



**"Undocumented, Unregistered and Invisible" : An
exploratory study of the Reasons of Migrating to Thailand of
and by Cambodian Young People**

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Introduction

The culture of large-scale migration of Cambodians to Thailand started in earnest in the late 1970s following the Cambodian civil war, culminating in the Khmer Rouge auto-genocide in the Cambodia and Vietnamese take-over. In the 1980s, up to half a million displaced people fled to Thailand; most did not get an opportunity to continue onwards to a third country so had to wait until the Paris Peace Accord in the early 1990s when refugees were repatriated to Cambodia in 1992-3 (Chandler, 1992). Since then, migration in search of work has continued at a lesser rate; however, the local non-governmental organisation (NGO) that commissioned this paper found that the number of young Cambodian people migrating for work has increased. In order to invest more in their programs to prevent migration, this NGO needed evidence for their donors. However, funding and time were very limited so the sample number of this paper was relatively small. Regardless, we argue that even a small NGO could provide information to offer insights into the reasons behind why Cambodians migrate for work and that would be helpful for future programs and planning.

According to World Bank figures (2016), in 1968 Cambodian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was 10% behind Thailand’s figure. While this difference is substantial, it is unlikely that it would have provoked the mass economic migration that currently exists; GDP per capita in Cambodia today is 20% of Thailand’s. This means that the same type of labour-intensive, low-skilled jobs would earn considerably more in Thailand than in Cambodia. This contrast in earning potential means that, for Cambodians, the economic incentives to migrate are significant. This has given rise to a culture of migration in communities throughout Cambodia. The high volume of Cambodians who migrate to Thailand has created a network of individuals and businesses operating in Thailand who make a living exploiting the most vulnerable of these migrants. Despite the Memorandum of Understanding Act of 2003 (Liptapanlop, 2003), which is supposed to protect

the rights of non-Thai workers in Thailand, exploitation remains an issue. Our research leads us to believe that there continue to be many risks and problems for many Cambodians who migrate, particularly when they cross the borders without documentation (Seng, 2015). The problems with migration once inside Thailand are said to include: being arrested; not being paid in full; being beaten; and being overworked to the point of causing health problems (Sophal and Savannarith, 1999; York, 2013).

Migration from Cambodian provinces that share a border with Thailand is considerably higher than elsewhere in Cambodia with close to 15% of the total labour force migrating to Thailand (Sophal and Savannarith, 1999). Furthermore, the Analysing Development Issues Centre (2003), who studies the prevalence of migration in individual villages in the Battambang province, says that in some villages as many as 78% of households had a family member with some migration experience. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2011) commissioned a study into dropout trends in Cambodia and found the three provinces with the highest dropout rates to be Banteay Meanchey, Battambang and Oddar Meanchey. These three provinces all directly border Thailand; USAID (2011) suggests the lure of better wages is partly responsible for these comparably high dropout rates. There appears to be a correlation between a household's proximity to Thailand and an increased rate of school dropouts. This correlation also supports the hypothesis that living in a community with high levels of migration adds to changes in attitude of the students of those communities as regards their education. The concern is that, if there are many people in the community who migrate, this could affect the aspirations of children in school and, consequently, their attitudes. A culture of short-termism (Sum *et al.*, 2009) can be created as a result of young people seeing their peers drop out to migrate. This culture of dropping out of school has profound negative impacts on individual migrants, with future income projections being lower and disproportionate rates of unemployment compared to those who complete high school (Sum *et al.*, 2009). While corruption and inequality exist within the education system, it remains vital for the economic development of Cambodia as it creates more long-term, sustainable economic opportunities for citizens and prepares them to live in a globalised world (Conochie, 2012). An educated society and a healthy economy would in turn offer would-be migrants increased job prospects within Cambodia, making them less likely to migrate.

Contextual Analysis

This study was undertaken in an effort to gain a better understanding of the impacts of migration to Thailand on young Cambodians. We wanted to investigate this topic in order that we might understand firstly whether alternatives to migration would be welcome amongst Cambodians who intend to migrate. ADI (2003) and Sophal and Savannariths (1999) indicate how prominent a part of community life migration is in some communities in Cambodia, which may pose problems when introducing new concepts and methods. Crucial to creating effective policy measures is to understand whether the migration is more influenced by ‘push or pull’ migration factors. Whether the key factor is a ‘push or pull’ factor dictates from which angle the issue is best addressed. For example, if the critical factor is a ‘push’ factor, such as the lack of job opportunities in Cambodia, then that would suggest the focus should be on creating alternatives to migration. However, if a ‘pull’ factor, such as the possibility of consistent work in Thailand, appears to be more important, then perhaps policy should be commissioned with the intention to make sure that, when people do migrate, they know how to do so safely and legally.

When Cambodians work undocumented, they are more at risk in Thailand primarily because they may feel unable to inform the relevant authorities of their mistreatment (Walsh, 2011). While it is known that migrants, both documented and undocumented, are badly treated by their Thai employers, undocumented migrants are disproportionately likely to experience a variety of problems (Walsh, 2011). Additionally, non-native groups who undertake irregular work in a country can cause the native groups to develop feelings of nativism. Nativism occurs when the local people begin to feel as though they are more entitled to opportunities and benefits in their country than foreign people are (Ostler, 2010). These feelings often exist more strongly when there are many undocumented workers because there is a perception that they lower the wages of local people by undercutting local workers. In this environment, the ‘pull’ factors, while attractive, are also dangerous and could make stereotypical views of migrant workers more entrenched. This paper will examine the ways this perception could be changed to make Thailand a more suitable place to work for migrant workers.

Secondly, this paper will look at further understanding the differences between the realities of migration and the preconceptions of potential migrants. The sharing of information with young people regarding the realities of migrating may contribute to a change in their actions, as well as their attitudes in the classroom, and make sure that they take all possible practical measures to ensure their safety is more pragmatic than saying that they should not migrate. The latter approach may be unrealistic when they are experiencing pressure from their family who depend on them for their income. A potential method is to provide an accurate view of undocumented migration and this impact on migrants' experiences (York, 2013). An increased proportion of migrants that have the correct legal papers would mean it would be easier for authorities to regulate migrants' behaviour, and would result in less power for those networks which exploit vulnerable, undocumented migrants.

It is hypothesised that, by ensuring the availability of information about the importance of working papers and the process of obtaining them, there could be major positive impacts on individual migrants' welfare and safety. A key intention of this research is to more accurately understand the key differences between migrants' expectations of migration and what happens in reality. In doing so, potential migrants will be able to be better educated about the dangers and about which steps to take to minimise risk. Furthermore, we believe that working towards finding a solution to this problem would be beneficial both to Thai and Cambodian governments as well as to individuals in the target demographic. Helping to ensure that more Cambodians get the proper working papers would begin to discredit the perception that Cambodian migrants are undercutting local workers and would reduce tension caused by this perception. Additionally, creating a tax benefit for the Thai government and the increase in wages could result in increased levels of remittances to Cambodian communities (Deelen and Vasuprasat, 2010). This research will be used to help create frameworks for approaches to engaging with migrants to improve their wellbeing. This will in turn help us to understand what would be the most effective way to continue to support migrants.

Methodology

Subjects eligible for the study were Cambodian between 14 and 29 years of age, with equal numbers of males and females. They were chosen in accordance with the UN definition of youth

(14 years to 24 years (UNESCO, 2019)), in order to comply with the ethical principles of the UN. They also needed to regularly migrate between Cambodia and Thailand, either daily or for weeks and months on end. Ultimately we interviewed 25 females and 24 males, using the ethical principles set out by the UN Ethics Office (UN, 2019).

All information in this study was gathered through one-on-one structured interviews with each of the 49 respondents. The research instrument comprised demographics, followed by 18 questions which included enquiring into when and why respondents initially started migrating, and to what extent they felt like they would have benefited from knowing more prior to their first experience of migrating. We devised the questionnaire through a combination of knowledge gained through the NGO *Kone Kmeng*¹ as well as from similar studies that have been conducted on migration. Just over 75% of interviews were conducted in Poipet, Cambodia with the remaining interviews in Pattaya, Thailand.

Our questionnaires were all conducted in the Khmer language. This was done so that respondents felt as comfortable as possible and were able to answer the questions with the amount of depth they chose. The questions varied from multiple-choice questions, to asking for respondents' thoughts on a particular aspect of their migration. Due to language barriers that were present, a structured interview format was used to make the coding process more straightforward. We were then able to extrapolate results and tables to give clear quantifiable evidence as to the reality of the situation of Cambodian migrants in Thailand. The one-to-one interviews provided privacy and an environment in which participants could state their opinions with the guidance of pre-prepared questions (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

All the data was analysed using SPSS statistical analysis program, version 21. Qualitative responses were analysed and grouped into categories to be inputted into the SPSS software. Additionally, we also investigated themes from the qualitative responses that were not easy to quantify; these themes are developed in the Discussion section.

Rationale and Limitations

¹ <https://www.kone-kmeng.org/>

In order to determine how recipients in various circumstances perceived their experiences of migration, despite having similar overall social backgrounds, we interviewed migrants who had just been deported to Poipet, Cambodia. We hoped to develop a better understanding of differences in perception about reasons for and impacts of migration. We accessed our respondents via a contact we have with the NGO *Samaritan's Purse*²; they assisted us in contacting the relevant respondents and all interviews were conducted by *Kone Kmeng* staff. There are two ways that Cambodians find work across the border: they travel daily to Thailand in search of temporary work or they migrate for a period of a few weeks or months. In both cases, there is a threat of deportation; in the interviewed sample in Poipet, there was a mix of the two types of migration. The second location we carried out the interviews was in Pattaya, Thailand which is a popular location for Cambodians to get work (IOM, 2019). In Pattaya, we accessed our respondents using snowball sampling via an associate of a *Kone Kmeng* employee who knows a community of Khmer workers in Pattaya. Here our interviews were conducted in a community of Khmer residents who had migrated long-term to Thailand for work. These two groups of workers gave us a comparatively extensive set of experiences within such a small, close-knit sample.

There are various limitations to our research to be aware of - namely that our respondents are not a representative sample of Cambodians who migrate to Thailand. Interviews conducted in Poipet were at the deportation centre where Cambodians are sent by the Thai authorities if they are caught working without documentation in Thailand. This means that all our respondents who were interviewed in Poipet had been working without documentation, which immediately categorised their migrating experience. This allowed for less representative, but comparatively rich and realistic responses from recipients due to the more extreme circumstances of their deportation. Also, with our interviews in Pattaya, the first interview was with an associate of a *Kone-Kmeng* colleague, who then provided us with access to her Khmer associates and friends in Pattaya to make up the rest of our respondents. So, rather than focussing on a representative group, the interviews were conducted with who was available at the time to take the questionnaire.

² <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/>

Results

Demographics

There were 24 male and 25 female respondents from nine provinces with the majority being from Banteay Meanchey (37% of respondents). Interestingly, respondents interviewed in Poipet were more widely spread through the provinces of Cambodia with the highest proportion being 27% from Banteay Meanchey and Battambang. Conversely, 67% of our respondents who were interviewed in Pattaya were from Banteay Meanchey - this could be due to the community of workers all knowing each other from Cambodia and hence working and living together in Pattaya (see Fig 1).

Fig. 1 Provinces of Cambodia



Our respondents ranged from age 17-29, of whom only one respondent was not relied upon by a dependent for financial support, and with 65% percent of respondents professing to have 4 or more dependents. More than half of respondents had not gone to secondary school, with only 14% achieving high school level education. The respondents had a variety of occupations in Thailand

although construction workers were by far the most common with over half of respondents; there were also several farm workers, factory workers and street sellers. Interestingly, over 54% of respondents said their stay in Thailand averaged over a year. Fewer than 25% of respondents' average stay in Thailand was less than 6 months.

Gender Differences

Almost all of the women had a more difficult experience of migration than the men. Perhaps most striking is the marked difference between perceptions of safety when in Thailand (see Table 1). More women reported not being paid fairly and having to do excess work. Women also found it more difficult to find work once in Thailand, with 29% of women finding work every time they migrate to Thailand compared to 58% of male respondents. Table 2 suggests that though gender is an important variable when considering a variety of issues concerning migration, the principal reason both genders quit education and migrate is due to family poverty.

Table 1: Safety in Thailand						
Do you feel safe when you are in Thailand?		Yes	%	No	%	
Gender	Male	13	54%	11	46%	24
	Female	6	29%	15	71%	21
Total		19	42%	26	58%	45

Table 2: Stopping Studying					
Why did you stop studying?		Family poverty	Academic reasons	Peer pressure	
Gender	Male	17	6	1	24
	Female	23	2	0	25
Total		40	8	1	49

Reasons for Migration

In order to understand the most common motivations which drive people to migrate, the ‘push or pull’ factors were explored. Respondents were asked the question ‘if you had had equal opportunities in Cambodia would you migrate to Thailand?’. An overwhelming 88% of all respondents indicated that they would choose to stay in Cambodia (93% for women and 82% for men). It would appear from these answers that ‘push’ factors are a dominant motivation, because, even though participants would choose to remain in Cambodia, 82% stopped school and began to migrate due to family poverty. When asked this question about their reasons for migration, more than 50% of respondents said they would like to be in Cambodia to feel more freedom, with a third of respondents stating safety as a concern. This indicates that, for the majority of the respondents, the decision to go to Thailand was not their first choice.

Educational Impacts

Our respondents were faced with many barriers against them remaining in schooling, with only 14% completing high school. However, 98% said that education was important to them, and 73% of respondents acknowledged that staying in school would have increased their job opportunities later in life (see Table 3). For the vast majority of respondents, material deprivation forced them

to stop school and to start financially supporting themselves and their families rather than the deferred benefit of remaining in education. Dropping out of school not only impacts young people in the short term but also enters them into a cycle whereby it is difficult to move from unskilled work areas (OECD, 2019).

Table 3: Importance of Education		
Is education important to you? why?	Frequency	Percent
Chance of a brighter future	19	42.2%
More job opportunities	33	73.3%
Less likely to be exploited	17	37.8%
Important life skills are learnt in school	11	24.4%
Means you do not have to migrate to Thailand to work	5	11.1%
Total	45	

Undocumented Migration

In reviewing the literature and subsequently undertaking our own research, it appeared that, in terms of the overall migration of Cambodians into Thailand, undocumented migration has been and remains a major issue. 100% of respondents claimed that the single biggest change which would make them feel safer when in Thailand would be having the correct working papers. The prevalence of undocumented migration means that they have very little protection from the law, giving their employers the power to act unlawfully, dishonestly and, at times, inhumanely. Secondly, it further sours relations between the indigenous Thai population and the incoming

Cambodians, with respondents stating that they would rather stay in Cambodia because they feel Thai people do not respect them. Antipathy and stigma already exist between the Thai people and the Khmer people; Kasetsiri (2003) states that this is often characterized by “ignorance, misunderstanding and prejudice”. The perceived lack of respect diminishes the power of the both Cambodian and Thai authorities to uphold their workers’ rights because they are undocumented, unregistered, and therefore invisible.

Table 4: Problems faced in Thailand.							
Do you face any problems in Thailand?							
		Not paid fairly	Arrested by police	Victim of abuse	No problems	Excessive work	Total Respondents
	Frequency	21	25	4	10	2	49
	Percentage	42.9%	51.0%	8.2%	20.4%	4.1%	

Lack of information

Our research found a profound lack of information of what it is like to migrate to Thailand. When asked what advice would be recommended for someone planning to stop school to migrate, multiple responses were given and the results paint a clear picture as seen in Table 5.

Table 5

What advice would you give to a young person?	Frequency	Percent
Do not stop school	35	72.9%
Explain negatives of working in Thailand	33	68.8%
Go to Thailand to earn more money	5	10.4%
Negative for Cambodia if you migrate	2	4.2%
Explain impact of dropping out	7	14.6%
Don't know	2	4.2%
Total	48	

These specific issues were highlighted in the Results section because of their relevance to and relationship with individuals' migration experience. Additionally, many of the aspects highlighted are a product of respondents migrating without the correct paperwork as was a consistent characteristic with the respondent demographic. As well as this, results highlighted that Cambodians migrating without documentation and their lack of information concerning the migration trends are aspects which, if mitigated, could result in improvements to Cambodians well-being during migration. There were other aspects to the results we gathered which have not been included in this section because they lack relevance to the overall narrative presented in this paper and are not pertinent to the human security of Cambodians undertaking the migration to Thailand.

Discussion

Family poverty and a lack of job opportunities in Cambodia are primary motivators for Cambodians to migrate into Thailand, creating a culture of migration in those Cambodian

provinces that border Thailand. This section combines knowledge from *Kone Kmeng*'s practice, the results from our own study, and wider reading to create a discussion around the issues of Cambodian migration into Thailand.

Some of the problems are direct consequences of migration, including being victims of abuse and having excess work to such an extent that it is detrimental to migrants' health. Other problems are less tangible, such as the impact that the culture of migration has on school children who remain in Cambodia and on future prospects of individual migrants, and the impact this large-scale culture of migration has on the economy and society of Cambodia. One issue which transcends this distinction between direct consequences and the less tangible problems is that of the prevalence of undocumented migration. Migrating without documentation has a direct consequence due to the high likelihood of not being paid and of being subjected to physical abuse.

The two main approaches when attempting to shape policy to counteract problems caused by migration could be classified as preventative and anticipatory measures. Preventative measures focus on stopping vulnerable Cambodians from engaging in migration in the first place, in essence preventing them from putting themselves at risk. These measures would include policies designed to create educational, vocational, and employment opportunities within Cambodia, alongside more general poverty-targeting policies which could lessen the need for children to have to support their families financially. Most of these preventative measures are long-term ongoing policies - improving average wages, poverty reduction and economic opportunities - and are targets of both Thai and Cambodian Governments for their rural populations.

Anticipatory measures in this case have a more specific purpose and can have a more profound influence in the short term. They apply a pragmatic approach by accepting this migration as inevitable and trying to anticipate and mitigate risks as effectively as possible. These policies would include supplementary classes, information packs or workshops attempting to fill the gaps in migrants' and potential migrants' knowledge. As discussed, *Kone Kmeng* and other stakeholders already employ a variety of poverty-targeting measures, which in the context of the migration problem would be considered preventative policies. Anticipatory measures would work towards

targeting poverty as well as making sure migrants were at least provided with information about the risks and realities of migration.

The extensive migration from Cambodian border provinces means it is expected of many young people to migrate to Thailand for work (York, 2013). This leads to common attitudes within these communities, such as a resignation from a young age that one's future involves dropping out of school and starting to migrate into Thailand to support the family. This fatalistic attitude has a profound negative effect on individuals and impacts entire communities (Raj, 2002). It can manifest itself in a poor attitude to education, regardless of an individual's academic potential or an understanding of the value of education. It also can be evident when an individual is preparing to migrate but neglects to take measures which would increase their safety and overall well-being.

Also, in regards to employment, it seems as though job prospects for Cambodians in Thailand are very limited. Of all those who said that they worked in construction, none of them claimed to be in management or supervisory roles despite 67% having worked in Thailand for more than 5 years. This shows that prospects of career advancement are extremely limited; it is likely if workers begin to migrate to Thailand they will get trapped in a labour-intensive, low-salary job.

As well as trying to combat problems caused by the attitudes made prevalent by large-scale migration there are also physical problems which trouble many Cambodian migrants in Thailand. These problems as described by the respondents include physical abuse, being overworked, not being paid fairly, and being arrested by the police - sometimes legitimately, sometimes not so. There have also been cases of forced drug abuse (e.g. amphetamines to increase work performance) leading to addiction and slavery of Cambodian migrants (Derks, 2010). It is also possible for migrants to experience these problems regardless of whether they legally migrate or not. However, every one of our respondents acknowledged that the main thing which would increase their safety when in Thailand would be having correct working papers. An increased number of migrants with passports and correct working papers would mean stopping the supply of irregular migrants to the large network of illegal employers and smugglers. While there are other factors at play, documented workers would have more credibility and opportunity to go to the authorities for problems they may encounter.

Recommendations

Community Workshops in Cambodia

As mentioned in the previous section, for some Cambodians migration remains inevitable, irrespective of desire or ambition, as it is seen as the easiest pathway to short-term, quick employment. Key to transforming this demographic's experience and inferring greater autonomy would be to include an explanation of long-term impacts of stopping school and migrating to Thailand, but also informing potential migrants about the conditions they will be working and living under when they are in Thailand. If Cambodians were informed of these details before beginning their migratory employment, the perception of migration as the inevitable option may change. It is telling that 73% of respondents said that their advice to a young person thinking of migrating would be to not stop school.

This information could be shared through workshops organised by *Kone Kmeng* or as part of formal education via government authorities. It is hoped that this information would have widespread accessibility and, as a result, would begin to motivate students to find a way to remain in education. Other key changes would be to inform potential migrants of the likelihood of facing certain problems, especially when they migrate without documentation. Perhaps this could be included in the curriculum of the personal and social education departments by discussing what migration is actually like, what problems may arise, and the implications on futures if migration does take place. If this information was shared in the classroom in a formal manner it could enlighten many people who are considering migration as to what to expect and how to be safe.

However, due to the fact that many members of this demographic working in Thailand without documentation dropped out of school at a young age or worked as a subsistence farmer in their village, they are frequently unregistered by government and municipal authorities. Therefore, it would be most effective to provide information and services using an informal, citizenship-based approach. One recommended method of getting this information to the intended recipients would be to have open workshops delivered by current and ex-migrants who can tell students and young people exactly what they wish they had been told.

Creating Secure Work in Thailand

Our findings suggest that an increased number of migrants with correct working papers would considerably improve safety in migration. There are two areas of information that should be made easily accessible to migrants: how to get correct working papers and, perhaps more importantly, an understanding of the value of having them, as well as of the implications to safety and well-being should the migrants be without papers. To obtain the papers, they must first get a passport, which must be obtained from the Ministry of Statistics and Passports in Phnom Penh. This service costs \$135 - a considerable sum - and then, in addition to the charge, there is processing time of 45 to 55 days, so two trips to Phnom Penh are required. Additionally, in order to obtain a passport, there is also a fee to get a work permit. To work in Thailand, you must apply for a work permit prior to leaving but a successful application is dependent upon having a job to start on arrival. There is also a broker fee which must be paid to get a work permit which has a \$49 limit. Considering the average monthly salary of a Cambodian working in Thailand is a little over \$200 (Tolson, 2014), the combined fee of a passport and working permits is more than one month's salary, and these fees must be paid upfront. In order to account for these costs and to allow a higher number of migrant workers to work safely and securely in Thailand, we suggest the scheme which is detailed below.

Due to the common profile of those migrants who migrate because of poverty, it seems very unlikely that most will have the money detailed above at their disposal to obtain passports and papers. In light of this we propose to the Cambodian Foreign Ministry and the Thai Ministry of Industry a Temporary Migrant Worker Scheme that is low-bureaucracy and low-cost and would allow migrant workers to undertake short-term documented occupations. This policy uses the theoretical basis of 'win-win-win' migration theory discourse, in which migration schemes are advantageous to the receiving country, host country, and migrants. In this case the beneficiaries would be the Thai government, the Cambodian government and the Cambodian migrants. The Thai government's international image is tainted; one of the key allegations levied at them is abuse of foreign migrants in southern border provinces. There is significant evidence of abuses from Thai employers towards undocumented Cambodian migrants who are reluctant to inform the

authorities. These migrants are predominantly poor so the proposed cheaper, more accessible Temporary Migrant Worker Scheme would reduce the number of undocumented migrants by increasing the accessibility of legitimate migration programs. The number of undocumented workers in Thailand demonstrates the existence of employment capacity; reducing the number of undocumented workers would strangle the labour supply for these illegal networks. This would allow for legal and ethical employers - whose employment rights and safety are currently unstable - to employ migrant workers under the Temporary Migrant Worker Scheme. This highlights the significance of these policy measures for individual migrants in terms of fair pay and conditions, a stark contrast to the current state of affairs. Legitimising this labour pool would result in an increase in tax revenue for the Thai government which would offset the costs of creation and implementation of the program. The Cambodian government would benefit in two ways; the high school dropout rates in bordering provinces will decrease because there is an easier migration route only accessible to over 18's - meaning temptation for children to drop out of school to migrate would decrease. This new documented migration demographic would receive better wages from official employers, so bordering provinces would receive greater levels of remittances, increasing opportunities for investment within Cambodian communities.

Further Research

We are aware that the interviewed sample is specific and not very large. While this has been helpful to give an insight into a small group of people's experiences, a larger, more representative study into Cambodian migration would help consolidate findings and deepen understanding of the topic. This further research would work towards creating a more community-centred approach in Cambodia as well as ensure safe migration across borders. While the preferred outcome is fewer workers migrating to Thailand rather than working in their native Cambodia, this paper recognises that there will always be migration; this paper and future research can contribute to making the passages and processes fairer and more secure.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper some clear trends have emerged; the vast majority of our respondents did not migrate to Thailand out of choice but rather due to a serious lack of economic opportunities

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2
3 within Cambodia. Furthermore, we discovered that the cost and process of obtaining a passport
4 and work permit substantially increases the number of Cambodians who migrate undocumented.
5
6 This causes problems for the Royal Cambodian and Royal Thai Government authorities as well as
7 endangering the individual migrants. Due to the nature of the principal factor which drive people
8 to migrate - namely, inadequate domestic economic opportunities - people will continue to migrate,
9 and sometimes undocumented irrespective of whether they understand the risks involved. This is
10 why the strategic base of recommendations had two main approaches; one being to continue to
11 improve the domestic situation so people are not forced to put themselves in danger, and the other
12 to regularise the existing migration processes and habits.
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20 Recommendations for further research could focus on provision and accessibility of services that
21 share information on how to migrate safely. If young people were aware of the reality of migrating,
22 it could motivate them to do whatever possible to remain in school and improve their future
23 chances. This could have a transformative effect on their futures and on the communities in border
24 provinces where huge numbers of the young workforce leave to work in Thailand.
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