

The Red Pencil activities

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Letter to the Editor

The Red Pencil has seen a vigorous expansion of activities in the first half of 2015, having partnered with different NGOs and carried out humanitarian missions across countries. The Red Pencil had missions in India with the foundation to help children from low-income families with behavioral problems; in India with an aim to provide art therapy sessions to children with cancer who face long-term hospitalization and heavy treatments; in Sri Lanka with the aim to reach out to neglected and marginalized individuals of all ages; in Myanmar with a goal to reach out to orphaned children, the self-esteem of poor and neglected children; in Thailand with the aim to conduct clinical sessions with teens belonging to the Mong community affected by discrimination, violence, and abuse. The Red Pencil also collaborated with independent artists in Iceland in implementing the Rain the Rainer programme that assists caregivers in overcoming their own distress from the Christchurch earthquake aftermath.

The devastating earthquake in Chile and a tsunami that left behind casualties, fatalities and emotional damage prompted the Red Pencil to offer its help together with the foundation to create a team of artists who were deployed to help manage the aim of offering trauma relief services. During the disaster, the artists helped to

assess and determine effective therapeutic interventions for children affected by the recent natural disaster;

support teachers and nurses in engaging children through a more therapeutic modality;

promote self-care and emotional awareness in the community.

It was observed that therapeutic art-making in a safe space allowed the victims to regain mastery and a sense of normalcy again. Expressing their feelings and thoughts through art therapy could also start to make sense of the devastation around them in a safe and sorted environment. As the children from the community came together to interact with one another in tented areas at the same time when schools were being suspended, the government simple activities like playing games, making art, processing feelings, and experiencing structure proved to be an effective path to healing.

The second half of 2015 began with random humanitarian missions in the Middle East and Europe with partners that deal with human trafficking and conflict zones refugees. In Lebanon, the Red Pencil worked with the foundation to empower a community of Syrian refugees, children, parents, and caregivers living in settlement camps; in Romania to help to help women who have been victims of human trafficking. There will also be humanitarian missions to America; through the foundation to help children and adults victims of human trafficking; with the aim to provide solutions to end overt and covert prostitution and to empower children, families, and caregivers facing overt, hidden, and domestic violence.

As always, we are very thankful to all dedicated artists, supporters, and sponsors for their presence and contribution into this world especially.