



## The Progress Report of Project Operation Unchain (POU)

### The case vignette that the team is still continuing to follow up

Mr. SS Thea, 26 years old, living with parents in Kumrieng District, Battambang province. He is the youngest child among 5 siblings. He accommodation is a tumbledown tent behind the house and he has been chained by his left ankle to a mango tree for 3 years. Without walls around him he is exposed with wind, rain and mosquitoes. He sleeps on a wooden floor and is usually quiet, but sometimes he shouts loudly as if scolding someone. When the family heard about "Operation Unchain", a commune committee member, who is responsible for children and women affairs, reported this case to the TPO mobile team. He was assessed and treated in September 16, 2015.

The disorder manifested in 2009, characterized by remarkable strange behaviors. He was restless, sleepless and aggressive. He destroyed things inappropriately. He talked nonsense and sometimes was violent towards his parents following a command voice he heard. He often hallucinated and saw young ladies staying in a tamarind tree before his house including a famous lady (Ms. Eva). He fell in love and communicated with this famous lady of his hallucination daily. He collected broken electronic devices to fix at home like he thought he was electrician.

His parents believed that the spirit living in the tree possessed him, so they cut the tree down and took him to see 4 different traditional healers (Kru Boran) before eventually taking him to see mental health professionals at a psychiatric outpatient unit in Battambang Provincial Hospital. His parents sold a 10 hectare land to afford the treatment both with traditional healers and the doctors. The medicines helped him sleep better but the aggressiveness remained, and disturbed family members and others. Due to their lack of knowledge about mental health, living far from treatment services, and depleted funds, the parents gave up the effort to bring him for continued treatment. He became more and more aggressive towards surroundings, destroyed properties of others such as car glass, etc. When feeling like they had no choices left, in 2012 his parents decided to chain him up and wait for him to die.

His older brother, SS Khoeun, 30 years old, also suffered from a chronic psychotic disorder for many years. Since he did not disturb others, the parents let him live without chains.

Both cases received treatment from TPO mobile team at the same time. Following the continued treatment for 3 months, Mr. SS Thea became less aggressive, able to communicate coherently with family members. The parents decided to unchain him. Whereas his brother, he could perform some tasks at pagoda. He currently lives with the monks.

TPO mobile team plans to follow up the case every 2 months, and are looking for possibilities to maintain the treatment through the closest public mental health services as soon as possible.

