INTO THE LIGHT

YOUNG FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS IN THAILAND’S SEAFOOD SECTOR AND THEIR ACCESS TO DECENT WORK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was conducted as part of Stopping Exploitation through Accessible Services (SEAS of Change), with support from Plan International Finland, Plan International Sweden, Plan International USA, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), KESKO Corporation and the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation. We are grateful for the support from the Plan regional office team, Plan Thailand team and Plan Cambodia team for their support at every stage of the research process. We are also indebted to Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN) and Plan Cambodia for their support in the field. They helped arrange interviews with key informants and provided us with crucial information that formed the core of this report. We are immensely grateful for the support provided by Sotheary Chhay, Rany Teng, Thaileng Thol and Sakada Srur for conducting interviews in Khmer language, and to Thundanai Yoosamran, Phastraporn Salaisook and Pilapan Koksee-Amnuay for their support in Thai language interviews. Last but not the least, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all respondents and informants both from government offices and civil society, who generously shared their time and knowledge with us in spite of their busy schedule.

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Kyoko Kusakabe

Submitted to Plan International
25 May 2018

Cover picture: © Plan International
Picture below: Yom wants her son to study and not end up as a fisherman. © Plan International
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoLVT</td>
<td>Department of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEF</td>
<td>Health Equity Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDPoor</td>
<td>Identification of Poor Households Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUU</td>
<td>Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI</td>
<td>Key Informant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPN</td>
<td>Labour Rights Promotion Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoLVT</td>
<td>Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIS</td>
<td>National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPRDC</td>
<td>National Programme for Rehabilitation and Development of Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV</td>
<td>Nationality Verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNS</td>
<td>Social Networking Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPPF</td>
<td>Social Protection Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among the global 258 million migrants globally (Ladek 2018), an estimated 32.25 million are aged 15 to 24, whilst 51.6 percent of migrant adolescents and youth worldwide live in developing countries with the largest number residing in Asia at 36 percent (UNDESA 2016). The proportion of women among the young migrants in developing countries is at a significant 44.1 percent (GMG 2014). Despite the high proportional number of young female migrants, they continue to face a unique set of challenges in navigating the labour market and achieving their aspirations compared to their older counterparts.

In the labour market, gender-based discrimination, traditional practices, fewer opportunities and the lower value placed on women’s economic contributions often result in higher rates of unemployment among young women. However, issues faced by young migrants have been less focused on within migration literature and support programs. This study sheds light on this often-ignored group of migrants, focusing on a group of young Cambodian women migrants in Thailand working in the seafood sector.

The fishing industry in Thailand is a sector that is heavily reliant on migrant labour. Fisheries exports from Thailand were pegged at USD6.6 billion in 2014. The fishing and seafood industry employed more than 600,000 people in 2017, of whom 302,000 were registered migrant workers (ILO, 2018). Migrant workers are therefore an important resource for the Thai fisheries sector. At the same time, studies have reported the harsh working conditions in the fisheries sector for migrants in Thailand (Brennan, 2009; Chantavanich, Laodumrongchhai and Stringer, 2016; Derks, 2010; EJF, 2015; ILO and ARCM, 2013; Yukata, Michikita and Tsubota, 2018). In spite of work conditions, young Cambodians continue to migrate to work in the fishing sector. It is important to understand the existing working and living conditions, including their aspirations, in order to ensure that youth within this sector do not face a dead-end with their career and overall life. Young Cambodian women in pursuit of their aspirations are struggling to expand their life choices they face. Opportunities in Thailand and Cambodia for young women migrants within the fisheries sector need to be expanded in order to aspire for a better future.
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research analyses how the role of gender, norms, and stereotypes shape the opportunities that Cambodian young women have, both if they migrate to work in the Thai seafood industry, as well if they stay in their own village in Cambodia. The research focuses on their access to education, training, and social protection services. The aim of the research is to develop appropriate program and policy recommendations for gender transformative interventions both in Thailand and in Cambodia, which would result in ensuring young Cambodian women’s rights as workers and migrants, as well as mothers and as daughters.
1.1 Research Questions

In order to understand young Cambodian women migrant workers’ life choices, the following research questions were explored:

1. What are the gender stereotypes within the fishing supply chain, communities and in their households?
   a. Which roles are limited to men and which ones to women?
   b. Do these roles perpetuate traditional gender norms and reinforce stereotypes?

2. What is the socio-economic situation of adolescent and young Cambodian women (i) working in the fishing industry in Thailand; (ii) living in Thailand as dependents of parents/spouses working in the fishery industry; (iii) left behind in Cambodia by families that have migrated to Thailand to work in the fishery industry; and (iv) who have returned from Thailand?

3. What is the contribution of young Cambodian women and their families to the Thai fisheries industry through their various roles within the supply chain?
   a. What is the cost and benefit of young Cambodian women’s involvement within the supply chain?
   b. What are the subsequent social benefits?

4. What are the factors influencing young Cambodian women’s access to education, training, social protection services, and ultimately, decent work opportunities\(^1\) in both countries?
   a. What are the challenges and obstacles these women face?
   b. How do gender norms affect the decisions of these young women?

5. What can be done to enhance young Cambodian women’s economic advancement, particularly, through access to decent employment opportunities, education, vocational trainings and social protection services?

\(^1\) Decent work refers to “opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace and social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives [and] equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men”, according to ILO’s Decent Work Agenda.
1.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied to this research comprised of desk reviews, in-depth interviews, and informal discussions. In-depth interviews were chosen as the main method of primary data collection as it allowed an exploration of both individual experiences and individual gender ideologies with respect to migrant women’s lives.

Three field studies were carried out: two locations where migrant workers are working for the fisheries sector in Thailand (Rayong and Trat provinces) and one location in Cambodia where nearly half of the respondents working in Thailand migrated from (Prey Veng province), as a reference point to understand the options that young women have back home. The research in Thailand was facilitated by the NGO Labour Rights Promotion Network (LPN), which has been working to promote labour rights in the fishing industry. They have schools for migrant children from fishing communities in Trat and Rayong, which allowed the team access to the communities where the fieldwork was conducted. The study in Prey Veng was conducted in the project village of Plan International Cambodia. In all the study sites, respondents were identified with the help of these NGOs. In Thailand, the field study team, comprised of both Thai and Cambodian nationals, were introduced to the fishing communities where Cambodian workers are most concentrated. The team members went around the communities as well as the migrant landing sites, and interviewed young women aged between 18 and 25, who were available and willing to talk to the team. Interviews were carried out in both Thai and Khmer languages. Twenty young Cambodian women migrant workers were each interviewed in Muang district in Rayong and in Klong Yai district in Trat province.

In Prey Veng, the research team were introduced to the project village of Plan International and interviewed young women introduced by field staff. Six young women aged between 18 and 25 were interviewed in the Peam Chor district within Prey Veng province, Cambodia. These interviews were conducted in Khmer language.

Additionally, 15 Key Informants (KI) in Thailand and Cambodia were interviewed, carried out in informal discussions in all three locations. KI’s interviewed include NGO staff and village heads in Cambodia and Thailand; a health volunteer in Thailand; employer representatives in Thailand; officials from a local school, and from the Department of Labor and Vocational Training in Cambodia. Data collection was carried out in December 2017 and analysis was carried out between January–March 2018.

1.3 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The seafood supply chain covered in this study includes:

- Post-harvest fishing-related activities in Thailand (for e.g. onshore sorting)
- Fish processing2

This study did not undertake a comprehensive supply chain study of the Thai fishing industry. The main research tool applied was in-depth interviews, and the selection of respondents did not follow probabilistic sampling principles. Young women were on call at all hours and therefore data was collected from individuals who were available at the time of the interview. The data presented is specific to the period (December 2017), location (Trat, Rayong, and Prey Veng), and key actors (migrant Cambodian women aged 18-25 years), and hence, cannot be extrapolated to the Thai fisheries industry as a whole.

2 Only enterprises and home-based workers are explored within this research and not fish processing for personal and/or household consumption.
Rayong and Trat provinces are both situated along the eastern seaboard of Thailand. Fishing vessels are loaded and unloaded at the piers along the waterfront by migrant men. The catch is sorted at the piers by migrant women and then shipped to factories for further processing. The good fish are packed for export and the rest is processed as feed for aquaculture. A small portion is also sold in the local market or given to workers. Processing in factories is carried out by both migrant women and men. The catch includes a wide variety of sea creatures, each of which is processed differently by different skilled workers at home and in factories. All the fishing vessels use nets, which are in constant need of repair. Net repair is a major livelihood for both Thai locals and migrant workers.

Rayong has more commercial fishing ports (41) compared to Trat (11), with larger ships docking at Rayong with larger-scale catch. Most of the fish in Rayong go to processing factories nearby and are packed for export. Women in Rayong have a varied livelihood both in the seafood industry and outside it. They work in the docks, in factories and at home to sort, clean and process the catch. In Rayong, migrant women earn around THB300 per day. They tend to be in Thailand longer and visit Cambodia less frequently.

On the other hand, Klong Yai district in Trat province is 10km away from the Cambodian border and the landing site stands alone without any major factories around. Trat has more small-scale fishing ports (101) compared to Rayong (53) and catch is used for both export and domestic consumption. The Fish are processed solely in the factories along with larger crabs, whilst only the smaller crabs are processed at home by women. Respondents in Trat have border passes, pink cards3, work permits and are paid lower wages (THB 5,000 - 6,000 per month) compared to migrant workers in Rayong. At the same time, they tend to have more connections with their communities back home and visit frequently.

3 Pink-colored cards were issued by the Thai government since the past two decades to migrant workers who registered themselves at the local OSS. It gives them temporary permission to stay and work in Thailand, though they may only live in the province where they are registered.
In both locations, Cambodian men working as seafarers are bound in contracts for 10-22 months and are paid a lump sum after completion of the agreed term of contract. Until then, they are given a small stipend every month, which is not sufficient to support their families through remittance. As a result, the wives and/or sisters of the men migrate with them to Thailand to work in the fish processing industry in order to earn a daily income while they wait for their male counterpart’s pay. Women are found in seafood processing jobs such as fish-sorting, squid-peeling, crab-picking, fish-processing, shrimp-processing, anchovy-processing, boiling fish, drying fish, making fish sauce among other roles. In the fishing industry, women also mend and patch nets—both at home and at the piers. Additionally, women are also found in the domestic labour industry carrying out professional domestic work as housekeepers and cleaners in hotels, hospitals and offices, and as waitresses or helpers in restaurants.

Ta So village of Ruessei Srok commune in Prey Veng province, Cambodia, is about 10–20 km from the Vietnamese border. Prey Veng is one of the poorest and the most populous provinces in Cambodia. The livelihood in Prey Veng is largely paddy farming, which is now being modernised with short-term rice varieties and machines for ploughing and harvesting, tasks which traditionally employed much of the population. However, according to NIS (2016: 57), 41.5 percent of the residents are farmers (including farm labourers) with less work available, leading to migration becoming a natural way of life for people in Prey Veng. About 9 percent of the population are internal migrants, while 4.2 percent of the population are overseas migrants (UNICEF, 2017).

### 1.5 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

About 30 percent of the interviewed migrants were 18–20 years old, 25 percent were aged 21–23 years and 45 percent of the interviewees were 24–25 years old. Despite their young age, 75 percent of them were married and 23 of them had one–three children. Seventy-five percent of them were married and 23 of them had between one and three children. Among the women who said they had been married at some point, 13 had one child, ranging in age from infancy to nine years, while eight had two children each and two had three children each. Two women were pregnant at the time of interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–20 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–23 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24–25 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17 (85%)</td>
<td>3 (15%)</td>
<td>12 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

More than 70 percent of the respondents are currently married. One respondent is a widow. One respondent is separated, marrying at the age of 17 but separating shortly after as her husband was an addict. Among the 40 respondents in Thailand, 42.5 percent have been here for between 1 and 5 years, while 27.5 percent have been here for between 6 and 10 years and 30 percent have been here for more than 10 years.

4 Interview with KI, Prey Veng province, 26 December 2017
5 Interview with KIs, village headman and NGO staff, Prey Veng province, 26 and 28 December 2017
Table 1.2: Respondents’ reported length of stay in Thailand (by province)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (7.5 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8 (20 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 (22.5 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11 (27.5 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 (22.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>40 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

Table 1.3: Profile of respondents by place of origin and destination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of origin (province)</th>
<th>Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rayong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prey Veng</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tboung Khmum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svay Rieng</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takeo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koh Kong</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Cham</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sihanouk Ville</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The next chapter presents the working and living situation in Cambodia for young women, detailing their livelihood options and the gender norms and barriers that are determining the direction of their lives. Chapter 3 provides evidence-based analysis of the gender norms and stereotypes, socio-economic situation and cost and benefit of young women’s migration from Cambodia to the seafood industry in Rayong and Trat, through young migrants’ experiences at their end destination. Chapter 4 provides the overall analysis of life advancement options for young Cambodian women.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The research design and questions of this study underwent through an ethical review by Plan International. In order to protect the identity of our respondents, they are identified by a number and/or place, to ensure their immigration status and employment is not jeopardised; they do not suffer stress; their children (if any) are protected, and their lives are not disturbed in any way by the outcome of this research. Information about the project and information collected during this project will only be used for academic and reporting purposes, with the aim to improve the lives of young female migrant workers.

All respondents were approached through intermediaries: NGO workers active in the area. Respondents were informed about the objectives of the project and requested to participate voluntarily and could withdraw from the research at any time without any repercussions. Interviews were recorded with consent from participants, which were then transcribed and typed out. This formed the raw primary data for analysis. Data from each set of interviews were handled by two people only: the researcher and the translator. All digital interviews and transcriptions will be destroyed after May 2018.
Chapter 2

The context in Cambodia: options for young women

2.1 Livelihood in Prey Veng

More than half of all households (59 percent) in Cambodia are small land owners with less than 1 hectare of land, while 25 percent of the households own 1-3 hectares of agricultural land (NIS 2016: 19). Less than 40 percent of all agriculture land in Cambodia is irrigated (NIS 2016: 22). Cambodian rice yields were reported at 3.3 tonnes per hectare in 2014. It is the lowest in Southeast Asia, according to a study by the ADB (2014).

Literacy rate in Cambodia is slightly higher for women (92.6 percent) compared to men (91.9 percent) for the age group of 15-24 years old (NIS 2016: 41). More girls than boys are enrolled in school at the lower levels. However, from lower secondary, there are more boys than girls. The Gender Parity Index for net attendance rate in upper secondary level is 0.9 (NIS 2016: 48). Only 24.9 percent of women aged 15-24 were in school (NIS 2016: 41). Almost 5 percent of women aged 15-24 years have never attended school, and the reasons given was their duty to contribute to the household income (42 percent), too young (13 percent) and did not want to go to school (12 percent) (NIS 2016: 44). Despite the availability of free education in Cambodia, the average annual expense for lower secondary and upper secondary are 876,000 and 1,521,000 Riels respectively (NIS 2016: 47).

In Ta So village in Prey Veng province, there are about 150 students in each Grade from 1 to 8, with almost equal boys and girls. In Grade 9, there are only about 110 students, with more boys than girls. In Grade 10, this is further reduced to about 100 students, with the percentage of boys being about 55 percent. In Grade 11, there are just 67 students in all: 60 percent boys and 40 percent girls. In Grade 12, there are only 46 students (40 percent of them girls), showing that two-thirds of all students (more than 70 percent of the girls) have dropped out between Grades 8 and 126.

6 Interview with KI, school official, Prey Veng province, 26 December 2017
The average attained education level of young women in Prey Veng is middle school\(^7\). Since girls drop out of school early, they are also likely to get married early, and start working early. With this limited education, the occupational choices of young women in Prey Veng are limited (Table 2.1). The core occupation for women (and men) is agriculture, mainly paddy rice production in-season. Wages will slightly increase if they migrate to Phnom Penh or to other provinces, but for young women, there is still a strong expectation that they should be near home and parents are less likely to allow them to go away from home alone\(^8\). “Girls can’t travel far from home because they could be raped and they will get a bad reputation,” according to a KI in Prey Veng. The preferred non-farm occupations for young Cambodian women are retail-vending and micro-businesses, however, formal training for these two careers does not exist in Prey Veng province\(^9\).

Table 2.1: Jobs available for young women in Cambodia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs in the village in Prey Veng</th>
<th>Jobs in Phnom Penh</th>
<th>Jobs in other provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural worker</strong></td>
<td><strong>Market vendor, street vendor, night vendor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Agricultural worker</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD 60-150 per month in season</td>
<td>USD 200-300 per month</td>
<td>USD 150-200 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small micro vendor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Domestic worker, nanny, housekeeping staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD 100 per month</td>
<td>USD 100-200 per month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic worker</strong></td>
<td><strong>Garment factory worker</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD 60-100 per month</td>
<td>USD 153-170 per month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helper in shop</strong></td>
<td><strong>Helper in shop</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD 100-120 per month</td>
<td>USD 150-200 per month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction worker</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USD 190 per month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Infographic excludes option of working on their own farm. (Source: Field survey 2017)

\(^7\) Interview with KI, village headman, Prey Veng province, 26 December 2017

\(^8\) Interview with KIs, Prey Veng province, 26 December 2017

\(^9\) Interview with KIs, Prey Veng, 28 December 2017
2.2 CASE STUDY: DECLINING RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN PREY VENG

The limited option for earning an income creates both low income and without much social protection in Cambodia, leading girls and young women vulnerable to risks. Girls are expected to support the family in the time of difficulties, as in the case of Rattana below.

Rattana is the 19-year-old daughter of a farmer. Her parents had one hectare of land, one buffalo, some chicken, pigs, and four children – two boys and two girls. With their rain-fed land, they have one tonne of rice which they sold at 100,000-120,000 Riels. This was not enough to feed the family. Then, her mother fell sick and her father borrowed money for the treatment. Further, they lost all their poultry during the bird flu epidemic. Their income from pig farming decreased because of the influx of cheap pork imported from Vietnam.

Rattana quit school at Grade 8, since the family did not have enough money to support expenses for her to attend school, which is about 1,000-1,500 Riel per day. She did not receive any encouragement to continue studying from teachers or family. She and her brothers then went to work as agriculture labourers. Her brothers got jobs which included spreading herbicides, chemical fertilizers and pumping water. The brothers also fished in ponds to sell catches for daily support. However, agriculture work for young women is restricted to transplanting and harvesting. These works are seasonal and irregular, and in the past few years, they are unable to find work harvesting rice because farmers are renting machines instead of hiring labourers.

With limited options for employment, Rattana and her sister decided to migrate to Thailand. However, Rattana returned to her village because of a sickness she developed, but is unable to acquire an IDPoor card\(^{10}\) (which allows them to access state support for the poor) because the local authorities consider her family above the poverty line as her sister continues to work in Thailand.

\(^{10}\) A government-issued card that certifies that the family is below the poverty line.
Box 2.1: Social protection in Cambodia

In 2017, the Cambodian government finalised the Social Protection Policy Framework (SPPF). The framework aims to reform and scale up social protection measures, incorporating the right to social protection as enshrined in Cambodia’s Constitution in line with the Third Rectangular Strategy, the socio-economic policy agenda for the Fifth Legislature (2013-2018).

As of December 2017, Cambodia’s most significant social protection intervention was the Health Equity Fund (HEF), which gives at least 2 million poor and vulnerable individuals access to healthcare and other benefits (OECD 2017). Access to healthcare services for poor and vulnerable households has improved considerably with HEFs, which has also reduced out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure across the country. However, with dissatisfactory healthcare facilities, beneficiaries still opt for private facilities over public ones.

Cambodia has three schemes to help people access healthcare without assuming a financial burden: HEF, vouchers on IDPoor Cards, and voluntary health insurance for the near-poor (Phnom Penh Post 2014). Despite this, for many Cambodians, free healthcare is still difficult to access because of the current infrastructure (distance and transportation to healthcare centers, limited working hours, poor patient to center ratio), cost (direct and indirect), quality (skills of staff, availability of drugs and equipment), lack of information, and cultural beliefs (Bigdeni and Annear, 2009).

In addition, social protection in Cambodia also includes: food distribution where and when needed; health initiatives like maternal and neo-natal care; community-based insurance schemes; healthcare for people with disabilities, the elderly, and orphans; work-for-food programs; vocational training programs; scholarships for poor children; public construction and infrastructure development in areas battling food insecurity and extreme poverty, and other humanitarian assistance. Scholarships and school meals cover a small portion of the population, offer meagre benefits, and rely on donors. Public sector workers get pension, disability and survivor benefits. There is no unemployment insurance.

The Ministries of Labour and Vocational Training; Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation; and Women’s Affairs are in charge of managing the social protection policy (Sann n.d. p. 136). Funds for social protection have risen from 1.5 percent to 1.7 percent of GDP or USD159 million in 2008 to USD176 million in 2009 (Mideros et al. 2012, p. 9). Donor support comes from the World Bank, UNDP and others. The National Programme for Rehabilitation and Development of Cambodia (NPRDC), set up in 1994, aims to enhance sustainable growth, equity and justice. The Socio-Economic Development Plan and the Poverty Reduction Strategy were also geared towards fortifying social protection (Sann n.d. p.133).

For women, the IDpoor programs facilitates access to health services, but access is mediated by male leaders at the local level. As a result, women-headed households (31.2%) have lower access to social protection services than male-headed households (68.8%) (OECD 2017: 102). Maternal and child health has improved and maternal mortality has reduced drastically over the past decade from 472 in 2005, to 161 in 201511.

2.3 CULTURAL BARRIERS TO GIRLS’ EDUCATION, TRAINING AND MOBILITY

Not only are girls expected to contribute to the family economically, but they are also expected to primarily adhere to the decisions of their parents and/or husbands, rather than pursue independent decisions. A young woman is expected to care for the children and maintain the upkeep of the house, restricting the mobility and continued access to knowledge and information. Thida’s story below shows such a case.

Thida is a young woman living in a small village in Prey Veng province. She is 19 years old and has an infant daughter. Her husband is a farmer and lives in the farm he works at. He visits the house in the village every 2-3 days. She has a shop selling snacks, clothing, household supplies and basic farming supplies. Her shop and house are next to her mother’s house and restaurant.

She was married after Grade 10 because her grandmother told her mother: “you have only 2 girls, no boys. You should get [Thida] married so that she can help you in future.” Her grandmother also believed that a girl has to be around the kitchen and cannot go outside to work like men, so there would be no point in educating further. Her mother said that she loves Thida very much and worries about her safety should she be far from home. For example, If Thida gets raped, her reputation will be spoiled. It is for this reason that Thida’s mother has a house and a shop for Thida next door, to keep her daughter safe.

Thida was a dutiful daughter, so she got married to a man her mother chose, even though she would have liked to study further. When she became pregnant, she suffered from a number of health problems, for which her mother spent a large amount of money treating. After her child was born, her health recovered, but she said that her husband’s attitude has changed after the baby was born. He drinks and scolds her more now. She is scared of her husband and looks to her mother for all kinds of support in life, including childcare, health and financial support, as well as dealing with her husband’s behaviour. She is too scared to ask her husband to allow her to study or go for vocational training. She does not have anyone to look after her small child as there is no preschool facility. She is afraid of alienating her husband and her mother as they are the only people she can get support from, so she confines herself to childcare at home.

Young women in rural areas are therefore trapped in the cycle of early marriage and subsistence livelihood by gender norms. Due to the gender norm of obedience, lack of choices and fear of losing their loved ones, they are unable to break out of this cycle. The next section further explores the barriers and obstacles faced by young women.
Box 2.2: Vocational training in Cambodia

The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT) was set up in 2005, where its budget grew from USD750,000 in 2006, to USD13 million in 2012 (Un, 2012). As of 2017, 39 polytechnics/institutes and 24 provincial training centers which offer TVET courses and degrees. Student enrollments rose from 27,894 in 2005 to 168,630 in 2009 (ILO & NIS 2010). In 2016-2017, a total of 39,207 students were enrolled in Cambodia, 11,401 of them being women (NIS 2016).

Enrollment in vocational courses is low, as highlighted by Asia Development Bank’s (ADB) senior social sector officer Sophea Mar (Phnom Penh Post, 2015). TVET is often the second choice, with people failing to realise that graduates of these programs are more likely to get gainful employment easily because of the high demand from employers. Young people and their families are opting for low-skilled jobs or migrant work since these offer the prospect of an immediate income without an interval of study. However, expanding the reach and awareness of TVET has been challenging due to funding, policy, capacity and access.

Within Cambodia’s labour force, only 1.1 percent have formal technical or vocational training (Un, 2012, cited in Development Research Forum, 2013). MoLVT statistics for 2005-2006 put the number of technical and vocational graduates at 27,487 people (from 40 public training institutions and 170 private and NGO training centers), where around 48 percent graduated from state schools (DRF 2013). Half of the total trainees and students receive technical training, while the remaining receive management and computer skills-based training. Of the 250,000 post-secondary graduates in 2014, only three percent were from technical and vocational fields of agriculture, science and engineering, while 50 percent had completed business administration courses, according to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs collaborated with an Australian organisation to provide training in food processing, tailoring, weaving, garment and handicraft-making. The project-spanning five provinces- started in 1993 and trained around 2,000 people. Courses were conducted for nine months (six in classroom and three on practical experience). However, the skills learned did not yield well-paying jobs.

Another project supported by ADB with a USD30 million loan aimed to enhance the quality of TVET in Cambodia, leading to more job opportunities for women and the poor. It included stipends to individuals from poor households (identified under a government household support scheme) and support for women’s dormitories (ADB, 2013). Though this increased female enrollment and retention to meet the targets set, the larger ripple effect of this

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12 The lack of capital makes it tough for potential business owners to purchase expensive machinery and equipment. There is difficulty accessing credit, along with incomplete market information which in turn discourages set up and expansion (Knight & MacLeon 2004).
13 There is a lack of supportive policies and incentives to encourage TVET as a desirable option. This can be seen in the two provinces with special economic zones, the government has set up universities (which is an option for a small percentage of the population) instead of encouraging TVET uptake.
14 With 10 different ministries involved in the management of TVET, capacity and resources are either lacking or fragmented. Special-skilled trainers are sparse and up-to-date technology is not available in the public institutes. Private institutions, supported by foreign government and organisations, are considered far superior.
15 Access to TVET is restricted with the existence of an urban-rural divide; TVET institutions are located in urban areas, which restricts attraction and access to people based rurally. Additionally, the educational entry requirements for formal training is at minimum a Grade 9 qualification, which many Cambodians (especially the poor and women) do not have and therefore cannot apply.
project in formal TVET programs remains to be seen. In fact, it is unlikely that the impact will continue as government investment in TVET is low and courses depend on the funding available (field survey, 2017).

Participants in vocational training institutes are usually from neighboring areas who can afford to do the course for three months, being poor but aren’t at the bottom of the poverty scale. They are usually young women and once they complete the course, they are either employed in garment factories or set up their own shops. Garment factories are currently the largest employers for unskilled women. Women who have completed vocational training in tailoring join at a slightly higher pay level, compared to unskilled workers. Though courses are not gender specific, enrollment is gendered.

Since international migration is a preferred livelihood option for Cambodians, there are also country-based training programs, such as those for migrants planning to work in Korea. Prospective workers join a one-year language training course in private training centers and sit a written entrance exam arranged by MoLVT. After the exam, a list of successful candidates is sent to Korea and companies choose the candidates they wish to recruit. During some recruitment years, there are more candidates than vacancies and some candidates are unable to secure jobs, despite completing and passing the courses.
2.4 CONSTRAINTS FOR YOUNG WOMEN TO BUILD THEIR NON-FARM CAREER IN PREY VENG

The previous case studies showed the barriers and constraints that impact young women’s efforts towards education and vocational training, improving livelihood and gaining access to social protection. Aside from lack of work opportunities in Prey Veng, obstacles exist that young women face in expanding their non-farm career choices: (a) limited access and/or encouragement for further education, (b) lack of vocational training opportunities; (c) gender norms that restrict women’s mobility; (d) general disregard towards women’s capabilities.

a. Limited access and encouragement for further education

KIs in Cambodia held the view that women should be home-bound and focused on care-related work. A new high school was set up in the village in Prey Veng three years back, yet the dropout rate remains high among girls. There is a 30 percent dropout rate for secondary school girl students in Prey Veng province in 2016 and most of them drop out to support their families. Many migrate to Phnom Penh, Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri, while some also go to Thailand. Among female students, dropouts and migration take place in chains. When one girl leaves, her friends and neighbors soon follow. Thus, social networks play a key role in keeping girls in or out of school. Despite the high levels of primary school enrollment, high school graduation rates remain low at 3.4 percent of among women aged 25 and above in Cambodia (NIS, 2016: 46, Table 19).

Parents migrating pressures children to quit school and follow their parents. Girls especially tend to migrate alongside the parents, since (i) they prefer to be with their parents rather than grandparents or aunts and uncles; and (ii) parents expect daughters (aged over 10 years) to help around the house in the destination of migration, so the mother can earn an additional income. Therefore, few young women are left behind by their migrating parents.

b. Lack of vocational training opportunities

None of the respondents in Thailand and Cambodia were aware of the vocational training courses run by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training in Cambodia, highlighting the lack of access to information. Lack of funding plays a major role in the courses offered each year. Tailoring, hair dressing and beautician courses are offered to women, and these courses are free, but do not offer a stipend or accommodation. Poor students from rural areas cannot afford to join these courses and opt for jobs to earn an income immediately. Therefore, lack of finances is a key barrier, followed by distance from home.

“Some family members take the students away from courses because they want them to work and earn money immediately. They cannot wait for them to complete the course in three months.”

– KI, DoLVT, Prey Veng.

16 Interview with KI and NGO staff, 28 December 2017
17 Parental out-migration has a negative impact on children according to Vutha et al (2014), especially since in the absence of any official support for children, they are left in the custody of aged grandparents who are unable to support them adequately.
18 Interview with KI, government official, 28 December 2017
“Courses conducted in villages have a larger number of women, while workshops held in the district has more men participating.”

– KI, NGO official, Prey Veng.

c. Gender norms restricting women’s mobility

Young women are expected to be near the house, and not to travel far\textsuperscript{19}. The fear that women will lose their virginity if they stay away from home is high among parents\textsuperscript{20}. Such gender norms restrict young women’s mobility, hence their education and employment opportunities. Women are expected to be the main caretakers of the family home and children. Such social expectations deprive women from accessing or demanding childcare services and bear the burdens of caregiving themselves.

“I love my daughter and I am worried about her safety, [so] I can’t send her far away to study. A woman should be around the kitchen.”

– KI, female, Prey Veng province.

“Only mother can take good care of children, so we do not have crèche.”

– KI, village head, Prey Veng province.

d. General disregard to women’s ability

Young women reported that they faced abuse and violence within the household\textsuperscript{21}. Women’s financial efforts for the family are downplayed and unacknowledged, whereas their gender roles as caregivers are revered, but unpaid. By revering motherhood and care work, devaluing young women, ignoring their economic potential and perpetuating the myth of a dangerous world outside their homes, Cambodian culture places strong barriers to young women’s efforts to gain an education and build a gender-equitable society. To transform the lives of young women, it is important to transform these social norms.

\textsuperscript{19} Interview with KI, Prey Veng province, 26 December 2018 and \url{https://www.wheretherebedragons.com/news/a-proper-woman-breaking-down-gender-norms-in-cambodia/}

\textsuperscript{20} Interview with KI, Prey Veng province, 26 December 2018

\textsuperscript{21} Four of the 40 respondents reported severe physical abuse by husband, father or grandfather. Several KIs interviewed in Prey Veng also said that beating the wife and children is accepted.
Livelihood options for young women in Cambodia are limited to factory work, petty trading (grocery or cosmetics shops), farming, dress-making and cosmetology. Most jobs had incomes of around USD150-200. Respondents in both Thailand and Cambodia were firm that international migration is the only option for a better life.

“We can earn a little money in Cambodia by doing agriculture and garments, but that is just enough for daily expenses. To earn more money and to build a house, we have to work abroad.”

– KI, female, 29, family of migrant workers, Prey Veng province.

For factory workers in Cambodia, the average income is about USD160-200, which is largely spent on rent, food, travel, transportation and medical expenses incurred in relation to unhealthy living and working conditions. Remittance is very low, sometimes as low as USD10 per month. In contrast, mothers working in Thailand sent about THB 1,000 – 3,000 per month for their children. Therefore, migration is a more economically beneficial option for young women who need to support their families and raise their children.

In-country migration is relatively safe yet international migration is high risk\textsuperscript{22}. the known high risks, there is little support for prospective migrants from governments or NGOs in Cambodia. The strongest migration-related support are the anti-trafficking programmes in the country. Korea and Japan have training and placement programmes for prospective workers, but the largest number of Cambodians migrate to Thailand and they have a vast network of brokers who are connected by word of mouth.

As of 2008, it was estimated that 57,000 people migrated abroad annually\textsuperscript{23}. This has increased over the past decade for various reasons, including national and international policies. Of the estimated 1.12 million people in the province, at least 60,000 migrate abroad each year\textsuperscript{24}. Many of them return home after a few years, but some do not. While the risks of trafficking are high, there is little information about safe migration. People do not inform village leaders about their migration plans (where and when they go or when they return) hence, there is no official data about the nature and extent of internal and international migration\textsuperscript{25}.

\textsuperscript{22} Interview with KI, government official, Prey Veng province, 28 Dec 2017
\textsuperscript{23} Calculated from interview with KI, government official, Prey Veng province, 28 Dec 2017
\textsuperscript{24} Interview with KI, NGO staff, Prey Veng province, 28 Dec 2017
\textsuperscript{25} Interview with KI, village head, Prey Veng province, 26 Dec 2017
3.1.1. Reason for migration

A majority (19) of the respondents are from families of farmers; while 10 respondents were from families of landless labourers. Migrants in Rayong came through the border in Battambang, while most migrants in Trat came through the border in Koh Kong. The two major reasons for migrating were financial (to pay back loans or earn for the family) or familial (to join family members already in Thailand). Two respondents had migrated to escape from abusive situations, specifically domestic violence. To describe the level of poverty, many respondents used the term “angko kilo” (angko means rice, kilo is kg) — meaning to buy a little rice every day after work. It may be interpreted as a hand-to-mouth situation. The pre-migration stories of respondents showed that they felt that they do not have any possibility of improving their lives or securing any employment.

Some respondents (4 in Trat and 6 in Rayong) have tried a number of different jobs including: petty trading, selling snacks, working in a small grocery store, farming and domestic work in Cambodia, before deciding to migrate to Thailand, as neither job enabled them to earn enough to support their family. It is important to note that they came to Thailand with an aspiration to obtain gainful employment and to improve their lives. Some came totally alone to escape from abusive family members.

Seven respondents had migrated to Thailand as children. The age upon their first migration ranged from 5 years old to 17 years old. For those who came before the age of 15, all of them came with parents. For age 15 and older, some came with parents, or with their husbands, but some came independently to join the family in Thailand.
Around 40 percent of the respondents reported that they came to Thailand accompanied with brokers while, 60 percent came with friends and/or family. In the case of respondents travelling with brokers, they were engaged for travel only and not for travel and job placement. The broker leaves migrants with their friends and relatives in Thailand, who then help them to find work. As a result, Cambodian migrants tend to live in a community, working in the same place, since they migrate in chains.

None of the respondents interviewed had migrated through the joint Thai-Cambodian Memorandum of Understanding system. More than seventy percent of the respondents have been in Thailand for five years or more. All of them were previously undocumented migrants, and said that they were frightened of the police and lived in fear. Over time, they registered themselves and received a pink card that allowed them to temporarily live and work in Thailand. Newer migrants who have been in Thailand for 0-4 years travelled to Thailand with a passport, or border pass. They then applied for a Work Permit through their employers. Two of the respondents in Trat said that they had entered Thailand by boat, either with brokers or with friends/neighbors. Three respondents in Rayong stated that they were brought into the country at night after walking across the border near Battambang. All others travelled by land across the borders and entered the country with a stamp at the border.

Respondent #6: female fish sorter (18) in Rayong, migrated to Thailand to escape from abuse endured at her grandparent’s home. She first went to Bangkok, where she worked in a medical shop organising drugs. The pay was good and she had a work permit. However, she was abused by her aunt with whom she lived with in Bangkok. To escape abuse once again, she moved to Rayong where she lives with her friend’s family. At present, she does not have a work permit or passport and her income has drastically decreased from THB300 every day to THB100-200 per day when work is available.

3.1.2. Mode of travel

Around 40 percent of the respondents reported that they came to Thailand accompanied with brokers while, 60 percent came with friends and/or family. In the case of respondents travelling with brokers, they were engaged for travel only and not for travel and job placement. The broker leaves migrants with their friends and relatives in Thailand, who then help them to find work. As a result, Cambodian migrants tend to live in a community, working in the same place, since they migrate in chains.

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3.1.3. Documents for migration

Respondents interviewed held a range of documents including: (i) Pink card (12 in Rayong, 7 in Trat); (ii) border pass (8 in Trat); (iii) Passport (or a Nationality Verification) and work permit (2 each in Trat and Rayong); (iv) Under process (5 in Rayong, 1 in Trat). One respondent each was currently undocumented, married to a Thai man and had a refugee card. Pink cards were also sourced in three different routes: (i) through employers, (ii) through brokers, (iii) through husband’s employers. All recent migrants reported that they had gone to the One Stop Service Centers with their employers and signed some documents, but had no direct information about the cost or process.

The employer was their only source of information. None of them could remember signing a work contract or knew their employer’s name and address. They knew the name of the pier where they worked and the nickname of their Thai manager.

26 Thailand and Cambodia first signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the employment of workers in 2003, but due to the laborious process and high cost, this has not been a popular route for migration among migrant workers. For the past two years, the government of Thailand has attempted to shift all migrant workers to this system (Kusakabe et al, 2018).

27 Border passes are only valid in the specific area where it is issued. Migrants who leave the province to work elsewhere become undocumented in the process.

28 One respondent had escaped from her aunt’s house in Bangkok and her work permit was left there. Further, the work permit’s validity is limited to the province and employer. She is now living and working in another province, for another employer. As a result, she is now an undocumented worker.
Table 3.1: Legal status of respondents (by province and process)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal route</th>
<th>Made by themselves</th>
<th>Made by employer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rayong</td>
<td>Trat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink card</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work permit under process</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border pass</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In Rayong, two respondents were undocumented, one was a housewife and one was a home-based worker. In Trat, two respondents were of Thai ethnicity or had married a man of Thai ethnicity. They had applied for Thai nationality. (Source: Field survey, 2017)

The cost of the new work permit reported by respondents ranged from THB5,000 to THB20,000, with respondents being unclear about the cost of each document since they ask an agent to do all the process on their behalf. They all reported that their employer had applied for the documents and had paid the fee in advance and the amount was being deducted from their salaries. Some respondents paid brokers up to THB 20,000 to get their work permits. Employed migrants borrowed money from their employer to pay for the work permit whilst unemployed migrants borrowed from the husband’s employer.

29The process involves Nationality Verification and work permit. Actual cost of NV is THB4,360 (THB2,360 for travel documents, THB500 each for visa, medical checkup, health insurance and work permit valid till March 31, 2018. The actual cost of the work permit is THB4,500 (THB100 for application form, THB1,800 for work permit, THB500 for visa stamp, THB500 for medical checkup and THB1,600 for health insurance). The work permit is valid for 2 years. However, the visa, medical and insurance costs have to be paid every year (THB 2,600).
Box 3.1: MoU between Thailand and Cambodia: The only legal route for migrant workers as of 2018

Thailand and Cambodia signed the first Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the employment of workers in 2003. But the high cost and laborious administrative process, this has not been a popular route for migration among migrant workers. For the past two years, the government of Thailand has attempted to shift all migrant workers to this system. Recruitment under the MoU began in 2006, when Thai employers requested 17,500 Cambodian workers (Vasuprasat, 2007: 8). However, only 600 Cambodian workers arrived.

The costs of migration under the MoU system were very high. Cambodian migrants had to pay recruitment agencies around twenty percent of their first year’s earnings in Thailand. In contrast to these fees of USD350-500, the cost of being smuggled from Cambodia to Thailand was around USD85 (Martin, 2007: 6). Despite this, the governments of Thailand and Cambodia on the MoU process instead of reducing costs and increasing ease of use.

The process involves Nationality Verification (NV) by the country of origin and a work permit being issued by Thailand. The cost of NV is THB 4,360 (THB 2,360 for travel documents, THB500 each for visa, medical check-up, health insurance, and work permit valid till March 31, 2018). The actual cost of the work permit is THB4,500 (THB 100 for application form, THB1,800 for work permit, THB500 for visa stamp, THB500 for medical checkup, and THB1,600 for health insurance). The work permit is valid for 2 years. However, the visa, medical and insurance costs (THB 2,600) have to be paid every year.

As of May 2016, there were approximately 487,000 documented Cambodian migrants in Thailand. Approximately two-thirds are fully regulated migrants with passports, while the rest are “pink-card” holders with temporary permission to stay and work in Thailand. Among the regulated workers, 23 percent entered Thailand formally under the MoU system, while 77 percent entered irregularly but had completed the Nationality Verification process.

In 2017, the Pink card system for regulating migrant workers was abandoned in favour of the MoU system. For workers already in the country, a Nationality Verification system was agreed between both countries.
Box 3.2: Migrant workers: Pink cards, border passes, NV, and work permits

In the early 1990s, Thailand became a net importer of labour, receiving more workers than it exported. Efforts therefore began to regulate incoming migrant workers. In 1992, the country began allowing employers to register migrant workers in their employment. However, only 706 migrants were registered due to the THB 5,000 bond that employers were required to pay. By 1996, the bond amount was reduced to THB 1,000, where the number of workers registered jumped up to 372,000 (Martin 2007). Since then, there have been many iterations of this effort to register and regulate migrant workers, with the MoU process being the latest.

For the past few years, migrant workers are registered every year during an annual two-month registration window. Those who register are allowed to live and work in the province where they register for between 1-2 years. They are required to pay a registration fee, medical check-up fee, and an annual health insurance fee. Workers are given a pink-colored card with a 13-digit number and a "stay on deportation" for 1-2 years. This system ties the worker to the employer and the province. Young women are particularly affected by this regulatory system as they are unable to leave potentially abusive employers. Workers who arrive in Thailand after the registration window closes have to wait till it reopens the following year, remaining extremely vulnerable until then operating as undocumented migrants.

Border passes are valid only in the specific province where Pink cards are issued. Migrants who leave their registered province to work elsewhere become undocumented. Pass holders have to leave the country and re-enter every week, paying THB70 (THB40 at Thai border, and THB30 at Cambodian border) for a new stamp every week. Problems faced by migrant workers using this system include bribery and corruption at the border, travel costs to the border and back each week, and taking time away from work. Though this was set up for seasonal and daily workers, it is also being used by long-term migrants working in border areas.

3.1.4. Financial constraints

Table 3.2: Remittance reported by respondents (by province)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remittance frequency</th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly remittance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly remittance for loan repayment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly remittance for siblings / parents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly remittance for children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 monthly remittance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times / year as gifts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No remittance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: More than one reason was given for monthly remittance. (Source: Field survey, 2017)
Two women reported that they once held pink cards but after their expiration, they have not gone through any other registration process due to the expense. Their husband’s continued employment and work permit as seafarers were considered more critical over the women. As a result of the high cost involved in acquiring pink cards, women were willing to risk their safety and become undocumented migrants. This also meant their options for work are limited, as most employers do not employ undocumented workers. Undocumented workers therefore seek work in “irregular” places, increasing their risk of encountering violence, trafficking and being cheated of their salary. However, all respondents stated that their husband or father would get a work permit, irrespective of the cost.

“There is no fish in the sea, so we don’t have enough income to pay for passport and work permit.”
- Respondent #3, female fish sorter (age 25) in Rayong

“[permit] is very expensive and we still have debts to pay back at home. So I will not apply for Nationality Verification now. Also, I don’t have a full-time job because my child is small.”
- Respondent #19, female fish sorter (age 24) in Rayong
3.2. WORKING CONDITION AND PAY IN THE FISHERIES SUPPLY CHAIN

Once they reach Thailand, young women migrants begin work in a seafood sector, either in the factory or at home. Finding work is not difficult, as their friends and relatives are able to introduce them to work almost immediately after they arrive in Thailand. Though obtaining work is not a problem, working conditions are tough. Long working hours are common, with 12-16 hours being reported by most respondents.

3.2.1. Jobs for women

Seafood processing
Women working in factories are paid by the quantity of seafood processed, with incentives for rewarding reliable employees. Young women who did not take leave and came to work on time were paid THB60-70 per kg, but if they took a day off, they were only paid THB50 per kg. One kg of peeled octopus meat earned them THB6 and one kg of processed fish earned them THB80-100 per kg. Factory workers in Trat reported being paid thrice a month: on 10th, 20th and 30th of the month. Seafood processing is not restricted to women, older men who unable to go to sea to fish are also employed. Payment terms are similar to the women, though men have the opportunity to carry out extra work such as portering and are paid more for it at THB335 per day.

Fish sorting
Fixed salaries were reported in Trat, ranging from THB 2,500 to THB 6,000 for fish sorters. Some women were paid THB 3,000 per month during low season and THB 6,000 per month in high season. In Rayong, women used to earn THB 8,000 per month, while now this has dropped to THB 6,000 or less after the restrictions following IUU ruling.

“I am planning to go back home my children because we earn much less now than we used to. Earlier, we could earn THB300–400 everyday by sorting fish. Now, we earn only THB100–150 most days and we don’t get work every day. So, we are waiting to see if the situation improves. If not, we will go back home. My husband will stay here and send money for us.”

- Respondent #2: female fish sorter (age 25) in Rayong.

30 No factory workers were interviewed in Rayong.
Table 3.3: Job profile and income range of young women in Rayong, Trat and Cambodia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job profile of respondents</th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Income range USD/month</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab picker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab picking business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish sorter</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>USD190–315</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish boiler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>USD315-475</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squid peeler</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>USD95-190</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net repairer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>USD60-230</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>USD285-315</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant* staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>USD285–380</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not earning (full time wife of fisher)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural worker</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty vendor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ^The data has been converted from THB to USD at 31.5 THB/USD and then rounded off.
(Source: Field survey, 2017)
*One is a seafood restaurant, the other two serve all kinds of food.
**This data was supplied by a respondent who was earlier working as a waitress.
Table 3.4: Gender stereotypes expressed by respondents with respect to jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Men’s jobs</th>
<th>Women’s jobs</th>
<th>Flexible work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries sector</td>
<td>Catching fish in the sea</td>
<td>Sorting fish</td>
<td>Fixing nets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loading and unloading at the port</td>
<td>Picking crabs</td>
<td>Processing fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean equipment</td>
<td>Clean, cut and dry fish</td>
<td>Peeling octopus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fisheries sector</td>
<td>Security guard</td>
<td>Domestic work</td>
<td>Peeling shrimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some jobs in construction</td>
<td>Waitress</td>
<td>Boil fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Selling food at the port</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Catching fish on small boats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

Mending nets
This is carried out by both women and men, Thai and migrants, at home and in the piers. The pay varies depending on the kind of net and the kind of work being done. High-skilled repair work is paid more than low-skilled work. One respondent began learning this skill with her brother and was paid THB180 per day. Now, as an experienced worker, she is paid THB300 per day, but the work is not available every day. Working hours are from 9 am to 5 pm with an hour’s break for lunch. Smaller boats also need repairs and this is done as home-based work. Migrant women earn THB200–300 for this work, depending on the availability of work and their contacts with small boat owners or middlemen.31

Home-based work/freelance work
Many migrant women, especially women with small children and long-term migrants, were involved in home-based crab picking and net repairs. They were paid by work done and work was quite regular as they had a network of brokers who delivered and picked up the work. They reported earning THB 3,000-10,000 per month, depending on the season.32 New migrants who lacked connections with local subcontractors were unable to take up this work. Home-based and freelance work is seen as an extension of women’s domestic work and women themselves view this as looking after the house while their men are away, rather than being a fisheries worker. Hence, they appreciate employers giving them an opportunity to earn while being at home.

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31 See Table 3.1 for income by job profile and location.
32 See Table 3.1 for income by job profile and location.
3.2.2. Gender impact of stereotyping work

Men are promised THB 10,000-11,000 (USD 315-350) per month working on the boat and a bonus for a good catch. Bonuses can amount to around THB 500-2,000 (USD 15-65) per month, so the total income men earn from boats is THB 10,000-13,000 (USD 315-410), depending on the employer. However, this amount is not paid monthly, rather a small advance of not more than THB 2,000 (USD 65) is paid each month and the balance is paid at the end of the contract, which is after 10-22 months.

On the other hand, the highest amount that women in Rayong and Trat can earn is from seafood processing (such as crab meat picking and octopus or shrimp peeling), which can earn them a maximum of THB 12,000-13,000 (USD 380-410) per month. They are paid in piece-rate and an experienced worker can pick crab meat or peel octopus and shrimp quite efficiently. However, earning THB 13,000 (USD 410) per month is rare and only happens when there is a lot of catch. Therefore, though women can earn as much as men do, they can only do so in certain months. In months that are low in catch, they can earn only around THB 4,000 (USD 125). So, the maximum pay that women can earn is almost the same as the minimum that men earn on boat.

Women earn less income than men, but no woman works on boats. Working as seafarers is considered to be strictly for men. Both women and men see working as seafarers as attractive because of the higher salary and regular income. However, due to the terms of payment, there is a need to support them during the contract period of several months. Men will come back once in two weeks or after several months. They need money to support themselves while they are on shore. They also need to remit money back home every month. For this reason, the wives of seafarers need to migrate along with the men. Women’s income sustains the family, while men’s income is considered savings. Women therefore live alone in Thailand, while the men are at sea, raising the question of their safety. To overcome possible problems, they live in ghettos next to their extended family members who support and protect each other. They go to work in groups and return in groups. They borrow small amounts of money from each other when required. However, the absence of men also means that the entire burden of household chores and childcare is on women, as is the income-generation. Women are therefore left on
Thai employers are unable to see the exploitation of workers (Flaim, Subramaniam and Taylor, 2018). Since migrants are paid a daily wage, they do not consider it an exploitative working situation. The only reason employers are willing to improve migrant working conditions is due to the international pressure and government-imposed regulations. Payment for overtime work, decent working conditions, trainings and other measures creates considerable cost to the company. While larger companies are willing to invest in workers to a certain extent, they note its impact on profit margins. Small and medium businesses will not be able to shoulder these costs, according to an employer representative Plan interviewed.

Employers expressed great disappointment with the current system of migrant workers, as it was both time-consuming and expensive. One organisation of employers noted that rather than government officials, staff from employers’ association have been more successful in ensuring decent working conditions for migrant workers. Therefore, associations of small and medium-sized employers may be useful to improve the working conditions of migrant workers.

Local level KIs felt that migrant workers were being treated better than Thai workers, hence expressed a certain sense of resentment against them. They felt that migrant workers gave a bad name to Thailand by their complaints on working conditions and they were also taking away facilities that were meant for Thai workers, such as healthcare, housing, etc.

- Compiled from interviews with KIs in Rayong, Trat and Bangkok.
3.3. GENDER IN THE WORKPLACE

3.3.1. Opportunities for job upgrading

Four out of 20 respondents in Rayong and 3 out of 20 respondents in Trat came to Thailand when they were below the age of 10. They learned from their mothers how to pick crabs and how to sort fish when they started working. Respondent #7, a 19 year old female fish sorter in Rayong reported that she earned THB50 per day when she was a child, but after she learned the skill, she could earn THB300 per day even when she was below the age of eighteen. Respondent #18, 25 year old female net-repairer in Trat, said that she used to get THB180 per day when she started working, but after learning from her brother, she now earns THB300 per day. She is proud of her skill and her income: “Mending the net is easy, but patching the net is a skilled job.”

Two respondents who have their own crab picking business expressed pride in their work and had the highest income. Other women processing other seafood also expressed pride in their skill. However, women employed in fish sorting said that they were just working to earn a living for their family and they were not learning any skill that would be useful for when they return to Cambodia. Some find that fisheries do not give them any improvement in their pay, career and childcare options, so move on to other occupations.

Respondent #17 In Rayong moved from fish sorting to working as a waitress. She heard of the vacancy and applied by herself. She speaks Thai as she migrated to Thailand with her parents when she was a child. She used to earn THB300 per day as a fish sorter but now earns THB400 per day as a waitress, because she has learned to speak Thai.

Respondent #9, a fish sorter (age 25) in Rayong, used to work harvesting rubber but when rubber prices fell, her income subsequently dropped and moved to Trat for fish processing work.

Only 32.5 percent of the respondents had changed jobs in Thailand. Only four respondents (3 in Rayong, 1 in Trat) took job-related decisions by themselves. Many of them reported that decision-making about changing jobs were taken in consultation with the family in Thailand as it would impact the household, whereas decisions about returning from Thailand were taken in consultation with family in both countries- both households.
Table 3.5: Number of previous jobs reported by respondents (by province, and reasons for change in career path)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous jobs</th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
<th>Reasons stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No previous jobs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Migrated as a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not have social networks with people in other fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture labor in Cambodia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Family member was working in Rayong / Trat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income was not enough to feed the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanted to live with family members (mother/husband) here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory in Cambodia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Long working hours and low pay compared to Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Husband was coming to Thailand to work, she came with him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own shop in Cambodia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Business was not successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Income was not sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish processing factory in Thailand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>She was sick all the time (changed to fish sorting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peeling shrimp in Rayong</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>She wanted to be close to her children (changed to sorting fish in Trat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picking crabs in Thailand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Her hands hurt (changed to sorting fish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic work in Thailand</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>She wanted a full-time job with better pay (changed to housekeeping in hotel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ser husband will not go to work alone, so she has to find a job with him (changed to fish boiling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber harvesting in Thailand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Her income reduced as rubber price fell(^3) (changed to waitress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitress in bar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>She did not like the way men treated her (changed to fish sorting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The total does not add up to 20 as some respondents who were farmers, also worked in factories and also changed jobs in Cambodia or Thailand. (Source: Field survey, 2017)

\(^3\) Payment for rubber harvesting is based on sharing the sale price of the produce and not on the work done.
Table 3.5 shows only a few workers changed jobs in Thailand. Most young women change jobs not for better a pay or position, but to escape from bad working conditions. There is little scope for upward mobility in the workplace. Women have tried various work opportunities in Cambodia and migrated to Thailand. However, in Thailand, it is far more difficult to change jobs as it requires word of mouth within social networks to access information on availability of jobs and their locations. Young women had small social networks, restricted to their immediate family members and neighbours, thus little access to information on jobs outside the fisheries sector. Even if the young women had information, work permits are tied to their current employers and province, making it extremely difficult to change jobs. Women faced a further obstacle— their family. As they await their seafaring husbands to return, they had to maintain childcare duties and live close to family or community members to ensure their personal security.

3.3.2. Childcare arrangements

In Cambodia, traditional notions of childcare form a barrier to young women’s mobility and work. Similarly, in Thailand, the workplace and community do not offer any childcare options, leaving women to create their own arrangements. Twenty-four respondents had children and their childcare arrangements were: (i) home-based work to care for children herself (4 respondents); (ii) live with parents who assist caring for children (9 respondents); (iii) leave children with friends and/or neighbors during work hours (4 respondents); (iv) send children back home to Cambodia (7 respondents).

Two respondents opted for a lower pay in order to manage their childcare responsibilities while earning an income. After having children, they moved from a factory-based to a home-based role in the same job (such as crab picking or repairing nets) to ensure they could balance both earning money while caring for their children. However, with home-based work, there is an increased uncertainty on the availability of work on a daily basis. One respondent became a freelance fish sorter, so that she can care for her child.

**Respondent #5** in Trat used to earn more than THB 10,000 per month when she was processing shrimp in Rayong. However, despite having debts that need to be paid, she is now working as a fish sorter in Trat, so that she can be closer to her children. She earns only THB 5,000 per month.

**Respondent #9**, a female fish sorter (age 25) in Trat lives with 6 other people— her husband, 2 children, her mother and her 2 brothers. Her mother takes care of the household chores and childcare so that she can work from 6 am to 6 pm.

**Respondent #13**, a female fish sorter (age 22) in Rayong leaves her child with an old Khmer lady who lives near her house. In return for the childcare, she gives her around THB100-200 per week in one or two small installments.
Mothers who had left their children in Cambodia said that they missed their children very much and would like to go back as soon as possible. One respondent travelled back home often because her child was sick, resulting in a huge debt. The cost of migration is very high for these young women as it comes with a psychological cost, a physical, and economic cost. However, despite the costs, women migrants still felt the importance to work in Thailand due to the lack of adequate income in jobs in Cambodia. Therefore, young women's vulnerability increases during migration, as they are responsible not only for themselves, but also for their children and have very little support from the state, employer or their community to do so.

### 3.3.3. Social protection

Social security and other benefits can also improve job conditions, but migrants have little access to such benefits. Eight respondents (3 in Rayong and 5 in Trat) did not have any information about social protection. The other 32 respondents had some information about the available facilities in Thailand for migrant workers, such as free education, free lunch at school, free medicine, legal migration routes, and police protection. Only 13 of the 40 respondents said they knew about the migrant health insurance scheme which they had paid into. More respondents in Rayong than in Trat knew about the health insurance scheme.

Twenty percent of the respondents in Trat crossed the border to go to the hospital in Koh Kong citing they were scared of Thai doctors. One respondent living with HIV said that she preferred the hospitals in Cambodia in fear that she will not get a job if a Thai hospital reveal her HIV status to employers.
Trips to the hospital tend to take many hours and because this affects their income, many workers prefer to avoid going to hospitals. No work-related injuries were reported; one respondent quit her job in a crab factory and chose to work as a fish sorter because her hands hurt after long hours of opening crabs. Despite having health insurance, young migrant women treat visiting hospitals as a last resort, to be used only if they are unable to treat the problem through traditional medicine or pharmaceutical advice.

Concerning young migrant women’s reproductive rights, maternal and child health are supported under their health insurance scheme, but there is no support for migrant women who may be raped or sexually harassed. One respondent said that she received information about birth control and pills from the pharmacy, and not from a hospital. Without adequate Thai language skills, migrants do not feel comfortable using hospital services, with some respondents complaining about the attitude of service providers.

“I went to the hospital when I was pregnant and the doctor was good. [However], I did not understand what the doctor said, but I can’t have a baby.”
– Respondent #17, a female fish sorter (age 22) in Rayong.

“I have been to the hospital only once, they spoke with me rudely. I don’t know why.”
– Respondent #16, a female fish sorter (age 24) in Rayong.

Many migrants went back home to give birth, hence their children were added to their family book in Cambodia. Those who gave birth to children in Thailand had birth certificates issued by the Thai hospital, but were not registered as Cambodian nationals. If a child’s birth is not registered in Cambodia within 30 days of their birth, there is a longer process and an additional fee to be paid, making it difficult for the child to obtain Cambodian citizenship. Therefore, there is a high risk that these children will grow up to be stateless adults.

All respondents were aware that they can approach the police, but preferred not to, as they have to pay the police. “If we call the police, we have to pay THB500-1,000 to the police”, according to respondent #6, a female 24-year-old crab picker in Trat.
3.4. Living Condition in Thailand

Cambodian migrant workers tend to live in enclaves in Rayong and Trat along with their families, with enclaves close to the workplace. Each unit has on average four people, with the range being from 3 to 9 people, including seafarers, women and children. This is less crowded when compared to living conditions in factory-based accommodation in Bangkok and Phnom Penh. Such living arrangements are important for Cambodian migrants for their security and peace of mind. Some migrants feel that they are discriminated against by Thais in hospitals, markets and by their landlords and managers. Since most migrant women do not speak adequate Thai, they prefer enclaves where they have Cambodian neighbors to speak with. This is seen as an advantage since it provides security for migrant women living alone, but at the same time, it can be a disadvantage as Cambodian men tend to gather for drinking and recreational drugs in other places, reducing integration with Thai society. Enclaves provide them security, but also limit their access to information that is needed to look for better jobs. Similarly, young migrant women travel to work in groups, so that they are protected from possible harassment en-route and restrict their social interaction and integration with Thai society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living arrangements</th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living with husband and/or children</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with parents and/or siblings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with both parents and husband</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with husband’s family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with friends/neighbors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

Out of the 40 respondents in Thailand, 38 lived with their immediate family members. Respondent #15, a 20-year-old female restaurant worker in Rayong, was living with her parents until recently when they went back to Cambodia due to the lack of work. They requested their neighbor to house their daughter. Respondent #6, an 18-year-old female fish sorter in Rayong, escaped from her relative’s house in Bangkok after being mistreatment and the confiscation of her passport. She is now staying with her friend’s family. Living with family ensures their physical safety and reduces expenses, as well as reducing loneliness and homesickness. All 40 respondents said that housing and food quality is better in Thailand as compared with Cambodia. They cook Cambodian food, speak their language and watch television programs in their language too.

Seven respondents reported that they lived with both parents and their husband. In some cases, parents cared for children; in other cases, they were living with parents/siblings, with all the men (husband, father, brothers) going to the sea, while the women stayed home, sharing household chores and childcare, and worked as fish sorters or net-repairers.
3.5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Young migrants have only limited education from Cambodia and generally do not have access to education and training in Thailand. Of the respondents, 30 percent had completed only Grade 2–3 and had started working by the age of 10 selling vegetables and homemade snacks on the streets, or helping their family in sorting fish, picking crabs and peeling shrimp. Three women were illiterate and had no education at all. Almost 50 percent of the respondents do not read and write in Khmer comfortably. In Trat, 9 women had started working after completing Grade 5–6. The reasons for dropping out of education were poverty-related, followed by lack of interest in education. In some cases, migration of parents was responsible for children dropping out of school.

**Respondent #5**, is 19 years old residing in Rayong and came to Thailand 2 years ago. She was studying in Grade 8 when her mother decided to migrate to Thailand, leaving her with extended family in Cambodia to complete her schooling. However, she wanted to be with her mother, so she dropped out of school. Her parents tried to convince her to continue her studies, but she was adamant to rejoin her parents. A year later, her aunt helped her to acquire a passport and travel to Thailand to be with her parents. She initially stayed at home with her sister to help with childcare, then worked as a domestic helper, and is now employed as part of housekeeping staff in a hotel. She got the job through the assistance of her uncle, who works in the same hotel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Cambodia</td>
<td>No education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2–4</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5–6</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td>16 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7–8</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (2.5 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Thailand</td>
<td>Grade 2–3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5–6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7–8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>40 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One respondent went to Vietnamese school in Kampuchea Krom and hence she couldn’t read and write Khmer. (Source: Field survey, 2017)

Two respondents went to Thai schools after migrating over and were the only respondents who were able to read and write some degree of Thai.

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34 According to NIS (2016), 4.9 percent of women aged 15-24 years have never attended school (Table 13, page 44), 75.6 percent have completed primary school (Table 17, page 46), 41.1 percent have completed lower secondary school (Table 18, page 46).
Respondent #19, a crab picker (age 21) in Trat, started school in Thailand when she was 9 years old joining at Grade 2 at Klong Makham school. She completed Grade 5 but stopped going to school because she felt shy studying with younger children.

Respondent #16, a fish sorter (age 18) in Rayong, came to Thailand when she was 3 years old with her family. She has no idea why they left Cambodia. She was studying in Thailand in a public school, but quit at grade 6 when her mother told her that the family couldn’t support her education anymore. She wants to continue higher education, but does not think it is possible.
Box 3.5: Education of migrant children

Since 2005, the Thai government has been committed to providing free basic education for all children. On July 5, 2005, a ministerial regulation (approved by the Cabinet) stated that educational opportunities should be extended to all children in Thailand, irrespective of their nationality status. According to the regulation, each child would also have the opportunity to earn a graduate certificate and set aside limitations on the movement of migrant families, so that their children could be admitted to an appropriate school.

As a result, more schools are admitting migrant children and acquiring per-capita funding accessible to such students (Nawarat, 2017). State schools are required to accept migrant children and are provided funds for admitting them. This in turn has reduced the costs incurred by the families; higher state subsidies for school children in general are supplemented by grants from charitable organisations for stateless and migrant children. However, only less than 50 percent of the migrant children have access to education in Thailand (Nawarat 2017). In addition to state schools, some community-based and non-governmental organisations have also started schools for migrant children. However, much of this effort is directed towards Burmese migrants and facilities for Cambodian migrants are fewer in number.

For migrant and stateless children trying to access state schools, the biggest barrier is money\(^{35}\). For undocumented migrants, admitting a child to school means risk of exposure. Since state schools have Thai as the medium of instruction, migrant children find it difficult to keep up (Nawarat, 2012, 2017). The rootless and seasonal nature of migrant work also means that schooling may be regularly interrupted as parents move locations to other jobs. Schools have refused to admit migrant children because of such practical concerns (Premjai, 2011, p.4). Alternatives such as term-only based enrollment, shorter school years for migrant children and/or non-formal education have not yet been explored by education providers.

There is a gender difference in access to education by migrant children, as older daughters often drop out of school to help out at home with younger siblings or contribute to the family income. Boys on the other hand, drop out due to peer pressure. The Thai government’s expensive and complex migration procedures have attracted much censure. Since these procedures have not changed to adapt to the needs of migrant children and their parents, it may be inferred that the country does not have a plan for regulating migrant workers and the migrant labor market-despite claiming otherwise (Nawarat, 2017).

\(^{35}\) Gender-disaggregated data on migrant schooling in Thailand is not available, though anecdotal evidence reveals that though there is no gender discrimination in primary schools; older boys tend to drop out in larger numbers than girls, due to peer pressure.
Many others, who have been working in Thailand for several years, can speak Thai fluently, having learned the language by watching TV and speaking with friends, colleagues and neighbours. The latest arrivals speak little or no Thai. Without Thai language skills, and without any further training, it is difficult for young migrants to upgrade their career. Four respondents were aware of the NGO-run training in Rayong and Trat, but could not attend because of time constraints:

“We have to go to work anytime the employer calls, so we cannot go anywhere. Sometimes, they call us at 2 or 3 am, other days they call us at 9 am. We have to be here at all times when a boat comes.”

— Respondent #10: female fish sorter (age 21) in Rayong.

Aside from their confined living condition, legal status and educational level, another limitation young women’s face is the lack of control over their own time. Called for, hence cannot travel outside their houses to attend classes. Thirty-eight women said that they would be interested in trainings under specific conditions: “If the training is near the house;” “not too expensive;” “if it is interesting” and “can give me [a] better income in future”. Respondents expressed interest in the following courses — Thai and/or English languages, growing vegetables, weaving clothes, tailoring, dress-making, cosmetology and how to run a business. These skills were mentioned by the respondents themselves, illustrating their limited knowledge of skills available, potentially a combination of their lack of access to information and internalised gender norms. Additionally, not everyone was interested in receiving training in Thailand; as one respondent explained: “I know that there is training for hairdressing here, but I prefer training in Cambodia, not Thailand. With the training, I can’t start a shop here, I can only be a worker in a shop.”

36 Barbers and hair dressers are not in the list of professions where migrant workers are allowed in Thailand.
3.6. YOUNG WOMEN’S FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Being a daughter comes with various expectations from the family. They are expected to always be around the house, help with domestic work, and look after younger siblings. They are also expected to financially support the family.

“I left school when I was [in] Grade 5 because my mother and auntie wanted me to come to Thailand to take care of my youngest brother.”

– Respondent #14, a female factory crab-picker (age 23) in Trat.

Respondent #18, a female fish sorter (age 23) in Rayong, dropped out of school when she was 12 years old to help her mother with the household chores and take care of younger siblings.

For these young women migrants, their income is either given to parents or sent as remittances to family back home, or if they are married and have children, income is spent on day-to-day expenses in the household. Only 16 of the 40 respondents (40 percent) sent money home every month where 8 sent money for parents and/or siblings and 5 sent money home to their children. Remittance ranged from THB 1,000 per month to THB 7,000 per month, though most of them sent back THB 2,000-3,000. Some women who have families back home but are not able to earn enough to send remittances responded to be considering returning home.

Without being able to fulfill their duty as good mother and daughters, they do not find it as worthwhile to be in Thailand. Women who are using all their income for day-to-day expenses are able to control only the daily expenses. For larger expenses, they need to depend on their husband’s income, and only seven of the 40 respondents said that they were able to take decisions regarding large expenses.
3.7. ASPIRATIONS AND LIFE OPTIONS FOR YOUNG WOMEN MIGRANTS

Young women migrants are sending money back home to pay off debts, and also to purchase land and build houses in Cambodia. They dream that one day, they will be able to go back home and live in their house.

“I plan to go back to Cambodia in 2 years. I want to build my own house in Cambodia and open a small shop for sewing clothes. I have to earn money and save it. If I had not come to Thailand, I [would] have nothing in Cambodia. I can go to work in the rice field with my parents or work in a garment factory in Phnom Penh with my friends. In both jobs, income is less.”

- Respondent #1: a female fish sorter (age 19) in Rayong.

However, most migrants have smaller daily aspirations to lead a comfortable life in Thailand. Considerable sums of money were spent in Thailand towards the purchase of phones, kitchen equipment, fans, fridges, TVs, motorbikes and other goods for their daily use in Thailand. They are keen to fulfill their aspiration for modernity (Mills 1997) rather than aspiring for better career.

Table 3.8: Respondents’ reported future plans (by province)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Rayong</th>
<th>Trat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start a business</td>
<td>One respondent wanted to start a tailoring shop</td>
<td>7 respondents wanted to start different kinds of business such as cosmetics shop, grocery shop, food shop, hair salon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy land and build house</td>
<td>8 respondents wanted to build house</td>
<td>3 respondents wanted to build a big house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 respondent wanted to buy a car</td>
<td>2 respondents wanted both a house and a car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy land for agriculture</td>
<td>2 respondents wanted to buy land</td>
<td>1 respondent wanted to buy land and grow vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 respondent wanted to rent land in Kratie and grow cassava</td>
<td>1 respondent said she wanted to have rice fields and cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in a factory</td>
<td>2 respondents wanted to join garments</td>
<td>4 respondents wanted to join garments factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No plans</td>
<td>2 respondents said their plans will depend on husband’s job, i.e. fishing in Thailand</td>
<td>2 respondents said their mothers will decide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 respondent said that she doesn’t know anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not go back</td>
<td>2 respondents said that their entire family is here</td>
<td>1 respondent’s husband has Thai ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 respondent escaped abusive husband</td>
<td>2 respondents wanted to start vending in Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>7 respondents refused to answer this question</td>
<td>3 respondents refused to answer this question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total does not add up to 40 as some women have multiple plans, such as build a house and start a business, while others want to be a housewife and take care of the children full time. (Source: Field survey, 2017)
Migration to Thailand is not just a livelihood option, but also a way for young women to escape violence. By living alone in a foreign country (while their husbands are out at sea), women have proved to their family members that they are able to earn for themselves and for their family members. Even though the pay is low, the fact that they are able to earn something gives young women a sense of achievement through migration, they feel that they are gaining respect and love from their families, especially in getting support from family members to manage their multiple responsibilities.

**Respondent #6**, a female fish sorter (age 18) in Rayong, ran away from home and school because her grandfather beat her. However, after she went to Thailand she said:

“I feel that my grandparents love me more now because I send money for them.”

“My mother is very proud of me, because I am the only one in my family who has migrated. When I first came here, my husband would keep all the money. But now, after 3 years, I keep all the money and I also make all the decisions.”

– Respondent #12, a female fish sorter (age 25) Rayong.

Some had aspirations in Cambodia, but were not able to achieve it due to the lack of money and opportunities. Respondents feel that they are in Thailand with a broken dream.

**Respondent #5**, a female housekeeper (age 19) in Rayong, wanted to be a police officer but dropped out of school to follow her parents when they migrated to Thailand. She now plans to work and earn, but has no more plans for higher education as she has already dropped out.

“If I had an education, I could earn enough money in my country. I don’t need to migrate.”

– Respondent #18, a female fish sorter (age 25) in Rayong.

All of the young women migrant workers transfer their dream to their children and work in order to ensure their children have better life options than them. Respondent #4, a 25-year-old fish sorter in Trat said she aspired her son to be a bank officer like her brother in law, as she herself was uneducated. Out of the 23 married respondents in Thailand, all of them said they wanted to educate their children so that they do not have to work as labourers. Young migrants, thus, are stuck. It appears that there are possibilities through migration, but it is also a mirage. Making their options more realistic and feasible is a challenge faced by all.
3.8. Cost and Benefit of Migration for Young Migrant Women

In order to determine why young Cambodian women continue to live and work in Thailand, despite the seemingly exploitative working and living conditions, the cost and benefit of migration needs to be examined.

3.8.1. Cost and benefit of migrating

A young female migrant currently living in Trat, earning an income of THB 6,000 (USD190) per month from fish sorting, will continue to earn the same even if she stays on in Thailand for several more years. Although minimum wage in Thailand might increase, there are no opportunities to upskill, hence their pay will be at the minimum. Additionally, they need to pay around THB 5,000/year for their visa, work permit and health insurance—borrowed from her employer. In addition, she will receive part of the income from her seafaring husband or male dependent, which will be used as part of remittances and paying back any debts incurred to migrate to Thailand. The cost of living in Trat is THB 4,750 for a four-member household (USD150 for the cheapest room rent and minimum food), and around THB1750 (around USD50) per capita. There is no additional cost towards health in Thailand as health insurance is paid every year along with the visa fee. This means that a young female migrant’s expected net income in Thailand (cash income minus cost of food, rent, work permit and healthcare) will be THB10,000 (USD310) per year.

Beyond basic living costs, in Thailand, the average expenditure on consumer durables is much higher than residing in Cambodia. Migrants spent THB40,000-50,000 to purchase motorbikes, opting to pay in monthly installments and phones are purchased for THB 10,000. Only 3 respondents had cheap phones that cost around THB1,000. Aside from transport and communication durables, some migrants in Rayong had purchased TVs and fridges, as they could spend all their income in Thailand and were not obliged to send any remittance to Cambodia. Respondents who had children in Cambodia or had to remit money regularly had fewer purchases in Thailand. All respondents had purchased fans and rice cookers in Thailand.

In order to support their expenditure in Thailand, migrant workers accumulate further debt in Thailand, in addition to pre-existing debts in Cambodia. Women’s income from migratory work, as detailed in this report, are irregular, so during low season, they need to borrow money from friends and neighbors, or from money lenders who charge 10 percent interest per month. More than 70 percent of the respondents said that they had taken a loan from their employer for administrative expenses or work permit costs, and this was subsequently deducted from their wages. However, these are not perceived as debts by respondents but as advance payment of their wages. Few respondents kept record of how much they advanced from employers and relied on the account kept by their employer.

3.8.2. Cost and benefit of staying in Cambodia

If the profiled young female migrant remained in Prey Veng, Cambodia, she could work only as agriculture labourer or as a shop helper (aside from working on her own family farm). The cash income from her wage work would approximately be around USD100. The socio-economic survey of Cambodia shows that for the second quintile group’s average monthly per capita consumption is 216,000 Riels (USD53) in rural areas. Living expenses in Thailand and in Cambodia is almost the same, however, working in Thailand gives higher wages, therefore, at present, migrating to Thailand is a better economic choice.

37 The cost of healthcare in Cambodia can equally be considered as nil for this demographic, as free healthcare is available for the poorest families.

38 Calculated from the NIS 2016 (pages 81-82) data on monthly consumption and percentage of food expenses in rural areas.
Concerning debts, a large number of households in Cambodia are in debt. Among respondents in Thailand, 37.5 percent reported that they are in debt, which is in line with the government’s official statistics reporting 38 percent of households who reported debts in Cambodia\textsuperscript{39}. Debts were incurred for two reasons among migrant young women: (i) for living and/or healthcare related expenses in Cambodia; (ii) to build assets in Cambodia. The case below shows how a migrant worker incurred debt to treat her child’s medical treatment:

“I have a debt of 1 million Riels (USD245) in Cambodia. I go home whenever my child is sick, so all our money is spent on travel and treatment for the child. This debt was incurred for treatment and travel.”

– Respondent #11, a female restaurant worker (age 19) in Rayong.

Loan and interest-based payment is a major monthly expenditure for Cambodian households. Therefore, hardly much remains for a migrant worker by working and living in Cambodia.

\begin{table}[!h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{llll}
\hline
\textbf{Place} & \textbf{Trat} & \textbf{Prey Veng} \\
\hline
\textbf{Income/Expenses} & THB & USD & KHR & USD \\
\hline
Women’s Income & 6,000 & 190 & 100 & \\
\hline
Per capita consumption & 1,750 & 54 & 216,000 & 54 \\
\hline
Medical insurance and visa (annual cost) & 5,000 & 160 & 0 & 0 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Comparative table showing income and expenditure of young women working in Thailand and Cambodia}
\label{table:income_expenditure}
\end{table}

Note1: 1 USD = 32 THB; 1 USD = 4,000 KHR
Note2: All numbers are rounded off to the nearest 10s. (Source: Field survey, 2017)

\textsuperscript{39} NIS 2016: page 74
3.8.3. Long term cost and benefits

The living cost of working in Thailand can increase with stricter regulations being introduced for obtaining work permits. Migrating to Thailand has additional intangible costs that cannot be financially accounted, such as: (i) loss of ties with children and family, (ii) loss of social circles in Cambodia, (iii) psychological costs of living in fear and (iv) feeling of being discriminated against by Thai people. Such personal costs have long term implications for young migrant women as they grow older. Due to their legal status in Cambodia, they can make long term investments in their networks, as well as in their homestead and farmlands. Such investments are important in the long term, as it would give them an income to rely on when they get old. Without such investments however, they are forced to depend on their children in their old age. Noting that children of migrants are vulnerable to having lower access to education- or even citizenship in Thailand- their earning capacity can be limited in the future and supporting parents would be a heavy burden for these children. Such long-term costs are not included in the calculations above.

At the same time, working in Thailand can also be seen as an investment for the future in Cambodia. They invest their income generated in Thailand as a means to prepare for their life after returning to Cambodia. Eleven young female migrant workers and their family members earned sufficient income to pay off their debts and/or build houses. Six respondents had purchased land and house via loans in Cambodia and were now paying off the debts. As one respondent said: “It is hard to save in Thailand, but we can pay off [our] loans.” Debt therefore is a strategy used to build assets in Cambodia.

“My mother owes the wooden shop owner USD 10,000 in Cambodia for building our house. My mother also has debt in Thailand. She borrowed THB 50,000 from our neighbor to lend to other people for the purpose of earning interest.”

– Respondent #7, a female fish sorter (age 19) in Rayong.

“To start a business, I borrowed USD 30,000 at two percent interest per month. The Business didn’t do well, so [my husband and I] came to Thailand to earn more [money]. I have to pay for eight more months to clear the loan.”

– Respondent #1, a female crab-picker (age 25) in Trat.

“My mother borrowed USD 7,000 from the bank to buy land. We are all working here and we send THB 7,000 every month to pay off the loan. We will take another loan of USD 10,000 to build a house.”

– Respondent #5, a female fish sorter (age 20) in Trat.
CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. CONCLUSIONS

Gender stereotypes in Cambodia affect the lives of girls and women in every way, especially on access to education, vocational training and employment.

1. Girls and young women are expected to help with household chores, care for younger siblings before marriage and take care of their own children after marriage.

2. Girls and young women are expected to obey their parents and husband.

3. Girls and young women are expected to be chaste and keep themselves safe from sexual assault.

4. Girls and young women are expected to do all this while also earning money and supporting their families at all times.

To satisfy these expectations, girls and young women drop out of school before completing secondary education and give up the option of pursuing higher education. This affects their income, exposure and reduces their life options drastically. This not only reduce their self-esteem, but reinforces the culture of devaluing the earning potential of girls and young women. Stereotypes keep the women subordinate in a patriarchal culture.
4.1.1. Gender stereotypes in fishing supply chain and its consequences

The fisheries industry in Thailand is gender segregated. There is a clear-cut gender stereotype that boat work is for men and land work is for women. No migrant women work on a boat, although working on a boat pays better than working on land. Women work on sorting fish, processing seafood and mending nets. These jobs are considered more suitable for women, since they are expected to work close to home. Migrants justify this gender-based division of labor by referring to stereotypes of physical strength and dexterity, and there were no reports of men wanting to do women’s job or any women wanting to do men's job. This division of labour is supported by the stereotype that men are stronger, leading to large differences in pay. Men are paid THB 10,000-13,000 per month with other benefits such as housing, whereas women’s wages are based on the work done and the pay is irregular. Such differences in wages further strengthens the stereotype that men’s work is harder and more important. The vicious cycle of gender stereotype feeds the gender wage differences, fueling women’s low self-esteem.

Young migrant women in Thailand are always seen as ‘helpers’ of either their parents or their husbands. Many young women come with their family as children. They either take care of the siblings or help their mothers in seafood processing. These women would give all their income to their parents and do not have any decision-making power on what and where they would be working. As they follow their parent’s decisions is not compensated by any independent income for themselves. Young married women define themselves as “in waiting”- waiting for their husbands to come back from sea and earning just enough to survive. Any savings come from the income of their husbands.

Young migrant women from Cambodia see themselves as supplementary income earners for the household and would feel that they are only supporting men. Therefore, the decision in work – where to work, whether in Thailand or in Cambodia and what to do in the future – all depend on their men and there is little space for women to exercise their own agency. At the same time, women are seen mainly as caregivers to their children, and are forced to bear the triple burden of household chores, childcare and minimum wage work independently, while the men are at sea for most of the days. The absence of men also increases young migrant women’s vulnerability in a new country in terms of their physical safety at home, at work, and on the road. To mitigate the risks, the migrants live with their families and always go to work or to the market in groups with other women. This strategy keeps them safe and builds a strong social network among migrants in Thailand, but drastically restricts their mobility in public spaces.

4.1.2. Socio-economic situation of Cambodian women in Thailand and back home

Existing gender stereotype and division of labour shape the opportunities and possibilities that young Cambodian women have in Thailand and back home. Young migrant women find that the living situation is better in Thailand than in Cambodia where they lived in poverty. However, there is little that they can do to increase their income, since they have few other options than to work in fish sorting and seafood processing. They are not able to go anywhere else, since their husbands or family members work out at sea for long periods, and they need to wait for their return at the shore.

Some respondents were young unmarried women who do not live with their family members. These women had relatively more control over their income. However, living alone without husbands or family members increases vulnerability to harassment from both Cambodians and Thais, therefore, they were living and working with friends.
The young women who are left at home in Cambodia are able to benefit economically from the remittances received from their parents. However, it is rarely the case that these children are able to continue their education to tertiary degrees and get stable employment. Rather, they would follow their parents to Thailand to earn an income. For daughters especially, the gender stereotype and social expectation is that girls are kept closer to their parents and expected to help around the family home rather than pursue their own career. Therefore, it is not that the parents’ migration leads to a stable financial situation for the family back home and facilitates their upward social mobility, it is more that young women are left in limbo and are compelled to follow the path of their parents.

4.1.3. Cost and benefit of young Cambodian women to migrate

For the Thai fisheries industry, the benefit of having migrant workers is very obvious. Without the migrant workers, the industry will not be able to operate, either in catching fish or in post-harvest activities. For young female migrant workers from Cambodia, they have gained an economic benefit by working in Thailand—being able to earn more cash income, to remit back home and be able to eat better quality food. Calculation of their income and expenditure in Thailand and in Cambodia clearly shows that they are better off financially when working in Thailand.

However, the increased cost of MoU process can lead to further reduction in their economic gain, while there is little increase in benefits such as access to education, vocational training, social services or decent work. Being away from Cambodia for a long period of time deprives them of accumulating social capital and labour investment in their farmland and homestead, which makes it difficult for them to integrate back to their place of origin.

4.1.4. Factors influencing young Cambodian women’s access to opportunities for upward mobility

The social expectation that daughters should be near their parents and support the parents far more than sons restrict career opportunities for young women in both Cambodia and in Thailand. Women in rural areas are expected to help their parents with the household and generate an income, instead of pursuing higher education opportunities away from home. Although it is often discussed that migration brings women outside their own community – freeing them from locally-imposed social restrictions – this is not the case in the fishing communities in Thailand. As depicted in section 3.8, young migrant women’s economic situation in Thailand is much better than in Cambodia. However, the improved economic condition does not improve the career of young women, but used for consumption in Cambodia and in Thailand. The gender norm that women should be near their family home and women as secondary income earner of the family are strengthened in Thailand (due to fear and other factors), which hampers women’s mobility, self-development and upgrading of skills.

Young women who had reached Thailand could not avail of any education or vocational training opportunities in Thailand, as they were not able to enter Thai schools for reasons including their language abilities, legal status, job stability and the expectation to help with household chores and earn an income. With the lack of opportunities to upskill or exposure to open opportunities, there are very little possibilities for young migrant women to move towards better and more decent jobs.

Although young Cambodian women were not able to further their education and training, they do try to make the most of the little resources they have in hand.

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40 The Thai government aims to phase out all other forms of migration for unskilled workers and has instituted the NV process by which migrants may transition from undocumented, pink card, or other channels to the MoU process, with work permits valid for 1-2 years.
They are aware of the health services that they are able to receive at Thai hospitals and what they are entitled to in a Cambodian hospital. If they have an ID Poor Card, they will receive free healthcare services (including HIV/AIDS treatment) at Cambodian hospitals. They would work in Thailand but cross the border to access health services at Cambodian hospitals.

The expectation and norm of ‘good daughters’ and ‘good wives’ chain women to the fishing communities in Thailand, providing them with very little opportunity for progressing. It must be noted however that the women make the most effort within limited space to make use of the available resources, showing the strong agency and will to improve their situation.
4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to expand life choices for young Cambodian women migrant workers in seafood sector, the following recommendations are made for civil society, including organisations such as Plan International.

**DELINK MIGRANTS’ STAY PERMIT FROM EMPLOYMENT**

Migrant workers need a strong legal status in Thailand. At present, the only way migrants can obtain legal status is for Thai employers to register individuals and obtain a work permit on their behalf. This dependence on employers for legal status has large potential to become an exploitative relationship. Migrants face difficulty in negotiating conditions with employers or progressing to a better job because their legal status is tied to their current employer. Despite the right to change employers, the current regulation makes it impossible for workers to change jobs with ease. The stay permit, and work permit requirements should be delinked, so migrant workers are able to register on their own and be given sufficient opportunities to look for and/or change employers.

The registration of migrants need to be done at an affordable price with fewer documentation required in order to allow migrants to register by themselves at the local government without fear and with ease. The ease in registration will encourage migrants to register and be eligible for formal employment. Formalising employment for migrant workers is extremely important, especially for migrant young women targeted in this study. They are invisible and vulnerable because their employment remains informal. This is further explored in the next recommendation.

**WHAT PLAN CAN DO**

There are other organisations working on migration issues, who are also advocating for easier and more independent registration for workers. There is a need for Plan and these organisations to work collectively in lobbying the Thai government to delink stay permits from employment permits, allow migrant workers to register by themselves.
FORMALISE EMPLOYMENT FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Women migrant workers remain invisible, vulnerable and marginalised because their employment remains informal. Young women migrant workers in seafood industry live near the port doing odd jobs such as processing seafood, mending nets or sorting fish, waiting for their male relatives who are fishing at sea. Their informal job arrangements (despite having an independent income of their own) remains invisible as it is used up each day for food and other daily necessities.

On the opposite spectrum, men’s income is paid in lump sum and is visible. This difference in the payment process strengthens the visibility of men’s contribution to the household and minimises that of the women. This then reinforces the gender stereotype that men control large amounts of money, while women control only daily expenses. Therefore, to make women’s employment more secure and visible, it is important that young migrant women’s employment is formalised, and worker receive a regular monthly wage regularly along with social security.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

1. Raise awareness among employers about the importance and impact of formalising employment for women migrant workers. Employers are aware of the difficulties in getting workers as well as the government policy enforcing registration of migrant workers. Therefore, it is beneficial to employers to formalise contracts and retain workers.

2. Train women migrant workers on labour rights to empower them to negotiate with employers in formalising their contracts.

3. Publish job and pay information of different employers in the area. Transparency of this information will allow migrants to seek better payment and employment condition, creating pressure for employers to improve contracts and working conditions. Such information can be provided either through SNS, or through regular migrant peer-to-peer meetings.

4. Support organising peer groups for exchanging information among women migrant workers. This will enable them to share information about better paying employers among their communities, as well as mutual support to negotiating with employers.

5. Build capacity and agency among young women migrant workers, so if the Thai government legislates in favour of migrant workers unions, these unions can engage effectively with young women. This allows them to be well-prepared to actively participate in collective and constructive decision-making.
A critical concern for young migrant women is that they are not able to continue education upon arriving to Thailand with their parents. Facilities are needed for migrant children to continue education in Thailand, especially for young girls, as they are primarily brought over to look after the house and younger siblings.

A bridging program to introduce Cambodian children to Thai education system including language support, could be established in schools where there are many migrants. Additionally, there is a need to reach out and encourage migrant parents to send children to school to continue their education, focusing on girls. Flexible education, and learning modalities and remedial education services are required to boost skills and knowledge needed for formal education among girls and young women who migrate.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

1. Support Thai schools near Cambodian communities in Thailand to prepare these institutions to accept Cambodian children. This includes not only translators, but also teacher training in transitioning Cambodian students to a Thai school system.

2. Support transition classes, where older children can get Thai language training support to integrate in the age-appropriate grade to minimise differences with their classmates. Older Cambodian students often feel shy to study with younger Thai students.

3. Reach out to migrant parents to encourage them to send children to school for further education.

4. Provide childcare support so young girls are not home-bound to care for smaller siblings whilst parents work. Childcare is further explored in the next recommendation.
One of the reasons why women opt for home-based work or do not take up better earning jobs is primarily for childcare. Their husbands or male relatives are often at sea, so if there are no other family members, women migrants are the ones who take sole burden of childcare. Providing childcare support allow migrant women to seek jobs and relieve young girls from caring for young siblings.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

1. Organise a community-based childcare support centre, funded by either contribution from parents themselves, local government and/or employers.

2. Advocate to employers the importance and benefit of providing childcare support for their workers, and solicit support for childcare centres.

3. Provide childcare training to volunteers and care givers at the childcare centre. Care givers should include both women and men to dispel gender stereotyping.

4. Childcare centres can be open to both Cambodia and Thai children. Organising meetings with local Thai communities on the need for childcare centres and organising a joint childcare support system. Childcare centres for Thai workers do not exist either, therefore this is an opportunity for both Thai and Cambodian communities to come together to create a joint support network.
At present, young migrants’ earnings are either taken away by their parents or are used up by their family in Thailand or in Cambodia, limiting possibility to take risks and seek other gainful employment. A savings mechanism for young migrants needs to be established so that young migrants can save part of their earnings, which they can use either as a seed money for small business or invest on vocational training to upskill. If the savings can be made by groups, these savings groups could provide additional support such as mentorship, soft skills training, rights awareness and mechanisms to educate migrants and safeguard them against potential financial abuse.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

1. Provide training for women migrant workers on financial management, with a focus on saving for future investment. on the importance of women managing their own finance, their involvement in the joint management of household finances and how that contributes to overall household management.

2. Provide accessible and secure savings facilities for migrant workers. Bank deposits might not be suitable for migrants who live far away from banks and are intimidated by or unaware of Thai banking services.
Women migrants are currently tied to fishing communities because they are reliant on their male relative’s income from working on boats. Cases do exist where women get better paying jobs moving out of fishing communities and often taking their male relatives with them. Vocational training would widen the options that women migrants currently have. Core skills include: Thai, English and Chinese language skills, numeracy skills, professional housekeeping (in homes or hotels), construction skills, communication and more. Access to job pools or hands-on training need to be incorporated within the vocational training to help the women progress on to different jobs.

**WHAT PLAN CAN DO**

1. **Conduct research on employers’ needs for skills from their employees.**

2. **Develop an information system where employers can put up job adverts.**

3. **Organise skills training and link to potential employers.**

4. **Employers who hire the trained worker pay a small service fee to an information system, so that the service can be financially supported.**

5. **Provide gender-awareness training to eliminate gender stereotyping in the workplace.**
ENSURE DECENT WORK FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

It is important to note that Thai labour law treats both Thai workers and migrant workers equally. An enforcement mechanism is needed to ensure minimum wage and decent working condition for migrant workers are and remain equal to Thai workers. The protection and enforcement of decent wages for home-based workers (crab-meat pickers) and daily wage workers (such as fish sorters and net menders) is especially needed.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

1. Work with employers’ association to encourage them to provide basic social services such as childcare support and maternity leave.

2. Conduct research with employers’ association on the gender wage gap and the impact of improved wages and benefits to the retention rate of migrant workers.
DISSEminate INFORMATION ON SAFE MIGRATION IN CAMBODIA

Information on safe migration is well disseminated in Cambodia, so migrants pursue informal routes of migration in distrust of the formal system, or because it is expensive and time consuming. Migrants prefer to follow advice from friends and relatives. It is important that migrants are aware of where and who to contact should they encounter any trouble in Thailand. Handbooks and leaflets listing places to contact exist, as well as apps developed to share information on risks. Despite the existence of these tools, disseminating information needs to continue, especially in different forms of communication.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

Disseminate information on safe migration using existing materials in project villages in Cambodia, incorporating different gender concerns.
DEVELOP A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS OF MIGRATING PARENTS, SO CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS CAN CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

Children left behind by migrating parents are unlikely to continue education without their parents, owing to financial or psychological reasons and prefer to migrate with parents. Parents prefer to bring their children with them, especially without a support network in their home villages, depriving children the opportunity to continue their education. A support system is needed where children not migrating with parents are cared for and allow them to continue their education without limitations.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

1. Provide awareness and training to teachers to identity and support the needs of children left behind.

2. Provide in-school facilities in schools that support girls to continue their education, such as childcare for younger siblings and counselling for children living without their parents.

3. Enhance school curriculum to be gender-inclusive and relevant to vocational training and the pursuit of gainful employment.

4. Provide a system linking vocational training and job placements. Children following parents to Thailand after leaving school is because they do not find a full school education would lead them to better employment opportunities in the immediate future. It is important that schools provide life skills, career counselling and develop apprenticeship schemes for students, in order for children (and their parents) find value in continued study and plan for their future better. Expanding imaginations and opportunities for future occupation is important.

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A reason why young women go to Thailand is because the job prospects in Cambodia is grim. Young women need upskilling in order to find better employment. There is a need to focus more on upskilling women than men, as men face very little restrictions in pursuing apprenticeships. Men often have social remittances, that is, they learn skills in construction when migrating and return upskilled to their home country. This is not the case for women, as opportunities to learn and upskill are more limited.

**WHAT PLAN CAN DO**

1. Research the skills in demand that would lead to better employment for women in Cambodia.

2. Organise formal skills training sessions, focusing on skills that will lead to a better income and away from traditional skills such as sewing and handicraft to reduce enforcing gender stereotypes.

3. Create a job placement or apprenticeship scheme for those completing vocational skills training to be directly placed into relevant jobs.

4. Provide training for employers in male-dominated industries on the merit and benefits of employing women.

5. Run campaigns on equal wages for equal work. In addition, run campaigns highlighting the importance of career development for women.
DEVELOP AND NURTURE YOUNG WOMEN’S AND GIRLS’ GROUPS IN CAMBODIA

Girls face gender-biased expectations to put their families’ needs and interests before their own. Forming young women’s and girls’ groups where they can share their aspirations, give mutual support and provide mentorship to enhance their career development will gradually break away from traditional gender-based norms and encourage pursuit of higher education or vocational skills training.

WHAT PLAN CAN DO

1. Organise young women’s group which meet regularly to share information and experiences.

2. Provide career talks by various women, who can also serve as mentors for the members in the group.

3. Organise industry visits to learn about different forms of occupations.

4. Engage parents, male relatives and husbands to encourage women to expand their occupation choices and have access to different careers.

© Plan International
(1) Analysing Labour markets in Thailand and Cambodia, and demand of skills to assess potential career pathways for girls and young women and identify skillsets required.

(2) A follow-up study on migrant children who have attended Thai schools. Did attaining further education in Thailand expand and enhance their career options?

(3) A study on children left behind in their home countries by parents migrating abroad. How does the migration of parents affect children left behind?

(4) A study on the existing campaigns and social-education methods towards encourage young women (and their families) to allow and pursue their own career.

(5) A study on employer incentives to provide training for migrant workers to upskill.

(6) An Action-research on the use of social media and technology for self-development of skills among young women migrants.


Knight, K. & K. MacLeon (2004), Integration of teachers’ voices into education for all in Cambodia: Teachers’ status, social dialogue, and the education sector (Phnom Penh: PACT-Cambodia)


Sann, V n.d., ‘The national social protection strategy for the poor and vulnerable: process of development’, vol. 18, Successful Social Protection Floor Experiences


In-depth interview questionnaire for respondents
Cambodian women aged between 18 and 25 years associated directly (employed) / indirectly (family of employee) with the fisheries industry in Thailand.

Name:................................................................. Age:..............
Place of origin:.........................................................Phone number:......................
Marital status: Single/ living together/ Married/ Divorced/ Separated............................
Living with: alone/parents/siblings/husband/boyfriend/children/in-laws/friend..............
Legal status: registered / work permit/ unregistered /papers being processed.............
Date of interview:............................Place of interview:....................................
Interviewer/s:....................................................Translator/s:.............................

I. Personal details: (ask this section to all women)
1. What are/were parents doing? Where are they now?
2. Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
3. How was life when you were growing up? (record life history naturally asking questions where required).
4. How many siblings do you have?
5. What are your siblings doing? What jobs they have? Married/unmarried, etc.
6. Where are they now? (this is to track migration)
7. How much land does your parents have in Cambodia?
8. What was your livelihood back home? (paddy, fishing, livestock raising, retailer, agriculture labor → this can be multiple choice)
9. What are the main cash income source in Cambodia?
10. How many months did you not have rice to eat at home per year in Cambodia? (record how many months they did not have enough cash to buy rice each year)
11. Education status: (number of years of schooling, kind of school, place)
12. Other Trainings (if any): (course, place, training period)
13. Why you did not continue schooling?
14. How much education level does your siblings have? (ask for all siblings)
15. Why did ++ study more while + studied less? (compare between siblings)
16. How much did you want to study? (any course she like to do, but could not)

Pre-migration job experience (if any):
17. Did you have any job in Cambodia before coming here? What was the job?
18. How did you find this work? Where was the workplace?
19. Were you happy with this work? Why did you want to quit the work? (married women only)
20. Which year did you get married?
21. What is the education level of your husband? Where is his place of origin? Before getting married, what did he do? After getting married, where did you live?
22. Do you have any children? How many? How old?
23. Where are they? What are they doing?
24. Who is caring for them? How much do you pay that person? (if they don’t pay cash, then ask about food, house, gifts, etc.)
25. How do you feel about them being with you/without you? (Separation from their children and other family members) – lonely, anxious, worried, unhappy, happy, relaxed (because they are doing well)
26. What is your husband/boyfriend doing? Where is he now?

Husband’s life and pre-migration job experience (if any):
27. What were his parents doing? Where are they now?
28. Where are his siblings? What are they doing?
29. What job did your husband do before coming here?
31. Why did he quit the job and come here?
32. Did his family face any problems such as poverty, violence, disaster, discrimination, etc.? (specifically, as about push factors in migration)
II. Migration details:
33. When did you come here? How many years back?
34. What was your age at migration: (if repeat migrant, get age at each migration/trip)
35. With whom did you come to Thailand?
36. Why did you leave your country/home? (Ask sub-questions to get details)

Push factors have to be recorded here:
37. Social factors – get details of issues faced in hometown/community
38. Familial factors – get details of issues faced with family
39. Disaster – get details of which disaster, when, what happened, impact of disaster
40. Desire for better life – what does better mean? What do/did you want?
41. Family reunion – who was here already?
42. Why did you choose Thailand for migration? (Why did you come to Thailand)
43. Why to this place? Who has introduced you to here?

Record pull factors here:
44. Did you have friends or family here? Who was here?
45. Did the broker or employer bring you here?
46. Who decided that you should migrate?
47. Who will decide when to return home?

Benefits of migration for young Cambodian women
(Social benefits: New networks of people, more exposure, more social skills, etc.)
(Personal benefits: more income, more exposure, more confidence, more freedom)
48. With whom do you live? Who are your neighbors?
49. Are they also from your place of origin?
50. How often do you talk with them?
51. Have you made new friends here? Who are they? Are they Cambodian? Thai?
52. Outside your family, who do you talk to most?
53. Do you go out and have fun? With whom do you do this?
54. What do you do for fun? (Evenings? Weekends?)
55. What is good about life in Thailand?
56. Do you eat more/better here than when you were back home? (how better)
57. Do you eat better in Thailand or Cambodia?
58. Do you miss any food from home?
59. Do you bring any food from home to eat here when you are homesick?
(Psychological benefits: Greater self-confidence due to higher salaries, better food, more free
time, less poverty, new language acquisition, etc.)
60. Do you think your work here is more physically difficult than the work back home? Why do you say so?
(Health: Better access to healthcare, more nutrition, healthier…)
61. When did you last fall sick in Thailand?
62. Did you see a doctor in Thailand?
63. What was the cost of treatment in Thailand?
64. Did you work when you were sick in Thailand?
65. How often do you fall sick in Thailand?
66. How often did you fall sick back at home in Cambodia?
67. How far was the doctor in Cambodia?
68. Which doctors and nurses do you like better? Thailand or Cambodia? Why?
69. Which hospitals do you like better? Thailand or Cambodia? Why?
70. Do you feel happier now?
71. Do you have more free time now? or when you were in Cambodia?
72. What new things have you learned?
Speaking Thai?
Using kitchen tools?
Using an ATM card?
Living alone?
Travelling alone?
(Has this increased income or lead to more decision-making role in the family, household and community?)

73. How much do you earn? How much does your husband earn? How much do other family members earn?
74. How much do you send back home to your family in Cambodia?
75. Who earns the most income in your family?
76. How do you manage the income? Do you pool them all together?
77. Do you think that those who earn most in your family will have more say?
78. Are you able to keep the money that you earn for yourself? Or do you have to give all to your family? (ask which family member controls her income)
79. If you want to buy something, will s/he always allow you to do so?
80. Can you give some examples of this? What did you requested to buy? What did your ++ say? (insert family member who controls income)
(Has migration increased your access to jobs, information about jobs, information about the world, etc.)
81. What job do you do here? What time to what time do you work?
82. Has the work content changed since you started to work?
83. Has your pay ever increased since you started to work?
84. Do you think you can expect to have more pay in the future? Why? How?
85. What is good about your workplace?
86. Do you think your experience in this workplace will give you an advantage for future work search? Why?
87. Do people in your family respect you more now? Do they listen to you more now? Why do you think they do so?
88. Do people in your community respect you more now? Do they listen to you more now? Why?
89. How often do you go back to your home in Cambodia? (how many times since she migrated here/ how many times per year/ or how many days per year)
90. Have you met with your friends back home who did not migrate?
91. Do you think the way people treat you has changed after migration?
92. Do you think you now relate to them differently from before? (this question will record any change in her own interests, perceptions and self-awareness)
93. Have you ever thought it would have been better if you have not migrated? Why?
94. Did you have a voice (any power) in the community in Cambodia before migration? (for festivals/rituals, negotiating with employers, donations for temples)
95. Do you have a voice (any power) in the community in Cambodia now? Does migration give you a greater voice in the community?
96. Do you amount more to temples now? Why?
97. Do you have a voice in the community of destination in Thailand now?
98. What do you organize in the community? (work, savings, celebrations, payment to police, housing arrangements, other)

III. Registration
99. Do you have the pink/yellow card (registration) or passport or work permit?
100. Who supports/helps you with your registration and paperwork – brokers, agents, family members, employer?
101. What is the cost of registration? Who paid the cost?
102. If you used a broker, what was the broker charge? Who paid for that?
103. If you spent money for travel, food, etc., how much was that? if she did not spend, who paid for that?
104. Did you suffer loss of income due to registration process? How many work days did you absent yourself to go for registration work? How much was the total loss? (Cost + loss of income + expenses)
105. Is there an income difference between registered and unregistered workers?
106. What did you gain due to registration? (higher salary, no fear, can travel home to see my children, bank account, etc.)
107. Have you ever worked without document?
108. Do you know anyone who has worked without document before?
109. Has having a document improved your working condition?

IV. Living conditions in Thailand:
110. How many people in the household? Who are they? (get relationships)
111. Did you come together?
112. Is everyone from your family here? Or have you left some people back home?
113. How many working people vs. dependents in the household?
114. What jobs do they have? (record by member/gender)
115. How much income do they earn? (record by member/gender) (Living conditions)
116. What kind of housing?
117. What kind of toilets? (shared by how many people)
118. How many people per room?
Get details of available facilities/opportunities and missing conditions (water, electricity, toilet, food, nutrition, hospital, medicines, jobs, etc.)
119. What facilities do you have in the house? water/ house/ security/ electricity/ healthcare/ education/ trainings/ transport/ other
120. Is this better or worse than your home in Cambodia?
121. How/why is it better/ worse?
122. What care work do you do in Thailand daily? (only cook/clean? In hospitals/ schools? Also pay for everything?)

Household work:
123. Who does the household work?
124. What tasks do you do? What tasks do others do?
125. How many people do you care for? (get relationships with each person)
126. Is there someone you are unable to take care of? Who? Why?
127. How is that person being taken care of? By whom? How do you contribute?

V. Job details:
(Only for women who are working in Thailand)
128. What job (get details):
If so, how often do they get work?
130. Income – terms/total (THB5/kg – average/day):
131. Working hours:
132. Do you have shifts?
133. Frequency of work (if not regular):
134. Reasons for choosing this job: (friend/family/neighbour/broker/other) (For all women, including those who are not working)
135. What job does your husband have? (get details):
If so, how often do they get work?
137. Income – terms/total (THB5/kg – average/day):
138. What are the working hours:
139. Do you have shifts?
140. Frequency of work (if not regular):
141. Reasons for choosing this job: (friend/family/neighbour/broker/other)
142. Who manages the day-to-day finances at home in Thailand?
143. Who manages large expenses in Thailand? (buy motorbike, rent bigger house)
(Only for women who are unemployed)

144. What do you do at home in Thailand? (list all the chores/responsibilities)
145. Do you have support from anyone to do this in Thailand?

Problems at work:

146. What problems do you have at your workplace in Thailand?
147. Do you have payment related problems? Delayed, low wages, reduced, deductions, etc.
148. Do you have problems with work availability? (difficult to get work)
149. Do you have work-related health problems? (skin problems, headaches, etc.)
150. Do you have difficult working conditions? (Long working hours, standing all day, wearing gloves in the heat, no gloves but wet all day, etc.)
151. Do any women in your workplace have trouble from men? (Sexual harassment)
152. Do you have problems with some colleagues?
153. Any other problems? Distance, legal issues, etc.

Prior jobs (only for women who have more than 1 job in Thailand):

154. Have you had any other jobs in the area that you tried/aspire to try?
155. Have you ever been promoted in your previous job? (maybe team leader)
156. Have you ever had pay raise in your previous job?
157. Has the employer ever trained you in any skill in current or previous job?
158. Has the work content ever changed in any job so far?
159. If changed, how do you learn the new skill?
160. When you got this job, did you have to have some skill? What skill?
161. Do you think that any skill you learned here will be useful for your future jobs?

VI. Financial details: (income is already covered in section III.)

162. What are the total expenses here?

House rent / utilities/ food/ transport/ medicine/ protection /leisure (for last one include movies, drinking, smoking, bars, online games, etc.)

163. How much do you spend for mobile every month?
164. How much do you send home? How often? For what purpose do you send? (food, rent, school fees, etc.)
165. How much money do you send for additional expenditure such as health care, house repair, festivals, starting new business, etc.?
166. How many people are you supporting back home? (get relationships)
167. What is your contribution to household expenses?
168. What is family savings?
169. What is your individual savings?
170. Do you have any debts in Cambodia?
171. How much and for what did you take loan?
172. Was it with a bank or was it with a money lender?
173. Do you have any debts in Thailand?
174. How much and for what did you take loan?
175. Was it with a friend/family or was it with a money lender?
176. Do you have a support system for finances? Moneylender/ friends/ employer/ relatives/ etc.
177. How much do you spend on health? How much in the last year/month?
178. What problems do you face economically?

VII. Decision-making:

179. Who decides what to spend on?
180. Who decides how much to save?
181. Do you have a support system for health? Friends/family/ hospitals/clinics?
182. Do you have a phone? What kind? Who bought it for you?
183. How many others in the household have a phone? What kind?
184. What other electronic goods do you have in your house? TV/Radio/computer/music player? Who uses it?
185. Do you have any vehicles in the household? Who owns it? Who uses it?
186. Any other major purchases? Who uses it? Who bought it?
187. Who does the decision-making regarding children, such as childcare, education, when to send children back home, whom to keep them with, etc?
188. Who takes decisions regarding daily expenses for food, travel to work, etc.?
189. Who takes decision about purchase of documentation, legal papers, etc.?
190. Who takes decisions about healthcare, and associated costs (travel, buying medicine, go to big hospital or local clinic)?

VIII. Problems:
191. What health problems have you faced?
192. What about drugs/alcohol problems?
193. Compared to life back home and here, where do you find more social problems? Why do you think so?
194. Have you heard of any domestic violence cases either at home or in the community?
195. Have you faced or heard others faced abusive behaviour in workplace?
196. Do you feel safe here more than back home?
197. For you, what are the benefits of being in Thailand and what are benefits of living in Cambodia in your opinion?
198. Do you have problems with police/immigration, etc.?
199. Do you face any other social problems? (discrimination, racial profiling, ethnic profiling, sexual harassment, violence from alcohol, other)
200. Do you miss your family?
201. When you miss your family, what do you do? (need to check whether all their family members are here or not).
202. Does it make you feel sick (when you are lonely)?
203. Have you ever skipped work because you were homesick?
204. Did you have any friends back home? Do you miss them?
205. What do you miss the most?
206. Are you excited and happy to be here? Is Thailand good for you?
207. Are you lonely and unhappy here? What is wrong?

IX. Gender norms in the fishing industry:
208. What jobs can ONLY men do in fishing? why?
209. What jobs can ONLY women do in fishing? why?
210. What jobs do both women and men do in fishing?
211. What jobs can women NOT do in the fishing industry? Why?
212. What jobs can men NOT do in fishing? Why?
213. Which jobs pay more, which jobs pay less in fishing?
214. Which jobs are more difficult in fishing? Why?
215. Which jobs are less difficult in fishing? Why?
216. If you could choose any job, which one would you choose? Why?
(for unemployed women only)
217. Why did you not look for work?

X. Education and training
Education
218. What age did you stop studying? Why?
219. What age did you start working? Why? What job? How much pay? (baby-sitting, or similar part time/unpaid work)
220. What age did you start earning money? Why? What job? How much pay? (this is industry-based work)
221. What opportunities for education did you have back home?
222. Have your class mates got better jobs after completing education? What jobs? Where? How much income? (Opportunity cost for income lost through education not received)
223. In Thailand, did you have any chance for education?
Gender norms affecting girls and boy’s education
Challenges – (often there are multiple challenges, so please get details)
224. What problems did you face with continuing your schooling?
a. School related: distance to school, facilities at school, problems at school
b. Poverty related: lack of food, lack of travel money, lack of fees, books, need to work, etc.
c. Government policies: school closed, no birth certificate, nationality papers...
d. School regulations and requirements: attendance, age limits, etc.
e. Identity and registration (especially for people studying in Thailand)
f. Social acceptance – in case of ethnic/racial/gender
225. Have you considered continuing your education in Thailand?
226. Did you know that some NGOs offer education/training courses?
227. If you are offered a chance, will you study further?

Vocational training
228. Have you had any trainings? Which ones?
229. What was the impact? – got job, made friends, other...
230. Have you heard of any such trainings? Where? Conducted by whom? When?
231. Did you attend? Why/ why not?
Challenges faced in access to vocational training – distance to training venue, poverty, information about the job opportunities, lack of social acceptance of such jobs for women,
232. Are you interested in any such trainings?
233. Would you consider attending such trainings? If so, what kind?

On the job training
235. Have you had any training on the job? Which ones?
236. What was the impact? – got promotion, more money, work better...
237. Have you heard of any such trainings? Where? Conducted by whom? When?
238. Did you attend? Why/ why not?
239. Challenges faced in access to on-the-job training – distance to training venue, poverty, information about the job opportunities, lack of social acceptance of such jobs for women...
240. Are you interested in any such trainings?
241. Would you consider attending such trainings? If so, what kind?

XI. Social protection
243. Do you have any social protection programs? For e.g. old age pension, childcare support, food at schools, health insurance, any other.
244. Does your country have this? Why don’t you have?
245. Is there any reason why women can’t get access to social protection?
246. Can you go to police for help if you need it? Why? Why not?
247. Can you go to the village head for help? Why? Why not?
248. Who can you seek help from? Why?
249. Are you covered by social security?
250. Migrant health insurance?
251. Have you or any of person that you know ever got arrested? If so, what happened? How were they released?
252. Can you go around alone or do you always need to be with other migrants? Why?
253. Have you ever paid to police? How much have you paid? What was the reason why they demanded payment?
XII. Future plans
254. What are your future plans for yourself?
255. What do you need to achieve these plans?
256. What are your future plans for your family?
257. What do you need to achieve these plans?
258. What do you think would you be doing if you did not migrate?
259. What income could be expected if you did not migrate?
260. Do you want to be here longer?
261. How long do you plan to be here?
This paper studies the broader structural change in the Vietnamese economy, from household-based primary-sector activities to wage and salary employment and self-employment outside the household. The analysis, based on a survey of 599 households in 12 coastal communes in two provinces, shows considerable changes in livelihood patterns over the decade covered by the survey. Over one-third of the responding households reported a different primary earnings source in 2012 than in 2002. Fewer relied on aquaculture as their main livelihood activity in the later years. While aquaculture, encouraged by official policy, has assumed an increasingly dominant position in fish production in Vietnam then, this is not necessarily a shift that has worked to the benefit of households in the coastal communities we studied. For most, aquaculture has not generated very high incomes so some are making it a less important aspect of their livelihood portfolio, not dropping it completely but shifting productive efforts to other livelihoods. Meanwhile, economic growth and structural change have created new opportunities for wage employment and self-employment for growing numbers of households. However, human and financial capital are necessary conditions for taking advantage of such opportunities arising from Vietnam’s economic development, which raises concerns about growing economic inequality in the country’s coastal communities.

This chapter records the role of women in some traditional Asian fishing communities such as Bajau Women Collecting Clams. The case study in Berau shows that women play a major role in the way fishing and fish trade in this region is organized and sustained. They sustain the networks of regional trade patterned along (informal) family/Bajau networks across the sea. Important is the historical dimension of these trade connections: the development of trade networks in time and space, networks in which relations of family, business, and trans-national ethnicity is fused. The authors argue that a gendered perspective on the different roles of men and women has much to contribute to a better understanding of the history of marine resource exploitation.

A review of case law and other documentation of human rights issues in fishing communities highlighting forced evictions, detention without trial, child labour, forced labour and unsafe working conditions, and violence and personal security- including gender-based violence- as key areas of concern. We argue that human rights violations undermine current attempts to reform the fisheries sector in developing countries by increasing the vulnerability and marginalization of certain groups. Citing cases from India, the Philippines, Cambodia, and South Africa, we show how human rights advocacy can be an effective element of support for development in fisheries. Finally, we outline how fisheries reform can better address human rights issues as an essential complement to the equitable allocation of fishing rights, contributing to improved resource management and human wellbeing.
This study is quite close to the current study as it looks exclusively at young migrants aged 15-24 years, and the data set is drawn from the Government Placement Branch, with recommendations relating to education, vocational training, employment of youth, and migration policies. Recommendations include: 1) Standardize and streamline the curricular offerings of educational institutions; 2) Ensure the recognition and equivalence of Philippine-earned degrees; 3) Address the excessive enrollment in courses for occupations such as nursing and seafaring; 4) Improve apprenticeship opportunities and benefits; 5) Offer incentives to employers who hire youth; 6) Offer adequate and accessible information services to applicants for work overseas; 7) Utilize fully the pre-employment seminars; 8) Consider age in government policies and procedures concerning migration; 9) Provide appropriate data; 10) Investigate further brain waste.

Using a survey in 2012 of fishermen on fishing boats in four provinces of Thailand conducted by the International Labour Organization, this paper examines the ranges of unacceptable working conditions by extending the measurement of forced labour. This paper makes two main contributions by identifying the degree of forced labour and measuring their working conditions. First, they conceptualise two situations, forced labour and possibly forced labour, with different combinations of available variables, which is an attempt to capture the multi-dimensional complexity in measuring forced labour. Second, they analysed the associated working conditions among the workers. With this, they have confirmed that fishing boats are places of forced labour and destinations of trafficked persons, and that the working conditions of forced and possibly forced workers are inferior to those of other workers. However, they do not in any way deal with female workers in the fisheries sector.

Thailand’s fishing industry relies almost exclusively on migrant workers to fill its hazardous, low-paying jobs. Recently, the industry has come under increased scrutiny due to the prevalence of forced labour and illegal fishing practices. This paper discusses the findings of a large-scale survey (n=596) undertaken with fishers – Thai, Cambodian and Myanmar – in four coastal provinces in Thailand. The majority of fishers worked on short-haul vessels in the wild-capture sector. Using the indicators developed by the International Labour Organization’s Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour, 16.9%(n=101) of respondents identified as being victims of forced labour for human trafficking. The survey results give important insight into the existence of deceptive and coercive recruitment practices, exploitative working conditions, and forced labour in the fishing industry. A concerted approach by governments and buyers is needed to eliminate forced labour practices.

This article examines the diverse visible and invisible roles of fisherwomen in small-scale fisheries. This research considered two ethnic groups situated in two different ecosystems: the floodplain freshwater ecosystem is represented by new entrant Muslim fishers ‘Maimal’ and the coastal ecosystem is represented by caste-based Hindu fishers ‘Jaladas’. From the basic ontological worldview of human dignity, moral individualism, and the social recognition
of women's rights, the paper argues that fisherwomen's roles need to be recognized, focused, and valued to develop a horizontal understanding that is a prerequisite to the process of democratization, and the proper functioning of a just society. In the rural societies, a host of attributes, such as the deep-rooted socio-cultural constructions of the motherly myth, extreme tolerance, family teaching, religious antagonism, poverty, lack of education, internalization of a subordinate position, lack of supportive institutions, and fear of loss of societal patronage, profoundly undermine the capacity of women to aspire and raise their voice. Fisherwomen are accrued an inferior social position although they perform unique roles in the areas of childcare, household upkeep, livelihoods, and psycho-social support for the seafaring fishers. Conducive to the ecotone of marine fisheries, this article also portrays how a rigid patriarchal form of society is seasonally transformed to matrifocality when fishermen are away for fishing for half the year.

Thailand has publicly committed to free basic education for all children regardless of nationality since 2005, but this commitment is challenged by the presence in the economy of large numbers of migrant workers whose children do not easily fit into the state school system. This paper is based on the findings of a research report by the author investigating how Thai state policy and practice in this respect has interacted and negotiated with ‘migrant learning centers’ (institutions which according to the government do not qualify as schools) run by members of ethnic community based organizations from Burma.

As a consequence of the importation of cheap labor from the neighboring countries of Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, and Lao PDR, many children from those countries currently reside in Thailand. The Thai government sometimes refers to having an “Education for All” (EFA) policy which includes these children. Yet it does not produce reliable statistical data for the proportion of these children enrolled in schools and their educational attainments. Scholars estimate the proportion in school as less than half. This paper investigates the nature of this gap between words and outcomes, through an analysis of a collection of high-level policy statements, and of findings in the literature on the educational conditions for migrant children. This covers both the public provision of education and official stances toward private and voluntary sector Migrant Learning Centers. The analysis crucially takes a critical view of the nature of policy, avoiding the fallacy that official statements form definitive, complete, or coherent expressions of the mind of the State. It finds that fragmentation here is associated with a persistent gap between the apparent thrust of many such statements and the actual outcomes. It warns against an assumption that administrative procedures can be made more efficient in a way that will close the gap.

This is a baseline survey of workers in Thai fishing and seafood processing in five zones where commercial fishing boats dock and seafood processing concentrates. The survey questions covered workers’ recent experience in the industry with recruitment, wages, hours, safety and health, support services, complaint mechanisms and living conditions as well as forced labour indicators and legal compliance levels. This report summarizes the findings of the survey to provide a baseline against which to measure progress in the months and years ahead. There is some data about young women migrants, which is useful for our study. The research included 18 Cambodian migrants aged 18-24 years, working in fishing, seafood and aquaculture.

vessel owners, Issara Institute, Bangkok.  
This study is extremely useful as it presents the views of Thai employers, whose cooperation is required for efforts to move towards Decent Work conditions in the Thai fisheries sector. Employers have shared problems with respect to their understanding of trafficking, attitudes towards programs to improve labor standards (including unionism), lack of legal labor channels, advance payment for workers, debt-bondage system, and so on. At the same time, they perceive problems with lack of labor, corruption, government regulations, and monitoring of vessels and labor. Such a research among seafood sector employers would be useful to improve the lives of migrant women who form the majority of employees in the seafood sector.

This publication presents data and findings from fishing vessels including overwork and underpay, transshipment of catch and crew, physical abuse of migrant crew members, debt bondage, trafficking, wages and payment schemes. The data covers both Burmese and Cambodian male seafarers and does not include the situation of women workers in the seafood sector. High overheads, low quality and value of catch, increase in reporting and administrative requirements, and tight profit margins were among the problems reported by vessel owners. Acute labor shortage has lead to further abusive practices in labor management, which are explained in this publication.

With specific focus on the children of migrants, this study provides valuable data to support the findings of our research about young migrant women. This publication: (i) assesses the impact of migration on children in the areas of child protection, intra-family relations, and access to education, health and other services, focusing on children who are left behind and those who migrate with their parents; and (ii) maps out existing interventions, both governmental and non-governmental for children of migrant parents.

Reason for migration: In six of seven case studies, the family had used land as collateral to borrow money for medical expenses and transport costs to the hospital. They borrowed from both the village moneylender and from lending institutions and the loan increased steadily. Faced with losing their land, the families sent working-age youth to Thailand.

Child migration: Whether children stay or go was influenced by the availability of a family member to care for a child. Migrant parents who did not have a family member, typically a grandparent, to care for a child were faced with few alternatives other than to take the child. Of the left behind children, 82.4 percent were with grandparents (usually a grandmother). Most of the grandparents suffered from health problems and described feeling overwhelmed by the burden of taking care of their grandchildren. One grandmother explained that it was physically and mentally exhausting caring for grandchildren.

Ripple effects of migration: Almost all caregivers reported overall higher standards of living after someone in their household migrated. Interviews with children revealed that their diet improved after migration, whether they stayed behind or moved with family or alone. Either the number of meals eaten per day or the quality and variety of food improved—in some cases, both. In the majority of cases, remittances were the main income source for the entire household.

Social protection: Case studies found that families headed by grandparents alone struggled to consistently provide food. All grandparents in the case studies noted that they were sometimes forced to eat only rice for a day and to borrow rice for their grandchildren to eat, even after a
family member had migrated. The primary research identified grandmothers who were not receiving remittances and had no other reliable source of income. In Siem Reap, a 61-year-old grandmother left her 8- and 10-year-old grandchildren for four to five days at a time in order to beg in local villages, as her daughter who migrated to Thailand had stopped sending remittances after she remarried. The lack of a national social protection system meant that there was no formal social safety net for these grandparents to rely on. Children as young as 2 years old were left alone, in some cases for long periods. Commune council representatives offered several anecdotes of children who had been sexually and physically abused after having been left behind with relatives when their parents migrated. Day care centers are uncommon in Cambodia, and where they do exist they are located in urban areas and are relatively expensive.

**Psychological cost of migration:** The research found that children suffered from a range of negative emotional and psychological impacts due to migration, including the disruption of relationships between parents and children. Most parents in the research visited home only once per year due to the cost of travel. One grandparent said her grandchild lived in a constant state of sadness, missing her mother. Another issue was the anxiety faced by families of international migrants. Grandparents who were carers and children of international migrants described living in a constant state of anxiety.

**Education of children:** The majority of respondents in the study reported spending a proportion of remittances on supporting children’s education. However, when children reach 15 years of age, remittances tend to be reduced and the impact of remittances on school attendance decreases. Children who migrated to Thailand faced particular challenges including the language barrier, lack of proper documentation, necessity to earn income and varying length of stay. One participant in the case studies was an 8-year-old child who had accompanied her parents to Thailand. She had not attended school while she was there because her parents were there illegally. Her parents were afraid of the police, and that someone could kidnap her, or take her away while she was at school, and they would have no way to get her back because they were illegal.

**Dropout among girls:** Continuing education after migration to urban areas was especially difficult for older children (15 to 18 years). Children in this age group are considered suitable for full-time work, which is especially relevant for poorer families where the opportunity cost of education is very high. Several 15- to 16-year-old girls interviewed in Phnom Penh said they had dropped out of school in their home villages because they had heard about possible work in garment factories in Phnom Penh. Even though their parents disapproved of their decision, they chose to move to help alleviate the dire economic situation of their families.


This report is most relevant to our research as it tracks the status of migrant workers at sea and on land. The findings include: (i) deceptive recruitment practices in their home countries, charged excessive fees leading to debt bondage in some cases; (ii) not provided with adequate information about the terms of their work at the point of their recruitment; (iii) absence of grievance mechanisms for all migrant workers in the fisheries sector; (iv) withholding of passports and personal documents by employers; (v) pay practices for sea-based workers including withholding workers’ total pay, and workers having no means of verifying if they were receiving the wages owed them; (vi) intimidation, harassment, and verbal and physical abuse, and restricted freedom of movement through constant surveillance and intimidation by the local authorities; (vii) use of an illegal substance among workers on fishing boats to keep awake and perform long work hours.