

RESEARCH PAPER

OUT FROM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

A STUDY ON DOMESTIC WORKERS IN CAMBODIA



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UN WOMEN

OUT FROM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS



DOMESTIC WORK IN CAMBODIA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CDW	Child Domestic Worker
CDWN	Cambodian Domestic Worker Network
CRUMP	Cambodian Rural-Urban Migration Project
DW	Domestic Work
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IDEA	Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association
NAPVAW	National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study aims to fill the knowledge gaps regarding domestic work in Cambodia and provide the information necessary for stakeholders to develop evidence-based and results-driven interventions to enhance the promotion and protection of domestic workers' rights.

Female domestic workers in Cambodia are highly vulnerable as many enter into domestic work at a young age, have no or very low levels of education, often grow up in difficult family situations and migrate from rural communities into urban areas, far from their families and social support networks. The disconnection from home breeds loneliness and isolation and makes domestic workers vulnerable to abuse. Their vulnerability is increased by the nature of domestic work which is carried out in private homes and by the low social status assigned to domestic workers and a very weak legal and policy framework to protect their rights.

In Cambodian culture, domestic work is seen as a form of servitude rather than *work*, an attitude that is embedded in a culture that emphasizes hierarchy based on gender, economic class, social origins, status, and ethnicity. Domestic workers are situated on the lowest rungs in the social hierarchy.

Poverty is a clear push factor in the decision to take up domestic work. Over 80 per cent of the domestic workers surveyed self-identify themselves as poor. Most domestic workers are married and have children. Many are dissatisfied in their marriages. The situation of a family also appears to play a role in the decision to send a daughter to work as a domestic worker, including factors such as divorce, parental abandonment, domestic violence and/or addiction. Notably, 24 per cent of study participants have no education. Many participants spoke of health issues ranging from headaches to HIV.

International standards that protect domestic workers are set out in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers' Convention (No. 189) and the associated Recommendation 201. But Cambodia has no binding obligation to its provisions because it has not yet ratified the Convention or its Recommendations. The Cambodian Labour Code offers protections to workers regarding working conditions but the Code explicitly excludes domestic workers from most of its provisions.

Domestic workers are not provided written contracts. They work hard and work long hours, on average more than 12 hours per day. Many work with no breaks, no rest days, no holidays and no leave. In addition to household work, some domestic workers perform work in their employer's business.

The majority of domestic workers work for strangers. Twenty per cent work for a family member. The majority live in the employer's home where more than half do not have their own room or, if they have their own room, do not have a lock on the door.

Wages for domestic workers are generally far from commensurate with the hard work and long hours they endure. The average monthly wage found in this study is US\$62. Migrant domestic workers earn the lowest average salaries in comparison to other female migrants. More than 30 per cent of domestic workers remit a part of their wages, and some remit all of their wages to their families. In the qualitative component of the study, instances of indebtedness to family members were found.

The most common form of abuse experienced by domestic workers is verbal abuse (46 per cent) closely followed by emotional abuse (38 per cent). Seven per cent of participants reported physical abuse and nine per cent reported sexual abuse including rape (three per cent). There was a general distrust of the justice system and belief that a domestic worker, especially a young one, could not prevail against an employer in court.

Despite their difficulties, the women who participated in this study are proud of their personal achievements and are particularly proud of their contributions to supporting their families.

This study was designed to reflect the growing understanding that the situation of domestic workers will not change merely by amending laws or enacting new ones. Change also requires a transformation in the social beliefs, attitudes and behaviour that underlie how domestic workers are perceived and therefore how they are treated. There are a

number of actions which need to be taken at policy level as well as directly with domestic workers and society in general in order to better protect the rights of domestic workers.

Based on the findings from this study, the following are recommended:

BOX 1.1

Legal and policy initiatives to protect domestic workers include:

1. Ratification and implementation of the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention (No. 189) and its related guidelines (Recommendation 201);
2. Amendment of the Labour Code so that domestic workers are included wherever relevant;
3. Inclusion of specific measures in the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014-2018 (NAPVAW) to address violence against women and girl domestic workers;
4. Regulation of domestic work placement agencies and enforcement of licencing;
5. Inclusion of domestic workers in the existing National Social Security Fund or creation of a social security scheme for domestic workers.
6. Inspection of households where domestic workers are employed by women labour inspectors to ensure safe and decent working conditions.

In addition to these legal and policy measures, it is also recommended that:

1. Domestic workers be included in censuses;
2. Campaigns be conducted to improve the attitudes and behaviour of society and employers towards domestic workers, and to encourage domestic workers to know their rights to safe, decent, and reasonable working conditions;
3. Children who are sent to do domestic work are registered;
4. Outreach and psycho-social assistance be made available to domestic workers and female migrants;
5. Mechanisms be put into place to report or talk about abuse; and,
6. The Cambodian Domestic Worker Network (CDWN) be supported, improved and expanded.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO

THE STUDY

UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, commissioned this research on women and girl domestic workers in Cambodia to advance increased economic empowerment of women, especially those who are most excluded, and prevention of violence against women and girls and expansion of access to victim/survivor services: two of UN Women's six global thematic priorities.

1.1 Background and purpose

In recent years, a significant amount of work had been conducted by UN Women and other organisations related to Cambodian migrant workers engaged in domestic work in other countries. However, very little research had been conducted looking into the situation of women and girl domestic workers in Cambodia. The terms of reference for this research noted that, "this is primarily due to the invisible and informal role that they take. Often working alone in a domestic property and unprotected by the Labour Code, domestic workers have the potential to be as vulnerable to economic and physical exploitation in Cambodia as they do abroad. However, until more is known about the women undertaking this work and the challenges that they face, it remains difficult to identify ways to increase their protection."

This research is directed at filling the knowledge gaps regarding domestic work in Cambodia, and provide the information necessary for stakeholders to develop accurate and specific results-driven interventions to enhance the promotion and protection of domestic workers' rights. Based on a literature review, including analysis of the legal and policy framework, and quantitative and qualitative research, this report sets out a comprehensive picture of the situation of women and girl domestic workers in Cambodia. Recommendations are made on what government and non-government stakeholders could do to improve protection of domestic workers in Cambodia.

This study reveals the growing understanding that the situation of domestic workers will not change merely by amending laws or enacting new ones. While laws help underpin change processes, true change requires a transformation in the social beliefs and attitudes that underlie how domestic workers are perceived and treated.¹ It is hoped that the centrepiece of this study - stories of individual women who perform domestic work - will serve to bring the truth and evidence out from behind closed doors in their own voices, and give domestic workers the opportunity to be an active part of the transformation.

1.2. Methods

This report brings together the findings of the literature review/policy analysis, and the qualitative and quantitative field research.

The *literature review* included a review of existing studies and the legal framework related to domestic workers in Cambodia as well as documents on international standards and practices related to protection of the rights of domestic workers.

The *quantitative research* included 234 women and girls (referred to in this report as the *participants*) who were interviewed in Khmer for approximately one hour based on a questionnaire (see Annex). The study was limited to women and girls, as they are the ones who perform most domestic work. Boys and men who are employed by households are most often employed as gardeners, guards and drivers, with

¹ Anderson, B. 2006. *A Very Private Business: Migration and Domestic Work*, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society.

some working in the household based businesses of the employers.

All participants were given the right to refuse to answer any question or to stop at any time. Most of the women and girls identified as domestic workers were pleased to participate, and stated that they felt they were being given an opportunity to let others know of their situation. Their answers were translated to English and entered into an Access database.

Of the 234 participants, 183 women and girls were interviewed in Phnom Penh, 25 were interviewed in and around Kampong Speu Town, and an additional 26 in and around Pursat Town. All interview locations were urban or semi-urban.

Kampong Speu Town, in southern Cambodia, was selected because of its accessibility and familiarity to the interviewers and for those reasons it was the first interview site, as the team knew many people in town and could identify respondents through their own networks. Pursat Town, in the northwest, was selected because of its location in a different part of the country and because it was a town unknown to the interview team. Phnom Penh was the primary focus for interviews because of its high number and concentration of domestic workers.

Before starting the research it was acknowledged that finding domestic workers to interview would be one of the most challenging aspects of this research because of the invisible nature of their work. While the Cambodian Domestic Workers Network (CDWN) agreed to assist in finding respondents, a significant number of the people they identified were not actually domestic workers, but cleaners from companies or factories.

Finding women willing to be interviewed was challenging in all three locations. Creative means were required to locate and interview current and former domestic workers in places such as public hospital waiting rooms, building sites, pagoda compounds, markets, public parks, housing developments and recycling centres. Because of these circumstances, convenience sampling was used whereby participants most readily at hand were selected. Snowball sampling was also used by asking participants to refer interviewers to other potential participants.

As it was important to assure confidentiality to the participants, in most cases interviews took place at a distance from the woman's workplace. Interviews took place on the street, in markets or on the very spot where the woman was

approached by the interviewer. Many of the women expressed apprehension during the interview that they might be away from their workplace for too long. In fewer than five cases, interviews could only be completed by telephone and in one case the interview could not be completed.

The *qualitative research* involved 15 of the 234 women who were selected for a more in-depth interview conducted by the same four experienced Cambodian social workers who conducted the quantitative research. The social workers asked questions from a second questionnaire (see Annex II) and followed up with additional questions to explore incomplete or interesting responses. These second interviews took two or more sessions of two or more hours each. The social workers also noted impressions and observations of the women they interviewed.

The 15 women from among the 234 who were selected for in-depth interviews were identified on the basis of their initial interviews which indicated that they had and/or were dealing with the most difficult of work situations. The selection criteria were any two or more of the following:

- Women who began domestic work as a minor;
- Women who had worked at multiple homes;
- Women who reported leaving their job abruptly;
- Women who reported emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Women who were in debt to their employers; and
- Women who in the quantitative interview, seemed particularly hesitant or afraid.

A number of the 234 participants who met the criteria to join the qualitative part of the study hesitated or refused, because of the more probing nature of the questions, even though the same assurances of confidentiality were given. The 15 women selected who agreed to answer the qualitative part of the study were each provided US\$5 to compensate them for the extended time it took to complete these sessions.

As a point of comparison, one of the in-depth interviewees was selected on the basis that she reported a positive relationship with her employer. This does not necessarily reflect the proportion of participants who reported a positive relationship, although this one woman was more consistently positive than any other.

Reassuring participants that their information would be kept confidential was critical to earn their trust, to obtain their consent to participate and for them to share their deeply personal stories, particularly for the 15 women interviewed in depth. To preserve confidentiality, the 15 women interviewed in depth whose stories are told in this study are identified by randomly chosen first names. Any particulars that could identify them or their locations are also omitted.

Limitations

It was difficult to locate prospective participants as domestic workers are largely invisible, hidden away in their places of work. This resulted in a smaller sample than had been originally hoped.

The sample cannot be said to be nationally representative as participants were not randomly selected and their locations too limited to reflect ethnic, religious or regional differences that might exist. The difficulty of finding participants even in populous settings led to the decision not to seek domestic workers in rural villages.

The fact that both current and former domestic workers were selected for interviews (for both the quantitative and qualitative surveys) meant that the age distribution, wages, and or other aspects of the respondents' lives reported at the time of the interviews were not necessarily representative of women and girls currently doing domestic work.

1.3. Terminology

Domestic work is defined by the ILO as work performed in or for a private household or households.² The nature of domestic work varies but most commonly includes one or a combination of cleaning the house, cooking, washing and ironing clothes, taking care of children, elderly or sick members of a family, gardening, guarding the house, driving for the family, taking care of family pets and other work that contributes to the functioning of a household.

Domestic worker is defined by the ILO as any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship.³ In some cases, domestic workers also perform work in the employer's business, which may or may not be on the same premises as their homes. The term domestic worker covers a heterogeneous group including: men, women and

children, full-time and part-time workers, workers with single and multiple employers, and those both living inside and living outside the home of the employer.

The Cambodian Labour Code in Article 4 defines "domestics or household servants" as workers engaged to take care of the homeowner or owner's property in return for remuneration.

The ILO definition of domestic work is preferred in this report as the more inclusive definition that includes domestic work that is not waged work, as a number of the women and girls interviewed worked but were not paid in cash but in kind with accommodation and food.

1.4. Structure of the report

This report is divided into four parts. Part 1 is this introduction. Part 2 looks at domestic workers, first within the global context and then within the Cambodian context; this part builds on the findings of the literature review and policy analysis. Part 3 is focused on the findings from the quantitative and qualitative research, complemented by relevant findings from other research as appropriate to assessing the validity and relevance of survey findings. Central to Part 3 are quotations from the 15 in-depth interviewees. Through these quotes these women give voice to their experience in domestic work and provide a deeper understanding of what lies behind the numbers. In Part 4, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

² International Labor Organization (ILO), 2011. *Domestic Workers Convention* (No. 189).

³ Ibid.

PART 2: CONTEXT

2.1. Domestic Workers in a Global Context

There are at least 53 million domestic workers worldwide who work in the homes of others where they clean, cook meals, care for children and the elderly, and perform a host of other tasks.⁴ This number does not include child domestic workers estimated to number 12 million. Sixty-one per cent of domestic workers are found in Asia and the Pacific.⁵

Eighty-three per cent of the world's domestic workers are women.⁶ Just as women's work in their own homes is considered by many to not be *real* work, so too domestic work is under-valued and goes unrecognized as a critical contribution to national economies by freeing up others to work in the formal economy.

ILO estimates that domestic work accounts for at least four to 10 per cent of total employment in developing countries.⁷ Yet, only 10 per cent of domestic workers worldwide receive coverage from labour laws in a way that is comparable to coverage accorded to other workers. Twenty-five per cent of domestic workers are excluded entirely from legislative protection.⁸ Thirty-six per cent of female domestic workers have no maternity protection.⁹ Of 72 countries reviewed in 2012 by ILO, 40 per cent provide no protection to domestic workers with respect to reasonable hours of work or days off.¹⁰

Globally, poverty is the main reason women engage in domestic work. Although income generation is the driver, in fact domestic workers typically earn only 40 per cent of the national average wage with 43 per cent of domestic workers not benefiting from minimum wage legislation.¹¹

Isolated behind the closed doors of private households, they typically lack the status or support to assert their rights

and they find themselves vulnerable to exploitation and every kind of abuse.

It is increasingly recognized that poverty lines aren't telling the whole story.¹² No matter how well implemented, an income or expenditure approach to poverty measurement will never capture important aspects of human deprivation. People with a similar level of income can have a very different level of well-being depending on their access to other forms of capital (human, physical, natural, etc.). A multidimensional approach to poverty goes beyond income and expenditure analysis to provide a richer understanding of deprivation by analysing many more variables. For example, the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) includes education, child mortality, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, cooking fuel, electricity, type of floor and asset ownership indicators. Methods have also been developed for measuring subjective well-being. The Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale used by Gallup Analytics classifies respondents as thriving, struggling, or suffering according to how they rate their current and future lives on a ladder scale

In 2011, the International Labour Conference adopted the Domestic Workers' Convention (No. 189). The ILO Convention No. 189 is the first international instrument to establish standards ensuring decent work for domestic workers. The accompanying Domestic Workers' Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201) provides detailed guidance for implementation.

To date, however, only 22 countries have ratified the Domestic Workers' Convention, with the Philippines being the only State in the Asia Pacific Region to have done so. Cambodia has not yet ratified ILO Convention No. 189 or Recommendation No. 201.¹³

⁴ UN Women, 2015. *Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*.

⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2013a. *Snapshot ILO in Action, Domestic Workers*.

⁶ UN Women, 2015. *Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*.

⁷ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2009. *Study on Living and Working Conditions of Domestic Workers in Cambodia*.

⁸ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2013a. *Snapshot ILO in Action, Domestic Workers*.

⁹ UN Women, 2015. *Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*.

¹⁰ Varia, Nisha and Jo Becker, 2012. *World Report 2012: A Landmark Victory for Domestic Workers*, Human Rights Watch.

¹¹ UN Women, 2015. *Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*.

¹² Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2014. *Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis 2014*.

¹³ ILO website, Ratification of Convention No. 189, last visited Aug. 2015

BOX 1.2

Key protections provided by Convention No. 189 include ensuring that domestic workers:

- are not under the age of 18, or if they are younger, and allowed by national legislation to work, have access to compulsory education (in Cambodia that would be through Grade 9);
- are protected against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence;
- enjoy fair terms of employment and decent working conditions, including respect for privacy if they reside in the household of the employer;
- enjoy equal treatment as compared to workers generally regarding normal hours of work, overtime compensation, daily and weekly rest and paid annual leave and are informed of their terms and conditions of employment preferably through a written contract;
- benefit from minimum wage coverage, where it exists;
- are free to reach agreement with their employer on whether to reside in the household, and that those who do reside in the household are not obliged to remain there or with household members during periods of rest or annual leave;
- enjoy occupational safety and health standards;
- enjoy conditions not less favourable than those applicable to workers generally in respect of social security protection; and,
- have access to courts, tribunals or other dispute resolution mechanisms.

The Convention also supports the introduction of labour inspection, enforcement and penalties, making specific reference to private employment/recruitment agencies.

2.2. Challenges faced by Domestic Workers in Cambodia

General attitudes towards domestic workers

Employment of domestic workers is a long-time practice in Cambodia based on the traditional role of women attending to the household. It is one of the most feminized sectors with at least 80 per cent of domestic work in Cambodia performed by women.¹⁴ Eighty-eight per cent of child domestic workers are girls.¹⁵ Consistent with the notion that work in the home is women's work, male domestic workers are typically hired for work outside the house, for instance as drivers, security guards and gardeners. In the case of boys who work inside homes, they typically perform some household tasks while also contributing to small-scale economic activities of the household.¹⁶ It is with this in mind that only women and girls were included as respondents in this study.

In Cambodian culture, domestic work is seen as a form of servitude rather than work, an attitude that is embedded in a culture that emphasizes hierarchy based on gender, economic class, social origins, status and ethnicity. Domestic workers are situated on the lowest rungs in the social hierarchy.

Child domestic workers may be perceived by some as more desirable than adult domestic workers. An IOM study in 2007 stated that, "... there is a demand for young CDWs [child domestic workers], especially given a concern for hierarchy within the household. The desirability of young CDWs essentially relates to the ease with which they can be ordered to work, while doing so with an older worker would be against the strong age-based hierarchies that permeate many social relations in Khmer culture. One house owner explained that older domestic workers in fact have better skills in certain tasks, such as child care, but that a worker cannot

¹⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2009. *Study on Living and Working Conditions of Domestic Workers in Cambodia*.

¹⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2013. *Cambodia Labour Force and Child Labour Survey 2012: Child Labour Report*. This report considers anyone under the age of 18 to be a

child. Under the Cambodian Labour Code the minimum age for employment is 15 and, under some circumstances, may be as low as 12.

¹⁶ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2009. *Study on Living and Working Conditions of Domestic Workers in Cambodia*.

be close in age or older than the house owner".¹⁷ This quote illustrates that it is not just poverty, but traditional social relations that drive the use of children as domestic workers.

Poverty

As elsewhere in the world, it is mostly poverty that leads Cambodians to domestic work. The factors that lead to poverty - limited education, low family income, high number of dependents in families, few opportunities for employment, especially in the rural areas - lead women and girls to work that they *can* do, which leaves domestic work as one of the few livelihood opportunities for rural, uneducated women and girls.

The official poverty rate in Cambodia is measured by household consumption with the poverty line being equal to the cost of a basic food basket plus an allowance for a minimum amount of non-food goods and services. Cambodia's poverty rate has more than halved in recent years from 47.8 per cent in 2007 to 18.9 per cent in 2012.¹⁸ Although poverty rates are decreasing, many Cambodians remain vulnerable to economic shocks or crises, such as natural disasters and illness. The poverty reduction that Cambodia has seen has largely resulted from those who were poor moving up one notch to being vulnerable. For example, the loss of just 1,200 riel/day in income (~US\$0.30) would push an estimated three million Cambodians back into poverty, thereby doubling the current poverty rate.¹⁹ On the multi-dimensional poverty index, Cambodia's poverty rate was estimated at 46.9 per cent in 2010²⁰, much higher than the income poverty rate for 2010 of 21.1 per cent.²¹ On the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, 34% of Cambodian respondents rated their lives poorly enough to qualify as suffering, 63% were struggling, and only 4% were thriving in 2012.²² Girls and women experience greater vulnerability both because of cultural norms that restrict them and because they have less access to resources and educational and employment opportunities.

Child workers often come from poor households, as child labour is one strategy used to deal with household poverty. These children are supplementary income earners, especially in times of crisis such as a parent losing work, family illness, natural disaster or desertion by a parent. The Ministry of Planning and UNICEF independently suggest that the child poverty rate is seven to eight percentage points higher than Cambodia's overall poverty rate.²³

Educational constraints

The Cambodian Constitution guarantees and requires education for all children through lower secondary school (Ninth grade). The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport reports a 97 per cent primary school enrolment rate for both girls and boys and that gender parity in education is improving.²⁴ Girls' drop-out rates from secondary school, however, are higher than boys' and rural girls and boys fare worse than their urban counterparts. Past lower secondary education, girls' participation is limited. Social norms place greater value on a boy's education because girls are not seen as the main contributors to household income. Girls' lower levels of education will affect their ability to participate in the labour force and their overall potential for economic empowerment. Education will be ever more critical to the Cambodian labour force as the economy becomes more knowledge-based in the face of globalization and ASEAN economic integration.²⁵

Emerging trends

There are a number of emerging trends in Cambodia that are likely to increase women's vulnerability and push some to pursue domestic work. Modernization in the agriculture sector affects women's labour and contributions as mechanization of farming methods excludes women's work such as transplanting and harvesting. Gender inequality and abuse of land rights continue to affect women's access to income, as they are more vulnerable to losing land. In other sectors, Cambodians are finding themselves competing

¹⁷ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2007. *Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Child Domestic Workers and Patterns of Trafficking in Cambodia*.

¹⁸ Ministry of Planning (MoP), 2013. *Poverty in Cambodia- a New Approach: Redefining the poverty line*.

¹⁹ World Bank, 2014. *Where Have All the Poor Gone? Cambodia Poverty Assessment 2013*, 2nd edition.

²⁰ Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2014. *Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis 2014*.

²¹ Ministry of Planning (MoP), 2013. *Poverty in Cambodia- a New Approach: Redefining the poverty line*.

²² Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2014. *Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis 2014*.

²³ Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2014. *Annual Progress Report 2013: Achieving Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals*.

²⁴ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) www.moeys.gov.kh/en/primary-education.html#.VSvy5LobP8E

²⁵ At the moment, only high skilled labour will be included in the free labour movement agreement however Cambodia's relatively weak human resource base, and the particularly low levels of education of women in the work force leaves Cambodian women poorly equipped to benefit from regional economic integration.

against more highly skilled labour forces in neighbouring ASEAN countries.

These emerging trends will increase the pressure on vulnerable women to migrate to find work. ADB notes that women comprised 50 per cent of all migrants within Cambodia in 2013, with almost 59 per cent of these rural migrant women moving to Phnom Penh.²⁶ The CRUMP study indicates that 11 per cent of Cambodia's women migrants take up domestic work.²⁷ Particularly for girls, but for women too, being far from home means they may be isolated, lonely and without any support. This makes them even more vulnerable to unfair treatment by employers and to abuse. The hazards of migration are well known and include under-age recruitment, illegal and exploitive recruitment practices, trafficking and abuse, low wages and poor working conditions.²⁸ The young are all the more susceptible to these hazards as they are inexperienced, have little voice or power in relation to their employers, and may be under pressure from their own family to continue to perform this work.

As well, growth in the Cambodian economy is affecting women in unexpected ways. As the economy grows and an increasing number of women enter the workforce, more households need and are able to afford domestic workers, especially in urban areas. This provides growing opportunities for rural women to migrate to do domestic work in urban areas. It may also provide an opportunity to push for better protection of the rights and interests of domestic workers.

Legal framework

The Cambodian Labour Code explicitly excludes domestic workers from nearly all provisions of the Code. For example, while the Labour Code addresses working hours, days off and vacation, and written and verbal contracts, domestic workers are explicitly excluded from those provisions. A person working without a contract is not covered by the Labour Code. The 2012 Cambodia Labour Force Survey reports that nearly half of all employees in Cambodia were hired with an oral agreement (48.5 per cent), while less

than a third (28.8 per cent) had a written contract. Indicative of how unfamiliar the concept of an employment contract is in Cambodia, almost a quarter (22.7 per cent) did not know if they had a contract or another arrangement.²⁹ Even among the workers who are protected by the Labour Code, few have written contracts. By law, minors may not enter into a contract unless there is consent from a legal guardian. It is not known the extent to which child labour in domestic work is taking place in the absence of any valid contractual framework.

The Cambodian Labour Code prohibits hiring a person to work in order to pay off debt but the provision does not encompass domestic workers. Another legal provision prohibits forced labour and does expressly include domestic workers in its ambit. Forced labour is defined in accordance with the Forced Labour Convention that provides this definition: "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily".³⁰ Where the debt arrangement is made by someone other than the domestic worker him/herself, there are legal grounds to say that the domestic worker did not offer herself voluntarily and, therefore, the worker falls within the definition of the Forced Labour Convention. In that scenario, the employment is prohibited under the Cambodian Labour Code. In cases of human trafficking and child labour these grounds will be relevant.

The ILO Minimum Age Convention, ratified by the Royal Government of Cambodia³¹, requires States to set the minimum age for waged employment at 15 years, or 14 years in least-developed countries. The Cambodian Labour Code sets the minimum age at 15 for full-time work in non-hazardous sectors. Children as young as 12, however, are permitted to perform 'light work' that would not affect school attendance. Light work is defined as under 14 hours per week.

The Cambodian Labour Code prohibits any form of work considered hazardous to be performed by a person under the age of 18 but the provisions of the law do not cover domestic workers. Article 179 of the Cambodian Labour Code

²⁶ Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2015. *Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Cambodia*.

²⁷ Kheam, T. and E. Treleaven, 2013. *Women and Migration in Cambodia: A further Analysis of the Cambodian Rural-Urban Migration Project (CRUMP)*, UNFPA and National Institute of Statistics.

²⁸ Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2014. *Women's Economic Empowerment: Cambodia Gender Assessment*.

²⁹ Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2013. *Cambodia Labour Force and Child Labour Survey 2012: Labour Force Report*.

³⁰ Cambodian Labour Code, 1997, Articles 15 and 16.

³¹ ILO, Ratification of the Minimum Age Convention ilo.org/dyn/nogermlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103055

requires all employers to register employees younger than 18 and submit that register to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training for 'verification, observation and warning'. The provision does not explicitly state that it applies to domestic workers.³² In 2004, the Royal Government of Cambodia did include domestic work in its list of 16 occupations hazardous to children.³³ The legal framework regarding the minimum age to engage in domestic work is thus unclear however, there is a basis for amending the Labour Code.

The Cambodian Constitution guarantees the right to be a member of a trade union as do ILO Conventions on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (No. 98) and Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (No. 87), both ratified by Cambodia. A 2012 survey estimated that 9.6 per cent of all employees in Cambodia held trade union membership.³⁴

When it comes to the freedom to establish and be a member of unions, the Cambodian Labour Code does apply to domestic workers. Domestic workers are however differently situated from other kinds of employees. For the most part, domestic workers have a one-on-one relationship with their employer and while there may be more than one domestic worker in a household, this is far different from garment factories or teachers who are able to organize a large number of workers to negotiate with their employer. Moreover, the most vulnerable domestic workers may have the least freedom of movement and little or no access to outside information or people.

In 2012, the Cambodia Domestic Workers Network (CDWN) was founded with support from Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA) that has worked to organize tuk-tuk drivers, street vendors and other informal workers in Cambodia. CDWN's mission is to organize domestic workers to have one voice to advocate for improved rights and working and living conditions.³⁵

While the Royal Government of Cambodia has not yet ratified the ILO Convention No. 189 on Domestic Workers and the related guidelines in Recommendation 201, it has ratified a number of other international conventions and recommendations relevant to the protection of the rights of domestic workers as shown in the box 2.1 on the next page.

³² International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2007. *Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Child Domestic Workers and Patterns of Trafficking in Cambodia*.

³³ Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Programme, 2009. *Towards Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Cambodia by 2016: Country Report*.

³⁴ Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2013. *Cambodia Labour Force and Child Labour Survey 2012: Child Labour Report*

³⁵ International Domestic Worker Federation (IDWF) webpage: <http://www.idwfed.org/en/affiliates/asia-pacific/cambodia-domestic-workers-network-cdwn>

BOX 2.1

ILO and UN Instruments relevant to Domestic Workers

Cambodia has ratified many international instruments relevant to domestic work including the following ILO Conventions:

1. Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (No. 111);
2. Forced Labour Convention (No. 29);
3. Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105);
4. Minimum Age Convention (No. 138);
5. Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182);
6. Employment Policy Convention (No. 122);
7. Convention on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (No. 98);
8. Convention on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (No. 87).

In addition it has ratified the following UN instruments:

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (CRC);
2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (CEDAW);
3. UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, 1998;
4. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (UDHR);
5. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (ICESCR);
6. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR);
7. CEDAW General Recommendation No.19 on Violence against Women, 1992;
8. CEDAW General Recommendation No. 26 on Women Migrant Workers, 2008;
9. International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990 (CMW);
10. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000.

PART 3: FINDINGS

This part of the report begins by examining key characteristics of domestic workers in Cambodia, including their background in terms of *demographics* (e.g., age, migration, marital status and children), *poverty status*, *family situation*, and *education*. It then moves on to investigate the employment conditions facing domestic workers in Cambodia including *recruitment*, *contractual arrangements*, and *living and working conditions*. Next, the findings look at *wages* and *benefits*. The focus of the findings then shifts to examine the incidence of *verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse*. The findings then look at *understanding of rights and recourse*. Finally, *work satisfaction* and the *aspirations* of the women who participated in the study are presented.

In this report, the term *participants* refers to the 234 women who were interviewed using the study's quantitative questionnaire. The term in-depth *interviewees* refers to the 15 women who, of the 234, also agreed to an in-depth interview and responded to the questions in the qualitative questionnaire.³⁶

"When I was 12 years old, my mother hired me out as a domestic worker. My family had no food to eat. My wages put food on the table and also enabled my brothers to go to school.

It was only after working for 3 years that I learned that my wages were being paid to my mother in advance annually. She was paid in gold. I think my employers believed that the advance payment allowed them to treat me like a slave. I worked 17 hours a day. No breaks during the day, no days off, no annual holiday. I am free now only because my brother used his annual salary to pay back the advance my mother received.

One day, my female employer was jealous of me because of how her husband was treating me so she threw a cleaver at me. She injured my leg and I could not work for 3 days.

I was not taken to hospital. Instead, her father-in-law applied medicine to my leg. She got away with mistreating me that way.

Over the seven years I worked with this family, my male employer tried to rape me three times. I was afraid to tell his wife, so instead I told his parents. They arranged for another domestic worker to sleep in my room so I would not be alone. I was too afraid and embarrassed to tell the police. I had no idea how to go about reporting it to the police anyway.

I am no longer a domestic worker. I am married now. My husband is an alcoholic. He steals from the little we have to buy alcohol. He is like my father who beat my mother and spent his salary on himself and other women. All I want is a better life for myself and for my children."

Leakena is 47 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

3.1. Demographics

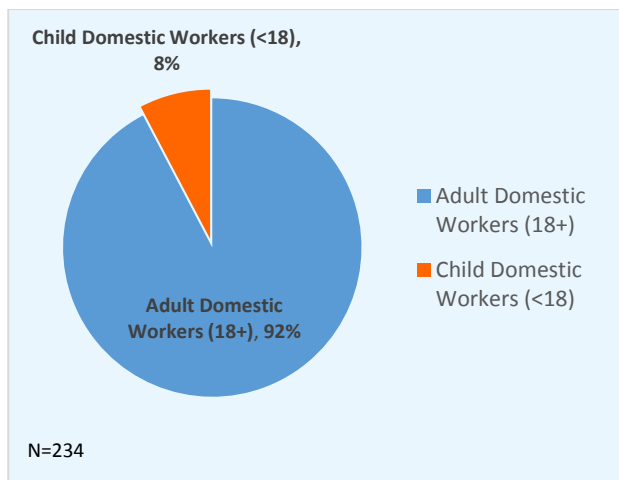
Age

The youngest participant in this study was 10 years old and the eldest was 82 at the time of the interviews. Eighteen (eight per cent) of the 234 respondents were under age 18 at the time of the interviews; 216 (92 per cent) were 18 or older (Fig. 1). Figure 1 includes all of the adult and child domestic workers interviewed in the quantitative portion of the study. As both current and former domestic workers were interviewed and the sample was small, the age on the date of interview does not necessarily reflect the proportion of child-to-adult domestic workers in Cambodia at the time of the study.

³⁶ Quotations from the in-depth interviewees are found throughout the findings and can be easily identified as they are in green.

Figure 1

Profile of Domestic Workers in Cambodia

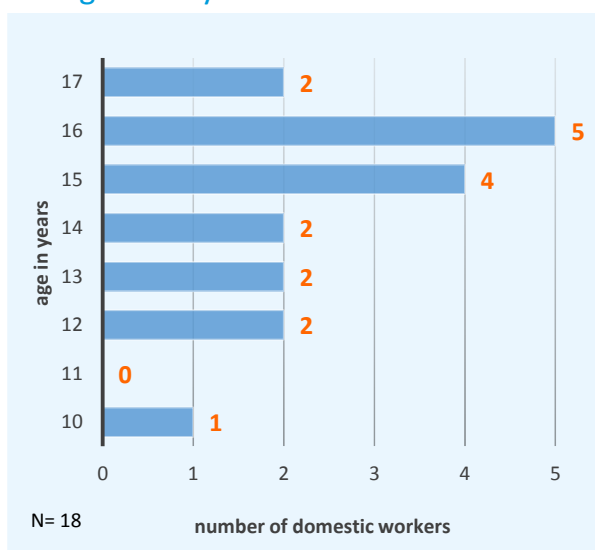


One of the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) is to reduce the proportion of children aged five to 17 in the labour force from 16.5 per cent in 1999 to eight per cent by 2015. The latest CMDG report indicates positive progress with 13.8 per cent children in this age bracket in the labour force in 2011. Other reports suggest a higher percentage. Regardless, there is still much progress to be made.

Figure 2 below shows the distribution by age at the time of the interview of the 18 child domestic workers.

Figure 2

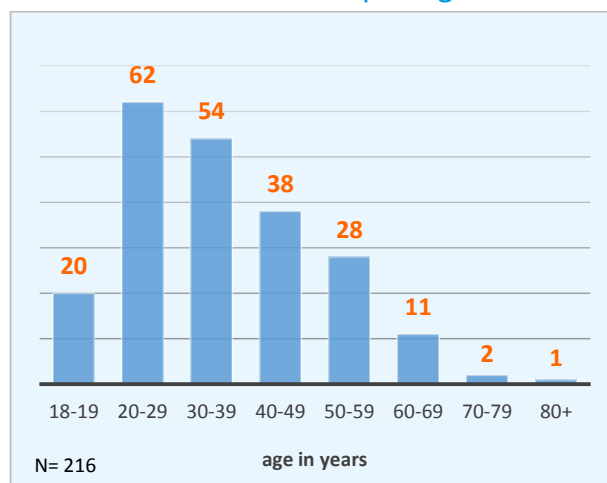
Number of Girl Domestic Workers below the age of 18 years



The 216 adult women interviewed are shown in 10 year age brackets below in Figure 3. In order to reflect the entire adult respondent group, an additional bracket was added for the 20 women who were 18 and 19 years old when interviewed. The largest group of women was found in the 20-29 year age bracket.

Figure 3

Adult Domestic Workers per Age Bracket



The 15 women interviewed in depth in the qualitative part of the study ranged in age from 18 to 62 at the time of the interviews. They had started working as domestic workers from age eight to 43. Please see Fig. 4 below for a more detailed view of their ages at the time of interview and the age at which they began to do domestic work. Ten of the 15 women (67 per cent) began domestic work when they were less than 15 years of age; all but three were under 18 years of age. As beginning domestic work as a minor was one of the criteria used to select workers for in-depth interviews, this is not surprising. Nevertheless, it does provide context for the experiences described by the in-depth interviewees.

"I left my home at eight years old. I have worked in four houses. In my last house, I woke at five am and worked a 16-hour day. I did housecleaning, laundry, cooking, buying food at the market and I also worked in the family's coffee shop. From time to time, more duties were given to me. I never dared to complain because I wanted to send money to my mother. My last employer was nasty, quick-tempered and stingy. My food was what was left over at the end of the family's meal. She would not even let me eat the food she offered to

the spirits after the incense burnt out. But there were also times when I felt she appreciated me. Sometimes she called me a patient girl and she complimented my cooking and how I organized her clothes. When I was 14, I worked in a house where I tended cows. If my employer thought that the cows had not eaten well on a day, then I was denied sufficient food to eat that day. If the cows destroyed crops of other farmers, my employer deducted rice from what was sent to my family. I do remember happy days from that time, though, when I could play with children in the fields with the cows.”

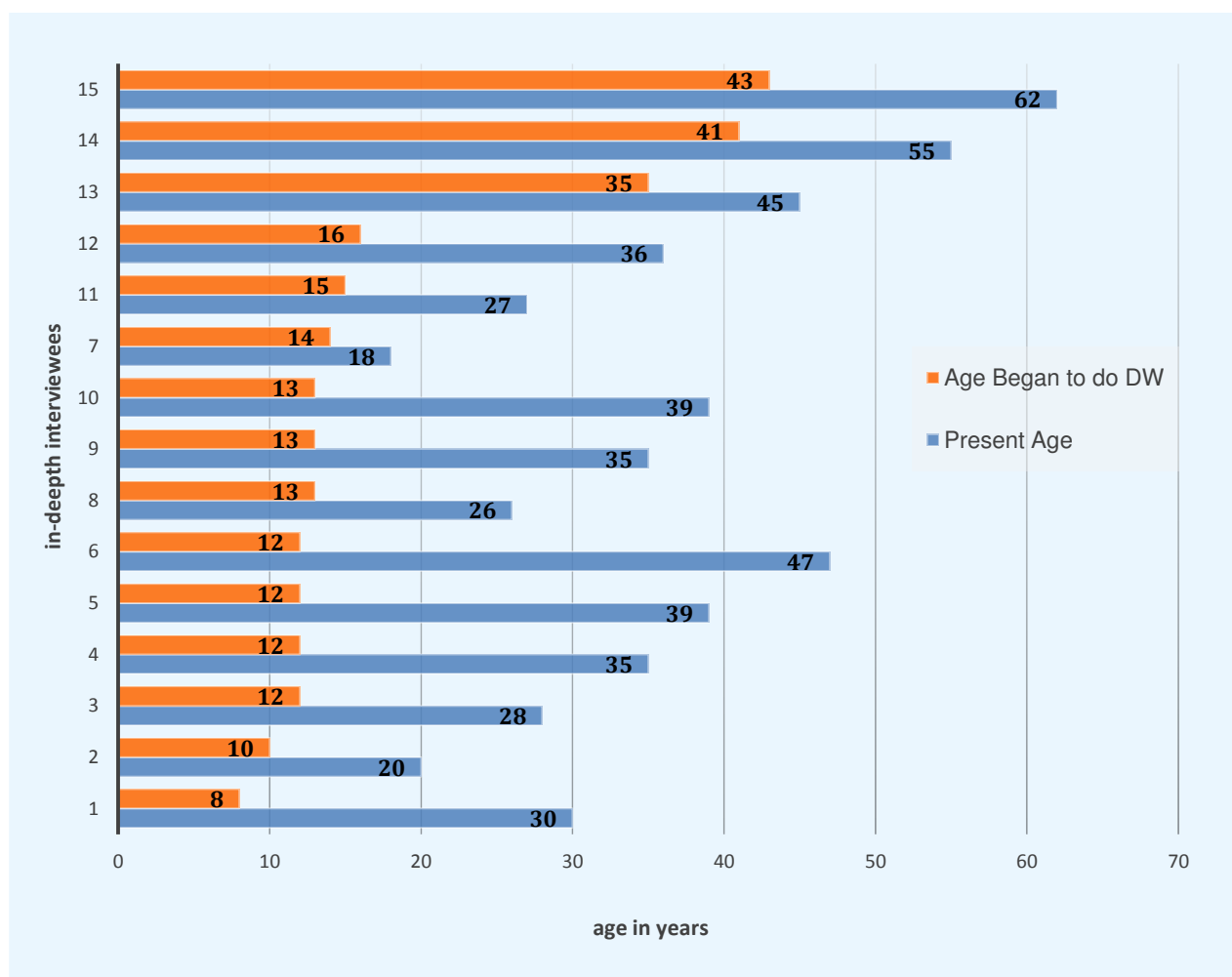
Chanthy is 30 years old, she became a domestic worker at age eight

“I left home and started to work as a domestic worker at age 13. This was at the time when my mother was in hospital. When my employer hired me, she told me nothing about working conditions or my duties but she gave me an advanced payment of USD \$30 so I could pay for my mother’s treatment and for food for my family. Since then, I have worked in 15 different houses for an average of 15 hours per day.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

Figure 4

Current Age vs. Age started to do Domestic Work (DW)



Migration

Of the 234 participants in the study, four were born outside Cambodia, three in Kampuchea Krom (Vietnam) and one in a Thai border camp. None of the participants in this study had ever sought domestic work outside the country. Seventy-eight per cent of all participants were working in a location other than their birth province. Of those who were working in Phnom Penh, 92 per cent had migrated from other provinces. Of those working in Kampong Speu province, 32 per cent had come from another province, and in Pursat, 16 per cent had migrated to work in Pursat. Most migrate to work in urban centres, leaving their homes and families in rural areas in order to help support their parents or their children. The 2014 CRUMP study found that 11 per cent of Cambodia's women migrants take up domestic work.³⁷

"When I left home, I missed my mother a lot and I was afraid of the new people I met. I tried to focus on helping my family."

Chanthy is 30 years old, she became a domestic worker at age eight

Marital status and children

Of the adult participants (18+) in this study, 68 per cent are or have been married or have lived with a man. According to the CDHS 2014 key indicators report, 68 per cent of Cambodian women in general are married or living with a man.³⁸ None of the child participants were married or had children of their own. Sixty-four per cent of adult domestic workers surveyed have children. Staying in marriage is strongly socially encouraged in Cambodia, even when the wife has experienced domestic violence. Cambodian culture accords married women higher social status than unmarried women.

Of the 15 in-depth interviewees, 11 have children. Sok Da is the exception among them who otherwise live apart from their children.

³⁷ Kheam, T. and E., Treleaven, 2013. *Women and Migration in Cambodia: A further Analysis of the Cambodian Rural-Urban Migration Project (CRUMP)*, UNFPA and National Institute of Statistics.

³⁸ National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2015. *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014 (CDHS) Key Indicators Report*, Ministry of Planning. The statistical cohort for CDHS was 15 to

"I am not married but I do have a four-year old son and I am now seven months pregnant. My son lives with my grandmother. He goes to school. People look down at me in my village so I cannot go back."

I have worked in five houses in total. Between domestic work jobs, I have worked at a beer garden and karaoke bar."

Nareth is 27 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 15

"My husband is like my father: he is not a good person, he does not take care of me or my daughter, and he is often drunk and violent. Being a wife is more difficult than being a domestic worker."

Chanthy is 30 years old, she became a domestic worker at age eight

"I am a widow with three children. Doing this work for the past 10 years, I have been able to keep two of my children with me."

Sok Da is 45 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 35

The CRUMP survey revealed that of Cambodian women migrants with children, women migrants who are domestic workers are the least likely, at 20 per cent, to have their children living with them.³⁹

"My hope is that I can return to my home village once I am free of debt. I will learn hairdressing so I can live with my children."

Theary is 26 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

The qualitative data indicates that where there was significant difficulty in a woman's family growing up, such as violence or desertion by a parent, significant difficulty was also often seen in her own family life.

49 as compared to this study that included women from ages 10 to 82.

³⁹ Kheam, T. and E. Treleaven, 2013. *Women and Migration in Cambodia: A further Analysis of the Cambodian Rural-Urban Migration Project (CRUMP)*, UNFPA and National Institute of Statistics.

“I am sad to say that my mother died in 2009. Her marriage was difficult as my father beat her and he was lazy and selfish. My father is now remarried. I am married but my husband ran away recently so I am left to support two children on my own. I am exhausted but at least no one beats me. My husband broke my nose and, since then, I have had difficulty breathing, my heart trembles and I experience headaches and dizziness.”

Theary is 26 years of age, she became a domestic worker at age 13

“My family was very poor. My father was always drunk. My mother went off to work as a labourer. I have had 3 husbands. My current husband always drinks alcohol and quarrels with me, insults me and beats me. I cannot rely on him, but I am strong enough to rely only on myself. I live with HIV.”

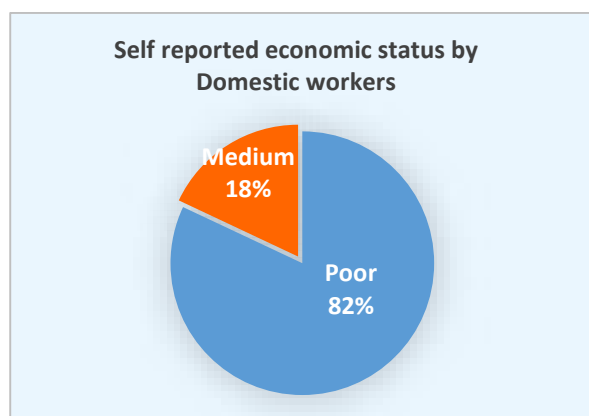
Srey Touch is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

3.2. Poverty

While no formal poverty assessment was conducted, as part of this study, participants were asked to characterize the economic level of their families as “poor” or “medium”. It was assumed that none of the participants would identify themselves as “rich”. The answers provided by the participants found that 82 per cent came from ‘poor’ families and the remainder from ‘medium’ level families. Those who described themselves as medium level were mainly young girls in high school or in university who were doing domestic work to support themselves while in school away from home.

Figure 5

Profile of a Domestic Worker



“Poverty sticks to me like it stuck to my parents. I expect that it will stick to my children too.”

Leakena is 47 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“At age 12, I left home for Phnom Penh to become a domestic worker. My family was very poor. My father was always drunk. My mother went off to work as a labourer. Starting at a young age, I earned money by transplanting rice for farmers. I had the chance to go to school for nearly one year. That was a good time in my life.”

Srey Touch is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“I left my home at eight years old. My parents had no income and our rice harvest was small. My parents were in debt. We were hungry. I could not go to school. Becoming a domestic worker was not my choice but, without the job, my family may have starved and our debt would have increased. In the end, my parents could not pay off our debt and we lost our land anyway.”

Chanthy is 30 years old, she became a domestic worker at age eight

3.3. Family Situation

Twelve of the 15 in-depth interviewees in this study spoke of difficulties in their families. There was a constant theme in the family descriptions of the women who gave these qualitative interviews: fathers were emotionally abusive, alcoholic, beat their mothers, were unfaithful to their mothers, stole from the family to feed addictions, were lazy, or the fathers were absent altogether.

“I was born out of wedlock and my parents abandoned me. I was raised by my grandmother who loved and cared for me and protected me.”

Nareth is 27 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 15

“My father left us and married another woman when I was 10. My mother raised me and my siblings alone. I dropped out of school in Grade four. At 13, I became a domestic worker.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

“When I was young I did not see my father. My mother took me to live in another province. We lived on the street and begged. Then she sold me to a jewelry maker but later she changed her mind and returned the money o him. She wanted me back but he did not agree. There was tough discussion before he returned me to my mother.”

Chanthan is 28 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“I am the eldest daughter. I have four sisters and one brother. My mother raised me and my siblings by herself. My father left when I was 10. As a child, I used to collect and sell crabs, lemongrass, tamarind fruit and sdav leaves (bitter herbal leaves used for Khmer food). I left home to work as a domestic worker at the age of 13.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

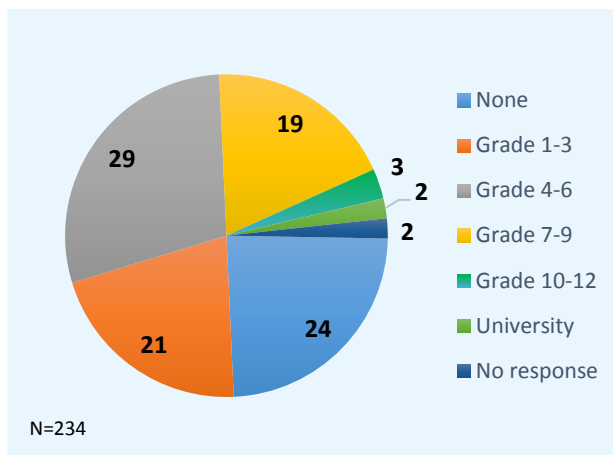
The qualitative findings of this study suggest that the combination of limited education, few occupational options and family problems are factors that push girls to do domestic work.

3.4. Education

Although the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia guarantees nine years’ basic education, the quantitative study found that 24 per cent of participants had no education at all; 21 per cent had three or fewer years of education; and, 29 per cent had completed at least one grade of upper primary school (Fig. 6). Only 32 per cent had at least completed primary school (compared to 43 per cent of women 15+ in the general population) and at least 75 per cent were well below the nine years guaranteed in the Constitution. In the general population 15+, 25.6 per cent of women were illiterate in 2013 (9.9 per cent in Phnom Penh and 17.9 per cent in other urban areas).⁴⁰ The education level of the survey participants is thus below that of the general population and much lower than that of women in urban areas.

The women and girls who had no education at all, or who had only completed lower primary grades have little if any ability to read and write.

Figure 6
Education of Domestic Workers



Those who have never been to school can be assumed to be illiterate as there are few adult literacy programmes in Cambodia, and those working 12+ hour days in employers’ homes are unlikely to have the time or energy to spend on studies.

Lack of literacy and basic education puts at least 45 per cent of the domestic workers in the position of being unable to have access to information in written form. This limits their awareness of what is happening in their environment and in the larger world, which heightens their actual isolation, their lack of empowerment and their access to their rights. A 2007 IOM study found that 39 per cent of child domestic workers said that they wanted to leave their workplace but they lacked alternatives due to limited education.⁴¹

“I dropped out of school in Grade four. In school, I liked singing songs and multiplication exercises.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

“I dropped out of school in Grade seven and began working as a domestic worker when I was 16. Writing and composition were the subjects I liked the most at school.

⁴⁰ National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2014. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey (CSES)*, Ministry of Planning.

⁴¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2007. *Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Child Domestic Workers and Patterns of Trafficking in Cambodia*.

Once, I wrote an essay about the benefits of sugar palm trees. I think sugar palm trees are interesting.”

Sopheha is 36 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 16

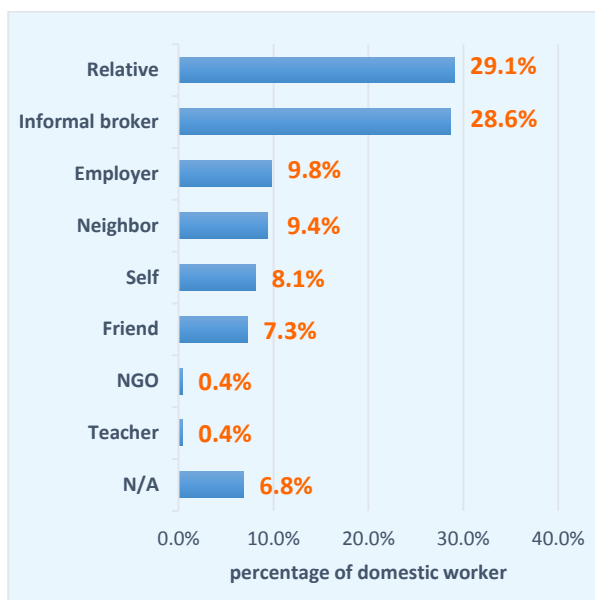
3.5. Employment as Domestic Workers

Recruitment

This study shows that informal brokers and relatives are the most common source of information about positions for domestic work, at 29 per cent each. Seventy-one per cent of participants in this study found work through informal connections including family, neighbours, teachers, friends or employers who know them. The rest relied on informal brokers to find work. Information from participants suggests that these informal brokers are mostly local women who, for a fee, facilitate connecting those seeking domestic work with those seeking a domestic worker. Recruitment for domestic workers by these brokers is unregulated in Cambodia. An internet search for more formal agencies turns up only one which recruits domestic workers for expatriate households.

Figure 7

How did they find their job?



⁴² Ibid.

“I found my job through a neighbor around the time when my mother fell sick and was admitted to hospital. I remember the day that my neighbour took me and another girl to the house. The employer greeted us and then picked me to be her domestic worker. We did not talk about working conditions and duties. My neighbour agreed on my salary. I received an advance of two months wages so there was money to pay for my mother’s medical treatment and for food for my siblings.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

This study also examined the nature of the relationship between domestic workers and their employers. Seventy-eight per cent of domestic workers work for employers they did not know previously. Twenty per cent work for relatives and two per cent for friends. Of the seven girls under the age of 15 who participated in this study, five worked in the home of a relative, three of these girls also attended school; one girl was badly mistreated. The IOM study suggests that a domestic worker who is related to her employer is less likely to be told that she will be working as a domestic worker and she is also less likely to be promised a salary.⁴²

Contracts

The employment relationship in Cambodia in general is regulated by cultural norms that discourage formalization of the relationship. For domestic workers, this is exemplified by the fact that the Labour Code almost entirely excludes domestic work contracts from its scope. The impact of these norms was evident in almost all cases in the qualitative research: not one of the 234 participants in this study reported having a written contract. In many cases, there are not even oral contracts that spell out expectations but, instead, it is simply up to the employer to decide on such matters as payment, working conditions, and hours and days off. In the culture, domestic workers would rarely ask questions about contractual arrangements for fear of upsetting the hierarchy and losing their jobs.⁴³

⁴³ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2009. *Study on Living and Working Conditions of Domestic Workers in Cambodia*.

“I have worked in four houses. I have never had a written contract. I have been at my current job for four years. I have yet to get a raise.”

Theary is 26 years of age, she became a domestic worker at age 13

“When I was 10 years old, shortly after my father left our family, I had to quit school to sell food at a nearby market. After that, I began working as a domestic worker. I have worked in 11 different houses, never with a written contract. At my first house, I did not receive any wages, only food.”

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

Nature of Work

Participants identified the range of activities for which they are responsible. Ninety-four per cent are responsible for cleaning in the home, 82 per cent do the laundry and 75 per cent are responsible for cooking. Less than half (47 per cent) have childcare responsibilities and only 39 per cent do grocery shopping. The bulk of responsibilities, therefore, are behind the closed doors of the home. In addition to working in the home, some domestic workers also perform work in their employers' business.

“In the afternoon, I worked in my employer's wholesale clothing business. I sewed buttons on 300 or more shirts a day.”

Sophea is 36 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 16

“At my last house, I earned US\$ 70/month. My workday began at 6 am and I worked 10 to 13 hours. Sometimes I not only did housekeeping and childcare work, I also went to my employer's house in the countryside and took care of the land and picked fruit.”

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

Working hours and breaks

Paid little and sometimes nothing at all, there are domestic workers who work more than 18 hours a day, and some of them are not afforded breaks during the day or time off. Child domestic workers, in particular, are over-worked.⁴⁴ In this study, participants have worked on average just over 12 hours per day. The maximum hours worked, reported by six per cent of participants, were 18 to 20 hours per day.

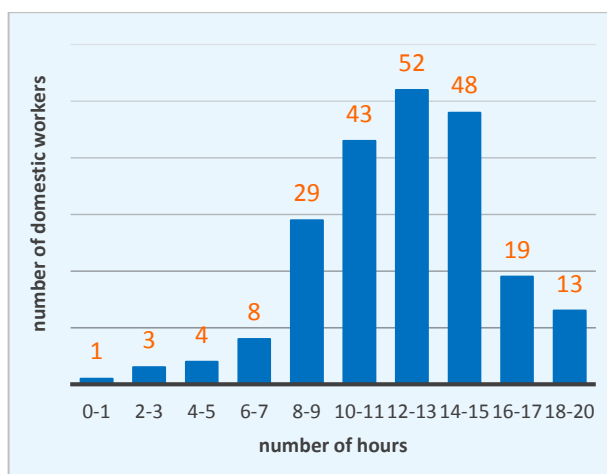
In the qualitative research, almost all in-depth interviewees complained of long hours of work.

“In my last house, I woke at five am and worked a 16-hour day. I did housecleaning, laundry, cooking, buying food at the market and I also worked in the family's coffee shop. From time to time, more duties were given to me. I never dared to complain.”

Chanthy is 30 years old, she became a domestic worker at age eight

Figure 8

Number of hours worked per day



“I have worked in 15 houses in which I have worked, on average, 15-hour days.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

⁴⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2013c. *Ending Child Labour in Domestic Work* (IPEC).

“At one home, I worked 19 hours a day. My morning consisted of washing clothes, cleaning house, grocery shopping and cooking. In the afternoon, I worked in my employer’s wholesale clothing business. In the evening, I cooked dinner for the family. I was paid US\$35 per month. I had no breaks during the day and no days off during the week. It was an exhausting and stressful experience.”

Sopheha is 36 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 16

The Cambodian Labour Code limits a (non-domestic) worker to working a maximum of eight hours/day or 48 hours/week. Exceptional or urgent work that requires overtime must be paid at a rate that is 50 or 100 per cent higher than the worker’s usual wage depending on when the overtime is worked.

According to the 2012 labour force survey the average hours worked per week in Cambodia was 47 hours, with men reporting longer hours of work per week, at 48 hours, than women at 45 hours per week. The average was 46 hours in rural areas and 49 hours in urban areas. Both sexes in urban areas worked longer than counterparts in rural areas. One survey that looked specifically at child domestic workers found their working conditions to be harsh - an average of 13.5 hours per day with non-relatives working harder for an average of 15.7 hours per day.⁴⁵

Twenty-eight per cent of participants in this study report having no breaks during the day, two per cent report having only a one-hour break and 17 per cent report having a total of two hours of break time per day.

Participants were also asked if they have access to television and radio. The question was meant to gain an understanding of what they do inside the home when not working, but also to know whether they are aware of what is going on in the world around them. Seventy-six per cent of participants, but only seven of the 15 in-depth interviewees, watch television and/or listen to radio.

Living conditions

This study found that the majority of participants lived in the home of their employer, making them even more dependent on the employer.

⁴⁵ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2007. *Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Child Domestic Workers and Patterns of Trafficking in Cambodia*.

Cambodia does not regulate sleeping arrangements for household employees. Article 6 of the ILO Domestic Workers’ Convention specifies that “... if they reside in the household, (they enjoy) decent living conditions that respect their privacy.” Further, ILO Recommendation 201, which details the specifics of the Domestic Workers’ Convention, states that, “When provided, accommodation and food should include the following: (a) a separate, private room that is suitably furnished, adequately ventilated and equipped with a lock, the key of which should be provided to the domestic worker; (b) access to sanitary facilities shared or private; (c) adequate lighting....; and, (d) meals of good quality and sufficient quantity...”.

In this study, more than half of participants did not have their own room (54 per cent) and almost half did not have a lock on their room (48 per cent), both arrangements making the domestic worker more vulnerable to abuse. In almost all cases in the qualitative research, women and girls either did not have their own rooms or had no locks to their doors.

“Now I sleep alone in the kitchen. There is no lock. In other houses where I have worked, I was sexually assaulted and abused.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

These arrangements also mean that there is no space that a domestic worker can call her own.

“I have worked in 11 different houses. Often I have slept in places with no lock. When I was 13 and 14 years old, some male employers touched me in ways that were unwelcome or they offered me money for ‘love’. When this happened, I acted bravely in front of them and then, later when I could, I informed their wives.”

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

Food

Study participants report that 90 per cent of them eat with their employer but only 68 per cent say that they eat what the employer eats. The others eat the less appealing food

that is leftover at the end of the meal or they are provided incomplete meals. Twenty-one per cent report they do not have enough to eat.

Health and safety

Only five of the 15 in-depth interviewees describe themselves as being in good health. Reported health issues range from HIV to headaches and vaguely described stomach problems. In some cases, illness can be linked to their domestic work. For instance, Srey Touch, who lives with HIV, was raped by an employer and then pressured to become a sex worker. Several other in-depth interviewees talked about exhaustion from their long hours of work and insufficient rest, resulting in feeling unwell.

The Cambodian Labour Code, together with a number of regulations, require employers to guarantee safe working conditions. Employers are legally liable for all work-related accidents, regardless of where fault lies. The Code also provides for labour inspections to ensure that employers comply with the Labour Code. Domestic workers are not covered by these provisions.

Participants in this study were asked about chemical substances in their workplaces (e.g., abrasive detergents, cleaning fluids, hair preparations which they had to use by hand to do their job) and whether they ever suffered a more than minor injury at work. Twenty-three per cent reported chemical substances in their workplace and 22 per cent reported having been injured at work.

An example of injuries was provided by one in-depth interviewee.

“In one house, I suffered an electrical shock. Another time, I accidentally burned half my body with boiling water. The burn was very serious from my waist to my toes. I was not taken to a clinic. Instead, my employer applied toothpaste as a traditional remedy and bought me pain medication.”

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

⁴⁶ Ellen, Rosa, 2013. *Girls Rule in New Draft of Moral Code*, Phnom Penh Post, March 29, 2013: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/7days/girls-rule-new-draft-moral-code>.

⁴⁷ Sokroeun, A., 2004. *A Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Contemporary Roles of Khmer Women in the Household* (Masters Thesis), Royal University of Phnom Penh. Also see:

Freedom of movement

Women and girls are vulnerable to restriction of activities and movement when they live in the home of their employer. Justifications for restrictions often come under the guise of sexual and physical protection and general paternalistic concern but social norms are what is at play. Cambodia's traditional Chbab Srey, a women's code of conduct, instructs women to stay close to home, telling them: 'do not walk fast'⁴⁶ and 'women do not have long legs'⁴⁷.

Restricting domestic workers isolates them and renders them more vulnerable by removing them from the public realm where they can access information and seek out assistance if needed. Moreover, limiting freedom of movement can be considered illegal confinement, which is punishable under criminal law.⁴⁸

Fifty-nine per cent of participants in this study reported having a friend or neighbour nearby whom they see; 41 per cent do not.

“During the week, I often have leisure time and I can meet friends or family.”

Sok Da is 45 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 35

“I would have been beaten had I ventured out for leisure time.”

Leakena is 47 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“I worked a 17-hour day. I cooked and cleaned the house, I went to the market, I cleaned clothes and I took care of my employer's dogs.

I had only brief opportunities to rest during the day after meals. I did not leave the house except to go to the market. My only time off was over the Khmer New Year.”

Sok Leang is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

Chbab Srey, Code of Conduct of Cambodian Women: carpediemilia.over-blog.com/article-21656482.html

⁴⁸ Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2009. *Cambodia Penal Code*, Book 2, Title 2, Chapter 4.

Freedom of communication

Almost 94 per cent of Cambodians between the ages of 15 and 65 have their own phone, and more than 99 per cent are somehow reachable by telephone.⁴⁹ The findings from this study found a far lower percentage of domestic workers having their own phone: 52 per cent reported having their own mobile phone and 48 per cent reported access to their employer's phone if they did not have their own. Owning a mobile phone of one's own gives significant freedom to be in touch with people outside the home, either friends or family, when time and circumstances allow. Given that a number of the participants mentioned or implied not daring to request anything other than what they are already given, we can perhaps imagine that having to ask to use the employer's mobile phone would restrict those calls to urgent or business matters, not social conversations.

Contact with family

Most participants in the study (55 per cent) have opportunities to see their families often, if not every day (two per cent); 21 per cent see their families only rarely; and, five per cent reported that they never see their family. The main reasons for never seeing family include not wanting to spend money to travel or not having free time to travel. However some women also said they were ashamed to visit home in cases where they had been sexually assaulted or had children outside of marriage. Nearly half of the participants (49 per cent) reported they have mobile telephone contact with their family.

3.6. Wage, Advances and Remittances

Paid work can be a foundation for substantive equality for women when it provides earnings that are adequate.⁵⁰ As shown in Fig. 9, among the participants who reported their income, 43 (19 per cent) received no wages at all, some as little as US\$25 per month amounting to US\$300 per year. Sixty-one per cent receive US\$75 per month or less and 78 per cent receive US\$100 or less. The highest amount

earned by a participant in the study was a woman who earns US\$400 per month.⁵¹ The average wage among participants was US\$62 per month, equivalent to US\$760 per year, US\$324 less than Cambodia's Gross National Product per capita of US\$1084 in 2014 (US\$90 per month).⁵² Although the Labour Code discusses minimum wage, the only workers who currently benefit from it are garment factory workers whose current minimum wage is US\$128/month.⁵³

Approximately 30 per cent of the participants are earning less than \$1.25 per day, the international standard for measuring extreme poverty. Approximately 50 per cent are earning less than \$2.00 per day, considered poor by international standards. And, approximately 70 per cent receive less than the per capita GDP. It is recognized that many of the participants are receiving food and accommodation in addition to wages, or wages have been paid in advance to their families so this does not provide a full picture of total compensation. However, it is also recognized that many of these domestic workers are sending money back to their parents and siblings or supporting families of their own.⁵⁴

Seventy eight per cent of participants in this study were migrant workers. The 2013 CRUMP survey found that migrant domestic workers earn the lowest average salaries in comparison to other female migrants. Small business owners have the highest average salary at US\$151 per month. Garment workers earn an average of US\$96 per month. Drivers and domestic workers earn the lowest average salaries with an average of only US\$47 per month.⁵⁵ The women in this study earned an average salary of US\$62, higher than the average wage reported for domestic workers in the CRUMP study, but considerably less than garment workers. Seven of the 234 participants earned unusually high wages of 175 to 400 per month, pushing up the average for the group.

⁴⁹ Phong, K. and J. Sola., 2014. *Mobile Phones in Cambodia*, Open Institute and the Asia Foundation.

⁵⁰ UN Women, 2015. *Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*.

⁵¹ Please note that the domestic worker who reported earning a monthly wage of US\$400 is employed by a foreign employer. This wage is not considered representative of the working conditions of Cambodian domestic workers.

⁵² World Bank webpage: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/cambodia>.

⁵³ For the minimum wage for garment factory workers see www.prake.org/home/salary/minimum-wages.

⁵⁴ As the survey did not distinguish between those who are currently doing domestic work and those who formerly did domestic work, it is not possible to say with certainty that all the wages reported reflect those of domestic workers.

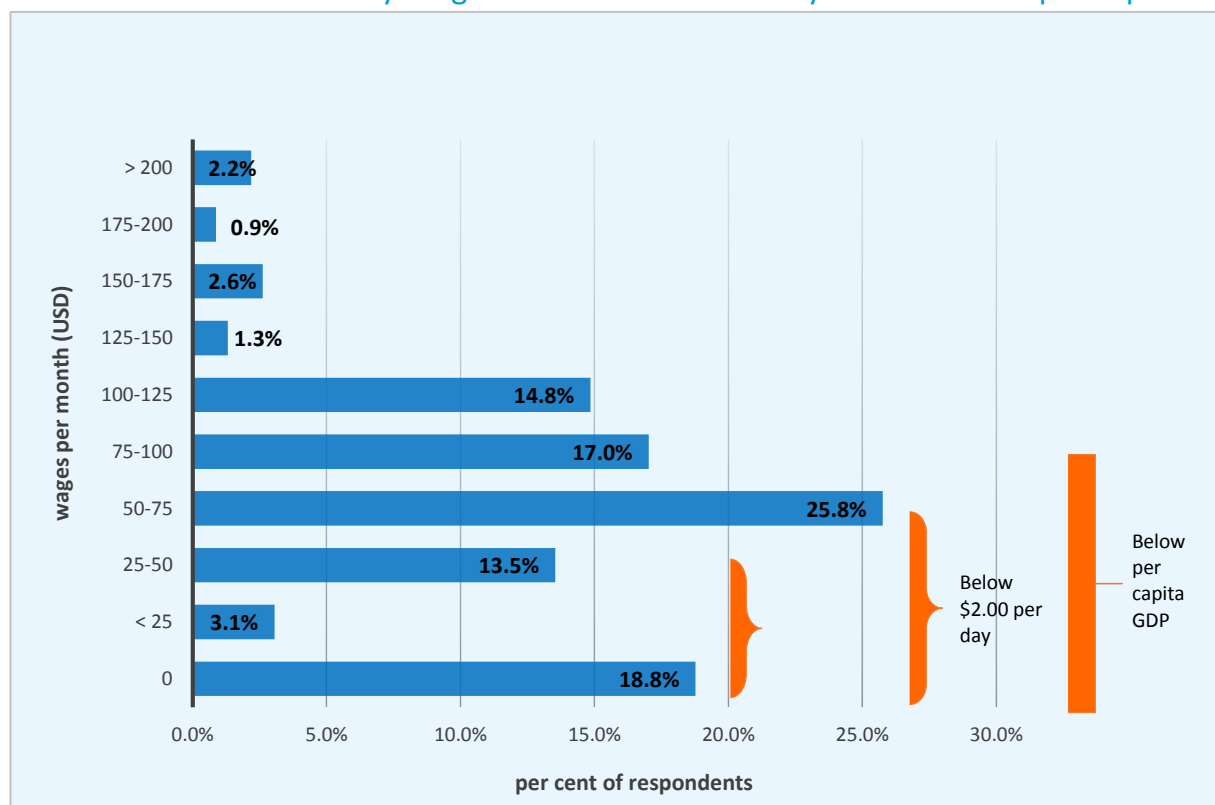
⁵⁵ Kheam, T. and E. Treleaven, 2013. *Women and Migration in Cambodia: A further Analysis of the Cambodian Rural-Urban Migration Project (CRUMP)*, UNFPA and National Institute of Statistics.

This study found that six of the seven participants under 15 years old were unpaid. This may be explained in part by the fact that of the seven children, five worked for a relative who are more likely to provide only benefits such as food and shelter. Three of those children were attending school. The one child domestic worker who was paid received US\$70 per month. The 2007 IOM study found that only 64

per cent of child domestic workers in Cambodia were paid for their work, despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantee of just and favourable remuneration and the ILO Conventions on Forced labour. The same study put the rate of debt bondage at 10 per cent of child domestic workers.⁵⁶

Figure 9

Domestic Workers' Monthly Wages relative to the Poverty Lines and GDP per capita



Advance payments

Advance payment of wages is a long-time practice in Cambodia that serves to indebt the person receiving the advance to the employer. The employer becomes a creditor and the debt is paid off through services provided. This arrangement has significant consequences in terms of the debtor's freedom to quit and how the debtor is treated by the creditor/employer.

From the qualitative part of this study, advance payments emerged as a mechanism for employers to exercise control over domestic workers.

The debt relationship makes the domestic worker feel trapped, especially when her family and support network is far away and even more so when the domestic worker is a child. An earlier study found that nine per cent of child domestic workers were in a debt bondage relationship with their employer.⁵⁷

According to the 2007 IOM study on child domestic workers, 31 per cent of child domestic workers earn wages they never see because the wages are paid to another person, usually the mother⁵⁸. This happens even though

⁵⁶ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2007. *Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Child Domestic Workers and Patterns of Trafficking in Cambodia*.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

the Labour Code specifies that wages should be given to the earner, however, for the most part, the Labour Code does not apply to domestic workers.

“It was only after working for three years that I learned that my wages were being paid to my mother in advance annually.”

Leakena is 47 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“When I first started working for my current employer, I received an advance of USD \$50 that was used to pay off the debt of my husband and his brother. I asked: why was I the one who had to earn the money to pay back their debt?”

Srey Touch is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“I work a 14-hour day with a heavy workload but no breaks, no days off during the week or month. I have never taken time off to go out with friends. I eat two meals per day, sometimes I only eat food that is leftover. I sleep in the kitchen. I have experienced headaches and dizziness from working hard. Considering that my wages are paid in advance, though, I feel that I cannot complain.”

Theary is 26 years of age, she became a domestic worker at age 13

In contrast, some workers do understand the implications of advance payments.

“I have never received an advance payment of wages. I think that when there is an advance payment of wages, the employer looks down on you and you do not have the right to leave because you owe the employer money.”

Sok Da is 45 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 35

While some appreciated being able to borrow money for emergencies: a number of the 15 in-depth interviewees have been grateful to be able to borrow money from their employers, especially to cover the cost of their health care

⁵⁹ Kheam, T. and E. Treleaven, 2013. *Women and Migration in Cambodia: A further Analysis of the Cambodian Rural-Urban*

or the health care of a sick parent. The employer withheld a part of their wage over a number of months until the debt was repaid.

Remittances

Many participants in this study remit funds, typically to their parents. On average, 30.4 per cent send money to others, although more than half of them send 10 per cent or less of their wages. Sixteen per cent give up all of their wages. In 2013, the average remittance for migrant domestic workers was 13.4 per cent of the monthly salary.⁵⁹

Figure 10

Percentage of Wages sent to others



3.7. Benefits

Days off and annual leave

Under the Cambodian Labour Code, a (non-domestic) worker is entitled to a minimum of 24 hours off every week. In addition, there are a number of public holidays that are regularly observed in Cambodia: the Khmer New Year celebrated over three days in mid-April; Pchum Ben, the Festival of the Dead when ancestors are honoured generally celebrated in September for three days; and, the Water Festival celebrated over three days in November. Government and NGOs shut down for these major holidays as do many businesses. There are a total of 26 public holidays.

Migration Project (CRUMP), UNFPA and National Institute of Statistics.

The Labour Code requires employers to provide paid public holidays to (non-domestic) employees or, at least, to pay an indemnity if the employee is required to work on a holiday. In fact, most of the important public holidays are honoured as many businesses themselves shut down. The Code also entitles workers to annual paid leave after they have worked for one year. The 2012 Labour Force Survey Report, however, found that only 9.5 per cent of all employees were given annual leave.

In this study, the quantitative research indicates that 68 per cent of participants were entitled to annual leave and 67 per cent were paid during annual leave. The qualitative findings of this study paint a bleaker picture:

“I barely had daily breaks at my job. I did not have time to leave the house. I did not have any annual leave and I rarely took time off for the Khmer New Year or Water Festival. Sometimes I would hide in the bathroom just to sit and get some rest.”

Chanthan is 28 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“I worked 10 to 13 hours per day. I worked seven days per week and I was entitled to only one day off per month provided I gave two weeks’ notice. I left this job because my employer accused me of stealing.”

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

Sick leave

While the 2012 Cambodia Labour Force Survey reports that only 10.4 per cent of the overall labour force was entitled to take sick leave⁶⁰, this study found that 83 per cent of domestic workers reported that they were able to take sick leave and 71 per cent were paid during sick leave. As the majority of the survey participants were living with their employer, the employer can see for him or herself when the worker is ill.

Health care benefits

The Cambodian Labour Code requires every ‘enterprise and establishment’ to provide primary health care to its

employees. Enterprises and establishments are also required to provide a 90-day leave for maternity with half-pay. There is also a 2002 Social Security Law that establishes a social security scheme to benefit all workers who are covered by the Labour Code (but not domestic workers).

In the quantitative research, 67 per cent of participants reported that their health care costs for illness or injury had been paid at least once by an employer. Some employers were also amenable to lending money against wages so their domestic worker can pay for her own medical care or medical care for her family members.

“I have been lucky to be able to borrow money from my employer when I am ill and require medical attention. When I borrow money, my employer reduces my monthly wage until the debt is repaid.”

Srey Touch is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

Related to on-the-job injuries, a number of the 15 in-depth interviewees reported that they received only non-professional medical care after sustaining an injury, as in the case of Sokunthea who suffered an electrical shock on one occasion and was seriously injured by boiling water on another occasion but received no professional medical care, and the example of Leakena whose employer threw a cleaver at her and was unable to work but not taken for medical care.

Other benefits

Participants in this study were asked about other benefits they received from their employers: 81 per cent reported receiving food, 71 per cent lodging in the employer’s home, and 12 per cent transportation costs related to work. While many domestic workers do receive benefits such as free lodging and food, without a contract in which those benefits are set out, these benefits may be discontinued at any time at the will of the employer.

⁶⁰ Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2013. *Labour Force Report*.

3.8. Verbal, Emotional, Physical and Sexual Abuse

The abuse experienced by many domestic workers reflects the low social status assigned to domestic workers in Cambodian society as discussed in Part 2. Abuse is generally discussed in three categories: physical, emotional and sexual. Verbal abuse usually is contained within emotional abuse. But for this study, it was decided to keep verbal abuse as a separate category as the first several interviews revealed that many employers spoke to their domestic workers in ways that was abusive.

Thus the types of abuse include:

Verbal abuse refers to scolding, blaming and criticizing, the use of rude names or critical words ('stupid', 'ignorant', 'careless') and tones of voice, such as shouting or yelling, that convey contempt, disrespect, disgust, superior status, to the person being spoken to.

Emotional abuse refers to conduct that causes or has the potential to cause mental distress through the use of threats, ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, or insult.

Physical abuse refers to conduct that causes or has the potential to cause bodily harm or pain and includes provision of inadequate or poor quality food.

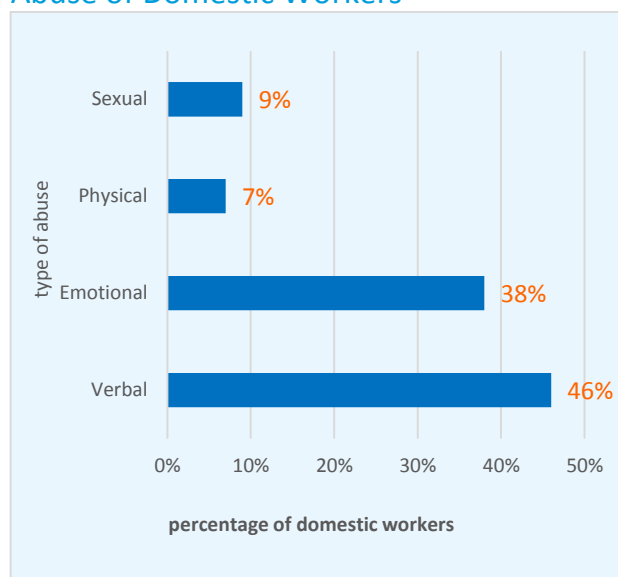
Sexual abuse refers to direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent, including sexual harassment, unwanted sexual contact or touching, indecent exposure and rape. In the case of children, it also includes sexual activity for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent.⁶¹

Violence against women is defined by CEDAW recommendation No.19 as any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women,

including threats of such as acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.⁶² Domestic violence is legally defined in Cambodia as an act of violence against a spouse, or dependent child or other dependent in the home. If the domestic worker does not live under the same roof, she is not covered by this law.⁶³

In the quantitative research verbal abuse was the most frequently cited with 46 per cent of the participants reporting that they have been subject to scolding, yelling or use of contemptuous words. Thirty-eight per cent of participants reported emotional abuse, seven per cent reported physical abuse and nine per cent reported some form of sexual abuse (Fig. 11). One criterion for selecting in-depth interviewees for the qualitative research was the experience of some form of abuse. This was directed at better understanding the nature of abuse experienced by domestic workers with the findings reflected in the quotes below.

Figure 11
Abuse of Domestic Workers



⁶¹ World Health Organization: www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap6.pdf

⁶² Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee, general recommendation No. 19 on VAW, 1992.

⁶³ Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2005. *Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims*, Article 3.

“People treat domestic workers like slaves. My last employer never said anything good about me. I was subject to beatings. Things have been thrown at me. All of these memories are painful and shaming.”

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

“Some of my employers were nice but most were not. They used to look down at me and insulted me with bad words.”

Chanthan is 28 years old. She became a domestic workers at age 12

“I left my home in Prey Veng Province at the age of 13 to work as a domestic worker. On the first day of my first job, my male employer asked me if I knew anyone beautiful to work at his house. Shortly after that, he attempted to rape me. On three occasions, he asked me to massage his penis. I refused. I was 13 years old and knew nothing about sex. I fled that house and my father was forced to re-pay the wages that had been advanced.

Sometimes my employer takes her anger out on me and she is difficult to please. She has punished me by twisting my ears when I have forgotten something. Once she slapped me in the face. The worst punishment was when she ordered me to stand in the rain at night. “

Theary is 26 years of age, she became a domestic worker at age 13

“My employer used to scold and blame me as if I was a small kid. She used more bad words against me than good words.”

Sopheha is 36 years of age, she became a domestic worker at age 16

Seven per cent of participants report physical abuse. Examples of physical abuse ranged from being hit, being forced to stand outside in the rain at night, having a cleaver thrown at her, to having food withheld.

“When I was 14, I worked in a house where I tended cows. If my employer thought that the cows had not eaten well on a day, then I was denied sufficient food to eat that day.”

Chanthy is 30 years old, she became a domestic worker at age eight

Nine per cent of all participants in this study reported sexual abuse with three per cent reporting having been raped.

“In one house, my employer raped me. I wanted to kill myself. I did not dare tell anyone, even my mother. I did not tell the police because I knew a poor woman could never prevail against my employer. Sometime after this, I was pressured to become a sex worker and I contracted HIV. You can see that I have many regrets. Now I am embarrassed and fearful to go home. It is too late for me. I think that I am dirty, that I am not a good woman.”

Srey Touch is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

IOM’s 2007 study on child domestic workers found that of women and girls doing sex work who also were once domestic workers, 10 per cent had been raped during their employment as domestic workers and 18 per cent were the object of attempted rape. Fifty-one per cent of women and girl sex workers interviewed had previously worked as domestic workers. The same study also identifies a link between migration into domestic work and subsequent sex work: “The path of migration that they follow shows a repeated pattern of social vulnerability in their own families and later in their lives as domestic workers. This social vulnerability later makes them easily recruitable into commercial sexual exploitation, either through ‘voluntary’ or trafficking-related practices.”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2007. *Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Child Domestic Workers and Patterns of Trafficking in Cambodia*.

“The employer of one of the houses I worked in was the owner of a karaoke bar. I worked at the karaoke bar and at one point I was pressured to become a sex worker. Now I live with HIV.”

Chanthan is 28 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

The findings from this study show that verbal and emotional abuses are the most common forms of abuse for domestic workers. Although the incidence of physical and sexual abuse is much lower, these remain significant risks for domestic workers.

3.9. Understanding of their Rights and Resources

This study shows that domestic workers have little understanding of their rights and, in any event, little trust that the administrative and justice systems will work in their interest. This is unsurprising given the findings that domestic workers typically have limited levels of education, that they come from poor and likely disempowered families, and that they are away from home and their support network. Although civil society organizations have been created to support workers in the informal economy in general (e.g., IDEA), and domestic workers specifically (e.g., Cambodian Domestic Workers Network established with the support of IDEA), ninety-one per cent of participants in this study had never heard of any association attempting to organize domestic workers.

Often, therefore, they do not seek help for violations of their rights whether from their employers, family, police or service providers like doctors. The women report fearing backlash as well as loss of employment and income. They fear the stigma associated with coming forward, especially when the violation is sexual.

Even when fears can be overcome, domestic workers do not believe they can prevail against a powerful or wealthy person. Law enforcement in Cambodia is hampered by a culture of impunity, the acknowledged problem of corruption and inadequate resourcing in the sector. The police and prosecutors may not take seriously allegations

of abuse, particularly when allegations are made by poor women. The problem is even more pronounced in the case of allegations made by children. This situation makes it difficult for victims of abuse to find justice and often pressure is exerted to accept out-of-court settlements that may never be paid.⁶⁵

“I was raped by one of my employers when I was young. It was painful, embarrassing and terrifying. I wanted to end my life but other domestic workers in the house stopped me.

I did not tell my mother or the police. I did not want to make my mother sad. I was poor and he was the employer so I knew I could not prevail with the police. I did not trust the police.”

Chanthan is 28 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“I was sexually assaulted and abused at three different houses. The perpetrators were my employer, my employer’s son and a house body-guard. I never spoke about these incidents with anyone. I was embarrassed. I just kept it all in my head. I did not report the three sexual abuses against me. I was young and naïve. I did not know those places [police or courts].

I could only move from one house to another when I was unhappy.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

Reasons not to contact authorities included: not knowing how to contact police, not believing that the domestic worker could prevail over the socially and economically more powerful employer ... and shame. Even well-meaning adults may not consider that children have rights and may think that the impact of harm will be minimal or that trauma will be easily forgotten simply because of youth. For child domestic workers, the difficulties in contacting the police are particularly problematic.

Among the in-depth interviewees in this study, there was not a single woman who had ever approached or gave any indication that she would ever approach authorities in the

⁶⁵ Amnesty International, 2010. *Breaking the Silence: Sexual Violence in Cambodia*; and Royal Government of Cambodia,

2014. *Violence Against Women and Girls: Cambodia Gender Assessment*.

event of a rights violation by an employer.

“In one house, the employer raped me. ... I did not dare tell anyone, even my mother. I did not tell the police because I knew that a poor woman would never prevail against my employer.”

Srey Touch is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

3.10. Work Satisfaction

In the qualitative research, interviewees were asked how they perceive themselves. Along with self-descriptions of themselves as poor, voiceless, ignorant, victims and powerless, common answers also include: hard-working, strong, independent and responsible.

“I am a hard-working woman and I like to work. I am independent and can support myself. I work fast and I am a great cleaner. I am good at organizing and tidying up the kitchen, dishes and pots and pans. I also can work at a farm and do rice planting.”

Chanthan is 28 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“I have lived a very difficult life, but I am happy that I could save money to build a house for my grandmother and help her to set up a small grocery business at the village.”

Nareth is 27 years old, she became a domestic workers at age 15

“I think of myself as a brave, hard-working, responsible and patient woman. I am also a good cook. I am working hard to make sure to send my four children to school.”

Sopheha is 36 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 16

“My current employers are kind and they are satisfied with my work because they see that I am hard working. When my employer adds to my duties, she increases my pay. If she were not to treat me fairly, I would leave. I live in my own house, so I can just leave.”

Srey Touch is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

Domestic workers who are fully satisfied with their job are few. In the CRUMP survey of female migrant workers, domestic workers were the most likely to be unsatisfied with their job, with over half reporting that they were somewhat or very dissatisfied.⁶⁶

“Overall, I do not have many good memories of being a domestic worker. I do remember being happy when an employer allowed me to go to the pagoda with his family. I liked when employers called my name gently.”

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

On the other hand, there are statements in many of the participants' interviews that show that they were pleased with some aspects of their work. One of the in-depth interviewees, a former garment factory worker, stood out from the rest as someone who is happy with her job.

“No one forces me to be a domestic worker. I choose this work. I used to be a factory worker. Although factory work offers a higher salary, I had to pay out-of-pocket for daily transportation and food. As a domestic worker, I am paid USD \$100/month and I do work I would have to do in my own home anyway.

I am a widow with three children. Doing this work for the past 10 years, I have been able to keep two of my children living with me. My son lives with his grandmother. I have been able to stay out of debt. My family has been able to retain our land.

⁶⁶ Kheam, T. and E. Treleaven, 2013. *Women and Migration in Cambodia: A further Analysis of the Cambodian Rural-Urban*

Migration Project (CRUMP), UNFPA and National Institute of Statistics.

My younger siblings have been able to study and my employer has helped support my children through school.

I work a 12-hour day, starting at 5:30 am. I clean the house, do laundry, go to the market, cook, do dishes, and take care of the garden. My children help with housework. My day often ends watching a Korean film on TV. My children and I sleep in our own room with a lock. We bathe in a place that is separate from others. I have breaks during the day. I visit my home village every two weeks. During the week, I often have leisure time when I can meet friends or family.

I like my female employer. She likes me too because I treat her house with respect, I do not mind a heavy workload and I am a good cook. I am proud to have an employer who likes me. My family receives clothes and medicine as well as money for the children to go to school. I receive tips for Pchum Ben and Khmer New Year. My children and I have joined my employers on trips to Angkor Wat and Kampong Som."

Sok Da is 45 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 35

All the in-depth interviewees who had remitted or were remitting funds to their families in the provinces stated that they are proud of the sacrifice they have made in order to feed their families and put their siblings through school. Those who began domestic work at a young age say clearly that they are proud to have helped their parents.

Interviewees were also asked if there are any aspects of domestic work they enjoy. Cooking was the activity mentioned most often. This may be because one tends to receive praise for good cooking, unlike a bed well-made or a floor well-swept. Quiet times with children and intimate moments with a female employer who had kind words or a laugh to share were also mentioned.

"Although I am a brave, patient and resilient person, I never enjoyed happiness as a domestic worker. I was miserable and afraid. I liked my last employer, though, and she liked me, especially my cooking."

Sok Leang is 39 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

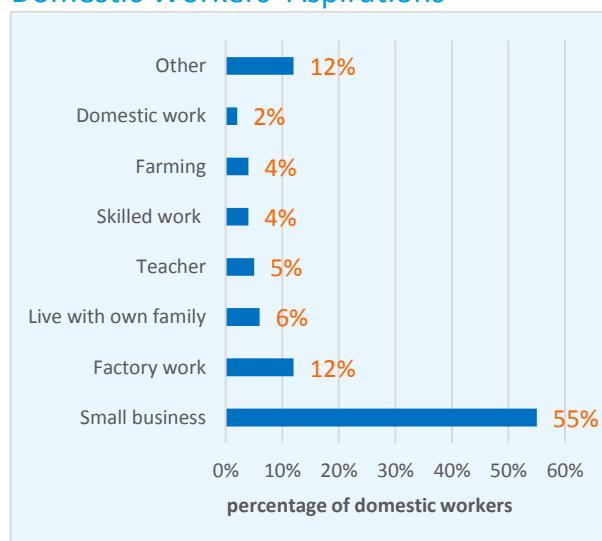
"My female employer is sometimes kind and I appreciate the times she has chitchatted with me and we have laughed together. She appreciates that I cook delicious food."

Theary is 26 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

3.11. Aspirations

All of the participants in the study were asked about their aspirations for the future. More than half of the participants aspire to having a small business. Twelve per cent wish to work in a factory. Six per cent want to live with their family. Only two per cent aspire to continue as a domestic worker (Fig. 12).

Figure 12
Domestic Workers' Aspirations



"I really want to learn to make dresses to rent for weddings. And I hope to marry a responsible man one day, a man who discusses family decisions with me and who speaks to me rather than beats me if I make a mistake. When I have children, I will try hard to earn money so that my children can have a good education and so they are not illiterate like I am."

Sokunthea is 20 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 10

“I will stop working as a domestic worker. I would like to learn how to sew and start a small tailoring business in my home. I would like to build my own house.”

Dalin is 35 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 13

“I want to stop being a domestic worker. I have done this work since I was 12. I have this dream that one day to buy my own motorbike and start a small business, selling vegetables, fish and meat at the village. I have never travelled to any other provinces in Cambodia.”

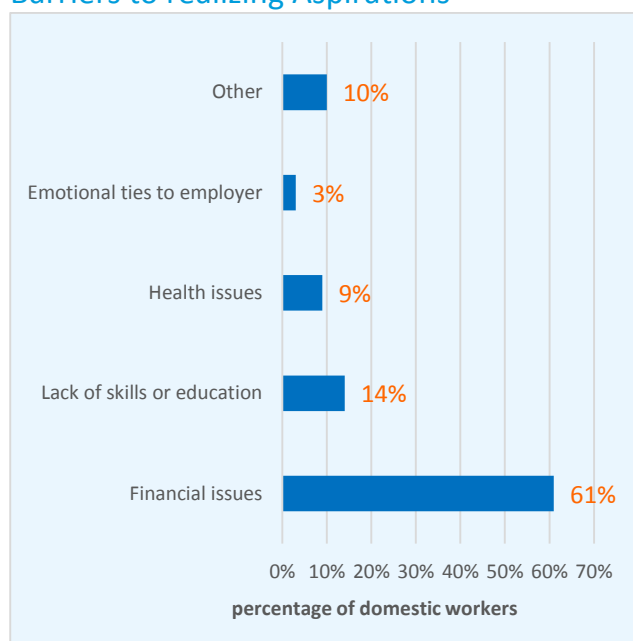
Chanthan is 28 years old, she became a domestic worker at age 12

“My mother was a domestic worker. I began working as a domestic worker when I was 8 years old. I do not want the same for my daughter who is now nine years old.”

Chanthy is 30 years old, she became a domestic worker at age eight

Participants were also asked about perceived barriers to realizing their aspirations. The foremost perceived barrier was financial at 61 per cent. Fourteen per cent feel they lack the education or skills to move on from domestic work. Nine per cent, mostly older participants, cited their health as a barrier.

Figure 13
Barriers to realizing Aspirations



PART 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

This report reflects how unregulated domestic work is in Cambodia. In almost all respects, the minimum protections provided by the Cambodian Labour Code do not cover domestic workers. In addition, Cambodia has not ratified the Domestic Worker Convention (ILO Convention 189 with Recommendation 201).

Domestic workers do their jobs in the privacy of households, and are thus invisible to the public, and to their own families. The ways they are spoken to, the hours they work, the multiple tasks they are expected to perform are all at the whim of their employers, without any fear of disapproval or punishment.

The women and girls who do this work are dependent on their work to support their families (whether parents or children) and have few other options due to their low levels of education and skills. They are reluctant to endanger their employment by complaining within the household and even more reluctant to report to any authorities outside the household. Yet most of them feel belittled by the work and the way they are treated.

They work too many hours to maintain good health, or to have the opportunity to have a private life. Many are paid too little to be able to save for a different future, which is clearly reflected in their statements about their aspirations.

Most of the children who do domestic work have no chance to go to school, to get the education that could help them to have other vocational options. And because they are working so many hours, girls are missing out on the developmental tasks of forming social relationships.

Domestic work is an essential activity that allows women and men to work in the formal economy and to help their own economic development as well as that of the country, but it should not be at the cost of the dignity, freedom, and well-being of those women and girls who provide the services. They should be appreciated, decently paid, treated like valued employees and have time for their own personal and family life.

4.2. Recommendations

1. Legal and Policy Initiatives to Protect Domestic Workers

- 1.a. **The Royal Government of Cambodia should ratify the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention (No. 189), Recommendation 201, and then implement its measures.**
- 1.b. **The Royal Government of Cambodia should amend the Labour Code so that domestic workers are included wherever relevant.** Amendments should include:
 - moving the blanket exclusion of domestic workers and instead, where necessary, excluding domestic workers from provisions which are not relevant to their work.
 - specific provisions for domestic workers that take into account their particular situation, for instance regarding safe sleeping arrangements given that many domestic workers tend to live in the homes of their employers.
 - changing the definition of domestic workers in Cambodia's Labour Code to the one found in the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention No. 189.
 - clarifying whether the child labour provisions of the Law cover child domestic workers and, if not, explicitly including them.
 - enforcement mechanisms focused on underage domestic workers. In doing this, care should be taken not to limit the possibility of domestic work in a way that inadvertently forces women and girls to find other, even more exploitative work
 - regulating advance payments to domestic workers, their families and any third parties.
- 1.c. **Include concrete and specific measures in the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014-2018 (NAPVAW) to address violence against women and girl domestic workers.**

The Plan, although already launched, may be sufficiently flexible to include measures to assess laws and regulations to ensure that they protect domestic workers, where applicable.
- 1.d. **Regulate Domestic Work Placement Agencies and Enforce Licencing.**

License and regulate agencies that place domestic workers. The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training could monitor future agencies in their recruitment, training, placement and monitoring of domestic workers. Consider the eight Prakas that were developed to regulate the placement of overseas Cambodian domestic workers as examples.
- 1.e. **Include Domestic Workers in current National Social Security Fund or Create Social Security Scheme for Domestic Workers.**

Explore the feasibility of adapting the existing legal framework for social security (NSSF) to cover domestic workers. If that is not possible, establish a social security scheme through the Cambodia Domestic Workers Network.
- 1.f. **Ensure safe and decent working conditions for domestic workers** by having inspections of the households where they are employed by women labour inspectors of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

2. Include Domestic Workers in Censuses

Beginning in 2018, domestic workers should be included in national censuses. Given the lack of nationally representative data about domestic workers, censuses should include a section on domestic workers, including information such as age and place of origin. As the next Census will take place in 2018, this recommendation should be brought to the attention of the Ministry of Planning as a matter of priority.

3. Conduct campaigns to improve the attitudes and behaviour of society and employers towards domestic workers, and to encourage domestic workers to know their rights to safe, decent, and reasonable working conditions

Emphasize the positive contribution that domestic workers make to the well-being of the families they work for and to their ability to work in the formal economic sector.

In any campaign link the good treatment of domestic workers to the development of the women who do this work, the families they work for and to national economic development. Once regulation of domestic work is established, disseminate information (leaflets, posters, video) about the rights of domestic workers to a safe, healthy, decent work environment.

4. Register Children who are sent to do Domestic Work

As a step toward eradicating child labour and protecting children, parents should be required to register with their Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) if they have a child between the ages of 8 and 15 who is leaving the home to do domestic work.

The information about child workers should be forwarded to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training which would be required to monitor their wellbeing in the workplace (see recommendation 1.f.).

5. Reach Out to and Provide Psycho-Social Assistance to Domestic Workers and Female Migrants

Domestic workers are a particularly vulnerable group, especially those who are far from home and family. Psycho-social programmes are needed that reach out to these women, in person, in groups, by mobile phones, or through associations of domestic workers. Programmes could assist them in navigating the changes in their lives and could equip them to deal with the difficulties they face, such as labour exploitation, verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

Programmes could be developed to assist in helping domestic workers leave difficult work situations. Programmes could also help to re-integrate domestic workers who wish to re-turn to their home of origin but lack the confidence and means to do so on their own.

6. Put Mechanisms in Place to Report or Talk about Abuse

With at least half of domestic workers in this study having their own telephones, there is an opportunity to connect them to helpful services by telephone. Research should begin on models to create a hotline staffed by trained and sympathetic women and men that could be accessed by calling a number or even by pressing # and a dedicated number. Alternatively, one of numerous existing help lines could be enhanced and utilized. The hotline could provide access to a wider variety of services, such as counselling and or a service to accompany domestic workers who wish to leave their positions or initiate criminal proceedings against their employers.

7. Support, improve and expand the Cambodian Domestic Workers Network (CDWN)

A membership-based organization that represents and advocates for domestic workers, the association should be supported to expand its membership throughout the country, perhaps to open branch offices in some provinces. Its work should include:

providing orientation to domestic workers and employers, including the rights of domestic workers, according to the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention No. 189;

- operating information and referral services for domestic workers by phone or through outreach services;
- promoting solidarity among domestic workers so that their isolation is reduced and their voices can be heard and listened to; and,
- developing and disseminating a resource list of adult education and vocational training opportunities and scholarship assistance.

Increased membership could be generated through an active media campaign, using TV or radio, leaflets/posters at places frequented by domestic workers (markets, public gardens, public transportation), or use of mobile phone networks.

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ANNEX

Quantitative Questionnaire I

Questionnaire for Women and Girls Who Work as Domestic Workers in Phnom Penh and Some Other Provinces

Name of client:

Name of interviewer:

Venue:

Time: from

to

1. Demographics

a. Age: _____ years old

b. Place of birth: _____

c. Living where now? At own house ☐ At other's ☐

d. Level of education: _____

e. Ever married? Yes ☐ No ☐

f. Have children? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Brief 3 generation genogram (noting who else does this work in family), parents alive?

3. Does anyone else in your family do the same work as you do? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, who? _____

4. How often do you meet your family? Directly ☐ Through the phone ☐

5. When you think about your home village, what do you remember?

6. What do they think about you doing this work?

7. What is your family's relationship to hiring family? Relative ☐ Friend ☐ Stranger ☐
8. Family's standard of living: Poor ☐ Medium ☐
9. Who is the person who gets the pay?

10. Pay in cash: _____ and it is used for Lodging ☐ Transport ☐
Schooling ☐ Savings ☐ Other: _____
11. What have the hiring family sent to your family? Rice ☐ Money ☐ Clothes ☐ Medicines ☐
Other What have the hiring family sent to your family? Rice ☐ Money ☐ Clothes ☐ Medi-
cines ☐ Other ☐
12. How much money in a month do you sent to your family?

13. How did you find this job? Do you have to pay intermediary for this job? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, entire pay ☐ step by step pay ☐ Other: _____
14. Where do you sleep?

15. Do you have your own room? Yes ☐ No ☐
16. Do you have any private space? Yes ☐ No ☐
17. Any place to keep own belongings? Yes ☐ No ☐
18. Describe about the house?

19. Do you have your own phone? Yes ☐ No ☐
20. If not, does the hiring family give you chance to use their phone? Yes ☐ No ☐
21. Duties: Cleaning inside ☐ Laundry ☐ Child care ☐ Cooking ☐ Marketing ☐
Other: _____
22. Do you have any other outdoor work? _____
23. Aside from you is there anyone else works as a domestic worker in the house? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, what do they do? Guarding ☐ Driving ☐ Cooking ☐ Child care ☐ Laundry ☐
Cleaning ☐ Other ☐
24. Are there any chemicals in the house which might affect your health? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, please describe: _____

25. Have you ever been injured during your work? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, please describe: _____

26. When you are sick could you tell me about your time off? Treatment?

If you have treatment, who paid for it? By myself ☐ By hiring family ☐
27. Do you get enough to eat? Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you eat the same food the hiring family eats? Yes ☐ No ☐
Describe: Left over food ☐ Some food ☐ Cooked by myself ☐ Other: _____

28. Hours of work (average): _____ hrs Longest day ever worked? _____ hrs
29. Hrs of sleep at night (average): _____ hrs
30. Hrs of rest during day (average): _____ hrs
31. How do they allow you to have time-off?
Week-end: _____ days A month: _____ days New year: _____ days
Pchumben : _____ days Water festival: _____ days
Requested by family : _____ days
Do you have rights to take annual leave? (Example: holidays, needed by family, wedding)
Yes ☐ No ☐
32. Time to watch TV or listen to radio? Yes ☐ No ☐ With hiring family ☐ On own ☐
33. Treatment by hiring family? (By wife, husband, kids) Describe:

34. Sometimes we hear of house helpers being mistreated: are you ever been mistreated?
a. Verbally (scolding, insulting, degrading,...) how often? Describe:

b. Physically (beating, slapping, pinching, pulling hair, kicking) how often?

c. Sexually (touching private place, flirting/courting, forcing to have sex) how often?

d. Emotionally? (restriction of freedom, decision, shouting at, threatening, intimidating)
how often? _____
35. Have you ever had problems with a member of your hiring family? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, who do you go to for help? _____

36. When you have a problem with a member of hiring family how does it affect you?

37. Do you have a friend/neighbor living near your work place? Yes ☐ No ☐

38. Do you have time to meet them? Yes ☐ No ☐

39. Have you ever heard about organizations or associations for this kind of work? Yes ☐ No ☐

40. How long do you expect to work at this place?

41. What do you think about this work?

42. What other kind of work can you imagine yourself doing? What would you like to do?

43. What are the obstacles to doing that?

44. Do you have any questions for me? Yes ☐ No ☐

Interviewer's observations:

Qualitative Questionnaire

Guiding questions for semi-structured,
in-depth interviews with domestic workers

Client:
Interviewer:
Venue:
1st From
2nd From
3rd From Duration:
Date:

Things to Find Out: What do we need to know and why?

1. The age of the domestic worker – single –married – children – birthplace– relationship to the employer –any money owed to the employer
2. The terms and conditions of work
3. The amount and frequency of contact with close family members
4. The degree of dependency on the employer household
5. The degree of contact with peers and the outside world
6. The degree of exposure to hazard and/or health risk
7. Employers' attitudes toward DW
8. Low status of the domestic workers and the impact on their self-esteem of overwork and harsh treatment and their ability to react to abuse
9. The amount and length of debt to the employer
10. Level of education or literacy
11. Access to information (Rights, Law Enforcement Agencies, Peer Groups)
12. Means of communication (Mobile)
13. Access to health services and medication (who pays for it)

1. Terms of Employment

1. Are you being paid for your work? Yes ☐ No ☐
Do you receive your own salary/wages?
2. How much?
How often you are being paid (daily, weekly, monthly)? Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐
When you receive your wage/salary? (what day of the month?)
3. Do you receive all your wage/salary? In full?
4. If not, who is it given to? (Parents, an `auntie' or other recruiter, or kept by employer?) if given to others, who gives it to them?
5. How were you recruited? (by a friend/neighbor, or by an agency or middleman?)
6. How old were you at the time that you have started to work at the house of your current employer?
7. Has any advance payment been paid to your parents at the time of your employment/start of your work at the house? How much? Or rice/ debt repayment?

8. What are and has been the implications of this advance payment for you and your work?
9. Does the employer ever make deductions from your wage/salary? If so, for what and how much and how often?
10. Are you or your family given any items in kind? (e.g. medicines, clothes, rice, food, school fee for siblings or yourself to learn English) If so, what?
11. Have you received any presents or tips/ bonus? How much per year and what time of the year?
12. Was the employment contract oral or written?
13. What was the agreement that was made? Do you remember the details? Did you agree for a one year work at the house? For how much money?
14. Who made the agreement? (parents/employer/recruiter/yourself?)
15. How long have you been working at the house of your current employer? How many more years do you intend to work at the house of the current employer?
16. Has the employer so far kept his/her words to follow the agreement? If not what did you do? Or if she/he stopped to keep his/her words what you will do?

2. Working conditions

1. What tasks do you perform at the house? Tell me about a typical day at the house? What time do you wake up and what you do from the morning to the time that you go to sleep at night?
2. What are the hazards/risks involved in the tasks?
3. Have you had any accidents while doing your job/ hurting yourself? How serious? What happened? Did you visit a doctor?
4. What are your working hours?
5. Do you have any rest breaks? During the day? During the week?
6. Do you have any full days off during the week? During a month?
7. Do you have any opportunities for leisure/fun? (in house/away from house) How often? Going out of the house? Going back to the village/your family home? Wedding, funerals, etc.
8. Do you have any relatives or friends in the city or town of your current place of work? Do you talk with her/him? Do you go out?
9. How often are you allowed out of the house? For how long?
10. Do you get any annual leave? How many days? Water festival? Khmer New Year?
11. Tell me more about the house that you are working at? Layout? How many bedrooms? How many bathrooms? Where do you sleep? Is it your own room? Who else does sleep at your room? Does the room have a proper lock?
12. Where do you bathe?
13. How many members are there in the employer's household? Any one close to your age? How many children do they have? What is their age? Who else live in the house?
14. How big is the house?
15. What facilities does the house have in the kitchen? Describe the kitchen? What items are in it? Which items you like to work with and which items you scared to work?

16. How have you been treated by the employer and members of the family? Who do you like the most and why? Who you often tend to avoid and why?
17. How satisfied is the employer with your work? What she/he does not satisfied about? She/he does not like the way you iron? Or cook or clean?
18. What happens if you make a mistake, fall asleep, wake up late? Break something or burn the food?
19. What do you eat? When? How often? Do you prepare your own food? Or do you eat the same food as the employer does?
20. Do you remember when was the last time that you did go outside of the house with your friends or leisure? Where did you go? For how many hours?

3. General Questions

1. Tell me more about your childhood? Where did you born? How many brothers and sisters do you have? Your parents?
2. What did you like about your childhood and what you did not?
3. Did you go to school? For how many years? What did you like about going to school? Can you share with us one good memory?
4. When did you move out of your family home and village to work as a help/domestic worker?
5. How old you were?
6. Why do you choose this job? Is it your choice? Or you are pressurized to choose it (e.g. you don't have other choice)?
7. When there is an emergency, who do you go to? Do you get helped?
8. Tell us what was going on your head/mind? What you were thinking about? What you were worried about? Sad to leave family? Your fears and hopes?
9. Do you remember anything of your first day at work? Who greeted you when you arrived at the house? Did you know about the condition of the work? Your payment? Term of agreement? Hours of work? And your tasks?
10. Are you still working at the same house with the same employer?
11. Or have you moved to a different house? When and why? How many different places have you worked since you moved from the village and your own family house?
12. What is your best memory of working at the house? Something that made you happy?
13. Tell me more about your job? Do you wash clothes? Do you cut and clean meat? Do you chop the vegetables? Do you cook? Do you clean? Do you go to the market? Do you take care of small kids? Do you iron? Do you work with knife? Boiling water? Cleaning detergents and etc.
14. What do you like about your job? Which task makes you feel calm and relaxed? Which tasks make you nervous / stressed? Why? Can you explain more, clarify?
15. What you do not like about your work?
16. What do you like about your employer and what you do not like? Tell me more and why? Can you give examples?

17. Have you ever been punished? How do you define punishment? Are there different types of punishments? Who punishes you if you make mistake? What was the harshest punishment you ever have received? Why do think it was hard?
18. Do you understand what does sexual assault and sexual abuse mean? Have you ever experienced a sexual assault or abuse? Can you elaborate? By whom? Have you talked with anyone about it? What did you do so it does not happen again? Do you feel comfortable to talk about it? Was it a onetime incident or it occurred several times? Same person from the house? Or different individuals?
19. What will happen if you tell about it with your employer or family or police?
20. Do you know that you can report the abuse? Do you know how the justice system works and who to approach?
21. What are your hopes? What you want to do for a better future? What skill do you want to learn? Which places you want to visit? Are you single? Are you married? Do you have children? What your husband does and where he does live? How about your children? How many and how old are they? Do they live with you? Who takes care of them?
22. Tell me about your strengths? What are you good at? What you can do really well? Any task? Or any job?
23. Do you want to get married? How you will meet your partner? What will change in your life if you get married? Will you go back to the village?
24. What changed in the life of your family because of your work as a domestic worker? Do They have additional food? They could pay their debts? They could send your siblings to school? They could keep their rice land?
25. What you can do to reach your hopes? What are the steps? Who can help you? Who will stop you?
26. Do you like your job as a help/domestic worker?
27. How many other workers are at the house? Who does what? Who is your boss?
28. Do you consider yourself as a healthy person? When was the last time you got sick? When is the most recent time that you visited a doctor or hospital? What was the reason? Who took you to the hospital or doctor? Who paid the bill?
29. Can you read and write? Do you read newspaper? What do you like to read?
30. Is there a TV at the house? Do you watch TV? Are you allowed to watch? What program do you watch? How often and with who? News? Drama? Korean drama?
31. How many provinces have you visited in Cambodia? How often do you travel with the employer or your own family? When was the most recent trip with the employer? Where do you stay or sleep when you do travel with the employer?

Interviewer's Observations:

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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