her. Luckily, Ms. Kuylang turned away and avoided the blows. She then escaped to a safe place. (This sex mania might be the cause of the hallucinations or the hallucinations might be the cause of the sex.) Sadly, the poor woman had to put up with her husband’s sexually manic behavior for years. Ms. Kuylang said the war, including her forced marriage, has had a huge impact on her life, especially her mental health (she feels constant emotional pain), she suffers from severe sexual violence, and the family finances are lean because her husband makes no effort to earn money but rather makes her life more difficult.

Ms. Kuylang thinks that her self-help group is one that loves each other and is helpful, so that all group members can be happier. Moreover, the group activities also made her more knowledgeable in terms of how to calm down. She also received positive solutions from the group despite the fact they normally just meet once a month and for a short time. She liked some group activities such as the meditation and the breathing exercises which helped to reduce her level of stress, group methods to deal with problems in the course of team work, trust building exercises like the blind car and others, the drawing and painting of our own resources and strength, drawing the river of life to reflect her whole life path, and closing the suffering with the sand.

Ms. Kuylang thinks that she will continue to meet with, and support the team members, despite being the only one in the team who lives far away from the others, because she doesn’t want to be as lonely as she was before. She said she has to strengthen herself and support her team members as they support her. She thinks forming a group of people who share similar experiences like this is good and helpful because they can share their painful memory and other difficulties in life with each other in a comfortable and safe space.

Ms. Kuylang sees herself differently since joining the group. She said that before she joined the group she thought she was an old leaf from a tree that fell off and flew away alone in the wind to somewhere that is far from people’s reach. She was a person who spoke very little. But now she feels like she is a great person because she feels supported, knows more about the court and its processes, and, in particular, she is more knowledgeable and accepting of the past, is able to forgive and is becoming a more helpful person. However, she still feels a bit lonely because the group meetings which were facilitated by the CDP are finished and as a result she will not meet her fellow group members as regularly as she did before.
Ms. Kuylang wants to tell the public, in particular the younger generations to please keep the sufferings of the Cambodian people who lived through the KR regime on the historical record in order to help ensure a regime like that never comes to power again.

Ms. Kuylang thinks that her current life is one of difficulty, which involves much stress about family finances and daily living because she can’t tend to her rice fields. Last year they suffered from flooding, this year they suffer from drought, another year they suffered from the rice becoming diseased etc. However, despite this she still will not leave the country to find work elsewhere. She thinks that she is going to love and take care of herself more and help her children raise their families and look after her grandchildren. She also hopes to be more patient with her husband and learn to ignore some of the troubles he causes.
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Ms. OM Ngon, 54, is a peasant who lives in Kompong Kdei village, Romlech commune, Bakan district, Pursat province. She has five sons and three daughters. Her youngest son suffers from epilepsy which causes him to have regular fits. Because of this, she must always be with him, and spends lots of money on his treatment.

Before the KR era she lived in Sdok Kram village, Bak Chechean commune, Kravanh district, Pursat province. The region she lived in was occupied by Khmer Rouge (KR) soldiers before they captured the whole country in 1975.

In 1973 she was 13 and attended grade 2 at school. However, she was forced to stop school at age 15 because of the evacuation. When this occurred, she was initially evacuated to Sdok Khla village where she was assigned to teach children aged between 4 to 10, and was later was evacuated to a few other places.

In 1974 she was evacuated by the KR to live in Samrong village, Bak Chechean commune. One morning in August 1975 at about 10 am, she was forced to get married. She was 17 years old. That year, the conditions governing forced marriages were not so strict; only one couple was married at a time, but like the experience of others, she did not know her husband before she was married to him. She and her husband were assigned to be married by Angkar.

As was the experience of other forced marriage couples, she and her husband were watched by KR cadre on their wedding night. Luckily she was able to avoid being forced to consummate her union for the first three nights of her marriage. However by the forth night she could avoid it no longer; the KR knew their marriage had not been consummated and issued a warning to the couple and forced her to agree to have sex with her husband.

Ms. Ngon’s husband was a good and gentle man; he never beat her or argued with her. In 1975 she and her husband were again forced to evacuate to Svay Daunkeo, where she was required to work in the women’s mobile group. The tasks assigned to this group were always changing according to the directions given by Angkar, but included cooking and clearing the land for crops and rice fields etc.

Ms. Ngon had one daughter with her husband through forced marriage. When her daughter was two months old in around May or June 1977, the KR took her husband away to be killed for no reason.

There were four other men killed to be killed with her husband. Ms. Ngon and the wives of the other four men did not dare ask any questions because they were afraid that they would be taken away to be killed like their husbands.

The villagers and her children knew about her forced marriage and they showed empathy to her and said it was normal at that time because nearly everyone experienced forced marriage.
Ms. Ngon remarried in 1980 to a widower who was also previously in a forced marriage. The relationship between her and her second husband is good; although they sometimes quarrel, he has never beaten her. When they first married he would occasionally drink wine with friends or neighbors but now he drinks a little bit every day because their children opened a small grocery at home. Although he only drinks a little, it makes her uncomfortable as he sometimes gets drunk and shouts at her and the children and complains. She and her husband treat all the children equally. They never distinguish them as the children from the first or second marriage.

When the war ended she worked in the rice fields to support the family. She had sole responsibility for the family (including earning an income and caring for the children) as her second husband was a soldier who lived at the military base far from home. She did the work of a man and a woman, such as ploughing, planting crops and seedlings, cooking for the children, schooling the children etc. The salary that her husband got from the army was not enough to even cover his travel costs for a visit home from the military base instead he took some money from home back to work.

Ms. Ngon feels that the war had a huge impact on her life. She was married twice; her first husband was killed and her second husband was away from the family, busy fighting, which made the family finances very tight, and her children were not able to attend school because they had to help their mother earn a living.

*Painting of resources she does to cope with daily life stress*

Before joining the self-help group, Ms. Ngon did not know any members of the team, but now she feels like their relationship with each other is like that of sisters. Their relationship is good, trusting, empathetic, and helpful. Team spirit and other activities facilitated by the group help her to feel a big sense of relief. In particular, she feels that she has learned a lot from the facilitation process. The activities that she liked the most include drawing and painting (though she did not know how to do either activity as she had never done them before), the tour of the city, and the closing ritual using sand to play etc. She says these activities made her happy and feel acceptance of her past. She said she has never had time to get out of the house to have fun, laugh and be happy like she did at the meetings because all she, and every other group member had ever thought about and did was for the sake of the family, to the extent that they forgot to think about their health. She said she will still continue to support this team by making the time for the group members to meet with each other or at least call each other as much as they can.
Ms. Ngon feels she is different since joining the group. Prior to joining the group, she describes herself as a person who did not speak much and liked to keep things to herself and did not let others know her thoughts. Now she has the confidence to speak out in order to release her stress and tension. Because of this, she feels happier, her relationship with and between family members is better, and her family economy is improving. In particular, she feels that her children love her more than ever before.

Ms. Ngon would like other victims of forced marriage and sexual abuse to feel that they are not alone, that she shares their experiences. She wants to tell them to be strong and not to try and hide their painful truth; stand strong and form a group like hers. She also suggests that they seek support from CDP and other civil society organizations like she her and her group did.

Ms. Ngon thinks she has lived a resilient life in which she has had to adapt to the difficulties, including working and raising many children alone etc.; but despite the difficulties she has experienced, she is satisfied with her life. In the future she still wants to continue to support her children until they are all married. When this happens, she wants to help to look after her grandchildren and to go to the pagoda more regularly.
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ក្នុងអត្ថបទថ្មៃនេះ ក្ល�
មានបំណងប្រការប្រជាជនដ៏ស្រស់ស្អាតដ៏លើប្រកែប្រការ ចាក់ចែកដំណើរការរបស់ក្រុមហ៊ុន ដើម្បីបង្ហាញយោបល់ ប្រជាជនរបស់សង្គម និងក្រុមហ៊ុនដែលធ្វើហោះហួតក្នុងការអោយបន្តិច ដ៏សំខាន់ជាងមុន។ ប្រជាជននេះបានត្រូវបានស្ថិតក្នុងការស្វែងយោងនៃការប្រការរបស់ក្រុមហ៊ុន។

អ្នកអាចបង្កើតការអោយបន្តិចបានដោយប្រឈមប្រាស់របស់ប្រជាជន ដើម្បីបង្ហាញយោបល់ប្រជាជនរបស់សង្គមនិងក្រុមហ៊ុនដែលធ្វើហោះហួតក្នុងការអោយបន្តិច។
Ms. OM Yan, 56, lives in Khna Toteoung village, Khna Toteoung commune, Bakan district, Pursat province. She has seven children. One of her daughters has gone to Thailand to work as a (casual laborer). Four of her children are married and live in the same village. Sometimes they illegally go to Thailand to find work such as working in the vegetable farms as they cannot work on their own rice fields due to unexpected rain or dry weather and/or transplanted rice becoming diseased. She is now living with her husband, her eldest son and three grandchildren whose parents have gone to Thailand to work.

Before the Khmer Rouge era (KR era), Ms. Yan lived in Kork Auvleak village, Spean Thmor commune, Kandal Steung district, Kandal province where she did some work in the rice fields. She was also responsible for looking after her brothers and sisters because her mother died when her youngest sister was 3 months old. Towards the end of 1973, when she was twelve years old bombs began to drop like heavy rain on the country. She fled the village with her aunt, her grandmother, her brothers and sisters and with hundreds of other people from her village and the three other villages nearby because they heard that the KR were nearly at their village. As they were fleeing, they met a group of Lon Nol soldiers who rescued them, and accompanied them to Thmol Bot, Chamkar Doung, Phnom Penh so that they could be free from KR. Ms. Yan, her brothers and sisters, aunt and grandmother lived there for one year. The family lived intent and earned a living running a small stall at the market. She and her brother were trying to look for some vegetable such as morning-glory and others types of vine leaves used in soup and other types vegetables for her grandmother to sell in order to have some money to buy food. She has been separated from her father since she fled the village because her father was working in the rice fields far from home and was captured by KR. Until this day Ms. Yan doesn’t know whether her father is dead or alive. When the KR captured Phnom Penh in April she, her aunt, grandmother, brothers and sisters were evacuated to Bakan, Pursat. She was assigned to work in the women’s mobile group where she was required to work very hard in the rice fields, digging the soil to build the dam and clearing the lands for plantations. Ms. Yan was forced by the KR to marry in 1977 at about 7 p.m. in the Khna Toteoung commune hall just after she returned from her work (clearing land for plantations). She was forced to marry alongside 24 other couples. The night of the marriage she was also raped by KR cadre like other couples. Her husband violently abused her; despite the fact that she was trying to be responsive she was still raped on the first night. They are still together.

Most of the villagers and the neighbors know about her forced marriage because some of them were forcibly married at the same time. Others know because they overheard from others, and some other people heard from her. She spoke about it with some of the villagers and also with her children. Their reactions to her experience of forced marriage were to be expected; they showed empathy to her, except her husband’s family who don’t value her and never treat her like a daughter-in-law or a sister-in-law. Despite the fact her marriage was arranged and forced upon her by the Khmer Rouge,
the couple still lives with each. Sometimes she feels like living with him is difficult especially in terms of the way he treats her— not accepting her and constantly looking down on her. When she was pregnant with her first child, her husband committed adultery. He often beat her and left her at home without showing any worry or concern about her or the child. Ms. Yan could not do anything but live through it and endure the pain. Once, she tried to hurt herself and attempted to kill herself by taking pesticide, but she was rescued. Ms. Yan has a very good and close relationship with all of her children. They love her as much as she loves them but her husband doesn’t seem to have a good relationship with them.

Ms. Yan feels that the war caused her great loss including her father, brothers and sisters, relatives and all the property she had. These losses make her feel sad and lonely. In addition to suffering those losses, she was forced to marry. She continues to suffer from this marriage, and feels that she is not a valuable person and that is why her husband’s family does not accept her. Sometimes she thinks about killing herself but it is impossible because she worries a lot about her children and their future life.

Since the war ended, Ms. Yan supported the family with her bare hands working in the rice fields to support her family to eat and live. Her children were unable to finish school because the family finances could not support their continued education. She tried her best to ensure that her youngest son will have a higher education. Nowadays, she is reasonable comfortable compared to the other families in the village because aside from the income she gets from crops she is also supported by her children who are working overseas.

Since participating in the self-help group, Ms. Yan feels that she is more relaxed and happy because she has good team members and the facilitator to listen to her difficulties with empathy and understanding. She is especially happy about the helpful comments and feedback she received. The group helps to solve difficulties for everyone, and helps them all to feel relief. She added that her ability to share her sadness and painful experiences with the group, and the group activities, have contributed to 70-80% of her mental and emotional healing. She liked some of the group activities including the drawing and painting of a tree which represents the self, building a grave for her father to rest by playing with sand. She also enjoyed other exercises and activities that involved thinking about leadership and team spirits. Ms. Yan will continue to meet her group members, who can support each other given that they shared the same painful memories of the KR. They will visit each other more often. She thinks that forming a group of people who share similar experiences like this is good and helpful.
they can feel comfortable to share and feel better. Before joining the group, Ms. Yan, saw herself as a lonely person who dealt with stress in a negative way by drinking alcohol and gambling. But now she feels excited by the fact that when she is stressed she turns to find a friend (especially the team member) to talk to. This makes her feel a lot better and has helped her stop drinking and gambling.

Ms. Yan wants to have more of these groups for other survivors of forced marriage and sexual abuse so that these survivors may have people to share their pain with, like she has had with her group. She wants them to know that forced marriage and rape happened to many other women during war, not only them but many other people. She wants to tell them to please be strong and lead their family (for properties.)

Ms. Yan feels that her life is a lot better now. Furthermore, her husband does not beat her like before and he knows more about gender issues etc. Ms. Yan thinks that she will continue to take care of her health to live better to advise and teach her children and her grandchildren to love each other, to love their relatives and to try their best to earn for the future of their children. When she gets older she is going to go to pagodas more often to save good karma for this life and her next lives.
បង្អុន

បង្អុនជាចំណុចច្រើននៃការជំនួសប្រជាជន ដែលមានប្រយោជនៈ កំពុងពេលដែលក្រដាសប្រជាជន មានមុខដើមឆ្លើយៗ ប្រការសិទ្ធិតាមរយៈជីវិតក្រោម ស្រុកក្រងកម្ពុជា ខេត្តជិត្រូរ ខេត្តខេត្ដ ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ខេត្តព្រល័ង ខេត្តបារា និង ខេត្តកំពង់ាច្រេង គឺជារៀងរាល់។

យើងងាយសុំពីប្រេងមួយចំនួនស្មុគ្រោះថាមពលសម្រាប់ប្រជាជន ដែលមានមុខដើមឆ្លើយៗ ប្រការសិទ្ធិតាមរយៈជីវិតក្រោម ស្រុកក្រងកម្ពុជា ខេត្តជិត្រូរ ខេត្តខេត្ត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ខេត្តព្រល័ង ខេត្តបារា និង ខេត្តកំពង់ាច្រេង គឺជារៀងរាល់។

មិនដូចជា ប្រជាជនស្ថិតក្នុងវគ្គកុម្មុយន៍ គឺជាអាថូរចម្រុះដដាវីមតី ដែលមានមុខដើមឆ្លើយៗ ប្រការសិទ្ធិតាមរយៈជីវិតក្រោម ស្រុកក្រងកម្ពុជា ខេត្តជិត្រូរ ខេត្តខេត្ត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ខេត្តព្រល័ង ខេត្តបារា និង ខេត្តកំពង់ាច្រេង គឺជារៀងរាល់។

មានភាពមានចិត្តស្តាប់រៀននៅក្នុងវគ្គកុម្មុយន៍ គឺជាអាថូរចម្រុះដដាវីមតី ដែលមានមុខដើមឆ្លើយៗ ប្រការសិទ្ធិតាមរយៈជីវិតក្រោម ស្រុកក្រងកម្ពុជា ខេត្តជិត្រូរ ខេត្តខេត្ត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ខេត្តព្រល័ង ខេត្តបារា និង ខេត្តកំពង់ាច្រេង គឺជារៀងរាល់។

មានភាពមានចិត្តស្តាប់រៀននៅក្នុងវគ្គកុម្មុយន៍ គឺជាអាថូរចម្រុះដដាវីមតី ដែលមានមុខដើមឆ្លើយៗ ប្រការសិទ្ធិតាមរយៈជីវិតក្រោម ស្រុកក្រងកម្ពុជា ខេត្តជិត្រូរ ខេត្តខេត្ត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ខេត្តព្រល័ង ខេត្តបារា និង ខេត្តកំពង់ាច្រេង គឺជារៀងរាល់។

មានភាពមានចិត្តស្តាប់រៀននៅក្នុងវគ្គកុម្មុយន៍ គឺជាអាថូរចម្រុះដដាវីមតី ដែលមានមុខដើមឆ្លើយៗ ប្រការសិទ្ធិតាមរយៈជីវិតក្រោម ស្រុកក្រងកម្ពុជា ខេត្តជិត្រូរ ខេត្តខេត្ត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ខេត្តព្រល័ង ខេត្តបារា និង ខេត្តកំពង់ាច្រេង គឺជារៀងរាល់។

មានភាពមានចិត្តស្តាប់រៀននៅក្នុងវគ្គកុម្មុយន៍ គឺជាអាថូរចម្រុះដដាវីមតី ដែលមានមុខដើមឆ្លើយៗ ប្រការសិទ្ធិតាមរយៈជីវិតក្រោម ស្រុកក្រងកម្ពុជា ខេត្តជិត្រូរ ខេត្តខេត្ត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តកំពត ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ខេត្តព្រល័ង ខេត្តបារា និង ខេត្តកំពង់ាច្រេង គឺជារៀងរាល់។
ក្រុមអ្នកដែលស្ថិតនៅក្នុងព្រះបរមរាជតារាយការពារជាតិសម្រាប់ការប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។ ស្ឧ្លេស្មើស្គុករបស់ក្រុមនេះជាមួយនឹងគ្រូពេទ្យសង្គមប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។ ក្រុមនេះត្រូវបានគោរពដើម្បីជួយគ្រូពេទ្យរបស់ព្រះបរមរាជវិហារ ។ ព្រះសង្គ្រាមជាតិសម្រាប់ការប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។ ការប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។ ស្ថានីយ៍នៃព្រះបរមរាជវិហារ ។ នេះជាអំពីការប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។ ព្រះសង្គ្រាមជាតិសម្រាប់ការប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។ ការប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។

គិតឃើញថាការប្រការតន្ត្រីនេះដែលបានប្រការបានលើកដោយគ្រូពេទ្យសង្គមប្រការតន្ត្រីក្រុមនេះ ។

ដោយហ៊ុន វិហារ សុខាអ សេចក្តី សេចក្តី

ព្រះសង្គ្រាមជាតិសម្រាប់ការប្រការតន្ត្រីដ៏ម៉ោង ។
Ms. RY Hon

Ms. RY Hon, 54, lives in Derm Roka village, Khma Toteng commune, Pursat province. Her family is the poorest one in the village because they own nothing. They don’t own any land to grow crops on. They live in a small cottage with a thatched roof and thatched walls built on a small piece of land owned by her brother-in-law. She has three daughters and two sons. Three of her children illegally left the country and went to Thailand to find jobs. One son is married and lives with his wife and children in another province. Nowadays, she lives with her husband and her youngest daughter who is 13 years old and attends grade 4 at the primary school in the village. She works for somebody who needs help growing crops and harvesting. Her income is irregular, depending on clients and her ability to work.

Before the Khmer Rouge (KR) era she was unable to attend school due to economic problems. She lived in Khma Toteng village in poverty with her mother (a widow) working hard in household and rice field work.

During the KR era, when she was 15 years old, her family was evacuated to Trapang Andeng village, about 10 km from Khma Toteng. She was assigned to work in the women’s mobile group who were required to grow and harvest crops, build the canal for agricultural purposes and worked very hard days and nights with only about four hours rest (some nights they could sleep only for two hours before the KR rang the bell to start working again.)

One day in May 1977 at about 4 p.m. she was forced by the KR to get married along with 14 other couples, despite the fact that she had not reached puberty. Although she was 17, she was late to reach puberty due to malnutrition and hard labor. Her husband (who is also her cousin) had been a monk before the KR came to power. He asked the chief of the cadre in the village if he could marry her.

They were spied on by the KR to see whether they consummated the marriage. Because her husband was a good man trying to lie to and hide from the KR cadre she was able to avoid consummating the union until 1978. Eventually she agreed to sleep with her husband because by then she has begun to love him because he was a good man. Unfortunately, she could not continue to live with her husband up to this day, as after the KR collapsed in early 1979 he was persuaded by his mother to return home and leave her. In 1981, he returned to her with the hope of reuniting, however by then unfortunately Ms. Hon was married to another man. Later, her first husband also remarried and lived in the next village. Occasionally they meet but she doesn’t speak to him much because she is still angry that he left her and returned to live with his mother. Furthermore, her current husband is very jealous of the relationship she had with her first husband, to the extent that he is chronically severely violent towards her.
The people of her village and her children know about the story of her forced marriage and they show empathy with her. The relationship between her and her ex-husband was good; he loved her and she also loved him because he was a good man – he knew what was right or wrong and was very helpful. She didn’t have any children from the forced marriage. She said if she had children at that time maybe her husband would not have left her and they would live happily together now. She said that her whole life has been very unfortunate, especially since 1981 when she married her second husband. After she gave birth to her third child, her husband stopped doing any work, started drinking more alcohol, fought with the family more often, and cursed her with bad language and smashed the furniture in the house and the kitchen, etc. Sometimes when she returned from her work selling in order to earn a daily living she would see her husband beat and throw her children out of the house. He would also beat her and she was wounded in her head often. Although there were occasions when the local authorities intervened, her husband never changed; after only one or two days following these visits from the local authorities he returned to the same violent behaviour. She asked for a divorce many times but her husband did not agree. She also attempted to run away from home a few times but it was not possible as she could not leave her youngest daughter. If she decided to take her with her then she would have to stop school (which she doesn’t want to happen) but if she leaves her with her drunken father, she is worried that he might beat her to death. Nowadays, her husband is drunk every day, always sleeps after drinking, does not work or earn any income, or do anything around the house. Even the job of replacing the old leaking roof and the wall is the job of Ms. Hon.

Since the war ended, she has worked for other people in their rice and vegetable fields to earn a living (especially enough money to buy food each day). This is because she does not own any land herself to grow vegetables and rice on (before the KR era her father left her mother for another woman and took all the land her mother left to her before she died). Furthermore, she is still in debt as she relies on her children who are working in Thailand to send her money, which she uses to pay her debts. She thinks her whole life has been very unfortunate; she was abandoned by her father, experienced war, her mother, brothers, sisters and relatives died in the war, she was improperly married without any dignity as a woman in accordance with Cambodian traditions, and suffers from physical, emotional and sexual violence because of her husband’s jealousy.

However in the last year her husband has not beat her as often and as violently as before, because, with the support she has received from the self-help group members, she has been able to stand up to him and fight back or at least push him away when he begins to beat her.
and her daughter. She is also able to fight back because her husband is always drunk and has less strength than before. She said that if she was to live without him, her life and the children’s life might be a lot better. Sometimes, she wishes her husband was dead rather than living because of all the difficulties he brings to the family. “It is my bad karma. I don’t know what I did in my previous life to deserve this terrible life” said Ms. Hon in with a sad, hopeless face.

She loves the relationship that she has with her self-help group. She says that “anytime my husband beat me, everyone came to visit and support me emotionally, they would encourage me and tell me not to think of suicide and would sometimes talk with my husband to tell him to stop being violent”. The team and the team activities helped her to release some tension but when she returned home, every tension came back and made her feel pain. Some of the activities that she enjoyed in the meetings were the tour of the city, and painting. She also enjoyed using sand to remind her of her relatives and what she lost in war; she felt as if she was building the sand mountain in the Buddhist ceremony.

She is going to continue meeting her team members more often because they love each other; they are all good and honest people. She said that since she joined this group, she felt better when they met, her levels of stress and tension decrease and, she is able to stand up for her rights and protect her children. She doesn’t have much to say to the other survivors of forced marriage and sexual abuse other than they should be stronger, and that there are more people suffering from the same things than you think.

She still thinks that her life is very difficult. She finds very little time to be happy. Any time she returns home and sees her drunken husband asleep like a dead body she feels annoyed and angry. It makes her want to leave home, but she promised the team that she will not think of committing suicide again. When she is highly stressed she will come to meet at least one or two people of the team to share her feelings and get them to help her find the solutions. Ms. Hon is not sure what she is going to do in the future. Maybe she will leave the country to work with her children in Thailand, but she is still worried about her youngest daughter’s education.
ស្ថាន៍ លោក ១ រៀង ប្រុស សាម កោះ អង្គរ យោធាចារ្យ ម្នាក់ក្រោយ ជាប្រធាន និង ជាសម្រាប់ការបង្កើតក្រុមពីក្រុមដែលមានអត្ថប្រយោជន៍។ 

លោកប្រុសត្រូវធ្វើការរំជើសមានមុនឃើញដែលមានអត្ថប្រយោជន៍ក្នុងការបង្កើតក្រុម។ 

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ដើម្បីបញ្ជាក់អោយសូត្រិត្តការសុខសម្ព័ន្ធកំពុងប្រការប្រការ ត្រូវបានប្រការសម្រាប់ការប្រការប្រការ ភាពច្រើនឆ្នាំមុខក្រុមហ៊ុន។ ការសុខសម្ព័ន្ធកំពុងប្រការប្រការ ត្រូវបានប្រការសម្រាប់ការប្រការប្រការ ភាពច្រើនឆ្នាំមុខក្រុមហ៊ុន។ ការសុខសម្ព័ន្ធកំពុងប្រការប្រការ ត្រូវបានប្រការសម្រាប់ការប្រការប្រការ ភាពច្រើនឆ្នាំមុខក្រុមហ៊ុន។

ឈ្មោះពីរក្រុមហ៊ុន: Sorn Peas: Place she want to go when she gets older.
Ms. SORN Pheap

Ms. Sorn Pheap, 57, is a widow living in Steung Kambov village, Trapang Chong commune, Bakan district, Pursat province. Ms. Pheap is a peasant (who grows crops and vegetable sand keeps animals) with four children and one adopted child. Poverty has forced her to allow her children to leave home and seek work in Thailand and Malaysia.

Before the Khmer Rouge era, Ms. Pheap lived in her home town of Srong village, Srong commune, Kong Pisri district, Kampong Speu province. She was about 12 years old when the Khmer Rouge (KR) took power. Ms. Pheap did not go to school. When Pol Pot came to power, she and her family were evacuated (by train) to Srey Dom Reo village, Russey Krong commune, Moung Russey district, Battambang province where she was required to work in a mobile team who were responsible for building a canal.

One day in 1977 when she returned from digging the canal at around 12 o'clock she was handcuffed and put in a car with other four women destined for correction in jail in Snam Preah village, Pursat province. Suddenly, the chief of the cadre appeared and ordered the KR cadre to release her on the basis that she was innocent. Ms. Pheap then walked to find refuge at a pagoda in Snam Prach village. The next day, she was called to attend reeducation. Ms. Pheap was scared to death thinking that she was out of luck and would be killed this time. When she arrived, however, she was told that she must marry. Ms. Pheap cried out her refusal. The KR cadre then threatened her saying “Don’t you want to live?”

Too afraid to refuse the KR’s orders again, Ms. Pheap allowed it to happen. There were 19 couples married at the same time. Like Ms. Pheap, none of the couples knew each other. After the forced marriage took place, her husband was questioned by the KR cadre regarding whether Ms. Pheap had agreed to consummate the union. Her husband responded “yes”. Her husband returned and told Ms. Pheap not to refuse to do anything ordered by the organization. They had to consummate the marriage and be a real husband and wife, despite the fact that she did not like her husband at all. For her survival she had to marry because other couples that were married the same night were taken away from the cooperative because they did not get along with their partners. Ms. Pheap agreed to consummate her marriage and they lived as husband and wife.

Three days after she gave birth to her first child (his daughter is now working in Malaysia as a maid for a Malaysian family) her husband was arrested by the KR who accused him of betraying Angkar. He never returned. Not long after this, news circulated that they were under attack from Vietnam soldiers and the KR cadre told people to run. Ms. Pheap, who had not yet fully recovered from giving birth, travelled by foot with her sister-in-law, mother-in-law and her few days old baby. On the way, her sister-in-law did not give her any food or water. Luckily, her mother-in-law helped her and she had water to drink. When they reached Bakan district they met Vietnamese soldiers who rescued them from the KR. Later, in the same year, she met her husband who she thought had been killed. She found out that her husband had also been rescued by Vietnamese soldiers after being taken away by the KR cadre to be killed.
After the KR era, her husband became a school teacher. In 1990, her husband left her for another woman just before she was due to give birth to her fourth child. Ms. Pheap still finds talking about this particularly painful. To this day she does not understand why her husband did not wait until after she had delivered the baby, despite the fact she begged him to wait. Ms. Pheap feels ashamed talking to others (especially her neighbors) or being reminded about her experience of forced marriage. She feels she had shamed her children by failing to marry a good man. After her husband left her she raised her four children by herself. She has never thought of getting married again as she’s afraid that a new man might hurt her and her children. Her children take good care of her and work hard to help ease her heavy responsibilities.

Since the end of war, Ms. Pheap and her children have made a living by planting rice, growing vegetables, keeping animals and working for other people. She has worked twice as hard in order to raise her children on her own. Her husband often lived outside her home with his new girlfriend, which caused Ms. Pheap great pain. Her husband eventually became ill and when none of his girlfriends would look after him he returned home to her. Ms. Pheap looked after him until he passed away and paid for his funeral. She lived her life in tremendous pain, degraded and under pressure from her sister-in-law and mother-in-law plus suffering the hurt that her husband caused her. She had thought that her life was full of unhappiness and she felt worthless and regretful.

Ms. Pheap thinks of the members of her self-help group as honest, supportive and helpful people. The group members’ relationship with one another is like that of a brother and sister. Ms. Pheap feels that the self-help group has helped to lessen her mental burdens. She feels happy and supported being able to express herself in a safe environment and talk about her childhood and painful memories. She loves the self-help group activities such as communal meals, drawing, resting together, performing art, doing relaxation exercises, and the group discussions. The members of the group talked and all agreed as a team that they would continue to meet in order to provide support to each other after the CDP program ended. They plan to pay a visit to each other’s home and meet each other at different social events.

Ms. Pheap believes that the establishment of a self-help group for people who have suffered from similar experiences to her has been an effective way for her to reduce the mental distress and loneliness she suffers. Additionally, groups like hers allows members to share their feelings and listen to each other. She used to think that she was stupid and not liked by other people. Now she recognizes that there are people who understand her and can help her solve her problem. She would like to tell other people who have suffered from forced marriage and sexual abuse to stand up for the sake of themselves and their children, and not to ever think about killing themselves. Although she is poor, she is happy with her life now, particularly compared to when her husband was having an affair. She’s happy because she has good children who take good care of her. Ms. Pheap says that she will continue to grow vegetables, keep chickens and go to the pagoda on a regular basis.
Sotheary YIM is a Clinical Psychologist and trauma therapist with eight years of experience working in social development sector in Cambodia. She has been socially engaged in bringing attention to psychology and its need in Cambodian society. Sotheary has extensive professional experience with survivors of trauma from Khmer Rouge era. Recently, her work focuses specifically on the Gender-based Violence during the KR. Sotheary received her master’s degree in Clinical Psychology and Trauma Treatment in 2010 from Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) and holds several others international training qualifications: Human Right and Peace in the Post-conflict countries; Transitional Justice in the context of post-conflict countries; Psycho-traumatology and Trauma Treatment and EMDR (Eyes Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) etc. With extensive professional practice and supervision, Sotheary received the EMDR Licensed (EMDR practitioner and supervisor) from EMDR-Europe.