Analyzing the Impact of Remittances from Cambodian Migrant Workers in Thailand on Local Communities in Cambodia
IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Opinions expressed in the report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM.

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ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF REMITTANCES FROM CAMBODIAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THAILAND ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN CAMBODIA

June 2010
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Bruno Maltoni
Project Coordinator
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<td>Cambodian Women for Peace and Development</td>
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<td>HOU</td>
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<td>OCDE</td>
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<td>UNCT</td>
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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Purpose

This is the final report on the survey conducted for the IOM project Analyzing the Impacts of Remittances for Cambodian Migrant Workers in Thailand and on Local Communities in Cambodia, funded by the Agence Française de Développement.

Migration in Cambodia is, by and large, concentrated within its borders. Reports from the Ministry of Planning put the percentage of internal migrants at 26.52 per cent of the total population (NIS, 2009). Most of these internal movements occur within provinces and involve travel over very short distances.

Labour migration is a relatively new topic for the government, international organizations, and NGOs working in Cambodia. Previously, interventions and research related to mobility were concentrated on human trafficking, especially sexual exploitation, and forced migration, such as diasporas, resettlement of refugees, and displacement.

Since 2004, labour migration has emerged as a key area both for research and project activities. The main target of these interventions has been, and still is, internal labour migration, particularly migration from rural areas to urban areas, with specific attention paid to strongly defined groups of migrants such as garment factory workers. The garment sector represents the only effective “pull” factor in Cambodia. In the past ten years, it has provided more than 250,000 jobs, mostly for young female migrants coming from the provinces around Phnom Penh.

In 2005, there was an increasing awareness in the government, International Organizations, and NGOs in Cambodia of the relevance of international labour migration from Cambodia to the countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion (mainly Thailand) and other Asian countries.

Cambodia is still in the early stages of managing labour migration, especially regarding the impact of remittances on local communities and at the national level.

There is no legal framework, and no reliable data on the volume of money transfers, or on how remittances from Cambodian migrant workers living and working abroad are transferred or spent.

The project has the following key objectives:

- To increase knowledge of how remittances by Cambodian migrants are spent.
- To link remittances with economic development in local communities in Cambodia.
- To increase knowledge of money-transfer channels and assess their effectiveness and flaws.
- To collect data on Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) that provide financial services to migrant households.
- To provide further recommendations and identify interventions that should be made so that remittances can become the catalyst for a greater contribution to the overall development of Cambodia.
- To work with migrants and beneficiary households on ways to improve transfer, saving and investment products.
To meet these objectives, IOM has researched the impact of remittances, assessed money-transfer channels between Thailand and Cambodia, and reviewed the products offered by Micro-Finance Institutions that go beyond micro-lending. The first component of this work, which is reported on here, consisted of quantitative research on the impact of remittances, with samples from Cambodian migrants working in Thailand and households in Cambodia that have sent migrants to Thailand.

1.2 Data Collection

The NGO Legal Support for Women and Children (LSCW) conducted research in close cooperation with IOM in order to analyze the impact of remittances on Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand and on local communities in Cambodia. This research was carried out in the provinces of Prey Veng and Kampong Cham (Cambodia) as well as in the provinces of Trad and Rak Yorn (Thailand).

1.3 Key Findings

- There is a substantial gap between the understanding among migrants and the understanding among the households from which migrants come about why and how people migrate, how remittances are transferred and used, and what services each group wants most.
- Households from which migrants go are involved only during the preliminary stages of the migration process - that is, before the migrants leave for the first time. Because of weak communication, households are not in close touch with migrants and have little idea about other aspects of the migration process, such as how migrants manage to cross the border illegally and how they send money home.
- On the other hand, again due to weak communication and lack of regular updates on the situation of the households they leave behind, there is a gap between what migrants know and what households know about how remittances are spent. Migrants tend to underestimate the impact of health costs and debt interest on the how remittances are used by household members.
- Consequently, due to this gap in understanding, the two groups have different priorities regarding the services they feel they need. Households value “investment information” and “microfinance training” a lot more than migrants do.
- The findings also reconfirm that remittances are transferred mainly through informal channels, and are used to meet households’ basic needs.

1.4 Recommendations

- Expand quantitative and qualitative research, linking migrants and households in Cambodia with representative samples and including all the Cambodian provinces with high emigration rates.
- Ensure that research in Thailand includes the main sectors of employment for Cambodian migrants, and assess the links among them.
- Improve access to legal migration channels through information on employment opportunities locally and abroad.
- Cut the costs of access to the legal migration process.
- Conduct Monitoring & Evaluation of formal and informal brokers and recruitment agencies.
- Prosecute informal brokers responsible for cheating migrants and pushing them into exploitative situations in receiving countries.
• Include details about remittance transfer channels in pre-departure training for regular migrants and in information packages for irregular migrants.
2. Introduction

2.1 Global Trends in Migration and Remittances

In the context of globalization, there is no doubt that migration has emerged as a defining global issue. According to IOM, the total number of migrants now living outside their countries of origins exceeds 200 million, which means that roughly one in every 35 persons in the world is a migrant (IOM, 2008). This mobile world is determined by a combination of “push” factors and “pull” factors, including demographic trends, economic and social disparity, and advanced transportation and communication networks.

However, there are still contradictory arguments regarding the effect of migration on development.

On the one hand, it is said:

- Migration is economically beneficial for most migrants and migrants’ families; if it were not, they would not move in the first place.
- Migration meets the needs of employers in the destination country.
- Remittances, as the most tangible and direct link between migration and development, directly augment individual recipients’ incomes, improve their quality of life and finance other activities, including education and health care.

On the other hand, it is said:

- Migrant investments in direct productive activities in their home countries have, at best, a modest effect on national economic growth. It is argued that remittances are largely spent on conspicuous consumption and very little of them is saved or invested.
- Remittances may generate dependency and enlarge economic and social disparity.
- Migration may reduce pressure on national governments to promote development within their own borders, insofar as it provides a short-term solution to domestic unemployment and fiscal bottleneck (Portes, 2008).

In recent years, there has been a shift towards a more positive view of the impact of migration on development. Part of the reason has been the huge volume of remittance flows to the developing world. According to the most up-to-date data from the World Bank (2009c), the flow of remittances to developing countries reached US$338 billion in 2008, up from US$285 billion in 2007. It was double the size of official development assistance (OECD, 2007) and has become a key source of external finance for developing countries. In some countries such as Bangladesh, Lesotho and Haiti, remittances accounted for a significant share of the economy.

Moreover, in the context of global financial crisis and sharp decline in other external funds, the importance and potential of remittances for developing countries is recognized and discussed. They are less subject to political barriers and controls, and are believed to be more resilient and projected to drop less in nominal terms than official aid flows and foreign direct investment. Some countries such as Ethiopia and Bangladesh actually

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1 ‘Migration, Development and Remittances’ was selected as one of the themes for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, (2009).
received more remittances than Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment. The remittance inflows to Ethiopia through formal channels reached US$389 million in the six months from August 2008 to February 2009. This represents a 19 per cent increase over the same period during the previous year (Orozco and Ferro, 2009).

The resistance of remittances to economic cycles can be explained by the following factors. Firstly, remittances are just part of migrants’ incomes, and they would continue to send money home and tend to send more when the situation in the home country is getting worse. Secondly, those migrants who return are likely to take back accumulated savings. Despite anecdotal reports of migrants returning home, new migration flows remains positive. That means the number of migrants continues to increase and remittances are likely to grow as well (World Bank, 2009b).

In the Greater Mekong Subregion, one of the main channels through which migration affects the sending country is remittances.

Qualitative evidence from diverse studies confirms that remittances are an important source of cash income for households in the sending countries. A study of the impact of remittances on communities in Prey Veng Province in Cambodia, for example, reports that remittances were important or very important for 91 per cent of the households interviewed.

Unfortunately, relatively little “hard” quantitative information is available on remittances from Thailand to the country of origin. Small focused studies of migrants from Greater Mekong Subregion countries in Thailand suggest they remit between US$50 and US$300 per year to their families. Based on these surveys, some researchers have calculated that total remittances from Thailand to the Greater Mekong Subregion countries of origin (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar) are of the order of US$177 million to US$315 million per year (World Bank, 2006).

2.2 Background

Temporary workers have been moving from low-wage countries to higher-wage countries on a large scale for at least seven decades. The phenomenon came to notice with movements from Mexico to the US in the 1940s, and exploded with the officially supported guest worker schemes that took workers from Turkey to Western Europe after the Second World War. Today, migrant workers, both regular and irregular, probably number more than 100 million (ILO; 2009). The funds they send home have been estimated at $316 billion in 2009, down 6 percent from $336 billion in 2008 (World Bank, 2010). Global foreign remittances in 2006 totalled three times all aid provided by donor nations to developing countries (as reported by OECD) (IFAD, 2006)Not surprisingly, this phenomenon has attracted considerable research, debate and attention from policy makers. As a result, there is a solid body of knowledge about the patterns that migration displays across many different markets, the behaviours of migrants, the opportunities and problems that emerge, the responses of governments in both the sending and receiving countries, and the policy measures that can have either positive or negative outcomes for both these countries and the migrants themselves.

By contrast, large-scale labour migration and the remittances that migrants send home are relatively new phenomena for Cambodia, which has begun to emerge from the isolation of war and political instability only in the past 15 years. Similarly, research on temporary economic migration by Cambodians to Thailand and Malaysia (their principal
destination countries) is sparse. There are no reliable data on the numbers of people involved, nor on the value of the funds they send home. The present study is, in fact, one of only a few to focus on movements of Cambodian workers to Thailand. Even so, there is enough research and anecdotal evidence to tell us that Cambodia’s experience appears to be following the patterns seen in many other labour-exporting countries in the past. In fact, we can say with some certainty that Cambodia is at Stage 1 of the four-stage process of developing transnational communities described by Alejandro Portes, and presented in diagrammatic form in the chart that is reproduced as Figure A on page 20 of this report (Castles and Wise, 2008: 23). It is therefore possible to see Cambodia from an international perspective, and to say what types of policies will produce the greatest benefits, and avoid the worst pitfalls, for migrants, their families and Cambodia as a whole.

Cambodia is becoming a labour-exporting country at a time when the international policy debate on migration sees it as a mostly positive phenomenon, and migrant remittances and migrant diasporas are widely seen as holding promise for development. In some ways, this optimism represents a return to attitudes that held sway at the very beginnings of the boom in labour migration. After the Second World War, hopes were high that migrant workers would contribute to the development of their countries by taking money, skills, knowhow and new attitudes home with them. By the 1970s and 1980s, free movement of labour was seen as a counterpart to the free movement of capital, goods and services, and information and ideas that would create a borderless world through the liberalizing action of market forces.

But by the 1990s, a more pessimistic tone dominated the debate. Labour migration might be good for the receiving country, which benefited from access to cheap labour, but it is often bad for the individuals, their communities or the sending countries as a whole. Criticisms focused on factors such as the opportunity cost to the source country, which loses the migrant’s productive output and consumption. This is most damaging when it manifests as a permanent “brain drain”, or the loss of better educated young adults, especially skilled workers and qualified professionals, but it has also been observed in temporary falls in production by unskilled labour, especially in the agricultural sector. If sufficient numbers of workers are drawn into the foreign economy, and especially if they take their families with them, sending communities may be reduced to ghost towns inhabited only by the old and infirm. Remittances may also be a double-edged sword. In some cases, members of a receiving family may choose to live on the funds, becoming dependent rather than productive. If the money is spent on imported consumer goods, it effectively goes straight back over the border again to an industrialised country, doing nothing for the local economy. Such spending can also exacerbate tensions between the families able to invest in sending a worker abroad and those too poor to afford such a strategy. Somewhat perversely, if a receiving family sees the remittance flow as stable and reliable, they are more likely to spend than to save and invest. But if they do see the money as investment capital, their decision to put it at risk in a new venture will be heavily influenced by the economic and business environment of the home country.

In the past decade or so, a more positive tone has again begun to colour the debate, at least partly in response to the headline-grabbing data about recorded remittances. Scholarship has focused on the potential for remittances to improve the education, health, housing and general welfare of receiving families, not only alleviating poverty but also developing future human capital. The impact of investment by national diasporas in
the home country is being studied, such as examples of investments by expatriate professionals from India and China. Research points out that such investments can build infrastructure including schools, hospitals, community facilities and feeder roads, improving the lives of the people in rural areas and linking them into their national economies. Particular attention has been paid to collective investments by Home Town Associations of Mexican emigrants in the US, which have transformed many sending communities.

But this enthusiasm has generated its own doubters. Economist Devesh Kapur (2004) suggests that remittances have become a new “development mantra”, based on the belief that remittances can somehow overcome underdevelopment. This less rosy view argues that the industrialised countries’ consensus on the importance of market liberalisation, privatisation and structural adjustment has been misguided, and that in many cases the integration of developing countries into the global economic system has in fact made life worse for their peoples. Globalisation has failed, say the sceptics, so in its place individual migrant workers and national diasporas are being hailed as heroes of development. As Portes says: “… to put it less positively, the idea is that some of the most exploited workers in the world can make up for the failure of mainstream development policies.” (Castles and Wise, 2008:7)

Recent research indeed suggests that remittances cannot, by themselves, guarantee development. Such funds can have positive effects if they flow into an economy with good governance, supportive macro-economic settings and a business environment that is conducive to productive investment. In these cases, the remittances amplify and reinforce the trends that are made possible by the sound policies, setting up a virtuous circle. In countries where the domestic policy settings are wrong, the effects of the remittances are wasted, being sucked into a vicious circle of mismanagement, inefficiency and corruption. In some cases, remittances can in fact make the situation worse, since they allow governments to procrastinate on reform. If a government relies too heavily on migration, using it as a safety valve for unemployment or hoping remittances will serve as a substitute for public investment, it is likely merely to compound problems in the future.

As a result, much current research on economic migration is focused on the practical strategies that can shape good policies and allow migrants, their families and communities, and both sending and receiving nations to make the most of its promise. The policies suggested include encouraging greater use of formal remittance channels to improve security and reduce the transaction costs of sending money home, so that a greater proportion of the migrant’s earnings reaches their families. A related tactic is to encourage the migrant diasporas to retain links with the homeland and invest in community infrastructure. Analysts propose regularizing migrants’ legal status to ensure their human rights, reduce their vulnerability and protect them from exploitation. They urge receiving countries that are concerned that foreign workers will not “go home”, and that are thus tempted to militarise their borders, to instead make it easy for workers to cross back and forth so as to facilitate “circular migration” rather than permanent settlement by migrants and their families. This approach may in fact help to prevent the emergence of ethnic minorities whose youth are drawn into anti-social subcultures and who then export these to their parents’ home countries. The research also lends support for strategies for the sending countries, including giving investment advice or business support services to the households who receive remittances, so that they can put the funds received to more productive use. Most importantly, this analysis suggests, sending
countries need to put the right domestic policies in place to encourage development irrespective of whether migrants are sending back remittances.

Remittances are hailed as a possible catalyst for development because of their potential to develop social capital, provide investment capital for entrepreneurial activity, and generate multiplier effects in the local economy. For policy makers wishing to facilitate this process, an obvious move is to make it cheaper, safer and easier for migrants to send money home. The less money is siphoned off in transfer costs and middleman fees during the transmission, the more will reach the households and be available for spending on the things for which the workers intend it. In addition, funds that pass through financial institutions can be counted in a country’s foreign exchange earnings, strengthening its external position and giving a truer picture of its economy. This could be significant to Cambodia, whose export earnings are narrowly based in the garments and tourism sectors. Foreign earnings that are held in secure bank accounts are also available to back loans, and are less likely to leave the country if there is political or financial instability. The risk of such capital flight is less relevant to Cambodia than some other countries at present, since it is likely that most funds received are either already committed to loan repayments or are spent on immediate needs, but this factor could become more important as the volume and value of transfers grows. Directing remittances through formal channels also helps guard against fraud, money laundering and funding of criminal or terrorist enterprises (Ghosh, 2006: 100.) Success in encouraging migrants to switch to formal channels depends largely on making formal banking mechanisms available to both workers and their families at lower cost. This is a challenge in the Cambodian context, where most banking institutions do not operate on both sides of national borders, and many migrants and their families do not hold bank accounts. It is a move that would require action by private commercial banks, perhaps in coordination with micro-finance institutions, with policy support from government.

Another factor that has been associated with positive migration outcomes in the international experience is the development of migrant diasporas who wish to “give something back” to their homelands. This phenomenon has emerged among both high-skilled migrants, such as Chinese and Indians in the US and Western Europe, and low-skilled migrants, such as the Mexicans in the US. It often takes the form of charitable acts by individuals who have done well in their new homes, and have a sense of obligation to extended family or the broader community in their place of origin. On a more communal scale, many groups of Mexican migrants in the US have retained such a sense of connection to their birthplaces, and to each other, that they have formed Home Town Associations. These invest through community groups or municipal authorities, building infrastructure and local facilities that underpin the economic growth of the towns. In recognition of the investment potential of these diasporas, some source countries, including China and India, have gone to great lengths to court them, enacting special measures to encourage them to visit, donate and invest. Mexico, seeing the potential of the Home Town Associations, set up the “Tres por Uno” or “Three for One” scheme, whereby each dollar provided by a Home Town Association is matched by one dollar from each of the national, state and municipal governments.

Could such moves help to harness the power of migrants in support of economic development in Cambodia? The present research suggests that remittances from Cambodian migrants go overwhelmingly to members of the immediate household. This is not surprising, given that a significant part of the money being sent home appears to be absorbed in paying off debts incurred to finance the migration itself, to repay funds
borrowed to cope with a medical emergency, to support daily subsistence by the family, or to invest in education of younger family members. There appears to be little money going into business investment, let alone community infrastructure.

There is also no evidence that Cambodian workers in destination countries are setting up the equivalent of home town associations. This is also understandable, given that Cambodian migrants in neighbouring countries are often transitory, their legal status may be irregular, and they are invariably working in low paid jobs. These migrants are not in a position, either individually or as a group, to endow a hospital or school, build a road or bridge, or establish a philanthropic foundation.

There is another factor which could well count against the development of strong associations in the Diaspora in the future. After three decades of war and political instability, the level of social trust in Cambodia is extremely low. The Khmer Rouge deliberately destroyed traditional social networks and the damage is still being repaired. Peace – or at least stability – has been made a higher priority than justice, such that the leaders and foot soldiers from the Khmer Rouge regime have been reintegrated into society without being made to pay for their deeds. Levels of fear and suspicion are high even among neighbours, and community ties are weak. Mention of collective action generally raises bad memories, and the web of religious, civil and social connections that might hold together, say, a Mexican community, are generally lacking. Given all this, the chances are remote that a Cambodian Home Town Association could form within the Khmer diaspora in Thailand and send back substantial sums of money for investment in community facilities at home.

Another reform which could have significant benefits would be improvements in the legal status of Cambodian migrant workers abroad. At present, a significant proportion of these are irregular and undocumented, with ambiguous legal status at best. They are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse throughout the migration process - while being recruited, travelling within their own country, crossing the border and working for their new employers. Without proper documentation, they cannot seek legal redress and are liable to be treated as offenders, rather than victims, by the police and the courts in the destination country. Such a situation can have advantages for the receiving country. Unprotected workers are not in a position to press for fair treatment or higher pay, so the overall wages bill to employers is lower and their competitiveness and profits are higher. But such policies can also entail clear violations of the migrants’ human rights.

A commitment to international standards on human rights should be enough to spur the receiving countries to action. But even in the absence of such a commitment, enlightened self-interest should provide convincing arguments in favour of legal protection for migrant workers. Recognising cross-border workers as legitimate temporary migrants can facilitate “circular” or “cyclical” migration. This is now widely seen as the pattern of migration that is most desirable for both sending and receiving countries. The idea is that younger, able-bodied workers should be encouraged to move temporarily to the host country, where they can earn money and gain skills and knowhow, and then return and contribute to the development of their own communities. This movement may happen on both a seasonal basis – for agricultural work, for example – or in the form of repeated, short stays. The alternative is family migration, where the breadwinners bring their spouses and children to live with them permanently. Experience shows that this can hold risks for both the sending and the receiving countries.
In particular, Portes argues (Castles and Wise, 2008:32) that the US decision to tighten controls on its long border with Mexico has prompted many migrant workers to bring their families to live with them. Although the family members may be exposed to heightened danger while they are crossing the border, the move saves the breadwinners from the risks of making repeated crossings just to see their families. Thus, the receiving country’s attempts to keep illegal migrants out may actually have the paradoxical effect of encouraging more to cross over, and to stay. At present, the land border between Cambodia and Thailand, in particular, is quite porous, with an abundance of secluded crossing points and a reasonably well-organised courier system on both sides able to manage illegal crossings. But there are regular calls for border controls to be tightened, with more patrols and heavier penalties for those caught crossing illegally. If these come to pass, it could well alter the migrant’s calculus to the point where it makes more sense to take the family across once and stay. Life in the new country may be precarious, but the difficulties and dangers of repeated crossings would be a thing of the past.

Portes’ research reveals the particular risks that this situation poses for the children of low-skilled workers from Latin America who move to the US. As a result of their parents’ tenuous legal position and their dependence on low-wage jobs, the children tend to be raised in ethnic concentrations in the poorer sections of America’s cities. There they are exposed to and sometimes absorbed into deviant sub-cultures, such as gangs and drugs. Their parents lack the economic or social power to protect the children from such influences. If the children have no legal right to live in the US, they are in greater danger of being sent “home”, where they may transmit their anti-social lifestyles to local families. The “social capital” that is being exported from the advanced economy to the developing country is, in this instance, of the least desirable sort. It is worth noting that skilled migrants and their families do not come under this sort of pressure. Migrants to the US from China and India tend to be qualified professionals with high educational levels and good earning power. According to Portes, this enables them to stay removed from the inner cities and protect their children from the destructive sub-cultures that flourish there.

There is little evidence at present that Cambodian migrant workers are taking their families to live with them in destination countries in any great numbers. However, it is clearly a possibility for the future. Small numbers of married couples are already migrating together, and this raises the prospect of children born in the host countries who will not be properly documented either there or in Cambodia. These children will be compelled to try to straddle both languages and cultures, but may be deprived of the educational support needed to succeed in either. Cambodian migrants are also likely to remain vulnerable because, for the foreseeable future, they will remain unskilled workers. The low quality of the education available to them in their home country will place them at the bottom of the economic ladder in virtually any country they move to. The Cambodian economy is narrowly based, but it is gradually expanding and skilled workers can generally be absorbed. It is the unskilled workers who are in surplus, unable to find productive jobs at home, and therefore motivated to migrate in search of work. There they find themselves at the bottom of the economic pyramid, with little chance to improve their skills or their social standing.

Another aspect of large-scale family migration from Mexico to the US has been substantial population decline in many areas south of the border. Much of this may be attributable to the establishment of the North American Free Trade Area in 1996 which, according to Portes has led to the hollowing out of Mexican industry and the wholesale
transfer of jobs to the US. This trend has turned some towns and villages into “ghost towns”, inhabited by only the old and infirm, or into “tinsel towns” that put on a show periodically for the sake of returning workers, but which otherwise support little real life within (Castles and White, 2008:23). Such a scenario is not likely in the near future for Cambodia, since the drawing power of industry in Cambodia’s neighbours is in no way equivalent to the gravitational pull of the US economy. Nonetheless, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is taking tentative steps towards economic integration. Cambodia and its northern neighbour, Lao PDR, are two Least Developed Countries at the geographical centre of a region that is rapidly industrializing. As its neighbours gather momentum, it is possible that certain areas of Cambodia could lose a critical mass of population, especially among the younger, economically productive members of these communities.

Migration is often lauded for its potential to enable skills transfer from advanced economies to developing countries. At present, this appears unlikely to happen in Cambodia on any significant scale. The vast majority of Cambodian workers are employed at the bottom of the economic pyramid, in fishing boats, construction sites, fish processing factories, domestic labour and the entertainment industry. In these jobs, they have little opportunity to acquire new skills which would benefit their communities at home.

Policy analysts also suggest that business and investment education for households receiving remittances could encourage these families to invest in productive activities and thus turn the remittances into self-sustaining assets. It is notable that the Cambodian households surveyed in the present research regarded such education as a low priority. It is not clear whether this was because they did not expect to have surplus funds available for investment, or because they would have no interest in such activities, even if they were to gain the necessary skills.

What is clear from research in the international context is that households will not invest hard-won funds if the domestic economic and business environment is not supportive. Factors that influence their decision can range from macro settings such as a stable exchange rate to micro factors such as the ability to get accurate and timely market intelligence about the daily price fluctuations of produce on sale in the nearest town. A similar pattern emerges in studies of larger-scale investment in communities in countries such as Mexico. Members of the diaspora may fund the construction of feeder roads and local industries, but if the community is not linked to the rest of the country by good national roads, power, communications and financial networks, the benefits remain isolated and the multiplier effect is limited. Migrants who have spent long periods in another country often make a similar calculation when deciding where to “invest” their remaining years. They will not return if life would be materially worse, no matter how strong the call of home.

After so many years of international labour migration, and so much research, there are few mysteries about migration’s causes and effects, its potential benefits and the factors that put those benefits at risk. As a result, even though Cambodia is a new entrant to this transnational labour market, it is possible to identify with reasonable certainty the policy actions that will be most positive for all concerned. The most important are moves to regularise the legal status of temporary migrants, to give them access to formal banking channels for sending remittances, and to improve the economic and business environment at home so that the impact of the remittances is not dissipated. All these reforms are beyond the power of the migrants themselves. Rather, the responsibility falls
to governments in both Cambodia and the receiving countries, and to a lesser degree to private sector firms.

International cooperation is required to improve the legal status of the migrants in the receiving countries. Orderly migration through well-organised channels would protect the migrants from exploitation from lenders, brokers, couriers, and employers – in other words, before, during and after they cross the border. In the longer term, it would also benefit their families by encouraging circular or cyclical migration. A proper legal framework would facilitate frequent moves back and forth, making it easier for the migrant’s family to stay at home and invest the breadwinner’s remittances than to cross the border with them and face the challenges of making a life and raising children at the bottom of the social scale in a foreign country.

Action by private sector banks is needed to increase the availability and reduce the cost of bank transfers, so that migrant workers can more easily send part of their earnings home. But this too is unlikely to be achieved with government support. The target market – migrants and their families – is highly fragmented and geographically dispersed. Their financial activities involve a high volume of low-value transactions, exactly the sort of activity that commonly attracts high fees. And providing a good service would require financial institutions to have either a corporate presence on both sides of the border or good relationships with counterpart institutions. Yet the system that most migrants currently use for transfers is hardly efficient, involving as it does an informal network of shopkeepers, agents and money lenders who use telephones and motorcycle messengers to pass information between the parties to the transaction. It seems reasonable to expect that a well-organised financial institution could compete effectively in such a market.

Most fundamentally, government action is required in migrant-sending countries such as Cambodia. It is clear that the benefits of remittances, migrants’ skills and ultimately migrants’ retirement savings will not be realised unless domestic policies are sound. This means establishing good governance and a transparent legal system, fighting corruption, building domestic infrastructures, investing in social capital through education and health, and building a stable and supportive business environment. In the absence of sound domestic policies, the capacity for remittances to give governments a buffer could actually impede development. As Stephen Castles puts it: “... migration and remittances cannot bring about sustained economic and social changes where fundamental changes are neglected – such as land reform, combating corruption, improving transport and communications, and improving health, education and welfare. Where governments rely on remittance-led development, the outcome is likely to be structural dependence on further emigration and remittances: a vicious circle of decline, rather than a virtuous circle of growth.” (Castles and Wise, 2008:10)

Cambodia does not need to wait until it moves into the later stages of migrant transnationalism to discover for itself what works and what does not. The lessons learned in other countries and earlier times are clearly applicable in Cambodia today, for the benefit of the migrants themselves, their families and communities, and ultimately for the nation as a whole.
2.3 Migration and Remittances in Cambodia

Cambodia, as one of the least developed countries and one of the poorest in the Greater Mekong Subregion, is an active participant in migration within the country, within the region and between the subregion and other regions. According to NIS 2008, 26.52 per cent of the Cambodian population are migrants.

Cambodia is also a newcomer to the area of migration management. The legal framework and consistent government policies are largely absent. There is also a big gap in understanding of migration flows inside and outside Cambodia and their impact on local communities. For instance, there are many statistics on the remittances in Cambodia, but they are to some extent contradictory. World Bank data indicates that Cambodia received US$298 million in 2006, which accounted for 4.1 per cent of GDP. However, the UNDP Human Development Report (2009) claimed that the figure is US$353 million. IFAD (2009) provided a very different picture and showed that inward remittance flows reached US$559 million in 2006, representing 7.8 per cent of GDP. None of the data sources above clearly specify their data collection mechanism. Some of them, for example the UNDP Human Development Report, still focus on migration flows to developed countries, mainly the USA, and neglect the major labour outflow to developing countries, namely Thailand, Malaysia and South Korea.

Nonetheless, as indicated in Table 1 (Portes, 2008), Cambodia remains at stage 1 of the process of immigrant transnationalism. Transnationalism is defined as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders”2.

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2 “Nations Unbound”, by Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc (1994)
Table 1: The process of immigrant transnationalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending Country</th>
<th>Receiving Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kin and communities support the emigration of some of their own in search of better conditions.</td>
<td>1. Migrants gain a precarious foothold and begin to send modest contributions to their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Remittances and news from the migrants begin to change the character of local life. It becomes increasingly geared to events abroad.</td>
<td>2. As migrants consolidate their economic position, the flow of remittances and investments increases. They make the first visits home and create incipient hometown associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The flow of remittances, investments, and information transforms the local culture. An increasing traffic of goods and people develops. Local religious and political authorities travel abroad to request support from their expatriates.</td>
<td>3. Migrants make significant investments in their home communities and strengthen their organizations. Their economic power gives them increasing voice in local political and religious affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Governments enter the scene, making concessions to their diasporas and courting them for economic and political support. The traffic of goods, information, and people surpasses local communities to become national in scope.</td>
<td>4. Migrant organizations become interlocutors of sending country governments and, simultaneously start taking part in local politics in their areas of settlement. The flow of investments increases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Portes, 2008
2.4 Migration to Thailand

Key destinations for international migration include Thailand, Malaysia and South Korea. Thailand is the largest receiving country for Cambodian workers. It has been estimated that the stock of Cambodian migrants in Thailand was 248,000 in 2008 and that by 2018 the number will increase to 316,000 (IOM-ADB, 2009). One of the factors is the increasing demand for labour in Thailand as a result of modernization. At the same time, due to the high cost of having children in Thailand, there is a shortage of young labour in the job market. On the other, along with economic growth, consumption demand increases in line with the rise in the amount of disposable income, leading to a greater demand for goods and services. In contrast, Cambodia’s gross national income per capita is only one-sixth (1/6) of Thailand’s, while the population growth rate in Cambodia is triple the rate in Thailand (World Bank, 2007). As a result, Thailand acts like a magnet, attracting significant number of migrants across the border.

However, previous studies showed that the dominant driving force is the push factors in Cambodia rather than the pull factors in Thailand, including chronic poverty, landlessness, job shortage, debt and natural disaster (IOM, 2006). Forty per cent of Cambodians live below the international poverty line of US$1.25 per day (UNICEF, 2005), and 36 per cent of children under five are suffering from underweight, so that Cambodia ranked 122nd out of 138 countries with data (UNDP Human Development Report, 2009). As a result of the post-war baby boom in 1980s, there is a large pool of young Cambodian people who are economically active and looking for jobs. It is reported that some 300,000 young people enter the job market annually (UNCT, 2009). But the economy is unable to generate enough jobs and migration becomes a solution to surplus labour.

Most migration within the Mekong region happens through informal channels. Migrants rely largely on family or friend networks, or employ the services of brokers to arrange travel routes and help them to find jobs.

Migrants are, in general, disproportionately young, of working age and male. Those from Lao PDR and Myanmar are, on average, less educated and less literate that the average for the populations of origin, signaling a “reverse” brain drain phenomenon. In contrast, there is a positive self-selection among migrants from Cambodia, who have slightly higher educational attainment than the overall population back home. The number of registered migrants represent in total about 3 per cent of the Thai labour force (World Bank, 2006)

Although data are partial and incomplete, migrants appear to work longer hours and to be paid less than comparable Thai workers.

The data on remittances from Cambodian workers in Thailand is extremely limited. There are no reliable statistics and data on the volume of remittance flows, transfer costs, households’ investment patterns, gender composition of the flows, and their impact on recipients and communities. Almost all features of remittance inflows from Thailand are still unknown.

Such a lack of knowledge is determined by the nature of migration from Cambodia to Thailand. The great majority of Cambodian migrants in Thailand are irregular and undocumented. The number of registered migrants provided by the Thai Ministry of Labor is the only available data. However, according to the Cambodian Ministry of
Labor, even these statistics are not completely reliable since many Lao and Burmese are identified as Cambodian by Thai authorities (World Bank, 2006). Moreover, there is no legal framework and no government institutions in Cambodia to regulate the flow of migration. Furthermore, the long and porous border makes it very difficult to stop irregular migration and to collect data.

In spite of the difficulties, some research on remittances has been conducted in recent years. These inquiries provide valuable inputs for understanding the complex situation. The World Bank, for example carried out a case study research in 2006 assessing the impact of remittances in Prey Veng Province. The study reported that 91 per cent of interviewees viewed remittances as a key asset for economic survival. Informal money transfer systems were popularly used by Cambodian migrants because of the costs of formal channels, which were high by both local and international standards. The transaction costs were highly dependent on the brokers and the remoteness of the recipient households. The costs could be as high as 30 per cent in rural areas. Therefore, poor families were disadvantaged since they often remitted small amounts but had to pay out a large proportion of these amounts as transfer fees.

A study by IOM (2009) provides some insights into the working conditions, salaries and remittance patterns of Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand.

As listed in the following table, wages follow a multi-layered hierarchy of labour in which irregular migrants are at the bottom. They receive lower wages than registered migrants, who in turn are paid less than Thai workers. This is consistent with the widespread opinion among employers, policymakers and the general public in Thailand that migrant workers should earn less than Thai workers as their suppressed wages in Thailand are still higher that what they would earn at home.

**Table 2: Approximate monthly wages of registered and unregistered migrants per sector, Thailand, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Thai workers (THB)</th>
<th>Registered migrants (THB)</th>
<th>Unregistered migrants (THB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3,000-4,000</td>
<td>3,000-4,000</td>
<td>1,000-1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3,000-6,000</td>
<td>4,500-6,000</td>
<td>3,000-3,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic work</td>
<td>5,900-7,000</td>
<td>1,000-4,000</td>
<td>700-1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>3000 and higher</td>
<td>1,000-3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>3,000-4,500</td>
<td>2,800-3,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishery-related work</td>
<td>5,000-6,000</td>
<td>3,000-4,500</td>
<td>2,800-3,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General labour</td>
<td>4,300-5,000</td>
<td>1,000-5,000</td>
<td>600-3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Chantavanich, 2008:*2
Table 3: Remittance flows in Cambodia and the Lao PDR *, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Lao PDR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banteay Meanchey</td>
<td>Svay Rieng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households claiming remittances as a source of income</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>9.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated share of remittances in total household income (average, %)</td>
<td>35.62</td>
<td>29.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households where remittances are &gt;=40% of total household income</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average value of monthly remittance and earnings per cross-border worker (US$)</td>
<td>$78.08</td>
<td>$39.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Regional Technical Assistance Survey Estimates, 2006 in Singh 2007  * Lao People’s Democratic Republic

Table 3 shows the remittance flows into two provinces of Cambodia, Banteay Meanchey and Svay Rieng. But these figures cannot represent the whole picture of Cambodia, as the sending of remittances depends on many factors, including the personal characteristics of the migrants, the length of migration experience, and employment sectors and wages.

Moreover, there are gender differences in migration, and female and male migrants behave differently in relation to sending money home. Gender, marital status and age are all important dimensions of remittances. Women tend to send more money back home, even though they earn less than men (ILO, 2007). Single men tend to spend money on themselves, while married couples send home the highest remittances of all types of migrants (Ibid, 2007).

Regarding the spending patterns, previous research indicated that remittances are mostly used as a household survival strategy rather than for productive investment. They are used to meet the basic needs of Cambodian households, including food, education, health care and repaying debts. In this sense, the benefits of remittances for the community were very limited (Ibid, 2007).

Nevertheless, the previous studies are far from adequate. Relatively little research has been conducted so far. Many of the studies focused on national remittances, especially those linked to garment factory workers. The remainder of those that are related to remittances are case studies with limited samples and are not representative. There is still a big gap in understanding remittances and their impact on local communities in Cambodia. We need expanded projects with larger samples and creative methodologies.
3. Survey

3.1 Methodology

In order to have a clear picture of the migration and remittance situation in Cambodia, this study employs quantitative data gathering methods (complete versions of the two questionnaires used are included as Annex 1 and Annex 2). Preparatory work involved questionnaire development and pre-testing, selection of survey location and sample, and training of interviewers.

Due to the sensitivity of the situation (the high rate of irregular migrants, distrust of Thai organizations, language barriers, political tensions between the two countries), Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW) was identified by IOM as the best partner to conduct the data collection among the Cambodian communities in Thailand. LSCW is the only Cambodian NGO with a strong presence within the Cambodian communities in Thailand, especially those located in the coastal provinces of Trad and Rak Yorng.

3.1.1 Survey Location and Sample Selection

The Households sample comprised 302 households in two provinces in Cambodia from which migrants had gone to Thailand. Based on consultations with LSCW, Prey Veng and Kampong Cham Provinces in Cambodia were selected as the target regions because of their high out-migration rate to Thailand.

Table 4: Location of households surveyed (number and %) by province (Cambodia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Cham</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prey Veng</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Migrants sample comprised 210 men and women who had moved from Cambodia to four districts in two provinces in Thailand, Trad and Rak Yorng Provinces. In these provinces, migrants are employed, by and large, in the fishing sector. The choice of these provinces was prompted by the fact that these Cambodian migrant communities are among the biggest and longest established in Thailand and, consequently, have strong ties with local communities in Cambodia.

Other employment sectors, construction and agriculture, are more sensitive to seasonal or economic cycles and are less rooted in Thailand, with high turnover from one employment sector to the other. Migrants are highly mobile in the fishing sector as well as moving from one job to another within the sector itself.
Table 5: Location of migrants surveyed (number and %) by province (Thailand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trad</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rak Yorng</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>210</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Location of migrants surveyed (number and %) by district (Thailand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khlong Yai (T)</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klaeng (RY)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khlong Soan (T)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khlong Chak (T)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>210</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (T) = Trad Province; (RY) = Ray Yorng Province

Due to the absence of a demographic registration system and the large proportion of irregular migrants, it was impossible to have a random sampling. The interviewees were selected through meetings with chiefs of communities both in Thailand and Cambodia with the support of two local NGOs, LSCW and Cambodian Women for Peace and Development Association (CWPD).

In Cambodia, the great majority of migrants coming from households in the selected provinces are irregular. There are no statistics or reliable estimates of the number of migrants going to Thailand, so it was decided to divide the interviews equally between the two provinces.

In Thailand, it was originally decided to divide the interviews equally between the two selected provinces. However, due to the political tension between Cambodia and Thailand, the local police suggested concentrating the data collection in Trad Province because in Rak Yorng they could not guarantee the security of the Cambodian staff.

In light of this situation, it was decided to concentrate most of the interviews in Trad.

This study is designed as a case study and is not intended to represent the whole of Cambodia. It is also important to note that the migrants interviewed were not matched with their families. The reason for this is the complexity of the situation. Migrants are very mobile and their families do not necessarily know where they are.
3.1.2 Development and Pre-Test of Questionnaire

The survey was developed by an IOM expert and the questionnaires used were endorsed by the World Bank for its Labor Migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion project. The questionnaires were pre-tested with 20 households in Prey Veng and Kampong Cham from which household members had gone to Thailand as migrants. The questionnaire included the following topics:

- Personal information about the migrant (legal status, age, gender, marital status, education, accompanying family members, financial situation of the family)
- Village information (education, overall/average economic situation)
- Migration experience
  - Reasons for migration
  - Source of job information and financial resources
  - Migration process (companions on the journey, methods of crossing the border)
  - Duration of migration
  - Working and living conditions in Thailand
- Remittances
  - Volume of remittances and proportion of income
  - Frequency of sending remittances
  - Reliance of migrant household on remittances
  - Cost of money transfer
  - Usage pattern of remittances
  - Management of remittances
  - Services needed to improve the investment and transfer of remittances

3.1.3 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted with the assistance of LSCW, whose staff were selected and trained as interviewers. They were required to conduct interviews in Khmer and to write down the answers in English.

IOM staff monitored the entire interview process and check that the collection was properly collected. Although they were asked to go back to respondents in order to obtain the missing information, this was not possible in all cases.
3.1.4 Data Entry

The data were input and analyzed with the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 13.0

3.1.5 Limitations

The main difficulty of this kind of research is the lack of records or information, which makes it necessary to do long and thorough preliminary work to identify issues, locations and respondents and to establish to what degree they are representative.

The Thai-Cambodian border dispute in Preah Vihear in 2008 was seen as another constraint in the initial stages of the research. The study was delayed due to security concerns raised by the border dispute. The lack of cooperation by the Thai government made the field work more difficult than was anticipated.

Cultural factors were also a constraint. The questionnaires were supposed to be administered face to face, but in Cambodia each interview very quickly became a communal event, involving all the villagers in the answering process. According to the interviewers, it was impossible to keep the interviews private, but the great majority of respondents were uncomfortable in discussing private financial issues in front of the other villagers. Therefore questions related to financial information have to be taken with a grain of salt.

Moreover, due to the mobility of migrants and weak communication between migrants and migrant households, it is extremely difficult to track migrants and match them with their families. Many of the migrants use nicknames or change names once they are in Thailand and the households have only a very vague knowledge of where they are. To complicate matters further, the fishing sector has a very high turnover and mobility rates, not only internally but to other employment sectors as well.

In light of these limitations, it is not claimed that the findings of this study are representative in nature. It would be worth doing a long-term survey with expanded samples in both Cambodia and Thailand, linking migrants and their households to compare with the data presented in this research.
3.2 Profile of Interviewees

More than 60 per cent of the interviewees in the Households group were parents of migrants, followed by spouses (28 per cent) and much smaller proportions of siblings and children.

Table 7: Interviewees by age, average education grade and illiteracy rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrants group</th>
<th>Households group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education grade</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy (%)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average age of the interviewees in the Migrants group was 30 years compared to 44.7 for those in the Households group. Obviously, the Migrants group was largely composed of working age people, while the Households group included the oldest and youngest household members.

A comparison of the average education grade and the illiteracy rate between the two groups shows that the Migrants have better education and a lower illiteracy rate than the Households’ interviewees. These data confirm that migration is a Darwinian process that sees the survival of the fittest and, in the long term, migration can deplete the sending country of the most proactive and educated members of the community, leading, in the long term, to a “brain drain”.

Chart 1: How are the Household interviewees related to their migrants? (%)

The average age of the interviewees in the Migrants group was 30 years compared to 44.7 for those in the Households group. Obviously, the Migrants group was largely composed of working age people, while the Households group included the oldest and youngest household members.

A comparison of the average education grade and the illiteracy rate between the two groups shows that the Migrants have better education and a lower illiteracy rate than the Households’ interviewees. These data confirm that migration is a Darwinian process that sees the survival of the fittest and, in the long term, migration can deplete the sending country of the most proactive and educated members of the community, leading, in the long term, to a “brain drain”.

30
Table 8: Interviewees by gender (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrants group</th>
<th>Households group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>84.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the Households respondents, the overwhelming majority (84.1 per cent) were female, while the gender balance in the Migrants group was a little more equal, though men clearly predominated. The standard profile for an average respondent in the Households group was female, older, and with little or no education. This profile is consistent with research on female-headed households\(^3\) in Cambodia and underlines the role of women in the management of the household.

Chart 2 shows that children and parents are the main dependants within the family. In the Households group, 55.3 per cent of respondents said there were dependent children in the household. In the Migrants group almost the same proportion – 54.2 per cent, said children were dependants in their households. The proportions of both groups who nominated parents as dependants were also similar – 38.5 per cent of Households respondents and 37.6 per cent of Migrants. Just over 5 per cent of Migrants (5.2 per cent) also identified siblings as dependants, while this category was not mentioned by the Households interviewees.

On average, the Households interviewees reported 5.24 dependants while the Migrants reported only 3.89. The higher number of dependants reported by the Households can

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\(^3\)“Marriage, Gender, and Labor: Female-Headed Households in a Rural Cambodian Village”, Takahashi M., Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 42, No. 4, March 2005
be related to the weak information channels between the two countries. As emerged in discussions with key informants, it is not unusual for migrants not to be up to date with births and marriages, so that they tend to downplay the number of dependants.

3.3 Socio-economic Background

A number of questions were asked of both groups to gauge the socio-economic status of the Cambodian households from which workers migrated to Thailand. These focused on the building material used for roofing houses, ownership consumer goods and land, and alternative sources of income.

The materials used for roofing the house are a standard indicator to assess the socio-economic level of households, especially in the countryside. Traditionally, the cheapest material is palm leaves, followed by metal sheets. The most expensive is tiles. As is shown in Chart 3, a significantly larger percentage of respondents in the Households group than in the Migrants reported that tiles were used to roof their houses. However, this indicator has to be taken with a grain of salt, because it is common in rural Cambodia for houses to be built over time and, consequently, a variety of materials can be used for the roofs.
Chart 4 seems to confirm that the households surveyed in Cambodia had a higher living standard than the Cambodian households from which migrants in Thailand came, except for the cheapest items (radio/stereo).

The ownership of mobile phones was surprisingly low in the Households group (45.4 per cent) and even lower in the Migrants group (only 16.7 per cent).

### 3.3.1 Land

In Cambodia, land still constitutes the most valuable asset for the livelihood of a household. Among the respondents, the ownership of land was quite high: 80.1 per cent for Households group and 85.2 per cent for the Migrants group. Among the respondents in the two groups who reported that they had owned land in the past and lost it, the main reasons for the loss of the land were poverty and health problems.

It is not easy to assess the impact of land ownership on a household’s livelihood, as there are many variables to consider, such as location, access to water for irrigation, productivity of land, and vulnerability to natural disasters. In general, it can be observed that the interviewees in both the migrants and households groups appeared to be relatively better off than the average population of Cambodian rural areas, confirming that migration is an option that is beyond the reach of the poorest of the poor.
3.3.2 Alternative Sources of Income

In order to have a clear overview of the households’ economic situation, both groups of respondents were asked to estimate the presence of waged jobs and other sources of income within the household, apart from the remittances sent by migrants. Non-paid jobs, such as domestic work within the household, have not been included.

The Households respondents reported an average of 2.26 alternative sources of income, while the Migrants respondents reported only 1.49.

Table 9: Alternative sources of income by occupation for Migrants and Households groups (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade*</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructions</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garment factory workers</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other factory workers</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public servant**</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Market Seller, Beauty Salon Employee, Groceries Seller, Driver, Moto Taxi Driver ** Teacher, Policeman, Deputy Chief of Village, Commune Council Member

More than two-thirds of the respondents in both groups reported alternative incomes from the agricultural sector, almost exclusively wage labour. At 5.9 per cent, the trade sector was the second most common source of income, according to both Migrants and Households respondents.
3.4 Migrants’ Demographics and Reasons for Going

The whole Households group, by definition, reported that at least one member of the household was a migrant in Thailand, with the average number of migrants being 1.5 per household. However, only 48.1 per cent of the interviewees in the Migrants group reported that another household member was also a migrant. The average age of the interviewees’ household members in Thailand was 27 years.

![Chart 5a: How are migrants related to interviewees in the Household group? (%)](chart5a.png)

![Chart 5b: Do you have relatives working in Thailand beside you? (%) (Migrants group)](chart5b.png)
By analyzing Chart 5a, Chart 5b and Chart 6, it is possible to infer some of the characteristics of the migrants who go to Thailand.

In aggregate, the great majority of household members migrating to Thailand were defined by the interviewees in the Households group as offspring. This is consistent with the background of the interviewees (Chart 1 and Table 5), who were identified largely as mothers of migrants.

By contrast, the interviewees in the Migrants group, when asked to identify household members who had migrated, were much more likely to nominate siblings and spouses. These data can be interpreted as an indicator of established social networks. It appears that many of those interviewed in the Migrants group had gone to Thailand in the wake of relatives who were of working age, or had invited such relatives to follow them.

This is also confirmed by the higher rate of female migrants among the Migrants group.

While the first migration waves are typically composed of young men, migrating alone; the following waves see an increasing presence of female relatives, thanks to the establishment of solid links between sending and receiving locations and, consequently, the possibility of extending the umbrella of social protection to the most vulnerable migrants.

Once the social and economic costs of migration decrease, it is possible for the most vulnerable groups (such as children and the elderly) to migrate safely.

Only a small percentage of respondents from both groups (11.5 per cent from the Households group and 10 per cent of the Migrants group) reported that migrants had invited household members to join them in Thailand.

Among them, only 13 per cent were female in the Households group, while the percentage rose to 33.3 per cent in the Migrants group. This is consistent with the findings in Chart 6. The employment sector shows a prevalence of fisheries (77 per cent
in the Households group and 69 per cent in the Migrants group), which is also consistent with Chart 7.

According to the interviewees in the Households group, 75 per cent of the migrants they had sent to Thailand were employed in the fishing sector (including fishing boats and fish factories on the mainland), making it the main area of employment in Thailand.

According to the Household interviewees in Cambodia, the main destinations for the migrants who moved to Thailand were Rak Yorng and Trad (or Trath) provinces. It is interesting to note that 11 per cent of the interviewees in the Households group said that they “don’t know” where their migrants were, confirming the high mobility and turnover among Cambodian migrants in Thailand as well as the weak communication between migrants and households in Cambodia.
While push factors seem to play a key role in the migration decision for interviewees in the Households group, those in the Migrants group were more focused on pull factors. The variable “lack of job” was chosen by a high percentage of respondents in both groups but, through in-depth interviews, a qualitative difference in the responses emerged.

For respondents in the Households group, lack of a job was merely another push factor that, in combination with other variables, “forces” people to migrate. However, it was seen by those in the Migrants group more as an opportunity to improve the livelihood of the household and of the Migrant himself or herself.

Another difference between the Migrants and Households groups was that only those in the Migrants group - albeit a very small percentage of them - mentioned being reunited with friends or relatives as a reason for migration.

**Table 10: Who decides that the migrant should go? (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrants group</th>
<th>Households group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrant himself/herself</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decision to migrate was seen by both groups as largely a decision made by the migrant alone. In migration literature, a decision to migrate that is taken by the household as a whole represents a way to cope with shocks (such as economic, environmental) by diversifying the household’s human capital and resources into new economic sectors.
The classic example in Cambodia is the case of households sending the oldest son to work in Thailand and the oldest daughter to Phnom Penh to work in the garments sector, (the main pull factor for rural-urban migration in Cambodia), while the parents take care of the household’s assets and the youngest siblings are sent to school.

In cases where the decision to migrate is taken by the household, the decision makers are usually parents (61.8 per cent), followed by spouses (29 per cent).

3.5. Role of Social Networks

Chart 10: Where do migrants and household members get information? (%)

![Chart 10](Image)

Chart 10 shows how information about job opportunities in Thailand is disseminated. It focuses on the sources of information relied on by migrants in the Migrants group and those from the Households group.

According to the data, households from which migrants had moved to Thailand reported that their information about migration came mainly from “institutional sources”, including formal and informal brokers and recruitment agencies, while respondents in the Migrants group relied on a more personal and informal network based on friends, relatives and villagers.
Consistent with Chart 10, Chart 11 shows that respondents in the Migrants group relied more on personal networks, with relatives as key informants, than did those in the Households group.

Migrants from both the Households group and Migrants group relied on informal and personal networks for the journey from Cambodia to Thailand. However, consistent with information in Charts 10 and 11, those from the Households group were more likely to use intermediaries than the Migrants were.
Chart 13 brings together the data in Charts 10, 11 and 12, making it possible to draft some tentative comments.

There are large differences in understanding between those in the Migrants and Households groups about migration motivations and processes. One plausible explanation is that there is a big difference between new migrants and experienced migrants. New migrants, who lack connections, social networks and information, tend to use informal brokers (in Khmer *mekhal*) or employment agencies. It appears that interviewees in the Households were involved only at the beginning of the migration process, namely before the first-time departure of the migrants. And due to weak communication, the Households were not in close touch with their migrants and had little idea of the rest of how the migration process works.

Consequently, the responses of the Households group were based on their knowledge of how new migrants move to Thailand for the first time. On the other hand, the responses of the Migrants group reflected years of migration experience. When the migrants settle on the Thai side, migration between the two countries becomes much easier and the role of intermediaries decreases, allowing the migrants to use their own personal networks, which are usually composed by relatives, friends and villagers.

3.6. Cost of Migration

Table 11: Did migrants pay upfront for the migration process? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrants group</th>
<th>Households group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Migrants group’s answers usually referred to their general experience as migrants moving between Cambodia and Thailand, while the Households group respondents were more focused on the first-time migration experience of members of their households.

Table 8 confirms that members of the Migrants group move between countries with lower costs than migrating members of the Households group. Only 24.8 per cent of the Migrants group reported that they paid money up front, compared with 78.5 per cent of the Households group.

![Chart 14: Who receives the up-front fees for arranging a migration? (%)](chart14.png)

Chart 14 shows who receives the money paid up front to cover the cost of migration. The main recipient, according to both groups, was the broker (64.7 per cent of the households paid a broker, compared to 44.2 per cent of migrants). Even in Chart 14, the data confirm how the respondents in the Migrants group use more “personal” channels to move to Thailand than the migrants described by the Households group. The average sum paid up front by those in the Migrants group was US$51.70, compared to US$112 paid by the Households group.
Chart 15 shows who supports the migrants in paying the cost of migration. For the Households group, the main money provider was the local money lender (39.1 per cent) while the respondents in the Migrants group used far more personal networks, confirming the trend of the previous charts. It is interesting to observe that, in rural Cambodia, it is quite common for the local money lender to be a relative of the broker, when it is not the broker himself or herself.

3.7. Journey to Thailand

The great majority of respondents in both groups reported that the migrants crossed the border illegally. This was so for 93.4 per cent of the Households group respondents and 93.8 per cent of the Migrants.
The great majority of migrants crossed the border by themselves, according to data from both groups. This was the experience of 82.3 per cent of the Migrants and the view of 76.2 per cent of the respondents in the Households group.

The fact that a higher percentage of respondents in the Migrants group than in the Households group said they used the services of a broker may seem to contradict what has been said before about the relative self-reliance of the more experienced migrants interviewed in Thailand. However, in Khmer the word “mekhal” literally means “Master of the Wind” and it is used to describe not only brokers but also smugglers and anybody who can provide “services” to migrants. In this specific context, the mekhal is probably a smuggler who helps the migrants to cross the border illegally for a small fee, usually around 150-200 Thai Baht (US$6-7).

It is also interesting to note that 16.3 per cent of the Households group did not know how the migrants they sent to Thailand crossed the border. This appears to confirm that those in the households are involved in the preliminary stages of the migration, but that once the migrant leaves, communication becomes more difficult and sporadic.

3.8. Length of Stay in Thailand

Chart 17: How long do migrants stay in Thailand? (by years, %)

Chart 17 shows that the majority of migrants, according to both groups of respondents, were long-term migrants (more than 1 year of residence abroad). The Households group reported that 16.3 per cent of migrants were short-term, a figure that is consistent with the 19.9 per cent of migrants who were regarded as short-term by the Migrants group.

The main problem in analyzing the data related to the permanence in Thailand is that both groups of respondents tended to confuse the first migration experience with the last. Many answers referred to the last time the migrant went to Thailand and not the overall extended stay. For example, through in-depth interviews, the IOM staff discovered that many migrants who said they had migrants for less than one year, or were reported to be so by the Households group, had in reality started their migration experience more than 10 years earlier. Their statement “less than 1 year” referred to the last time the migrant entered Thailand.
Chart 18 shows that the Households group said a very high proportion - 45.5 per cent - of the migrants never come back to their villages in Cambodia. This contrasts with the data from the Migrants group, which suggested that a very low 7.1 per cent of migrants never go back. The Households group were also much more likely to say that migrants come back only once per year: 37.3 per cent of Households respondents said this was how often migrants returned, compared with 26 per cent of the people in the Migrants group.

Certainly, this indicator is subject to many other factors, but it is worthwhile and necessary to explore the following arguments:

First, the data once again shows there are differences in understanding between the Migrants and the Households groups. Due to weak communication, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for households to keep in touch with migrants. Migrants often return to Cambodia but do not necessarily go home. There is anecdotal evidence of migrants who come back to Cambodia for short periods, usually staying in border areas like Poipet in the Northwest of Cambodia and Koh Kong in the South West, without informing their households.

Second, in general, it appears that the migrants from the Migrants group come back to Cambodia more frequently than those reported by the Households group. This trend can be explained by the fact that when a social network is established between sending and receiving locations, not only does the cost of migration decrease but there is easier movement between the two countries.

As mentioned above, migrants from the Migrants group seemed to be more experienced, while a high percentage of migrants from the Households group appeared to be first-timers, who had not yet developed their social networks or were not included in one.
The majority of migrants who come back to Cambodia return for national holidays (Khmer New Year, Pchum Ben, Water Festival), according to 63.7 per cent of respondents in the Households and 78.3 per cent in the Migrants group.

It appears that those interviewed in the Migrants group are more in control of their schedule, with 11.8 per cent of them reporting that they are able to join family events such as weddings and, funerals, compared to the 0.5 per cent of migrants from the Households group. The behaviour of migrants from the Households group seems to depend more on the circumstances. According to key informants, migrants with little experience tend to go back to Cambodia when they lose their job, while migrants with longer experience are able to stay in Thailand and find employment, often in different sectors.
NOTE: This section of the survey was administered only to the Migrants group, defined as the sample of 210 Cambodian migrants living and working in Thailand.

The majority of the Cambodian migrants – 90.3 per cent – interviewed in Thailand described themselves as irregular migrants. However, the definition of “regular” versus “irregular” migrant is quite confused and full of grey areas. Many of the migrants interviewed considered themselves to be legally in Thailand because they had forged documents, or documents issued by their employers. This latter group, in fact, constituted the majority.

This practice seems to be quite common in the fishing sector, but has been found in the agriculture and construction sector as well. The employers issue ID cards for the duration of the contract with a picture of the migrant and the stamp of the employer. This document is informally acknowledged by the Thai police but only in the province, or even the district, where the migrant lives and works. As these ID cards are not formal work or residence permits, and their validity is limited to the province or district where the migrants work, they do not give the migrants freedom of movement.

The great majority of Cambodian migrants interviewed in Thailand were employed in the fishing sector (78.9 per cent), followed by the construction sector (15.2 per cent). These findings are consistent with the data shown in Chart 7.

For 86.7 per cent of the interviewees, their current job was also their first occupation in Thailand. Of those who had had another job previously, 91.6 per cent said they were employed in the fishing sector.

The migrants reported that they worked an average of 9.5 hours per day. Of the group, 39 per cent worked 8 hours per day, 11 per cent worked 9 hours, 22.9 per cent worked 10 hours and 24.8 per cent work 12 hours or more. The migrants worked an average of 6.15 days per week, with 48.1 per cent working 6 days per week and 34.3 per cent working 7 days.

The migrants' average daily income was US$4.95 (Thai Baht 164), which is in line with the daily minimum wage for Trad and Rak Yorng provinces (Thai Baht 157). The average monthly income was US$119.30.

Table 12: What is the monthly income of Cambodian migrants in Thailand? ($)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US$ 50 – 100</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US$ 100 – 200</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US$ 200 – 300</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Personal communication with Phil Robertson, consultant for the IOM Project “Trafficking of Men in the Fishing Industry and Other High Risk Employment Sectors in Selected Countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region”
The working conditions in Thailand were considered bad by the 67.6 per cent of the interviewees.

The main complaints were related to the hardness of the job (51.4 per cent) and the lack of safety in the workplace (20.9 per cent). Other complaints referred to unclean work environments (10.5 per cent) and the irregular schedule on which wages are paid (9.8 per cent).

Abuse was reported by 5.6 per cent of the interviewees and 1.4 per cent were worried about being arrested by Thai authorities.

On the other hand, working conditions were considered good by 32.4 per cent of the migrants. The factors that contribute to “good” conditions are the payment of wages on a regular schedule (33.8 per cent) and the possibility of increasing their wages through overtime (33.8 per cent). Other indicators of a good workplace are good interaction with supervisor and co-workers, and regular working hours (29.3 per cent).

Table 13: What types of accommodation do migrants use? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flat</th>
<th>5.7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private house</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared room</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace (boat, construction site, etc.)</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding living conditions, 45.2 per cent of the migrants interviewed said they shared a room with other people, while 34.3 per cent lived at their workplace and 20.5 per cent lived in a private house or a flat.

Table 14: With whom do migrants share accommodation? (%)

| Relatives | 41.0 |
| Co-workers | 43.3 |
| Friends   | 10.5 |
| Villagers | 5.2 |

The Cambodian migrants shared their accommodation mainly with co-workers (43.3 per cent) and relatives (41 per cent). Other room mates included friends (10.5 per cent) and villagers (5.2 per cent).

Regarding social networks, all the migrants interviewed said that they were in touch with other Cambodian migrants.
Among these, co-workers represented the biggest group (50.5 per cent), followed by relatives (25.7 per cent) and other Cambodian migrants they had met in Thailand (18.6 per cent).

Among the main issues reported by Cambodian migrants, the most significant was related to the condition of being an irregular migrant in Thailand and the constant fear of being arrested and perhaps abused by the Thai police (41.9 per cent).

Immediately after that, in the list of concerns, was their conditions of employment, with 31.4 per cent reporting dissatisfaction with low pay, irregular working hours and payment schedule, being paid less than Thai workers, and having greater difficulty in finding employment in Thailand.

Other migrants reported that the main problem was abuse in the workplace (11.4 per cent), followed by discrimination by Thai people toward Cambodian migrants (9.5 per cent), difficult living conditions, especially the high cost of living (4.2 per cent) and, finally, the lack of support structures where they could seek help when in need (1.4 per cent).

3.11 Remittances

The great majority of migrants in Thailand send remittances to Cambodia. This was true of 94.3 per cent of the migrants described by respondents in the Households group and 98.1 per cent of those in the Migrants group.

![Chart 20: How much money do migrants send home? (US$)]
Chart 20 and Chart 21 show the amounts of remittances sent by the migrants in the two groups of interviewees (Migrants and Households) and the frequency of the transfers.

These kinds of data were the most difficult to collect. This was especially true in relation to the Households interviewees, due to the irregular schedule on which the migrants sent remittances and the lack of accurate financial records.

In general, Household group interviewees had much greater difficulty in reporting the amount and frequency of remittances than did the Migrants group, who were more positive about both aspects of their remittances.

Chart 20 shows the interviewees’ answers to the question of how much money is sent from Thailand. The interviewers specified that the question referred to the amount sent each time. If, for example, the migrant sent US$100 x 3 times per year, for a total of US$300, the amount that should have been reported was US$100.

The more realistic data seems to be those provided by the respondents in the Migrants group. Of these 71.8 per cent reported that they sent less than US$100. Other amounts above US$200 were reported, especially by interviewees in the Households group, but these probably referred to smaller amounts reported together.

Chart 21 shows the frequency of remittances and, in general, there is not much difference between the two groups of respondents. The only significant difference between the two groups relates to the answer “once a year”, with 22.9 per cent of Households group and 10.6 per cent of the Migrants group giving this response.

As with Chart 20, this difference may be largely due to lack of recollection and proper record keeping.

To assess the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis, the two groups were asked if the amount of remittances had decreased in the time leading up to the survey, which was conducted during 2009.
The amounts of remittances were largely unchanged, according to both groups, with 94.4 per cent of Households respondents and 83.8 per cent of the Migrants group saying the amounts had not changed. A lower percentage of the Migrants group said the amounts were unchanged, and the migrants attributed this to the greater difficulty they faced in finding employment in Thailand. This increased difficulty may have been a consequence of the financial crisis.

The two groups’ perceptions of the impact of remittances on the households’ income was assessed by asking the respondents to say whether the households relied “very much”, “partly” or “not very much” on the remittances to contribute to the household’s income.

Interestingly, the two groups perceived the impact of remittances on the household’s income quite differently. Nearly a quarter of the respondents in the Households group (22.2 per cent) said they relied “very much” on remittances, while only 5.4 per cent of the Migrants group thought that their households in Cambodia relied very much on the remittances they sent.

This discrepancy may be due to two factors: a) weak communication between migrants and households, and/or b) the fact that the migrants and households interviewed do not match each other, and in fact the two groups belong to different communities with different economic situations.

To show the fluidity of the situation, data from a World Bank survey in 2006 in the Cambodian province of Prey Veng on the topic of remittances\(^5\) has been added to the chart above. The sample in the World Bank survey was 100 households who had sent migrants to Thailand. The World Bank analysis shows another different situation, with 90.6 per cent of households saying they relied very much on remittances.

To verify that the responses of the Households group in the IOM/AFD survey were an accurate evaluation of the impact of remittances on the household’s income, it was decided to add a control variable (CV) to the IOM-AFD survey.

This question, which was put to the Households group only, asked the respondents to assess subjectively what percentage of the household’s income was represented by remittances. Responses indicating that remittances represented 80-100 per cent of the household’s income were interpreted as equivalent to the answer that the household relied “very much” on remittances. Similarly, responses that estimated remittances as 40-70 per cent of income were taken to be equivalent to the answer that the household relied “partly” on remittances. Those for whom remittances made up 10-30 per cent of their incomes were taken to be households that rely “not very much” on remittances.

By comparing the percentages of Households that gave each answer to the two questions, it is possible to see that their responses to the Control Variable question almost perfectly match their responses to the main question. This confirms that the respondents in the Households group gave a consistent evaluation of the remittances as a component of the household’s total income.

In Cambodia, especially in rural areas, “lucky” or “unlucky” migration can happen not only within the same district but within the same village. Successful migrants have decent jobs and regular salaries, while their neighbours end up in exploitive situations and are unable to remit money to the household in Cambodia.

Cambodian migrants in Thailand tend to use informal money transfer systems to send remittances back home.

As shown in Chart 23, the most common system is the phone system, according to people in the Migrants groups and brokers according to those in the Households group. In fact, these two options are the same process, which is known by different names. Because there are many stages and intermediaries in the phone system (as described in

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6 According to ILO 2009, only 8 per cent of Cambodian migrants hold bank accounts in Thailand.
detail below), households in Cambodia usually not fully understand the transfer process and simply talk about the person contacting them to deliver money, whom they know as the broker.

The migrant (the sender) provides the address and name of their relative or the person in Cambodia who is to receive the money (the recipient). The telephone or ICOM shop\textsuperscript{7} in Thailand then calls a telephone shop in the locality nearest to the recipient's home in Cambodia and a motodop driver is sent to try and locate the recipient.

The recipient in Cambodia is asked to come to the telephone shop and to discuss with the sender in Thailand who will be responsible for paying the transfer charges. The sender gives the money to the shop in Thailand and then uses the phone to contact the recipient at the shop in Cambodia. The sender is charged for the telephone call and the recipient pays a fee to the shop in Cambodia and to the motodop driver who took them to the shop.

Telephone costs in Thailand are 10 to 15 Thai Baht per minute. The ICOM charge is 100 Baht, but there is no time restriction on the user. The ICOM is more economical but it is hard to use and has communication problems if the weather is bad. If relatives make a call to Thailand from Cambodia on the ICOM, the recipient in Thailand has to pay 100 Baht for the call and about 30 Baht to the motodop driver who delivered the message asking them to come to shop (depending on the distance).

There are a number of other private operators who have connections with their home towns and provinces in Cambodia and who help migrants to send money home. The operator calls a shop or restaurant in the migrant's home town and asks the staff to find the sender’s relatives and bring them to the shop at a prearranged time. The operator together with the sender then calls the recipient and the amount to be transferred is agreed.

The sender in Thailand gives the money to the operator, who then instructs the restaurant owner or shop in Cambodia to pay the money to the recipient. The sender confirms that the recipient has received it. The operator then transfers the sender’s money into a bank account in Cambodia for the restaurant owner or shop owner to withdraw.\textsuperscript{8}

There are also private agents in the villages who are usually collaborators of the brokers and who provide a money transfer service for migrants. This system works like the phone system, but in this case the agent stays in the telephone centre and it is the broker who provides the money to be paid. In both cases the cost is around 10 per cent of the remittance. Both systems are used to avoid robberies on the two sides of the border.

Less common is the transfer of remittances by the migrant himself or herself.

Even though it is less statistically significantly, it is interesting to note that the Cambodian bank ACLEDA Bank, which has the largest network of any financial system in Cambodia, is one of the options for remitting money to Cambodia. The transfer system involving ACLEDA Bank works like this: the migrant/s cross the border with cash,

\textsuperscript{7} An iCOM shop is a radio transmitter system used in general when the mobile coverage is not optimal.
\textsuperscript{8} The Situation of Cambodian Migrant Workers in Klong Yai District, Trad, Thailand (LSCW, 2005)
saying to the Thai border police that they are going to gamble in the casinos located on
the Cambodian side of the border between Trad and Koh Kong.

Immediately across the border, in Koh Kong, there is a branch of ACLEDA Bank where
the migrants can send the money to their households without identifying themselves. All
they need to do is to provide the details of the ACLEDA Bank account held by their
relatives in Cambodia\(^9\).

Anecdotal evidence shows that, in some cases, Cambodian migrants pay a fee to Thai
bank account holders to send the money to Cambodia via a Thai bank.

The cost of the transfer for the migrants in Thailand is between 5 per cent and 10 per
cent of the remittance, according to the amount of money transferred. For the recipients
in Cambodia, the cost ranges from 10 per cent to 15 per cent depending on the amount
of money transferred and the number of intermediaries involved.

According to the interviewees, the cost of making a transfer from Thailand to Cambodia
can be up to 25 per cent of the total remittance. This data is consistent with findings of
previous research conducted by LSCW and World Bank and is confirmed by interviews
with financial institutions.

A subset of respondents in the Migrants group, those who had been living in Thailand for
more than one year, were asked if the cost of transfers had changed in the previous 12
months. Of this group, 93.8 per cent reported that the cost had not changed.

The same question was put to the Households group as a control variable to check the
degree of communication between migrants and households. About a third, or 36.2 per
cent, of the respondents in the Households group said the cost of transfers from
Thailand had not changed, while 50 per cent said that they did not know, confirming the
weak communication between the two groups.

\(^9\) For more details on money transfer channels, see Component II of the report
Chart 24 illustrates the main ways in which remittances are spent.

- **Primary goods**: Food, clothes and any other items that are fundamental to the daily activities of the household.

- **Health**: Access to health care is a major problem in Cambodia, especially in the countryside. Health expenses represent the typical case of idiosyncratic shocks that require a relatively large sum of money in a very short time. A common solution to this emergency situation is migration to Thailand.

- **Debt**: This category includes certain sub categories, such as:
  
  - Debt for the job: The migrant himself or herself, or members of the migrant’s household, borrow money, often from the broker or the local money lender, to cover the up-front payment demanded for the move to Thailand.
  
  - Debts for health: The cost of medicines and medical consultations often pushes the household into debt to the local moneylender or other households in the community. Health-related debts often culminate in the loss of the household assets.

- **Assets**: These are defined as any items which support the livelihoods of the household, such as land, cattle, motor bikes, etc.

- **Education**: Sending children to school, including the cost of notebooks, pens, and daily fees.

- **Housing**: Building, refurbishing or repairing the home of the household or other relatives.

- **Ceremonies**: Marriages, festivities, funerals, and others.

The question asked of the interviewees in the Households group was to identify the areas in which remittances are *actually* used, while the interviewees in the Migrants
group were asked how they *supposed* the remittances were used by their households in Cambodia.

At a first glance, there is a general agreement between the two groups that remittances are used for primary goods. In all, 92.8 per cent of respondents in the Migrants group and 84.8 per cent in the Households group selected this response.

The main discrepancies related to health (70.9 per cent of Households respondents compared to 48.1 per cent in the Migrants group) and debt (67.5 per cent in the Households group compared to 19 per cent of the Migrants). As well, education showed a significant difference between the two groups (42.7 per cent in the Households group compared to 72.9 per cent of the Migrants).

Once more, these discrepancies can be explained by the weak communication between migrants in Thailand and local communities in Cambodia.

In particular, the low percentages that the Migrants supposed are spent on debt and health are possible indicators that the Migrants are out of touch with the current situation in the household, and as a result are unaware of health-related events, such as car or work accidents, and diseases, or other events that push the household into debt (42.7 per cent of the Households vs. 72.9 per cent of the Migrants). As explained above, debt is often a direct consequence of health-related events.

Due to this weak communication, the Migrants group may have underestimated the impact of health costs or debt interest payments on the general management of remittances by their household members.

A high proportion of the interviewees in the Migrants group (72.9 per cent) seemed to believe that the remittances were spent on education, but only 42.7 per cent of those in the Households group said the money was spent on education.

Housing and assets had a lower priority for both groups, but even in these areas the Households said they spent more than those in the Migrants supposed.

It would be worthwhile to conduct a long-term survey with an expanded sample both in Cambodia and Thailand, linking migrants and the households they came from, to compare with the data presented in this research. The main constraint on such a project would be the tracking of the migrants in Thailand. Many of them use nicknames or change their names once they are in Thailand, and the households have only a very vague knowledge of the migrants’ locations. To complicate things further, the fishing sector has a very high turnover and mobility rates, not only internally but to other employment sectors as well.
Chart 25: Relative frequency and impact of Households spending (%)

Chart 25 presents data collected from the Households group only. It shows what percentage of households allocated money from the remittances to each area of spending. This is identified as the “frequency” of the spending. It also shows what percentage of the remittances, on average, was devoted by the households to each area of spending. These figures are defined as the “impact” of the spending and are based on the subjective perceptions of the respondents.

For example, 84.8 per cent of the respondents selected the category of primary goods as an area on which they spent part of the remittances. This is the frequency of spending on primary goods. On average, the respondents answered that the amount of remittances spent on primary goods was 33.3 per cent of the total amount of remittances they received. This is the Impact of the spending.

The two areas of spending nominated most frequently by the respondents were primary goods (selected by 84.8 per cent of the group) and health (selected by 70.9 per cent). However, the respondents said that these two areas had a medium-low impact on the expenditure of remittances, specifically 33.3 per cent and 20.2 per cent, respectively.

The areas with the highest impact but relatively low frequency were assets (32.1 per cent by Impact) and housing (42.1 per cent by Impact). Buying assets such as land or cattle, and the cost of building or renovating a house, would obviously absorb a large percentage of the remittances, due to the high costs involved, even though these areas of spending were chosen by only 28.5 per cent and 26.5 per cent of the interviewees.

Debt is the area of spending with both high frequency and high impact. It was chosen by 67.5 per cent of the interviewees and represents 37.3 per cent of the total use of remittances. The main kinds of debt mentioned were debts for getting a job for a migrant, consisting mainly of repaying the money charged by lenders who supplied the money for the up-front payment for the migration, and debts to start a business.
Chart 26 compares data collected in two surveys, this 2009 IOM study supported by Agence Française de Développement (AFD 09) and the 2006 study by the World Bank (WB 06). Comparisons are possible because both sets of data were collected from households of migrants in the same two provinces, Prey Veng and Kampong Cham.

In both surveys, household members only were asked to say what percentage of their remittances they allocated to each area of spending. The numbers do not sum to 100 because of the difficulty of getting accurate financial data, due to factors such as poor recollection, inadequate record-keeping and reticence in the presence of other villagers. However, the answers do give some idea of respondents' perceptions about the relative importance of the various things they spent their remittances on.

It appears that the households in the World Bank 2006 survey were in a worse situation than their counterparts in the Agence Française de Développement study in 2009. The households surveyed in 2006 were more likely to say the remittances were used for health (31 per cent compared to 10.5 per cent of the households surveyed in 2009. They were also more likely to report that they spent remittances on primary goods - 25 per cent compared to 17.4 per cent. On the other hand, the interviewees surveyed in AFD 09 spent much more on education (7.3 per cent compared to 3 per cent), Ceremonies (6.1 per cent compared to 0.4 per cent) and, especially, assets (16.8 per cent compared to 2 per cent).

However, in the World Bank 2006 survey, the category of assets was limited to the purchase of land only. If assets had included the types of goods included in the same category in the 2009 survey, the differences between the two surveys would probably be less striking.

Comparing the two surveys, it is evident how difficult is to get a clear idea of how remittances are used by local communities. Doing this would require large samples and longitudinal surveys that involve different provinces in order to make the data more representative.
The main difficulty in this kind of research is the lack of records or information. The absence of this information entails long and thorough preliminary work to identify issues, locations, respondents and to determine to what degree they are representative of the population being surveyed.

Without representative data, case studies are helpful in understanding the general situation, but they still leave many areas unexplored. While case studies are useful for understanding the dynamics of how remittances are used in specific locations, they lack the capacity to provide a clear big picture of the dynamics of migration and the use of remittances by Cambodian migrants and their households.

![Chart 27: What spending categories are most important to Households? (%)](chart)

* Households group only

Chart 27 shows the goods that were reported as being most significant (on average) by the respondents in the Households group.

For 43 per cent of the respondents, the main purchase for which remittances were used was food, followed by medicines (21.9 per cent) and school books (19.3 per cent). Also significant was debt, which may have been incurred both for the migrant’s job (15.2 per cent) or to start a business (8.6 per cent).

According to the respondents, the most expensive purchases, were “building” and “repairing” a house (7.6 per cent and 8.3 per cent, respectively), followed by “land purchase” (4.3 per cent).

Medicines represented the only expensive purchase that was also nominated as one of the most significant areas for the use of remittances.
### Table 15: Are remittances sent regularly or irregularly? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrants group</th>
<th>Households group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 12, the overwhelming majority of both groups described the pattern of sending remittances as “irregular”. Indeed, the percentages are almost identical – 93.3 per cent of Migrants and 93.4 per cent of the respondents in the Households group.

The fishing sector is characterized by high irregularity in employment and in the payment of wages\(^\text{10}\). Consequently, remittances from migrant workers employed in this sector show the same pattern.

### Table 16: Who is responsible for managing remittances? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrants group</th>
<th>Households group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouses</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offspring</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The management of remittances is a task that falls mainly to parents, according to both groups (71.5 per cent of respondents in the Households group and 52.9 per cent of Migrants). This is true even though those in the Migrants group rely more on spouses than do migrants coming from the Households group (38.1 per cent of Migrants compared to 22.3 per cent of Households respondents). The reason for the greater prevalence of parents in the management of remittances in the Households group is probably simply that the interviewees in this group were, in a large majority, parents of migrants (as shown in Chart 1).

The remittances are strictly an internal household affair. Only 1.78 per cent of respondents in the Households group reported using the remittances to support people outside the household, while for the Migrants group, the percentage was only 0.5 per cent.

Chart 28 shows what services both groups of interviewees see as priorities for migrants. Respondents in the Households group chose almost all the services suggested in the Questionnaire, while the Migrant group respondents were more selective in their answers. This difference is probably due to the fact that Migrants group interviewees have a deeper understanding of the migration process. The Households group, having less knowledge, consider almost all the services to be good and necessary, without too much distinction.

Both groups consider that the major priority is the establishment of cheaper and safer money transfer channels. This was nominated by 91.7 per cent of respondents in the Households group and 91.1 per cent in the Migrants group.

In general, the Migrants group showed more interest in services that would improve their chances in the receiving country. These included things such as “Information on Safe Migration” (nominated by 54.4 per cent of respondents), “Focal points in the receiving country” (40.8 per cent), “Vocational training” (34.9 per cent), “Reintegration” (28.4 per cent), “Information on job opportunities in the receiving countries” (26 per cent) and “Cheaper legal migration channels” (23.1 per cent).

The main difference between the two groups related to financial services which could increase the impact of remittances on the household’s livelihood. The Households group respondents assigned great importance to services such as “Investment Information” (79 per cent of Households group compared to 5.3 per cent of the Migrants group) and “Microfinance Training” (68.9 per cent compared to 5.9 per cent).

It is interesting to note that both groups considered the prosecution of brokers cheating migrants to be relatively unimportant (34.4 per cent of the Household group and 3.6 per cent of the Migrants.)

Finally, only respondents in the Households group suggested that they wanted services related to providing information to the households about the location of migrants in Thailand, increasing the protection of migrants abroad and, especially, providing
information that would raise awareness among migrants in Thailand about the risks of such things as gambling, drug addiction, and STDs.

Table 17: How do migrants see their migration experience? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only for MIG group

Table 14 shows the attitudes of the Migrants group to their migration experience as a whole. For 69 per cent of the group, migration to Thailand has been a negative experience.

The reason for this, as nominated by the largest proportion of the group (34.7 per cent), related to their employment, especially the fact that the wages they received were less than they expected. The next most common causes of dissatisfaction, in order, were, bad living conditions (26.3 per cent), the problems of being an irregular migrant (11.8 per cent), discrimination by Thai people (11.8 per cent) and homesickness (11.8 per cent).

Finally, 10.4 per cent of the respondents reported being abused in the workplace.

3.12 Conclusions

In Cambodia, migrants’ remittances are still an under-evaluated source of income for local communities. This is so in other developing countries too, where the migration process is in the first stages and the local economy is not fully developed or is still in a transition phase.

The few studies available show a great variety of situations concerning the use of remittances.

In the World Bank study in 2006, the main issue was health and access to medical care. Health-related shocks require a large amount of money in a short time, while nature-related shocks can be diffused over time and can entail lower expenses in terms of human and economic resources.

Consequently, in 2006, migration to Thailand was a short-term coping strategy chosen to face unforeseen shocks, but evolved into a day-by-day coping strategy for responding to various shocks. It was not a long-term process aimed at diversifying the human capital within the household and providing alternative sources of income to invest in local communities.

In 2009, from the data collected, it seems that the situation was different.

As in 2006, the migration process required an initial outlay for the acquisition of the broker’s skills and social network so that the migrant could have a successful migration.

What was different was that while the sample selected for the 2006 survey showed that remittances were used almost exclusively to buy primary goods and pay for health related expenses, the 2009 interviewees showed different characteristics.
First of all, there are significant differences between the answers of the interviewees from the two groups (the Migrants and the Households). The Migrants group seems to be composed of experienced migrants who can move with relative ease between the two countries and who have a deeper knowledge of migration-related issues, from money transfers to border crossings. The Households respondents, on the other hand, seem to be more involved in the preliminary phases of the migration process, losing contact with the migrants once they move away from the sending community.

The main characteristic revealed by the 2009 survey is the weak communication between the two groups. This is underlined by the variations in the two groups' tendency to own mobile phones, and their perceptions of issues such as how remittances are spent and how often migrants return to Cambodia.

From the data collected, those in the Households surveyed were involved only during the preliminary stages of the migration process, that is, before the first-time departure of the migrants. Due to weak communication channels, the households were not in close touch with their migrants and had little idea of the rest of the migration process, including, for instance, how migrants manage to cross the border illegally and send money home.

On the other hand, also because of weak communication and lack of regular updates on the situation of the households, there is a gap in understanding between migrants and households regarding how remittances are spent. Migrants tended to underestimate the impact of health costs and debt interest payments on the general management of remittances by household members. Consequently, due to the gap in understanding between these two groups, they had different priorities regarding the services they said they require. Households value “investment information” and “microfinance training” a lot more than migrants do.

Another aspect to be taken into consideration is the fact that the households interviewed, in different measures, have started using migration as a strategy to improve their livelihoods and not only as a short-term strategy in answer to shocks, as was observed in the 2006 survey.

This new approach to migration could facilitate migration of other members of the community in the future, even if it is still a medium- to long-term approach, considering that a significant number of migrants in Thailand still regard migration in negative terms.

To increase the positive impact of migration, the first step is to extend legal status to more migrants and to improve the general process of recruiting regular migrants.

The high cost of access to legal migration channels pushes many migrants into irregular status. Legal status would allow migrants to remain involved in their communities of origin, would guarantee an easy return, and encourage them to participate in the socio-economic development of the sending country.
3.13 Recommendations

- Expand quantitative and qualitative research, linking migrants and households in Cambodia with representative samples and including all the Cambodian provinces with high emigration rates.
- Broaden research in Thailand to include the main sectors of employment for Cambodian migrants and assess the links among them.
- Improve access to legal migration channels through information on employment opportunities locally and abroad.
- Reduce the costs of access to the legal migration process.
- Conduct Monitoring & Evaluation of formal and informal brokers and recruitment agencies.
- Prosecute informal brokers who are responsible for cheating migrants and pushing them into exploitive situations in receiving countries.
- Include details of remittance transfer channels in pre-departure training for regular migrants and in information packages for irregular migrants.
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ANNEX A

IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN CAMBODIA

HOUSEHOLDS QUESTIONNAIRE

IOM-AFD – April 2009
QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEW N. ____

INTERVIEWER _________________________

WHEN (dd/mm/yy) / /

WHERE (Province__________ District______________________)

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Interviewee’s Status (in relation to the migrant)
   1. Wife/husband
   2. Son/daughter
   3. Father/Mother
   4. Father/mother in law
   5. Brother/sister
   6. Brother/sister in law
   7. Nephew/niece
   8. Uncle/Aunt
   9. Son/Daughter in law
   10. Other relative (specify) _____________________

2. Age ____

3. Gender M □ F □

4. You are: Married □ Single □ Widow/Widower □ Divorced □

5. N. of Dependents ____

6. Who are they (i.e. 3 children; 2 elderly…)?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
7. Did you go to school?  Yes ☐  No ☐

8. (If yes) Until which grade?  ______

9. Material used for the roof in your house in the village

- Straw/Bamboo/Grass/Palm leaves  ☐
- Galvanised iron/Zinc/other metal sheet  ☐
- Asbestos/cement sheet  ☐
- Concrete/Brick/stone  ☐
- Tiles  ☐
- Other (specify)  ☐

10. Here is a list of items. Could you please tell me if you have one in your house in the village.

- Radio/stereo  ☐
- TV  ☐
- Motorcycle  ☐
- Car  ☐
- Mobile phone  ☐
- DVD/VHS  ☐

11. Do you have toilets?

- Inside the house  ☐
- Outside the house  ☐
- No toilet  ☐

12. Does your family own land for cultivation?  Yes ☐  No ☐

13. (If yes – Q.12) How much land for cultivation does your family own (acres)?

____________________

14. If no, does the household owned land in the past?

- Yes ☐  No ☐

15. If Yes, why the household doesn’t own the land anymore? (see Q. 14)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
We would like to ask you now some information on the village you live

16. Which is the most common material used by the people in your village for the roof of their houses?

Sbaw/Bamboo/Grass/Palm leaves ___
Galvanised iron/Zinc/other metal sheet ___
Asbestos/cement sheet ___
Concrete/Brick/stone ___
Tiles ___
Other (specify) ___

17. In your village there is a primary school?  Yes ☐ No ☐

18. Where is the nearest primary school to your village (in km)?

In the village _____________
1 – 5 _____________
5 – 10 _____________
10 – 15 _____________
15 – 20 _____________
20 – 25 _____________

19. How is the road linking your village to the national road?
   Good ☐
   Bad ☐

20. How distant is the village from the national road (in km)?

Cross the village _____________
1 – 5 _____________
5 – 10 _____________
10 – 15 _____________
15 – 20 _____________
20 – 25 _____________

21. How many people have a job in your household in the house in the village? _____
22. Which kind of job?

________________________________________________________________________

23. Is there any member of your household living and working in Thailand?

Yes ☐      No ☐

24. (If yes) Who are they?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Place of residence</th>
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</tbody>
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1. Wife/husband (In Thailand) (In Thailand)
2. Son/daughter
3. Father/Mother
4. Father/mother in law
5. Brother/sister
6. Brother/sister in law
7. Nephew/niece
8. Uncle/Aunt
9. Son/Daughter in law
10. Other relative (specify) _____________________

**MIGRATION**

25. Why did the migrant/s moved to Thailand?

A______________________________________________________________________
B______________________________________________________________________
C______________________________________________________________________
D______________________________________________________________________

26. Did they decide to migrate by themselves or it was a family decision?

Themselves ☐      Family Decision ☐

27. If it was a family decision, by whom was it decided?

Parents ☐      Wife ☐      Elder brother /sister ☐
28. Who informed the migrant/s about the destination in Thailand?

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<td>c. friend</td>
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<td>f. broker/ mekhal</td>
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<td>g. employment agencies</td>
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<td>h. other (specify)</td>
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</table>

29. Who did help the migrant/s to find a job?

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<th>A</th>
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</table>

30. The migrant/s paid up-front money before going to Thailand?

Yes ☐ No ☐

31. (If Yes) To whom

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<thead>
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<th>A</th>
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<td>g. employment agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. local moneylender</td>
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<td>i. other (specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
32. How did they get the money to face the up-front payment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<td>a. alone</td>
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<td>h. local moneylender</td>
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<td>i. other (specify)</td>
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</table>

33. How much the migrant/s paid (specify the currency)?

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<th>Option</th>
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<td>A</td>
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</table>

34. With whom the migrant/s migrate to Thailand?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. alone</td>
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<td>b. relatives</td>
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<td>g. Recruitment agency</td>
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<td>g other (specify)</td>
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</table>

35. How did the migrant/s enter in Thailand?

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<th>Option</th>
<th>A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
36. (If irregular) How the migrant/s managed to cross the border?

A______________________________________________________________________
B______________________________________________________________________
C______________________________________________________________________
D______________________________________________________________________

37. How much time did the migrant/s spend in Thailand (months)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 (Months – if less than one year)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >10 (Years – if more than one year)

38. How often the migrant/s come back to the village?

A______________________________________________________________________
B______________________________________________________________________
C______________________________________________________________________
D______________________________________________________________________

39. How do they come back?

By themselves
By taxi
broker

40. When?

A B C D
Festivities (Khmer NY; Pchoum Ben; Water Festival)
Never
Rainy Season (Transplanting)
Family Events (Weddings; Funerals; etc.)
No specific occasion
Other _____________________________

41. Did the migrant/s invite some of the relatives/friends/villagers to work in Thailand?

A B C D
Yes
No
42. (If yes) Who are they?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Occupation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Wife/husband</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Son/daughter</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Father/Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Father/mother in law</td>
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<td>5. Brother/sister</td>
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<td>6. Brother/sister in law</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Nephew/niece</td>
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<td>8. Uncle/aunt</td>
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<td>9. Son/Daughter in law</td>
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<td>10. Other relative (specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Friend</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Villager</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Neighbor</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Other (specify)</td>
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**REMITTANCES**

43. Do/does the migrant/s send money back home?

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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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44. How much does/do the migrant/s send money back home (specify currency)?

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45. How often does /do the migrant(s) send money back home?

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</table>
46. Did the amount of remittances decrease in the last year?

Yes □  No □

47. If yes, do you know why?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

48. How much the household rely on the remittances

Very much □
Enough □
Not very much □

49. Which percentage of the household total income is represented by remittances?

___%

50. How does the household receive the remittances?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

51. How much is the cost of the transfer for the household (amount and/or percentage and currency)?

_____________________________________

52. (For migrants more than one year in Thailand) Has the cost of transfer increased in the last year?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
53. For which kind of needs the household use the remittances

- Primary Needs
- Health
- Debt
- Assets
- Education
- Houses
- Celebration
- Other _______________________

54. Specify the details and cost/percentage for each area:

- Primary Needs
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

- Health
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

- Debt
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

- Assets
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

- Education
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

- Houses
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

- Celebration
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

- Other ________________________________
55. How is the trend of remittances?

Regular ☐
Irregular ☐

56. Who manage the remittances in the household?

1. Wife/husband ☐
2. Son/daughter ☐
3 Father/Mother ☐
4. Father/mother in law ☐
5. Brother/sister ☐
6. Brother/sister in law ☐
7. Nephew/niece ☐
8. Uncle/Aunt ☐
9. Son/Daughter in law ☐
10. Other (specify) ☐

57. Outside of the household, there are other people that benefit from remittances?

Yes ☐
No ☐

58. (If yes) Who are they?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

59. For what?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
60. Which kind of service they would like to be provided by Government, IOs, and NGOs to improve the remittances’ investment and transfer

- Safer and cheaper money transfer channel
- Microfinance training
- Information about investment opportunities
- Information about safe migration (Smuggling, Trafficking and HIV/AIDS information)
- Information about job opportunities abroad
- Focal points to be contacted in case of need (source & destination)
- Reintegration support
- Vocational Training
- More accessible and cheaper legal migration channels
- Prosecution of fraudulent brokers
- Other

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ANNEX B

IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN CAMBODIA

MIGRANTS QUESTIONNAIRE

IOM-AFD – April 2009
INTERVIEW N. ____

INTERVIEWER ______________________________

WHEN (dd/mm/yy)  /  /

WHERE (Province__________ District______________________)

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Migrant Status
   Regular □   Irregular □

2. Age   ____

3. Gender  M □   F □

4. You are: Married □   Single □   Widow/Widower □
   Divorced □

5. N. of Dependents in the house in Cambodia   ____

6. Who are they (i.e. 3 children; 2 elderly…)?
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

7. Did you go to school?   Yes □   No □

8. (If yes) Until which grade?   ______

9. Material used for the roof in your house in the village in Cambodia
   Sbaw/Bamboo/Grass/Palm leaves   ____
Galvanised iron/Zinc/other metal sheet ___
Asbestos/cement sheet ___
Concrete/Brick/stone ___
Tiles ___
Other (specify) ___

10. Here is a list of items. Could you please tell me if you have one in your house in the village in Cambodia

Radio/stereo ___
TV ___
Motorcycle ___
Car ___
Mobile phone ___
DVD/VHS ___

11. Do you have toilets in your house in Cambodia?

Inside the house ☐
Outside the house ☐
No toilet ☐

12. Does your family own land for cultivation? Yes ☐ No ☐

13. (If yes – Q.10) How much land for cultivation does your family own (acres)?

14. If no, does the household owned land in the past? Yes ☐ No ☐

15. If Yes, why the household doesn’t own the land anymore? (see Q.14)

________________________________________________________________________

We would like to ask you now some information on the village in Cambodia you come from

16. Which is the most common material used by the people in your village for the roof of their houses?

Straw/Bamboo/Grass/Palm leaves ___
Galvanised iron/Zinc/other metal sheet ___
Asbestos/cement sheet  ___
Concrete/Brick/stone  ___
Tiles  ___
Other (specify)  ___

17. In your village there is a primary school?  Yes ☐  No ☐

18. Where is the nearest primary school to your village (in km)?

In the village
1 – 5
5 – 10
10 – 15
15 – 20
20 – 25

19. How is the road linking your village to the national road?

   Good ☐
   Bad ☐

20. How distant is the village from the national road (in km)?

Cross the village
1 – 5
5 – 10
10 – 15
15 – 20
20 – 25

21. How many people have a job in your household in the house in the village?
   ______

22. Which kind of job?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

23. Is there any member of your household living and working in Thailand, other than you?
Yes ☐  No ☐

24. (If yes) Who are they?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Place of residence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>A_________</td>
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</table>

1. Wife/husband  
2. Son/daughter  
3 Father/Mother  
4. Father/mother in law  
5. Brother/sister  
6. Brother/sister in law  
7. Nephew/nice  
8. Uncle/Aunt  
9. Son/Daughter in law  
10. Other relative (specify) _____________________

MIGRATION

25. Why did you decide to migrate to Thailand?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

26. Did you decide to migrate by yourself or it was a family decision?

Myself ☐ Family Decision ☐

27. If it was a family decision, by whom was it decided?

Parents ☐ Wife ☐ Elder brother /sister ☐

28. Who informed you about job opportunities in Thailand?

a. alone ☐
b. relatives ☐
c. friend ☐
d. villagers ☐
e. people from villages nearby ☐
f. broker/ mekhal ☐
g. employment agencies ☐
29. Who did help you to find a job?

a. alone ☐
b. relatives ☐
c. friend ☐
d. villagers ☐
e. people from villages nearby ☐
f. broker/ mekhal ☐
g. employment agencies ☐
h. other (specify)__________________

30. Did you pay up-front money before going to Thailand?

Yes ☐ No ☐

31. (If Yes) To whom

b. relatives ☐
c. friends ☐
d. villagers ☐
e. people from villages nearby ☐
f. broker/ mekhal ☐
g. employment agencies ☐
h. local moneylender ☐
i. other (specify)__________________

32. How did you get the money to face the up-front payment?

a. alone ☐
b. relatives ☐
c. friends ☐
d. villagers ☐
e. people from villages nearby ☐
f. broker/ mekhal ☐
g. employment agencies ☐
h. local moneylender ☐
i. other (specify)__________________

33. How much did you pay (specify the currency)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
34. With whom did you migrate to Thailand?

- a. alone
- b. relatives
- c. friend
- d. villagers
- e. people from villages nearby
- f. broker/ mekhal
- g. Recruitment agency
- h. other (specify) ____________________

35. How did you enter in Thailand?

- Regular
- Irregular

36. (If irregular) How did you manage to cross the border?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

37. How much time did you spend in Thailand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 (Months – if less than one year)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 >10 (Years – if more than one year)

38. How often do you come back to Cambodia?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
39. How do you come back?

- By yourself
- By taxi
- By broker

40. When?

- Festivities (Khmer NY; Pchoum Ben; Water Festival)
- Never
- Rainy Season (Transplanting)
- Family events (Weddings; Funerals; etc.)
- No specific occasion
- Other ___________________________

41. Did you invite some of the relatives/friends/villagers to work in Thailand?

- Yes
- No

42. (If yes) Who are they?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________</td>
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<tr>
<td>__________</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Wife/husband</td>
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<td>2. Son/daughter</td>
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<td>3. Father/Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Father/mother in law</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Brother/sister</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Brother/sister in law</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>7. Nephew/nice</td>
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<td>8. Uncle/aunt</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Son/Daughter in law</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Other relative (specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Friend</td>
<td></td>
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<td>12. Villager</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Neighbor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working and living conditions in Thailand

43. Where are you staying in Thailand

Province _____________ District________________________ Village________________________
44. What is your occupation in Thailand?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

45. Did you have other jobs in Thailand before this one?
Yes   ☐
No    ☐

46. (If Yes) Please list them (job, location and salary)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

47. How many hours you work per day? ____

48. How many days you work per week/month? ____

49. How do they pay you?
Money     ☐
In kind   ☐

50. If money, how much (specify currency)?
________________________________________________________________________

51. If in kind, which kind of benefit?
________________________________________________________________________

52. How you describe the conditions in your workplace?
Good    ☐          Bad   ☐

53. (If good) why?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
54. (If bad) why?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

55. Where do you live in Thailand?

Flat ☐ 
Private House ☐ 
Shared Rooms ☐ 
Workplace (Boat, construction site, etc) ☐ 
Other ____________________________________________

56. With whom?

Relatives ☐ 
Co-workers ☐ 
Friends ☐ 
Villagers ☐ 
Other ____________________________________________

57. In Thailand, you are in touch with other Cambodian migrants?

Yes ☐ 
No ☐

58. (If yes) who are they?

Relatives ☐ 
Co-workers ☐ 
Flat mates ☐ 
People coming from the same district in Cambodia ☐ 
Cambodian migrants met where you live ☐ 
Other ____________________________________________ ☐

59. Which are the main issues you have to face as regular/irregular Cambodian migrant in Thailand?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

REMITTANCES

60. Do you send money back home?

Yes ☐
61. How much do you send home (specify currency)?

____

62. How often do you send money back home?

____

63. Which percentage of your salary you sent back home as remittances?

___%

64. Did the amount of remittances you sent home decrease in the last year?

Yes □ No □

65. If yes, why?


66. How much your household rely on the remittances you sent home

Very much □
Enough □
Not very much □

67. How do you send the remittances back to Cambodia?


68. How much is the cost of the transfer (amount and/or percentage and currency)?


69. (For migrants more than one year in Thailand) Has the cost of transfer increased in the last year?


70. How do you think the remittances are spent by your household (more than one answer allowed)

Primary Needs ☐
Health ☐
Debt ☐
Assets ☐
Education ☐
Houses ☐
Celebration ☐
Other __________________________

71. Specify the details and cost/percentage for each area: (Perception)

Primary Needs
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Health
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Debt
____________________________________________________________________________

Assets
____________________________________________________________________________

Education
____________________________________________________________________________

Houses
____________________________________________________________________________

Celebration
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Other ________________________________________________________________________
72. How is the trend of remittances?

Regular ☐
Irregular ☐

73. Who manage the remittances in the household?

1. Wife/husband ☐
2. Son/daughter ☐
3. Father/Mother ☐
4. Father/mother in law ☐
5. Brother/sister ☐
6. Brother/sister in law ☐
7. Nephew/nice ☐
8. Uncle/Aunt ☐
9. Son/Daughter in law ☐
10. Other (specify) ☐

74. Outside of the household, there are other people that benefit from remittances?

Yes ☐
No ☐

75. (If yes) Who are they?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

76. For what?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

77. Which kind of service would you like to be provided by Government, IOs, and NGOs to improve the remittances’ investment and transfer

Safer and cheaper money transfer channel ☐
Microfinance training ☐
Information about investment opportunities ☐
Information about safe migration (Smuggling, Trafficking and HIV/AIDS information) ☐
Information about job opportunities abroad ☐
Focal points to be contacted in case of need (source & destination) ☐
Reintegration support ☐
Vocational Training ☐
More accessible and cheaper legal migration channels ☐
Prosecution of fraudulent brokers ☐
Other ____________________________________________________________________________
78. How do you evaluate your migration experience?

Good ☐ Bad ☐

79. If good) why?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

80. (If bad) why?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________