

Youth Migration and Urbanisation in Cambodia

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**CDRI
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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Tables and Figures	3
Acknowledgements.....	5
1. Introduction and Overview	7
1.1 Background and Rationale.....	7
1.2 Research Objectives	8
1.3 Research Methodology	9
1.4 Sample Design.....	9
2. Population and Migration	12
2.2 Supply and Demand of Labour Force.....	13
2.3 Socio-Economic Background of Young Migrant Households	14
2.4 Characteristics of Young Migrant Workers.....	15
2.5 Seasonal or Permanent?.....	18
2.6 Reasons for Migrating	19
3. Social Networks and Migration	21
3.1 Sources of Information	21
3.2 Travel Alone or with Someone.....	22
3.3 Paying Your Way?.....	22
3.4 Migration-Related Costs.....	23
3.5 Sources of Finance.....	23
4. Integration into the Urban Environment	25
4.1 Free-Time Socialisation.....	25
4.2 Type of Accommodation	26
4.3 Room-Mates	26
4.4 Skills Training and Duration	27
4.5 Access to Health Care.....	28
4.6 Challenges and Difficulties.....	28
4.7 Problem Solving and Social Protection	30
5. Costs and Benefits of Migration	31
5.1 Employment in Urban Areas	31
5.2 Working Conditions	32
5.3 Earnings and Living Conditions	34
6. Impacts on Sending Households and Communities	37
6.1 Remittances	37
6.2 Linkages with Sending Households and Communities	42
7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations.....	46

Abstract

Since the late 1990s, a growing number of young adults in rural Cambodia have migrated to urban areas to take up jobs created as the result of the country's opening to a free market economy and its subsequent high economic growth. Moving from one place to another is always risky, especially for young workers most of whom have never left their home village and are equipped with only very limited basic education and few or no skills. Undoubtedly, there are some necessary reasons behind this huge movement of young people from rural to urban areas. Their migration process, networks, living and working conditions, challenges and difficulties are not yet well understood, nor are the impact of remittances and migration on sending households and communities. Aiming to fill in these knowledge gaps, this study has five specific objectives: (a) to understand the socio-economic background of young migrants' households; (b) to identify the factors and circumstances that promote migration and to understand how youth decide to migrate from rural areas; (c) to examine the role of social networks in facilitating migration; (d) to discover the types of employment in urban areas for young migrants and their integration into the urban setting; (e) to understand relations with the sending household and the impact on poverty in the sending household and community.

The study found that most young migrant workers are from the medium and poor categories. The very poor lack the social and financial capital to migrate, while the rich decide to stay put to avoid migration-related risks. The flows of young migrant workers from rural to urban areas are mainly through informal channels and networks; a formal network is largely absent. The study also found that young migrant workers face many difficulties in both life and work; however, they do not complain much and tend to be able to overcome those difficulties. Even after living in urban areas for some years, most of them fail to integrate into the urban setting but group with other migrant workers from the same village or other rural areas of Cambodia. The study also found very strong links between young migrant workers and sending households and communities. They regularly and frequently remit money home and make home visits during important holidays. The remittances from young migrant workers are primarily used for basic needs. This helps keep families out of poverty but fails in most cases to move them higher in the well-being ranking.

Tables and Figures

Figure 1.1: Number of Young Migrants Interviewed, by Province	11
Figure 2.1: Well-Being of Interviewed Sending Households	15
Figure 2.2: Years of Schooling of Migrant Workers Interviewed	17
Figure 2.3: Number of Migrant Workers per Interviewed Household.....	18
Figure 2.4: Work Destinations of Relatives of Young Migrant Workers Interviewed	18
Figure 2.5: Seasonal and Permanent Jobs of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers	19
Figure 2.6: Primary Reason for Migrating of Young Migrant Workers	20
Figure 3.1: Sources of Employment-Related Information	21
Figure 3.2: Travel Companion of Young Migrant Workers	22
Figure 3.3: Sources of Finance for Interviewed Young Migrant Workers to Travel and Find Job	24
Figure 4.1: People Young Migrant Workers Meet Most Often in Free Time.....	25
Figure 4.2: Skills Training of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers	27
Figure 4.3: Problem Solving and Social Protection.....	30
Figure 5.1: Average Time Spent at Destination and in Current Employment (in months).....	31
Figure 5.2: Working Days per Week of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers	33
5.2.2 Working Hours per Day	33
Figure 5.3: Working Hours per Day of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers.....	33
Figure 5.4: Job Satisfaction of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers.....	34
Figure 5.5: Salary Satisfaction of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers	35
Figure 5.6: Moving to Move Up?	36
Figure 6.2: Frequency of Remitting Money (in months)	38
Figure 6.3: Average Amount of Money Remitted per Time (thousand riels).....	38
Figure 6.4: Average Amount Remitted per Year (thousand riels)	39
Figure 6.5: Use of Remittances.....	40
Figure 6.6: Change in Financial Situation of Sending Households	41
Figure 6.7: Future Plans of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers	45
Table 1.1: First-Round Sample	10
Table 1.2: Gender of Young Migrant Workers Interviewed.....	10
Table 2.1: Number of Tourist Arrivals, 1995–2006	14
Table 2.2: Employment in Garment, Construction and Tourism Industries in Cambodia.....	14
Table 2.3: Migrant Workers Interviewed, by Age	15
Table 2.4: Age of Migrant Workers Interviewed.....	16
Table 2.5: Marital Status of Migrant Workers Interviewed.....	16
Table 3.1: Did You Bribe Someone to Get Your Current Job?	23
Table 4.1: Young Migrant Workers’ Activities in Free Time	25
Table 4.2: Interviewed Young Migrant Workers’ Accommodation	26
Table 4.3: Interviewed Young Migrant Workers’ Room-Mates.....	27
Table 4.4: Access to Health Care of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers	28
Table 4.5: Challenges and Difficulties Faced by Interviewed Young Migrant Workers.....	29
Table 4.6: Difficulties Reported by Interviewed Migrant Workers to Families	29
Table 5.1: Intended Duration of Stay in Current Employment.....	32
Table 5.2: Monthly Earnings of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers.....	34
Table 5.3: Spending Patterns of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers (thousand riels).....	35
Table 5.4: Reasons for Change in Living Conditions	36
Table 6.1: Remittances as Share of Earnings.....	39
Table 6.2: Money-Sending Channels.....	40
Table 6.3: Frequency of Home Visits by Interviewed Young Migrant Workers.....	42

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Youth Migration and Urbanisation in Cambodia

1. Introduction and Overview

1.1 Background and Rationale

In the 1960s, about 11 percent of the Cambodia's population lived in urban areas,¹ but during the Pol Pot era the cities were virtually emptied. Re-urbanisation began with the downfall of the Khmer Rouge, and in 1998 the general population census of Cambodia (GPCC) estimated the urban population at about 16 percent.² The Cambodian population is young, 60.8 percent being 24 years of age or younger.³ The share of migrants in the urban population (56 percent) is much greater than in rural areas (31 percent). Fifty-three percent of urban residents had not been born in their city of the survey.⁴ These are the results of two big waves of migration. The first occurred in 1979 following the collapse of the Pol Pot regime, and the second in 1993, when hundreds of thousands of people returned home from border camps. Labour migration is still a relatively new phenomenon, but it accelerated significantly in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The trend has continued unabated, and most of the migrants are youths in their late teens or early 20s seeking either to contribute to family livelihood or to earn their own living.

Each year, increasing numbers of young people leave their rural villages behind and migrate to urban areas or other countries in the region needing low skilled or unskilled workers. International migration tends to be more problematic and poses more risks and challenges. Therefore studies on migration concentrate on international rather than internal migration. Yet internal migrants heavily outnumber international migrants and have more impact on rural development and poverty reduction purposes, given that most internal migration is rural-urban rather than rural-rural or urban-rural, whereas some international migrants are from urban areas. The focus of this study is rural-urban youth migration and its impact on urbanisation and poverty reduction.

Migration can have both negative and positive impacts on development and poverty reduction. Its net impact is still open to debate. Dang (2003) points out that migration was habitually viewed as the result of poverty and lack of employment, or as a factor contributing

¹ According to National Institute of Statistics (2004a), an area can be classified as urban when it meets three criteria: (1) population density exceeding 200 per square kilometre; (2) male employment in agriculture is below 50 per cent; and (3) total population of the commune exceeds 2000.

² This was later revised to 17.7 percent based on the new definition of "urban areas" adopted from National Institute of Statistics (2004a).

³ National Institute of Statistics (2006), p.35.

⁴ National Institute of Statistics (2004b), p23. Analysis of CIPS Results, Report 5: Spatial Distribution and Migratory Movements. July, 2005. National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning. Sponsored By UNFPA.

to poverty in urban or rural areas. Internal migration, therefore, was sometimes considered an obstacle to development that had to be restricted and controlled. Dang argues further that migration policies could attempt to achieve a “socially desired” population distribution. Even though its net impact is still open to debate, internal migration can be a crucial livelihood strategy for many poor people, and an important contributor to national economic growth (DFID 2004). This argument is supported by Laczko (2005). He points out that internal migration has the potential to contribute to development in a number of ways. By supplementing their earnings through off-farm labour in urban areas, rural households diversify their sources of income and accumulate more capital. In the short term, migration may result in the loss of local financial and human capital, but it can also contribute to the long-term development of rural areas. In particular, internal migrants’ remittances can be significant in alleviating the poverty of rural households. Remittances from urban employment supplement rural incomes, boost consumption in rural areas, contribute to household saving and can thus stimulate the local economy. In the long run, sending communities stand to benefit mainly through remittances.

Cambodian migrants view migration as a short-term strategy to cope with unexpected problems and not as a long- or medium-term process to improve the socio-economic status of the family. Those who decide to migrate are driven from their home communities by an overwhelming predominance of push factors over pull factors. The push factors include chronic poverty, landlessness, lack of employment, debt and natural disasters such as droughts and floods. The garment sector represents the only effective urban pull factor in Cambodia (Maltoni 2006).

In 1998, the number of beyond-province labour migrants stood at 246,410. They increased marginally in 2004 to 257,903 (NIS 2006). People who migrate for work are generally the poor and the poorest, who can not earn enough to support their families in their original place. Phnom Penh is the main destination. With garment factories mushrooming in and around Phnom Penh, these migrants, especially young women, end up working in the garment sector. Construction is also booming in almost every corner of the country and absorbs most of the male labour force. The majority of male migrants are in construction-related work in big cities such as Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

It has long been observed that people are more likely to migrate when young, so if more migration occurs, it is likely to be youth doing it. Despite this, little research has been done and very little is known about young migrant workers in urban Cambodia. A series of consultative meetings on migration research was held in Phnom Penh in early 2006 by the National Committee for Population and Development (NCPD) in order to ascertain the amount of current research on various themes associated with migration. It was determined that there was a general lack of comprehensive research on migration in Cambodia.

1.2 Research Objectives

Aiming to fill the gap mentioned above, this study had five specific objectives: (a) to understand the socio-economic background of young migrants’ households; (b) to identify the factors and circumstances that promote migration and to understand how youth are making decisions to migrate from rural areas; (c) to examine the role of social networks in facilitating migration and the process of migration; (d) to discover the types of urban employment for young migrants and their integration into urban settings; (e) to understand relations with the sending household and migration’s impact on poverty in sending households and communities.

The study attempted to test the following hypotheses:

- (a) Migrant workers are predominantly from the medium and the poor categories; the rich stay put because they have already diversified their sources of income, while the poorest lack the financial capital to move.⁵
- (b) The push factors (lack of employment opportunities, too little land or landlessness, crop failure due to drought and floods, debt) heavily outweigh the pull factors (better payment and better living conditions in the urban setting).
- (c) There is an absence of proper linkages and coordination in facilitating labour migration.
- (d) Migrant workers face many difficulties and challenges in integrating into the urban environment and, at the same, time put pressure on the urban labour force.
- (e) Migrant remittances can have a strong economic impact on households and communities in terms of reducing poverty and promoting well-being.

1.3 Research Methodology

The study relied on both primary and secondary data, with the research divided into two stages. However, the focus was on primary research using key informant interviews (KII), household surveys and focus group discussions (FGD). A structured questionnaire was designed for the first-stage interviews of young migrant workers and a separate questionnaire was developed for the second-stage interviews of their parents and relatives. In addition, a village check list was drafted for the FGD. Secondary data were collected through desk research. Data from an initial literature review were used to assist the development of research design and methodology, and provided important additional information for the study.

1.4 Sample Design

In the first stage of research, KII were conducted with 600 randomly selected young migrant workers from eight different occupation groups; they helped to identify other young migrant workers in a purposive sample approach. In the second stage, 50 households were interviewed, from five villages that were the original homes of many young migrant workers interviewed in the first stage. The value of this second-round household survey was to cross-check the findings from the first-round interviews. In addition, FGD were conducted in both stages to gain qualitative information.

• First-Round Site and Sample Selection

In the first stage, four municipalities and provinces with a high migrant population were selected as sample sites: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey (Poipet).⁶ Primary data were collected through field interviews in these sites with migrant workers aged from 15 to 24. Key informants were selected randomly and helped to identify more youth migrants in a snowballing effect.

The Cambodian labour market is strongly gender based, economic sectors being clearly separated between men and women. Women are usually employed in the informal sector (small trade, food sellers etc.), in garment factories and in the entertainment sector. To have gender balance, two female-dominated occupational groups, garment workers and casino workers, and two male-dominated groups, construction workers and motorcycle-taxi drivers,

⁵ In this study households are divided into four groups: rich, medium, poor and poorest.

⁶ See Appendix 1 for migration numbers by province.

were chosen as samples. The other four occupational groups are divided between male and female workers.

A combined sample of 480 persons from the above-mentioned locations was selected, in four groups: waiters/waitresses, garment workers, motorcycle-taxi drivers and construction workers. To reflect the distinct characteristics of individual locations, 30 car washers in Phnom Penh, 30 petty traders from Siem Reap province, 30 casino workers and 30 cart pullers working along the Cambodian-Thai border in Poipet were added. Apart from the motorcycle-taxi driver and cart puller groups, purposive sampling was employed.

Table 1.1: First-Round Sample

	Waiters/ waitresses	Motorcycle- taxi drivers	Construction workers	Garment workers	Others	Total
Phnom Penh	30	30	60	90	30*	240
Siem Reap	30	30	30	NA	30**	120
Battambang	30	30	30	NA	NA	90
Poipet	30	NA	30	30	60***	150

* Car washers. ** Petty traders. *** Casino workers and cart pullers.

Of the 120 garment workers in the sample, 105 were women; 110 of the 120 construction workers were men, and all the motorcycle-taxi drivers were men. The other occupations were divided between the sexes. Overall, there were 350 young male and 250 young female migrant workers.

Table 1.2: Gender of Young Migrant Workers Interviewed

	Male	Female	Total
Garment workers	15	105	120
Waiters/waitresses	49	71	120
Construction workers	110	10	120
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	120	0	120
Casino workers	5	25	30
Petty traders	9	21	30
Car washers	16	14	30
Cart pullers	26	4	30
Total	350	250	600

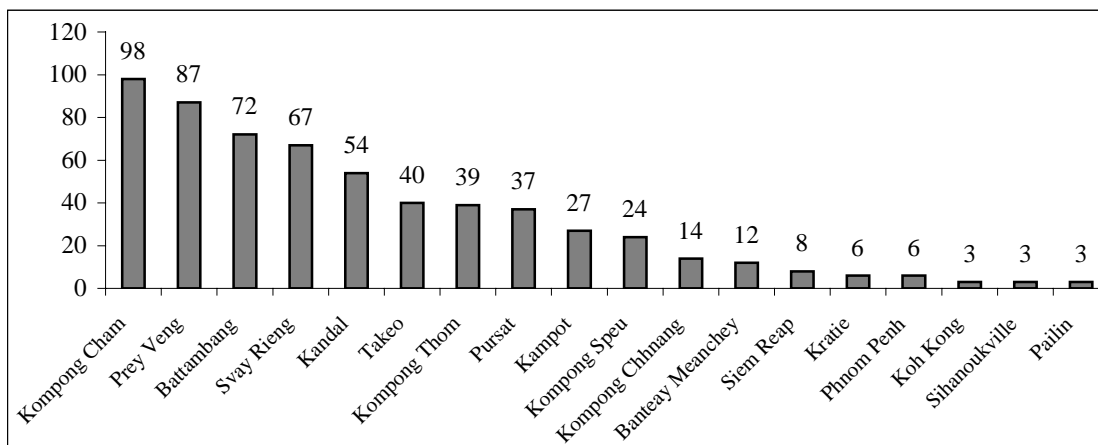
In addition to having balance between the sexes, the eight study groups were chosen because they are common occupations among young migrant workers. However, by choosing these groups, the study left out many other occupations. The sample size of 600 is statistically sound but the sample is considered indicative rather than representative.

• *Second-Round Site and Sample Selection*

The first-round survey indicated that Kompong Cham and Prey Veng provinces provide the largest numbers of youth migrants. Therefore, five villages from the two provinces were selected as the second-round sample sites; each village provided at least three migrant workers interviewed in the first round. In this stage, 10 families in each village were interviewed. Key informants were the parents and relatives of young migrants. In addition, FGD were conducted among village chiefs, parents and relatives of migrant workers and other knowledgeable elders in each village to obtain qualitative data and different perspectives to complement the quantitative data. The quantitative data from household surveys could be used to cross-check the quantitative data from the migrant worker survey. The villages were:

- Speu village, Spueu commune, Chamkar Leu district, Kompong Cham province;
- Prasoutr village, Cheung Prey commune, Batheay district, Kompong Cham province;
- Trapeang Ta Mouk village, Pean Rong commune, Prey Veng district, Prey Veng province;
- Ballangk village, Kansaom Ak commune, Kompong Trabaek district, Prey Veng province;
- Prey Daeum Thnoeng village, Prey Daeum Thnoeng commune, Sithor Kandal district, Prey Veng province.

Figure 1.1: Number of Young Migrants Interviewed, by Province



2. Population and Migration

2.1 Labour Migration Theories

Rational Economic Theory

Most studies on migration stress the rationality of migrants. Todaro (1989), for example, assumed that migrants act individually according to a rational economic self-interest. The decision to migrate took into account the expected “profitability of the employment” at the destination; a personal cost-benefit analysis took place in the prospective migrant’s mind.⁷ According to this view, the decision to migrate is a rational economic decision based mostly on the wage difference between the area of origin and the destination. In other words, the decision to migrate is taken when the expected benefits, mainly financial ones, outweigh the financial and social costs.

The Two-Sector Theory

The historical literature of migration is based on models of development stating that all countries, at some stage, have to experience the movement of a labour force from agriculture to the non-agricultural sector. More often than not, this inter-sectoral allocation of labour has implied geographical movement of workers from rural to urban areas (Lewis 1954).

Internal migration was thought to be a natural process in which surplus labour was gradually withdrawn from the rural sector to provide labour for urban industrial growth. The process was deemed socially beneficial since human resources were shifted from locations where their marginal products were often assumed to be zero to places where this marginal product was not only positive but also growing rapidly as a result of capital accumulation and technological progress (Todaro 1989: 274). Widespread population movements are one of the main characteristics of a typical development process. This is echoed by Lewis’ “two-sector model”, which became the “general” theory of development in labour-surplus Third World nations during most of the 1960s and 1970s. In the Lewis model, the underdeveloped economy consists of two sectors: (1) a traditional, overpopulated rural subsistence sector characterised by zero marginal labour productivity—a situation that permits Lewis to classify this labour as surplus in the sense that it can be withdrawn from the agricultural sector without any loss of output—and (2) a high-productivity modern urban industrial sector into which labour from the subsistence sector is gradually transferred (Todaro 1989: 69).

Balanced Growth Theory and Asymmetric Development Theory

The “balanced growth approach,” stemming from liberal economic theories, assumes that by alleviating unemployment and providing inputs such as remittances and returning skills, migration spurs development, narrows regional disparities and eventually makes migration unnecessary. The “asymmetric development approach,” which relies more on micro-level studies, does not recognise that migration, remittances and return are automatically converted into accelerated development (McDowell and de Haan 1997: 15).

Poverty, without a doubt, is a factor in migration. However, it is not poverty alone that causes migration, but also inequality. Market economy brings about inequality and disparity of wages and income, which in turn spur migration. It is likely that not only “objective” inequality, but also the perception of it, is a determining factor (McDowell and de Haan 1997: 17).

⁷ Todaro, Michael (1969), “A Model of Labor Migration and Urban Development in Less Developed Countries”. *American Economic Review*, 138-148, quoted in McDowell, C., and de Haan, A. (1997), p. 6.

Individual, Family and Community Factors

Another migration theory offers reasons to expect high youth participation in migration due to individual, family and community factors:

Individual factor: The classic economic explanation for the greater tendency of the young to migrate is that migration is an investment, requiring individuals to incur costs to generate higher income (Sjaastad 1962; quoted in McKenzie 2006). Costs include the financial costs of moving, finding a job and forgoing earnings, and the psychological costs of leaving familiar surroundings and adapting to a new labour market (McKenzie 2006).

Family factor: A key insight of the new economics of migration literature (Stark and Levhari 1982, quoted in McKenzie 2006) is that the decision to migrate is often a decision of the family, not just of an individual, particularly in developing countries. Households can send one of their members and count on remittances to help them cope with shocks. They will select that member based not just on which individual gains most from migrating but also on the household functions the member performs and the likelihood of the member remitting money (McKenzie 2006).

Community factor: Once some young people have migrated, it becomes more likely that others will do so too. One reason for this is the migrant social network, which lowers the costs and increases the benefits of migrating. Since youth are more likely to migrate initially, a young potential migrant is more likely to have a recent migrant in his or her peer network than is an older individual, and so may be more likely to benefit from the migrant network (McKenzie 2006).

2.2 Supply and Demand of Labour Force

Cambodia has a very young population as a result of the baby boom after the end of the Pol Pot regime. The population is growing at an average 1.81 percent annually. In 2020, Cambodia's population is projected to be 18.7 million, compared to 14.4 million in 2007 (NIS 2006). With around 60 percent of the entire population 24 years or younger,⁸ creating jobs for those young adults has proven a daunting task for the government. More than 80 percent of the population live in rural areas and engage mainly in agricultural activities, which normally offer only three to six months' employment, so more and more young adults are leaving their villages for year-round employment in urban areas. The absence of year-round employment in rural Cambodia highlights the gravity of unemployment and underemployment.

On the demand side, employment in urban areas, mainly in garment factories and construction sites, is the talk of rural villagers, especially young adults. From the late 1990s to early 2000s, garment factories sprang up one after another in and around Phnom Penh. This was coupled with a boom in construction of new houses in Phnom Penh and new hotels and other tourism facilities in Siem Reap province as the number of tourists visiting the country increased at an impressive rate of 20 percent per year. The services sector has also picked up steam, mainly in tourism-related areas such as hotels, restaurants and travel companies.

In 2006, 330,000 workers were employed in the garment industry. They came from rural areas; more than 90 percent were young women. Construction offered as many as 260,000 jobs to young men, while hotels and restaurants together produced 61,000 jobs.⁹ At the same time, commerce along the Cambodia-Thailand and Cambodia-Vietnam borders has become much more vibrant in the last decade, creating jobs for young adults as restaurant workers, casino workers and cart pullers. In response to this dramatic surge in employment opportunities, young adults in rural Cambodia started to migrate in droves. No part of the

⁸ See Appendix 2 for population distribution of Cambodia.

⁹ See Appendix 3 for details of employment by sector.

country seems immune from this phenomenon. Some young migrant workers interviewed in urban areas are from barely accessible areas. (Two villages from which high numbers of young migrant workers came were selected as potential study sites but were not accessible to the researchers.) This dramatic movement of young people in such a short period represents a new demographic shift in the making.

Table 2.1: Number of Tourist Arrivals, 1995–2006

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number (thousands)	219	260	218	286	367	466	604	784	701	1055	1421	1700
Growth rate (%)	-37.8	18.6	-16.0	30.9	28.3	26.8	29.7	30.0	-10.9	50.5	34.7	19.7

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Table 2.2: Employment in Garment, Construction and Tourism Industries in Cambodia, 1995–2006

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Garment factories	20	24	67	129	152	190	186	188	197	206	250	294
Garment workers (thousands)	19	24	51	79	96	123	188	210	234	246	296	330
Construction workers (thousands)	27	38	54	48	83	70	84	120	153	195	234	260
Hotels and restaurants (thousands)	11	7	6	15	28	19	10	24	27	30	43	61

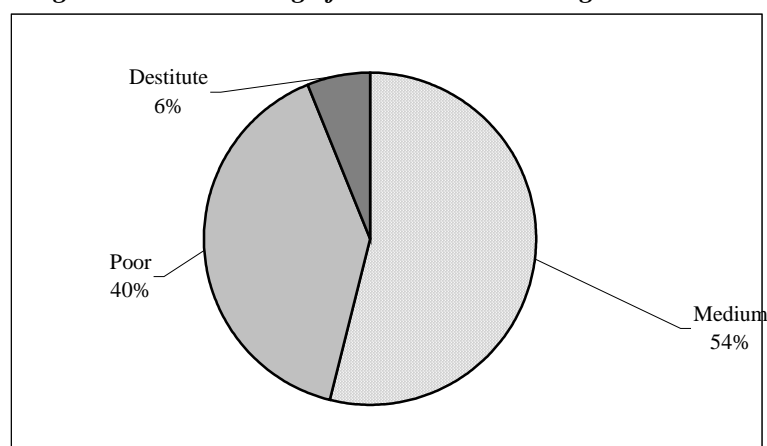
Sources: International Monetary Fund, Council for Development of Cambodia, Ministry of Commerce and Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia

2.3 Socio-Economic Background of Young Migrant Households

• Well-Being Ranking of Sending Households

Rural to urban labour migration in Cambodia is so extensive that not only the poor and the poorest but also the medium migrate. A good number of households in the villages studied have at least one young adult making a job-finding trip to urban areas. Only families that had no adult children or with old or disabled parents reported no young migrant workers.

As Figure 2.1 shows, 54 percent of the sending households are in the medium category, another 40 percent are poor, while the remaining 6 percent are the poorest families. The poor and medium households combined were 94 percent of the sending households interviewed. The poorest find it difficult to migrate primarily because they lack financial and social capital. In some other cases, the children from the poorest families have to stay to take care of their aged or disabled parents, whose condition is the cause and/or result of poverty. Adult children from rich families stay in their home village for other reasons. Most of the rich are able to diversify their sources of income by loaning money to other poor villagers or renting out productive assets such as tractors, hand-tractors and mills, or creating small businesses in their own villages. These enable them to avoid the risks and challenges associated with migration.

Figure 2.1: Well-Being of Interviewed Sending Households

2.4 Characteristics of Young Migrant Workers

Table 2.3: Migrant Workers Interviewed, by Age

Age	Number	Percent
15	12	2.00
16	27	4.50
17	31	5.17
18	51	8.50
19	58	9.67
20	71	11.83
21	57	9.50
22	61	10.17
23	60	10.00
24	172	28.67
Total	600	100.00

As indicated above, this study is on migrants aged from 15 to 24 years. Migrant workers were chosen randomly, but only 12, or 2 percent, were 15 years old—mostly cart pullers and car washers. Those 24 years old were mostly motorcycle-taxi drivers, construction workers and casino workers.

• Average Age of Migrant Workers

In Cambodia, as in most countries, internal migrants are predominantly young adults. In this study, the sample was chosen from the population of migrant workers aged 15 to 24. Among the eight occupational groups interviewed, motorcycle-taxi drivers had the highest average age, 22.95 years, cart pullers had the lowest at 18.73 years, and the average of the whole sample was 21.04 years. Motorcycle-taxi drivers tend to be older because they need capital to start their jobs, a decent motorcycle costing USD500–1000, a significant amount for rural people. Occupations as waiters/waitresses, car washers or especially cart pullers are taken up by migrants in their late teens because no financial capital or skills are needed. The research team had to stay a few days longer than planned in Battambang town to find motorcycle-taxi drivers who were no older than 24 and from other provinces.

There were some special cases among the 600 respondents. Thirty-five of them were parentless; 34 were from families having a step-father or step-mother or had problems with other siblings. In one case a girl was raped before deciding to move.

Table 2.4: Age of Migrant Workers Interviewed

Type of work	Mean (years)
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	22.95
Casino workers	21.73
Construction workers	21.44
Garment workers	20.87
Waiters/waitresses	20.20
Petty traders	19.70
Car washers	18.87
Cart pullers	18.73
Total	21.04

• **Marital Status of Migrant Workers**

Table 2.5: Marital Status of Migrant Workers Interviewed

Marital status	Number	Percent
Single	465	77.50
Married	124	20.67
Divorced	7	1.17
Widow/widower (spouse passed away)	4	0.67
Total	600	100.00

More than three-fourths of the young migrant workers were still single. This confirms the hypothesis that migrant workers stay single longer than those who remain in rural areas. The household survey offered almost the same percentages: 74 percent single, 20 percent married and 6 percent divorcees or widows/widowers. As recently as 10 years ago, married couples were mostly from the same village. However, more and more intra-province marriages are reported among migrant workers. In a traditional society in which one's primary social connections were grounded in village-based relationships, this represents a demographic shift.

• **Education of Migrant Workers**

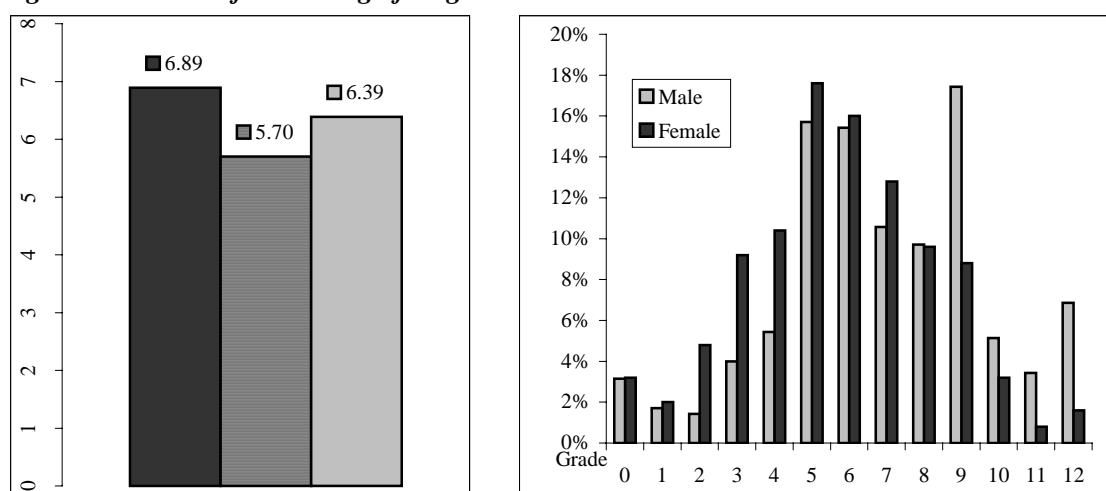
Education is one of the most important aspects in life. Having proper education helps expose migrant workers to job-related information and can lead to better and more rational decisions. The survey suggested that the overall average education attained by youth migrants was 6.39 years, a relatively low level which means that most of them barely finished elementary school¹⁰. Compatible with other research findings, the average years spent in school by young female migrant workers is more than one year less than the schooling of their male counterparts.

Earning money was the foremost purpose of migrant workers interviewed. However, young migrants can build their own human capital if they attend school or skill training in their destinations. Aspiring to better living conditions in urban areas, a small number of them spent a few hours a week studying foreign languages or computer skills. A group of construction workers in Siem Reap province spent an hour and 500 riels per day learning English in the hope of becoming foremen with foreign construction companies. In another positive but rare example, a motorcycle-taxi driver in Battambang province worked half the day and spent the other half honing his English and Japanese language skills, hoping to become a tourist guide or office worker. In another case, a waiter in a restaurant in Battambang province worked only part-time and spent the other half of his time going to school. Such opportunities are rarely available in their remote home villages. Unsurprisingly, these are isolated cases; the

¹⁰ According to the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey, 2004, about 73 percent of rural Cambodians fail to complete primary school, compared to 62 percent in other urban areas and 37 percent in Phnom Penh. The same survey also found that people who moved tended to have a higher level of education than those who have always lived in the same village.

overwhelming majority of young migrant workers quit school altogether when, or before, they leave for urban areas. Their main objective is earning money, not more education. By migrating to cities, young migrant workers can enjoy better access to education and training, but most fail to take advantage of this. The educational level of young migrant workers is on a par with young men and women remaining in rural areas; they would have ended their schooling even if not migrating. No evidence was found that migration cut short education or increased rural school drop-out rates.

Figure 2.2: Years of Schooling of Migrant Workers Interviewed



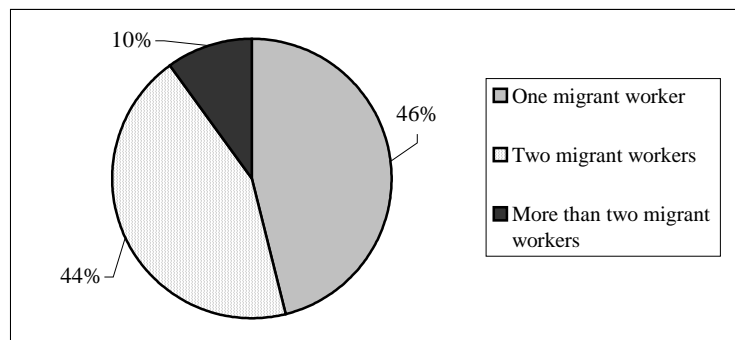
• *Household Size of Migrant Workers*

In a traditional society like Cambodia, decisions to migrate, especially of young adults, are more often taken collectively or by other family members than by the young migrants themselves. For this reason, household size and number of dependants were long suspected to have a key role in deciding whether a family has an emigrant worker. Large households tend to have excess labour, which leads to members migrating. The average household size of migrant workers interviewed was 5.3 members, while the average of households in Cambodia in 1998 was 5.1 persons. It was higher in urban (5.4) than in rural areas (5.0) (NIS 2004b). Since the household size of young migrant workers is almost the same as the nationwide average, household size can not be considered a push factor.

• *Number of Migrant Workers per Household*

It is not rare that more than one member of a family migrates. The household surveys indicate that the number of families having more than one migrant worker exceeds the number of families having only one. Forty-six percent of the households interviewed had one migrant worker, another 44 percent had two at the same time, and 10 percent had more than two. In one case, all five children from one family were working in urban areas. Typically, the eldest child would move out first and come back to bring younger siblings after building his or her own network in the urban setting.

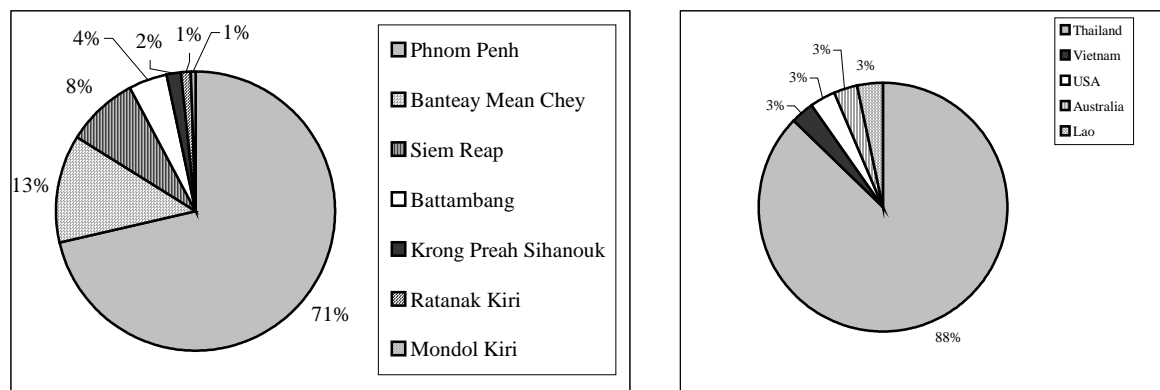
Figure 2.3: Number of Migrant Workers per Interviewed Household



• Working Destinations of Relatives of Young Migrant Workers

Largely consistent with the data from the household surveys, more than one-third (34.5 percent) of the young migrant workers interviewed had at least one other member of the family seeking work at the same time in the same city, other parts of the country or across the border. Figure 2.4 again shows that Phnom Penh is the most popular destination, followed by Banteay Meanchey (Poipet), Siem Reap and Battambang provinces. Among international destinations, Thailand occupies the number one position.

Figure 2.4: Work Destinations of Relatives of Young Migrant Workers Interviewed



2.5 Seasonal or Permanent?

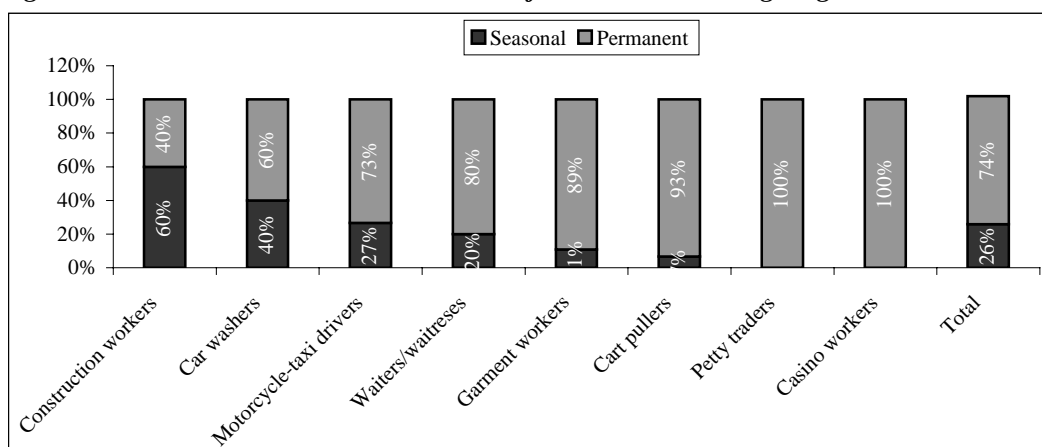
In this study, “seasonal” workers are defined as those who go back to their place of origin to help their families with farming activities on a regular basis; the rest are grouped as “permanent” workers. The study found that approximately one in four young migrant workers was seasonal. This is not surprising given that they are still in their late teens or early 20s, often the main labour force in their families. The second-round household survey in Kompong Cham and Prey Veng, the main sending provinces, found a slightly different figure, 21 percent, for seasonal young migrant workers.

Sixty percent of construction workers are seasonal. Usually, they do not adhere to any specific company but take up jobs on a project basis, moving from a finished construction site to a newly started one. Others returned to their villages, waiting to be contacted by a construction foreman or their colleagues. Motorcycle-taxi driving also employed a high percentage of seasonal workers. Most of these workers failed to nail down year-round employment and took up their jobs as a stopgap. Among waged workers, two out of five car washers are seasonal and, surprisingly, one in 10 garment workers. All the casino workers, the best paid among the eight study groups, were permanent workers. Most of the cart pullers

and all the petty traders interviewed were permanent workers because most of them migrated with their families.

Despite the surge of young adults leaving rural areas, a rural labour shortage has not been reported yet. Families with children or a spouse working permanently in an urban area usually hired other villagers for rice farming, paying 4000 to 5000 riels a day.

Figure 2.5: Seasonal and Permanent Jobs of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

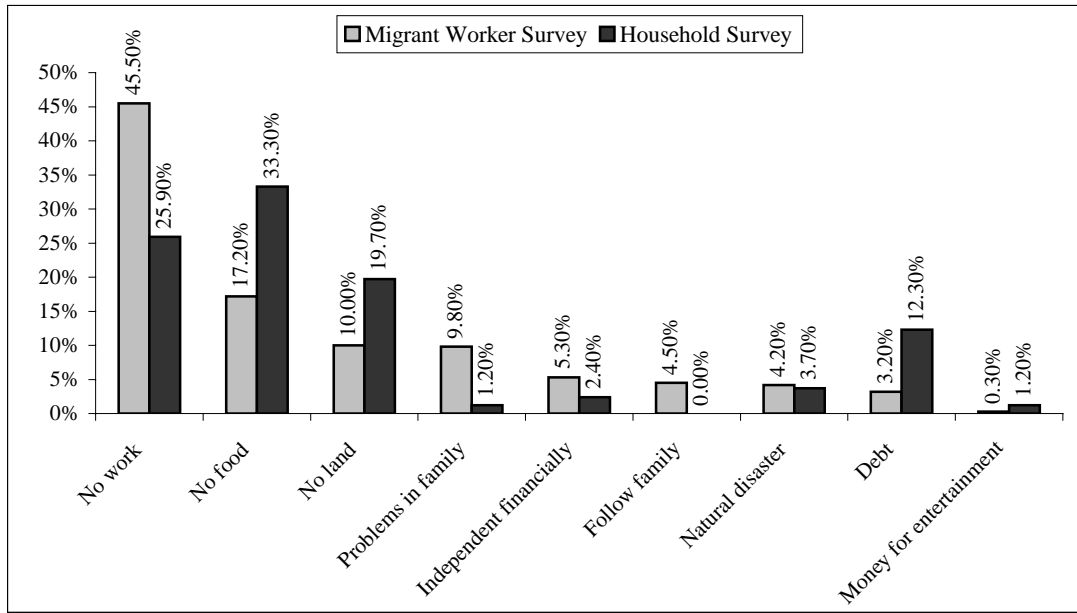


2.6 Reasons for Migrating

The scope and scale of labour migration among young people have reached an unprecedented level. It is hardly a new phenomenon, but its recent momentum is extraordinary. As mentioned earlier, labour migration among youth is due principally to push factors and facilitated by pull factors. Chronic poverty, landlessness, depletion of natural resources or common property resources, lack of year-round employment, debt and natural disasters compel many young rural Cambodians to migrate. High demand for unskilled labourers in the labour-intensive garment and construction sectors and the prospect of paid employment and a better life constitute the pull factors. In addition, a few young adults migrate along with their families. In some cases, the lure of materialism proved too tempting to resist for some young migrant workers from medium families, who would normally have enough to eat but wanted to be independent financially or wanted more money for entertainment.

Almost half of the young migrants decided to migrate because of the absence of year-round employment in their home village. The lack of year-round employment is mainly a push factor; however, it corresponds to the desire of young adults to break free from traditional employment, i.e., farming and fishing, to year-round waged employment, lured by the success stories of their migrant relatives, friends or other young adults from their village. Another 17 percent cited lack of food as their reason for migrating, while insufficient land was the reason of one-tenth of the whole sample. "Forced out by problems in family" came in a close fourth. Surprisingly, only 4.20 percent cited natural disasters as the reason for migrating, and debt was the reason of only 3.20 percent of the young migrants. However, the household surveys found debt as the reason to migrate in 12.30 percent of cases. While lack of land and debt were the motive for only 10.00 and 3.20 percent respectively overall, they were the major reasons for young migrants from the poorest category.

Figure 2.6: Primary Reason for Migrating of Young Migrant Workers



3. Social Networks and Migration

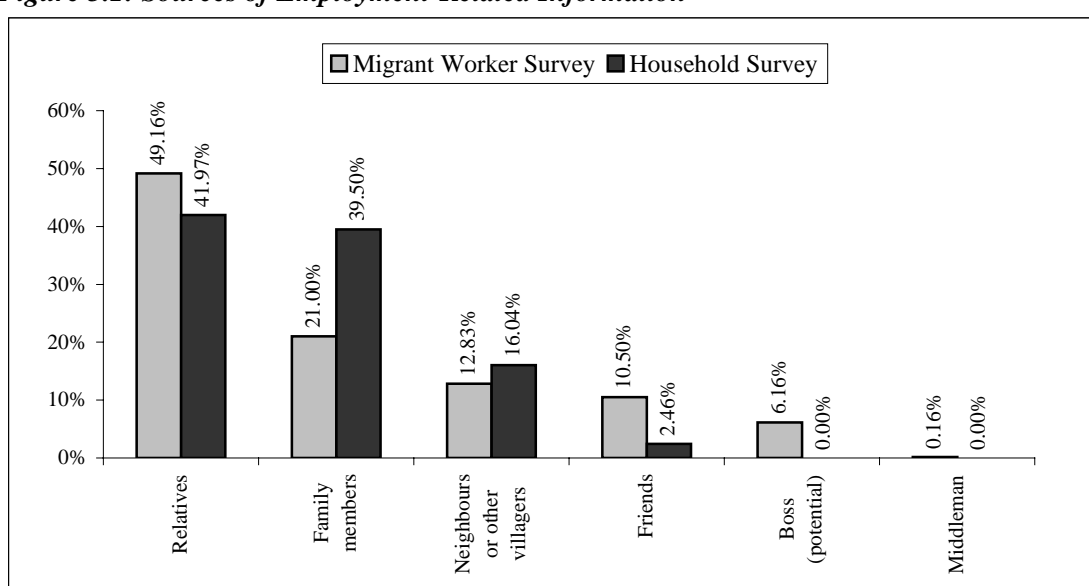
3.1 Sources of Information

Network theory attributes migration to personal, cultural and/or other social ties. Within migrant-sending areas or countries, information about jobs and living standards in receiving areas or countries is most efficiently transmitted through personal networks such as friends and neighbours who have emigrated. Immigrants' relatives often help them find jobs and adjust to the new environment (Oishi Nana 2002, quoted in Kim 2005).

Moving from one place to another, both seasonally or permanently, is risky and entails both social and financial costs. Proper and adequate information would greatly reduce migration risks and improve chances of success. The study suggested that most young migrant workers had very limited information, if any, relating to potential jobs, living and working environments in urban areas. They relied heavily on informal sources of information. The information they got before deciding to move was primarily on the availability of employment rather than on working or living conditions. In most cases, they did not have enough knowledge about the costs and benefits of their decisions.

Almost half of them first heard about employment opportunities from relatives, while the rest heard from family members, neighbours or other villagers or friends. Notably, the mass media played almost no role in disseminating information on the availability of employment to rural Cambodia. This also highlights the social networks between migrant workers and sending areas. A construction foreman in one studied village would phone to his home village when he needed more labour; as a result, most of his unskilled workers were young men from this village. In the same vein, a vast majority of waiters and waitresses in a particular restaurant came from the same or a nearby village of the restaurant owner. Cases of siblings or friends from the same village working in the same factory, restaurant or car-washing garage are very common. Parents of the young migrants generally believe that the risks are minimised by having someone from the same village as the boss, and they can have "peace of mind" if someone from the same village is a co-worker with their children. Figure 3.1 also indicates the absence of a role of middlemen in internal migration. They play a far more important role in international migration.

Figure 3.1: Sources of Employment-Related Information

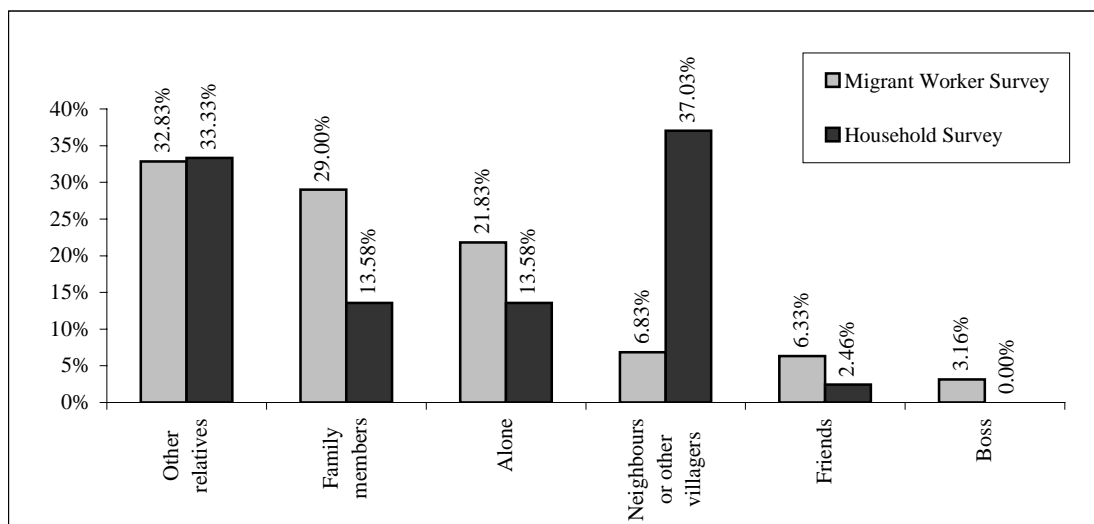


Having proper networks can be a determinant factor in success for a migrant worker because better networks mean better chances of securing a job and fewer possibilities of being cheated. The absence of formal and the presence of informal networks is one characteristic of labour migration of young adults in Cambodia. The study suggested that one of the most common patterns of young adults from a village migrating is that first one or two of them migrate; a year or two later the pioneers return to their home village, spreading information about jobs and the benefits gained from migrating. In most cases, the pioneers serve as coordinators for other villagers. In a traditional society like Cambodia, social networks are based in the village and spread out like a spider web, but with the migration of young adults from rural areas, a new linear network, connecting rural and urban areas, has started to take root. This new network is undoubtedly a catalyst for migration from rural areas. While the traditional web-like network remains largely intact, albeit weaker, the new linear network has become stronger and stronger and played a very significant role in facilitating rural-urban migration. It is clear that those who remain outside this new network find migrating much harder.

3.2 Travel Alone or with Someone

Having a travel companion is very important to young migrant workers, especially females. Most young migrants are complete strangers in urban areas, and the trip to find a job in a city is generally their first journey. In addition, most parents are reluctant to let their children travel alone. Only one-fifth of the young migrants travelled alone to urban areas, the rest travelling with companions, mainly relatives or family members. Among male workers interviewed, 26.85 percent travelled alone, while only 14.40 percent of females travelled without a companion.

Figure 3.2: Travel Companion of Young Migrant Workers



3.3 Paying Your Way?

Social and financial capitals play a defining role in whether a person can migrate. Bribery has long been thought to have played a significant role in gaining employment in urban areas; it can be a major stumbling block for the poor and the poorest, already sorely short of cash for travel, food and temporary accommodation.

Nonetheless, bribery to get a job was reported only among garment workers, exactly 10 percent of them paying their way into the factory. The amount of money changing hands

averaged 102,000 riels,¹¹ a substantial amount for rural people. The size of bribes varied greatly, from 20,000 to 400,000 riels.

Table 3.1: Did You Bribe Someone to Get Your Current Job?

	Type of work								Total
	Waiters/ Waitresses	Motorcycle- taxi drivers	Construction workers	Garment workers	Car washers	Petty traders	Casino workers	Cart pullers	
Yes	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	12
No	120	120	120	108	30	30	30	30	588

Although the three non-waged groups—motorcycle-taxi drivers, petty traders and cart pullers—do not need to bribe anyone to get a job, motorcycle-taxi drivers need a considerable capital to start their business: from several hundred dollars for a decent second-hand motorcycle to more than \$1000 for a brand-new one. Reportedly, petty traders have to pay the authorities for the space where they do business or in order not to be chased away in the name of “public order.” Cart pullers also have to “share” their small and hard-earned income with border police when pulling carts across the border. Capital is not needed by cart pullers because most own no cart; they rent it for 20 baht a day.

3.4 Migration-Related Costs

Migration has long been considered a type of investment. The primary goal of moving, especially from rural to urban areas, is to move up the economic ladder. Typically in rural Cambodia, capital needs to be mobilised to enable family members to migrate. Most of the money is spent on travel fare, food and accommodation until landing a job. The study found that on average a young migrant worker spends 27,800 riels during the time from leaving home until getting a job. Most of this money is spent on travel and food. In most cases, free accommodation is provided by relatives or friends from the same village.

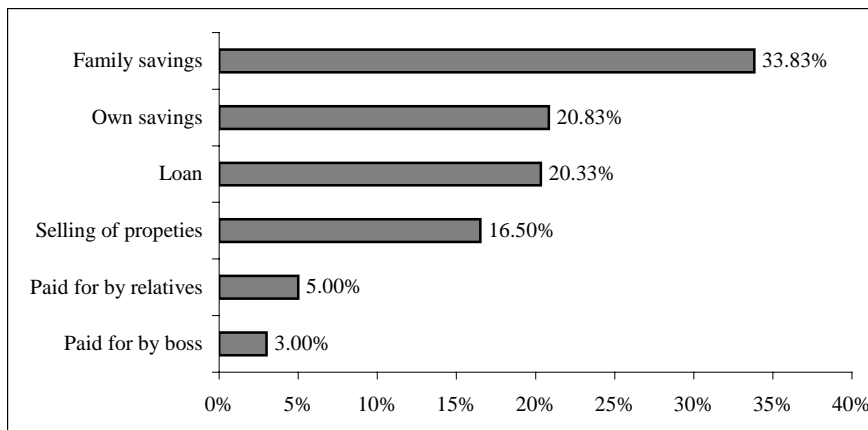
A migrant worker spends an average of six days between leaving home and getting a job. Some of them have their jobs tentatively secured by relatives or friends before travelling and start the job immediately upon reaching the destination.

3.5 Sources of Finance

When asked about sources of finance, about one-third cited family savings. Own savings came in second, while loans and selling property were third and fourth respectively. Five percent were paid for by relatives, while 3 percent were financed by their prospective bosses. The fact that 37 percent either took loans or sold property helps explain why some families move down the well-being ranking after a failed attempt at migration. A loan puts pressure on young migrants to earn more money to repay the debt incurred upon their departure.

¹¹ Even though the riel is the national currency, US dollars and Thai baht are widely used in Cambodia. Baht are popular in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces, close to and bordering Thailand, while the dollar is widely used in Siem Reap, the tourism hub of the country. Respondents gave answers in riels, baht and dollars. When this study was conducted in mid-2007, the exchange rates were US\$1 = 4100 riels and 1 baht = 120 riels.

Figure 3.3: Sources of Finance for Interviewed Young Migrant Workers to Travel and Find Job



In rural Cambodia, the poor and the poorest lack funds for even the smallest investment. In most cases they resort to loans from local moneylenders or micro-finance institutions (MFIs). The former are the traditional way, while MFIs, having made inroads into rural Cambodia only recently, offer an alternative to the poor. Nonetheless, loans are a serious decision for the rural poor. Usually traditional moneylenders require no collateral, but they charge exploitative interest rates, not less than 10 percent per month. MFIs generally charge 3 percent per month but require borrowers to put up assets, in most cases farmland, as collateral.

4. Integration into the Urban Environment

4.1 Free-Time Socialisation

For most of the young migrants interviewed, the journey to find job in the city is their first. This study shows that their integration into urban settings is “sorely shallow”. The new friends they make are from other parts of rural Cambodia, rather than from the cities they reside in. They are either too busy or too scared to go out or unwilling to spend money to explore the city. Waiters and waitresses virtually confine themselves in their workplaces and rarely venture out; car washers are similar. Construction workers mostly stay in their makeshift huts in or around construction sites. Garment workers know only the road on which they shuttle to work.

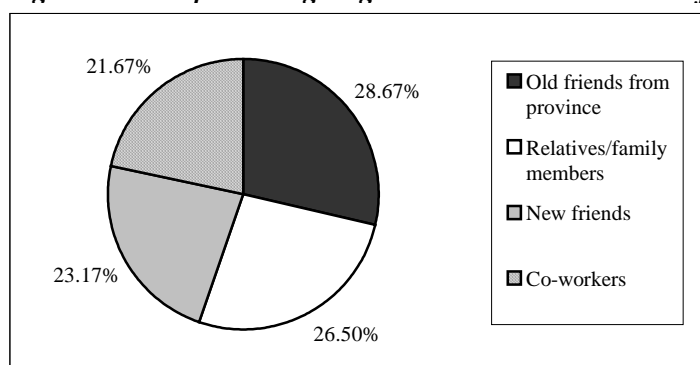
Almost half of the respondents picked “go nowhere” when asked how they normally spend their free time. One out of six spent time meeting with family members or friends, while another 14.66 percent went for a walk with friends. Some 5 percent said that they have no free time, while only 2.66 percent devoted their free time to education, in most cases studying a foreign language. The average education of the migrants was only 6.39 years, and only a small number tried to take advantage of the better educational opportunities in urban areas. Clearly, education is outweighed by the primary goal of landing a job and making money. Sixty-six of them did not answer this question.

Table 4.1: Young Migrant Workers' Activities in Free Time

Activities in free time	Number	Percent
Go nowhere	281	46.83
Meet with family members/friends	101	16.83
Go for a walk with friends	88	14.66
No free time	31	5.16
Study	16	2.66
Help do housework	10	1.66
Other	7	1.16
Total	534	89.00

Old friends from their home province were the people young migrants said they met most often during free time. Relatives or family members came a close second, followed by new friends and then co-workers. The fact that more young migrants chose to meet with old friends rather than new friends shows that the networks and connections built over time still held firm. Only a minority were making new friends, who were themselves migrant workers from rural areas rather than urban adults. These were rural-rural rather than rural-urban connections. The interaction between rural migrant workers and their hosts was still very limited.

Figure 4.1: People Young Migrant Workers Meet Most Often in Free Time



4.2 Type of Accommodation

The type of accommodation varied greatly according to type of employment. Overall, one-third of the young migrant workers interviewed live in a rental house, a little over one-fourth lived in free dormitory accommodation provided by employers, and more than one-sixth lived in construction sites. One hundred and four out of 120 restaurant workers stayed in a free dormitory. More than half of motorcycle-taxi drivers were living in a rented house, while most of the rest lived with relatives. Three-fourths of garment workers also lived in rental housing, with the rest in paid dormitories, free dormitories or living with relatives. All of the car washers lived in a free dormitory, in this case the housing provided by the garage owner. The accommodation of petty traders is almost evenly split between their own house and living with relatives, due to the fact that most young petty traders migrated along with their families. Some of the cart pullers also migrated with their families, resulting in one-fifth of them living in their own houses, more than one-fifth living with relatives and half of them in rental houses. Two-thirds of the casino workers lived in rental houses, with the other third in a free dormitory.

Those who paid for accommodation (dormitory or rental house) paid an average of 42,600 riels per month. In one of the most common patterns, young migrant workers would form a group of four to seven or more co-workers to share a rented house. To minimise the expense, they usually are jammed in together. The situation of cart pullers in Poipet is even more depressing; their cheap rental houses were literally on mud and surrounded by piles of garbage, with no electricity or running water. The situation of those getting free accommodation was no better. In Siem Reap town a group of 15 young construction workers lived together in a five-by-six metres temporary shelter with no electricity, no running water and not even one toilet. A toilet nearby was used by hundreds of workers engaged on a construction mega-project.

Table 4.2: Interviewed Young Migrant Workers' Accommodation

	Type							Total
	Free dormitory	Paid dormitory	Rental house	Living with relatives	Own house	Living in construction site	Sleeping rough (e.g. in the street...)	
Waiters/waitresses	104	2	8	2	4	0	0	120
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	0	1	65	41	13	0	0	120
Construction workers	0	0	8	0	1	111	0	120
Garment workers	15	6	90	8	1	0	0	120
Car washers	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
Petty traders	2	0	3	11	13	0	1	30
Casino workers	8	2	19	0	1	0	0	30
Cart pullers	1	0	15	8	6	0	0	30
Total	160	11	208	70	39	111	1	600

4.3 Room-Mates

Nearly 38 percent of the young migrants lived with relatives, some of whom were migrant workers themselves. About 20 percent have people from the same village as room-mates, slightly more than those having co-workers as room-mates; this is a result of networks built in the village. It is not uncommon for young migrant workers from one village to be concentrated in a construction site, restaurant, garage or even a garment factory. Fewer than one in 50 were living alone.

Table 4.3: Interviewed Young Migrant Workers' Room-Mates

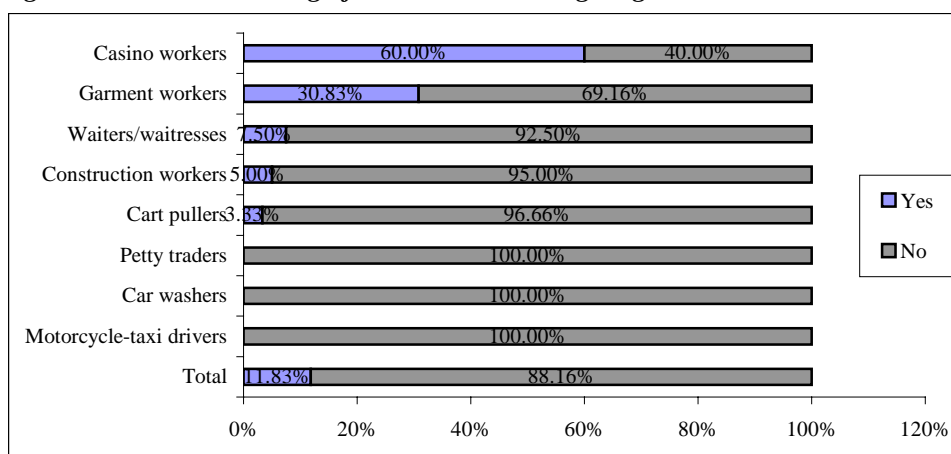
Who do you live with?	Number	Percent
Relatives	126	37.95
People from the same village	68	20.48
Co-workers	60	18.07
Family	41	12.35
Friends	31	9.34
Alone	6	1.80
Total	332	100.00

In short, most young migrant workers' integration in cities was still very shallow. Most dared not venture into the city centre but stuck with relatives or friends from the same village. They could not afford the higher quality of life enjoyed by urban people. However, most seemed not to care much about things other than their ability to earn money. Not many complained about their degree of integration into the urban environment or their quality of life.

4.4 Skills Training and Duration

Most of the young migrant workers had only some basic education and no job-related skills or training. However, taking into account that 73 percent of rural Cambodians fail to finish primary school, the young migrant workers' average education of 6.39 years put them among the better educated in sending communities. From the FGD, in most cases they represented the best hope of their families. Migration was not the reason for them dropping out of school. Most discontinued schooling because of the family's financial situation or difficulties commuting to distant high schools, which are normally situated in commune or district centres.

Most of the young migrant workers were employed in jobs requiring few or no skills. Five of the eight sample groups—construction workers, waiters/waitresses, garment workers, car washers and casino workers—were waged labour. Even among these groups, however, only a small percentage went through any training before starting their jobs. No car washer received any training, and a scant 5 percent of construction workers and 7.50 percent of waiters/waitresses got some basic training. Garment workers and casino workers were the exceptions: 30 percent and 60 percent respectively received training. Among those receiving job-related training, the average training time was 17 days.

Figure 4.2: Skills Training of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

4.5 Access to Health Care

Because this study was conducted in urban areas, access to health care was not a problem for the young migrants interviewed. Exactly one-third had not been ill since migrating. Among those who had been ill—mostly minor illnesses such as headache, dizziness and diarrhoea—a pharmacy was the source of treatment for almost 70 percent. About 14 percent went to a private clinic; fewer than 10 percent went to a public hospital or public health centre. Most of the interviewees expressed a deep distrust of the public health system and were very worried about staff skills and attitudes, and afraid of being treated badly. Six percent of them resorted to coining,¹² while only one percent went to traditional herbal healers.

Table 4.4: Access to Health Care of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

Have you ever been ill since coming to the place of current residence?	Number	%	Where do you usually go for treatment?	Number	%
Yes	400	66.66	Pharmacy	279	69.75
No	200	33.33	Private clinic	55	13.75
Total	600	100.00	Public hospital/health centre	38	9.50
			Coining	24	6.00
			Traditional healer	4	1.00
			Total	400	100.00

Only a few cases of serious stomach-related diseases were reported. When affected by minor diseases, most said, they take no leave but go to work ill. Surprisingly, the few serious cases returned home to receive treatment rather than staying to take advantage of the better quality health service, because they had no one to take care of them if they stayed in an urban hospital.

4.6 Challenges and Difficulties

A clear majority of workers interviewed reported no difficulties with life in the city. Even when working 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week, not many complained about hardships. This again underlines the fact that the young migrant workers cared very much about earning money and very little about working and living conditions or their overall well-being. Among those who did report difficulties, “discrimination” and “verbal harassment” by either bosses or customers were the leading complaints.

Waiters/waitresses encountered more verbal harassment than other sample groups; this was also the main problem faced by casino workers. Motorcycle-taxi drivers mainly faced money problems with customers and discrimination by both customers and the public on top of a security problem (armed robbery) for those working at night. Young cart pullers reported conflict with authorities as their main difficulty; many of them complained bitterly about authorities extorting their hard-earned money. They had very little or no trust in the authorities, viewing them as part of the problem rather than the solution to any problems they encountered. This deep-rooted distrust was also voiced by other groups of young migrant workers.

¹² A traditional treatment for minor diseases in which a coin is used to scratch medicinal oil into the patient’s back. It is a common practice still very popular among rural Cambodians.

Table 4.5: Challenges and Difficulties Faced by Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

Type of work		What are the difficulties you face in daily life?						Total	
		Verbal harassment by boss, customers	Physical harassment	Prejudice (seen as sex workers)	Discrimination (seen as cheap labourers)	Conflict with authority (mainly police)	Money problem with customers		None
Waiters/waitresses	Male	12	0	0	1			36	49
	Female	17	1	2	4			47	71
	Subtotal	29	1	2	5			83	120
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	Male	3	4		19		22	72	120
	Subtotal	3	4		19		22	72	120
Construction workers	Male		3		9			98	110
	Female		0		1			9	10
	Subtotal		3		10			107	120
Garment workers	Male				0			15	15
	Female				6			99	105
	Subtotal				6			114	120
Car washers	Male	2						14	16
	Female	0						14	14
	Subtotal	2						28	30
Petty traders	Male	1			0	0	0	8	9
	Female	0			3	2	2	14	21
	Subtotal	1			3	2	2	22	30
Casino workers	Male	0			0			5	5
	Female	8			2			12	22
	Subtotal	8			2			17	27
Cart pullers	Male	1			3	11		11	26
	Female	1			0	1		2	4
	Subtotal	2			3	12		13	30
Total	Male	19	7	0	32	11	22	259	350
	Female	26	1	2	16	3	2	197	247
	Total	45	8	2	48	14	24	456	597

Table 4.6: Difficulties Reported by Interviewed Migrant Workers to Families

Type of work *		Job-related or working conditions	Low salary	Accommodation-related	Blaming by boss or supervisor	Total
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	Male	3	4	6		13
	Subtotal	3	4	6		13
Construction workers	Male	1	5			
	Female	0	0			0
	Subtotal	1	5			6
Garment workers	Male	8	0		0	8
	Female	14	11		1	26
	Subtotal	22	11		1	34
Car washers	Male	1	5	3	1	13
	Female	0	0	0	0	0
	Subtotal	1	5	3	1	14
Total	Male	13	14	9	1	37
	Female	14	11	0	1	26
	Total	27	25	9	2	63

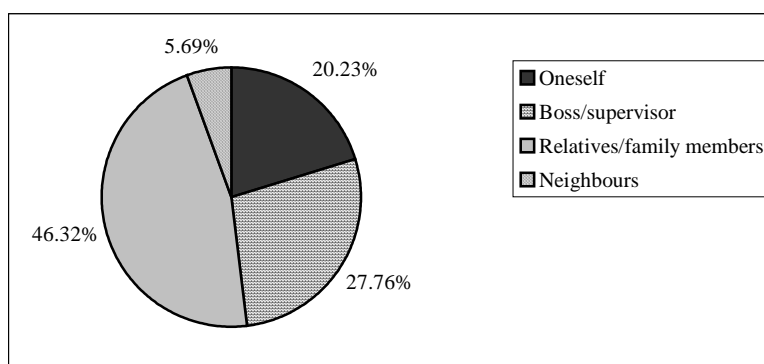
* During the household survey, the research team met with families of workers employed in only four occupations.

In the home villages, interviews with families of migrant workers indicated that about half of the workers reported difficulties they faced to their families while the other half did not. Among those reporting difficulties, job-related or working conditions—such as night work, heavy work, long hours and hot workplaces—were 43 percent of the problems reported. Low salary came in second with 40 percent, while 14 percent complained about their accommodation. Another notable problem was “blaming” by bosses or supervisors.

4.7 Problem Solving and Social Protection

Almost half of the respondents turned to relatives or family members for help when encountering problems in work or life. One-fourth went to their direct boss or supervisor, while one-fifth had no one to rely on except themselves. It was revealed during FGD that members of this last group tended to migrate alone and had no friends or relatives in the areas where they settled. There was a great sense of hopelessness among this group. Remarkably, none of them cited the authorities as guardians of justice or problem solvers. These young migrant workers lacked proper social protection in their employment and lives. In the absence of social protection, they predominantly relied on individual social networks built before migrating or shortly after reaching their destination.

Figure 4.3: Problem Solving and Social Protection



5. Costs and Benefits of Migration

5.1 Employment in Urban Areas

The quarterly survey of vulnerable workers conducted by CDRI since 1998 has found that about 90 percent of vulnerable workers are from rural Cambodia. Jobs that are low paid or deemed low status are mostly filled by migrant workers, most of them young. There are reasons for this. Most, if not all, young migrant workers from rural areas are unskilled, making it impossible for them to break into other occupations. They have to settle for unskilled jobs, which are very vulnerable.

5.1.1 Duration of Stay in Urban Areas and in Current Employment

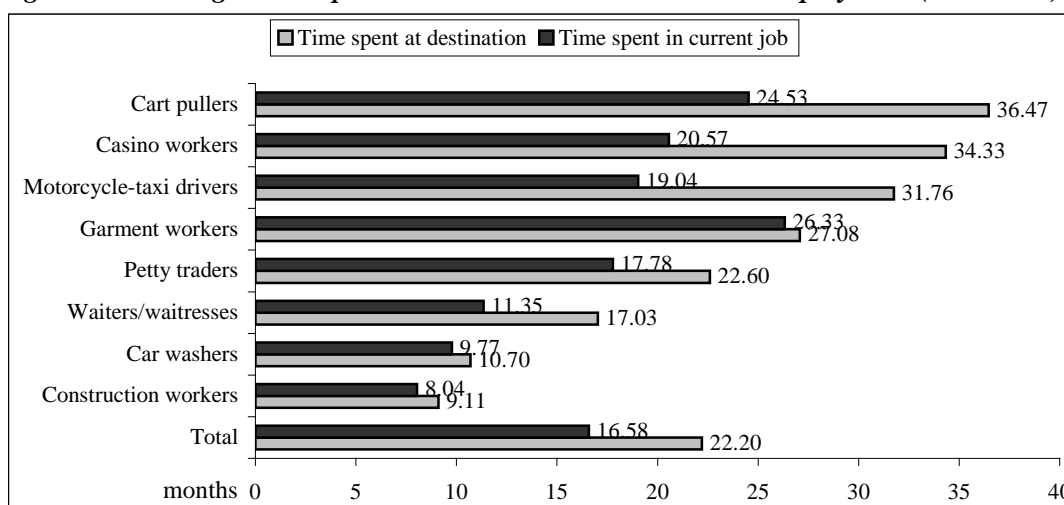
On average, the young migrant workers had been in urban areas a little over 22 months. Seventy respondents had been in urban areas for 12 months and 69 for up to two years. Cart pullers stayed the longest at the destination, an average of 36.47 months. Casino workers and motorcycle-taxi drivers had been there an average of 34.33 and 31.76 months respectively. Construction workers had the shortest stays, 9.11 months, because of the nature of their work.

With the average age of the respondent being 21.04 years, this means that most left their home villages when they were 19 years old. There are many reasons that they waited so long to migrate after most of them left school at 13 or 14 years. First of all, most families would not allow children who are too young to migrate for jobs in the “wild” urban areas, especially girls. Another reason was the time consumed in networking. Most parents allowed their children to migrate only when they knew there was a reliable and trustworthy network; only a small number of the young migrants interviewed ventured into urban areas without some kind of network. A third reason was that it took time to accumulate the necessary capital.

On average, the young migrant workers had spent 16.58 months in their current jobs. Twelve months was the mode, with 79 out of 600 respondents. It is not uncommon for young migrant workers aged less than 24 to have been working for eight to 10 years.

Among the eight sample groups, garment workers and cart pullers had spent the longest average time in their jobs, more than two years. Casino workers, motorcycle-taxi drivers and petty traders had spent between one and one and a half years, while waiters/waitresses, car washers and construction workers had spent less than one year with their current employers.

Figure 5.1: Average Time Spent at Destination and in Current Employment (in months)



5.1.2 Intended Duration of Stay in Current Employment

More than 60 percent of the respondents said they didn't know how long they intended to continue in their current job. Thirteen percent answered that they would stay for an "unlimited" time. The other 27 percent knew how long they wanted to stay in their current jobs, which averaged 15 months.

Table 5.1: Intended Duration of Stay in Current Employment

	Don't know	Unlimited	Average	
			Months	Cases
Waiters/waitresses	79	10	12.29	31
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	72	19	16.76	29
Construction workers	60	12	9.87	48
Garment workers	82	11	21.37	27
Car washers	15	6	16.77	9
Petty traders	22	5	7.66	3
Casino workers	17	8	33.60	5
Cart pullers	15	6	10.55	9
Total	362	77	15.13	161

Job security was a major concern. The jobs the young migrant workers were engaged in were volatile and vulnerable in nature, which cast doubt over their and their families' livelihoods. While a clear majority did not know how long they would stay in their job, the rest did not expect to stay very long. The casino workers intended to stay an average of more than 33 months because of better working conditions—higher salary and light work. Even in garment work, widely regarded as one of the most stable occupations, workers expected to stay less than two years.

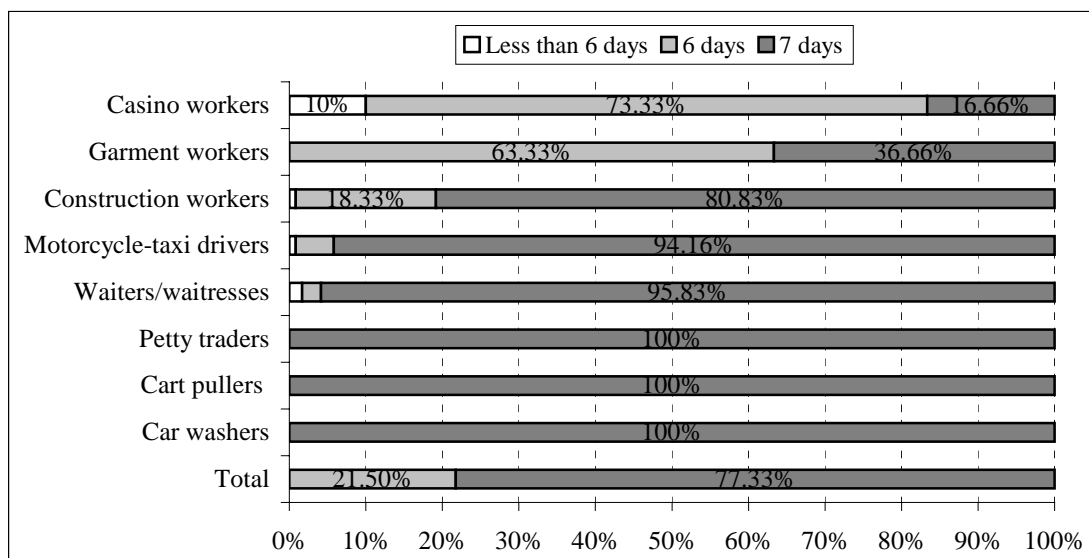
5.2 Working Conditions

The jobs undertaken by rural youths are frequently characterised as three Ds: dirty, difficult and dangerous. This seems harsh when a clear majority of them are engaged in garment and construction sectors. Their jobs are low skilled and low paid and largely ignored by urban youths. During FGD, some migrant workers admitted that jobs in urban areas are not harder than their farming jobs at home.

5.2.1 Working Days per Week

Overall, 77.33 percent of the youth migrant workers interviewed worked seven days a week, 21.50 percent worked six days and only 1.16 percent worked less than six days. All car washers, petty traders and cart pullers and about 95 percent of waiters/waitresses and motorcycle-taxi drivers worked seven days a week. Only among garment workers and casino workers did a majority work six days a week.

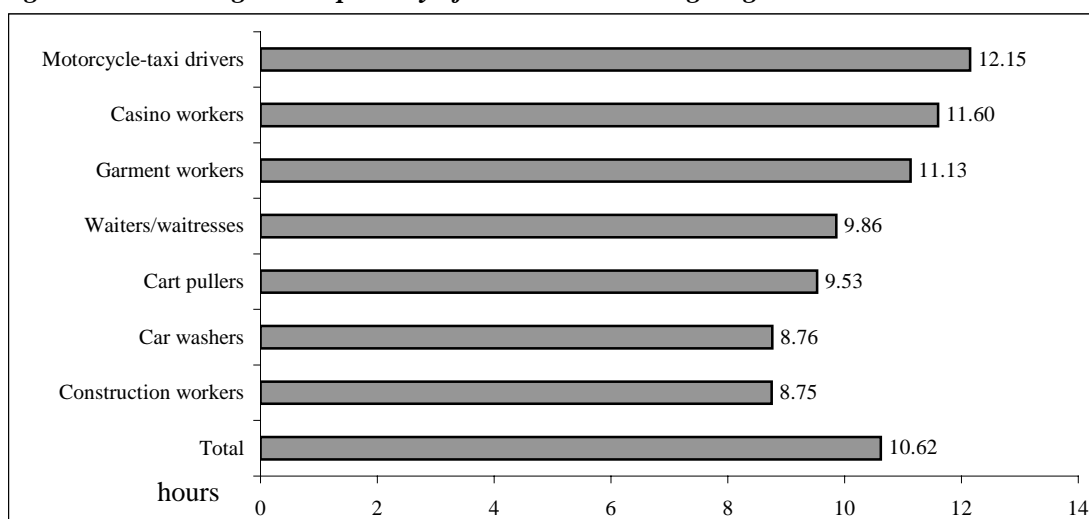
Figure 5.2: Working Days per Week of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers



5.2.2 Working Hours per Day

On average, the interviewees worked 10.62 hours per day. Three of the sample groups—motorcycle-taxi drivers, casino worker and garment workers—averaged more than 10 hours a day. Motorcycle-taxi drivers worked the longest, 12.15 hours. Construction workers, who had the shortest work hour among the eight groups, worked 8.75 hours. The average working week for these young migrant workers stood at an astonishing 72 hours.

Figure 5.3: Working Hours per Day of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers



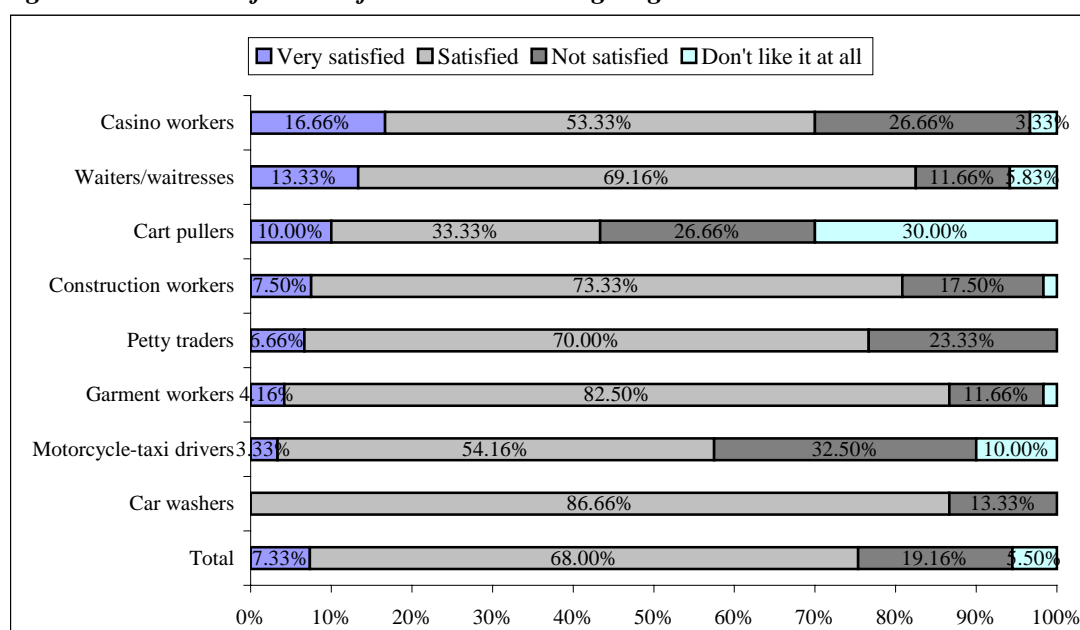
5.2.3 Job Satisfaction

Despite these long hours, 68.00 percent of the workers interviewed are “satisfied” with their job and 7.33 percent are “very satisfied.” Only 19.16 percent said they were “not satisfied” with their job and 5.50 percent did “not like it at all.”

More than 80 percent of garment workers, car washers, waiters/waitresses and construction workers were “very satisfied” or “satisfied.” They are virtually shielded from having to cope with the outside world. Only cart pullers had more negative views than positive, due to the

fact that they have to deal with the authorities in addition to their job. They are also the most vulnerable among the eight groups studied.

Figure 5.4: Job Satisfaction of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers



5.3 Earnings and Living Conditions

5.3.1 Earnings

On average a young migrant worker earned 307,400 riels per month. This mean was rather high due to the salaries of casino workers, who averaged 621,700 riels. Car washer salaries averaged 102,200 riels. Waiters and waitresses had average salaries of 100,000 riels, but tips took this to 168,900 riels.

Table 5.2: Monthly Earnings of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

Type of work	In thousand riels	In US dollar
Car washers	102.2	24.92
Waiters/waitresses	168.9	41.19
Garment workers	279.3	68.12
Construction workers	292.7	71.39
Petty traders	356.3	86.90
Cart pullers	381.1	92.95
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	430.8	105.07
Casino workers	621.7	151.63
Total	307.4	74.97

5.3.2 Spending Patterns

More than half of the spending of the interviewed young migrant workers was on food. Food occupied first place for all sample groups except car washers, who are provided free meals by garage owners. The sample spent only 1900 riels per month on transportation, reaffirming the finding that they do not travel much in their city of employment. Spending on eating out on weekends averaged 7800 riels per month. In total, on average a young migrant worker spent

145,600 riels a month in “expensive” cities. The lowest spenders were car washers and the highest were casino workers.

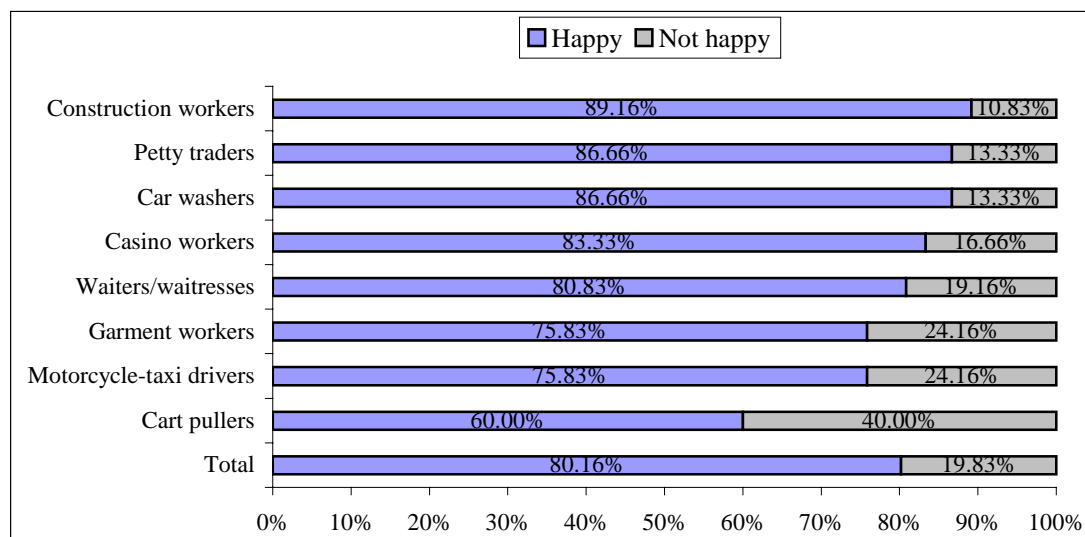
Table 5.3: Spending Patterns of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers (thousand riels)

Type of work	Spending							Total
	regular food	eating out	transportation	rent	clothes	health care	other	
Waiters/waitresses	9.2	4.4	0.6	5.0	30.5	6.7	16.4	72.2
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	146.6	10.9	0.2	23.2	19.4	5.6	25.2	219.6
Construction workers	103.6	4.8	0.3	3.6	17.4	4.7	11.3	136.9
Garment workers	77.1	8.1	1.4	20.6	20.8	6.1	15.2	149.1
Car washers	0.00	3.4	0.00	0.00	19.0	0.7	5.9	28.0
Petty traders	103.3	2.6	0.00	3.4	19.9	1.9	12.5	133.6
Casino workers	137.5	32.4	26.1	36.4	52.8	13.0	28.7	309.1
Cart pullers	85.8	5.2	1.7	11.6	18.8	4.7	8.3	130.7
Total	84.0	7.8	1.9	13.0	23.1	5.6	16.4	145.6

5.3.3 Salary Satisfaction

Overall, fourth-fifths of the young migrant workers interviewed were “happy” with the salary they were earning. In all of the eight groups except cart pullers, the “happiness” rate was over 75 percent. During focus group interviews, they explained that this was the very first time they could earn money by themselves, and their earnings were enough for food and other expenses, with some left over for their families. One of the most frequent answers was that they realised that they do not have many skills.

Figure 5.5: Salary Satisfaction of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers



Their earnings were large compared to their families' incomes. The average land owned by a sending household interviewed during the household survey was 0.75 hectare. On average this would produce 1.5 tonnes of rice per year.¹³ A kilogram of rice sells for 500 riels, so that crop would be worth 750,000 riels in cash. This is less than the annual average earnings of car washers, the lowest earning group—1.2 million riels.

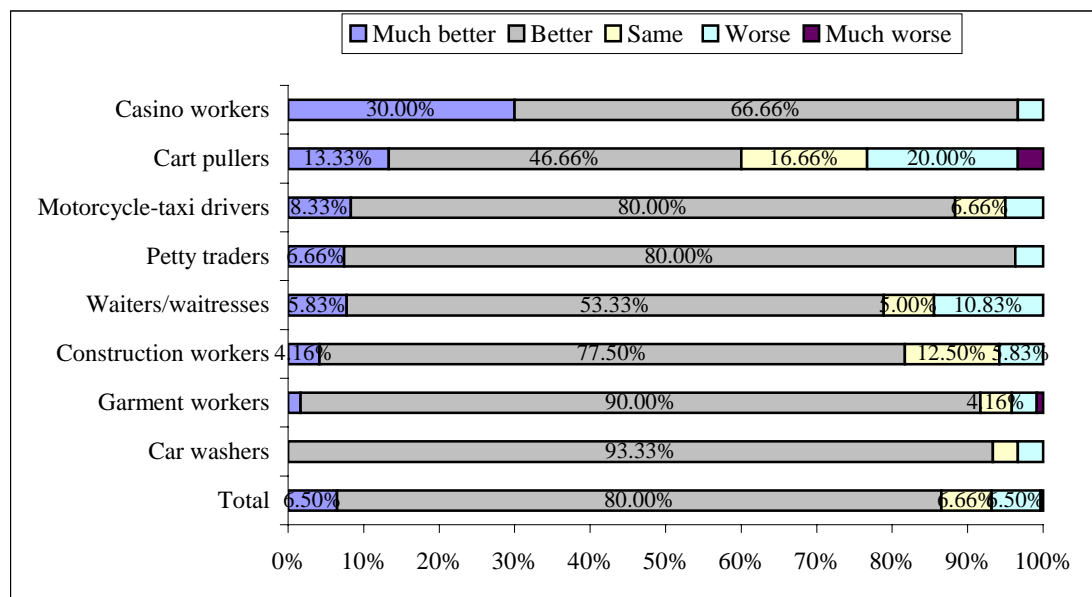
¹³ In Cambodia the average yield is 1.98 tonnes per hectare. “Cambodia Human Development Report 2007” published by Ministry of Planning and UNDP, p.67.

5.3.4 Moving to Move Up?

Migrant workers, regardless of age, move to move up in well-being. Asked to compare their living conditions after and before migrating, 6.50 percent said they were “much better,” 80.00 percent said “better,” 6.67 percent said their conditions remained the same, 6.50 percent said they were worse and an insignificant 0.33 percent said they were “much worse.”

Waiters/waitresses and cart pullers were the least positive groups, with a combination of “much better” and “better” answers of less than 60 percent. The other six groups gave positive answers of well over 80 percent.

Figure 5.6: Moving to Move Up?



“Having a job,” “can earn money” and “having enough food” were the reasons given by those who gave positive answers, earning money being preponderant. Harsh working condition and low pay were cited by those who gave negative answers about their conditions.

Table 5.4: Reasons for Change in Living Conditions

	Much better	Better	Same	Worse	Much worse	Total
Having a job	3	77	2	0	0	82
Can earn money	33	391	1	1	0	426
Having enough food	3	6	0	0	0	9
Work is not too heavy	0	6	0	3	0	9
Work is too long	0	0	1	10	0	11
Can earn too little money	0	0	33	19	2	54
Work is heavy	0	0	3	6	0	9
Total	39	480	40	39	2	600

6. Impacts on Sending Households and Communities

Migration can have both positive and negative impacts on sending households and communities. Migration benefits sending households through remittances and the skills and knowledge obtained. How remittances are used has strong implications for the future well-being of the sending households and the development of the community. The downside of migration is mainly the shortage of labour for farming.

6.1 Remittances

6.1.1 Percentage of Young Migrant Workers Sending Money Home

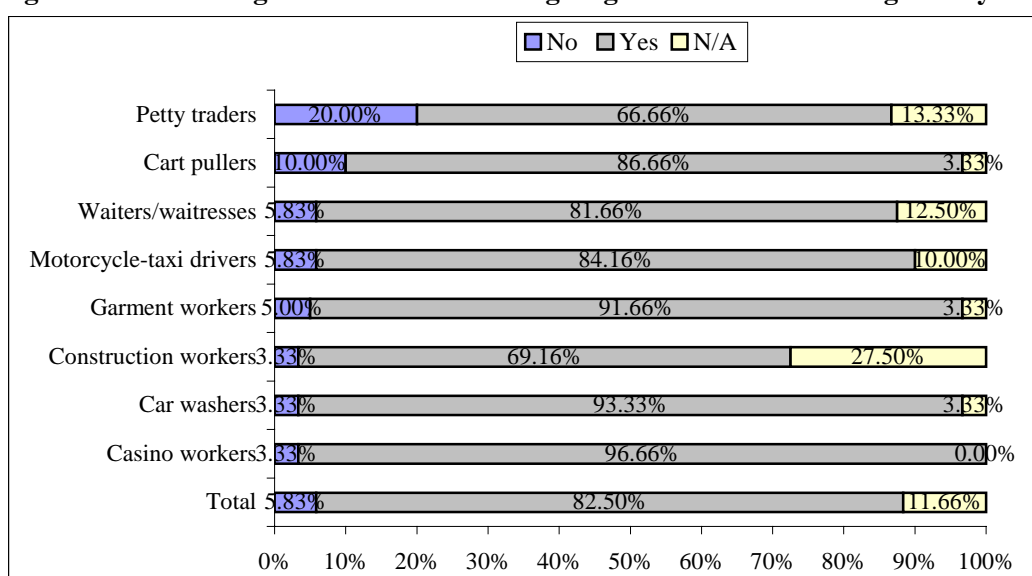
Among 600 young migrant workers interviewed, 70 had been working less than three months. For this reason, they are excluded from the analysis of remittance-related issues.

During the FGD with parents and relatives of young migrant workers, most revealed that the decision to migrate was the family's rather than the migrant's. The young migrants move out to earn money for the family rather than for themselves.

An overwhelming 93.38 percent of those young migrant workers sent money home. However, because some of those not remitting money home were living with their families, the share of young migrant workers providing money to their families was virtually 100 percent.

The household survey showed almost identical results; 90.12 percent of households interviewed reported receiving money from their migrating family members.

Figure 6.1: Percentage of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers Sending Money Home

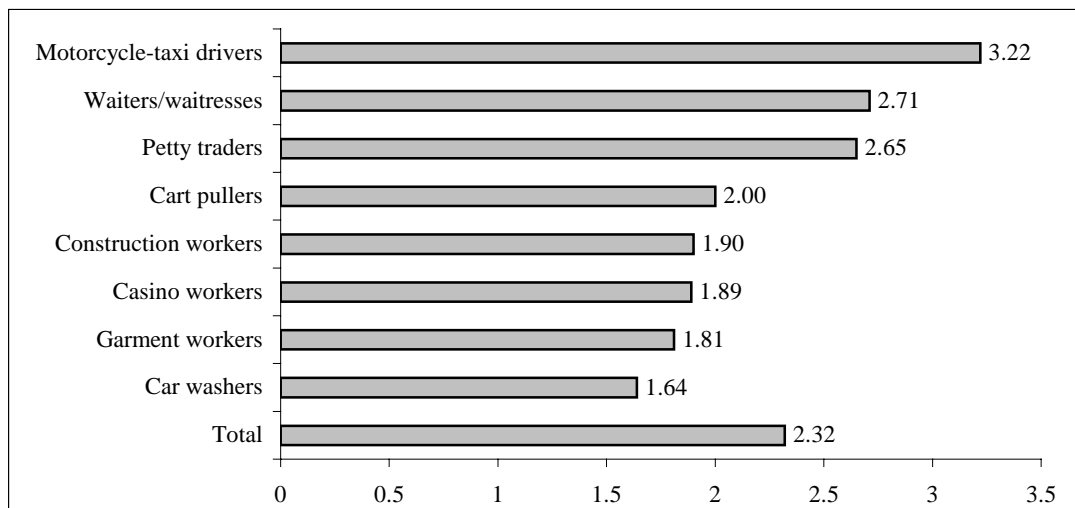


6.1.2 Frequency of Remittances

The study found that most young workers remitted money home regularly. Some sent money home when they had accumulated a considerable amount; others sent it on the day they were paid.

On average, the young migrant workers remitted money once every 2.32 months. Waged workers sent money home more often than non-waged workers. Sending households indicated that migrant workers sent money home on average every 1.57 months.

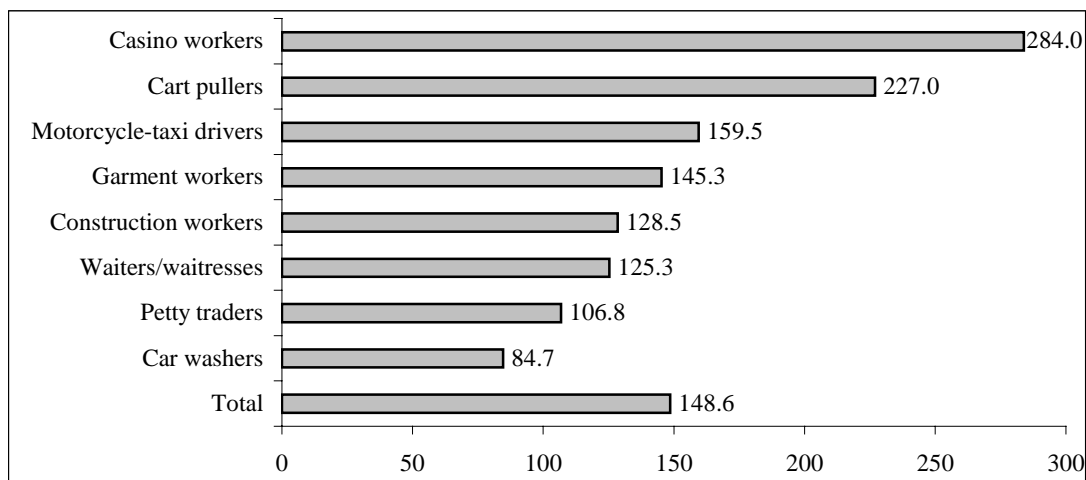
Figure 6.2: Frequency of Remitting Money (in months)



6.1.3 Amount Remitted per Time

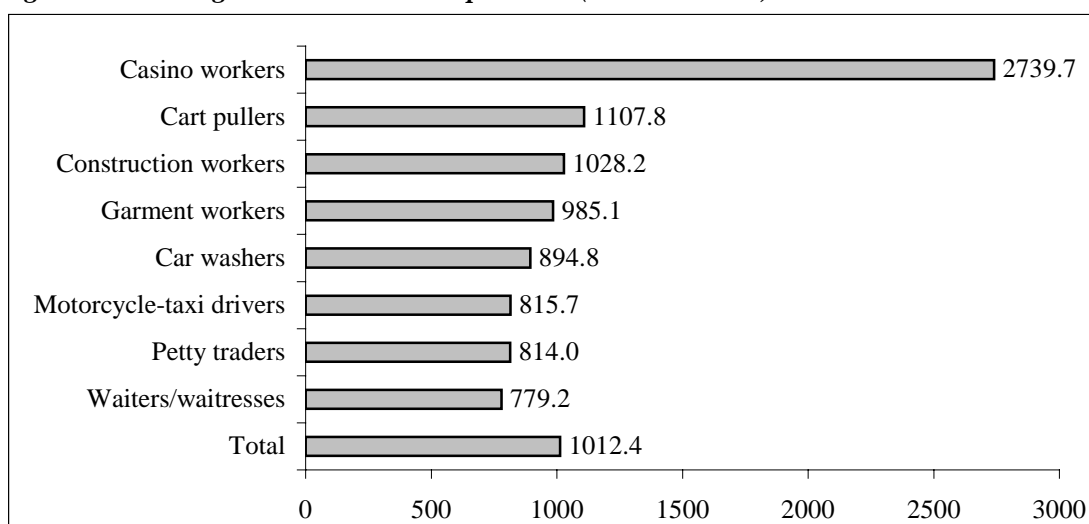
The young workers reported sending an average of 148,600 riels per time. Data from households suggested only a little difference, an average of 114,900 riels. The average amount sent differed greatly by group, according to earnings. Car washers sent 84,700 riels per time, while casino workers, the top earners, sent 284,000 riels.

Figure 6.3: Average Amount of Money Remitted per Time (thousand riels)



6.1.4 Amount Remitted per Year

The young migrant workers interviewed sent an average 1,012,400 riels per year to their families. The amount ranged from 779,200 riels by waiters/waitresses to a whopping 2,739,700 riels by casino workers. The household surveys suggested that the average migrant worker sent 918,900 riels to the family. This is a substantial amount of money for rural Cambodians; in some cases, it could totally support the family.

Figure 6.4: Average Amount Remitted per Year (thousand riels)

6.1.5 Remittances as Share of Earnings

On average, the interviewed workers reported remitting 27.44 percent of their total earnings to their families. This percentage varied greatly according to occupation, from 15.77 percent by motorcycle-taxi drivers to 72.96 percent by car washers. This again highlights the strong links between areas of origin and destinations.

Table 6.1: Remittances as Share of Earnings

	Annual remittances (thousand riels)	Annual earnings (thousand riels)	Remittances as % of earnings
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	815.7	5169.6	15.77
Petty traders	814.0	4275.6	19.04
Cart pullers	1107.8	4573.2	24.22
Construction workers	1028.2	3512.4	29.27
Garment workers	985.1	3351.6	29.39
Casino workers	2739.7	7460.4	36.72
Waiters/waitresses	779.2	2026.8	38.44
Car washers	894.8	1226.4	72.96
Total	1012.4	3688.8	27.44

6.1.6 Remitting Channels

Micro-finance institutions played a very modest role in the sending of remittances, only 6.26 percent of workers interviewed using this channel. Informal channels dominated, with one-fourth each sending money through relatives, taking it home themselves during visits or sending it through friends and villagers. Disturbingly, 2.02 percent of young migrant workers have someone from their family travelling to their working destination only to pick up their salaries.

High transaction fees and complex procedures were given as reasons for the unpopularity of MFIs, whereas speed and simplicity were reasons for choosing taxi men and emerging phone shop services.

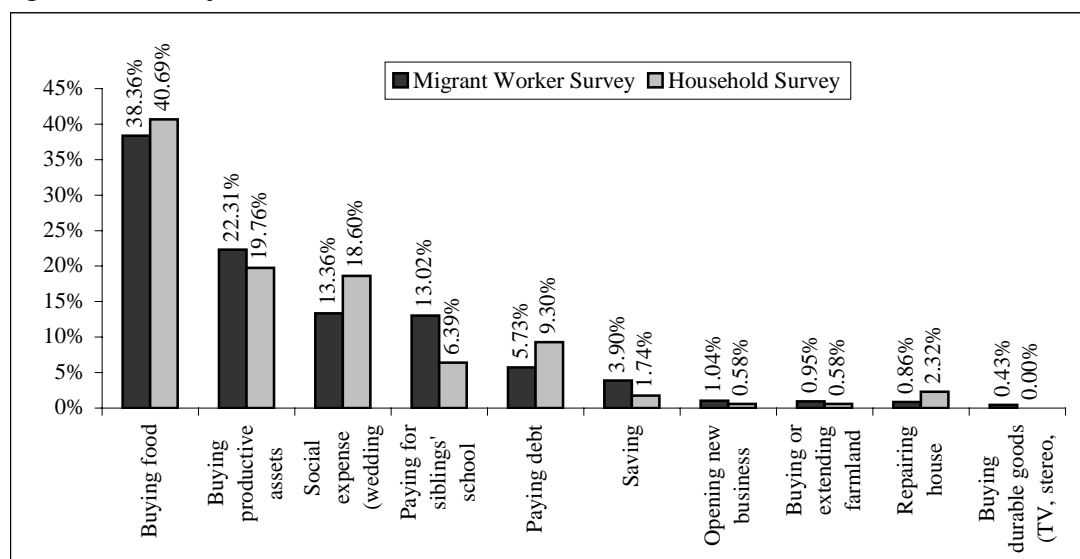
Table 6.2: Money-Sending Channels

	Number	Percent
Family member comes to take the money	10	2.02
Micro-finance institutions	31	6.26
Phone service	35	7.07
Taxi men	44	8.89
Friends/villagers	121	24.44
Directly (oneself)	124	25.05
Relatives	130	26.26
Total	495	100.00

6.1.7 Use of Remittances

The relationship between poverty and migration is still a very complex issue. Undeniably, poverty is one of the main factors stimulating migration, and migration in turn can help reduce poverty. Knowing how sending households use remittances is vital to understanding how migration helps to alleviate poverty and promote the well-being of households and communities. Whether or not remittances are used for productive purposes has serious long-term implications not only for the well-being of sending households and communities but also for migrant workers when they return. Unsurprisingly, during FGD some young migrant workers did not have clear ideas about how their families use the money they sent.

The study indicated that remittances were used primarily for buying food. Buying productive assets such as rice seed, fertiliser, cattle or a tractor came in second in both the migrant worker and household surveys. Spending on social functions such as weddings and religious rituals came in third in both surveys; in rural Cambodia such functions occur very frequently. Another expense that can be considered productive, albeit in the long term, is in siblings' school fees and stationery, which came fourth in the worker survey and fifth in the household survey. Repaying debt came fourth in the household survey and fifth in the migrant survey.

Figure 6.5: Use of Remittances

6.1.8 Impact of Remittances on Sending Households and Communities

The study indicated unmistakably that most sending households gain net benefits from labour migration, but the impact of migration on sustainable livelihood or poverty reduction is still very complex. Since the explosion of rural-urban youth migration in the late 1990s and early

2000s, there has been a substantial flow of remittances from urban to rural areas. Remittances undoubtedly help stabilise rural livelihoods in Cambodia. However, an unwelcome and disturbing trend is emerging for some rural families to become too reliant on their migrating children. During village household surveys, the research team observed that some families in sending communities are doing nothing but waiting for remittances. In these cases, migration is, not a supplementary, but the only, source of family income. Various poverty studies by CDRI have found that the poor can move out of poverty when they are able to diversify their sources of income, so quitting farm work because migrating children send remittances home may have a negative impact on the family financial situation. It is also worth recalling that most young migrant workers are unskilled or poorly skilled and their employment in volatile jobs is not guaranteed. Given this, over-reliance on remittances can be a trap.

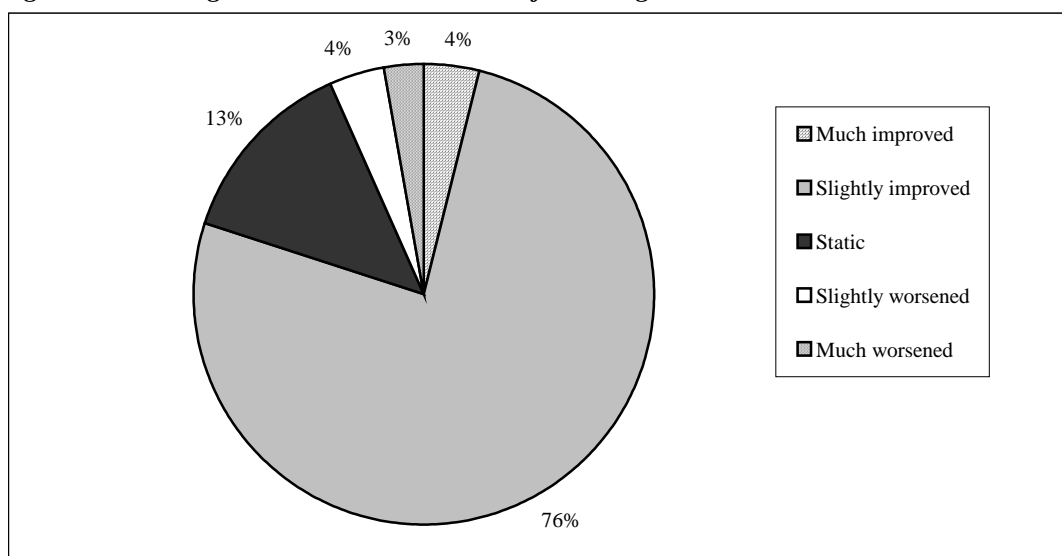
Overall, youth migration has had a hugely positive economic impact on sending households. Failure to land a job or being cheated can adversely affect sending households, but such failed migration does not happen frequently compared to international migration, even in the absence of formal social networks and proper protections. During group interviews with parents and relatives of migrant workers, some families confessed that they do nothing but wait for remittances by family members to cover all their expenses. This shows that migration in some cases can help families move out and stay out of poverty. Families with young migrant workers have a more stable financial situation and in some cases have moved up the well-being ladder, but it is not the poorest who have the highest rate of migration.

Remittances from migrant workers also clearly have a positive economic impact on sending communities. They help to stimulate the local economy by creating new small trade and business and increasing household consumption. Villages with a large number of young migrant workers enjoyed more robust economic activities than those with a small number of young migrant workers.

6.1.9 Change in Financial Situation of Sending Households

The impact of remittances on family financial situation is clearly very positive. When asked about their family financial situation since family members migrated, four-fifths said it had improved, and only seven percent said it had worsened.

Figure 6.6: Change in Financial Situation of Sending Households



However, apart from remittances, migration does not bring many benefits to sending households or communities. During FGD with villagers, some of them mentioned that the attitude of young migrant workers to the elders in the village has not changed much. However, some of them reported cases of migrant workers bringing back modern culture— young women wearing tight jeans, a preference for fast music over traditional—and, more seriously, a worker returning home drug-addicted. However, this isolated case does not have much bearing on the generally positive impact of migration.

Transfer of skills and technology is commonly cited in literature and research on migration. However, the transfer of skills and technology through the return of Cambodian migrant workers is almost non-existent because their occupations are mostly unskilled.

Sufficient migration could raise concerns about a lack of labour for agriculture. However, labour migration in Cambodia has not yet reached the level of a drain from rural areas; there is no evidence that communities with large numbers of young migrants lack labour for farming. Nonetheless, rural young men and women clearly prefer non-farm urban employment to farming in their home villages.

6.2 Linkages with Sending Households and Communities

6.2.1 Home Visits

Much migration, in various parts of the world, is circular: migrants maintain strong links with their areas of origin over extended periods, and family and other personal networks are crucial in maintaining links between origins and destinations (McDowell and de Haan 1997: 15). Strong links between young migrant workers and areas of origin are expected in traditional Cambodian society. The frequency of home visits is the most telling indicator of the strength of the linkages between young migrant workers and their sending communities.

The mode of home visits by young migrant workers is twice a year, more than one-fourth of them going this often. More than 13 percent visit once a year. Most visited their home village at least once a year. Visits regularly coincided with the Khmer New Year holiday and Phchum Ben, a very important ritual in the Cambodian calendar, meaning that they generally spent their longest and most important public holidays in their areas of origin. None of them received a travel allowance, so they had to spend their hard-earned money for the trip, mostly on taxi fares, which double during these public holidays. This shows the strong and resilient links between young migrant workers and sending communities.

Table 6.3: Frequency of Home Visits by Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

Months	Seasonal		Permanent		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Never	0	0.00	10	2.25	10	1.66
0.5	2	1.29	0	0.00	2	0.33
1	27	17.42	21	4.72	48	8.00
2	22	14.19	24	5.39	46	7.66
3	14	9.03	48	10.78	62	10.33
4	9	5.80	31	6.96	40	6.66
5	3	1.93	15	3.37	18	3.00
6	21	13.55	133	29.88	154	25.66
7	0	0.00	3	0.67	3	0.50
8	0	0.00	1	0.22	1	0.16
12	3	1.93	78	17.53	81	13.50
24	0	0.00	4	0.90	4	0.66
N/A	54	34.84	77	17.30	131	21.83
Total	155	100.00	445	100.00	600	100.00

As expected, seasonal workers went home more often than permanent workers. A third of seasonal workers went home every one or two months, while a majority of permanent workers went home once every six months. The 10 workers who never go home all belonged to the permanent group and the four workers who went home only once in two years were also permanent workers.

The duration of visits can also serve as an indication of the links young migrant workers maintain with their origins. On average, the young migrant workers spent 5.54 days at home per visit. According to the FGD, in most cases they stayed home as long as their holiday permitted.

6.2.2 Labour and Financial Shortages

In some literature on migration, the sudden outflow of young workers to urban areas would create labour shortage in their areas of origin. In Cambodia's labour-intensive farming, a shortage of labour would severely handicap agriculture in home villages. However, the study found that one out of five young migrant workers was seasonal. They went back to their home villages as frequently as required, especially during ploughing and rice cultivating periods. During household survey, families with permanent migrant workers in urban areas still maintain enough labour forces in farming, those families who fail to do so would resort to other means by hiring labour forces in the village or from nearby villages. From household survey, no families report or complain about shortage of labour force in farming. In short, rural-urban youth migration in Cambodia has not reached the labour drain level and it will not do so in the foreseeable future because the most important reason for migrating is a lack of jobs at home, and most migrants would stay in their villages if there were jobs for them.

Capital is needed to enable a family member to migrate. This study suggested that on average a young migrant worker spent 27,800 riels on travel and food from the time of leaving home until getting a job. This is a considerable sum for the rural poor. The study also found that roughly 20 percent of the financing came from loans. This raises concern about financial shortages in sending communities, but the study found no hard evidence of such shortages. Most of the families that borrowed to finance their children's migration repaid the debt in three to six months. The cost of migration was not enough to reverse the urban-to-rural flow of finances.

6.2.3 Alternative Jobs

Most of the rural young men and women migrating for work found themselves in low or unskilled jobs with very low salaries. They did not have many options. When asked about their aspirations, operating a small business was by far the first choice among the young migrant workers. The second choice was becoming a technician. Office work for a private company came in third. Only a small percentage expressed a desire to go back to farming. More than 10 percent of them lacked any vision for the future, either not knowing what they wanted to do or "never thinking" about future jobs even when pressed by the interviewer. Almost one-fourth of garment workers were keen to utilise the skills they had obtained by opening their own tailor shop.

Table 6.4: Favoured Alternative Jobs of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

Aspiration	Sellers	Civil servant / teacher	Technicians (repair phone, car, motorcycle)	Work at private company	NGO	Farming	Never think	Don't know	Other	Tailor shop	Total
Waiters/ waitresses	85	2	3	5	1	4	6	6	8	0	120
Motorcycle-taxi drivers	58	0	24	11	2	5	7	5	8	0	120
Construction workers	34	0	18	10	0	17	7	6	28	0	120
Garment workers	60	1	2	3	0	7	1	10	7	29	120
Car washers	4	0	0	1	0	4	0	6	15	0	30
Petty traders	13	0	2	4	2	1	2	2	4	0	30
Casino workers	21	2	0	1	0	0	3	2	1	0	30
Cart pullers	11	0	2	11	0	1	3	1	1	0	30
Total	286	5	51	46	5	39	29	38	72	29	600
Percent	47.66	0.83	8.50	7.66	0.83	6.50	4.83	6.33	12.00	4.83	100.00

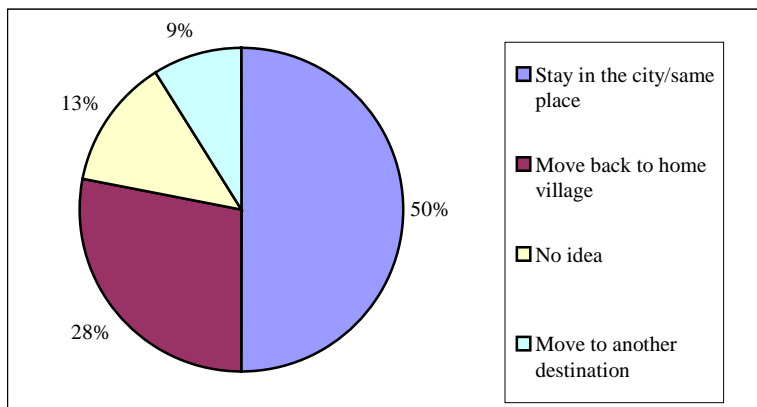
6.2.4 Future Plans

Although there are no reliable data on the exact number of rural-urban and urban-rural young migrants, the former are expected to outweigh the latter. Migration rates in urban areas are more than double those in rural areas. Over 16 percent of urban residents had migrated in the previous five years, compared with 7 percent of rural residents.¹⁴ The number of workers in agriculture is declining while the labour force in industry and services, concentrated in urban areas, has increased over the last decade. The urban population has also increased remarkably over the same period, from a little over 10 percent in 1998 to 17.7 percent in 2005.

In 2006, the garment, construction and hotel and restaurant sectors together provided around 650,000 jobs, which were mainly filled by young adults from rural Cambodia. Their future plans—how many plan to settle permanently in the city, how many plan to move elsewhere or back to their home villages—have long-term implications for this demographic shift.

Exactly half of the young workers interviewed planned to stay in their current settings, while a little more than one-fourth planned to return to their home village.

¹⁴ NIS 2005, p. 38.

Figure 6.7: Future Plans of Interviewed Young Migrant Workers

During the second-round village interviews, the research team met a few returnees. One young female complained about harsh working conditions and low salary in her factory and cited them as the reasons for returning. Inability to earn and save much encouraged her to return home, in addition to her desire to live with other family members. A few other returnees cited family reasons such as having to take care of old parents and young siblings or returning to be married. Whatever their reason for returning, one prominent problem stands out: the lack of a sustainable source of income. There is an acute need to create non-farm employment opportunities for returnees.

7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Labour migration has a big impact and an ever increasing role in poverty reduction in a country where around 35 percent of the population live under the poverty line, earning less than \$0.50 a day. The remittances from migrants are very substantial and in some cases can support a rural family the whole year round. Migration was once considered as the second or third source of family income and only a supplement, but for some families it has become the leading source of income. Migration helps to diversify sources of income, helps rural people save and puts them in a stronger position to cope with sudden shocks. There are people moving up in well-being from selling labour in other provinces. A majority of households having members migrating reported being in a better financial situation.

The flow of young workers from rural to urban Cambodia will continue unabated in the foreseeable future. There is no doubt that migration should not be controlled or restricted. The supply of low and non-skilled labour from rural areas heavily outweighs the demand in urban areas. This means that other local employments besides farming need to be created for the increasing number of rural young adults, because the study found that a majority of them decide to migrate because of having no year-round employment in their areas of origin. There is no evidence of a shortage of financial or human capital in sending villages; on the contrary, money flows from urban to rural areas as remittances. However, transfers of skills and technology through migrant workers were not found. Migration in Cambodia has not reached the level of a labour drain. Sending villages still have enough labour for farming; households that do not have enough labour can hire workers from inside the village or from nearby villages.

Migration is still very challenging. Capital needs to be mobilised and networks need to be created. The study found that only a small minority of young migrant workers are from the poorest families. The need for capital and networks can block the poorest from migrating, depriving them of a source of support for their families. Most of the jobs undertaken by migrant workers are low paid and of low status, seldom taken by urban labourers, so migrant workers are not putting much pressure on employment opportunities for urban people. Nonetheless, their integration into the areas where they reside is still very shallow. They virtually confine themselves to workplace and accommodation. They spend free time meeting with family members or relatives or friends from the same village. The new friends they make are themselves mostly migrant workers from other parts of rural Cambodia, almost none from the host cities. Living in either free or rental housing, they generally have only enough space to sleep. They largely can not afford the higher living standard enjoyed by urban people. They are very reluctant to spend money so that they can save and send to their families. The links between young migrant workers and their families are very strong, as indicated in the frequency of home visits, the frequency of sending remittances and the amount of remittances.

Formal facilitating networks and protection are largely absent, but this fails to put a brake on rural-urban youth migration. Informal networks thrive and play the role of invisible hand in the absence of formal ones. However, this results in very fragmented coordination of labour migration. Migrant workers rarely have enough reliable information about working and living conditions in urban areas. The limited information they receive before deciding to move is primarily on the availability of employment, and the information is generally flawed. The employment young migrant workers are taking up is very vulnerable. They clearly need more protection, especially from the authorities. However, none of the young migrant workers interviewed looked to the authorities for help when having problems.

One important policy question is whether labour migration can be a substitute for development in rural Cambodia. Migration is a short- or medium-term rather than long-term solution. Labour export is not an instant solution to the shortage of non-farm occupations in

rural Cambodia. Alternative rural jobs need to be created for sustainable rural development. Nonetheless, development is associated with increased urbanisation and shrinkage of the rural population. Migration would have to be permanent for the country to develop, although permanent migration does not necessarily lead to development. Many development scholars who have written on strategies for development and industrialisation believe that the industrial sector needs to become a lot more active and vibrant to be able to absorb migrants.

In order to smooth migration, maximise benefits and protect young migrant workers better, the following measures should be introduced.

(1) Provide skills training to would-be migrant workers. The study clearly showed that young migrant workers have only a little basic education, and almost none of them are equipped with the necessary skills to enter the job market or to take up skilled and high-paid employment. Possessing no skills gives them no options in the job market and relegates them to low pay and low status work. Those in the formal sector, like construction workers, receive skills through on-the-job training. Those in the informal sector, like cart pullers or petty traders, expressed a desire to move into the formal sector but were prevented from doing so by a lack of necessary skills. More opportunities to obtain required skills should be extended to young workers from rural areas in the form of vocational training schools.

(2) Provide better protection to vulnerable young migrant workers. None of the young migrant workers interviewed cited the authorities as someone they could turn to in time of trouble, nor were non-government organisations mentioned by the young migrants interviewed. Young migrants do not seem to know of the existence of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training. Their jobs are very vulnerable, so they need a better protection mechanism. The relevant authorities should protect young migrant workers rather than extorting money from them.

(3) Detailed information should be provided to would-be young migrants. The study found that young migrant workers lack necessary information before leaving home and, in some cases, even after arriving at their destinations. "Information windows" should be introduced in at least provincial departments of labour and vocational training to provide young adults with information about the availability of employment, other employment-related information and information about living and working conditions in urban settings. Providing correct information would help to curtail the costs and the chances of being cheated or failing to find a job.

(4) Formal networks should be created. Young adults migrate using informal networks. Migration should not be controlled or restricted. It should be better facilitated and coordinated. Formal networks should be created to facilitate and coordinate the flow of migrant workers from rural areas.

(5) MFIs should play a far more important role. MFIs have played a very limited role in promoting migration in Cambodia. Some of the poorest are not migrating because of inability to mobilise financial capital. MFIs could play a more active role to enable the poor and the poorest to migrate. In addition to providing loans at low interest rates, they could also serve as remittance-sending channels by lowering the fee and cutting the complexity of the paperwork.

(6) The informal sector should not be neglected. Those in the informal sector are likely to be more vulnerable and need more protection. However, they play a very important role in the economy. They should not be neglected but given special attention.

(7) More employment should be created in rural areas. Usually, only three to six months are spent in rice fields. Year-round jobs need to be created in rural areas to reduce unemployment and underemployment. Jobs are also needed for returnees.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

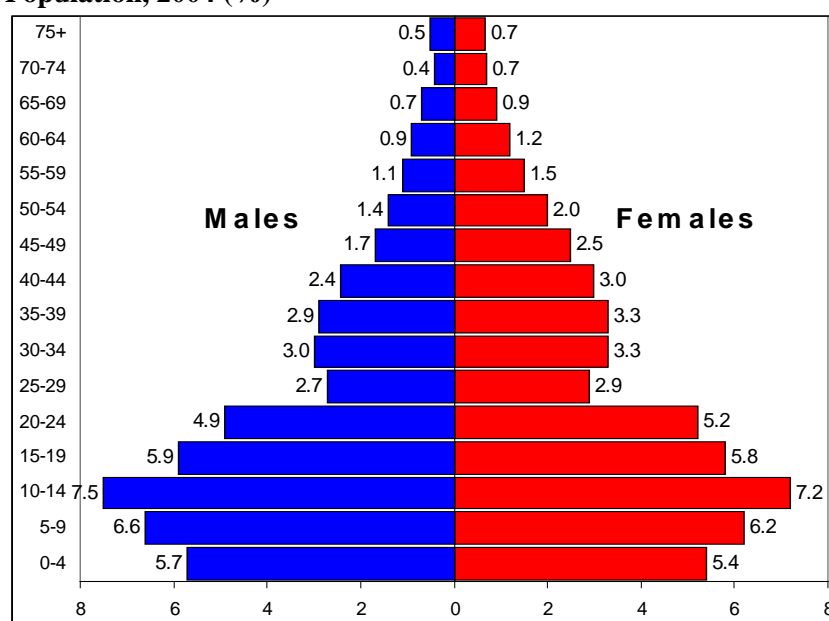
Number of Emigrants and Immigrants, by Province

	Emigrants		Immigrants	
	GPCC 1998	CIPS 2004	GPCC 1998	CIPS 2004
Banteay Meanchey	49,072	72,575	69,532	113,304
Battambang	113,573	162,383	68,848	136,746
Kompong Cham	147,672	179,088	109,750	91,744
Kompong Chhnang	28,308	29,467	32,466	26,393
Kompong Speu	55,725	73,804	35,754	48,176
Kompong Thom	77,851	71,703	16,889	36,299
Kampot	72,512	103,336	17,636	33,242
Kandal	177,619	179,564	127,104	152,862
Koh Kong	9,555	22,394	57,426	52,593
Kratie	25,416	25,203	22,596	23,717
Mondolkiri	1,785	1,094	4,958	10,554
Phnom Penh	80,794	113,463	395,246	363,429
Preah Vihear	6,247	13,792	7,788	9,435
Prey Veng	133,362	117,151	29,093	41,068
Pursat	60,962	75,915	27,266	40,303
Ratanakkiri	2,390	1,351	8,783	11,414
Siem Reap	33,235	41,193	26,455	37,351
Sihanoukville	16,471	20,330	55,794	63,598
Stung Treng	3,254	4,534	9,109	12,646
Svay Rieng	45,745	52,565	94,950	97,797
Takeo	113,400	167,342	22,663	58,932
Oddar Meanchey	12,228	17,180	11,172	35,100
Kep	1,082	1,856	7,022	28,116
Pailin	2,179	5,560	12,142	28,024

Sources: National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning

Appendix 2:

Population, 2004 (%)



Sources: National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning

Appendix 3:

Cambodian Employment, by sector: 1995–2006 (thousands)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total	4932	4456	4430	4909	5519	5275	6243	6571	6965	7496	7878	8053
Agriculture	4013	3482	3492	3771	4214	3889	4384	4426	4471	4520	4655	4619
Agriculture and forestry	3964	3389	3413	3698	4109	3688	4123	4136	4147	4160	4255	4243
Fisheries	49	94	79	73	105	147	261	291	323	360	400	376
Industry	142	211	210	216	352	444	640	741	835	947	1,059	1,169
Mining and quarrying	6	1	8	6	5	3	4	15	16	17	19	20
Manufacturing	108	169	144	159	259	367	549	601	656	720	789	870
Utilities	1	3	4	3	5	4	4	6	10	16	17	19
Construction	27	38	54	48	83	70	84	120	153	195	234	260
Services	776	762	727	921	952	941	1219	1404	1659	2028	2163	2265
Trade	350	394	349	341	402	436	644	756	888	1042	1104	1140
Hotels and restaurants	11	7	6	15	28	19	10	24	27	30	43	61
Transport and communications	64	66	81	118	121	120	167	178	187	196	206	217
Financial intermediation	5	4	11	1	5	8	6	9	12	16	23	32
Public Administration	170	143	138	222	187	147	149	159	169	180	185	184
Education	86	61	56	81	88	87	88	94	100	106	113	120
	<i>Percentage of total</i>											
Agriculture	81	78	79	77	76	74	70	67	64	60	59	57
Agriculture and forestry	80	76	77	75	74	70	66	63	60	55	54	52
Fisheries	1	2	2	1	2	3	4	4	5	5	5	4
Industry	3	5	5	4	6	8	10	11	12	13	13	14
Mining and quarrying	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	2	4	3	3	5	7	9	9	9	10	10	11
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	3
Services	16	17	16	19	17	18	20	21	24	27	27	28
Trade	7	9	8	7	7	8	10	12	13	14	14	14
Hotel and restaurants	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Transport and communications	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Financial intermediation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Administration	3	3	3	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Education	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: International Monetary Fund

Youth Migration and Urbanisation in Cambodia

Moving from one place to another is always risky, especially for young workers most of whom have never left their home village and are equipped with only very limited basic education and few or no skills. Undoubtedly, there are some necessary reasons behind this huge movement of young people from rural to urban areas. Their migration process, networks, living and working conditions, challenges and difficulties are not yet well understood, nor are the impact of remittances and migration on sending households and communities. Aiming to fill in these knowledge gaps, this study has five specific objectives: (a) to understand the socio-economic background of young migrants' households; (b) to identify the factors and circumstances that promote migration and to understand how youth decide to migrate from rural areas; (c) to examine the role of social networks in facilitating migration; (d) to discover the types of employment in urban areas for young migrants and their integration into the urban setting; (e) to understand relations with the sending household and the impact on poverty in the sending household and community.



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