



## Cambodia

# Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse and their Supporters Progress Report 2010- 2011

### **Introduction:**

Welcome to the latest progress report of the unique Chab Dai Coalition project - First Step Cambodia. Produced to update partners, donors and supporters on our progress in the last year, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support and encouragement that has made this possible. This report outlines our key achievements of this year and suggests ways forward to continue meeting our goals.

### **First Step is one year old!**

On April 26<sup>th</sup> 2011 First Step was one year old! The team celebrated our birthday on their Annual Retreat and Strategic Planning workshop in Kompong Som. It is hard to believe that we have been together for a year – during that time we have worked hard to establish the project and made significant progress in many areas but continue to recognise that in many respects, our work has just begun. We feel confident that with your continued support we are well placed to achieve our longer term goals.

### **Turning research findings into reality:**

Several of our team were involved in the first ever research study in Cambodia to focus on the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation of boys and young men - “I thought it could never happen to boys”. Whilst published three years ago, it still serves as a guide to our core activities by placing the needs of boys and young men, at the centre of all we hope to achieve, forming the foundation stones of all our activities.



Over the last year we have worked to develop an expansive and flexible range of social work and other activities related to **Prevention & Prevention, Support and Advocacy & Education**. Our holistic approach ensures that beneficiaries include individual boys and young men, families, communities and others within the wider sphere such as local authorities, International and local NGOs, coalitions, educational institutions, donors and Government.

**Developing Unique Learning Opportunities and the 'Boys First' Curriculum:**

Our research and ongoing discussions with NGO partners indicate that those striving to support boys and young men have a variety of significant needs. In September 2010 the very first intake of trainees, representing eleven local and international NGOs started the unique 'Boys First' curriculum which includes 280 hours of learning. The first phase of this was completed in February and that group is now taking part in an additional twelve follow up days and will graduate in September.

Feedback and evaluations from the training have been overwhelmingly positive and in many cases the training has proven to be transformational, dramatically changing how participants viewed the issue of male sexual abuse and the way they work with male survivors. One participant shared his thoughts, indicating how there is a need to respond both on a personal and organisational level to this issue:

*I have learned many different topics... most are new for me... now I understand that after sexual abuse so many different things happen to survivors... another layer was learning about how fear can affect boys... It can be hard to find solutions and then we get 'stuck' and blame ourselves or the boys...*



*I think that if all helpers can learn like we do right now then it will help a lot... when social workers do things based on their habits it can be harmful to boys... This training has really helped me open my eyes and made me realise*

*that we often make assumptions, not look for the reasons behind a boy's behaviour, sometimes blame them and are then unable to help...*



*In the community people mostly talk about girls' abuse... after this (training) it makes me understand that we need to change strategies and raise more awareness of boys too...*



The feedback and evaluations have enabled us to further improve the content and methodology. A new group of trainees has been interviewed and begin the next cycle of training in June through to November of 2011. The continued sponsorship of Hong Kong based donors CLSA enables us to provide the training at an affordable price and we thank them for their invaluable support.

In March of 2011 we received a visit from faculty members from Huddersfield University – one of the leading UK based social welfare centres of learning - and are exploring ways for them to support the development of the

curriculum, which may lead to accreditation in the years ahead.

First Step has also facilitated a variety of learning events and workshops in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and this will continue. A presentation about the issue of sexual abuse and boys was also made at the CLSA investor's forum in September 2010 – taking the message to an international audience.

### ***The Chab Dai Boys Forum – promoting partnership for positive change:***

The Chab Dai coalition has from its inception strived to assist members to learn, share and build positive networks and this continues. The First Step training has therefore also been enhanced by the regular facilitation of the Chab Dai Boys Forum – bringing together those interested in working with boys to engage in learning, discussion, networking and sharing. We firmly believe and have a strong commitment to achieving positive change through partnership and this has proved a popular initiative.

In the past year over one hundred individuals representing over thirty different organisations have attended the forums, which have addressed issues of discrimination, masculinity, cultural and social barriers to change, and beliefs and facts about the sexual abuse of boys. Presentations from guests such as Glenn Miles PhD from Love 146, and others from Mumbai, India, enabled those attending consider the issues of sexual abuse from a wider, global perspective. The forum has also presented a number of films from other continents that have further expanded the understanding of those attending.

### ***Social Worker and Managers Forums prove popular:***

We recognise that the needs of staff and Managers within NGOs are varied and in 2011 started providing regular and more focused forum meetings. There is a high demand for accurate information and support from those working with male survivors and we strive to ensure these needs are met. First Step will provide 18 different forums in the next twelve

months – a vital part of our Advocacy, Education and Support strategy.

The project is also offering free, confidential one to one support, consultation and supervision to those working with boys in Cambodia and similarly there is growing demand for this initiative.

### ***'Stepping Out' – The Siem Reap Boys Forum:***

In March 2011 the team hosted the first Boys Forum in Siem Reap, attended by 29 people from fifteen NGOs. The appetite for support and training in relation to boys issues in this tourist hub is significant. We plan to return to Siem Reap throughout 2011 and 2012 to provide training and will be carrying out a mapping and needs assessment of NGOs in that city. We anticipate that this will lead to First Step opening a small office in 2012 in order that training, support and social work services can be provided on a regular basis.

### ***Developing the First Step project:***

From a very early stage one of our primary goals was to create a team of social worker – trainers who could not only deliver high quality and unique learning opportunities to others but also provide a range of sensitive and appropriate services to male survivors of sexual abuse, their families and supporters. This also ensures the training provided to others will evolve continually to reflect the reality of work with boys and men.

The small team has worked very hard to achieve high standards throughout the year in relation to all of our activities and numerous hours were also spent networking with teams and NGOs in a variety of settings. We remain committed to working in partnership with all for positive change. In April of 2011 we welcomed four new staff to the team – Yung Chanthao, Suy Kunthea and Im Sreytha join as trainer – social workers, whilst Khem Sopharin joins as translator interpreter.



**First Step Cambodia team**

### ***Developing easily accessible community based services:***

We knew at the beginning of our journey that creating a new team providing services for male survivors presented major challenges and would take time. Therefore, alongside the intensive team capacity building process, we networked with existing partners and developed relationships with others from within and outside the Chab Dai coalition.

This had resulted in MoUs with several key partners and First Step staff will now be placed within other organisations to build relationships with children and partners to carry out their work - enabling them to focus in priority areas where boys are considered at high risk. This has also led to a growing number of direct referrals being made to the team from within Phnom Penh but also Kompong Thom and Siem Reap.

Ongoing reflection, learning and planning of social work activities will ensure we develop services that respond to the reality on the ground in diverse communities. This may in time lead to the development of new and innovative services (such as outreach, drop in facilities and safe spaces for boys) or the enhancement of services that already exist with partners. We continue therefore to be grateful to our partners and donors whose support and flexibility provides us with the time and space to be creative in our approach.

### ***'Speaking our Truth' – a partnership approach to producing films and resources:***

For some time we planned to produce a documentary style film to highlight the issue of sexual abuse of males in Cambodia, which would both support and be a key feature of our Advocacy and Education strategy in the future. The film, titled 'Speaking Our Truth', features the voices and stories of male survivors. Initially the film will be used with NGOs, local authorities and others to act as a vehicle for awareness raising, prevention and support initiatives. It is anticipated that additional resource and shorter versions will be created to enhance awareness raising tools and other activities with families and boys.

The support of Hong Kong donor CLSA and US based Love 146 enabled us to start the process of making the film in late 2010. We are grateful that an exceptional Phnom Penh based film maker, Daniel Lanctot has lead this project in the sensitive and respectful manner required for such an important undertaking.

'Speaking Our Truth' has been produced in partnership with and includes contributions from students and staff from the social work faculty at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, children and arts centre staff of Sihanouk Ville based M'lop Tapang, members of the First Step team and other NGOs including Chab Dai, TPO and Friends International. We believe that the finished product will have a dramatic impact on the way this issue is viewed. 'Speaking Our Truth' will be completed in time for its premiere later this year.

### ***The First Step website - reaching a global audience:***

Our experiences of the last year continue to teach us that the need for accurate and helpful information about boys' issues is considerable and requires this to be a vital component of our strategy. Accurate information leads to empowerment and positive change. We also note that use of the internet is growing significantly in Cambodia and South East Asia.

The First Step web site, developed with the expertise and support of Phnom Penh based charity Yejj, went 'live' in September 2010.

Feedback has been very positive and in just eight months over 2500 visits from 65 countries have taken place. Over 50% of these have come from within Cambodia whilst others hail from the USA, Europe, Several South East Asian countries and others including India, Australia, Russia, Argentina and Yemen. The sexual abuse and exploitation of boys is increasingly becoming recognised as a global issue and the site has enabled us to reach out beyond borders to share and support others.

The site will be available in Khmer within the next few weeks and continue to be updated with important news, features and information as the work of First Step continues.

The site can be accessed at [www.first-step-cambodia.org](http://www.first-step-cambodia.org)

### **Creating a Specialist Resource Centre:**

In response to the needs of partners we set up our resource centre - providing easy access to a range of research, reports, resources and tools useful for working with boys and men. This includes an extensive range of publications and materials related to sexual abuse of course but include others related to health, relationships, violence, fatherhood, boys' development, sexual health etc. - thus encouraging a holistic approach to working with males. So far over one hundred people have joined the library and made use of what is the largest collection of resources related to sexual abuse of males in Cambodia. We plan to continue expanding our range of Khmer language resources throughout 2011.

### **Developing regional and cross border partnerships:**

We recognise abuse of boys as also an emerging issue within the region and have made efforts at networking with others over the last year. This has started to bear fruit and we are in a good position to support the work of others in South East Asia. First Step is also a member of the advisory panel for UK based CEOP who also work in Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines and has contributed to presentations and documents being shared within this geographical area. In 2011- 2012 we plan to develop closer links with regional partners through sharing and learning opportunities.

### **Global Partnerships:**

In March 2010, Alastair Hilton, project technical advisor, attended an international conference organised by the US based Male Survivor organisation ([www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org)) in New York and was invited to participate on an international panel with representatives from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Jamaica and the UK. He shared information related to the work and development of the new project, which was well received.

As a result of contacts made in the US, through the web site and other networking, First Step has also contributed to the development of services, research and resources in several countries and developed contacts to support the work of others in Africa. The sexual abuse of men and boys is gradually becoming recognised as a global issue and we feel privileged to share our experiences with others.

### **Award winners!**

In 2010 First Step received an award for Preventative Intervention from the Board of US based Male Survivor, the leading US based organisation working in the field.

In March of 2011 we received further news that UK based CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) have honoured the First Step team with an award for **'Special Recognition in Tackling Child Sexual Abuse'**, in recognition of the contribution we have made in the past year and the shared endeavours we have taken with CEOP in the protection and safeguarding of children and young people. We are delighted to be recognised at such an early stage of our project life and look forward a continued partnership with CEOP in the years ahead.

### **International Days for male Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence:**

In 2010 the First Step Project was invited to become country representative for the Advisory Council of a new global initiative aiming to raise awareness of issues for male survivors through two International Days of events in September 2010.

In partnership with M'lop Tapang in Sihanouk Ville, we held an arts event and concert to highlight this issue of the sexual abuse of boys in Cambodia. The event was attended by hundreds

of people and was considered a great success. We are in the planning stages of another event to be held in September of 2011. For further information of this important global initiative, follow the link below.

<http://www.internationaldaysmalesurvivorsofsexualabuseandviolence.info>

### **Continuing the growth of Global Partnerships:**

First Step Cambodia was successful in gaining funding from Promundo, a Brazilian based NGO, who in partnership with The Oak Foundation are supporting the work of several projects across the world developing work with boys and young men, including those from Nepal, India, Brazil, Nicaragua, Jamaica and Costa Rica. Promundo are being very innovative in their approach and creating the opportunity for all involved to meet and develop what is essentially a global research project. First Step is very honoured to be considered for this initiative and this is testament to our work of the last year or so.

First Step will meet again with all the partners later this year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to share findings and experiences – further news will be shared at a later date. This partnership has also enabled First Step to share experiences and resources on a regular basis with a project based in Nicaragua and we hope to carry out a visit there later this year.

As awareness of the issue of abuse of males grows, we have been joined in our work by new donors from Europe and Asia, thus strengthening our broad base of donor support. Hong Kong based donors CLSA agreed to fund our work from May 2010 and from January 2011, FELM, based in Finland have also committed to First Step. Other private donors and also US based Imago Dei also came on board in 2011. We are very grateful for the backing of such insightful, creative and innovative donors, which enables us to enter the next phase of our development with optimism.

The sexual abuse and exploitation of boys is increasingly being recognised as a global issue and we are proud to be part of a global community that is searching for solutions and promoting hope.

### **And finally...a big First Step thank you!**

Everybody at First Step would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our friends, supporters and donors from all over the world who have enabled the dream to become a reality in the last twelve months. We continue to work hard to overcome the obstacles and repay your faith but also recognise we would not have got this far without you.

There have been many important and valuable contributions including those from Richard and Peta Lee, Jeremy Floyd, Eeva- Maria Stayton, Lynne Martin, Daniel Lanctot, Glenn Miles, Helen Sworn and the staff from The Chab Dai Coalition. Maggie Eno, Eve Sarin and the team at M'lop Tapang continue to be incredible partners that continually inspire us. The team from Huddersfield University provided us with an unexpected and timely boost, for which we are very grateful.

A special thanks for the training participants for working hard, having an open mind, being prepared to embrace change and new ideas and providing invaluable feedback. Your warmth and humour will also ensure that our lives will never be the same again!

Thanks also to our committed community of donors, past and present, who demonstrated great foresight and imagination where many others hesitated. They include The British Embassy, CLSA, Love 146, For the Silent, Equitas, Giving Hands, Tenth Church (Vancouver), Ecopac, I Empathise, Child Wise Australia, FELM; Imago Dei, Little Things with Love and a number of private individuals. We will continue to do all we can to repay your commitment and trust.

If you have any further inquiries, please do not hesitate to make contact.

Thank you all for your continuing support and interest.

The First Step Cambodia team.

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